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THE ROLE OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOSITY IN A POSTMODERN SOCIETY

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Abstract: The discussion about the period in which we currently live faces a series of setbacks. Some philosophers, such as Bauman, consider this a period of extension of the modern, while others, such as Lipovetsky, see it as hypermodernity, and Lyotard characterizes it as postmodernism. Despite the different names, there is consensus on two premises: human relationships have become fluid and transitory, and meta-truths no longer fully explain the contemporary world. This article seeks to define the parameters that can guide today's society, especially when the great narratives prove incapable of guiding man on his journey. With truth itself being questioned, the question arises as to what can serve as a guide in this ever-changing world. What replaces the truth that no longer exists and how is this gap being filled? Religion, science and man himself in his entirety have all been goals sought by humanity. However, in the context of extended modernity or post-modernity, the answer may lie not in a new vision of religion, but in religiosity. The speed of the answers demanded by today's world contrasts with the dynamics of the religious relationship, which is often a gradual and introspective process. Religiosity, understood as the relationship between man and religion, could present itself as a modulator of this interface. This article will be based on a wide-ranging bibliographical review, connecting concepts and seeking to understand how religion and religiosity can help insert man into a world that is no longer based on broad, definitive narratives.

Keywords: Postmodernity; Religiosity; Meta-narratives.

INTRODUCTION

The discussion about which historical period contemporaneity can be called is the first obstacle to assessing the role of religion and religiosity in this period. Some important philosophers, such as Bauman, consider that we

are living only an extension of modern times; others, such as Lipovetsky, believe that we are in a hypermodern phase. However, there are other thinkers, such as Lyotard, who believe that this is a new period, known as postmodernism.

However, regardless of the name given to current times, a consensus has been established on two fundamental premises: human relationships have become fluid and transitory; and reality cannot be explained by meganarratives.

This article aims to explore the appropriate concept of contemporaneity and seek to understand and signal the function of religion and religiosity in this new world. If truth itself is being questioned nowadays, what could be structured as an anchor to guide reality itself? What, after all, is the difference between religion and religiosity? Once the differences or similarities have been defined, how can religion and religiosity help in this new journey?

The article will investigate concepts, definitions and denominations of the current time and period, and explore the real possibility of the need for religion and religiosity in such troubled times.

MODERNITY AND POSTMODERNITY

The best way to determine the definition of the denomination of the present time, post-modernity, would be to start by understanding what has been determined to be modern. From a historical point of view, the modern period began in the middle of the 17th century. In philosophy, the milestone came with the release of René Descartes' *Discourse on the Method* in 1637, where the author introduced the concept of reason, to the detriment of logic without any kind of verification. Reality is determined by the action of the subject, because if the individual thinks, he will therefore exist.

So-called modern thought is based on the concept of reason. Man has reality on the basis of the subject's understanding; therefore, in quick thinking, one would imagine that the later period would be determined as simply a post-modern stage. However, this conclusion has proved to be questionable.

Bauman, in his work *Liquid Modernity* (2001), states that we don't live in a postmodernity, but in a modern period that attributes fluidity and transience to relationships. The world is not living in a post-modern era, because modernity has only been extended and not modified. Reason had not been supplanted.

Lipovetsky, in *The Age of Emptiness* (1989), describes the new reality through the lens of increased individualism, where he introduces the concept of hypermodernity, i.e. the world remains in modernity, but since we live in extremes, the contemporary period is characterized by an excess of the modern. Everything is extreme, resulting in exacerbated individualism.

However, presented by Jean-François Lyotard, in the book *The Postmodern Condition* (2004), originally written in 1979, the French thinker formally expresses that: "Simplified to the extreme, disbelief in meta-reports is considered postmodern" (2014, p. 16). There would therefore be no single truth, but rather various narratives. Truth and justice would not be explained by just one way of thinking. Lyotard innovates by trying to understand that reality does not have only one way of filtering or evaluating it. Thus:

In revolutionary eyes, postmodernity is reformist. In Enlightenment eyes, it is a regular visitor, in other words, another anarchic rebellion of irrationality. In truly modern eyes, it is merely modernizing. However, in its own eyes, postmodernity is anti-totalitarian, that is, democratically fragmented, and serves to sharpen our intelligence for the heterogeneous, marginal, marginalized, everyday, so that historical reason can see new objects of study there. Greatness is lost, tolerance is gained (Lyotard, 2004, p. 127).

Post-modernism is then defined as a period in which broad, grandiose narratives do not respond to the world we see today. Religion, science, reason or other meta-stories cannot explain the contemporary world. Extreme individuality and technological revolutions have created a new reality in which the known systems are not sufficient for the new questions.

