

The value of Coexistence: from the Postmodern crisis to the prospect of Religion

قيمة التعايش: من أزمة ما بعد الحداثة إلى أفق الدين

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DOI: 10.46315/1714-012-001-049		

Received: 05/11/2022. Accepted: 11/01/ 2023 Published :16/01/2023

Abstract (English):

The value of coexistence, as an articulated existential value based on the consideration of otherness and participation, finds welcome in a postmodern climate characterized by difference and openness to the other through interaction, acceptance, and rejection of closure, otherwise, the denial of any criterion that establishes the value of coexistence, makes postmodernism a space distinguished by a foundational crisis. On the other hand, we find religion as an existential concept that absorbs the debate of the basis and purpose of coexistence. It presents itself as a criterion in the moral debate, especially the value of coexistence, in a world that can not be thought of without the other, the family, the community, and the public space, where the ego does not have to melt into the 'we'. In other words, it is not possible to think about the value of coexistence apart from religion. Based on this assumption, this paper attempts to show the crisis of the value of coexistence in a postmodern space and how religion can confront and overcome this crisis.

Keywords: Postmodernity ; Difference; Value of Coexistence; Ethics; Religion.

ملخص باللغة العربية

تجد قيمة التعايش باعتبارها قيمة وجودية مفصلية تقوم على اعتبار الغيرية والتشارك موضع ترحيب في مناخ ما بعد حداثة يتميز بالاختلاف والانفتاح على الآخر عن طريق التفاعل والتقبل ورفض الانغلاق، دون الاعتراف بأي معيار يؤسس لقيمة التعايش، مما يجعل ما بعد الحداثة فضاء يعاني أزمة تأسيس، في المقابل نجد الدين باعتباره مفهوما وجوديا يستوعب جدل أساس التعايش و غايته، يقدم نفسه معيارا في جدل الأخلاق وبالخصوص قيمة التعايش، في عالم لا يمكن التفكير فيه دون الآخر، الأسرة، المجتمع، الفضاء العام، دون أن يذوب الأنا في النحن، بتعبير آخر، لا يمكن التفكير في قيمة التعايش بعيدا عن الدين، بناء على هذا الافتراض تحاول هذه الورقة إظهار أزمة قيمة التعايش في فضاء ما بعد الحداثة و كيف يمكن للدين أن يواجه هذه الأزمة و يتجاوزها.

كلمات مفتاحية: ما بعد الحداثة؛ الاختلاف؛ قيمة التعايش؛ الأخلاق؛ الدين .

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1- Introduction

Postmodernism claims itself a haven for different societies and heterogeneity, a factor that granted its pioneers the title "philosophers of difference". Postmodernism revolts against totalitarian systems and absolute ideas, as it would be sufficient to forge a description of totalitarianism to exclude any system, doctrine, or institution. At the same time, postmodernism tries to reconcile difference and plurality-according to its perspective- and coexistence, whose concepts and ways converge all philosophies and doctrines that attach man and society to a better life. On the other hand, throughout history, religion has represented an abundant ethical resource through the idea of pleasing God in general or through the legislation of social or psychological behavioral values. Religions have always represented ethical systems and are an essential factor in human coexistence, where the contemporary mind cannot think lucidly apart from religion, as Jürgen Habermas points out (Habermas, 2010, p. 17). Despite this, in the eyes of postmodernism, religions - are considered metanarratives produced by authority and society; namely, having no intrinsic meaning or truth to them, which renders the horizon we are tackling here "religion as a concept" and not religions as ideologies in the contemporary conception. The importance of that distinction emerges amidst the different approaches to how religion is conceptualized according to the diversity of intellectual contexts and their mechanisms, which brought about a functional reductionism of religion, Therefore, the wager of this research is predicated on an attempt to approach the concept of religion in a common ontological dimension, being a warrantor of the value of coexistence, accommodating the dimensions of human life. The foregoing demands us to evoke the problematic of the value of coexistence- as a central social value - in the postmodern space, the extent to which religion interacts with this normative crisis, and the value of the guarantee it provides. Two problems branch out here to discuss the topic: How does the concept of coexistence centralize as an absolute value in light of an absolute relativity that characterizes the postmodern climate? Moreover, in light of the manifestations of postmodernism on values, society and life, how does religion, in its ontological dimension, constitute a horizon for the common coexistence value?

