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## GREGORY PALAMAS' CONCEPT OF LIGHT AS A MEANS OF OVERCOMING NEOPLATONIC ONTOLOGY\*

**Abstract:** *This paper examines Gregory Palamas' concept of light, exploring whether this notion can transcend Neoplatonic boundaries and provide the foundation for a new ontology free from pantheism and monism. It is argued that in Palamas' theology, "light" functions analogously to "energy" within the dialectical pair of essence and energies. In this framework, light, like energy, belongs to an essentialist ontology in which the primary category is ousia or essence. The paper contends, however, that surpassing Neoplatonic ontology requires a fundamentally different concept: the notion of hypostasis. Unlike essence or energy, hypostasis is uniquely capable of simultaneously expressing communion and otherness, thereby opening the path to a relational and dynamic understanding of being that moves beyond the limitations of classical Neoplatonic thought.*

**Keywords:** *Nature, energy, hypostasis, being, monophysitism, theosis, hesychasm, imagination.*

In this paper, I examine Gregory Palamas' concept of light, arguing that to be properly understood, it should be situated within the broader Neoplatonic problem of the One and the Many. The central question I address is whether Palamas' notion of light can transcend Neoplatonic boundaries and serve as the basis for a new ontology, free from pantheism and monism.

Plotinus developed a profound conception of light within his philosophical system, where it symbolizes the ultimate source of existence and knowledge. For him, light represents the transcendent realm of the One, the highest form of reality. Plotinus emphasizes that light is not merely a physical phenomenon but a metaphorical expression of the divine. It is the illumination that enables the soul to ascend from the material world to the intelligible realm. In this context, light is intimately connected to the process of self-realization and the awakening of the soul to its true nature. The journey toward light requires contemplation and the purification of the soul; by turning inward and detaching from material distractions, one can attain higher consciousness and experience the divine light within. The question remains, however: in what ways, if at all, does Palamas' notion of light differ from that of Plotinus?<sup>1</sup> This study aims to clarify these differences and explore the potential of Palamas' concept to redefine the ontological relationship between essence, energy, and hypostasis.

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1 On the notion of uncreated light, see also: Noble 2021.

In Palamas' theology, the notion of "light" appears to function in much the same way as "energy" within the dialectical pair of essence and energies, to the extent that the two terms might seem almost interchangeable. Accordingly, one may conclude that "light" shares the same ontological status as "energy," both belonging to an essentialist framework in which the primary category is *ousia* or essence. The difficulty with *ousia*, however, lies in its creative capacity: in the act of creation, it can only produce imperfect copies rather than true ontological otherness. For Plato, the material world is merely a shadow of the eternal Forms, while for Plotinus, the further creation differentiates itself from the One, the deeper it sinks into non-being.<sup>2</sup> To move beyond Neoplatonic ontology, a fundamentally new concept is required: that of hypostasis. Only hypostasis, it is argued, can simultaneously express both communion and otherness. The reasons for this unique capacity, and the mechanisms by which hypostasis achieves it, will be examined in detail later in this paper.

Despite some dissenting views, Orthodox thinkers in the late twentieth century increasingly recognized the necessity of a bold paradigm shift, positioning hypostasis as the central ontological category. Hypostasis is widely regarded as the key concept distinguishing Christian theology from Neoplatonism. As Torstein Tollefsen observes, 'the concept of hypostasis within Christian theology and Christian anthropology represents an interesting step beyond Neoplatonism'.<sup>3</sup>

However, Palamas argues for the essence/energies pair rather than an essence/hypostasis framework. Some Orthodox thinkers maintain that this is not problematic, interpreting Palamas' *energeia* without hesitation as equivalent to hypostasis. While such an identification could be a legitimate move, it presupposes that we first provide a clear and satisfying definition of hypostasis.

