

About Human Condition and Spirituality

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Abstract

Nowadays, the mankind is enthused about a real informational explosion but it the anxiety about the human mission also appears: “the humankind, enthused about its own discoveries and its power asks itself with anxiety which is its place and role in the Universe (Gaudim et Spes 3). Yesterday and today, the human being realized that he cannot “answer these fundamental questions which always have tormented his heart regarding the end and the beginning and hence his sense of existence” (Benedict XVI, Discourse, Pontifical Gregorian University Rome, the 4-th of November 2006). The 21st century is marked by a return to spirituality because the need for spirituality “reaffirms with power, so far that the observers... reach the conclusion attributed to Andre Malraux: «The 21st century will be religious or will not be at all»”.¹ Nowadays, spirituality means searching for wisdom and there are questions as: who are the humans, where do they come from and where do they go. Under these circumstances, we have to establish some ethical benchmarks.² This void makes place for the religious fundamentalism, a laic spirituality based of consumerism described as “a process through which goods are the services created, produced, used and exhausted”.³ But the human must switch from the state of consumer to the state of citizen.”⁴ Here is about “the necessity of surpassing a selfish ethics.”⁵

Keywords: human condition, freedom, consumerist society, spirituality

¹ Jean Vernet, *Secolul XXI va fi mistic sau nu va fi deloc* (Bucharest: Corint, 2003), 5.

² Jean Vernet, *Secolul XXI*, 13.

³ Kuruvilla Pandikattu, “From being a citizen to a consumer”, *Chronicle Financial*, Nov 26 2012.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ *Gaudim et spes*, 30.

The Necessity of Moral Education for Gaining the Stage of Human Condition

Nowadays, “we can talk about a scientific explosion in all the fields of life, but the human continues to be tormented by the questions: where does he come from and where does he go”.⁶ The existential questions are a pleading for moral and religious education⁷ for forming “a solid and durable human development”.⁸ “The modernism brought industrialization, and then came the postmodernism with automatization, robotisation and for two decades now the computational explosion. Now, for example, we do not use anymore the term typing, but a pompous term called desktop publishing. The old typewriter stays sad in a drawer, because its place was taken by the more and more performing computer. The actual characteristic of the lived time is the acceleration of social, political and economical culture, and thus the human becomes more alone in front of the avalanche of information”.⁹ The modernism and the postmodernism brought, unfortunately, also the nihilism where God is exiled from the world he created, and in this context the human condition is forced to anchor in temporality. It is about a nihilism which ended up in destroying fundamental domains as: theology, anthropology, moral. This destroying action is motivated through three explanations:

- the first shows that the problem of God is solved by atheism;
- the second considers that human needs scientism;
- the third concludes that religion is an imposition.¹⁰

It could be told that from a nihilist point of view, God cannot create the world out of nothing. Then, the history of humanity is denied according to *creatio ex nihilo* which constitutes “an expression of faith but also a *cognitive matrix* that

⁶ Ștefan Grosu, “Despre necesitatea învățământului confesional creștin,” *Cronica de Fălticeni*, 11/03/2014. To be seen also Gabriel Hasmațuchi, “Nichifor Crainic and the interwar «New Spirituality»”, *Annals of “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava, Philosophy, social and Human disciplines*, vol. II *Past and Present Human Standpoints* (Suceava: “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava Press, 2011).

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ Vladimir Petercă, *Calea spre oameni*, redactor Ștefan Lupu, desktop publishing and cover binding Petru Ciobanu (Iași: Sapiența), 678.

⁹ To be seen Adriana Macsut, “Consumism și anticonsumism, Platon și Prozac,” in Ștefan Grosu, Adriana Macsut, Ana Maria Gajdo et al., *Virtual Philo café 2013* (Bacău: Rovimed, 2014), 226.

¹⁰ Vittorio Possenti, *Filosofia după nihilism*, ed. Silviu Hodiș, trans. Alex Cistelecan (Târgu Lăpuș: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2006), 8.

is a significance *nucleus* where the road of human history begins”.¹¹ In this context, the nihilism shows that the knowledge does not exist, because it implies the faith into an illusion, and then there is no point for the human being to ask what it is. Questions whether we could talk about be moral education here arise, and Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche concludes, in a radical way, that there is good and evil because there is no ethics “the moral phenomena does not exist, there is only a moral interpretation of the phenomena”.¹² If moral education means interpretation, then the human and his condition are also an interpretation, and the human finds himself in the impossibility to find his goal in an illusory world. In this context, there is only place for thinking about “the void of the disappeared human”,¹³ and metaphysics is reduced to an abstract speculation. The human, limited at a temporal condition and without the possibility of reporting to the divine metaphysic infinite reaches the temporalization of the truth. The human being is closed into finitude which means “the forgetfulness of eternity”¹⁴ because there is a relation between “the forgetfulness of being and the forgetfulness of eternity”.¹⁵ The human who came from nothing is going toward nothing, and then does not need a goal to ordinate his human condition. The question why the natural inclination to conserve the human being exists in this nihilist context comes into play. The word is about an inclination which is not limited to conservation, but it is dynamic in the sense that it pushes the human to search tools for existence.¹⁶ These tools are necessary for the physical life and for spiritual ideals. They show that at the origin of human acts there is love which is “before any selfish lopsidedness”.¹⁷ The forgetfulness of being pushes the individual towards suicide, in the sense that the fascination of nothingness constitutes “a kind or reverse and sickness of the attraction to being”.¹⁸ The condition of being cannot be separated by moral, which expresses the attraction of human to good, in the sense that he must do well and

