

TITLE: The Self-moved mover

SUBTITLE: God and Western *bio-theo-political paradigm of autarchy* in Jürgen Moltmann's Theology

AUTHOR: Martín Grassi

INSTITUTIONAL FILIATION: Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina, Faculty of Philosophy and Literature – National Council of Research in Science and Technology of Argentina (CONICET)

Published: *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, 2018, pp. 1-18.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/21692327.2018.1486222>

Abstract: Jürgen Moltmann is one of the most important theologians in the XXth century that intended to leave aside a rigid and impassible notion of God. However, although Moltmann opens new ways to consider God's life by stressing God's passivity and relationality, the concepts of activity and self-sufficiency are still structuring the whole theological argument. I intend to show how our understanding of life has been shaped by a bio-theo-political paradigm of autarchy that defines life by the use of the Greek prefix "autos", and how this paradigm is still working on Moltmann's theology, who is not able yet to overcome the metaphysical impassible God. I claim that only a radical deconstruction of this paradigm and the construction of a new way of defining life by the use of the Greek prefix "syn" (with), could enable to think seriously on God's relationality and love.

KEY WORDS: Moltmann, Theology, Impassibility, Autarchy, Life, Relationality, Love, Deconstruction, God, Metaphysics

I. Deconstructing Our Understanding of Life: Theology's Ultimate Truth

In this paper I intend to show how a certain understanding of life as autarchy found in Western thought tradition is still at work today, focusing mainly on Jürgen Moltmann's theology. Deconstructing a whole tradition is, by definition, an impossible task. Still, the strength of the deconstruction task is the fact that it offers a powerful hypothesis that enables new readings within a certain paradigm. In my case, I will suggest the central hypothesis of my deconstructive project concerning the Western bio-theo-political paradigm of autarchy, taking Moltmann's theology as

a case study to prove it. I chose Moltmann's Christian theology for at least four reasons, two for the theological theme, two for the author in particular. With regards to theology: first, the concept of life and its definition is most relevant to theology, for the Western God is a *living God*, and its way of living determines what life *paradigmatically* is. Second, in theological Western thought, the most revolutionary theory of divine life is that of Christianity, given the Incarnation, the life – and death – of the Divine Person *as* a human being, and the fact that the Christian Trinitarian God makes of God a relational being, i.e., a network of *ad intra* interrelations between the *different personae*. With regards to Moltmann in particular: third, as a contemporary theologian, Moltmann offers a good example to check whether the Western notion of life has changed from Ancient philosophy and Theology. Fourth, Moltmann's interest in God's passivity, as well as the centrality of the notion of life in his theology, in addition to his understanding of the Trinity, makes of his work an essential place to understand semantical displacements and analogical operations.

I am aware that approaching this large topic analyzing one author only could be seen as reductive, but there is no way to face an entire tradition, nor a way to go into it from a *panoptical* place. The arbitrariness behind my choice is not a malfunction of my project, but the very core of the deconstructive method: I can only justify my decision by showing its competence to give the textual grounds of how life is understood in Western theology. In this paper, then, I will only examine the meaning of God's passivity and its reference to the very meaning of life in Moltmann's theology within the scope of my general hypothesis concerning the definition of life as autarchy in Western thought. This paper, thus, is not meant to be an exhaustive study on Moltmann's thought; my reference to Moltmann is motivated by the need to show how this bio-theo-political paradigm is still at work in contemporary theology, and mainly in a theologian such as Moltmann, concerned in re-defining classical theism by attending to the meaning of a *living and suffering God*. Now, one could ask why should we give special attention to theology, since theology is only meaningful to some people, i.e., to those who are religious. My intention is to show that, despite our personal beliefs, theology is the discourse that reveals the ultimate truth of

a certain paradigm, and in order to understand this semantical priority, one should focus on the importance of analogical thinking and its implications.

Analogical thought never goes one semantical way: as soon as an analogy is built between two objects, the bridge that stresses their meaning is a two-way road. In other words, there is no analogy without its *inversion*. I know that this is, perhaps, a very ambitious statement, and would need to be tested in many analogical procedures. My main concern in this paper, however, is to see how analogical thinking affects the very Western notion of life. One could affirm that the main phenomenological life-experience we have is that of our own living. The Greek words *tzoe* and *bíos* already show that the meaning of life can take physiological, biological, as well as ethical and social meaning, and that this ambivalence itself is a product of our own reflection towards our own way of living. To say that a bug is alive is a certain way in which an experience of our living is said of something that seems to have some shared peculiarities; to say that God is alive implies this same operation. The interesting thing here, which I call *inversion*, is that the very objects defined by this analogy as being alive, are taken now as the main *analogon*, that is, as the object that reveals what life is in the very first place: in the former case, from the life of a cell all life is explained by its chemical composition, while in the latter, from the life of a certain God, all life is to be understood as a certain *image* of this divine life. This two-way road of analogy allows, therefore, for semantical displacements to take place, making any attempt to grasp these displacements almost impossible. Once analogy is at stage, we are no longer owners of our thinking processes, and our concepts are configured by these invisible operations.

One of the main tasks of Western Philosophy has been to analyze and to clarify the meanings of words. This task is, evidently, even harder if we consider this analogical operation behind our main concepts (I am unsure whether analogy is present in *all* our concepts). Nevertheless, this task must be addressed, and part of our philosophical work must face a certain deconstructive phase in which, even if it is not possible to clarify a concept, one could, at least, become aware of the semantical situation in which a concept is significant. This paper attempts to apply this method to the concept of life, and to see what is the main feature that allowed the analogical operation to take place from cells to God. In a first approximation to my hypothesis, I

find that what defines if something is alive or not is *autarchy*, i.e., the unique property of every living being to move by itself and to develop its vital dynamism without any need of an-other.ⁱ Evidently, autarchy is not the same in a horse than in a human being, and surely it is not the same concerning the Divine Life. In a blink of an eye, this self-sufficiency that we are aware of from our own experience of life is taken by concepts moving from the ethical to the political, and from the theological to the biological. The perfect living being would be the one that does not need anything nor anyone *else* to live perfectly: the perfect living being rules herself (*autonomy*) and provides her own living by herself (*autarchy*).

The method I am trying to set and test in my project aims to grasp that what is laying behind our fundamental understanding of the world, of human beings and of the Divine. What is laying behind, the *paradigm*, cannot be truly thematized nor objectified, since every object of our thinking is already a result of the pre-thematized paradigm. Nevertheless, one can work on the unveiling of the paradigm as far as one explicit the central semantical core that gives meaning to its fundamental concepts. A possible method to examining a certain paradigm and finding the essential semantical core behind the plural discourses of a certain concept is finding the ultimate meaning of that concept in different disciplines. Life is one concept to be deconstructed in this way. So, to know which is our fundamental belief on what life is, one should examine how this concept is built in biological, political, ethical, and theological discourses. Nevertheless, the theological discourse is the definitive articulation and formulation of the paradigm, since theology -even more than philosophy- is the only discipline where a *Weltanschauung* achieves its holistic meaning and ultimate expression. For seeing the real meaning of the concept of life, is to say that God is alive, since this *paradigmatic meaning* signifies what is to be alive for every other living being.

