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Opera Omnia Raimon Panikkar. Toward an understanding

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summary

The incentive for writing these pages was the start of a complete edition of the work of Raimon Panikkar, a few weeks before his death. They are divided into three parts and sketch an initial understanding of his thinking, which is now definitive. The first discusses his use of etymology, which he often employed to dig deeper into the comprehension of that which he set forth, analyzed and interpreted. The second, which I call poetic, discusses his use of thoughts and images by poets and writers as a guide or complement to an idea. The third addresses his creation of neologisms, a method which he used to capture the richness of a thought in a more precise or useful technical word when expressing himself in the various languages in which he wrote his work. He respected and valued all languages of the world equally; being that they are, as he used to say, the maximum richness, along with silence, of humanity.

key words

Etymology, poetics, neologisms, word, languages, silence

“Linguistic atrophies lead to the atrophy of thought.”² These words could be used as the catchphrase for the following pages and, in fact, they are their origin.³ I think it is important to keep in mind Raimon Panikkar’s world of the word when looking at his work, now almost complete. I propose doing so via three converging paths: the etymologic, the poetic and the neologic.

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- 2 R. Panikkar, «La paraula, creadora de realitat», *Llenguatge i identitat*. Symposium held at *Vinarium* (Tavertet) on the 12-13 and 19-20 of September, 1992. Montserrat: Publicacions de l’Abadia de Montserrat, 1994, 53.

The etymological recourse

In his thesis on Sciences there are some pages dedicated to the laws of thermodynamics, the second of which refers to the concept of entropy. He observes that in addition “to its primary meaning of revolving and evolving, ἐντροπία means confusion and shame. And really both senses can be applied to the modern word entropy. Science, literature, rhetoric, apologetics and prophetism have all revolved at some point around this magic word.”⁴ And he continues: if the universe is a closed system, its entropy will reach the point called *thermal equilibrium*, which is to say, arrive at inert material, static chaos, its end. Therefore, the origin of the movement of the universe that ends with the law of entropy presupposes its origin coming from an external cause, which would mean the following: “physics, by the intelligibility of its laws, would postulate the existence of God.”⁵ Well, then no. To affirm that would be entropy in the original meaning of confusion. All scientific principles exist only as a calculation mathematically expressible in the signs of formula’s letters and numbers. But the sign, a creation of our mind, can never mean the totality of reality in itself, which does not and will not submit to the logic of our signs; the signs only express reality in the quantitative dimension, not in the entitative. We are faced with two paths of knowledge, and mixing their conclusions or transferring them from one to the other is confusion; entropy that leads to incongruence.

He speaks of two paths of knowledge when affirming that we are flanked by a dual problem: the anthropomorphic and the epistemologic. Of the first, he writes: “what did Protagoras mean when he said “man is the measure of all things”? What did the *Rig Veda* mean when it sings that “man is all”? Perhaps man is the juice of every dish –but now we must be aware, and discern (the gravy)».⁶ Regarding the epistemological problem: “we have already suggested that modern science is *epistème* and not *gnôsis*. Despite the multiple meanings of the first word, perhaps we would clarify many questions if we reserve it precisely for

3 The circumstantial origin was the presentation of the *Operu Omnia Raimon Panikkar* in Manresa on the 25th of November, 2009. The directors of the publishing house Fragmenta, Ignasi Moreta and Inés Castel-Branco, invited me to speak there. I would like to thank them and Professor Xavier Melloni for his encouragement; all errors and omissions are mine.

4 R. Paniker, *Autonomía de la ciencia. Sobre el sentido de la ciencia y sus relaciones con la filosofía*. Madrid: Gredos, 1961, 209.

5 *Ibidem*.

6 R. Panikkar, «El conflicte entre la teologia i la ciència», *Revista de Catalunya*, 82 (1994): 37.

strictly scientific knowledge (based on the etymology and not the history of the word) to say that the *epistēme* a true *epi-bístēmai* (*bistēmi*, from the root *stā*), which is to say, a ‘position [ourselves] before’ things; like in a fashion show: have the models parade before our eyes in order to judge them. And if we want to be even more subtle, which is one of the forms of irony, we can remember the discrete nuance of *epi* does not only connote *before*, but also *upon*. The *epistēme* would be that form of knowledge that places itself before but also *upon* things, not only to know them, but also to control them and to be able to predict what they will do, how they will behave.”⁷

The etymological recourse appears for a second time in the aforementioned science thesis, in the development of all that Panikkar wants to clearly express. The first use of this etymological recourse was in his doctoral thesis on Philosophy, where he devotes nine pages to the evolution of the central word, “nature.” They are worthy of a detailed study that would reveal etymological references to no less than eleven languages—from Sanskrit to German Gothic to Lithuanian—plus the Spanish in which the thesis is written. Based on this astonishing display⁸ and what is seen in the science thesis, I propose considering this recourse as one of the fundamental elements of all of Panikkar’s work: the constant search for the root of words; roots that are necessary for the comprehension of all reality accessible ? and it requires serious work? to the human-language mind or the language-mind of humans.

Accessing the root of a word is reaching its underlying meaning. Of course, it will do us no good if we aren’t, at the same time, aware that the normal occurrence isn’t the loss or obscuring of the first meaning, but also its modification. If we take the present meaning, but don’t know the history of the word, the result is as poor as if we held on only to the original meaning without wanting to take the leap to the here and now. “Etymology [...] takes each word from its isolation and situates it in a network of relationships, on two different planes: the linguistic and the human. The linguistic plane gives it a structural orientation, and the human plane incorporates it the life of man, the cultural, social and historical subject.”⁹ The root goes hand in hand with the meaning: etymology—now we would say the first plane as defined by J. Bruguera—and semantics being the second plane. An example: “The word ‘pena’ originally presented an

7 *Ibidem*, 37-38.