RELIGION AND RELIGIOSITY

Religion (Oman, 2013) is understood as a series of norms interconnected by their own concepts, which are standardized by certain premises followed by a group of people. Religions are made up of myths, rites, interdicts and ministers. Myths are introduced concepts that try to explain the nature of things and why they happen. Rites are the manifestations that coordinate the exercise and dynamics of religious events, i.e. the rituals present in each specific movement. The interdicts are the restrictions that make up the religious structure, since they all need limits imposed so that religious exercise has an indoctrinating function. On the other hand, the ministers symbolize those who represent and spread the religion.

Religions are institutionalized structures created by man so that man himself can establish criteria and norms that enable the manifestations of his religiosity to take effect. To understand religiosity, it would be better to use another concept called spirituality. Paloutzian, in his work on the psychology of religion in its global perspective, published in 2017, states that spirituality is defined as the search for the meaning of life. Spirituality is therefore a personal feeling in the search for the ethereal, and you can therefore have spirituality without religion.

Religiosity, according to Mishra (2017), is the way in which spiritual beliefs are guided and informed in the subject, in other words, religiosity is spirituality guided by religion. If

we imagine spirituality as snow that is located on top of a mountain, clear, isolated and shiny, and if we understand that the ditches that guide this melted snow through a structure we call religion, it must be understood that the snow that migrates from a spirituality guided by a religion is called religiosity. Religiosity, therefore, is spirituality guided by a religion.

The challenge is to question whether, in a post-modern world, it would be possible for a religion and/or religiosity to operate, if we understand that religiosity presents itself through an institutionalized structure of religion. In a postmodern reality characterized by the absence of meta-narratives, where the world is not explained by a single truth and where individualism is exacerbated, spirituality also presents its difficulties. However, in a paper by Luchetti in 2015, the author advocates using the relationship (religion and spirituality) as a binomial (R/E) so that this relationship can be measured against the improvement in health of selected patients. The study believes that those who have the relationship (R/E) in their daily practice show better results in health treatment, as opposed to those who don't have it.

The novelty of the aforementioned study is characterized by the use, not just of a process of spirituality or the isolated practice of religion, but of a relationship (R/E). However, the challenge of the proposed work runs counter to these new studies. The aim of this article will be to provoke the idea that religion can exercise its activity in a post-modern world.

RELIGION AND RELIGIOSITY IN A POSTMODERN WORLD.

According to two of the main philosophers of postmodernity, religion is at its end. Baudrillard, known for his characterization of postmodernism in terms of its relationship with mass consumption, states that religion is no longer possible in contemporary times, as people only obey the so-called "market", living in a "second death of God". This thought is also shared by Lyotard.

However, there are thinkers who express the opposite. Sandrini, in his 2009 work *Religiosity and Education in the Context of Post-Modernity*, cites both the Italian thinker Gian Vattimo, who advocates a return to historical religion, and the Spanish philosopher Trias, who advocates the perception of religion not as the formation of a new religion, but as an updated symbolization, similar to what Freud and Marx did in their academic works. The idea is to understand that religion needs an overhaul in terms of interpretations and symbols, as the foundations are already sufficiently structured.

CONCLUSION

Defining postmodernity has become a difficult task, as the definition itself has not been a consensus. Lyotard, a renowned French thinker, achieved a certain homogeneity in the concept by stating that, in the postmodern period, meta-narratives such as science, religion, positivism, reason and socialism would not fully explain the world we live in. Therefore, a single truth would not apply to a post-modern world.

So how would religion be established in this troubled world? Is there room for religiosity in this postmodern world, understanding it as a spirituality led by a religion?

Spirituality, recognized as the search for the meaning of life and existence, has perhaps found its place in this contemporary world by presenting itself in a relationship with religion. Some authors, such as Luchetti (2022), have advocated understanding religion and spirituality not as separate and isolated events, but as a relationship (R/E).

In a hyper-individualistic world, isolation and a personal exercise in the search for mystical meaning might make sense. But the provocation is precisely this: can one think of religion being exercised in a post-modern world?

Religion is characterized by myths, rites and interdicts. In religion, there are rules that must be followed and respected, because it is the institutionalization and structuring of faith. Some post-modern authors, such as Baudrillard and Lyotard, don't believe that there is any room for the exercise of religion, as this instrument has been taken over by the market and consumption. However, there are authors such as Vattimo, an Italian thinker, who believes that religion should be revived through the historical recovery of religion. Trias, a Spanish philosopher, also believes in the full exercise

of religion, but that this process should take place with a new symbolization of practices.

The aim of this work is to act as a provocation. In a world where individuals are isolated and exercising their own truths, is it possible to insert religion?

Is the postmodern period a tomb or a new opportunity for institutions to act with their rites, myths and interdicts?

We hope that future work can explore this very contemporary subject.

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