

**Słowa kluczowe:** dusza, zmysły, immaterializm, Bóg

**Keywords:** soul, senses, immaterialism, God

*Elżbieta Kotkowska*<sup>1</sup>

ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY, POZNAŃ, POLAND

ORCID: 0000-0001-8807-882X

# THE ROLE OF THE SENSES IN ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA'S IMMATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF MAN<sup>2</sup>

St. Gregory<sup>3</sup> lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and was the bishop of Nyssa. He notably participated in the Council of Constantinople (381), where he contributed to the final determination of the creed called the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith. On account of his monism, Gregory is also the Church Father, one finds in many studies related to the history of philosophy<sup>4</sup>.

1 Elżbieta Kotkowska is a professor at Adam Mickiewicz University, serving in the Department of Philosophy and Dialogue at the Faculty of Theology (2/4 Wieżowa Str., 61-111 Poznań, Poland). Her research primarily focuses on patristics and fundamental theology. She explores the historical and salvific processes of the early Christian era and examines the role of new apologetics in addressing contemporary questions of human identity. Her work emphasizes the intersection of historical theology and modern challenges, offering a robust framework for understanding early Christian thought and its relevance today (e-mail: elzbieta.kotkowska@amu.edu.pl).

2 This article is an extended version of a paper presented at the international conference "The Senses of Christianity," which was organized by the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University's Centre for Interdisciplinary Humanistic Studies in Poznań on November 29–30, 2023.

3 Born in Caesarea, Cappadocia (c. 335–c. 395), Gregory was the grandson of Saint Macrina the Elder, son of Saint Emilia, and brother of saints Basil the Great, Peter of Sebaste, and Macrina the Younger.

4 Gregory explained the existence of the universe in the spirit of immaterialism. This is similar to the view of Berkeley ([1881] 2002, p. 3), who was active in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This is, however, not a very popular interpretation today. Yet, both philosophers became involved in the philosophical disputes of their time, seeking answers to the question of what reality (defined as *matter*) is and how it exists. Both denied the real existence of matter, although their philosophical justifications stemmed from different positions.

Gregory also developed a coherent, historical-salvific vision of the universe, one in which spiritual reality is more important than the material. But the material reality is, however, not depreciated due to the resurrection. According to Gregory, the senses play an essential role in understanding the material world. They are, however, insufficient to fully know and understand the immaterial world, let alone God. Gregory interpreted the senses as tools of the immaterial soul, but these tools require supervision. Through the mind (νοῦς), the soul interacts with its senses and understands the material world in a rational way. On Gregory's account, perception of the external world is prone to error because, through their sensuality, humans are akin to the animal world. Gregory presented this idea by allegorically interpreting the "garments of skins" that man received after the fall. Thus, human sensuality is a task for him on the way to God. Nonetheless, a question arises as to how Gregory, using the science of his time, described the relations between soul, mind, and senses to show that the senses play a significant but auxiliary role in human life during the pursuit of God.

## PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Similar to almost all the Greek Church Fathers, St. Gregory of Nyssa was a Platonist—a theologian for whom Platonism and Neoplatonism (Daniélou, 1994) provide the right answer to the question "*What is?*" Gregory nonetheless took into account the data from revelation. He was a continuator of the church scholar Origen's thought. Gregory is heteronomous in his philosophy, which means that, in his cogitations, he takes into account conclusions from the 3rd-century bishops' epistolary achievements. He refers to decisions taken during synods, including the synod held in 325, which was later called the Council of Nicaea, and was, therefore, not autonomous in his philosophical views. What gave Gregory a prominent place in philosophy is his consistent immaterialism, along with his philosophical monism (Ross, 1995).

Gregory asked the following question: How was immaterial God, who is a spirit, able to create the material world? In his conception of creation, which was based on the Book of Genesis, he posits that, in the first act of creation, the whole universe was conceived in the divine Mind (Νοῦς). He opposed views rooted in Hellenistic culture and maintained that God does not need an intermediate material, which is matter, to bring the changing universe into existence. This is because "everything that subsists through creation has connection with change, inasmuch as the subsistence itself of the creation had its rise in change, that which was not passing by the Divine power into that which is (Gregory, 1995c, p. 6)". In God, ideas arise. Through His will and due to the Word (Λόγος), these ideas are expressed externally.