¹¹ Ștefan Grosu, “Creatio ex nihilo”, in *Disputatio de euthanasia*, coords. Ștefan Grosu, Viorel Guliciuc et. al. (Bacău: Rovimed, 2014), 115.

¹² Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Frammenti postumi, vol. VIII* (Milano: Adelphi, 1986), 12.

¹³ Michel Foucault, *Cuvintele și lucrurile*, trans. Bogdan Ghiu and Mircea Vasilescu (Bucharest: Univers, 1996), 451.

¹⁴ Possenti, *Filosofia după nihilism*, 23.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ Servais Th. Pinckaers, *Morala Catolică*, trans. Emil Moraru and Iulia Cojocariu, desktop publishing Iulia Cojocariu (București: Editura Arhiepiscopiei Romano-Catolice de Bucuresti, 2008), 84. To be seen also moral aspects in human life, presented by Maria Sinaci, *Normativitate și biotică. Aspecte filosofice contemporane* (Cluj Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2014), 38.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 84.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

beware of evil. The moral does not only mean a code of prescriptions, and moral education “endeavours to answer to human’s aspiration to good and truth”.¹⁹

About Assuming the Human Mission and the Need of Spirituality

Nowadays, the humankind is simply enthusiast about a true informational explosion but the related anxiety related to the human mission also appears. The human, devoured by anxiety, “is wondering... about... his place and his role in the Universe”.²⁰ Hence, the human cannot fight anxiety without reporting to his spiritual condition.

Misunderstood Freedom

The freedom which “gives human permission to do everything that tells that the human is free to do evil and to beat with cruelty his neighbour (here should be reminded the Nazi holocaust and the communist gulag which raised evil to the level of virtue) is wrongly promoted”.²¹ The human freedom must not cancel the ethics. The negation of ethics leads to violence, and violence “denies the independence of the being”.²² In the previously presented nihilist context, the human freedom can be pushed up to violence. The human pushes his freedom up to the denial of the divine eternity and reaches the void of the self. The nihilism encourages the human freedom to deny “the supreme engagement which for the human being is his own essence”.²³ The human, released from the divine faith, is anchored in this absurd but also anarchic world where he finds “only contradiction and madness”.²⁴ The human spirit reaches the limits of his thinking – the limit where “the suicide awaits”.²⁵ The absurd invades the human spirit, and the human being has no hope because his conscience is reported to a life whose meaning he cannot find. His only escape is the appeal to transcendence, that is the divine area that the human relays on when he is confronted to the impossible. Therefore, the human freedom must not forget that the human reason is open to unlimited transcendence. The finitude throws the human to nonentity, and the freedom leads

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 5.

²⁰ *Gaudim et spes* 3.

²¹ Ștefan Grosu, “Despre măreția libertății umane”, *Cronica de Fălticeni*, 08/04/2014.

²² Emmanuel Levinas, *Între noi. Încercarea de a-l gândi pe celălalt*, trans. Ioan Petru Deac (Bucharest: Bic All, 2000), 180.

²³ *Idem*, *Eseuri despre iudaism*, trans. Țicu Golstein (București: Hasefer, 1999), 262.

²⁴ Albert Camus, *Mitul lui Sisif*, trans. Irina Mavrodin (Bucharest: Editura Pentru Literatură Universală, 1969), 11.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

to a depression where he cannot find the meaning of life. Then, the free human needs to find the capacity to escape from the limited physical world and to understand that his reason is oriented to the perception of the unlimited.²⁶

The Freedom and the Consumerist Society

The humanity is living now anchored in the society of knowledge at the core of which there is an issue of singularity, which is the dilemma whether the human will ever be overdrawn by the computer. Confronted to the avalanche of computers, the human is more and more alone and tempted to consume more and more. The accelerated technological development goes to the great productions of goods and creates a more and more aggressive real industry of advertising, the phrase consumerist society comes into play, where the existential dilemma is whether to consume or not. The ads show that the free human is the one who consumes. The degree of development of a country is measured by the power of buying of its members. The consumerism refers to “a process where the goods are created, produced, used and exhausted”.²⁷ The free human, belonging to the consumerist society, is a seller. The consumerism which proclaimed this idea of the human being as a seller begins, in fact, from “the selfishness of humans who pervert... the social environment”.²⁸ But this approach of consumerism perverts the human condition. The human progress determines the benefits of civilization, and individuals all over the world gain the conscience of liberty through which they affirm their dignity. The individuals do not want only to earn money from work, but they also want to be free in order to be able “to develop their personality”,²⁹ and to participate in a democratic society to “the organization of economic, social and political life”.³⁰

²⁶ Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Despre opera sa*, trans. Wilhelm Tauwinkl, ed. Silviu Hodiş (Târgu Lăpuş: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2005), 94.