8 R. Panikkar, *El concepto de naturaleza. Análisis histórico y metafísico de un concepto*. Madrid: CSIC – Instituto de Filosofía Luís Vives, 1972, 55-63.

9 Jordi Bruguera, *Introducció a l’etimologia*, Barcelona: Societat Catalana de Llengua i Literatura, 2008, 27.

ambivalent meaning; on one hand it means suffering, pain, and on the other punishment, penalty.”¹⁰ In short: researching the etymology is thoroughly pursuing the meaning or meanings.

While Panikkar was expansive in this example, in others he is brief. “The term “*ritus*”, it goes without saying, does not mean exactly “ceremony”. *Ritus*, rhythm and arithmetic have an etymological kinship, by the way.”¹¹ Other times he recurs to etymology to clarify a thought. In the text he affirms that politics “are the patrimony of man, even in the literal sense (*ad panem*)» and the note specifies that «French plays with the etymology of the word *apanage*, which we have translated for *patrimony*», with the clarification –I add– that some dictionaries specify «ensemble de biens de l’esprit».¹²

Using the etymology recourse or, if you prefer, etymosemantic, means revealing the cultural historical field that generated it, and, the other way around and simultaneously, once we have situated it within that field, the root of a word and its evolution from one world to another become fully intelligible to us. «As

10 Here the note that elucidates the quote: «Il greco *ποινη* (*poínē*) significava propriamente: il riparare, il ripagare nel bene o nel male. Oltre a ricompensa significa anche punizione. Il latino *poena* conserva questo significato di punizione in termini giuridici. Più tardi la stessa parola entrerà a far parte di numerose lingue neolatine col senso di sofferenza. In sanscrito “pena” potrebbe essere tradotto alla lettera con *danḍa*: bastone, verga (Cf. il greco *δένδρον* [*dendron*], albero); o anche con *pīḍa*, che significa in primo luogo sofferenza, pena, e in seguito assume il senso di tortura, correzione (Cf. *pīḍagrāha*: camera di tortura, riformatorio). Significativamente il verbo *pī*? era usato in origine per indicare l’azione di spremere il *soma*. Perciò l’atto del sacrificio produceva sofferenza. Il sanscrito usa anche *vedanā* per esprimere sofferenza, pena, tortura, e questo termine significa anche percezione, sensazione». R. Panikkar, *Mito, fede e dermeneutica. Il triplice velo della realtà*. Milano: Jaca Book, 2000, 79.

11 R. Panikkar, *Entre Déu i el cosmos. Una visió a-dualista de la realitat. Converses amb Gwendoline Jarczyk*. Lleida: Pagès, 2006, 145.

12 R. Panikkar, *L’esperit de la política. Homo politicus*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1999, 14. I have here the French translation of the English original. «Le mot anglais *worship* n’a guère d’équivalence dans les autres langues européennes. “Culte” est peut-être le synonyme le plus proche; tous les autres mots d’origine latine ou germanique ont un sens bien plus restreint. Le mot *worship* est extrêmement vague [...] Etymologiquement, le mot vient de *weorþ*, c’est-à-dire *worth*, valeur, et veut donc dire estime, honneur. A partir de là, il a acquis la signification d’importance, de respect, de dignité (cf. le mot allemand *Würde*). Dès les origines, le mot a des connotations religieuses: vénération d’une puissance considérée comme divine, révérence pour un être supérieur, adoration, etc. Il est significatif que le sens étymologique, et probablement les sens premier, de *worþ* soit “valeur économique”: c’est le prix de quelque chose. Nous témoignons donc du respect à quelqu’un ou nous lui rendons hommage et vénération, parce que nous savons découvert que celui est l’objet de notre culte a une valeur pour nous» (R. Panikkar, *Le culte et l’homme séculier*. Paris: Seuil, 1976, 17-18).

you know ἡ πολιτική is a Greek word that, even before Plato and Aristotle, had acquired autonomy from the base word πόλις ‘city’. We point out that *polis* still means ‘city’ and sometimes ‘state’, but only indirectly. The verb πολιζέω, already in Homer (*The Iliad* VII, 453; XX, 217), means ‘to build the walls of the city’, following the etymology of *polis*.¹³ And a bit further on we can read: «the expression *ta politiká* was also sometimes the opposite of βασιλική, which is to say, βασιλική τέχνη or the art of governing characteristic of kings. *Ho politikós* is the public man, the *statesman*, the citizen. Literally, πολιτική is the «political space», the *agora*, the *ager publicus*»¹⁴ and continues to be from Ancient Greece to the present times. The title of this chapter is «The History of the Word». Would the book be the same without it? No.

We have mentioned two paths of knowledge. Panikkar searches for the etymological source: «jñana» (Sanskrit), «gnosis» (Greek)¹⁵ and upon arriving into Latinit splits into SCIENTIA which gives us «science» and all its derivatives. The other path was at one point GNOSCERE, a word that underwent two more alterations: NOSCERE, in educated expression, and COGNOSCERE, which turned into the colloquial «conoscere», the immediate root for the Romance languages. We understand its meaning, however it is more densethan it appears because from its Indo-European origins it has had a near homonym. NOSCERE/NASCERE: «to know» / «to be born». From the root GNOSCO that became «science», Panikkar draws the conclusion that today, in this word, we have limited the original meaning to the sense of physical analysis by dividing and subdividing, breaking and subbreaking in desk calculation and in experiments. By doing this, we have put science at the service of technique, which, in turn, no longer means as it did for the Greeks «to do artfully» or «inspiration».