It is likely Palamas avoided Neoplatonic terminology, which may explain why his theology has not yet been rigorously analyzed from a fully ontological perspective. I argue that Palamas' primary concern is to articulate a mode of participation that safeguards God's absolute transcendence. Only after affirming the apophatic character of divine essence does he attempt to clarify the status of the created world.

This approach reflects Palamas' presumption that the relationship between God and humanity had been adequately resolved. If God created humans to participate in His glory and attain deification—that is, to become fully like Him in everything except in essence—then human vocation is fulfilled. Yet, the notion of deification requires careful scrutiny, as it may harbor subtle tendencies toward monism. If creation is fully permeated by divine life, it risks becoming identical with God. To be "identical," however, does not necessarily entail the loss of ontological otherness. Deification would be meaningless if human distinctiveness were entirely absorbed. Indeed, certain patristic texts reveal hints of monophysite tendencies, acknowledged even by some mainstream Orthodox scholars. Tollefsen, for example, observes that in the Christology of Gregory of Nyssa one gets the impression that the humanity of Christ is diluted to such a degree that almost nothing remains of human nature as such.<sup>4</sup>

One can understand Palamas' position in light of the historical context, where the imperative to distinguish the Christian God from pagan deities remained paramount. Yet it is striking that many contemporary Orthodox thinkers continue to embrace a similar worldview. Palamas' assertion regarding the possibility of experiencing uncreated light in hesychast prayer was especially cherished by Orthodox theologians who rediscovered his work in the twentieth century, attributing to him a singular position within Orthodox theology. One might expect,

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<sup>2</sup> Wilberding 2006. Ho 2015, especially pp. 29-56.

<sup>3</sup> Tollefsen 2012, p. 214.

<sup>4</sup> Tollefsen 2012, 218.

however, that following this initial period, scholars would approach Palamas' thought with greater critical detachment.

The question of human ontological freedom remains one of the most challenging issues in philosophy, particularly since Christianity presents itself as having transcended the limitations of Platonic and Neoplatonic thought. A key methodological question arises: can a true balance between participation and otherness be achieved if the primary concern is the preservation of God's autonomy, while human being is treated as secondary? Should philosophical reflection begin with God, with humanity, or perhaps with the notion of God-man as a mediating principle?<sup>5</sup>

Even when Gregory emphasizes creaturely participation in divine life, his conception suffers from similar limitations as that of deification, because it neglects the ontological particularity of created beings. In Christian theology, participation predominantly signifies God's activity *ad extra*, leaving the created element largely passive. The focus is on God's majesty, His love for humanity, and His desire to share divine life, while the ontological significance of deified human nature and its positive telos remains underexplored. One may even ask, following Berdyaev, whether human nature is merely superfluous, its role being to yield space to divine nature.<sup>6</sup>

I contend, therefore, that the pair of notions *essence/energies-light* may adequately reinforce God's radical transcendence but is insufficient to express the ontological alterity of creation. A hierarchy of being in which the particular is always subordinate to the universal cannot serve as a foundation for the ontological otherness of the human person. Introducing a novel concept such as hypostasis without first establishing a robust ontological framework would be largely ineffective. Developing this framework is no simple task, for it entails articulating a genuinely new ontology.

This new ontology must account for how God, who creates from absolute non-being—which ultimately implies that He creates from Himself—can bring forth an absolutely ontologically other being. This question is crucial, as it may provide the definitive criterion by which we can discern whether Christian ontology fundamentally departs from its Neoplatonic counterpart. For the moment, it suffices to suggest that an ontology surpasses Neoplatonic limits if it posits that a created person constitutes 'an ontological fact'<sup>7</sup> for the Creator.

To avoid ambiguity, we should clarify that by 'an ontological fact' is meant an absolute novelty in being. Most theologians would endorse this definition insofar as they interpret it to signify that God has created something new for other beings, but not for Himself. What I propose, however, is more radical. The creation of a truly ontologically distinct being entails a revolution not only in the being of the world but first and foremost in the being of God. An absolutely new ontological fact implies that God undergoes a change, that His being is augmented. After each act of creation, there is more being than existed before. By creating a new person, God generates something genuinely new for Himself—a being that has always been a mystery, an inexhaustible secret.