Gregory thus combined his philosophical thought (in the spirit of Plato and his successors) with data from revelation. He concluded that, since ideas stem from, and were conceived in the *Noûs* of the immaterial God, they are, of course, immaterial. Hence, the entire created world is also immaterial in its existential basis. The Church Father also became involved in discussions related to matter at that time. He did not agree with the views of the Gnostics, who needed a demiurge shaping eternal matter to create a world known by the senses (Moore 1995). For Gregory, the eternity of shapeless matter is impossible because only God is the one that *is* (i.e., eternal) (Gregory, 1995a, p. 24). Gregory was very consistent in his Platonic convictions and did not follow Origen's view that accidents formed the first matter (i.e., the substance formed by these features so that it could later become a material universe). Indeed, Gregory denied the existence of the first matter altogether (Przyszychowska 2006 p. 120). The substance—as the basis of variation—does not have a real existence. It is constituted as a concept and not a real being by those features (i.e., categories that we observe in the material world). Gregory states:

For after all that opinion on the subject of matter does not turn out to be beyond what appears consistent, which declares that it has its existence from Him Who is intelligible and immaterial. For we shall find all matter to be composed of certain qualities, of which if it is divested it can, in itself, be by no means grasped by idea ([1893] 1995a, p. 24).

The substance is not directly cognizable. What is cognizable are accidents, which means that the existence of the substance cannot be determined<sup>5</sup>. Following Plato's thought and the spirit of monism (extreme idealism) (Daniélou 1975, p. 52; Przyszychowska 2006, p. 120), Gregory insisted on the spiritual unity of the universe. Following Aristotle's thought, he argued that what we observe are the features<sup>6</sup> of a given thing and only they are observable<sup>7</sup>. According to Gregory, "that not one of those things which we attribute to body is itself body; [...] but every one of them is a category; it is the combination of them all into a single whole that constitutes body ([1893] 1995b, p. 457)".

5 According to Balthasar ([1942] 1988, 22–23), Gregory's vision of reality falls between the views of Plato and Aristotle.

6 Gregory used the Stoic term "ποιότης" here.

7 Gregory accepted the distinction Aristotle proposed, thereby recognizing the categories referred to as accidents (e.g. relationship, quality, place, time, action, passion) (Studtmann 2007; Ross 1995).

The above reasoning can be summed up using the Church Father's words:

Seeing, then, that these several qualifications which complete the particular body are grasped by thought alone, and not by sense, and that the Deity is a thinking being, what trouble can it be to such a thinking agent to produce the thinkables whose mutual combination generates *for us* the substance of that body? ([1893] 1995a: 24) <sup>8</sup>.

Matter does not have real existence. Hence, we can rather talk about 'cognizable materiality.' Matter perceived through the senses but interpreted in the mind (understood as νοῦς) is of great importance for an interpretation of the role of the senses in human life and getting to know the surrounding world. In the theological sense, man was created by God, who breathed the spirit of life into him and made him in his own image (Gen 1:26; ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν ἡμετέραν). In the Hellenistic world, the term "soul" (ψυχή) was used to answer the question of who man is. This means that we can offer an answer to the question of who Gregory thinks man is.

## WHO IS MAN?

According to Gregory, man is a spirit or, more precisely, a soul (ψυχή), one that expresses itself externally through the materiality that the senses (αἰσθήσεως) belong to. This is because the soul is "an essence created, and living, and intellectual, transmitting from itself to an organized and sentient body the power of living and of grasping objects of sense, as long as a natural constitution capable of this holds together (Gregory, [1893] 1995b, p. 433; Hoffner, 2006, p. 88)".

During the life given to man, thanks to the senses, he communicates with himself, others, the world, and God. The key issue then is to examine the relationship between what is spiritual and what is perceived as material. Gregory distinguished two orders of the cognition of reality because the soul (ψυχή) and materiality cognized by the senses (αἰσθήσεως) belong to two different spheres of existence<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Regarding the materiality of man and the universe, Gregory stated as follows: "Yet if the perception of these properties is a matter of intellect, and the Divinity is also intellectual in nature, there is no incongruity in supposing that these intellectual occasions for the genesis of bodies have their existence from the incorporeal nature, the intellectual nature on the one hand giving being to the intellectual potentialities, and the mutual concurrence of these bringing to its genesis the material nature".

