

Postmodern Openings

ISSN: 2068 – 0236 (print), ISSN: 2069 – 9387
(electronic)

Covered in: Index Copernicus, Ideas RePeC,
EconPapers, Socionet, Ulrich Pro Quest, Cabell, SSRN,
Appreciative Inquiry Commons, Journalseek, Scipio,
CEEOL, EBSCO

Eschatology of Modern Totalitarianism and the Challenges of Globalization

Antoniu Alexandru FLANDORFER

Postmodern Openings, 2014, Volume 5, Issue 3,
September, pp: 37-47

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://postmodernopenings.com>

Published by:

Lumen Publishing House

On behalf of:

Lumen Research Center in Social and Humanistic Sciences

Eschatology of Modern Totalitarianism and the Challenges of Globalization

Antoniu Alexandru FLANDORFER¹

Abstract

Along his history, Man has always been mesmerized by the ideal of creating an earthly paradise out of his habitat, so he implemented the vector of progress by means of the particular Myth that was inherent to each epoch. Man's fascination with his exponential evolution in the world appeared with the industrial revolution that was gradually enhanced by the intrusion of politics. A mixture of political and socio-economic aspects was created with the sole purpose of consolidating such historical tendencies that led to the birth of the totalitarian regimes of the 20th c., taking the shapes of secular religions, (R. Aron), political / intra-mundane religions (E. Voegelin), religions of earthly redemption (E. Morin), ideologies of redemption (J. Freund). Nowadays, after the failure of politics, the semantic "pool" of collective imagination has received the addition of a new spasm of humankind that was generated by the following issues: the evolution of science up to a teleological praxis, the maximal efficiency of production leading to an inherent over-consumption, and, finally, the replacement of Christian morals by the ethical commandments of the society.

Our research constitutes a phenomenological analysis of totalitarianism and the dystopian challenges of Globalization.

We notice that both the Nazi or communist counter-utopias, and the present-day dystopia are the result of the secularization of religion; while the human being, stuck in a secular millenarianism, has sketched new coordinates in a godless environment. The solution to avoid humankind's own moral suicide is to be found not in the social hypostases of individual, but in the return to mysticism. It is therefore necessary to return to the archetype rather than to a prototype that is permanently cloned in the process of uniformization of the society as a result of standardization and in the atomization of the individual through digital socialization.

Keywords:

Totalitarianism, political religion, Overman, Nazism, utopia.

¹ Antoniu Alexandru FLANDORFER - PhD Candidate, University "Ștefan cel Mare", Suceava, Romania, tony_flandorfer@yahoo.co.uk, 0742209412.

From a political perspective, the ultimate historical factor in the evolution of humankind is socially circumscribed to progress, which shaped the hypostases of the individual under certain millenarist-utopian auspices. With the creation of this social vector, Man has undergone the stages of evolutionary initiation that were inherent to each of the àions. The entire phenomenon had an immutable manifestation, both from a political-economic perspective and from a social or tabooization one. Therefore, if we look at human history as a whole, the essence of social life is built on the foundation of progress, a notion that has an entelechial function. Progress, as a catalytic principle for the evolution of humankind, has been more pregnant in totalitarianist regimes, which used it as an ideological stimulant. Actually, progress is inherent to revolution, but totalitarianist regimes pose as redemptive ideologies based on social millennialism. Totalitarianist regimes manifest as pan-ideologies, as they are inherent to a political chiliasm, due to the utopian forms that help consolidate totalitarianism within collective mentality. Certainly, in theory we can speak about a Marxist ideology, however its social extinction, through Leninism and Bolshevism, cannot fit into the proto-doctrinary canon. The political heresy, conceptualized as the principle of the “permanent revolution”, can be decelled in both Leon Trotsky’s vision, as well as in the ideological suburbs of the national-socialist Weltanschauung. At present, humankind is crossing a teleological era in history, acquired through the progress of science, in which the individual is just as subject to atomization as he was in the totalitarianist regimes, and society is heading implicately towards global massification. This social and human phenomenon was caused by massive consumerism and patterning, the pillars of the politics of hegemony in globalization. In the present research paper we shall analyze, from the perspective of phenomenology, all the aspects that have led to the corrosion of the spiritual dimension of *Primordial Man*, as well as the tribulations of a humankind facing in ebullition the imminent Eschaton, or the end of history (Francis Fukuyama), the malignant causes of the Faustian desire to build the Civitas Dei on a mundane level.