Running the risk of breaking the flow of this paragraph, I leave it unfinished to insert the following, which I think is significant for the overall subject: «“Mechanical” was used in modern languages before “machine,” to which it is related. On a side note, keep in mind that the original pejorative meaning (still in use today) of cunning and artificial ingenuity which is maintained in the word “machination” and the sad memory tied to the Latin *machina* (the platform on which slaves were display for sale). The original Greek *mechané* (cf. *mechos*) means instrument (the means of achieving something and, then, also cunning), is the closest to the Gothic *magan* (*mazan*), which means to be able (compare with the German *vermögen* from the root *magh* “to be capable of, to have the possibility of”). Technology refers to the realm of the machines, while technique belongs

13 R. Panikkar, *L'esperit de la política. Homo politicus*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1999, 74.

14 *Ibidem*, 77-78.

15 R. Panikkar, *Ecosofía. Para un espiritualidad de la tierra*. Madrid: San Pablo, 1994, 21.

to the world of instruments (tools). The power of the tool comes from man; that of the machine, from beyond him. The energy source of the tool is the *ingenium*, that of the simple machine is conducted nature (wind, water, etc.), and of the complex machine is transformed nature (chemistry, atomic force, etc.).¹⁶ Now the technique is splicing more and more until reaching the atom that blew up in our hands. We have violated the harmony of matter. And with the expansion of so much technique our psychological harmony has also exploded. «The characteristic of modernity, brought to a fever pitch by modern science, [is] the method of fragmenting problems and, therefore, reality and, as a result, also man».¹⁷

I now return to the paragraph I left unfinished. In the Greek root GNOSCO, which is maintained in its near homonym that means “to be born,” Panikkar sees the possibility of regaining the lost balance. It can be found in an etymological detail of the Latin form: the addition of the prefix CON to the root GNOS, which when added to verbs, indicates that the process is arriving at its end. Briefly, I am born [*neixco*], which means I am brought forth by nature into the world, but until I *con-neixco*, until I reach *coneixement*—knowledge—I haven’t made the leap from nature to culture. That explains the ancient tradition, reminds Panikkar, that associates gnosis with salvation.

«Honoring human dignity to the end is the main task facing man».¹⁸ It is here, I believe, where some words must be added, which were said as if in passing,

16 R. Panikkar, *La nova innocència*. Barcelona: La Llar del Llibre, 1991, 119.

17 R. Panikkar, «La paraula, creadora de realitat», 48. A second example says: «My hypothesis maintains that there is a qualitative leap between technique, understood as the Greek *techné*, and modern technology. The first represents a human variant. All peoples have *techné*, art, artifacts, manipulation of nature [...] Perhaps the most adequate term for expressing this reality is “handicraft” [...] culture is handicraft. Modern technology, on the other hand, is the fruit of one single civilization [...] Its human space is rational organization; technocracy [...] I call the second usage “technocracy” based on the etymology of the word and the fact that this second usage, unlike the first, does not refer to a simple instrument, which is easily managed by the consumer, but rather it demands or imposes a way of thinking, a lifestyle [...] Technocracy represents the shift from the *techné* as art, as handicraft, to technology as control. Like *krátos*, like power». And these lines are accompanied by the following quote that Panikkar takes from the work of E. Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* (1969, vol. II., p. 71): «*Krátos* ne signifie ni ‘force physique’ (*iskhús, sthénos*), ni ‘force d’âme (*alké*), mais ‘supériorité, prévalence’, soit à l’assemblée... Mais, dans d’autres emplois, *kraterós* se rapproche, pour les sens, de *kratáios* (‘dur, cruel’), *kratús* (‘dur’)... *Krátos* est à rapprocher de l’indo-iranien *kratu*, qui désigne la ‘vertu (magique) du guerrier’: this is how Benveniste sums up his study of this word. I refrain from commenting ironically and sadly that the magical force of the machine has “prevailed,” not only over *homo faber*, but also over *animal loquens*». R. Panikkar, *Paz y desarme cultural*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2002, 92-94.

but are highly revealing of his teachings: «In order to demonstrate that it is a universal subject while remaining in the concrete, due to my philological obsessions and my need to relearn Catalan, I have tried to see what this word we use means: *l'home i la seva por* [man and his fear]. And in searching for the meaning of «*por*», I found that a language like Catalan has, at least, fifty-five words to refer to this concept. They all connote or denote «*por*» [fear], and create a conglomerate that, when trying to investigate to find some clarity within it, appears like a dark forest that Dante himself would have feared: absurd, paüra, fàstic, nàusea, angouxa, apocament, terror, esglai, ensurt, opressió, neguit, frisança, esgotament, pànic, angúnia, ansietat, basarda, desassossec, cova, malestar, impaciència, quimera, atribolament, esverament, aflicció, alarma, covardia, caguera, fòbia, malfiança, recel, pusil·lanimitat, temor, horror, esfereïment, trepidació, etc.».¹⁹ Now I will draw attention to those words said as if in passing: «my philological obsessions». Why? Just because he was returning to Catalan after many years spend in English-speaking ambits? There occurs to me a more personal and basic answer: «etymology (from ἔτυμος truth) has its importance».²⁰ He confesses that researching it is the search for the truth enclosed in each word.²¹

