

# MODERN TIMES IN RETROSPECTIVE: YOUNG MINDS AS CRADLES FOR 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY CULTURAL CRISES

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***Abstract:** This study is a survey of the key elements pertaining to what is known today as a new development in the social studies, psychoanalysis, theology, and literature at the dawn of the 1950s, which addressed the then generation of young academics and young people in general. Our purpose here is to see how the end result of notable crises, such as the conflict between traditional dogma and the new hermeneutics of the nouvelle théologie, for instance, led to more revolt amid the young generation rather than to the promised improvement and hope for a better future both socially and culturally. We will thus show that the new language associated with psychoanalysis and literature was mainly derived and encouraged by post Vatican II continental theologies, whose critical spirit allowed for such redefining of doctrinal statements as to make them acceptable to the young revolted generation that departed from the source of faith and Scripture. In the present study this is the context against which we can then conclude on the practical relationship between revolt and liberalism.*

***Keywords:** psychoanalysis, Kristeva, theology, Schillebeeckx, literature, Llosa.*

## Introduction

The reason why we chose the “Modern Times” as headline for this study which is particularly intended to envisage the 1950s in psychoanalysis, theology and literature, and to follow the extent to which it affected the then young generation was based on several presuppositions. Firstly, although it has been said that at least in the

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artistic and literary world Modernism has died off long before the inception of WWII, the same cannot be maintained in relation to the European Continental theology of the 1950, which only began to develop in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council. This would mean that, indeed, at a larger scale the first realm had already entered post-modernism when the latter only began to come to terms with Modernism. Since the *Aggiornamento* announced a new era of “change” and “open-mindedness” for the Church, or, as Pope John XXIII said in 1961, a period of “modernization”, it is clear that mainstream Modernism would not have been completed without this new theological wave. On the other hand, what the “new theology” brought about was not only, as Pope Paul VI noticed in the encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*, a call on the different churches to establish common grounds in the Body of Christ, thus dialogue, but also a confirmation that the Church had to do reforms in order to meet the needs and expectations of the young generation.

The Church is to renew both internally and externally, though the accent, we would add, falls more poignantly on the “social church”, and this message, was felt, is better directed towards this practical realm with the help of the youth: “As a necessary condition for receiving the supernatural gifts of truth and grace in a way consistent with the dignity of the human person, Christ aimed at developing in men a psychological as well as a moral awareness..., the awareness of their discipleship, which was later to...grow to maturity, and then at last men would understand who Jesus was, and the meaning of what he has taught and done.”<sup>1</sup> In assonance with his call to modernization, other voices emerge in nowadays Catholicism to point to the heritage of Vatican II and to summon hierarchy once again to implement inside the Church the objectives settled by the Council, in the following order: “Younger personnel whose

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_06081964\\_ecclesiam.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam.html), (retrieved April, 2016). As a token of this encyclical's influence upon Catholicism, see its ongoing editions ever since its promulgation to very recent times: Paul VI, *L'Eglise Aujord'hui*, Editions du Centurion (Paris: Broché 1964), and Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*, Presentation d'Enzo Bianchi (Paris: Embrasure, 2015).

theological views represent the broad spectrum of legitimate contemporary thought should be employed. Likewise, the number of women – admittedly a minority at the Vatican – must grow to hold more power in the Church... Christians from other denominations or even the World Council of Churches should be invited to participate as consultants in the work of the Curia.”<sup>2</sup> These recommendations are made particularly in this source in the context of some interesting remarks on intertextuality, *i.e.* the need to further the cooperation between theology and society (thus to avoid the “dialectical tension” between the two), and also between religious texts and secular works in the spirit of contemporary critical theory supported by analysts such as Bakhtin and Kristeva.<sup>3</sup> In what follows we are about to see how these tenets worked for those social dimensions they influenced, and especially, if we were to invert the previously mentioned order, for the ideas at the basis of Julia Kristeva, known as the initiator of psychoanalytic theory, Edward Schillebeeckx, a contemporary Catholic theologian sound for his liberal views on church and society, and Vargas Llosa with his ideas of youth integration in today's intricate society.