1. Progress as an Ideological Mytheme of Modern Totalitarianist Regimes

Throughout the history of mankind, a reversible phenomenon occurred, namely the intrusion of the political factor into the religious

institution, within the inherent hierarchy of the Church. From the very beginning of the process of crystalization of traditional confessions at a social level, the secularization of religion acted as a means of coercion on the masses. The political and the religious praxis coincided with the junction between the religious and the social commandments. With the industrial revolution and the change of paradigm in the world, Man began to acknowledge his *topos* in history, but this phenomenon has caused an axiological destabilization of Man facing the Divinity, henceforth starting the process of disenchantment of the world (in Weber's words).

The mechanisms of society have replaced Man with a new ideal-type. Starting with social Darwinism, the individual's historical character and his implication in history prescribed, making way for new and peculiar hypostases within modern ideologies. According to Roger Griffin, the earliest constitutive aspects of modernism are marked by the devastating experience of the rebellion against modernity, within which the rebellion against positivism is but a trend that materialized as an epiphany, limited to esthetical, religious and intellectual research of the *nouminous*, marked by passive or Romantic pessimism.

Another perspective is that of the pessimism of strength, adopted by Nietzsche after breaking with Schopenhauer's direction, who indicated, through the vitalist rejection of the world, a new direction, imposed by the philosophical radical critique of the concept of the will to power, which is inherent to the meta-political objective regarding the metamorphosis of the social order that existed at the time. This programmatic or Dionysian modernism (as Robert Gooding-Williams calls it) in transforming the social level acts as a counter-movement for modernism seen as the decadence of the *fin-de-siècle*.

According to Roger Griffin, there is proof that Nietzsche used to experience epiphanies on a regular basis; none the less, he chose to dedicate his life to changing the world itself, rather than his own perception, by adopting an active form of modernism (Griffin, 2008, p. 54).

However, the ideologies that have marked the catastrophe of the 20th century originated in Marxist philosophy, either by implementing a social doctrine and a materialist conception of history, as in communism, or by a racial war born under false effusion of a pathological mystical nature, as in National Socialism.

Both political visions appeared as secular rituals at the level of the collective psyche, having as a pretense the instauration of a cosmic order at an ontic level, which – after seducing the masses of followers – proved to be nothing less than a form of Pavlovian training of souls in search of a heaven on Earth (Berdiaev, 1995, p. 124).

In their political discourse through propaganda, both ideologies have preached the progress of humanity as being the engine of society. This utopian mechanism has promoted the instauration of the individual, by abolishing divinity from the millennial kingdom, inherent, actually, to religion, namely Judeo-Christianity.

Therefore, religion was translated into politics, through the secularization of the main mythemes of religious faith. Nonetheless, we know that the institution of the Church did not accept openly the chilist vision, and even considered it a heretical peril which could eventually lead to the destabilization of the clerical authority. It was the inclination of the masses towards the social proclaimed by these revolutionary-Messianic movements that led to the widespread success of the 20th century redemptive ideologies.

On the path of eternal transformation, both communism and fascism planned (or tended to) the extinction of the individual by inventing new criteria of faith, loyalty and affiliation, all equally important, crystallized in a directive political myth. (...) Both Stalinism and the Nazism have emphasized the necessity of social integration and common affiliation, by means of excluding the others. (Tismăneanu, 2013, p. 25; our translation).