This claim appears to conflict with the doctrine of divine perfection, according to which what is perfect cannot become more perfect, being immutable and fully realized. If God is perfect in this sense, He cannot acquire anything new. How, then, could He create from Himself without violating this perfection?

This raises a further tension: does the doctrine of God's perfection contradict His radical transcendence? While God's energies are communicable, His essence remains inaccessible. Yet if the energies are accessible and His nature is not, does this imply that within

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<sup>5</sup> Knežević 2020b, 78.

<sup>6</sup> Knežević 2020a, 214.

<sup>7</sup> Tollefsen 2012, 138.

God there exists unactualized potential—a *posse* that has never become *esse*? One could argue that divine nature is inaccessible to us but not to God. Yet if nature is fully accessible to God, does this entail that it is entirely domesticated by Him? Such a conclusion risks collapsing the distinction between God and His creation, between essence and energies, rendering God entirely approachable and erasing any ontological otherness. The introduction of hypostasis, therefore, presupposes a radical reexamination of fundamental Christian doctrines, including participation, deification, transformation, and divine activity.

If we now return to Palamas' concept of light, we notice that this issue is intertwined with the gnoseological problem of vision. As we know, Palamas defended the experience of light by the Hesychast monks, first against Barlaam and later on against Akindynos. Barlaam denied the uncreated character of the light, while Akindynos feared that the teaching about divine *energeia* was tantamount to introducing multiple gods. In the first part of next section I shall focus briefly on the dispute between Palamas and Barlaam. In the subsequent section I shall outline my critique of the patristic concept of mind from the modern perspective, mostly using the theories of Immanuel Kant and S. T. Coleridge.

### **Mind as Eye and Lamp: Palamas on Seeing Divine Light**

Palamas was explicit that the light seen by Hesychasts is the same light experienced by the disciples on Mount Tabor. The light of Tabor, argues Palamas, is the divine *energeia*. Now if the light is uncreated as Palamas claims, what is the gnoseological faculty of the mind that allows the apostles to perceive it? How could uncreated light be perceived by created beings?<sup>8</sup> The only answer one could think of is that the creaturely mind is transformed to such a degree that it becomes somehow "uncreated". This is what Palamas seems to suggest when in his *Homily* 34<sup>9</sup> he writes about the transformation of the apostle's senses. Palamas explains that the light cannot be observed by the mind in its natural condition, but the Holy Spirit generates a transformation of their senses. If we read closely the *Triads*, we get an impression that the vision of uncreated light is possible when the person has reached a higher level of spiritual development.

There is nothing in Palamas' epistemic theory that we already don't find in the writings of the Fathers. Palamas refers to Macarius of Egypt when he speaks about the heart as the seat of the rational capacity. As we now, Macarius writes that the heart leads the whole organism. One should probably understand the heart as the man's spiritual centre. So, the work of the ascetic is to watch over his mind, which is dispersed through the senses into the external world, and to bring it back to the heart. The role of *nipsis* or watchfulness is to detach the mind from the exterior world of sensation and thus to enact purification.

It is here that Palamas brings divine grace into play. The ascetic struggle could not lead to the transcendent unless it is benevolently met by the Spirit. Through prayer, the mind is united with the Holy Spirit and acquires angelic form and deiform character,<sup>10</sup> making it capable of seeing divine light.

By its natural struggle, man can only show his inclination towards union with God but he cannot cause deification. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, as Palamas repeats multiple times. It is the Spirit that pours the grace onto the ascetic rewarding him for his effort, producing a radical change in the mind. Due to the grace from above divine activity enters into the natural constitution of man and deifies it. This is how man is brought into the new epistemic condition.