### **Julia Kristeva, the philosopher for the rebel**

Before one analyses Kristeva's ideas, one must address first the problem of context and setting in order to properly accommodate the terminology she employs throughout her work.<sup>4</sup> As many readers

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<sup>2</sup> Warren A. Kappeler III, *Communication Habits for the Pilgrim Church. Vatican Teaching on Media and Society* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2009), 144.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>4</sup> Parts of this study related to the ideas of Kristeva, Schillebeeckx and Vargas Llosa have also been published as 1. Ramona Simuț, “Life as Pastiche: the Semiotic Clashes of Cultures in Julia Kristeva's Feminist Literature.” In Sebastian Chirimbu, ed., *Modern Approaches to Linguistics, Literature, and Cultural Studies*, vol. 2, 565-579. Sandy, Utah: Ecko Publishing, 2012; as 2. Ramona Simuț, “The Call for Cultural Resurrection in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: the Case of Edward Schillebeeckx.” In Sebastian Chirimbu, Maria Alexe, Adina

and students of Kristeva's work and language recently noticed, she seems to have a hard time selecting and dividing her notable ideas in an orderly fashion.<sup>5</sup> But in no way is this a peculiarity either of her opus or of other works attributed to post-modernism, including those which deal with philosophical, religious, and psychological inquiries. From this standpoint, reading Kristeva's work only is, critics notice, "an enduring attempt", due to the fact that Kristeva's whims bring her to the grand project of developing her book into an *apologia*, a defense of everything seems dangerous, abnormal, and undesirable at a first glance.<sup>6</sup> As this attempt surely is a post-Enlightenment project which opens up to more obscure realities in society, Kristeva takes great joy in redefining and explaining to the general public many of what otherwise are specialized terms, such as disability of any sort, weirdness, monstrosity, horror, feminism in the context of gender inequality, abjection, etc.

Nevertheless, the interesting thing with this effort is that whenever Kristeva focuses on physical or mental impairment in nowadays society she stirs up a hornet's nest by linking these clinical cases to their more flexible theological understanding. As for the other problem, which relates to language, it is commonly left to the premises of art to deal with, even if, she admits, gender issues nowadays transcend artistic representations, thus they need to be revalued along with the sexual terminology ascribed to them. However, as a prerequisite to any critical survey of Kristeva's

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Barbu-Chirimbu, Georgeta Costache, Eduard Ionescu, Ramona Simuț, Denisa Drăgușin, Alexandru Burda, eds., *Interdisciplinary Researches. Creation and Creativity in the 21st Century*, 309-315. Iași: Ștef, 2012; and as Ramona Simuț, "The Concept of Youth Integration in the Literature of Mario Vargas Llosa." In Sebastian Chirimbu, Ramona Simuț, Maria Alexe, Adina Barbu, eds., *Interdisciplinary Researches in the 21st Century. Creation and Creativity in a Modern European Education*, 150-156. Oradea: Emanuel University Press, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> See Ilya Merlin, review to *Julia Kristeva, Hatred and Forgiveness* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), in *Feminism & Psychology* 22 (2012): 279-282.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 279-282.

psychoanalytical theory, we have to understand that there is an essential difference between the *neo-humanism* pertaining to Enlightenment representatives such as Immanuel Kant, and the *new-humanism* at stake here, which has a lot in common with the principles at the basis of the so called *nouvelle théologie* in fashion during Kristeva's youth and undoubtedly familiar to her, since she is herself a product of the social critique theory developed in France from the 1950s onwards.

In relation to Kristeva's ties to the new theology movement, Stacy Keltner notices how Sara Beardsworth managed to seize and integrate Kristeva's many and relatively intricate psychoanalytical thoughts into the "modern continental philosophy", which stands proud defending a negative perspective on life and society in the 1950-60s. Keltner's review of Beardsworth's work, considered "one of the best books on a French figure to be published in recent years," captures an interesting concept through which the author depicts Kristeva's concern for nowadays society. The concept drives primarily on the sense of loss equally carried out by scholars, men and women, humanists, and social analysts, a concept which Kristeva perceives when she herself studies their attitude as the "loss of loss" (*i.e.*, in Kristeva's words, "the tendencial severance of the semiotic and symbolic" introduced by the decline of authority in the church and society at large.<sup>7</sup>