The mixture between religious faith and superstition about a Messianic second coming consequently to the instauration of an utopian earthly paradise implies the authority of a savior with social redemptive valences. The infallible aura of these utopian leaders was imposed by the atemporality derived from the millennial perspective, engraved in the collective imagination since the creation of a constant external menace identified as a scapegoat (*le bouc émissaire*). In the political ritual of the religions of earthly redemption (Edgar Morin), the Manichean battle between Good and Evil produced a manipulating psychosis among the masses, leading to total submission and unconditional adhesion to the

utopian project by triggering the massification process, followed by the atomization of the individual.

Since Future is of an utmost importance, the dominant figure (as we shall point out) is the Chief. The authority par excellence belongs to the “revolutionary” Chief (in politics, religion, etc.), that has a universal “Plan” (Stalin). (...) On the other hand, there is another Authority, just as indisputable, of the Future. The “man of the future” has authority because he has everything “in front of him”. “Young people” draw their – sometimes considerable – Authority from the Future they embody. The Authority of the “man of tomorrow” is readily recognized. He can claim himself both from the Millennia to come (Hitler), and from the past millenia (Mussolini). (Kojève, 2012, p. 74; our translation).

The progress of humanity, claimed by National Socialism, has its mobile in the *techné*, going from the individual entelechy of the modern Man to a form of ethics based on trans-human norms, which transforms the individual into a prototype. Consequently, the development of archetypes as mythologemes emerges in the prototypes that are inherent to the masses, in the form of recurrent dehumanizing patterns. Progress, as a trend of the era, represents the main cause for the Mesmerism that subjugated the masses in a collective hysteria. Many have raised the question about how was it possible for certain outstanding intellectuals, such as Heidegger, to join the National Socialist program. His brief adhesion, which was later transformed by his critics in a genuine case study, may be explained by the prevalence of the notion of “progress” within the Nazi *Weltanschauung*, which was later extended to the concept of *techné*. The famous *Rektoratsrede* (“Rector’s inaugural address”), which allowed him to become a part of the political intellectual elite of the Third Reich, was compromised from the very beginning. The reason for Heidegger’s adhesion to Nazism is the “(...) technicist precipitation of science, therefore of knowledge [savoir] or of the *techné*, in a Western-Greek definition (...)” (Lacoue-Labarthe, 2010, p. 70; *our translation*), which he would judge later, after the war, as irreversible in the context of spiritual exacerbation of national spirituality as the Western historical essence of the German people. In his *Question*

Concerning Technology, Heidegger identifies the origin of Evil within the essence of technique, rather than in technique itself.

The destining that sends into ordering is consequently the extreme danger. What is dangerous is not technology. There is no demonry of technology, but rather there is the mystery of its essence. The essence of technology, as a destining of revealing, is the danger. The transformed meaning of the word "Enframing" will perhaps become somewhat more familiar to us now if we think Enframing in the sense of destining and danger.

The threat to man does not come in the first instance from the potentially lethal machines and apparatus of technology. The actual threat has already affected man in his essence. The rule of Enframing threatens man with the possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth. (Heidegger, 1993, pp. 331-332).

Regarding the notion of progress in Marxism, we observe that it represents both the actual ideological engine that leads to the fulfilment of the programmatic prerogatives, and the ultimate panacea that helps the individual abandoned by God become eternal within a fake Eutopia. Therefore, progress implies a redemptive function on the individual that renounces his archetype interdependence of the transcendent, subjugated by a counter-utopian totalitarian project.

In communism, progress is the sum of all the targets that can only be reached through technological revolution. To elude the reification of Man, a process that is typical to capitalist societies, Marxism proclaims the domination of Man over nature, which can only be accomplished with the help of science. Domination upon his habitat consists in a form of progress.

The laws of his own social action, hitherto standing face to face with man as laws of Nature foreign to, and dominating him, will then be used with full understanding, and so mastered by him. Man's own social organization, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by Nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under

the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, more and more consciously, make his own history-only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom. (Tucker, 1978, pp. 715-716).

