

**PROMOTING RELIGIOUS VALUES IN THE POSTMODERN WORLD****Ciprian GAVRA***„Ovidius” University of Constanța  
Ciprigavra88@yahoo.com***Abstract**

*The collapse of the New York Stock Exchange during the interwar period, the completion of the Second World War, with all its atrocities have determined a series of mutations in the social-cultural sphere, especially from the perspective of values. The post-modernism generated mistrust in the meta-narratives of modernity. The transition to post-modernity came with a change in the worldview and the contemporary world, as the old meta-narratives were deconstructed. The meta-narrative deconstruction, the post-death of God and the twilight of the debt marked the beginning of a new period where the old values are replaced with some new values tailored on the contemporary society.*

*In this paper we wish to discuss a number of issues raised by the trans-humanist current, since they conflict with the moral and religious beliefs. As part of our approach we will deal with some aspects: the eternal life (immortality), the genetic editing and the moral perfection (moral enhancement). Our argument is that it is wrong and immoral for the man to intervene in the divine work in order to change the human nature as man as a rational being must assume the condition of being mortal and obey to the divine will, without trying to modify this status in any way.*

**Key words:** *post-modernity, religious values, morality, promoting Christian values,*

**JEL Classification:** *Z12*

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The postmodernism emerged as a crisis of modernity values, values which are considered no longer to be accepted as imperatives, at least after period of the two world wars. In post-modernity (Harvey, 2002, Troc, 2006, Stănciugelu, 2002), the emphasis falls on the responsibility towards each other (Levinas, 2000), regardless if it is about the other one next to us or other generations that will come after us. The trans-humanism is a philosophical-cultural current which proposes the physical and cognitive improvement of the human individual with the aim to expand life.

Emerged in the postmodern period, the current brings to the forefront a number of issues related to the prolongation of life using new technologies, the loading of the consciousness into a virtual device, the replacement of biological parts of the human body with other non-biological parts. On the one hand, another idea is the enhancement, the moral enhancement – i.e. the use of new technologies in order to create or transform the individual behavior. The techno optimists support the idea that the use of new technologies in order to create a better individual or a physically and morally better humanoid species should not be considered an issue because as we know the technology has helped man to achieve progress since the oldest times.

On the other hand the techno pessimists argue that the irrational use of new technologies could entail problems related to the survival of the human species or that a new humanoid species to conflict with the current human species. Among the authors in our country who have raised related aspects we considered it appropriate to bring into question a number of issues highlighted by Terec-Vlad Loredana, as she highlights a number of problems related to moral bioethics and immortality and the human life extension.

One of the problems of the trans-humanism is related to the epistemic arrogance of those who support this cultural current. Another issue that we want to emphasize is related to the atheist way of thinking and the Christian way of thinking given that within the trans-humanism a number of issues involving the use of new technologies in order to prolong life, or to create life contradict moral Christian and values (Terec-Vlad, 2015, Terec-Vlad, 2015b).

The holy books state that God made man in his image and likeness and no man has the right to alter in any form the human physical or cognitive condition in order to manipulate, to contain, the free will, to deprive freedom, because man must be aware of the choices he makes as they have consequences in relation to the divinity. These aspects related to the human or cognitive improvement involve a number of bioethical dilemmas that the Orthodox Church examines carefully. Certainly, according to the sacred books the involvement of technologies in the private life of the individual in order to create perfect individuals or in order

to clone some people who lived in the past raises the question regarding the identity of the duplicate. (Terec-Vlad, Terec-Vlad, 2013). These issues are extremely delicate and important as often the issue is not only about bioethical dilemmas but also about the fact that with new technology we could create the Universal Soldier that may destroy a part of humanity, who is resistant to pain or who does not feel compassion and mercy.

These issues that we would like to highlight are meant to point out that shortly we are going to have to give an account to God for having played God (Yannoulatos, 2003)

## **II. RELIGIOUS VALUES VERSUS POSTMODERN VALUES**

The crisis due to the WWI, the crash of the New York Stock Exchange and the horrors of the WWII were the reasons that have determined a cultural shift in values in terms of society and individual. The dusk of the debt (Lipovetsky, 1996) of the Kantian categorical imperative in three forms entailed a new imperative, the imperative of responsibility formulated by Jonas (Jonas, 1984).

If we consider the God-given moral authority as a starting point up to the moral responsibility, then we must admit that we have a moral responsibility to follow the path of the Lord and not deviate from it, since those matters are contrary to the holy books. The idea is that we start from is that the human individual believes that the old values are no longer in trend, or that the postmodernism provides us the opportunity to create our own system of values (Mladin, Bucevsky, Pavel, Zăgrean, 2003).

But we believe that all these marketing strategies only serve to drive us from the divine path and bring us closer to the earthly path. Of course, we have noticed that uncontrolled power utilized by obscure people transforms the man who has the power into symbolic power, but we must realize that most times it is wise that power to be used rationally and under no circumstance intemperately.

Another aspect that we want to bring into discussion in our work deals with the concept of family (Juravle, Sasu, Terec-Vlad, 2016) but also related to the fact that the family is the basis of society (Juravle (Gavra), Sasu, Bubăscu, 2015) the traditional family, as it is known (Gavra, 2016, Juravle, (Gavra), Sasu, Spătaru, 2016), is based on a range of reinforced and substantiated values (Apostu, 2012, Apostu, 2013, Apostu, 2013 Apostu, 2016).