Concerning Kristeva's more recent activity, it is a well-known fact that she was heavily influenced (although she partially eluded) by the semiotic method developed by Roland Barthes. Where she eluded him, however, was the absorption of precisely the new theological language of the time, thus creating her own voice in the field of behavioral philosophy. For instance, O'Grady constructs a daring project on Kristeva's work after the '80s, clearly stating that while at the beginning of her career as a linguist under the influence of Roland Barthes, Kristeva was too infatuated with what in the '70s

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<sup>7</sup> See the review to Sara Beardsworth, *Julia Kristeva: Psychoanalysis and Modernity* (New York, NY: SUNY Press, 2004), by Stacy K. Keltner, in *Continental Philosophy Review* 39 (2006):107-112.

raised under the title feminism, and also too mischievous regarding the role of theology/religion in sorting out the time's challenges.<sup>8</sup> And this would be true, since if we well remember religion just lost its power and authority over social problems.

On the other hand, O'Grady reckons, Kristeva's reborn interest in religious matters in the '80s is undoubtful, since she reevaluates subjects like the symbolism of church fathers, the significance of sacraments (especially related to the nowadays interpretation of the body of Christ) and of key ecclesiastic dogma such as the teaching about Virgin Mary, etc. For a student of Kristeva's work, O'Grady's remarks and perspectives sound refreshing. However, for someone interested in the way literature/linguistics and theology relate, the argument that Kristeva is deemed to have such twisted preferences on the basis that she never before defined her work under the auspices of feminism is rather farfetched. And it is so despite this article's pioneering attributes in investigating Kristeva at both a literary and a theological level.

The idea that Kristeva has a lot in common with the Catholic theology of her adoptive country is indeed with O'Grady and only few others like her. In Sara Beardsworth's article on Kristeva's ethical and political interconnection<sup>9</sup>, we again find ourselves on the edge of setting time boundaries to her ideas, but this instance we are asked to take a step further into the great metaphor which defines Kristeva's theological reason, namely the concept of suffering. If O'Grady thinks that Kristeva's ties with Catholic religious life are restricted to interpretative issues and, true, she seeks only those subjects which make her a revolutionary exegete, the other scholar understands that in some crucial issues Kristeva's art becomes politically profitable. Precisely this concept of suffering is the final goal of Kristeva's most

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<sup>8</sup> Kathleen O'Grady, "The Tower and the Chalice: Julia Kristeva and the Story of Santa Barbara", *Feminist Theology* 10 (January 1, 2002): 40-60 (especially pp. 41-42).

<sup>9</sup> See Sara Beardsworth, "Kristeva's Idea of Sublimation", *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 12 (2004) Supplement: 122-136 (especially 124).

admired theologians belonging to continental Catholic liberalism. Exegesis in post-modernity is the new leap of faith for dissident Catholic theologians, but in their view suffering ensures their way to community and regains their authority as social teachers outside the boundaries of the church as a traditional institution. Suffering is what shapes the community of men and women, and dealing with suffering (in all ways, psychoanalytically, theologically, politically), is what represents the *humanum* (the human race with no gender equality issues, but with a never ending hope in a better life and well-being).

The interesting trend of post-modernity, though, as evident also in the case of liberal theology, or the French Catholic liberals for our purpose here, is that while they may still question the value of religious truth for all cultures today, they rarely feel necessary to go as far as mysticism, which they rather imply as particular to any religion in any country and culture. As far as Orthodoxy is concerned, mysticism do not trade the personal view of truth (semiotics) for the canon of faith (symbolic of the Orthodox Church), and mainly this is why Orthodox mysticism became a great source of inspiration and admiration for liberal theologians in general. Because Kristeva's thought was molded in the particular atmosphere of liberal Catholic theology in France, in a few lines we are to shed some light on what this type of theological system implies. And precisely because Kristeva was herself a philosopher coming to France as a foreigner, we will make use of a theologian outside France in order to shortly present this new type of theology.

