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THE DISPUTE BETWEEN POLITICAL
THEOLOGY AND THE POLITICS OF
THEOLOGY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST
CENTURY ON THE MEANINGS OF
THE POSTMODERN GLOBALIZING
AND INDIVIDUALISTIC SOCIETY AND
THE CHRISTIAN PERSONALIST
GLOBALITY

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Abstract

Upon the dawn of postmodernity, in the twenty-first century, *we witness the emergence of a new way of thinking and of new forms of culture and life, under the ideology of globalism, whose dominance is given by the practicality and utility related to civilization, and under globality, which is the cultural aspect of globalization, pertaining to the field of culture. The two dimensions of globalization and globality, civilizational and cultural, will (re)question the principle relationship between Christianity and the new postmodern globalizing utopia, requiring to (re)consider the sense and presence of Christianity within the world, and the appropriate sociological figure of the Church, within the new reality of global and globalized humanity, in the postmodern public space. This paper deals with this ideology - globalism and the cultural manifestation of globality, and with the Orthodox answer to the new challenge of individualism and postmodern globalizing (neo)collectivism.*

1. Preliminary considerations

At the end of modernity, in the twentieth century (Popescu D., 2005), and the beginning of global postmodernity (Lyotard J.F., 1979), in the twenty-first century, we witnessed the emergence of a new society and of a new type of man, at a planetary scale. This socio-economic and existential event was marked by an explosion of new technologies benefiting from the information revolution and from promoting an economic and ultra-liberal ideology of the global free market and a postmodern multiculturalism. The cultural and practical theoretical expression of this event was the final result of the contemporary ultra-liberal political and economic symbiosis with the new (neo)collectivist ideology, concentrated in the dictum that nothing is totally bad nor absolutely good (in between), everything being relative and fleeting. We live in a seemingly organized world, which is scary and haunting, which makes the transition from a consumer market to a consumer society, characterized by the replacement of the existing modern socio-economic mechanisms with the new mechanisms of the global market, subject to the law of demand and supply. However, it has a tragic end, represented by the emergence of an irrational trend, manifested as a metastasis of devouring and globalizing trans-economies, in violation of its own objective laws regarding the development triggered by the modern triad, i.e. Market-Product-Profit/added Value. The result? We are witnessing the emergence of a new totalitarianism, this time of economic nature, dictated by the media. In the new transition to the postmodern society, the entire Reality is subjected to a game of arbitrary rules, oscillating speculatively between excess and shortage, where all the forms of the values suggested by the modern society degrade within a world characterized by dissolution and indistinction, by random and permanent plurality. Within this new totalitarian regime, triggered by the market and the media, where only the market governs, and states are only managing the assets on their territories, we notice that it seeks only the purely economic efficientization, free from any human, social or cultural considerations. Therefore, we will reach the stage where, ultimately, we will abandon all the essential democracy principles and those of the social contract, imposed by the socio-political thinking of past social movements. We will further discuss this postmodern utopia, which triggers not only the annihilation of the personal diversity of individuals and the leveling of the modern traditional cultures – by substituting the myth of the continuous progress by the tyranny of mass-media communication, which invades all aspects of social life – but also the emergence of the new postmodern human being, emptied of

transcendence and uprooted from the natural Reality of the world created and (re)born from God.

2. Practical civilizing globalization and theoretical cultural globality

The beginning of the twenty-first century manifests itself under the sign of a new Reality, characterized by the emergence of a super-global culture, driven by postmodern utilitarian and hedonistic principles. The dynamics of these principles has, as main expression vectors, the globality – representing the cultural aspect of globalization and nexus to the field of culture – and globalization on a planetary scale, which is the practical and utilitarian aspect of globality, related to the field of civilization. The above two concepts, i.e. globalization and globality, are apparently distinguishable from one another. However, in fact, they have a homogeneous and universalist nature, dictatorially overlapping over particular cultures by their totalitarian nature (Popescu D., 2005). Their cohesiveness was provided, as Benjamin Barber said, by using communication, entertainment and commerce systems, aimed at shaping the world only from a human perspective, which wanted to turn it into an ideal and terrestrial dream world (Popescu D., 2005), without reporting it to the verticality of the Transcendence.