Evidently, this does not mean that theology states what biology must think; nor does it mean that biology does not influence theological thought. What it means is that one will find in biology a concept of life that radically depends on its theological meaning, and that if new biological theories appear, then theology will represent the ultimate paradigmatic figure to which those inventions should adapt. What is said about biology, certainly, must also be said also about

political and ethical discourses. The difficulty in the method I am suggesting is that one can neither take one discipline, nor take one as being the basis of the others: semantical displacements are so radical that there cannot be any hierarchical epistemological structure between them. Theology, in this sense, is not placing the foundations of the other disciplines at all. It is simply giving them the ultimate expression of what they are saying, by stating the key notions on the Supreme Being (element, force, person, or whatever it may be) that warrant our understanding of the universe as a whole. My goal, then, is to show that to change the theological or philosophical understanding of the concept of life is not superfluous to biology nor to other sciences, not because a biologist will use this concept, but because a change in the paradigmatic meaning of life (which is found in theology) will open new semantical possibilities to *see* what life *simpliciter* means.

II. The Trinitarian Meaning of God's Passion

Jürgen Moltmann argues that the Trinity shows the peculiarity of the Christian religion. Although Christianity is taken to be, with Judaism and Islamism, *monotheistic*, Moltmann states that this concept of “monotheism” is rather an equivocal one, and that it is not clear enough to describe the idea of God behind its singular religious expressions.ⁱⁱ Nevertheless, this concept of monotheism expresses much about a certain construction of what God is meant to be: that is, a Political Ruler. In fact, “monotheism” can be traced as a concept in *Political Theology*, expressed by the formula: “One God, one King, one Kingdom”.ⁱⁱⁱ Moltmann argues that this Political Theology can be traced to the very ancient religions, from Chinese Imperial ideology to the Persian myths, and to the Egyptian religiosity, and its essence is to see power as the main feature of God, so that “as much power, as much divine” (formula that intends, at the same time, to divinize the political ruler). But this concept of God is also present in Aristotle (in his metaphysical and political theology found in Book XII of his *Metaphysics*), and finds its final formulation in the Enlightenment, under Louis XIV's kingdom. There is also another way, however, in which Political Theology was expressed: not by a religion of domination, but rather as a *Patriarchic* religion. The roman concept of *pater familias* underlined the absolute and

monarchical *potestas* of the father within the realm of his family. The Caesar himself was proclaimed *pater patriae*, which ascribed the Emperor absolute power over all his subjects, and ruled as king-priest and father-priest, as *pontifex maximus*. These titles reflect, at the same time, the people's hope in the Emperor's protection and the affirmation of his limitless power (*pater omnipotens*). From Lactantius onwards, God was thought of as this *Pater Omnipotens*, that is, as the only Father and Sovereign. Moltmann claimsthat "this double concept of God [as Father and Sovereign] has coined the image of God in Western Civilization".^{iv}

To overcome this theological paradigm within Christianity, Moltmann's central strategy, influenced by Erik Peterson, is to stress that the revealed God is herself plural, i.e., Trinitarian. Although the patriarchal perspective has shaped Christianity, the real and original message of Christ and the religious experience of early Christian communities was rather different. The concept of God cannot be understood from a generic and abstract definition, but from Jesus Christ himself, since "the death of Jesus on the cross is the *center* of all Christian theology":^v the "Father of Jesus" is not a God of the powerful, but of the powerless, it is a God that gives herself to the others, it is a God whose essence is Love.^{vi} And this presence of God in history, as the history of her giving, can only be understood from a Trinitarian perspective, which puts into question the very notion of unity. Moltmann summarizes the Trinitarian comprehension in Christianity in three stages: 1) under the metaphysics of substance, the Tertulian model of "One nature, three personae"; 2) within the modern metaphysics of subjectivity, Karl Barth and Karl Rahner used the formula "one subject and three ways of being"; 3) the perichoretical perspective, in which God's unity is established by virtue of the mutual inhabitation of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. "Only this perichoretical concept of the unity of the Triune God takes the Trinitarian experience of God to its fair concept, since with this concept the unity of God is not a solitary and transcendent vanishing point, but an inviting Unity that receive and unites within itself".^{vii}

The doctrine of the Trinity (that is the essence of Christianity), stresses Moltmann, must be undertaken from the central event of Christ's Crucifixion.^{viii} It is in the Father's loving giving of his Son by the Holy Spirit that we find the truth of the Trinity, and nowhere else. Therefore, there is a fundamental bond between God's suffering and his Trinitarian essence. So, not only the

concept of God is transformed from unity to plurality, but also it is transfigured by the Cross from activity to passivity. The central question today for Christians (and it is also the central question concerning Political Theology) is: “Which God motivates our Christian faith, the God who was crucified or the idols of religion, race and class?”^{ix} This question arises from ethical and political concerns, as the opposition between the crucified God and “the idols of religion, race and class” shows. This framework puts into question not only what kind of God we believe in, but also what historical meaning this God has for humanity –specially for the suffering human beings. Even more, for Moltmann, “suffering precedes thinking, and our questions about God have their origin in pain over the injustice in the world and over the loneliness of suffering”;^x therefore, in this confrontation between God and suffering, we should leave aside an indifferent God that rests peacefully in Heaven, and we should deeply connect with this pain, if we really want to address the theological question seriously.

It is not then the case that Christian Theology must reopen the theopassion question which it early rejected: Has God himself suffered? Can God suffer and die? If so, what meaning can a powerless, suffering God have for poor suffering human beings other than providing a religious confirmation for their suffering? (...) Christian Theology must look at the question of Christ’s suffering before looking at the suffering of the world. (...) Only when we are clear as to what happened on the cross between Jesus and his God can it be clear who this God is for us and for our experience.^{xi}