Modern perspectivist and historical thinking, tainted by the secularized millennialism under the auspices of the social revolution of progress, has produced an axiological overthrow, in which the individual imposed his tyrannic authority onto cosmic order. All this led to the instauration of a totalitarian Church, that perverted human spirituality, whereas the “priory” of Man created a new secular religion, in which Man is situated above the Divinity. The resort of such a solipsism entrapping Man is the Myth of progress, specific to the collective imaginary of the epoch, which substituted the traditional Christian religion for the political ritual of redemptive ideologies.

2. Cenotaph of the *Primordial Man* in the Global Paradise of Overconsumerism

Once humankind has surpassed the two horrors of the 20th century, it has evolved on a certain trajectory determining a special direction in an attempt to elude the sumptuous tragism of ethos through the cosmetization of politics. Everything, including the primary ontic ideals, is rendered obsolete. Politics based on doctrines only include the masses in a socially artificial manner, apparently without any profit, under the patronage of non-governmental organizations. The illness of such a political practice is the result of speculations on economical interests. On the other hand, the masses have been inoculated with the importance of moral values outside religion, which has enforced the trend of the *new world order*. Repressing the spirit is a part of a different kind of a totalitarian plan at a global level, but it only manifests itself in the subsidiary, much like *religious politics* (Eric Voegelin), so that the individual cannot not precisely identify such elements.

Globalization, with its components (consumerism and standardization; due to the reification caused by the wave of neo-liberal capitalism manifested after WWII, they set this process onto the human beings, transforming them into prototypes) can be categorized as an

economical religion, masked by the promise of human redemption, achieved with the help of the *progress* that follows the teleological *praxis* of science and technology, capable of a new *Eschaton* that would install the *welfare state* in the *Civitas Dei*.

Consumerism and National Socialism (in a more general word – fascism) started as Eutopias that have evolved – from a political perspective, due to *Myth* of the *àion* of modernity – into counter-utopias, whose ethical axiology reached pathological levels, but its present *status quo* lacks any moral value and is characterized solely by over-production and consumerism.

Yet the ladder of the City of Heaven can no longer be a “faith ladder”, but an empirical one: A utopia has to specify where one wants to go, how to get there, the costs of the enterprise, and some realization of and justification for the determination of who is to pay. (Bell, 1995, p. 296).

The individual has exiled himself from his relationship with transcendence by eluding all mysteries that could involve him in any sort of metaphysical restlessness. The world has succumbed to a corrosive form of hedonism, both mentally and spiritually. After being compromised by secularization, religion, a cohesion factor for the masses, has made way for an exacerbated *élan vital* capable of projecting transcendence to an earthly level, leading to desacralization. Regarding the new *Great Disruption* reiterated by humankind, it is defined by Francis Fukuyama based on the two notions proposed by sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies: *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society). In Francis Fukuyama’s opinion, the Great Disruption is a contemporary variable of the transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* that occurred in the 19th century; in contrast with the previous disruptions (consisting in the transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy), the 19th century phenomenon implied evolving from an industrial economy to a technological one (Fukuyama, 2002, p. 152).

As we can clearly see, any revolution implies massive changes in the existential ensemble, and the individual is put in the posture of undergoing a stage of transition on his path to the ultimate progress, which implies an apodictic argumentation of the ontic level, but

generates a meta-spiritual conflict. The end of the history will be a very depressed era, says Fukuyama. The virtues that were once prized, such as the quest for fame, the will to risk one's life for a purely abstract ideal, the ideological battle that praised bravery, imagination and idealism will be replaced by economical calculus, technicalities, environmental concerns and consumerism. There will be no more art, nor philosophy, but only a perpetual remembrance of history, a state of idleness that might initiate history once again (Fukuyama, 1994, p. 49).