2- Methods

Discussing the concept of coexistence based in principle on the minimum participation and acceptance of the different other without excluding or annihilating him, where society integrates regardless of their ethnic, religious or sectarian differences (For more discussion in this topic check :

Elias, Society of individuals; Chayes & Minow, Imagine coexistence), the process calls for comprehending postmodernism while analyzing the dimensions of difference and plurality - as prevalent thoughts- due to their philosophical and sociological contexts taking in regard the value of coexistence, also, exposure to the concept of religion and its approaches according to The field of knowledge: psychological, social and anthropological, prompts us to approach its concept in its ontological dimension, as a minimum that qualifies us to deal with its theoretical and practical relationship with the issue of ethics and coexistence in particular, which requires using both the analytical and critical methods, then, we tried to conclude the discussion with the important outcomes for both perspectives. Therefore, we tried to answer the research problematic through these axes:

- The concept of postmodernism
- Difference and coexistence in postmodern climate
- A conceptual approach to religion
- Religion: as a horizon for the value of coexistence.

3- Results

By discussing the previous hypothesis, this research led to the following results :

- Postmodernism - as a period and a conceptual climate - is a clear revolution against the metanarratives and totalitarian systems, thus, there is no place for absolutes and global ideas because it is considered a sign of depotism.
- The idea of difference as central in the postmodern climate represents an epistemological discomfort with any holistic idea, to avoid being closeted around local narratives, and with the manifestations of the idea of difference and the paradox between value theorizing and questions of pluralism in reality, postmodernism has also become a meta-narrative.
- Evoking the margin historically and cognitively led to an unconscious authoritarian centralization and a parallel direction for the suppression of the philosophical other, with hostility towards the semantic field of concepts of the center, origin, and subject, which were firmly established in the semantic field of modernism.

- The question of the value of coexistence suffers an ontological and epistemological instability in the postmodern climate, which makes it a refuge to justify oppression in the name of spreading democracy and fighting extremism.
- Postmodern strategy by declaring the three deaths: metaphysics - meaning - humanity, it dismantled the axioms of the coexistence issue, therefore, the mere search for a cognitive or social base for the idea of coexistence in postmodernism makes it a failed task.
- The most important anchor of the postmodern climate in evaluating religion is based on the prevailing impressions in the history of ideological violence, and the failure to differentiate between the tendency of individuals and groups to violence and the exploitation of the prevalent ideology whatever it is, and between religion as a conceptual philosophical apparatus and social component regardless of the historical experiences.
- The resurgence of the question of religion in its ontological and ethical dimension - amid the problematic of standards - represents a fundamental idea in the dialogue of religions in terms of enhancing the common values, even in the current philosophical and ethical dialogue to find the epistemological and ontological common concept of religion as a guarantor, thus, the establishment of consistent, normative and realistic ethics.
- The attempt to adjust the concept of religion and link it to the ethical issue and coexistence in particular faces a problem because of the functional definitions that make it subject to every field of knowledge instead of being an independent phenomenon.
- Through the concept of religion, Belief in the Transcendental Absolute as a power in which a person believes in strength, care, and reckoning. Also, away from the preconceptions that enter into religious experience or religion as history, it includes ontologically two aspects related to ethical value: the cause and effect of ethical action.

4- Discussion

The concept of Postmodernism :

Postmodernism is an exasperating term, as Hans Bertens expressed (Bertens, 1995, p. 3), more than any other philosophical term, which we know if we approach the concept in multiple fields, philosophical, social, psychological, historical, political ..., also as a period or thoughts, It seems clear that the prefix "post" indicates a rebellious context, to show a dialectic relationship with modernity, accordingly, we find a strong relationship between the origins of postmodernity and Nietzsche,

because the incoherent theories of postmodernity only acquire rigor and philosophical credibility when seen in relation to the Nietzschean problematic of the eternal recurrence (Vattimo, 1988, p. 15), in addition, Lyotard sees that "postmodernity" is what we live in today, so he calls his book "The Postmodern condition" and defines it simply as "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard, 1979, p. 7), i.e. the narratives and ideologies that prevailed before in political, religious, philosophical, social and ethical, which bear the controversy of spirit, self, or meaning.