The real question in Theology, then, is whether God suffers or not, if She is also in pain, and if She could even die, or if She is Transcendent (and Impassible) with regards to human’s history and the world. Nevertheless, this is not just a theological-ontological question, as if our only concern were to know about God’s essence, but also an ethical and political question, since the very meaning of God cannot be undertaken without considering what God means to human beings and their history: “God and suffering come together, such as the calling for God and the lively suffering in this life comes together as well”^{xii} Therefore, we must address first what we have already called the analogical operations and its inversions. For, at the same time, apparently without taking any notice, Moltmann states that the question on God’s suffering comes from our

own experience of suffering *and* that we must look first to Christ's suffering before we attend suffering in the world. Even more, the question is reduced to the event of the Cross, where the relationship between Christ (that is, the *incarnated* God) and his God can reveal the relationship between God and human beings. Now, where from does the very *meaning* of suffering comes: is it from human suffering, or from God's? If the former, then theology is nothing but an anthropomorphic projection on a transcendent and impassible Being; if the latter, then theodyssey would not present any problem at all, for it is absolutely evident that God suffers, for we only know what suffering *means* because of God's Passion itself. There is a necessary and unbreakable bond between anthropology and theology, since God is only meaningful for human beings, and they only find their proper dignity in their reference to the divine. As Moltmann clearly states: "Theologically man's question about the meaning and the purpose of his life must be causally linked with God's question about man as his likeness, the meaning and aim of his love. *If man is not the answer to God's question, then God cannot be the answer to man's question*".^{xiii} There is no way to speak about God without speaking about human beings, as there is no point in understanding them without God's Revelation. Here is the dialectical and paradoxical essence of our theological thinking –and there is no way out! What life means, and then what suffering means, can only be thought if we, simultaneously, take humans and God as the main and the secondary *analogon*: what is said of human beings, is also said of God, and the other way round. In any case, the reference to Jesus Christ makes this two-way semantical road the very *cross-road*: for Jesus Christ is, at the same time, God and Man, Man and God, and his own presence *in* the history of this world implies that his relationship with his Father is *as* the one we have with him. Since God lived –and suffered, and died- as we do, we can understand the meaning of our own lives by reflecting on the Divine life. But, now, how we understand this suffering of God without changing our very concept of God?

What Moltmann stresses is that the cry of Jesus Christ in the Cross, "*Eli Eli lama sabactani?*" (Mt. 27:46), "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me", must be taken as the core of the Christian Faith, for the crucifixion is the central event of Christ (and the only Political one!). "The fact that Jesus has been abandoned by God raises for him the question of God's deity;

so he cried out to God, for the sake of God”.^{xiv} This paradoxical event of the Cross, where God is cried at by God Himself, gives birth to the question of the Trinity. Whereas an ontological standpoint would deliver an abstract concept of God, an *apathetic* and immutable God, such as the one offered by Greek philosophy, the Christian God cannot be considered but from this Trinitarian nature. Now, to think of the Trinity, we must think of the Crucifixion, and to think of the Cross of Christ is to think the relationship between the God-Father, the God-Son and the God-Spirit. Both questions are essentially bound. Then we should avoid a metaphysical concept of God that is an impassible and transcendent Being (such as Aristotle’s *Unmoved Mover*). Moltmann argues that the doctrine of the two Natures in Jesus-Christ is put forward from this metaphysical assumption of God’s Perfection, and is inadequate to understand the Event of the Cross, and the real nature of God. We should abandon this doctrine and, with it, “any concept of God-metaphysical, moral, or political –that is assumed to have general validity; and we must think in terms of the Trinity”.^{xv} Following Karl Rahner, Moltmann states that we should forget the theological distinction between a general topica “of the One God” and the specific topica “Of the Trinity”, “so that we can begin with the Trinity and only later look for the concept of God that develops from it”. Because “the Trinity is God’s essence”.^{xvi} Therefore, a humanistic Christology is also to be left aside, since here “the impassivity of God is replaced by the imperturbability (*ataraxia*) of the human consciousness of God”, and “the old axiom of the immutability of the divine nature is transferred to the ‘inner life’ of Jesus”.^{xvii}

Theology must address the event of the Cross, and will only do so if it becomes a Trinitarian theology. Moltmann’s attempt at a Trinitarian theology of the cross “*will endeavor to deal seriously with the full historic nature of Christ’s being forsaken by God*”.^{xviii} Being the Cross and the Trinity the two elements that characterize Christianity and that differentiate it from any other religion or belief, it is necessary to think how these two are related. To address this question, Moltmann focuses on the meaning of the verb “to forsake”, and goes right into Paul’s theology of the Cross. From this perspective, the historical event of the Cross implies that Jesus is forsaken by his God for the sake of all god-less and god-forsaken human beings, and the Father forsakes his Son for the love he has for men; this event, thus, has an eschatological meaning. In fact, not

only is the Son sacrificed in the Cross, but also the Father, since when the Father abandons the Son, He also abandons Himself. Nevertheless, Moltmann argues, the Father's suffering is different, and therefore there is no *patripassionism* here; and "since the death of his Son is different from the pain of the Father, we cannot speak in a theopassionate way of the *death of God*".^{xix} If we mean to understand what happened between the Father and the Son in the Cross, we should leave aside the general concept of God, and speak in a Trinitarian manner. Hence, the Crucifixion puts into question the very meaning of God's unity: "because the crucifixion is both historical abandonment and eschatological surrender, unity in separation and separation in unity are one in the crucifixion".^{xx} We must think of the Cross, thus, from an eschatological perspective, i.e., from the very definition of God as Love.

He [God] is love; his existence is constituted in the event of this love seen in the abandonment and surrender of Jesus on the Cross. And so later terminology, *thinking eschatologically* of the unity of Jesus and the Father in self-surrender, spoke of the Father and the Son as *homoiousian*. In the cross the Father and the Son are totally separated by the abandonment of Jesus and at the same time intimately united in surrender. Out of what happened on the cross between the Father, who forsakes, and the Son, who is forsaken, that is, the loving Father and the loving Son, there proceeds the sacrifice itself, the Spirit who justifies the ungodly, rescue the forsaken, and raises the dead. From this we draw the thesis that God's being is historical and that God exists in this specific history of Jesus Christ.^{xxi}

With this argument Moltmann avoids speaking of a simple concept of God, rejecting, therefore, a theology of the "Death of *God*": the Cross is about the relationship between the three Persons of the Trinity, "in which these persons are constituted *in their relationship to each other* and so constitute *themselves*".^{xxii} For Moltmann, this approach overcomes the dichotomy between an *immanent* and a *functional* Trinity, and the one between the general nature of God and Her inner Triune nature: the functional Trinity *is* the immanent Trinity, and the Trinity *is* the nature of God. "Faith sees the historical event between the Son, who is forsaken, and the Father, who forsakes, in eschatological terms as an event between the loving Father and the beloved Son in

the Spirit of life-creating love”.^{xxiii} The unity of these Father-Son-Spirit relationships can only *a posteriori* be termed “God”, for “the word God means an event, precisely this event”.^{xxiv}

Returning to Moltmann’s first question concerning God’s meaning to human suffering, he argues that “because He has suffered the death of Jesus and by doing so has shown the power of his love, men and women can also find the power to abide in love, to resist destruction, and to ‘hold on to what is dead’ (Hegel); Hegel called this the life of the Spirit”.^{xxv} The Trinitarian event of the Cross means eschatologically that a Divine History is opened to the future, and that it opens the future; that reconciles love and suffering, and emancipates human beings from a world of anxiety, domination, and death. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity turns the History of God to a History of Love, which, in human terms, means the history of liberation.^{xxvi}