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<sup>8</sup> Tollefsen 2012, 202.

<sup>9</sup> Palamas 2022, 266

<sup>10</sup> Tollefsen 2012, 204.

This scheme would imply, however, that at some point created nature must cease to be what it is – a creature – and is transformed into divine nature. This is obviously against the Chalcedonian dictum about the hypostatic union in which two natures are united not only indivisibly and inseparably but also unchangeably and unconfusedly. Epistemic problem of the vision of uncreated light is a good example of how the union of two natures without confusion and change is impossible on the level of nature. This is why Chalcedonian definition does not simply speak about the union of two natures, but about their *hypostatic* union.

Why is it that concurrent communion and otherness is unfeasible on the level of nature? The answer is simple and yet for some people it might sound surprising: this is because there is only *one* nature. Before my words are interpreted as an awkward proclivity towards monophysitism, let me explain what I have in mind when I claim that in Christian ontology there is only one nature. Firstly, existence of two natures automatically entails two origins of being or two deities, which is against Christian ontology. This leaves us with just *one* origin of being and *one* nature. This nature, of course, is divine nature. But the whole meaning of the Chalcedonian definition, as well as Maximus the Confessor's struggle and martyrdom, was to justify the existence of human nature. Since the Fathers do not have in mind two sources of being when they speak about the two natures in Christ, we need to search for a different explanation. We shall do this by looking for the defining property or *differentia specifica* of human nature and, by specifying the origin of human nature. Where was human nature created from?

Human nature, as we know, was created *ex nihilo*. This *nihil* has to be something completely inexistent. It has to be an absolute non-being because had it had being, this would have involved not just one, but two origins of being. This is why the Fathers introduce the concept of *ouk on* or absolute non-being, which is only a logical category completely devoid of any ontological content. However, as if contradicting their previous statement, the Fathers explain that the *nihil* should not be interpreted to mean an absolute non-being. This is because they are aware that the old Greek maxim *ex nihilo nihil fit*, despite everything, does contain undeniable truth. So, they concurred that to create *ex nihilo* means in fact that God creates out of Himself. In the final analysis, *creatio ex nihilo* means *creatio ex Deo*.<sup>11</sup>

If we therefore accept that human nature was created from absolute non-being, which *de facto* means that it was created out of God, we admit that there is only one nature – divine nature. From the Patristic logic, it would be preposterous to say that created nature originates from the uncreated one as this would annihilate particularity of the former. So, what is the idea that the Fathers came up with apropos the origin of human nature? As we have seen, Palamas ventured to say that in its deified state human nature becomes as if it was without origin. But what Palamas wanted to say is that human nature becomes almost uncreated because it is not determined by God. Could it be that in another sense human nature, indeed, *is* without origin? The Fathers, of course, do not claim that unequivocally. Nonetheless, they agree that the only way to endow human nature with particularity is to argue, despite the *ex nihilo nihil fit* axiom, that it originates from the absolute non-being. The source of human nature is absolute non-being and its defining attribute therefore is *nothingness*. We come to the same conclusion if we look closely into the Patristic view of the so-called participation. The act of creation is a divine activity *ad extra*, which should mean that God inaugurates something new, making space for what is not Himself. As noticed, such an alterity cannot exist by a power inherent in it 'since it has no such power, but depends in all respects on God. This total dependence is expressed in the terminology of participation.'<sup>12</sup> The creature is totally dependent on God and it has no inherent power by which it could exist on its own. In other words, if God withdrew his grace the world would return into the absolute nothingness as if it had never existed.

<sup>11</sup> Knežević 2020, 24.

<sup>12</sup> Tollefsen 2012, 210.

It should have been clear by now that the essentialist ontology simply does not possess strategy that could provide for particularity of the created world. What is needed is a radically new ontology, which starts from the notion of particularity, that is, in which particularity of hypostasis is the main ontological category. What change to the epistemic theory this new ontology would cause?