<sup>9</sup> In the latter part of this article—when writing about the soul [ψυχή], the mind [νοῦς], and the senses [αἰσθήσεως]—we will understand them according to the Greek from Gregory's time.

Following Aristotle<sup>10</sup>, Gregory introduced various aspects of the description of the soul and distinguished three types of life forces in it. The first one “is only a power of growth and nutrition supplying what is suitable for the support of the bodies that are nourished, which is called the vegetative soul (Gregory, [1893] 1995a, p. 8)”. Continuing this thought, Gregory argued that

there is another form of life besides this, which, while it includes the form above mentioned, is also possessed in addition of the power of management according to sense; and this is to be found in the nature of the irrational animals: for they are not only the subjects of nourishment and growth, but also have the activity of sense and perception ([1893] 1995a, p. 8).

“[T]he third type of life force is: perfect bodily life is seen in the rational (I mean the human) nature, which both is nourished and endowed with sense, and also partakes of reason and is ordered by mind ([1893] 1995a, p. 8)”<sup>11</sup>. This methodical classification is only for a better understanding of internal communication between significantly different spheres of existence. The Church Father further stipulated as follows: “[L]et no one suppose on this account that in the compound nature of man there are three souls welded together, contemplated each in its own limits, so that one should think man’s nature to be a sort of conglomeration of several souls (Gregory, [1893] 1995a, p. 14; Przyszychowska, 2006, p. 10)”.

According to the biblical message, man is a psychophysical unity. However, this unity is very dynamic. It features relationships that occur through specific communication channels between vegetative, sensory, and rational aspects. The key to our inquiries is Gregory’s belief that

the human mind (νοῦς) being a discoverer of all sorts of conceptions, seeing that it is unable, by the mere soul (ψυχή), to reveal to those who hear by bodily senses (αἰσθησεως) the motions of its understanding, touches, like some skilful composer, these animated instruments, and makes known its hidden thoughts by means of the sound produced upon them ([1893] 1995a, p. 8; Gregorius, 1863a, p. 8)<sup>12</sup>.

10 Aristotle distinguished three aspects of the soul, combining functions such as vegetative, sensual, and a thinking soul, which denotes the power of cognition and understanding (Przyszychowska 2006: 10).

11 Gregory concluded that “[f]or this rational animal, man, is blended of every form of soul ([1893] 1995a: 8)”.

12 Here, we have an appreciation of the material aspect of human life, which was fully revealed in the Son of God’s incarnation.

Here, we have three elements: the soul (*ψυχή*), the mind (*νοῦς*), and the senses (*αἰσθήσεως*). Being, in essence, a soul, man can only express and get to know himself through the material world. He also discerns data through his mind. Gregory emphasized that the mind is “a thing intelligible and incorporeal ([1893] 1995a, p. 9)”, just like the soul. However, the mind’s communication with the soul—as the principle of life—can only take place through the senses. For Gregory, one cannot omit the materiality given to man as a body and the entire created universe. The senses provide a person with appropriate stimuli; they transmit data that are interpreted in the mind. Gregory further stated that the immaterial mind “distributes itself into faculties of sensation, and duly receives, by means of each, the knowledge of things ([1893] 1995a, p. 11)”. It is worth mentioning that the mind does not have a specific place in the body. Gregory rebukes those who proclaim such a belief:

Let there be an end, then, of all the vain and conjectural discussion of those who confine the intelligible energy to certain bodily organs; of whom some lay it down that the ruling principle is in the heart, while others say that the mind resides in the brain, strengthening such opinions by some plausible superficialities ([1893] 1995a, p. 12; Höffner 2006, p. 92).

The action of the mind is externalized through the senses, but is, itself, akin to the spiritual basis of all existence. In answering the question of who Gregory thought man is, it should be stated that man is a soul endowed with senses. Through the mind, man should appropriately direct these senses. They are the vessels through which the soul expresses itself outwardly.