Expressed in rather inadequate figurative language, God is transcendent as Father, immanent as Son, and as Spirit open to the future. If we understand God in this way, then we understand our own history –our suffering and our hopes- as God’s history. The history of life lies beyond theological subordinationism and atheistic protest because *it is the story of concern in life and the story of love*.^{xxvii}

III. The Living and Loving God

Theology must face the difficulty of thinking Love as God’s essence –or, should it be more accurate to say that we must think Love’s essence as God? Here is where all theology is put into question. As I have shown, Moltmann tries to elude a certain characterization of God, which makes of Her an abstract Being, indifferent about human beings’ history, and to affirm a more relational essence of God. For that sake, he underlines the place of the Trinity as God’s essence, because only within a Trinitarian scheme one could think of a real commitment of God with human beings through Christ and the Holy Spirit, and because the Trinity denotes that God is, in Herself, relational. Now, the real issue behind Moltmann’s Theology is that of Immanence, that is, to make of God something of *this* world; strictly speaking, an absolute immanence of God would mirror Her absolute Transcendence, for both positions would entail understanding God as something abstract, *some-thing*, and not *some-one*. Hence, Moltmann seems to deny

patripassionism or the very *Suffering of God*, since it would threaten the difference between God and History; at the same time, he stresses the place of Christ and the *real* suffering of the *Father* on the Crucifixion to avoid a philosophical figure of God (as the Aristotelian one). How to escape this thin passage between Scylla and Charybdis?

The theologian knows that ‘love’ is the key concept that could, simultaneously, make the ship wreck or save the embarkation; it is, at the same time, the easy way out and the riskiest one. For love is bound to suffering, and then to alteration, to time, to difference: if God Loves human beings, then She would suffer for them, and that would mean that human beings really change God, since She is no longer *in-different* to them. When one loves, one is altered by the loved one, and the passion of love leaves action or initiative in a second place. Nevertheless, if God loves us in this way, then She would not be neither *autonomous* nor absolute... She would be, in a way, identical to human beings, a part of the world, chained by its powers and laws. For this reason, Moltmann’s strategy is to underline that the figure of the Son would evoke this *immanence*, while *transcendence* is saved in the figure of the Father, and the Spirit the one that would bring them together. It seems that God must be kept from *heteronomy*, for She is the One Ruler, the Highest Law, and Her freedom is absolute as far as it is Pure Spontaneity and completely creative. Taking the Nicaean Council into account, Moltmann argues that the judgment on Arius’ heresy was right, since God does not change *as* created beings do. What is denied is not God’s changeability, but only the identification of God’s movements with World’s changes.

This negative stipulation says only that God, unlike men, is not subject to what is not divine.

Therefore, the denial that God can change, this distinction between God and World, is not to lead us to conclude that God is inwardly unmoved, but rather we can draw from it the conclusion that God has sovereign freedom. So then, God is not changeable as his creation is, but he is free to change himself and also free of his own volition to make himself subject to being changed by others. God cannot be divisible as creation is, but he can share himself with us. (...) It is not necessary on the basis of the relative assertion of God’s unchangeableness to draw the logical conclusion that he is absolutely unchangeable inwardly.^{xxviii}

If we take a close look at this text, one could find Moltmann's strategy to save, at the same time, God's suffering –and, then, Her changeability- and Her Autonomy. The key move is to be found in the use of the *concept-adverb* 'inwardly'. God changes... *inwardly*, i.e., to change, to move, to suffer, and to be affected by others is God's *decision*. God does not change as the world (i.e., created beings) does, since created beings are essentially contingent, relative, and absolutely heteronomous –they depend radically on God. God changes only as far as She decides to do so. She has a *sovereign* freedom (Political Theology again!). She becomes *subject* of the others only as far as She decides such a paradoxical situation, where the ruler is subjected. God's changeability is, thus, a consequence of Her Activity, not of Her Passivity. First, She decides to be *with* human beings, second, She suffers. She is, *inwardly*, essentially, in her own, absolutely independent... *autarchic*. Suffering in God, therefore, is *active*.

But besides unwilling, passive suffering and the effectual inability to suffer, there is also active suffering motivated by love, a voluntary sacrifice *in order to be affected by* others. There is involuntary suffering, there is suffering that is taken on oneself, and there is the suffering of love. If in an absolute sense God were incapable of suffering, he would also be incapable of loving, like the "unmoved first mover" of Aristotle, who, because of his perfection, is loved by everyone but is himself unable to love. Anyone who is able to love is able to suffer because he opens himself to the sufferings that love brings, but *remains* superior to them because of the power of his love. We are justified in denying that God is able to suffer because of some lack in his being. But this should not lead us to a denial of *his ability to suffer out of the fullness of his being*, that is, his love.^{xxix}

Moltmann knows that love brings suffering, but I think he does not fully take into account that suffering brings love. In his willingness to save God's autarchy, he classifies different types of love, an active one and a passive one, keeping God's sovereign freedom undetermined by other than Herself. God "remains superior" to the suffering coming from the loved one because, ultimately, She does not depend on the loved one: She *remains* superior because *Her love is not absolute*, because Her Passion is only a consequence of Her Action, of the "Power" of Her love. Her sacrifice was voluntary, and by Her decision She opened herself to alterity: She sacrifices herself in the person of the Son "*in order to be affected by others*"... but what does this "in order

to...” means? *In order to* be affected, She lets others be part of Her life; but as far as Her openness is Her own decision. God decides *to live* –as men, loving and suffering- as far as She is able *to leave* this relation at any given time; *is the l(ea)(i)ving God which lives with human beings as far as She leaves history aside*. It does not matter whether God can *morally* leave or not her commitment with human beings aside... the whole question is not an ethical one, but a metaphysical one, as the end of this text underlines: there is no lacking in God’s Being, for God’s Being is in itself Fullness... and *from* this fullness She can love –and suffer. Freedom and love are still dependent on the idea of God’s sovereignty.^{xxx} Strictly speaking, God cannot suffer. The suffering *of God* is only an *ethical* metaphor, an analogy that is motivated by the sufferings and the needs for hope in our historical situation.^{xxxi} But, *politically*, the central metaphor must be kept in the side of autarchy and autonomy -what kind of “Kingdom of God” could we expect if God as its ruler were not absolutely powerful?^{xxxii}

Christianity is about the story of concern in life, a story of love. Love and life are two concepts that define each other, and Moltmann’s strategy is to relate them in an essential way: She is a living God because She is a loving God, and *viceversa*, God is Love because God is Life. In a certain sense, love and life cannot be thought of separately. Thus, the way we define one will determine the definition of the other. Now, if we consider the definition that Moltmann offers of life, we will see this clearly:

What is Life? We can begin with a biological concept of life that is derived from simple forms of life, but this is already inapplicable where more complex living things are concerned. If “living” means something that can reproduce itself, that certainly applies to all living things on earth, but is not even enough to let us understand the vitality of the earth, which produces all living things but does not reproduce itself. So we shall start with the philosophical definition of life that Plato put forward for the universe: “What is alive is endowed with automobility” –that is, it can move of its own volition. *The principle of life is movement and, moreover, self-movement. That also accords with the primitive experience of life; what moves by itself is alive*, what is no longer able to move, or is incapable of movement in general, is dead or was never alive.^{xxxiii}

I shall examine this text carefully. First, the question “what is life” appears to belong to biology (*bios-logos*, the study of life), and seems to produce a definition of life from the “simple forms” of life onwards. The main biological feature that Moltmann assumes to determine what is alive is the capacity to *reproduce*, and he is quickly to dismiss it because of its inability to tell us something about “more complex” ways of being alive. It is, however, strange that Moltmann leaves this feature aside, for his very characterization of the living God is “the wellspring (...), who is not only living in Godself but who makes everything that comes into proximity with the divine alive, too”.^{xxxiv} This essential *generosity* of Life –using an ethical metaphor- could be well expressed by this biological stand for life’s capacity to produce and to give life to another. Nevertheless, it is also true that to speak about God being “reproduced” would entail serious theological difficulties. Now, since the biological definition of what life is does not reflect the richness of life itself –or, strictly speaking, it is not general or inclusive enough-, Moltmann looks into philosophy for a definition of life. Reading Plato, what defines the living is its capacity to move itself by itself, i.e., the main feature is “auto-mobility”.^{xxxv} It is quite interesting that Moltmann gives an anthropomorphic expression to this prefix ‘autos’, describing automobility as the capacity of the living to move “of its own *volition*”. The principle (*arché*) of life is, therefore, “self-movement”. The question “*what* is life?”, then, is turned into the question concerning the *principle* of life, and this is a turn that must be taken into serious account, for a) the definition is not a semantical (*genus proximus plus differentia specifica*), but a metaphysical one, that looks for the foundation of the *phenomenon*, that is, its ultimate principle; b) the principle here is “self-movement”, which, strictly speaking, is not a principle, but a feature: the principle of this capacity should be looked for in the concept of *psyche*, as Plato and Aristotle stated; c) this turn from an *eidetic* to a metaphysical perspective, concerning the *arché* of life is, thus,, turned again to a phenomenological standpoint: self-movement is a feature that neither it is a scientific hypothesis nor a theoretical claim, but an evident fact that we find in our “primitive experience”. Therefore, the principle is as clear and evident as this feature of “automobility”: we have here a circular argument that aims at establishing without any other consideration what life is. Far from being an “objection”, what this shows is that we cannot define life without taking some of its feature as the

essential one, and without identifying this feature with some sort of principle that would explain it. As I mentioned earlier, it seems that the whole Western Tradition kept this characterization of life, and regarded life as defined by autarchy. It seems that, although Moltmann tries to take distance himself from the Western Metaphysical and onto-theological claims, he is still caught up with them. And I think that we should look closer at the concept of Life to unveil this metaphysical paradigm, not only considering the concept of Being –as we are used to, mainly after Martin Heidegger’s deconstruction of Metaphysics.

If *automobility* is the essence of the living, then God should also be capable of moving Herself out of Her *volition* –moreover, God should be the “absolute automobile”. Here, Moltmann is as Aristotelian as he could be, and although he tries to underline that the “living God” has nothing to do with the “unmoved Mover” of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, he is still trapped within a theological paradigm defined by autarchy. The core of his position is to be found in the centrality that the prefix “autos” or “self” has in his argument. As Moltmann says: “The biblical experience of God would correspond to a *self-moved Mover* rather than to an *unmoved Mover*”.^{xxxvi} So, the Living God does move, but only from Herself. This means that any motion coming from God is an independent and *auto-nomous* decision taken by God, and God alone. What is not divine is not movement (*versus* Aristotle), but heteronomy or dependence –or, strictly speaking, *passivity*. Passivity is at the center of all this discussion and, as I have shown, love is the key concept in this *cross-road*. I should now address how Moltmann argues on God’s immobility and impassibility.^{xxxvii}

If we were to see immutability as an attribute of the divine subject, we should deprive it of its vitality for, in the world of our experience, unchangeableness and immovability are only manifested in what was never alive or is no longer so. It is impossible to consider God as being unchangeable and immovable without declaring God to be dead. But the living God is free to move and to change. God can creatively go out of Godself and arrive at God’s Sabbath rest. God is not a “movable God” in the general sense that God can be moved by alien forces or by God’s own moods, like the Greek gods. God is a God who moves of God’s own volition. Does that mean that God is an arbitrary God? If we understand the living God as subject,

then the divine *immutabilis* of ancient physics is replaced by God's *faithfulness*, a faithfulness on which we can rely.^{xxxviii}

Immutability is strange to life; what it *cannot* move, is not alive. Now, this verb, 'can', is in the midst of the question, for what is problematic is the very dependence between the mover and what is moved. So, in the case of God (but, strictly speaking, this is a feature of all living beings, which God re-presents archetypically), what moves and what is moved is *Her-self*, but only in the sense that this *Self* is not an abstract and immutable being, but a twofold subject. In fact, the verb "can" goes from a general and impersonal meaning, to a personal one, as if "can" would refer to one's volition. In a hidden move, Moltmann states that living beings *can* move, as far as they can *choose* to do so. There is no need of an-Other to move them, because what is living is what can move by its own volition. Moreover, God, for Moltmann, is the Perfect Living Being, the most autonomous one, who is, not only, not moved by an-other, but who only moves by Her-self, out of Her-self. Nevertheless, if God is not immutable, and if God moves by Herself, then the ghost of an arbitrary God, of an unpredictable and incongruous God, needs to be addressed. To do so, Moltmann does not postulate a "substantial" permanence, but a "subjective" or "personal" permanence, given by the God's promise, and by God's loyalty or *faithfulness*. Even though God can change because She chooses so, She will hold her promise, so we can hope in Her kindness and truthfulness. God is the Perfect Ruler, because Her sovereign decision is always an expression of Her loyalty to Her People, and, thus, Her choice is no longer arbitrary. God's identity is, therefore, only guaranteed by the Godhead, as far as Her own volition to be true to Her decision is the only way in which we can expect God to be the *Same*: what moves God's decision will always be God, and Her absolute loyalty is only based on Her absolute autonomy, i.e., Her lack of dependence on any other (paradoxically, loyalty can only be absolute where there is no difference between the subject and the object of the promise, that is an absolute *auto-nomy*).