We are now returning to the question of how created being can see uncreated light? This question is vital because it involves the concept of mind and its capacity to preserve human otherness. In other words, in Patristic texts the mind is often described as “the eye of the soul”, which implies that our ontological alterity is impossible unless this ruling principle in our psychosomatic constitution is not able to maintain it. Participation as described in Patristic works is akin to the relationship of mirroring. Beings are said to participate in God because He is present and active in creatures, but the *vice versa* does not seem to be the case. Thus, ideal participation would be the one in which the human element does not hinder pure reflection of the divine life in the creature. This is not surprising given that human being is said to be created out of nothingness and this nothingness is also the essence of creature’s nature. It would be misleading should the mind of this creature tried to play a positive role and add something of its own to this relation. It is impossible to imagine a different kind of mind on the basis of theology according to which any positive purpose of human nature – even deified human nature – cannot be singled out. As we have said, the best that this nature could achieve is to withdraw and leave space for divine nature. This kind of theology does not allow for a different theory according to which mind would not be a simple mirror but the lamp, to use W.B. Yeats’ expression. The vision of uncreated light should not be taken to involve automatic process of deification unless it preserves human particularity. Genuine *theosis* could be only the one in which an absolutely unique human person – and not an abstract human nature – is deified. Overcoming of monism and monophysitism is conceivable only in the ontology in which the person – the personal and not generic otherness – is the principal ontological category. Thus, what are the similarities and differences between the vision of light or the concepts of mind in Plotinus and Palamas?

### **Mind – Mirror or the Lamp**

Some authors trace the problem of the passivity or the activity of the human mind back to Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. M. H. Abrams, in the *Mirror and the Lamp*, maintains that Plato was the main representative of the philosophical archetype of human intellect as the reflector, i.e., intellect as a passive faculty or mirror. Explaining the nature of sense perception, memory, and thought, Plato evoked the reflection of images in a mirror, or the stamping of impressions on a wax plate. Aristotle was close to this position, arguing for a comparison between intellect and wax.<sup>13</sup>

Plotinus, however, was the chief begetter of the archetype of the projector. He explicitly rejected the notion of sensation as “imprints” made on a passive mind. For Plotinus, the mind is an act or power that ‘gives radiance out of its own store’ to the world of objects.<sup>14</sup> Drawing from his theory of emanation, Plotinus drew an analogy between the One and the Good and an ‘overflowing fountain’ or a “radiating sun”. Moreover, as E. K. Emilsson writes, Plotinian intellect could be described as an ‘ideal knower’, ‘something that knows and understands what there may be to know and understand in as full a sense as one could possibly postulate.’ Emilsson also differentiates significantly between Plato and Aristotle’s concept of knowledge, on the one side, and Plotinus’s, on the other. Plotinus, like no-one before or after him regarded the intellect’s

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<sup>13</sup> Knežević 2020, 201.

<sup>14</sup> Knežević 2020, 201.

knowledge as both self-constitution and constitution of the object. Emilsson calls the self-constitutional aspect of knowing, in Plotinus's thought, the "existentialistic element". Nonetheless, we are warned that in spite of intellect's defining and building itself, seemingly without any outer restraints, the impression of absolute freedom is misleading. The One, explains Emilsson, determines the intellect, and, although it is called an image of the One and bears resemblance to it, it does not faithfully represent its originator.<sup>15</sup>

What Abrams fails to see is that a theory of an essentially active intellect, even in the sense Coleridge attributes to the term 'active,' is fundamentally unthinkable within the context of creation as emanation.<sup>16</sup> In Plotinus, the activity of the intellect is circumscribed by emanation: everything that flows from the One occupies a lesser ontological level, producing a hierarchical and ultimately monistic cosmos. Consequently, the human mind is essentially passive, able only to mirror divine reality, and this mirroring is necessarily imperfect. The Plotinian framework, while emphasizing the intellect's capacity to illuminate, remains constrained by the logic of emanation, preventing a truly autonomous or creative activity of the human mind.