#### Edward Schillebeeckx and radical theology

A relevant figure for the new theology outside France is the Flemish theologian and philosopher Edward Schillebeeckx, whose death happened less than a decade ago, in 2009 in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Schillebeeckx's main concern was not to debate all over again on the doctrinal status of the Catholic Church, but to reiterate the idea belonging to the *nouvelle théologie* that theology must start from bellow. Thus a new weight was placed on the hermeneutical study of things pertaining to faith through its pioneers such as Henri

de Lubac, Jean Daniélou, Marie-Dominique Chenu, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, all of them theologians with whom Schillebeeckx befriended and knew only too well.<sup>10</sup> We must define our faith in human language, he says, so that the Christian phenomenon might regain its empirical dimension and become the religion of the people as it once was. As a consequence of this idea, Sch. urges that the redefinition of the church infers as a precondition the redefinition of the main Christian doctrines.<sup>11</sup>

Hence, Schillebeeckx speaks of the church from a twofold perspective. In the first place, he refers to the doctrinal or the theological dimension of the church. The first chapter of his books *Jesus in Our Western Culture* left us with an open question regarding the role of the church within God's eternal plan of transforming the 'secular history' into 'salvation history'. The question, as he put it, refers to the role of the church in this process, whether it mediates the significant transformation or not. This dimension of the church implies the clarification of Christian doctrines and is more theological in nature. It envisages rather the rethinking of the concept of God, Jesus and creation, without giving an explicit statement about the role of the church as mediator. Only in the second place,

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<sup>10</sup> As a consequence, they are remembered after Vatican II as "the rich legacy of the past" by younger theologians that they decisively influenced both as educators and as theologians: "How privileged we were indeed to live in Europe when many of the prophetic figures of these times were teaching, publishing, their books or having them translated: Congar, Chenu, Rahner, Schillebeeckx, Häring, de Chardin, Daniélou, de Lubac, Jungmann, to name only a few. How we devoured those books and discussed them eagerly!", see Françoise Darcy-Berube, *Religious Education at a Crossroads: Moving on in the Freedom of the Spirit* (Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1995), 8 and fwd. Before the time referred to here and after, Schillebeeckx's books were heavily translated into English and other languages, and his ideas only seemed to have occupied his young countrymen as he was read extensively by young males and females all over the Netherlands, especially because they were intentionally written "with an eye on non-professional readers", see Philip Kennedy, OP, *Schillebeeckx* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), viii.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus in Our Western Culture* (hereinafter referred to as *JOWC*) (London: SCM Press, 2012), see chapter 2.

Schillebeeckx speaks of the church as having a relational dimension. Only when it comes to “the relationship of the church of Christ to Jesus of Nazareth”, is the role of the church in the salvation history clarified. As Schillebeeckx stated in the first chapter of *JOWC*, if the death of Jesus was necessary in order to redo the unity between God and humanity, his resurrection would set Jesus of Nazareth in a new light as the Christ of faith by the mediation of the community of faith which is the church:

„One can say that the ‘church of Christ’ which came into being on the basis of the resurrection of Jesus is the deepest significance of the ‘appearances of Jesus’: in the church community ‘assembled’ in faith there appears, is present, the crucified but risen Christ”<sup>12</sup>.

Schillebeeckx emphasizes the importance of metaphor in the theological language, where metaphor comes from the reader as direct interpreter of the Bible, thus his authority comes into first place. A poignant distinction between what is called the conceptual and the non-conceptual sets Schillebeeckx in a position too vulnerable against the background of Roman-Catholic theology. The fact that this theologian ascertains the malleability of epistemology in favor of anthropology impedes on the position and significance of Catholic dogma and articles of faith, which consequently become simple reproductions of certain “immediate experiences”, mere products of human history. One of the main accusations coming from the Congregation of Faith at the Second Vatican Council was that Sch. instituted a wall of partition between human history and church dogma. Moreover, the isolated experiences which humans live are defined as participation into their psyche (their psychological life), and this takes Schillebeeckx to support the idea that “all psychological and religious experiences spring from the subconscious. This is why the term “pure religious experience” is an

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<sup>12</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus in Our Western Culture* (London: SCM Press, 2012), 27-28.

“abstraction.”<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, this “creed” does not forbid Schillebeeckx to tackle the problem of experience-religion experience in contemporary society, hence creating a model of “religious” experience.

A question regarding this approach is how can we ontologically validate such an experience (“situational”, as we might call it, or at best “historical”) as a universal human standard? Schillebeeckx’s critical approach seems to come across drought land, and as we suspect would probably face an “existential” deadlock if the theologian did not unfold before our eyes the perspective of a relationship between experience and revelation. In this context only, we are told, experience receives a practical role which can save it from possibly phantasiist justifications.