In this way, God would not be immutable, but would surely be impassible, for no movement comes from an-other. So, Moltmann asks: "Is the living God merely a sovereign, autonomously moving God, or can God also be 'moved' to something by human beings?". His answer is a theological one, based in the very experience of the *Exodus*: "God's *descent* for the purpose of

God's people's liberation is motivated –moved- by God's compassion, and God is moved to compassion by the people's suffering".^{xxxix} It seems to me that this is a weak argument, for it is not clear how one could hold this tension between autonomy and heteronomy within God's Being. It is important to underline, however, that Moltmann is no longer working within the framework of Philosophy or Systematic Theology: he is writing with an exegetical perspective. Even though he had already contrasted a philosophical God with a biblical One, the arguments for God's life and God's self-mutability were philosophical ones or, even better, metaphysical ones. Nevertheless, with regards to *impassibility*, metaphysics is no longer helpful. Why? Because Moltmann is still grasped in a metaphysics of the "self", in a metaphysics where the central issue is the account for the identity –God's identity, in this case. In order to think of God being *altered*, Moltmann needs to recur to biblical exegesis. But, even then, Moltmann's formula is still metaphysically dependent, for it is not human beings that move God out of compassion, but God Herself that moves *to* compassion *by* Her people's needs: there is a fold here that must be unfolded, a third element that must be explained, a *detour* that must be justified. *Com-compassion* does not need any mediation: if compassion is not at the very beginning, then it turns to a moral decision. And that is precisely how Moltmann understands compassion: God's choice to *descend* to Her people, to suffer with them. Again, *activity* is behind *passivity*, and *autonomy* is behind *heteronomy*. As I have shown regarding love, God suffers because She chooses to do so; therefore, She is *still* able to take distance from it whenever She decides to do so. Even if Moltmann wants to depart from the Aristotelian *apathy* concerning God, re-starting from Abraham Heschel's axiom of God's *pathos*, he still argues that "what he (Heschel) means is not an attribute of the divine, but God's passionate relationship to God's people, a relationship that in Amos is called 'righteousness', and in Hosea 'love'".^{xl} In other words, to say that God suffers is an ethical and political concern, for God's Being is forever the *same*.

The apathy axiom says merely that God is not delivered over to God's drives and need like human beings. The Deity is sovereign –consequently, God is a–pathetic. But freedom is not "untouchability", nor is it merely sovereignty; it is love as well. If God were in every respect "apathetic", then God would be a God without relationships, and absolute in the sense of

being detached from everything. For us, a being of this kind would be a matter of indifference, because *it could not enter into relationship with us*.^{xli}

Freedom is not “*merely* sovereignty”, but “*love as well*”. God cannot be detached from the depths of Political Theology, and there is no God where sovereign Freedom is absent. God’s love, God’s suffering, God’s passion: they are for Moltmann, all of them, only a question of God’s decision over Herself.^{xlii}

IV. Conclusion

I did not intend this paper to be an exhaustive investigation on Moltmann’s theology, but to take his work as a case study to show the strong presence of what I call the Western *bio-theo-political paradigm of autarchy*. This paradigm defines life primarily by its self-sufficient dynamics. This paradigm can be traced back to the Greek tradition, going unchallenged during the Middle Ages and the Modern world. Contemporary thought has stressed the question of alterity, and there has been a profound deconstructive work on the very notions of being and of selfhood. The concept of life, however, remains to be deconstructed and must be redefined. I am confident that only a deconstruction of the Western notion of life will enable a radically new way of defining self and otherness, and, moreover, Being itself. Even though this is an almost impossible task, since life is at the core of multiple discourses –from biology to ethics, politics and theology–, the consequences that this deconstructive work will unravel are of substantial importance, for it entails a radical change in our discourses on life. I neither know how a new definition of life could surface, nor which kind of metaphors or concepts should be adopted to do so. What I do know is that the privilege given to the prefix “autos-” when defining life allowed us to understand living beings in a very successful fashion (and that is why this paradigm has not been questioned), but not in a sufficient way.

I would like to finish with a small comment about the *constructive* side of my project, which is what really matters (even if I cannot include much about it in this paper). This construction stage of a new notion of life opens the field of possibility itself, allowing to think the unthinkable, and turning possible the impossible. So, if one takes the experience of communion

over the experience of autarchy, finding new metaphors and concepts stressing relationality over substantiality, then one could be able to think the meaning of the notion of life differently, and, therefore, open new perspectives and new problems, even within the natural and social sciences themselves. Then, what if, following my deconstruction, the prefix “autos-” is but a secondary feature of living beings? What if, as a preliminary constructive suggestion, the prefix “syn” (with, together, etc.) is used in its stead? Perhaps this change could surpass many of our difficulties concerning the understanding of relationality, community, intersubjectivity, and so forth. Perhaps this change could shed new lights upon our understanding of God, human beings, and even the world itself.

To conclude, as I tried to show in this paper, the consequences of the paradigm of autarchy are quite problematic in theology, since God is still defined as an isolated and self-sufficient God; and, no matter the efforts Moltmann makes to undermine this kind of onto-theological concept of God, “his left hand doesn’t know what his right hand is doing”, for the *bio-theo-political paradigm* is still operating in his writings.^{xliii} Ultimately, the Aristotelian *unmoved mover* is not so different from Moltmann’s *self-moved mover*, for non of them are really loving. To think on a loving God we must first rethink a living God, and, thus, re-examing our metaphysical tradition. Western metaphysics, I would dare to say, is not so much founded on the (in)difference between *esse* and *ens*, as Heidegger assumed, but in the understanding of life as autarchy, which turns relationality problematic and understands being essentially as unity. For a change to come, the concept of *passivity* should be revisited, leaving the metaphysical predominance of *activity* aside; and the concept of *plurality*, as well, should be freed from the hands of the concept of *unity*; the category of relationality, also, should be revised as not being something dependent on substance or selfhood, as a mere accident; and so forth... I do not know how a new paradigm of life would look like. The results of deconstruction are always to be expected, for they are still to come...

Martín Grassi biographical note:

PhD in Philosophy (University of Buenos Aires). Professor of *Natural Theology* and *Philosophy of Religion* in the Faculty of Philosophy and Literature in the Catholic University of Argentina. Assistant Researcher,

National Council of Science and Technology of Argentina (CONICET) at the Buenos Aires National Academy of Sciences. My main researches aim at the semantical displacements concerning the idea of community and life from theological, biological, political and ethical discourses, by deconstructing what I call the *Bio-Theo-Political Paradigm of Autarchy*. This paper is a result of my *Oxford – Templeton Latin America Fellowship* (2016) at the Protestant Faculty of the University of Bonn (under Dr Cornelia Richter's advise) and at the Ian Ramsey Center of the University of Oxford (under Dr Ignacio Silva's advise). I am really thankful for these two prominent scholars for discussing my paper and project.