The role of the senses in human life is an important topic for St. Gregory. Based on the knowledge available at that time, he endeavored to understand how the human body works. He also tried to understand how the soul (*ψυχή*)—which ensures human life through rationality (the rational part of the soul)—gets to know itself and how it expresses itself in desires through so-called motions<sup>13</sup>. Gregory asked himself a question about how man uses his mind (*νοῦς*) to reach toward both the truth of creation and an understanding of the world given to us by God. For this reason, the role of the senses as tools of the human soul became important to Gregory, especially since God endowed human nature with senses. According to Gregory,

13 As a self-taught man, Gregory reached an impressive level of technical, biological, and psychological knowledge (even in today’s understanding of these terms). He was also familiar with the medicine of his time. (Przyszychowska, 2006, pp. 36–37).

we are in touch with those things which affect our life in many ways by means of our senses; for there is one faculty, the implanted mind (νοῦς) itself, which passes through each of the organs of sense and grasps the things beyond: this it is that, by means of the eyes, beholds what is seen; this it is that, by means of hearing, understands what is said; that is content with what is to our taste, and turns from what is unpleasant; that uses the hand for whatever it wills, taking hold or rejecting by its means, using the help of the organ for this purpose precisely as it thinks expedient ([1893] 1995a, p. 6; Gregorius 1863a, p. 6).

With typical scientific zeal, Gregory analysed how communication between the mind and the senses proceeds, how a person copes with a great deal of stimuli and information, and how the soul (albeit immaterial) understands the material world. He also invoked the thoughts of Cicero and Lactantius<sup>14</sup> to compare the mind to a city with many gates. Newcomers enter through the gates with a specific aim—some to visit a market and some to go to theatres or houses. According to Gregory, “some such city of our mind I seem to discern established in us, which the different entrances through the senses keep filling, while the mind, distinguishing and examining each of the things that enters, ranks them in their proper departments of know ([1893] 1995a, p. 10)”. One thing can, then, be known through several senses (Gregory [1893] 1995a, p. 9): “For when one sees honey, and hears its name, and receives it by taste, and recognizes its odour by smell, and tests it by touch, he recognizes the same thing by means of each of his senses (Gregory, [1893] 1995a, p. 10)”. Sensations can also be evoked from all the senses on the basis of one. For people of Hellenistic culture (primarily an oral culture), natural or learned synaesthesia was familiar.

In conclusion, the functioning of the senses is dependent on the soul, which is the principle of life. At the same time, in its rational aspect, the soul interprets and recognizes what is in man and what is outside. It is necessary to judge rationally (according to a cognitive aspect) to avoid being deceived or even cheated by the senses. Man can thereby prevent desires and passions from dominating his rationality and blurring the aim for which he was created. Gregory argued as follows: “[I]t to be true that the intellectual part of the soul is often disturbed by prevalence of passions (παθημάτων); and that the reason is blunted (τὸ διανοητικὸν τῆς ψυχῆς) by some bodily accident so as to hinder its natural operation ([1893] 1995a, p. 12; Gregorius, 1863a, p. 12)”. In this way, the Church Father’s statement brings us to an important aspect of human sensuality, one that is closely related to desires and

14 Gregory took over images from Hellenistic culture, which St. Paul the Apostle also used in his missionary work.



passions. Through the senses, man sees things and relations that become the object of his desires. His task is then to shape them toward the implementation of the over-riding goal, which is union with God.

The mind is the boundary between the spiritual and material worlds. God, says Gregory, created man by “blending the Divine with the earthy, that by means of both he may be naturally and properly disposed to each enjoyment, enjoying God by means of his more divine nature, and the good things of earth by the sense that is akin to them ([1893] 1995a, p. 333)”. The human mind (i.e., the rational aspect of the soul) can, therefore, be interpreted as belonging to a border zone of sorts. On the one hand, it reaches toward the Mystery and is, in this sense, incognizable. On the other hand, thanks to sensory abilities, it enhances the cognition of the world. A full experiential and cognitive area, therefore, opens up to man. In the act of creation, God endowed man not only with mind (νοῦς) but also wisdom (φρόνησις). This endowment is special: “[W]e cannot strictly say that He gave, but that He imparted (μετέδωκε) them, adding to the image the proper adornment of His own nature (Gregory, [1893] 1995a, p. 12; Gregorius, 1863a; p. 12)”.