Kant, in contrast, inaugurates a radical reorientation of this model, shifting the philosophical focus from the object to the subject. As Berdyaev observes, the medieval cosmocentric philosophy treated knowledge as a reflection of external reality, whereas modern philosophy, exemplified by Kant, places the human mind at the center of cognition.<sup>17</sup> Kant's theory of imagination marks a radical break with the understanding of the intellect as a passive and formless reflector. In Kant's view, not only is our intellect not formless but it also possesses *a priori* cognitive capacities, 'a transcendental apperception', without which sensuous perceptions would appear chaotic. That is why regarding the problem of subjectivity in general and imagination in particular probably the most crucial event in modern philosophy was Kant's Copernican turn. Some Kantian scholars maintain that only with Kant's critical writings did a full-scale doctrine of subjectivity become central to philosophy.<sup>18</sup> It is important to understand Kant's concept of transcendental apperception or imagination in its historical context. He borrowed the term from Leibnitz, who distinguishes bare perceptions from perceptions of perceptions, i.e., apperceptions. Kant saw three levels in mental life: Firstly, the level of passive representation, which involves sensations and feelings; secondly, at an intermediate level there is an element of activity, but still nothing amounts to genuine cognition; thirdly, genuine cognition arises only on the uppermost level, which Kant names 'consciousness' in the sense of apperception.<sup>19</sup>

Kant explains the meaning of these terms only in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where he distinguishes between 'inner sense' and 'apperception'. Apperception alone is the genuinely cognitive term, denoting the power of objectively judging the data provided in inner sense. Apperception is sharply contrasted to the mere 'sense data', whether inner or outer.<sup>20</sup> So what does Kant imply when he talks about a 'transcendental imagination'? As is well known, Kant means that imagination is the hidden condition of all knowledge, and in the *Critique of Pure Reason* he speaks of it as an 'art concealed in the depths of the human soul'.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, for Kant, the term 'transcendental' is concerned with the preconditions of experience or with a knowledge that is preoccupied not so much with objects as with the mode

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<sup>15</sup> Knežević 2020, 202.

<sup>16</sup> Knežević 2020, 202.

<sup>17</sup> Berdyaev 11, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Ameriks 2006, 51.

<sup>19</sup> Ameriks 2006, 54.

<sup>20</sup> Ameriks 2006, 54.

<sup>21</sup> Kearney 1988, 167.

of our knowledge of objects as long as this knowledge is possible *a priori*.<sup>22</sup>

Imagination, argues Kant, is not to be conceived solely as a mimetic model of representation, but rather as the transcendental model of formation.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, imagination for Kant is not merely a secondary mediation between sensation and intellect but the common root of both these forms of knowledge. In other words, Kant agrees that our sensory experience provides the ‘content’ of cognition—we may say that sensory impressions are the indispensable ‘other’ in an act of cognition—but without our faculty of understanding they are formless. For us, sensuous impressions are the ‘content’ of knowledge whereas our faculty of understanding gives the ‘form’ in which we receive it. These two forms of knowledge are, furthermore, joined in a synthesis, or what Kant calls ‘an active faculty for the synthesis of the manifold’, which is *imagination* or *Einbildungskraft*.<sup>24</sup> Imagination unites in a particular way the sensory experiences—Kant names these forms ‘schemata’— which are then subsumed under the pure concepts of understanding.<sup>25</sup>

The crucial step that Kant made towards establishing the autonomy of the imagination was to distinguish between its ‘reproductive’ and ‘productive’ functions. The reproductive function of imagination forms sequences of perceptions, but behind it there is a more fundamental capacity of productive imagination that provides creative rules according to which certain classifications of perceptions are favoured to others. It is selection happens *independently* of the empirical order of sensory perceptions and it represents the *autonomous* capacity of the productive imagination.<sup>26</sup> In this sense, Kant overcomes the passivity inherent in the Plotinian model, proposing a mind capable of creatively engaging with reality, rather than merely reflecting it.