By the new global super-culture, which no longer wanted to reveal another side of the world in the variety and identity of particular cultures, in the unity in diversity of God's creation, the natural world will be considered a mere material reality, locked in its own autonomy, a world of spiritual and human realities isolated by human subjectivity. The symbols of the new global super-culture are the Internet, videos, television series, easy books, hard rock, Disneyland parks and McDonald restaurants, which exceed the national cultural specificity and induce a global way of life (Popescu D., 2005). Within the current imbalance of value systems, the globalization ideology is responsible for the current crisis of culture globality, which deepens increasingly in favor of civilization. This ideology is dominated by the lust of excessive consumption, interfering, at doctrinarian level, with the deconstructive influence of cultural-philosophical postmodernism. This ideology questions the traditions and values specific to the ethnic and national community. In these circumstances, as Jean Baudrillard wrote, we head toward a virtual and imaginary world (the new postmodern values of globalization), falling in an interminable abyss, losing the time dedicated to future perfection by missing the Christian eschatology, (re)inventing new origins of the past, which manifests itself in a permanent present-future. Movies such as *Jurassic Park* are

representative in this regard. This vision of the new world, obsessively focused on the individual and on his/her demiurgic economic powers, will trigger the belief in the existence of a continuous economic expansion, by intensifying production and consumption, leading to an endless accumulation of material goods (Fotiou S., 2008). Blinded by this Myth of Continuous Progress, we thus created a world only by the Image and Likeness of Man, by his Flesh and Pleasures, which, substituting in an extremely rapid pace, made the transition from the old acute crisis of modern values to the crisis of the unhealthy spiritual and economic excrescences of postmodernity.

Not incidentally, in such a new sick world, postmodernity represented the prosecution period of those who did not know to accommodate the modern values to current times. The failure to recreate the value-energetic stream of modernity values, ending up in substitutive and alienating postmodern values, was triggered by the dissolution of the old modern political ontology, by the split of national cultures and economies. The Truth of modern positivist lies was replaced by the ideological ultra-liberal Lie, the modern ethical Good being replaced by the social Evil of various individualistic manifestations of all kinds. The artistic Beauty was replaced by the “ugliness of the individual kitsch” (Nouss A., 2000), starting from the adage according to which beauty is not what is universally beautiful; it is what you like as an individual. In other words, we are witnessing, as I. Ramonet wrote, the creation of a new geo-politics of chaos (Ramonet I., 1998). It will be generated by the two dimensions of the new society, circumscribed to the religious-philosophical dualism and to the philosophical individualism (Fotiou S., 2008), which triggered the new voracious and devouring world (Ică I.Jr., 2005). Amid exacerbated mass consumption and endless selfishness, we notice that some people lack Bread and others lack Freedom. If, under the religious-philosophical dualism, we analyze, by means of reason, the three elements of the ontological Christian triad, God-Light-Nature, by the binary Manichean antagonistic relations – Man against God, Man against Man and Man against Nature –, the philosophical Individualism would give a final ideological shape to these binary inter-relationships presented above. This Individualism will propose a new definition of the relational and aggressive new cultural autarkic entity from the above triangle. This entity is seen as a closed one, appropriate only in statistics. Consequently, the individuals of the new postmodern world are not only in conflict with each other, but also in conflict with the nature, the vital space of one threatening the vital space of his/her peer, by self-promoting his/her own views at the expense of the other's freedom of opinion (Fotiou S., 2008).

This postmodern self-centered conception, with origins in various biological and sociological theories, sought to find a justification for the selfish and inhuman nature of the Man seen as the Almighty Demiurge. It started with the historical period of the Enlightenment, culminating in Darwin's era and his biological Darwinism, which promoted the theory of human evolution. Subsequently, we headed towards Nietzsche's social Darwinism, which would produce a real shock by promoting the new dimension of the Over-Man. By this biological and ideological substitution, the entire world was converted into a battleground, where not only do different components of the combatant parties face hostile positions, but they are also engaged in a merciless fight. The body enters into conflict with the soul, the reason with the feeling, the conscious with the unconscious, the man with the woman, the white with the black, the European with the African, the bourgeois capitalism with the working class (Fotiou S., 2008). Concretely, at the global level, it is found that the whole world is in an authenticity crisis, in search of the true human identity. The crisis that undermined both the modern conception of life – since the Enlightenment – is based on the classical physics epistemology, promoted by Isaac Newton and by the philosophers of the Enlightenment, and on the new global postmodern conception of the triad production-consumer-profit, which subordinated the historical destiny of the modernity of techno-science and media performance. When this new postmodern pseudo-vision came to the surface, the true facet of this Egocentric Power of the Father of Lies was uncovered. It will thus conquer and take possession of the object known – from the equation Subject-Person - the other Subject – which will be subject to the autonomous will of the man.