This pan-Gioacchinism, filtered through Hegel's theory of historicity, claims an ultimate state of humankind, after the *temps des lys*, inherent to the *Era of the Holy Ghost*, (Durand, 2003, p. 11), a state that represents the victory of the *Man* of anomie, or simply the *Anti-Messiah*. In a theological perspective, we can identify the *katéchon* as an outside force that delays the End, as well as the tribulation that contains the seeds of Evil that exist prior to the contact with the Antichrist. This action, according to Tertulian, has the purpose to make the world eternal and to set peace, and, in the opinion of Carl Schmitt, it represents the only foundation that can exist in a Christian doctrine supporting state power (Agamben, 2009, p. 108). However, I consider that this solution to the imminent End could have been a real success in the 20th century, nevertheless an exchange between the political scene and the institution of the Church occurred, with the purpose to replace traditional religion with the social cult of the individual, which made totalitarianism possible.

In Henri Corbin's vision, the separation of the Church from the State, when and if it takes place, leads to the desacralization and secularization of public life. It seems that this secularization has its origin in the denial of any metaphysical perspective and of any previous world, so it appears that this pseudo-sacred side can reinvest secularized institutions. Totalitarianism is the natural consequence of institutionalized religion (Corbin, 1997, p. 181).

Redemptive ideologies have peaked at the same moment as the totalitarianisms of the past century, but continue with an exponential manifestation during the era of globalization, therefore annulling the individual up to his disappearance from the spiritual plan. The irreversible reification produced in the digital era, and also the hedonistic over-consumerism, places Man in a dystopian landscape, as a prisoner of his own *Panopticon*. As for the initiation of a divine reign at an ontic level, we can paraphrase the famous Nietzschean assertion in *Ecce Homo*,

referring to the inability of the institutionalized Church to create a genuine *Imitatio Christi*, and assert that *there was only one Adam Kadmon, and he was cast out of Paradise*.

Bibliography

- Agamben, G. (2009). *Timpul care rămâne: un comentariu al Epistolei către romani*. Cluj-Napoca, Editura TACT.
- Bell, D., The end of ideology in the West, in Alexander, Jeffrey C., Seidman, Steven (coord.) (1995), *Culture and Society. Contemporary Debates*, New York – Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, pp. 290-297.
- Berdiaev, N. (1995). *Un nou ev mediu*. Craiova, Editura OMNISCOP.
- Corbin, H. (1997). *Paradoxul monoteismului*. Cluj, Editura „Biblioteca Apostrof”.
- Durand, G. (2003). *Arte și arhetipuri: religia artei*. București, Editura Meridiane.
- Fukuyama, F. (1994). *Sfârșitul istoriei*. București, Editura Vreamea S.C.
- Fukuyama, F. (2002). *Marea ruptură: natura umană și refacerea ordinii sociale*, București, Editura Humanitas.
- Griffin, R., Modernitate, modernism și fascism. O „re-sintetizare a viziunii”, in Antohi, Sorin (coord.) (2008). *Modernism și antimodernism. Noi perspective interdisciplinare*. București, Editura Cuvântul, pp. 45-73.
- Heidegger, M. (1993). *Basic Writings*. San Francisco, Harper.
- Kojève, A. (2012). *Noțiunea de Autoritate*. Cluj-Napoca, Editura TACT.
- Lacoue-Labarthe, P. (2010). *Ficțiunea politicului: Heidegger, arta și politicul*. Cluj, Editura Idea Design & Print.
- Tismăneanu, V. (2013). *Diavolul în istorie. Comunism, fascism și alte câteva lecții ale secolului XX*. București, Editura Humanitas.
- Tucker, R. C. (1978). *The Marx-Engels Reader*. New York - London, W. W. Norton.

Biodata



Antoniu Alexandru FLANDORFER works as a public servant at the Prefecture of the County of Suceava, Romania. He is also a Ph.D. candidate at the Doctoral School of the “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, with a doctoral thesis entitled *The Criticism of Ethical and Philosophical Fundaments of National-Socialism*. He is a graduate of the Mechanical Engineering and Public Administration Faculties at the “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava. Some of the most significant articles he published are: *Național socialismul ca „religie politică” – o radiografie a distopiei*, *Ipostazierea eticii în societatea consumatoristă*, *The Tolerance as the Ethic Foundation of Social Economy into the Perspective of the "Included Third" in the Contextuality of Transmodernity*.