Some earlier lines were devoted to the word «*coneixement*». While the etymological meaning he presents and its evolution may be quite clear to us, one thing is certainly true: *el coneixement* [knowledge] is limited. So can we go further? Yes. Above knowledge there is wisdom. In the words of Panikkar: «the German word *Weisheit* (wisdom) is related, etymologically, with *vidyā*, *veda* [Sanskrit], *idein* [Greek], *videre* [Latin], vision, *wissen*; the Greek word *sophia* and the Latin *sapientia* indicate experience, skill and taste. Even though the word «wisdom», in other languages, expresses other contexts, it seems that these two aspects are always present. Saint Bonaventure made it very clear when he derived *sapientia* from *sapor* and *sapere*, from “taste” and “to know” (II *Sent.* d. 4, dub. 2). With this he designates both the part of wisdom that is affective, sensorial, that affects taste, and the intellectual, cognitive and scientific part. It is, both *techné* and *epistémè*, to do and to know, praxis and theory. [...] Heraclitus said that *sôphronein*, to think wisely, was the greatest virtue, and that wisdom, *sophia*, consists in saying the truth and acting according to nature, listening to it».²² Listening. Here we have the beginning of wisdom. And through that, according to Panikkar, we reach the highest level of knowledge, self-awareness and the path to surpass it through contemplation.

19 R. Panikkar, *La nova innocència*, 145-146.

20 R. Panikkar, *La plenitud del home. Una cristofania*. Madrid: Siruela, 1999, 240, nota 147.

21 To honor that truth: «the word *modernity*, etymologically means precisely “mode”, that which is in style. It comes from *modus*: that which lasts only a moment and immediately disappears» (R. Panikkar, *Benaurada senzillesa*. Barcelona: La Llar del Llibre, 1988, 122).

22 R. Panikkar, *Invitació a la saviesa*. Barcelona: Proa, 1997, 19.

There are many other examples throughout his body of work, but I will limit myself to two final notes taken from the discreet footnote, which are a basic component of the reflections that Panikkar wrote about peace.²³

The poetic recourse

In the work of R. Panikkar there is a second significant recourse. I call it poetic in the sense that a text—in verse or in prose—generates a reduplication or polysemy with what it has been linked to. I am referring to the detail of the subject headings of books, chapters, articles... and also the citing, in the body of the text, of

23 «The cross and the sword were bound together for centuries» with the note: «I interpret the Latin *bonus* as ‘the warrior’ assuming I am right that *bonus* derives from an older form *duonus* (compare with *bellum*, *duellum*; where I think that *duonus* contained). Thus, Bonus is the man of conflict, of division (*duo*), like a man of war” (F. Nietzsche)». R. Panikkar, *Paz y desarme cultural*, p. 60. Panikkar’s supposition can be confirmed. Etymologically everything points to, if not a direct derivation, than a quite clear crossing. «*bonus*, -a, -um (de *duenos*, *duonus*, formes encore attestées à l’époque archaïque [...] : bon. Le comparatif et le superlatif son empruntés à d’autres racines: *melior*, *optimus*. Le sens est proche de celui de “brave” comme pour gr. ἀγαθός; [...] Souvent employé dans des formules de politesse: uirbonus, boneuir (= ὄ γαθή). Synonyme familier de *magnus* [...] La forme **dvenos* sur laquelle repose *bonus* se retrouve passailleurs. Tout ce que l’on peut essayer d’expliquer, c’est un élément radical **du-*», etc., que cal completar així: «*bellum*, -i n. (forme ancienne *duellum* [...] encore bien attestée dans les inscriptions, chez les poètes et les glossateurs [...] De là l’étymologie populaire [...] *duellum bellum*, uidelicet quod duabus partibus de uictoria contententibus dimicatur [...]): guerre [...] (A. Ernout – A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots*. Paris: Klincksieck, 1979). «Religious peace, on the other hand, was considered more of an inner attitude [...] And that, in spite of the fact that, originally, many words like *salam*, *shanti*, *shalom*, *eiréné*, *pax* and *mir*, also contained a political and religious meaning», he writes, with notes on the six words: «[1] Common Muslim greeting, which includes peace with God and with one’s brothers, along with wellbeing. Cf. *Qur’ân* VI, 56 [[This aleya from the sixth surah, says: «Say [prophet]: “I was forbidden to worship and serve / those you invoke / and who are not the only God, Allah”. / You also say: “I will not follow your desires. / If I had I would have strayed far from the path, / I would cease to be among the rightly guided”».] The Sumerian root *silim* (Acadic *sálamu*) indicates fullness, health being complete. / [2] *Shanti* is simultaneously the reflection and the projection of the inner harmony of the universe [he refers to one of his texts] / [3] [in this note he refers to another text written by someone else] / [4] “*Le mot désigne d’abord la paix considérée comme un état durable (à la différence, chez Homer, de εὐδότης, qui concerne la conclusion d’un accord); n’est pas originellement un terme juridique ou diplomatique*”: Chantraine 1968 [*Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, Paris (Klincksieck)], *sub voce* “*eiréné*” / [5] The Latin word (*pacem a pactione*) has the expressly juridical meaning of “pact” / [6] The Russian word *mir* means, both “peace” and “world”; the latter in the sense of *κόσμος*, which is lovely, harmonious, ordered. Looking at the *world* as it really is (should be): peaceful. Lack of peace destroys this world. This is the traditional idea of *ordo*, *τα*, etc.» R. Panikkar, *Paz y desarme cultural*, 62.

verses *strictus ensu* and the mentioning of men of letters. I think that an exhaustive analysis of this recourse will bear relevant surprises.

