

# Social and Ethical Dimensions of the globalized Postmodernity

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In the post-modern globalized reality there occur unprecedented financial, political and social transformations. They are distinctly different in all geographic azimuths. As has already become clear, most of them are unpredictable and potentially charged with contradictory processes. The imposed information post-industrial society by the most economically powerful states creates uncertainty for the future, and the changes that catastrophically take place in the Eurasian space also revive many old contradictions. The enlargement of the scope of the new world market brings to the surface, in an open form, some shortcomings of the capitalist society, which have so far been hidden in the recesses of the western prospering world (Beck, 2000).

The mythologemes about the **stability** and **absorbing ability** regarding the various social cataclysms, which can be overcome by the organisation and the hierarchy of the post-modern authorities, disintegrate and lead to doubt in the agitated analytical minds of the people in the post-modern society.

Now the place of the mechanisms for the imposition of power and law in the execution of the main role in the national state is taken by the diverse contradictory mechanisms for the securing of global dominion, which, however, are mutually subversive and antagonistic. Between them there originate legal and regulated zones belonging to **No-one** (Beck, 2000). These no man's "zones" are not entirely abandoned – they are within the power of the anonymous corporation capital, but the mechanisms of their influence and management always remain unknown for the general public. In the words of Z. Bauman "the Earth is without a Landowner", but after all there exists a Landowner. He is an indisputable **ontic reality**.

The capitalist globalisation of the economic, political and social life is a process of an objective nature, but at the same time is also an organisational and subjective process that is performed through the conscious management of the activities of a number of international organisms and institutions.



In the opinion of Nikos Kotzias, globalisation is based on the **inner logic** of the capitalist production relations, on its **internationalisation**, as well as on the new technologies and the greatly altered labour relations accompanying them. But globalisation acquires its image and receives its true (social and political) schematic through the choice (personal and social), through the conflicts, through the actions and reactions of the **subjects** (Kotzias, in Beck, 2000). From a philosophical point of view, this is a diverse and contradictory process of a total **objectivisation of human subjective acts**.

The consolidation of new powerful establishments and mechanisms of world control, the degradation of humanistic values and the norms of international behaviour, the devaluation of the legitimate, of the world authoritative organs to the benefit of and under the pressure of the “new” “world dominants”, **create the impression of the advent of “New Middle Ages”** (in the words of A. Menk), **of a movement towards a world dictatorship, we would add.**

Against the background of the outlined strange global changes like the creation of the so-called “global village” the collapse of morality loads the human existences with new great responsibilities. The focusing of the attention of a number of thinkers on the issues of morality (Z. Bauman, E. Levinas, F. Fukuyama, E. Chorán and others) is a proof of the comprehension of the universal **meaning** of morality, of the essence, existence and realization of man and of society as a whole.

Even the idea about the primary, decisive role of morality with regard to society is reached. This conception is important. It is not a simple manifestation of **ethical idealism**, but a fully realized need for **ethically complete co-existence**.

For Z. Bauman and Allen Wolf, society and its continual existence and prosperity become possible owing to the moral capabilities of its members, and not vice versa (Bauman, 2001).

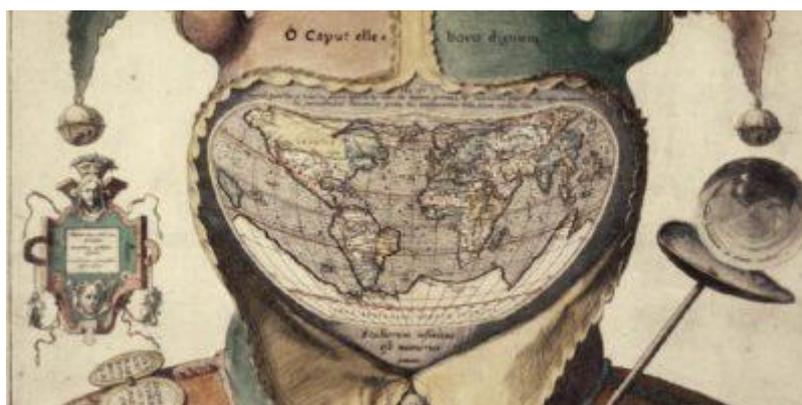
Zigmund Bauman expressed an idea, which can also be called extreme moral personalising, **morality without ethical code** as a dominating content and reality of the post-modern morality.

For such a morality characteristic are the ambivalent moral decisions, because the human reality is confused and ambivalent. And the post-modern feelings consist of the respect of **duality**, of the taking into consideration of the human emotions, **undertaking activities without purpose and even without the calculated benefits** (Bauman,2001). The same author admits that with the pluralism of rules, typical of the post-modern time, the moral choice seems **twofold**. This period of time provides a so far unprecedented **freedom of choice**, but at the same time throws us in a state of **uncertainty**, which has never before been so painful.

It only remains for us to ask ourselves whether in the sphere of morality, pluralism is a reliable principle as well. Because if every human act is acknowledged for a moral one, then how can we differentiate between the moral and the immoral? If morality is not based on **one** universally recognised Absolute – then “everything is possible!” This is what Dostoevski claims as well– “If there is no God, then everything is possible”. In this case we also have to agree with the generally recognized “Antichrist” Nietzsche, who was the first in the philosophy of the New Time to announce “Gott ist Tot!” (God is dead!).

After all, it follows from everything mentioned so far, that **no authority is completely believed**, at least not to the full and all the time. And this is an aspect of the situation, which in simple words is described like a “post-modern moral crisis”, and the moral crisis causes the ethical one (Bauman,2001,pp.34-35).