As a soul, man participates in divine incognisable nature through the mind and wisdom. This means that, as His image, man is not fully cognizable to himself: Man would not be fully the image of God (Gen 1:26) “if, while the archetype transcends comprehension, the nature of the image were comprehended, the contrary character of the attributes we behold in them would prove the defect of the image (Gregory, [1893] 1995a, p. 11)”. Being this image (εἰκόνα) is an indelible gift, even after the first fall of humanity, but man still has the task of becoming God’s likeness (ὁμοίωσιν). Wisdom—as understood by people of Gregory’s time—is not only knowledge. Learnedness is not enough to become wise. The moral attitude determines wisdom, which results from a relationship with God. And, thanks to this relationship, man becomes the likeness. Man becomes deified (θεοποιηθῶμεν) because God shares his mind and wisdom with people through this likeness (Athanasius, 1857, p. 192B). In this case, the desire (ἐπιθυμία) for knowledge and wisdom brings man closer to the aim set by God.

On the way to God, one of man’s tasks is to master control of desires (ἐπιθυμίες) and passions (πάθη) through wisdom. After the fall, this brought man closer to the nature of irrational animals (Gregorius, 1866, p. 61; Gregory, [1893] 1995b, pp. 440–441; Höffner, 2006, p. 90). Desires and passions can, however, make this task very difficult because the relationships between both levels of existence (spiritual and material) have been disturbed. Gregory notes that through materiality, and especially through the senses, man connects with the animal world and its consequences. Gregory makes the point as follows:

But since, according to the view which we have just enunciated, it is not possible for this reasoning faculty to exist in the life of the body without existing by means of sensations, and since sensation is already found subsisting in the brute creation, necessarily as it were, by reason of this one condition, our soul has touch with the other things which are knit up with [animal nature] ([1893] 1995b, p. 442).

Further, for Gregory, we call these animal properties

passions (πάθος); which have not been allotted to human nature for any bad purpose at all (for the Creator would most certainly be the author of evil, if in them, so deeply rooted as they are in our nature, any necessities of wrong-doing were found), but according to the use which our free will puts them to, these emotions of the soul become the instruments of virtue or of vice ([1893] 1995b, p. 442).

It is important to emphasize that, even though sensuality connects man with the world of animals, sensuality is a gift and a task. Through this, man can reach the fullness of God's likeness. Man can become deified ( π μ ) despite his relationship with animal nature and emerging desires and passions.

### THE "GARMENTS OF SKINS" (Ο ΔΕΡΜΑΤΙΝΟΣ ΧΙΤΩΝΑΣ)

To clarify man's task regarding his own sensuality, St. Gregory provided an elaborate interpretation of a passage from the Book of Genesis. There, God gives people garments made of skin when they are forced to leave their place of creation (i.e., Paradise) (Gen 3:21). For Gregory, Christianity is not a utopia, and he realistically examines the condition of man in the world. Gregory argues as follows:

For after, as [Moses] tells us, the earliest of mankind were brought into contact with what was forbidden, and thereby were stripped naked of that primal blessed condition, the Lord clothed these, His first-formed creatures, with coats of skins (δερμάτινους ἐπιβάλλει χιτῶνας). In my opinion, we are not bound to take these skins in their literal meaning [...] But since all skin, after it is separated from the animal, is dead, I am certainly of opinion that He Who is the healer of our sinfulness, of His foresight invested man subsequently with that capacity of dying which had been the special attribute of the brute creation. Not that it was to last for ever; for a coat is

something external put on us, lending itself to the body for a time but not indigenous to its nature (Gregory, [1893] 1995c, p. 8; Gregorius 1863b, p. 33C).