Bibliography

- Almeida, E. F. "Jürgen Moltmann e a noção de pathos divino" (*Jürgen Moltmann and the notion of divine pathos*), in: *Numen* (Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora), 18/1 (2015): 142-150.
- Costelo, D. "Moltmann's dismissal of divine impassibility: Warranted?", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 61/4 (2008): 396-407.
- Dean-Drummond, C. *Ecology in Jürgen Moltmann's Theology*. Eugene (Oregon): Wipf & Stock, 2016.
- Fiddes, P. *The creative suffering of God*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Grassi, M. "Life as Autarchy: Deconstructing Bio-Theological Western Paradigm", *Science, Religion and Culture*, 3/1 (2017): 1-12.
- Jansen, H. "Moltmann's View of God's (Im)mutability: The God of the philosophers and the God of the Bible", *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, 36/3 (1994): 284-301.
- Komline, H.-L. "Friendship and being: Election and trinitarian freedom in Moltmann and Barth", *Modern Theology*, 29/1 (2013): 1-17.
- Moltmann, J. „Kein Monotheismus gleicht dem anderen. Destruktion eines untauglichen Begriffs“, *Evangelische Theologie*, 62/2 (2002): 112-122.
- Moltmann, J. "Hope and History", in: *Theology Today*, 25/3 (1968), 369-386.
- Moltmann, J. "Political Theology", in: *Theology Today*, 28 (1971): 6-23.
- Moltmann, J. "The "crucified God": A Trinitarian Theology of the Cross", in: *Interpretation*, 26/3 (1972): 278-299.

- Moltmann, J. (1978) "God's Kingdom as the Meaning of Life and of the World", in: Küng, H. :Moltmann, J. (eds.). *Why Did God Make Me?* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 97-103.
- Moltmann, J. *Trinität und Reich Gottes*. München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1980.
- Moltmann, J. *The Theology of Hope*. London: SCM Press, 2002.
- Moltmann, J. *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*. London: SCM Press, 2008.
- Moltmann, J. *The Living God and the Fullness of Life*. Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, 2016.
- Mostert, Christiaan. "Moltmann's *Crucified God*", *Journal of Reformed Theology*, 7 (2013): 160-180.
- Oderberg, David. "Synthetic Life and the Brutness of Immanent Causation", in: Feser, E. (ed.) *Aristotle on Method and Metaphysics* (Pasadena City College, California: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 206-235.

ⁱ An introductory study on this Western paradigm of life as autarchy can be found in: Grassi, Martín, "Life as Autarchy: Deconstructing Bio-Theological Western Paradigm".

ⁱⁱ Moltmann, „*Kein Monotheismus gleicht dem anderen*“

ⁱⁱⁱ The expression "Political Theology" is ambivalent in Moltmann's work, since, on the one hand, it designates the abstract concept of a unique God that rules over a unique Kingdom, while on the other hand, Christian Theology as a "Political Theology" has a positive historical meaning, and can be taken as an "Hermeneutical category" ("Political Theology", 8). As Moltmann himself argues: "Political Theology would like to try to interpret the dangerous memory of the messianic message of Christ within the conditions of contemporary society in order to free man practically from the coercions of this society and to prepare the way for the eschatological freedom of the new man" ("Political Theology", 8). He insists, however, that "the Political Theology about which we have inquired does not want to dissolve Christian faith into politics; nor does it want to replace Christianity with humanism. If we would in practice put man in place of the divine, we could theoretically have to put the human essence in place of the divine. If we would change religion into politics, as our "leftist" friends and Marxist demand, politics would have to become our religion. (...) That would mean abolishing once again the desacralization of politics which Christianity has effected. The divinization of politics is a superstition which Christians cannot accept. They are Christians and hold to the crucified one in order to witness to men of a greater freedom" ("Political Theology", 23). I shall return to this ambivalence when I analyze Moltmann's concept of Eschatology to see if he can really separate the one meaning of Political Theology from the other. For further examination of Moltmann's perspective on Political Theology, see Moltmann, *Trinität und Reich Gottes*, 207-239.

^{iv} „*Kein Monotheismus gleicht dem anderen*“ , 115.

^v Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 210.

^{vi} Moltmann underlines that in the early history of Christianity, Christian philosophers united biblical monotheism with philosophical monotheism, that was, strictly speaking, a metaphysical *monarchism*: "If there is one God, there is also one ruler on Earth. The Universe itself has a hierarchical-monarchical structure: One God – one *logos* – one cosmos. Divinity is the symbol and integration point for the unity of

reality as a totality. The monotheism of this “natural theology” corresponds to the imperialism of the one emperor in the related “political theology” (“Political Theology”, 11). However, as Erik Peterson showed, “this political-religious monotheism [of the first Christian philosophers as Eusebius] was destroyed by the inner power of the Christian faith itself. This took place at two basic points: the trinitarian doctrine of God and the eschatological concept of peace” (“Political Theology”, 12). Moltmann argues that this early Christian Political Theology was possible because there is a correspondence between world-view and the foundation of a State, and that these Christian Apologetical thinkers “appropriated this *convertibility of concepts* in order to turn the early Christian denial of the Emperor cult into a Christian foundation of the Roman empire of peace” (“Political Theology”, 12, my italics). What I call *inversion* within *analogy* is what Moltmann calls *convertibility of concepts*, and it is absolutely necessary to keep this essential feature of concepts in mind.

vii Moltmann, „*Kein Monotheismus gleicht dem anderen*“, 118. For further Trinitarian examination and its historical development, see: Moltmann, *Trinität und Reich Gottes*, 17-35.

viii “The more one understands the whole event of the cross as an event of God, the more any simple concept of God falls apart. In epistemological terms it takes so to speak Trinitarian form. One moves from the exterior of the mystery which is called ‘God’ to the interior, which is Trinitarian. This is the ‘revolution in the concept of God’ which is manifested by the crucified Christ. But in that case, who or what is meant by ‘God’” (Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 210).

ix Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 279. I decided to use this paper and not the major book with the same name, because I found the paper more accurate and precise in philosophical and theological terminology concerning the imbrication between Trinity and God’s *pathos*. The reader may find these ideas on Chapter 6 of *The Crucified God* (206-303)

x Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 280.

xi Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 282.

xii Moltmann, *Trinität und Reich Gottes*, 65.

xiii Moltmann, J. “God’s Kingdom as the meaning of Life”, cited in: Dean-Drummond, *Ecology in J. Moltmann’s Theology*, p. 77, my italics)

xiv Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 284.

xv Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 288.

xvi Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 288.

xvii Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 290. For further examination on the meaning of God’s *passion*, see: Moltmann, *Trinität und Reich Gottes*, 36-76.

xviii Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 290.

xix Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 293.

xx Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 293.

xxi Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 293-294.

xxii Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 295, my italics. “The Father is the one who abandons. He abandons Jesus to the abyss of being forsaken, and that is the real abyss of this world forsaken by God. The Father’s pain is the death of the Son in this absolute destruction. The Son is the one who is abandoned by the Father and the one who gives himself in self-surrender. He suffers the hell of this death. The Spirit is the Spirit of surrender of the Father and the Son. He is creative love proceeding out of the Father’s pain and the Son’s self-surrender and coming to forsaken human beings in order to open to them a future of life” (Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 294-295).