Although a modern mind cannot evaluate the mentioned post-modern feelings as a lethal danger for the human co-existence, after all the ray of hope penetrating this cloud is unusually bright(Bauman,2001). The repeated post-modern spell cast on the world brings the chance of a face-to-face encounter with the human moral capability – the way it is. Bauman does not believe that as a result the world will inevitably become better and hospitable, but it will have the opportunity to reach “**agreement**” with the **tough and enduring human inclinations**, which it obviously did not succeed in removing and humanise through the laws of recommencing. Which is this beginning for the rational and religious modern person? This is a question without an answer.



For Emmanuel Lévinas ethics exists in the metaphysical relation of the One and the Other: “This doubt in my spontaneity caused by the presence of the Other is what we call ethics” (Lévinas, 2000). The same author emphasizes that in the European thinking one predominant tradition can be identified, in which the spontaneity of freedom is not questioned at all. However, the opposite position of the criticism of spontaneity, caused by the awareness of the

lack of moral dignity, precedes the truth, precedes the consideration of everything and does not suggest the dissolving of the Ego in the Universal.

For Lévinas(2000)the initial awareness of my immorality does not coincide with my subordination to some fact, **but with the subordination to the Other, to Infinity**. The idea about Totality and the idea about Infinity differ from each other exactly in that the former is purely theoretical and the latter **Moral**. And this means that Wholeness as an object of knowledge is problematic, and Infinity, as a moral requirement is a condition, we cannot do without (conditio sine qua non!). In the sphere of morality, either the Other is All, or there is no morality, because there is no Love projected in the Infinite, i.e. in God. Morality is impossible, if the Other has not become God for us!

This is the great conclusion reached by the “Eurasian” Lévinas. One conception that is entirely possible to prove. Besides, according to him, the foundation of truth is freedom, which can **become ashamed of itself** (truth cannot be deduced from truth). And the Other is not originally a fact, is not an obstacle, does not frighten me... “He is the desired one in my shame”( Lévinas,2000,p.57).

Lévinas shares Descartes’ perception of the idea of infinity or of perfection as a **prerequisite** for our own imperfection. This is not an idea but a Desire, the meeting of the Other, a comparison, which is not theoretical, but a **shame** and it is realized in shame, where freedom is simultaneously revealed in the experiencing of the shame and hides in this very shame (Lévinas, 2000).

Francis Fukuyama is an adherent of the idea of the restoration of social order not simply through the decentralised interaction of personalities and communities. It has to be built also through the state policy (Fukuyama,2001). More precisely, he believes that the revival of the values that began in the nineties and the creation of new social norms, which he hopes will occur in future, will come from the four squares of the normative taxonomy: **political, religious, self-organised** and **natural**. The return to religion, according to him, will not be resolved through the mass return to the religious dogmas, but **in a more gentle decentralised form**, where the religious faith is an expression not so much of some dogma, as of the existing social norms and the desire for order.

Fukuyama acknowledges the peculiar role of Protestantism for the development of western capitalism, because virtues like sincerity, duty and mutual help, the norms creating the public capital, to a very great extent **overlap** with those Puritan values that Max Veber defines as exceptionally important for the development of the western capitalism in his book “*Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*” (Fukuyama, 2001).

The reflections of E. M. Chorán are notable for their **sceptical approach** to the authenticity of religion, especially the Christian one, but at the same time they give prominence to the **faith in the human spontaneity**. ”Ingenuously tracing the steps of Truth, at some time I tackled – pure loss! – many disciplines. I already started establishing myself in scepticism...” (Choran, 1996).

“**Living absolutely pointlessly!** I have had visions of this state and I have often acquired it without succeeding to stay in it for a longer time – I am too weak for such happiness” (Choran,1996, p.153).

The survival of mankind not only in the present day, but also in future is a responsibility connected both with the common (Society as a whole) and the separate (with the personality).

The relation “The Ego and the Other” is also the foundation of the relation with the Other. In the discourse of the relation of the Ego and the Other, the French philosopher Emanuel Lévinas (born in Lithuania!) observes that in the contemporary reality there exists a **shortage of shame**. Quite insufficient is also the comparison with the Perfect, with infinity, with the Other (Lévinas, 2000).

The issue about the careful consideration of the contemporary post-modern contradictory reality is not only moral. It is connected with quite numerous **philosophic problems**. What is important about them is also the posing of the question **about the meaning of human life, of the very being of man and even of the Universe**. In the second place, of great significance is the examination of the role of the existing public institutions (financial, political, social and spiritual), as well as the role of the various forms of the human conscience. For this reason, in my opinion, although not entirely, this issue is mostly philosophic and “religious”, but not only when the communitary (group) social and national interests are taken into account, but also the presence of the more common and universal realities and dependencies.

The conclusion of a number of thinkers about the **eschatological vacuum** in the post-modern society, (even not being universally valid!), seems real, having in mind the aspiration of the leaders of globalism for the universalization of the **Anglo-Saxon models** of a free capitalistic market and its social and political values, despite the contemporary world crisis.

The necessity of a **transformation** of reality, which is subordinated to the martyrdom, to Evil, is viable, immediate, “local”, and not only a task of the “world beyond”! What is needed is an ideal, faith and expectation of what is coming, of the future, but this expectation should be **active**, and not **passive**; Future, like History, is consistent (plastic), they are not a Utopia. The future dissolves into the present, which is no more only present, but a potential past.

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