At the beginning of our accounts of Kristeva’s idea of alterity/otherness/alienation/exile, we also mentioned that she introduced in a very personal key some innovative elements for the study of psychoanalysis today. A recent study of how Kristeva applies her investigative methods in physical therapy tackles the new wave of psychoanalytic interpretation of narratives and proposes that we come to terms with Kristeva’s philosophy through her most important concepts and themes, namely “semiotics, abjection, love, revolt, gender, feminism, and politics.”<sup>14</sup> Thus, applied to the field of nursing care and ventilator assisted patients, one central observation that can be added here is that modern/post-modern patient caring is related to the significance of abjection as physical impairment, and the subsequent revolt which springs out of this whole situation, rather than a sheer preoccupation for the well-being of the individual in the most intimate of his contexts, namely his own family as he is cared for at home, and not in a state/private institution.

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<sup>13</sup> Schillebeeckx, in Robert J. Schreiter, *The Schillebeeckx Reader* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), 43.

<sup>14</sup> See Berit Lindahl, “Experiences of exclusion when living on a ventilator: reflections based on the application of Julia Kristeva’s philosophy to caring science”, *Nursing Philosophy* 12.1 (2011): 12-21 (especially 12).

Kristeva is used as a source for this new trend in assisted care and life support in view of her expanded thought on the relationship between abjection (the state of not being a full person and thus being refused his/her own right to be properly loved and treated as a normal social person) and revolt against the new dimensions created by this impairment/inequality. Not even for a moment can this condition of the patient be perceived, while reading Kristeva, as a means for a reciprocal love-mercy relationship between the patient and his respective family/friends: Kristeva smoothly strays from this traditional context to making her position sound in clinical debates, and drawing attention to the cases' narrative which encourages revolt and estrangement rather than the real purpose which in this case helps technology improve.

From a simple comparison with the theology of liberation, the concept of God that the *nouvelle théologie*, and particularly Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, Hans Kung, and Edward Schillebeeckx later promoted is of greater importance than the concept of God promoted by liberals. In trying to define God to modern men and women, these new theologians (while not all of them accepted the term Modernist associated with their movement, see Yves Congar) came to put the attributes traditionally reserved for God in the context of worldly/human suffering, which is familiar to us and can be removed precisely because God is said to have all the characteristics needed to change suffering into happiness.

However, Schillebeeckx is not a political theologian who strives to introduce us at all costs to the concept of suffering as found in Jürgen Moltmann, Johann Baptist Metz, to name only a few of the exponents of liberation theology. Like Metz, however, he is concerned with men and women for whom the social and political life represent a real challenge in everyday existence, because they are both practical theologians rather than transcendentalists. The difference between the two, however, is that Schillebeeckx does not link the concept of suffering to any political situation, but defines anthropology in relation to the inner self of the individual, a path similar to what we can find in Cixous and her prevalent notion of feminism as otherness based on the inner difference between men

and women. The equivalent for liberation theology in women struggle for rights and freedom in countries from South America and within black Americans would be “womanism”, just to instill the sense of difference in perception and practice from what the rest of European feminism stands for. With this in mind, the parallel aforementioned is of even greater importance when we take into account what Modern theology did to nowadays concepts related to European feminism, lest we should say that Modern theology itself offers the implications for today’s psychoanalysis.<sup>15</sup>

When it happened in Europe, psychoanalysis was a revelation, and it challenged the very concept of revelation as in was traditionally defined, a turn that also came from theologians like Schillebeeckx. Schillebeeckx’s insistence that the revelation of God is not to be confounded with human suffering or human history had a big impact on the new trend called feminism. This is precisely