This contrast between the passive Plotinian mirror and the active Kantian lamp illuminates Palamas’ hesychast conception of the mind. In his theology, the human mind is both receptive and active: it perceives uncreated light while preserving the ontological distinctness of the human person. The mind is not a mere mirror of divine energies but functions as a “lamp” that illuminates, mediates, and integrates the divine light into personal experience. Here, Palamas navigates a middle path: unlike Plotinus, he safeguards human otherness, and unlike Kant, the mind’s activity remains oriented toward communion with God rather than autonomous creative synthesis. In this way, Palamas offers a distinctive theological model in which the intellect participates in divine illumination without collapsing into monism or pantheism, harmonizing Neoplatonic insights with the Christian doctrine of hypostasis.

## Conclusion

Gregory Palamas’ concept of light occupies a unique position at the intersection of Neoplatonic philosophy and Christian theology. While Plotinus presents light as a metaphysical principle within an emanationist hierarchy, in which the human mind remains largely passive, Palamas reconceives light as a divine energy accessible to created beings through the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. Unlike the Plotinian intellect, which can only mirror the One imperfectly, the human mind in Palamas’ framework participates actively in divine illumination while preserving its ontological distinctness. This allows for genuine theosis, in which the uniqueness of each person is retained rather than subsumed into the divine.

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<sup>22</sup> Kearney 1988, 168.

<sup>23</sup> Headley 2008, 6.

<sup>24</sup> Kearney 2008, 169.

<sup>25</sup> Bowie, 1990, 20.

<sup>26</sup> Kearney 1988, 170.

By situating Palamas' light within the broader problem of the One and the Many, and contrasting it with both the Neoplatonic intellect and the Kantian active mind, we see that his theology seeks to reconcile participation with otherness. Unlike Kant, the mind's activity is not autonomous but oriented toward communion with God; unlike Plotinus, it is not merely reflective but capable of receiving and integrating divine illumination. Crucially, this approach presupposes a shift from an essentialist ontology of ousia to a personalist ontology in which hypostasis—the ontological particularity of each being—becomes central. Thus, Palamas offers a theological vision that transcends the limits of Neoplatonism: the human person is both other than God and capable of real union with Him. His doctrine of light exemplifies a new ontological framework in which divine transcendence, human particularity, and participatory communion are held in creative tension. In this sense, Palamas not only preserves the integrity of Christian orthodoxy but also provides a model for an ontology of radical relationality, in which the divine and the human meet without obliterating the distinctiveness of either.

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**Ромило Александар Кнежевић**

**КОНЦЕПТ СВЕТЛОСТИ КОД ГРИГОРИЈА ПАЛАМЕ  
КАО СРЕДСТВО ПРЕВАЗИЛАЖЕЊА НЕОПЛАТОНОВСКЕ ОНТОЛОГИЈЕ**

Овај рад испитује концепт светлости код Григорија Паламе, истражујући да ли ова идеја може да превазиђе неоплатонске границе и послужи као основа за нову онтологију ослобођену пантеизма и монизма. Тврдимо да у Паламином теолошком оквиру „светлост“ функционише аналогно „енергији“ унутар дијалектичког пара суштине и енергија. У овом оквиру, светлост, попут енергије, припада есенцијалистичкој онтологији у којој је примарна категорија оусиа или суштина. Међутим, рад закључује да за превазилажење неоплатонске онтологије потребно је увести фундаментално другачији појам: појам хипостазе. За разлику од суштине или енергије, хипостаза је јединствено способна да истовремено изрази и заједништво и другост, отварајући тиме пут ка релацијском и динамичком разумевању бића које надилази ограничења класичне неоплатонске мисли.