Gregory explained the excerpt from the Book of Genesis in an allegorical fashion. He links animal skin with mortality and decomposition of the body after physical death, which man has in common with the animal world (Naumowicz, 2010, pp. 273–274): “This liability to death, then taken from the brute creation, was, provisionally, made to envelope the nature created for immortality. It wrapped it externally, but not internally. It grasped the sentient part of man; but laid no hold upon the Divine image (Gregory, [1893] 1995c, p. 8)”. To fully understand Gregory’s argument, we should note that the Church Fathers writing in Greek understood human nature differently from the Latin Fathers (Kotkowska, 1999). Human nature, according to the Greek Fathers, is understood as an ontic unity and includes both mental and divine life, that is, a dynamic relationship toward the Triune One. Anticipating the fall, God “added” materiality in the act of creation and, with it, sensory life and the senses through which man expresses himself. Desires and passions are inseparably intertwined with sensuality.

Gregory interpreted “skin garments” as a kind of “place” for the effects of man’s erroneous decisions—decisions that result from subjecting mental nature to animal nature. Due to this, sin does not violate what Gregory identifies with the image of God in man (i.e., the rational soul [mind] and a relationship with God). The course of Gregory’s reasoning can be seen in the interpretation of the resurrection that follows death and the body’s physical decomposition. The decomposition of the body after death is necessary because

wickedness has intermingled with our [man’s] sentient part, I mean that connected with the body, [God] will dissolve the material which has received the evil, and re-moulding it again by the Resurrection without any admixture of the contrary matter will recombine the elements into the vessel in its original beauty (Gregory, [1893] 1995c, p. 8).

After the death of man, the body decomposes, and with it the skin garments<sup>15</sup>. The evil man has accumulated then evaporates. And, during the resurrection, the soul regains its body (i.e., its material expression) along with the senses

15 Garments made of skin are also an image of all human physical development, physiology, and sexuality.

without being burdened with evil (i.e., sins)<sup>16</sup>. Thus, both the senses and the associated materiality (cleansed of evil desires and passions) will share in the resurrection.

We can see that, for Gregory, all gifts—both spiritual and material—were given to man with a good and wise aim, even when they do not belong to his essence. Gregory explained as follows:

Supposing, then, that our reason, which is our nature's choicest part, holds the dominion over these imported emotions (as Scripture allegorically declares in the command to men to rule over the brutes), none of them will be active in the ministry of evil; fear will only generate within us obedience, and anger fortitude, and cowardice caution; and the instinct of desire will procure for us the delight that is Divine and perfect ([1893] 1995b, p. 441)".

Thus, each of the soul's negative motions—as triggered by the senses—can be transformed into good and lead to building a fuller likeness (ὁμοίωσις) to God, that is, to deification (θεοποίηθῶμεν).

## CONCLUSION

In answering the question of what role the senses play in St. Gregory's immaterialist concept of reality, one must note the following: First, the senses are a link between the rational soul (i.e. the mind) and the soul understood integrally; second, the senses are useful tools thanks to which communication between the two spheres of existence—spiritual and material—is possible; and, third, the senses are a task for a person who, thanks to reason and acquired wisdom, assesses the quality of pertinent information, motions, desires, and passions. According to Gregory, man's ultimate task is to renew the image—to become the likeness by constantly exceeding his own limitations (both physical and spiritual). Human actions permeated with wisdom in both spheres of existence transform not only man but the entire universe (Kotkowska, 2003, pp. 170–179; Höffner, 2006, p. 98). And, after the resurrection and the world's renewal, the senses will have a role to play. According to Gregory, having reached his goal, man will look toward God and never cease to desire Him (Naumowicz, 2010, pp. 470–474). Indeed, seeing and desire are not possible without the sensuality that belongs to man.

16 This interpretation is possible on the assumption that, in essence, evil is non-being. All is beautiful and good that is closely related to the First Good; but, that which departs from its relation and likeness to this is devoid of beauty and goodness (Gregory [1893] 1995a: 12). Everything devoid of good and beauty (i.e. a relationship with God) ceases to exist in the resurrection.