In other words, the constructive dialogue from Person to Person-Subject is perverted in the new postmodern (de)constructive dialogue by substituting the Person-Subject with Individual-Object to dominate, which narrows in a reductionist way the anthropological conception of the man. The man becomes, in these circumstances, a mere object to manipulate and dominate. From an image-potency of God, which is made perfect by and in totalizing life, in the communion of persons, brought by Lord Jesus Christ (Fotiou S., 2008), with the fulfillment in personal community, every man can become an image of the Image of God in history. We reached, through the new deconstructive dialogue, the state of the man without an image, in a society that is in a perpetual search for meaning and spiritual and material identity. From now on, the focus falls only on calculation, measurement and statistics, moving away from the quality of life revealed by the Christian metaphysics and spirituality, whose

values would be considered unnecessary in the new modern theoretical field of social sciences. The science that was given to the man, in cooperation with the Divine, came to be regarded as a utility tool; its value can be determined only if it becomes a domination tool and an absolute knowledge authority. In other words Science, or rather the techno-science, would become the new global Religion of the contemporary world (Fotiou S., 2008). Similarly, in nature, the demiurge man would see only an enormous territory that he/she can exploit endlessly. The Nature gives the impression of an inanimate object, of a possessed good, dominated and exploited. Currently, the Post-Modern man is trying, in these circumstances, to discard the meaning of the life given by Modern Individualism and by the abyss of the fight with the dualism of the nothingness that hurt him. Hence, he/she tries to find refuge, in order to escape in the human pseudo-religions that give him/her the illusion that they can take him/her out of this life without life. Therefore, the postmodern man will seek refuge in the pseudo-religious groups that abolish Person uniqueness and underestimate the historical process of human creation and evolution. These will trigger a limitless subjectivity and dissolution of the Soul-Body, of the Human Being in the Impersonal Essence of the Universe. These are the two postmodern reporting poles of the new Man Individual-Body. We are, therefore, again at a decisive turning point in the history of humanity, a turning interpreted by a multiplicity of subjective viewpoints (Fotiou S., 2008).

3. The orthodox answer to the great challenge of globalizing postmodern individualism and collectivism

In his work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Max Webber notices that, behind each theory on man and society, there has always been an ontological concept of Reality, which will match a particular utopian vision, a role model, based on an ontological foundation, from the specificity of the religious cultural orientation (Fotiou S., 2008). From the outset, we should note that, although we are at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a century of great expectations for many, we are already in a phase where the man has no image (Faros F., 2013) and no roots (Popescu D., 2005). Not incidentally, therefore, our research on civilizational globalization and cultural globality starts from the research conducted in the Anthropology/Christology of the Orthodox Church, which focuses on the constructive dimension of the Person (Hierotheos M., 2002). If Athens engendered the concept of Individual for ontological anthropology and the Ancient Rome engendered the concept of Citizen of the city, the Christian Church engendered the concept of Person to human existence and thought. As far as the

person is concerned, the relationships between God, Man and Nature are dialogic and inter-personal (Fotiou S., 2008) , (Zizioulas I., 1991), permanently open and constructive dialogues, simultaneously. From this perspective, as far as organization is concerned, all the cosmos elements can exist in harmony and there is nothing isolated; there is nothing in opposition to other components. Inside the cosmic processuality, which we call Life, everything tends toward transfiguration, using the uniqueness of the Holy Trinity and the hypostases of the Father Creator, Savior and Son of the Holy Spirit and Divine Providence. This transfigured life is seen as the harmonious Unity in the diversity of all parts of the whole.

This Unity, in Trinity, is articulated in the creaturely cosmos, because it is the mode of existence and sustenance of God Himself in the harmonious communion of the three Persons, of the Holy Trinity, where One is Three and Three is the divine One. This divine Trinity is, in other words, the Mystery of the Unique God, but three distinct hypostases united in an essence of sacred order, without subordination, equal in personal dignity as I-You-Him, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Although each Person is distinct – Father-Son-Holy Spirit –, They are in a supreme communion granted by the Eternal Perichoresis, which is in the communion of the Unification of Eternal Love. Thus, not coincidentally, the humankind has, as vocation, the deification/transfiguration/ becoming in accordance with the resemblance to the Holy Trinity of Life, in the fullness of the inter-relational communion with the world and nature. In this harmonious communion, every Man-Person is singular and unique, being, at the same time, in unity with the others. The equation terms that translate the Church ontology centered on the Person will be as follows: Existence, which means co-existence or Life in the fullness of the Love, edifying the Holy Trinity, which means Agapi – Love by the communion Sacrifice – where the other lives in me and I live in him. Savior Jesus Christ is the model par excellence that offers the participation in the dialogue of love-becoming of the unity of the triadic communion, starting from the harmonious unity with God, peer and nature. Christ is the Incarnation of Messianic Personalism and of Jesus the Man, who becomes the Theanthropic, the empirical proof that the Man can live according to his existential way (Fotiou S., 2008), (Himcinschi M., 2008). Father Dumitru Stăniloae, talking about the Holy Trinity and the inter-personal relationships within the Holy Trinity, saw it as a structure of supreme love. The Greek Metropolitan Zizioulas said, in this context, that the Christology developed by the Holy Fathers, especially by the Cappadocians of the fourth century, pursued in their works to show that this Holy Trinity had only