The preface of the work is headed with this quote: «ἦθος ἀνθρώπου HERACLITUS, Fragment 119».²⁴ The note reads: «proper nouns, out of respect to the different cultures, are kept in the original language except where popular use has established another spelling». And further on he writes: «the heading of our study speaks to us of *ethos*. Literally: “For man, ethics [is his] spirit”. *Daimónis* what comprises the true personality of man, that which gives him his deepest and most distinctive characteristic. *Ethos* is here the untransmittable nature of each person, his character, his dignity, his “ethicalness”».²⁵ It seems very clear to me that the quote of the heading is not here mere ornament, but rather a guide and tool for interpretation.

A second example of headings taken from sacred books, be they biblical, from vedas or others. «*Mē phylax tou adelphou mou eimi egō? / Am I my brother's keeper? / Genesis4:9 / Tat tusamamvayāt. / Yes! Thanks to the mysterious harmony that embraces all / Brahma Sūtra, I,1,4*» with the following note: «Obviously the two translations are not literal».²⁶ This double quote presides over the entire book—even before the double prologue—devoted to the subject of dialogue among religions.²⁷ It seems unnecessary to clarify the relationship between the two quotes to see them not only as an entrance point, but as a demand that justifies the book and invites the reader to join the world of men and the cosmos.

Another quote that presides over an entire book: «ἀνευ δὲ ἀπετηῆς ἀληθινῆς θεὸς λέγομενος ὄνομά ἐστιν *Without true virtue, the God of which you speak is a [mere] name.* (PLOTINUS, *Enneads*, II,9, 15,39)».²⁸ The meaning is clear: if one who speaks of a god, of God, does so on the sidelines of deep reality itself, without virtue, limiting himself to a simple contemplative exercise, the result will not be a book about a god or God, but pointless speculation. He makes that clear right from the second part of the title. And he confirms it in the chapter «Fragments al voltant de l'experiència de Déu» [Excerpts on the experience of God] where one reads the names, side by side, of Dionysius the Areopagite and Thomas Merton, and some verses by John of the Cross.²⁹

24 R. Panikkar, *L'esperit de la política...*, 13.

25 *Ibidem*, 15.

26 R. Panikkar, *El diàleg indispensable*, 7.

27 *Ibidem*, 21.

28 R. Panikkar, *Les icones del misteri. L'experiència de Déu*. Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1998, 9.

29 *Ibidem*, 56.

The volume *Invitació a la saviesa* [An Invitation to Wisdom] is a collection of two conferences and two articles that, in book form, was first published in German. Panikkar adds a «Prologue to the Catalan edition» that begins: «*Invitació a la saviesa* is the new title of the book». ³⁰ In effect, and as we have already pointed out, Panikkar's work is redone, retranslated and reedited with changes. The book is headed by a Latin quote and its un-credited translation (perhaps Panikkar's own?) The first part, a Biblical quote; the second, one from the *Rig Veda*; the third, this: «There is no word without sound and body» with a note that reads: «allusion to Stefan George. The poem *Das Wort* was published in 1919 for the first time in the book of poems *Das Neue Reich*». ³¹ The fourth part is not preceded by a quote. Concisely: a quote that synthesizes the author's intention by commenting the words from the Bible on wisdom from the book of *Proverbs* (primarily 9:1), «*Gaudens gaudebo in Vita, quia in corde hominis in cunctis sibi Sapientiam mansionem paravit.* / I shall rejoice in Life because Wisdom has prepared a glorious dwelling place for itself in the human heart»; the second: «*Sapientiae diffcavit sibi domum.* / Wisdom has built her house. Pr 9:1»; the third: «This is my magnificence, / and even greater is man: / one quarter are all the beings, / three quarters are the immortal in heaven. *Purusha-sūkta, Rig Veda X, 90,3*»; the last, from the German poet (1868-1933).

Another example is offered in the texts added in 1979 in an English-language volume, most of which come from a first edition in French (10), English (4) and German (1) between 1968 and 1972. I have the Italian version constructed, in regard to the poetic recourse, in the following way. After the title and credits of the edition, the first quote from the *Kena Upanisad*, II, 3 and, in note, three parallel references to three other Oriental books. Following the introduction, three untranslated words in Sanskrit and a short verse from the *Brahma Sūtra*. Part I is headed up by a confession from Aristotle, *Ad Antipater* (1582 b 14), in Greek and translated. You turn the page and see the first chapter with a double heading, Sanskrit words from the *Dammapada* VII, 6 (95) and from Luke 21:19 plus two notes on semantics; second chapter: *Tao Tz Ching*, 18 also with a semantic note; the third: *Matthew* 6:34; the fourth: two quotes taken from the *Úatapatha Brâhma?a* I, 3, 3, 1 and VI, 2,1,18. Part II's overall quote comes from the letter to the *Hebrews* 11:3; then comes the fifth chapter (which I will comment on later); the sixth: *Psalms* 35:11. And it continues like this until Part III and, at the end, the fifteenth chapter presided over by *Galatians* 5:13, a chapter divided into two epigraphs and each headed by its own quote. The book ends with this one: «*Sit finis libri non querendi* / (La fine del libro non sia la fine della ricerca) / *Brahma?e*