“Let’s begin with a dramatic calculated of the human situation: human exists as limited being in limited world, his reason is opened to unlimited, to the whole Being (*Sein*); the prove in this thing is the recognize of limited, of his parochialism: I am, but I could not be. Most of those could exist could not be. The Beings (*Wesen* pl.) are religious thoughts and philosophies of the humankind”.

²⁷ Kuruvilla Pandikattu, “From being a citizen to a consumer,” *Chronicle Financial*, Nov 26 2012.

²⁸ *Gaudim et spes* 376.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

The Statute of Citizen of the Free Human Being

The anti-consumerism appeared as a movement for fighting the consumerism, in the sense that there is a need for humans to evolve from the statute of *consumers* to the statute of *citizens*.³¹ Apostle Paul, in this sense, uses the expression: “to lead a life of citizens”,³² which refers to the fact that citizens must live according to civil and religious laws. It is about citizens who live in a free society which has as a model the Christian society which “is presented from the very beginning as a free, multicultural, multiethnic and multireligious society”.³³

Hope and Anguish

The humankind is living today a period of changes. Starting from the 20th century so far, the humankind has been confronted with industrial explosion, informational explosion and also with periods of crisis. The ethical audit shows that, in fact, the economical crisis is a moral crisis. We can speak about a global chaos where humans search for freedom but they are confronted also with a cruel anguish and they need also need the *wing of hope*. The human, anchored in a nihilist frame and consumerist society, believes to be the centre of the Universe and exiles God from his life. To escape from this subversive context, the human makes the step for assuming faith. The act of faith is not simple anyway, but it is an act where human “becomes conscious about the step made in the direction of God”.³⁴

About the Transformation of Mentalities

The patriarchal families, the local traditional communities undergo deep social transformations. The urban civilization is more and more intensive, the tools of social communication are more and more enhanced. The humans are encouraged by Abraham Patriarch to leave their country and to establish in other corner of the world: “Leave your country and your kin and the house of your father/ and go to the country that I will show you”.³⁵ In this context, we can talk about “psychological, moral and religious mutations”³⁶. All these transformations and mutations go to “distrust and mutual hates, conflicts and sufferings whose

³¹ Pandikattu, “From being a citizen to a consumer”.

³² *Philippians 1,27*.

³³ Petercă, *Calea spre oameni*, 266.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, 597.

³⁵ *Genesis 12, 1*.

³⁶ *Gaudim et spes 7*.

cause and victim is the human himself”.³⁷ In a world marked by disbelief and selfishness the unique solution for the human being is to overdraw the nihilist stage in which he believes to be the centre of the Universe and turn his face to God who made of the human the key of the Universe. Under these conditions, the human becomes “the arrow that climbs up in the great biological synthesis,... the key, the head of the Universe and the advanced front of life”³⁸ and represents the energy which has the capacity “to renew life itself”.³⁹

The Need for Spirituality and the Advocacy of Humanity

The 21st century marked a return to spirituality because there is a need for spirituality that “reaffirms with power, so the observers... reach to the conclusion given to Andre Malraux: «the 21st century will be religious or will not be at all»”.⁴⁰ In this century, which is searching for the lost faith of the nihilist thinking there is a need for a human approach where it is not “about the rejection of divine faith, but about the revealing of the divine from the human”.⁴¹ The human is called to come back to God the Creator and to rediscover the relation with his neighbours. The new challenges of the global world encourage every human to recover the greatness of his condition created according to God’s appearance and to build a new type of collaboration, “where we are not allowed to neglect the justice and the dignity of everyone”.⁴² Under these circumstances, developing a culture based on “the humanization of the world” is needed.⁴³

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³⁷ *Gaudim et spes* 8.

³⁸ Emile Rideau, *La pensee du Pere Teilhard de Chardin* (Paris: Seuil, 1968), 108, 113.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ Jean Vernet, *Secolul XXI va fi mistic sau va fi deloc*, trans. C. Jinga (București: Corint, 2003), 5.

⁴¹ Marius Cucu, “Cuvânt înainte” at *Paradigme Umaniste. Explorări în tradiție și actualitate*, coord. Marius Cucu (Suceava: Editura Universității “Ștefan cel Mare”, 2013), 1.

⁴² Petercă, *Calea spe oameni*, 680.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

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