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<sup>15</sup> See Clayton Crockett's very clarifying study in this respect, *Interstices of the Sublime: Theology and Psychoanalytic Theory* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2007). Here, where from page one we are given a definition of the “sublime” as presented by Modern theology at the contact with Freud’s psychoanalytic theory, namely (for instance in relation with the now famous movie *The Passion of the Christ* and the beating, the process of crucifixion) the “sublimation” at the expense of “the primal scene” of Christianity: viewers believe what they first see, without thinking at the implications of, say, the “tensions between Jewish Christians and Gentiles within the Jesus movement, the Jewish revolt”, etc., all of which end on the brick of destruction just as the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.C. or, to expand, just as “Jesus” was destroyed on the cross. This parallelism of destruction falls outside Freud’s theory of a “primal scene” that catches most eyes, and its dynamics moves through human history as well as the individual story. This spicing up, this penetration of the ego related to Freud's idea of a subliminal message is what nowadays psychoanalysis builds on precisely because it was first discussed by Modern theology against the background of Freud’s theory. What Modern theology and psychoanalysis later did with this “primal scene” in every event of life was to inspect the concept of “trauma” inherent to all these sub-cultures affected by the immediate context – and for a long time suppressed by the proponents of the “sublime”, thus initiating all the new languages of these “trauma”-tized cultures, including feminism. For this, see Marcus Pound, *Theology, Psychology, Trauma* (London: SCM Press, 2007), esp. chapters 1, 2, 3.

because the concept of God was now the totally other, and also because human suffering changed its meaning in time. Today we have a different kind of anthropology than the one which made the object of the Middle Ages, at least from an ecclesiastic point of view. Nowadays men and women do not expect for salvation to be brought to them on the basis of a pre-understood (*à-priori*) notion of God. Nowadays men and women want to make salvation urgent and they express the need for a redefined, “re-understood” divinity. It is a reality that makes Schillebeeckx draw a sharp comparison between the Middle Ages “churchly times” and modern “religious times”:

“God, the hope of religious man, had in the past to function as his refuge in those secular spheres in which he had not yet achieved a firm hold on the world and human society... Now that man seems to be capable of coping with the world on his own, he no longer appeals to God and the Church to supply for its impotence. This aspect of the modern phenomenon can legitimately be called secularization”<sup>16</sup>.

In modern times, God is not sought as a mere “supplement” for the helplessness of human social life. Modern times are religious not because churches are built up all over the earth but because social suffering seeks its healing in meaningful liberating events. The suggestion Schillebeeckx is making regarding modern man seems to imply that secularization, men on himself, is no better solution for the future of humanity that has suffering as a destination. In this context, and somehow in relation to Moltmann’s position on suffering history, Schillebeeckx claims that the concept of God is to be defined in terms related to these men and women’s actual historical condition, but must not be identified with the experience of suffering. As dramatic as human suffering may be, Schillebeeckx too advises that we should not minimize God, because God is still the “totally other” in every instance. Schillebeeckx is very sympathetic to the theology of liberation up to a certain point, that of retaining the attributes of God as *alterus*. We have to understand that there is still

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<sup>16</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx., *God the Future of Man* (New York, NY: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 173-174.

a break between mysticism and politics, between communion with God and political action for humanity. This was meant by Schillebeeckx when he said that the human way followed from the divine way in history.

In the footsteps of Modern theology, however, European feminists, Cixous included, somehow redirect the characteristics traditionally associated with the concept of God as to represent the fine line of what being a woman with all the social and personal attributes means. The European feminists saw the transition from the all-knowing, traditional God of the Church, to his mere historical Modern functions as the one who works for, the one who liberates, as inspirational. So inspirational that when they asked for social rights and liberties, the nature of their “petition” was made clear from the very beginning: it was to be inherently different from what the *womanists* in Latin America stood for. The feminists were less concerned for a job, a car, some spare time, etc., and more preoccupied with the own image of the movement/the person asking for these common rights. In other words, the attitude was nearly everything, and the authority with which it was brought forth had to be felt especially in men circles. They were not asking for equal rights, but for a change in authority leading to the idea that being “the other” in this equation granted the very top ontological and social position.