30 The first: *Der Weisheit eine Wohnung Bereiten*

namah).³² With this example we are facing the articulation of texts through a game of quotes that appear from one end to the other and throughout, like the layers of a liliaceous bulb (let's think of a gladiola, instead of an onion). With this structure confirmed we could continue to study the contents of these quotes to discover in them, layer by layer, the implicit links between the partial subjects, or between the wider blocks of the parts, and perhaps even a loop between the first and last of the books. We could go on and on. However, it is worth stopping for a closer look at the quote heading the fifth chapter: «καὶ ἐάν μὴ πιστεύσετε, οὐδὲ μὴ συνῆτε / *Se non crederete, non esisterete.* / Is 7:9» with the note, which I transcribe for its value in relation to the contents of the chapter.³³ The importance of this note lies, I believe, in the fact that it is the heading, first of all, of the chapter «La fe com a dimensió constitutiva de l'home» [Faith as a building block of man] and secondly because the content of the chapter begins with its interpretation.³⁴

32 R. Panikkar, *Mito, fede e ermenentica...*

33 «Prima di commentare il testo, darò alcune delle sue più comunit raduzioni: “Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis” (versione dei Settanta, generalmente utilizzata dai teologi medievali); “Sinoncredideritis, non permanebitis” (Vulgata); “Vosotros, si no tuvierais fe, no permaneceré is” (Nacar-Colunga); “Si no creéis, no podréis subsistir” (Martín Nieto); “Se non avretefede, non starete saldi” (Istituto Biblico); “Se non crederet, non restarete saldi” (Nardoni); “Mais si vous ne tenez à moi, vous ne tiendrez pas” (Bible de Jérusalem, ma in una nota: “Si vous ne croyezpas); “Gläub tihr nicht, so bleib tihrnicht” (Luther); “Se vi perdetè di coraggio, la vostra causa è persa” (Knox); “If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established” (AV e RV); (RSV only changes ‘ye’ to ‘you’); “Have firm faith, or you will not stand firm” (NEB). Questo testo è stato ampiamente commentato dalla tradizione cristiana. Cf. Agustí, *Epistula* 120,1,3 (PL 33,453; *Sermone* 43,VI,7 (PL 38,257); *Sermone* 118,2; 126,1,1; ecc.». *Ibidem*, 189. The names and abbreviations referred to in the text correspond to the following books: the Latin edition; the Spanish versions by Alberto Nacar and Eloíno Colunga, the Catholic version based on the original languages done in 1944; the version of Evaristo Martín Nieto, as editor, is after the Second Vatican Council; the next is from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome; Nardoni's version, the Italian version by Castoldi, Nardoni, Pasquero and Robaldo published in 1961; the next two are well known; followed by the English Catholic version of the *Vulgata* by Ronald Knox done between 1945 and 1955; the initials correspond to: Authorized Version, Revised Version, Revised Standard Version, New English Bible.

34 «“Senza fede non potete esistere”. Così dice questo passaggio chiave della speculazione teologica cristiana tradizionale. Significativo è il gioco di parole in ebraico: se non credete, *ta'aminu*, non esisterete, *te'amenu*. *Aman* (Cf. *amen*, *emet*) è uno dei due modi di esprimere la fede. Se da un lato *betab* (*batab*) mette in resalto l'aspetto della confidenza, *emet* (*aman*) dall'altro indica fermezza, solidità, sussistenza e quindi consistenza». A questa nota és del text: «Cf. Corano, XLVII, passim, ove gli *āmanū* (forma verbale di *mu'min*, ilcredente), “coloro che hannofede” (*imān*) svolgono un ruolo importante nell'Islam» (*Ibidem*, p. 190). Ja redactades aquestes pàgines ha apresgut el segonvolum de *l'Opera omnia*: R. Panikkar,

We establish, then, after that transcription, a triple bond: that which is created between the quote and the text, the content of the text, and the etymological and semantic clarifications. It is also important to consider the references and literary citations as a part of this poetic recourse. Homer and R. Tagore, F. Dostoievsky, T.S. Eliot and Antonio Machado are quoted; in the text or in notes, G. Benn, Dante and Jacopone da'odi, A. Solzhenitsyn and G. Tabidze, J. W. Goethe, Horace the Elder, and the young –because he is still alive– poet David Jou, F. Kafka, A. Camus, without counting the writers from Asia. This list is not exhaustive. The writers and the quotes have value because they act as a source of ideas, a guiding boundary marker, a maxim that confirms the thought, a light in the dark, but never as mere ornament. Two examples that prove how the quotes work with the content: the first are some verses from the *Cant espiritual* by Joan Maragall recast by Panikkar. They become the distilled idea, not only of the prologue they conclude, but of the entire book, becoming the summarized declaration and guiding comprehension. His originality, in addition, allows a re-reading of the verses of Maragall, making them more expansive, charged with more meaning to the point, I would argue, of reversing their melancholy, griping air. «Allow me to say it by paraphrasing the poet:

I quan vingui aquella hora de saviesa
en què es desvetllaran els sentits humans,
feu que siguin molt més penetrants,
que sense oblidar la immediatesa
ens duguin a descobrir la bellesa
en la Vida tot estant».³⁵

And when that hour of wisdom comes
in which human senses are revealed,
make them much more penetrating,
so without forgetting the immediacy
they lead us to discover the beauty
in Life while in its midst.

The second example: the subject of this statement is the human word: «Man is a speaking being; one cannot separate his speaking from his being: *Homo loquens*».³⁶ This is so much the case that Panikkar explains it with a careful

Mite, símbol, culte. Opera Omnia Raimon Panikkar, Volum IX, Tom 1. Barcelona: Fragmenta, 2009. This contains five chapters, with their mottos, from the book *Mite, fede ed ermeneutica*. The reorganization of the material into two volumes and the addition of sections devoted to symbols and worship, obviously, alters the described usage of quotes.