an existential purpose. These inter-personal triadic relationships are a model for the peace of the rest(less) man, who is represented not like a multifaceted mask, as in ancient tragedies, but as a Real Person, whereby the Theanthropic Jesus Christ brings us into history the reality of His Person, foundation and hypostasis of the person, for the fulfillment of every man (Zizioulas I., 1999) as image of God's Image in History.

If the individual is characterized by distance, separation and especially by the multi-division of masks, the Person is characterized by the relationship with the others, starting from the closeness and unity (Fotiu S., 2008) of the love dialogue I-You-Him. If the Individual enters a numerical category, becoming an impersonal object, by wearing different masks, and he/she can be replaced by other masks, the Person includes a unique being, with a unique human essence, and nobody and nothing can replace him/her, (re)comprising in himself/herself the entire world, his/her value being equal to the entire Cosmos (Fotiu S., 2008). The person is the horizon that reveals the Truth of Being, not as the mere nature subject to individualization and combination, but as a unique image of totality, embracing the entire world, according to the Holy Trinity model, with burning love. The person will become aware, *ad intra* and *ad extra*, of the unity of everything that exists. In the act of creation, where he/she is born, he/she tries to reach, by love – agapi – the *ad extra* universal unity (Fotiu S., 2008), (Zizioulas Ioannis, 1991). The Person's inner world is a world of agreement between the three parts of the soul, between Reason, Feeling and Will, through a metanoia that flows permanently in the heart's love, experienced outside through the good deeds of Man. It is an organism that pulsates and lives from psychosomatic exchanges (Fotiu S., 2008), (Himcinschi M., 2008). In the continuous flow of the entire life, these elements are (re)charging each other and enter into (inter)action, eliminating any dualism: biologic versus social, organic versus inorganic, theory versus practice (Fotiu S., 2008). In this context, the unilateral concepts about life can be overcome in the new Orthodox vision, if everything is programmed biologically, the totality as life remaining permanently open, in order to allow the Man, with religious roots, to use all his/her potential energies toward the likeness with God, as the image of the Divinity's Image in history. Only thus, by maintaining totalizing and inclusive relationships with their peers, men will be able to say that others' lives are essential parts of their lives (Fotiu S., 2008). Thus, they will live truly only when they give others a part of themselves; they will acquire by giving (Steindhardt N., 2006), and when you acquire, you will give in your turn. It is a vision of existence for our full religious (re)bound, perceived in the

globality of the tri-dimensional dialogue Divinity-Man-World, our own salvation being connected to the salvation of the other person from our life (Fotiu S., 2008).

4. Conclusions

The globalizing postmodernity provides two pseudo-solutions on man and society:

1. one solution invites us to renew our faith in the individual, based on a diffuse, polymorphic sacrum, in order to have a better understanding of the broader interests of the individual, on a long-term; this solution is equivalent to taking refuge in a future where it is believed that techno-science will play a messianic role.

2. the second solution predicts a return to pre-modern structures of social order, to the collectivist concepts of nation, race, guilds of humanity and life; this solution proposes a return to the past to find new roads, in order to rescue the society.

In contrast to these two options, Orthodox Christianity proposes, without imposing, a personalist vision that starts from the meditation on the anthropological-social-political implications of the fundamental mystery of Christian faith. This vision is (re)found in the Trinitarian theological model of the Holy Trinity and in the Christological-ecclesiological model, in terms of diversity in identity and multiplicity in unity. On the one hand, by the Trinity model, the Orthodoxy offers the eternal model of an open and dynamic identity, where unity is not confusion, and the difference is not division. On the other hand, by the Christological-ecclesiological model, universality is achieved in the (national-cultural) particular, it opens toward the universality of the human-divine world, by the Theanthropic Jesus Christ, Head of the Church, which He created and also continuously updates, until the end of time, through the seven Sacraments.

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in an inaccessible transcendence, the man becoming a rootless being.

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