xxiii Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 295.

xxiv Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 295.

xxv Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 297.

xxvi See: Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 331-356. The eschatological meaning of Christianity is present in Moltmann’s mayor work, *The Theology of Hope*. See also: Moltmann, “Hope and History”.

xxvii Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 299, my italics.

xxviii Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 287-288.

xxix Moltmann, “The Crucified God”, 288, my italics.

xxx For further examination of God’s freedom, see: Moltmann, *Trinität und Reich Gottes*, 68-72. In this book, he defines authentic freedom as different from power or possession over something, and understands it from love. But he is still grasped in the paradigm of autarchy when he states that “true freedom must be understood as *auto-communication* of the good” (Moltmann, *Trinität und Reich Gottes*, 71, my italics). This definition of freedom stems, for Moltmann, from the experience and meaning of love. For Moltmann, that “God is love” means, among other things that: 1) love is the *auto-communication* of the good; 2) that every communication of oneself presupposes the capacity of *auto-distinction*; 3) and that in Her decision to communicate, God opens Her own essence (*Trinität und Reich Gottes*, 72-76). In his paper, Koline accounts for the difference between Moltmann and Barth regarding God’s freedom. Moltmann criticizes

Barth's understanding of Divine Freedom as being defined by absoluteness and sovereignty, whereas for Moltmann himself, Divine freedom must be defined by love, that is, by its openness to alterity. The dogma of Trinity is, therefore, a key element for Moltmann to understand this divine love, that is only such in opening itself to men and the world. "In Moltmann's concept of divine freedom as friendship, God's love *ad extra* makes possible God's authentic freedom. For Barth, God's full and perfect freedom in Godself makes possible God's authentic love *ad extra*. Each, therefore, defines the relationship of love and freedom in a way that renders his notion of authentic freedom incompatible with the other's notion of authentic love" ("Friendship and being", 11). I will leave aside the defense and the new reading of Barth that Komline puts forward, showing that Moltmann's critics are not conclusive, and how, through McCormack new reading of Barth renders both theologians closer than it looks at a first glance. What I want to stress is that, in despite of Moltmann's attempt to surpass an understanding of freedom coming from the scheme of sovereignty, his understanding of love is still captured by the bio-theo-political paradigm of autarchy. If life is essentially autarchy, and love is the ultimate expression of life, then ultimate love coincides with sovereign freedom, that is, with the kind of love that is given without any condition or necessity, the love that God gives from his own fullness.

^{xxx} In a footnote ("The Crucified God": 293, n. 35), Moltmann states that a "pain of God" theology, such as the one of Kazoh Kitamori and Bonhoeffer, arise from peculiar political situations.

^{xxxii} Paul Fiddes made a similar objection to Moltmann's perspective when he argues that "if moments of divine action are all basically God's act upon himself like this, we are bound to ask whether the impress of the World upon God is taken seriously" (*The creative suffering of God*, 137). Fiddes' work is deeply influenced by Process Theology, but mostly by Karl Barth's theology of event. I think that, albeit his important perspectives on the suffering of God, he still depends on this paradigm of autarchy, for it is God Himself who decides to open herself to the world and to human beings. As Fiddes claims, "There is of course no circle of relationships which is already enclosed without us, and which is then opened up subsequently for latecomers; God is open to us in his very form, for it is for the sake of the world that the relationships within God are movements of suffering and self-giving. *He determines that when He determines His own Being*" (*The creative suffering of God*, 142, my italics). As one could easily see, the great fear of opening God to alterity is to lose His transcendence: is not surprising, then, that the chapter I quote is entitled "The God who suffers and *remains* God" (my italics). The question of God is the question of transcendence, the question for a *remaining*.

^{xxxiii} Moltmann, *The Living God*, 25, my italics.

^{xxxiv} Moltmann, *The Living God*, 23.

^{xxxv} In the Scholastic tradition, this reflexive dimension of living beings is called "immanent causality". See: Oderberg, "Synthetic Life and the Brutness of Immanent Causation".

^{xxxvi} Moltmann, *The Living God*, 26.

^{xxxvii} For an interesting examination of the difficulties concerning God's immutability in Moltmann's Theology, see: Jansen, "Moltmann's View of God's (Im)mutability". Also, Castelo (*Moltmann's dismissal of divine impassibility*), following the work of Gavrilyuk, critiques Moltmann's dismissal of divine impassibility both for the theological consequences it may carry and for a certain naïve examination of the concept of impassibility in patristic ages. Nevertheless, the various critics of Moltmann's theology of the suffering God aim at some kind of restoration of classical theism, which would account for God's Transcendence.

^{xxxviii} Moltmann, *The Living God*, 36-37.

^{xxxix} Moltmann, *The Living God*, 37.

^{xl} Moltmann, *The Living God*, 40. For an introductory study of Heschel's influence in Moltmann, and their differences, see: Almeida, "J. Moltmann e la noacao de pathos divino".

^{xli} Moltmann, *The Living God*, 42, my italics.

^{xlii} In his paper, "Moltmann's Crucified God", Christiaan Mostert gives an account of the different objections on Moltmann's *Crucified God* made by various theologians. In the first place, Moltmann does not give a sufficient account of God's transcendence; second, his use of anthropomorphism and anthropopathism is taken too far; third, that his claim that an impassible being cannot be a loving person is not conclusive; fourth, that his understanding of *apatheia* is flawed, since *apatheia* never mean detachment and indifference; and finally, it is not clear how Moltmann understands the relation between the utterly transcendent God and the contingencies of history. My claim is that all of these objections ultimately understand that Moltmann is trying to reform our traditional way of thinking of God, but from *within* the same metaphysical framework. I think that a real change regarding our understanding of God is only possible by suspending the Western paradigm of autarchy. To think on a Crucified God is to think of a God that is perfectly alive in Her suffering, that is, in Her love. But to think on love from the perspective of *agape*, defined by the capacity to *auto-communicate*, is not only insufficient to surpass classical metaphysical frame, but it is a key element of the architecture of the paradigm. I am certain that our

metaphysics is not dependent on the concepts of substance or of subject, but ultimately on our concept of life, from which the ideas of substance, subject and relationality stems from.

^{xliii} The question that Almeida poses in his article (“J. Moltmann e la noacao de pathos divino”, 149) about a certain remaining of a metaphysical God in Moltmann, albeit leaving it without an answer, is not to be understood as the inclusion of foreign concepts in the reading of the Biblical text (as Almeida suggests), but as Moltmann’s strategy to warrant God’s transcendence with the use of the prefix “autos-”. Classical Theism will remain unchallenged as long as the paradigm of reflexivity and autonomy of God is not contrasted with the real affection of the other, in a relational paradigm that suspends the value of the self if it is not pierced by its communion with the other.