35 R. Panikkar, *Invitació a la saviesa*, 8.

36 R. Panikkar, «La paraula, creadora de realitat», 26.

consideration preceding the verses, which I quote here: «Each word is a mystery in that it *says* a universe. The word *rosa*, for example, awakens, says, reveals not only what it is (which is already an abstraction), but also all that it truly is “in everything,” because it is in constitutive relationship with the universe [...] To be precise, the word *rosa* is no mere noun: it is a noun loaded with adjectives (rosy); but it is also a verb, an action. The word *rosa*, ‘to rose’ to put it one way: goes from the rose to me, to us, and from us to the rose; there is much transitive and intransitive action between the rose and all that the rose ‘roses’: we imagine it, we smell it, we prune it, we offer it, we talk to it, it talks to us, it fascinates, it attracts (or repels), it reminds us, it excites us (to the point of irritating us with its doomed sentimentalism) [...] The rose is never alone. Even the purest nominalism has to add a *tenemus* to “the name of the rose”: *stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus*.³⁷ Harkening back to the poets is not “poetic license”, but rather strict linguistic rigor:

I jo m’he dit: construiré la rosa
del pensament amb pètals
de flaire suggerida: no cobegis
la flor –no som en el jardí–, camina
quietament pel viarany ombrós,
a voltes fulgurant, de les paraules».³⁸

And I told myself: I will build the rose
of thought with petals
of evoked scent: don’t covet
the flower –we are not in the garden—, walk
placidly down the shady, sometimes
dazzling, path of words.

The reader should keep in mind the way Panikkar introduces this poem. The poem is by Joan Vinyoli, from his book *El callat*.

On neology

Approaching Panikkar’s work from the word leads one to discover that he has coined new ones. Words which, it should be said from the outset, are not simple

37 This note is from the text: «Yesterday’s rose endures in its name, we hold empty names.” An expression from the 12th-century Benedictine Bernardus Morlanensis (of Morlaix) in his book *De contemptu mundi* and popularized by Umberto Eco’s novel, *Il nome della rosa* [...]».

38 *Ibidem*, 28-29.

technical terms created by derivation or composition. The resulting words are dense because they are not configured as strictly unambiguous signifiers, but rather, in many cases, polysemous. However, not necessarily due to their strict lexico-semantic state, but rather because, beyond that state's boundaries, they suggest much more within the context of Panikkar's body of work. For example, «ontonomy» which he creates between the well-known words «autonomy» and «heteronomy». The composition creates a new word, generic in that it refers without restriction on the actions of any being. However the referential generalness still automatically connotes certain beings and certain actions that carry with them certain contexts. To put it another way: we are here faced with new technical terms for dense texts, mostly not closed in a univocalness of meaning reducible to a single context. There are precise in their meaning, yes, but also suggestive of other connotations. Perhaps it would serve us to consider a quote from Augustine in the hope that it will be of help in understanding how far one must go when entering the world of Panikkar. The Bishop of Hippo refers to signs in this way: «*quod signasunt, id est, quod significant*» and says: «*Signum est enim res, praeter speciem quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem venire* / The sign is that which, in addition to filling the senses with an image, evokes from inside itself another way of thinking».³⁹ Which is to say, if the sign –Panikkar's neologism— directs us to the signification that allows us to enter via the sense or senses into the lexico-semantic structure, it also evokes the thought of something else: a radical extraction from a specific culture. That is: in perceiving the, let's say, new linguistic meaning we also grasp that there is another in the coordinates of other cultures and, what's more, that from now on we have to retain both in order to be faithful to it. Based on his expressions, this one for example: «when the seed of Christian (we have no other word) faith falls in the Indian sun, it penetrates to grow and flower, but the results may be quite different from the branches and fruits of other lands. The root of the Christianity of two millennia is Jewish (Rm

39 Aurelius Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, II, 1.1. (CC SL, 32). This same Augustinian text is used by R. Barthes, but with a more restricted meaning, while still equally valid, complementary and even a basis of my reading (see Roland Barthes, *Elementos de semiología*, Madrid: Alberto Corazón, 1971, 39 [note the error: he refers to II, 1.2]).

40 R. Panikkar, «Una teologia cristiana índica», *Fe i teologia en la història. Estudis en honor del Prof. Dr. Evangelista Vilanova*, a cura de Joan Busquets i Maria Martinell, Montserrat: Facultat de Teologia de Catalunya – Istituto per le Scienze Religiose (Bologna) – Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1997, 675. Em permeto d'allargar la nota amb les referències bíbliques perquè em sembla que s'han de tenir presents, fins i tot literàriament: «Si les primícies són santes, també ho és tota la pasta; i si l'arrelés santa també les branques» (Rm 11,16); «Jesús els digué: en veritat, en veritat us ho dic, abans que Abraham vingué al món, jo sóc» (Jn 8,58).

11,16), but not the seed (Jn 8,58)»,⁴⁰ we comprehend the entire Panikkarian discourse –not only that which deals with the Christian world of the example— refers to a paradigm that strives to embrace all human visions of Reality (with a capital R, because it must omnicomprehensive).