For feminists, this was indeed a revelation: after millennia of censorship, the authority of man was to be replaced with woman authority, and the language for God hence derived was “she”, not “he”.<sup>17</sup> This happened not only because a woman is the revolutionary agent who overturns the society of “he”, thus eloping the subculture, but also because “she” already overcame stereotypes traditionally

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<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, it should be mentioned here that although Schillebeeckx was one of the first theologians to notice the birth of feminism in The Netherlands, for instance, he made a clear distinction between feminism as an anti-male trend, and feminism as something that is peculiar to a woman, as something new and empowering that a woman can bring to society, see Edward Schillebeeckx and Catharina Halkes, *Mary: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1993).

connected with her as the weaker link. While back in the 1960s, everything in terms of hermeneutics and politics started with the new wave of modern theologians, who declared themselves to be radicals (that is, they rejected the power and authority of Christian dogma over social issues), we could say that Cixous benefitted from the uproar and mayhem unleashed by these theologians and thus organized her own centre for feminist studies based on this enormous opportunity to consider women an important part of this revolted sub-cultural mass of individuals.

### **Mario Vargas Llosa and young rebellion**

The concept of youth social integration is overwhelmingly present in Llosa's literature from his first works up to the last, *i.e.*, from his short stories gathered in his volume *Los Jefes* up to recent works such as his *Letters to a young novelist*. Wherever the word integration comes to mind though, the idea of rebellion is not far away. Rebellion in Llosa is to be understood, on the one hand, as revolt against arbitrariness (just like in Albert Camus' novels), using pretty much the same arbitrary means and solutions which are very different from Camus' path. This mindset is specific to all his well portrayed characters from his early work, and it defines rebellion for rebellion's sake as youth prerogative. In *Temptation of the word*, Efrain Kristal shows how the short stories in *Los Jefes* establish a tension between those who defend and those who defy the order.<sup>18</sup> And in *The Leaders* (Llosa's first fictional work), we are presented with the fate of two schoolboys who become friends due to the fact that they are not intimidated by their school's unjust and arbitrary authorities. The meaning that Llosa gives to rebellion here has a lot to do with trends found in many postmodern literary types (such as the "Young Adolescent" genre within Modern prose), where characters are unable to tolerate lies, betrayal or transgression of their tacit codes of honor. If on a personal level these characters commit

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<sup>18</sup> Efrain Kristal, *Temptation of the word. The novels of Mario Vargas Llosa* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1989), 30.

lying, cheating, and stealing, on a social level they are prone to punish whoever employs these means to betray or humiliate them.<sup>19</sup> The meaning of rebellion as revolt against arbitrariness in Llosa's work dismisses even the most noble of actions when they are just a step away from means of exercising power, therefore, as Kristal puts it, they only reaffirm the arbitrariness of laws and life by judging it tacitly.

The second important idea related to the concept of rebellion in Llosa's early work seems to incline towards an active revolt of the marginal characters in Vargas Llosa's early stories. These characters are those who disregard the norms not only of the established order but also of the rebel groups<sup>20</sup>. In *A Visitor*, for instance, a criminal betrays another criminal in exchange for freedom, and not only the other criminals despise him, but the police also by abandoning him in the desert. The protagonist of the story is an outcast because he respects neither the law of the land nor the solidarity that thieves expect of one another and that the police tacitly respect. The influence of the German anti-Nazi war painter George Grosz is more likely to have a greater impact on Llosa's attitude towards social authority and ranks of power here, since the writer seems to exonerate rebels in jest and to greet with wrath all the social and political structures whose mission is to use coercion towards adaptation. Llosa probably felt their compelling strategy as contrary to the strife of integrating the youth in society.

There has been great talk about Llosa's fluctuating career between his political convictions in the 1960s, when a certain Romantic attitude towards political order and social structures was in place, and the later bourgeois/capitalistic political creed from the 1970s onwards, when Llosa's literature suffered an inexplicable

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<sup>19</sup> To exemplify, Kristal explores (p. 30) Llosa's first indigenista story, *i.e.*, *The Younger Brother*, where two Peruvian aristocratic brothers kill an Indian believed to have forced himself on their sister. Finding out that the rape was a mere capricious lie, the younger brother decides to set free other Indians in compensation for his murder. Here, the concept of rebellion is on the Indians part, as he defies the rule by not giving up his principles.

<sup>20</sup> See Efrain Kristal, *Temptation of the word*, 31.

fixation on high culture prerogatives. As a scholar in literary theory, M. Keith Booker makes a critical approach of Llosa's 1970s prose, and the conclusion he reaches helps us discern between Llosa the modernist and Llosa the postmodernist. In short, Booker takes a stand against the idea that Llosa gave prominence to his political creed in his novels, rather to literary-aesthetic criteria by which to express his opinion towards the social-political situation of Peru.