The idea that we want to promote in this article is that God created man – he created the man and the woman in his respective image and likeness. The post-modernity (implicitly the death of God) comes with new theories based on individualism (on the one hand) and utilitarian values and even post-utilitarian values (if we might say so).

Currently the family has suffered a series of mutations both in terms of roles and from the perspective of the couple. In post-modernity the couple is no longer composed of a man and a woman as outlined in the holy books, but from people of the same sex who wish to start a family and have children using the intervention of new technologies; also, a single person outside of a relationship in a couple who wants to have a baby and turns to professional help to get pregnant. These aspects invite to debate in terms of values, freedoms, rights, and in religious terms (Iloaie, 2009).

We believe that the family – the basic cell of society – should remain as God created it, since the human intervention using new technologies in such cases brings no benefits. We want to refer to the following issue: beside the fact that the marriage between two persons of the same sex is immoral, a child can neither differentiate between mother and father and nor the roles that they have within the family.

If the postmodernism lays emphasis on individualism and leaves the individual to choose the best thing or action for himself based upon responsibility, from a religious perspective things are different, whereas the imperatives leaves no room for interpretation. In the holy books it is clearly highlighted that within the family will of the Lord must be observed and not the will of the man. The religious values do not mutate unlike the human values and for this reason we believe that man must return again his face to God and not to the worldly things as He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

## **III. MORAL DILEMMAS CONCERNING THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN ORDER TO PROCREATE**

As previously stated, the holy books clearly expose the human debt to God and his fellow men. However, with the development of technique and technology man has become ever more powerful and currently performs experiments to change nature and implicitly to change the human nature, believing he is himself a kind of God. These issues are extremely delicate and call for debate; the debate themes are the meaning of life and death, the relationship with the divinity, etc.

On the one hand, with the help of new technology we have come to increase our lifespan and eradicate diseases that were incurable until recently, but we must not forget that it through the same technology have

created weapons of mass destruction, biological weapons, chemical, nuclear weapons, etc (Cucu, Lența, 2014) On the other hand, the divine message is understood differently from person to person and from one religious doctrine to another.

However, we must point out that in terms of bioethical dilemmas, the philosopher Julian Săvulescu published a study which raises questions about how the new technologies are utilized: Săvulescu gives the example of a deaf lesbian couple which wants to give birth through artificial insemination to a child with the same disability (Săvulescu, 2002).

Of course, this attitude is immoral and contravenes the divine will, because as long as God provided the human being with a series of procreation capabilities, man should not intervene especially to change nature. If some authors support such cases, we consider it a blasphemy against the divinity. We understand that there are minorities, but this does not mean that we should deprive an individual of the ability to hear, just because some of us are part of a different social category.

The distrust towards the meta-narrations of the modernity, we could bring to the fore the myth of progress: if progress was considered linear, now it is believed that progress is performed with syncope. The point is that the linear trajectory of progress is interrupted by a qualitative leap generated by collective responsibility (Apel, 1993). The responsibility to the other is not only an individual responsibility, but of all individuals; "responsibility involves the most intimate areas of human - weakness, courage, guilt, effort, care, risk taking, moral innovation etc., all giving it a certain value." (Jeder, 2011) If the immoral and irrational use of new technologies is allowed, then this will lead to the destruction of the present human species (Terec-Vlad, Terec-Vlad, 2014) by the new knowledge created by the same human beings or better said by the current humanoid species.

#### IV. THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF THE RELIGIOUS VALUES VERSUS THE POST-MODERN VALUES

The postmodern values are different from the modern values in that the imperatives (and here we refer to the Kantian categorical imperative) are no longer in trend on the requirements of postmodern society. If the categorical imperative of Kant had universal value under its three forms, that is "acting only after the maximum that you can want also like it to become universal law", "it acts as the maximum of your action should become by thy will a universal law of nature " or "it acts so as to use the humanity, both that inside your person and that inside other persons, each time as purpose and never only as a means "(Kant, 2007).

If modernism was under the sign of the categorical imperative, the post-modernity is marked by the responsibility, both to themselves and to each other. The religious matters though have not changed the divine will is still divine will and the law of the Lord does not change depending on the historical periods, since killing is murder and blasphemy is blasphemy, etc.

The religious values will not mutate depending on human will, and therefore we must bear in mind that the individual values should also remain the same as they have always been (Cucu, Lența, 2014, 2016) It is though difficult in a knowledge-based society to succeed to focus strictly on the religious values, as both the globalization and the frequent changes occurring at societal level changes the mindset of the individual. The freedom is not understood from the Kantian of the religious perspective anymore but from the following perspective: everything is allowed.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

We considered it appropriate to bring the discussion in this paper an aspect which the nowadays society promotes as paramount. The old values have entered into a state of numbness or oblivion, to put it this way, the people are increasingly individualistic and even selfish.

The trans-humanism with all its weapons can not provide solutions to those without solutions and to bring to the fore that it doesn't take divine will in order to become a kind of God. As the values of modernity are no longer in trend, the postmodern values leave plenty of room for interpretation. We believe that the executive aspect in this whole equation is related to the divine will, since God is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

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