## References

- Athanasius of Alexandria. (1857). *De incarnatione Verbi Dei*, PG 25. In: *Patrologie Coursus Completus Graeca* 26. Paris: Migne, Paul, Jacques, p. 983–1028.
- Balthasar, H. U. ([1942] 1988). *Présence et pensée: essai sur la philosophie religieuse de Grégoire de Nysse*, Paris: G. Beauchesne.
- Berkeley, G. ([1881] 2002). *A treatise concerning the principles of human knowledge*. Dublin: David R. Wilkins. Accessed at: <https://www.maths.tcd.ie/~dwilkins/Berkeley/HumanKnowledge/1734/HumKno.pdf> (27.01.2024).
- Daniélou, J. (1944). *Platonisme et théologie mystique: essai sur la doctrine spirituelle de Saint Grégoire de Nysse*. Paris: Aubier.
- Daniélou, J. (1967). *Les tuniques de peau chez Grégoire de Nysse*. In: *Glaube, Geist, and Geschichte. Festschrift für Ernst Benz zum 60. Geburtstag*, (hrsg.) G. Müller, W. Zeller, Leiden: Brill, s. 355–367.
- Daniélou, J. (1975). *Le IV<sup>e</sup> siècle: Grégoire de Nysse et son milieu*. Paris: Institut catholique.
- Gregory of Nyssa. ([1893] 1995a). *On the making of man*. In: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2*, vol. 5: New York: Schaff, Philip, p. 387–427.
- Gregory of Nyssa. ([1893] 1995b). *On the Soul and the Resurrection*. In: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2*, vol. 5: New York: Schaff, Philip, p. 427–468.
- Gregory of Nyssa. ([1893] 1995c). *The Great Catechism*. In: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2*, Vol. 5: New York: Schaff, Philip, p. 471–507
- Gregory of Nyssa. (1960). *In Canticum Canticorum*. In: *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol.VI, Leiden: Brill.
- Gregorius Nyssenus. (1863a). *De hominis opificio*. In: *Patrologie Coursus Completus Graeca* 44. Paris: Migne, Paul, Jacques, p. 124–256.
- Gregorius Nyssenus. (1863b). *Oratio catechetica magna*. In: *Patrologie Coursus Completus Graeca* 45. Paris: Migne, Jacques Paul, p. 9-106.
- Gregorius Nyssenus. (1866). *De anima et resurrectione dialogus*. In: *Patrologie Coursus Completus Graeca* 46. Paris: Migne, Jacques Paul, p. 11–160.
- Höffner, M. (2006). *Dusza i ciało w antropologii Grzegorza z Nyssy*. *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Studia Religioznologiczne*, 39, p. 81–100.
- Kotkowska, E. (1999). *Dlaczego JA mam cierpieć za grzechy jakiegoś tam Adama i Ewy*. *Katecheta*, 6, p. 59-61.
- Kotkowska, E. (2003). *Pomyśleć świat jako całość według św. Grzegorza z Nyssy*. Poznań: Księgarnia Św. Wojciecha.
- Moore, E. (1995). *Gnosticism*. In: *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed at: <https://iep.utm.edu/gnostic/> (27.01.2024).
- Naumowicz, J. (2010). „Szaty ze skór”: kara czy ratunek dla człowieka? *Patrystyczna*

- interpretacja Rdz 3, 21. Vox Patrum*, 55, p. 463–475.
- Origen. (1857). *Patrologie Coursus Completus Graeca 11*. Paris: Migne, Jacques Paul, p. 115–415.
- Przyszychowska, M. (2006). *Wstęp, tłumaczenie, przypisy*. In: Grzegorz z Nyssy. (2006). *O stworzeniu człowieka*. Kraków: WAM, s. 5–38; 47–149.
- Ross, D. L. (1995). Gregory of Nyssa. In: *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed at: <https://iep.utm.edu/gregoryn/> (27.01.2024).
- Studtmann, P. (2007). *Aristotle's categories*. In: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-categories/> (27.01.2024).

# THE ROLE OF THE SENSES IN ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA'S IMMATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF MAN

## SUMMARY

St. Gregory of Nyssa is a representative of philosophical immaterialism with theological justification. He is one of the first philosophers to treat philosophy more creatively than apologetically in the revelatory context. For him, man is a spirit just like God the Creator. However, the soul expresses itself externally and people communicate with each other through the senses. The following key questions then come to the fore: In his immaterialist vision of reality, how does Gregory present and justify the role of the senses in relation to the Greek interpretation of  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ? And why is the role of the senses only auxiliary in true knowledge that goes beyond what is visible and tangible?

*Article submitted: 28.09.2024; accepted: 19.11.2024.*