Booker exemplifies by two of Llosa's outstanding novels of the late 1960s-late 1970s, where Llosa takes into account the young generation of Peru by questioning its capacity to make a good use of the mass culture widely spread through all levels of society.<sup>21</sup> While confronting Llosa's work and its potential through *Captain Pantoja* and *The Green House* to reach the masses that matter (*i.e.*, the youth), Booker makes the assumption that "the relative accessibility of *Captain Pantoja*...increases the effectiveness of its critique of Peruvian society (and Western bourgeois society in general) by virtue of the simple fact that more people will be able and willing to read it. But one should be cautious in jumping to the conclusion that *The Green House* is a pompous product of modernist cultural elitism while *Captain Pantoja* is the down-to-earth carnivalesque fruit of the kinds of subversive folk energies privileged by Bakhtin... Huysen's distinction of the Great Divide between "high" and "low" culture simply does not apply to these two opposing texts... While it is true that mass culture (radio, newspaper reports) plays a much more prominent role in *Captain Pantoja*, it is also true that the book takes a highly critical stance toward the mass cultural materials that it employs, suggesting that the media of popular culture are more a part of the problem than of any potential solution."<sup>22</sup>

With these two novels, Llosa touched a sensitive string concerning nowadays adolescents and youth social problems. It is rather a problem born out of more flexible ways of spending time and entering relationships, which in Llosa's thought only democracy

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<sup>21</sup> M. Keith Booker, *Vargas Llosa among the Postmodernists* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1994), 41.

<sup>22</sup> M. Keith Booker, *Vargas Llosa among the Postmodernists*, 41.

was able to offer. Llosa simply does not discuss whether or not popular culture has some degree of dignity (*i.e.*, if the Indian Peruvian culture is worth the trouble or not), since another question troubles him, namely whether the newly installed mass-media is able to provide for Peruvian youth as a whole. In Booker's words, Vargas Llosa's work ascertains that the relative values of postmodernism gave birth to a strong taste for popular culture which is not always beneficial or legitimate as an aesthetic resource. However, he concludes, he also suggests that "this acceptance grows not so much from an increase in democratic open-mindedness as from a decrease in artistic seriousness. Neither Vargas Llosa the modernist nor Vargas Llosa the postmodernist seems capable of taking popular culture seriously, but the latter appears to acknowledge that seriousness is not necessarily a prerequisite for importance"<sup>23</sup>. Vargas' later work, contrary to ideas about nowadays youth in Schillebeeckx or Kristeva, is highly skeptical of what he considers a negative example brought by contemporary culture into society, first on aesthetical grounds, and secondly because this kind of culture swipes the youth will to defy/revolt against void contents.

## **Conclusions**

While associating Modern theology with post-Modern psychoanalysis and literature in trying to investigate perception and influence they had on young audiences, we rested a bit on the fine differences emerging in the works of Kristeva, Schillebeeckx, and Llosa from their debut to later thoughts on this issue. We showed how at first Kristeva, a young immigrant herself in the 1960s Paris, wrote extensively on alterity/otherness/alienation/exile, with which she introduced in a very personal key some innovative elements for the study of psychoanalysis today. However, in recent studies Kristeva is shown to apply her investigative methods in physical therapy, an issue that tackles the new wave of psychoanalytic interpretation of narratives and proposes such concepts as semiotics,

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<sup>23</sup> M. Keith Booker, *Vargas Llosa among the Postmodernists*, 41.

abjection, love, revolt, gender, feminism, and politics to further her psychoanalytic endeavors. The latter concepts are especially related to particular problems of young generations, therefore in our opinion this shift was necessary for a theorist as Kristeva more likely on social grounds than as a clinical emergency. The same shift can be noticed in relation to Schillebeeckx and Llosa's works, which by the end of their respective careers question the social reform of the church and state while closely investigating the message and changes made in favor of young people. This preoccupation with the youth, we think, has a double meaning: first, the three of them are intuitive about the role of young men and women in society. Secondly, however, and we find this to be a rather personal attitude in their case, young minds are sought as cradles for their writing as they perceive the mentioned topics to be vital for their own identity, thus they will continue to rebel and seek reform.

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