In any case, as for the neologisms and their particular connotation –we'll call it omnicultural—there is no other path than a detailed study, and this is not the place for that; here we just indicate a case in point.⁴¹ Real things are not sufficiently represented by scientific terms, given that scientific language, after all, is reduced to an organic group of signs and information for the communication of objective data, to which we react and act in consequence. «*Science is information*».⁴² However, reality and life are something more than just data; they are each person's experience. Panikkar expresses it, very clearly, this way: «we use terms, but we say words. A word is not a mere term. The word is not a mere sign.»⁴³ Why? «A real word includes the speaker as much as the person he is speaking to and what is being spoken about.»⁴⁴ And to drive this point home, I will copy a repetition of these thoughts taken from a later text, spoken and printed in Catalan: «the word is only word – “living word” Maragall would say–, when it includes the thing spoken of and the speakers [...] It is not language which reveals things as it is not things which ‘cause’ language. Things are themselves linguistic crystallizations –like etymology already suggests; the things themselves are revealed to humans and animals– and possibly to all beings [...] The things are the revelation itself. The thing is when it reveals itself. The language of things is their awakening. The thing is this unveiling. That is the symbol. Which is why the symbol is not purely subjective nor exclusively objective. The symbol only is symbol when it symbolizes and it only symbolizes when it is revealed to itself».⁴⁵

We will not enter the path of the «symbol» even though we are aware that «here we arrive at one of the most interesting points in Panikkar's discourse:

41 «We all know Nominalism [...] is the basic assumption of Science. Now, the scientific use of terms implies that we have abolished the “whims of fantasy” and found the exact correlation between terms and concepts. [...] This is the essence of Nominalism: names do not name things but merely represent concepts. [...] Clarity, distinction and precision are the ideals –and conditions– for scientific intelligibility». R. Panikkar, «Words and Terms», *Archivo di Filosofia* [or cited thus: *Esistenza, Mito, Ermeneutica. Scritti per Enrico Castelli*], II, (1980): 121].

42 *Ibidem*, 122.

43 *Ibidem*, 123.

44 *Ibidem*, 124.

45 R. Panikkar, «La paraula, creadora de realitat», 23-24.

the notion of the symbol». ⁴⁶ I think that the excerpts allow for the assertion that the bulk of the neologisms created by Panikkar are encapsulated more beside the word than the term –without getting too far from his own approach, obviously. When he writes in the small type of a note: «I have coined the term *techniculture* to express the passage of a civilization from agrarian to *technicultural*», ⁴⁷ he has not created a word that can be evaluated with the same preciseness and limitations that a mathematician would use with the «logarithm» or «sulphuric» of the world of chemistry. Techniculture (not «technology») is the neologism that becomes symbol of a particular culture, that is, of a concept of the world and of life with the subsequent way of relating to it, living it and expressing it. When we hear it or read it we enter into this conception to understand it and confront it.

In his aforementioned book *Le culte et l'homme séculier*, he uses the neologism «nigriques», which in English would be negrics. «Rubric» is an old word from the Christian liturgical world (in Western Europe beginning in the 14th century), that note written in red ink that determines how a ritual should be carried out. The neologism refers to the part written in black ink and comes to mean the content of the rite; if the rubric explains how to perform it, the negric is it in itself. «Originally there was little separation between rubrics and negrics. Form and content were inseparable; the outer act had as much important as the inner one [...] In a fascinating process, in which human consciousness is totally implicated, the rituals gradually become internalized until, finally, the intention begins to dominate to the extent that it endangers the material, external aspect of the act. Then a compromise and a certain balance, which is not always easy to maintain, is reached between the negrics and the rubrics». ⁴⁸ Having read this quote I am, you could say, tempted to think that we have always had the two words in our Romance languages. I won't deny that both are lovely words from the semantic field of the liturgy, but it is also true that in Catalan from «rúbrica» we have derived «rubricador», «rubricista» and even «rubricisme» –although not found in the normative dictionary– and last but not least, «rubricar», the verb that has leapt the furthest from the liturgical realm, which makes all speakers think of the name at the bottom of a document (supposing that the word hasn't been completely replaced by «to sign»).

46 Steven Hopkins, «El símbolo, la palabra y el mito del pluralismo. (Reflexiones sobre la metodología intercultural de R. Panikkar)», *Anthropos*, 53-54 (1985): 83.

47 R. Panikkar, «Words and Terms», 124.

48 R. Panikkar, *Mite, símbol, culte*, 467-468. While I used the French book in the presentation, here I copied from the definitive Catalan version.

One last example. «Anachronism is what our grandparents do: they judge the world of today with their ideas from yesterday [...] On the other hand catachronism falls on the other extreme: it is using today's categories to judge the past». ⁴⁹The innovation is clear. The dictionary lists «anachronism», putting together the prefix *ANA* that means «out of» with the noun *CRONOS*, «time». Quite a common word. But its opposite doesn't exist, created with the prefix *CATA* that means «beneath», which is to say: if the former tells us of something situated outside of the present day, the latter tells us of a time past beneath something present. How can one explain the absence of this neologism in the dictionary? Certainly not because this error of appreciation is less real than the one committed by our grandparents! Is there a psychological explanation, a sociological one...?

I hasten to reiterate that the neologisms found in the work of Panikkar cannot be discussed in the space of four pages; they are merely mentioned here as another aspect to keep in mind.

In closing

Our look at Panikkar's work draws to an end. It is as if we were closing a circle by returning to the first path that sheds light on the work of Raimon Panikkar, that which searches out the root. The poets, who have also made an appearance here, have more solid arguments to close these pages. I reproduce a few of their words, taken from an interview with the Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwix, who died less than two years ago. «Poetry can only watch over the light, it can learn from the strength of the grass more than the strength of an airplane. It can renew and revive man's astonishment. Words in poetry always maintain the essence of their first life. Poetry teaches us how to return to the childhood of things, to our childhood within those things, and renew it. This is the best means to defend human existence». ⁵⁰

Translation from Catalan by Mara Faye Lethem

49 R. Panikkar, *Benaurada senzillesa*, 47-48.

50 Hassan Nadmii Larbi El Harti, «Mahmud Darwix», *Ami*, Suplement Cultura, (May 5, 2005), III.