If we want to show the most important broad lines that characterize the postmodern context, which touches the basic concepts in the dialogue of the coexistence value, here we find the word "context" or "climate" referring to the nature of thought in postmodernity, as it is away from any form of doctrine or philosophical system, or what indicates stability and centrality, we then mention the most important common points (Hassan, 1981, p. 34) that touch on the ethical issue:

- Deconstruction of any notions of power in any field, political, ethical, social...
- Demolition of the concepts of certainty and the final meaning.
- Rejection of meta-narratives and totalitarian ideas

It is not surprising; then, that we find writers like Foucault and Lyotard explicitly attacking any notion that there might be a meta-language, meta-narrative, or meta-theory through which all things can be connected or represented. Universal and eternal truths, if they exist at all, cannot be specified. Condemning meta-narratives (broad interpretative schemas like those deployed by Marx or Freud) as 'totalizing' (Harvey, 1990, p. 45), accordingly, would be It is then easy to deconstruct the moral value with its absolute-objective-holistic significance that applies to everyone because the most important notions of value - meaning, stability, and transcendence- have been dismantled, so postmodernity becomes an uncomfortable ethical climate for discussing the coexistence value, which could be valid only in an organized and stable relational system.

Difference and coexistence in postmodern climate :

Although postmodernism claims openness to all social and cultural differences, it is capable of turning at any time into a meta-narrative or an authoritarian system, it triumphs over the marginalized not origin, focusing on individual pleasure instead of justice, it prefers to talk about human culture, but is disturbed by human nature (Eagleton, 1996, p. 26). Of course, we should ask - according to the insistence of postmodernism - how can we aspire to grapple consistently with the notion of universality if we find ourselves unable to visualize any unified representation of the

world, or envision it as a "whole" filled with clear links and variance instead of being comprised of constantly-changing fragments, postmodernism presents two options: the unified vision is oppressive if it exists, or it is just an illusion, thus, we shouldn't even try to engage in a global project (Harvey, 1990, p. 52), through to the postmodernism view, we find ourselves in front of a new individualism that is not only far from self-centeredness, because the self basically becomes alienated in a semantic space that eliminates metaphysical notions. as well as postmodernism expels any transcendental or teleological approach, the contemporary individualism - according to Gilles Lipovetsky- is considered an accomplishment of individuals who are foreign to disciplines, rules, various constraints, it is narcissistic pleasures rather than mere autonomy, and it provides the explosion of enjoyment more than the conquest of freedom, promotion for hedonistic values, permissiveness, passion for unbridled temperament characteristics, So we have entered the era of narcissism (Russ, 1994, p. 10). How can this individual present an ethical alternative to acknowledge the other and to rein in that individualism which does not admit to any absolute? This is what we can express by the crisis of the standard, thus, the deconstruction of the meta-narratives is the clear declaration of the fading of the ethics narrative, and as long as truth is an authoritarian product and man is dead, then no solid system or standard can be founded, therefore, Claims of coexistence become baseless in the postmodern climate, Although we find in postmodernism the ethical dialogues insist on the living inside small narratives, which is another expression of cultural relativism, the last, it is an encrypted expression to ethical relativism because there is no difference - according to Richard Rorty - Among those who talk about cultural relativism, including respect, and between the Nazis, on the one hand, they asserts that their choice is the best, but on the other hand they don't have any criterion for choosing between them and the Nazis, so the dispute is always in a vicious circle (Rorty, 1999, p. 15).

Besides, The political and strategical domains were rich fields in which postmodernism practiced its ethical perspectives and its cultural theories. Robert Cooper - who was an advisor in Tony Blair's government - expressed by saying: " The challenge to the postmodern world is to get used to the idea of double standards. Among ourselves, we operate on the basis of laws and cooperative security. But when dealing with more old-fashioned kinds of states outside the postmodern continent of Europe, we need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era – force, pre-emptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary to deal with those who still live in the 19th century world of "every state for

itself". Among ourselves, we keep the law but when we are operating in the jungle, we must also use the laws of the jungle." (Cooper, 2002)

The effects of postmodernism appear if we return to Nietzsche again, i.e. the true substance of the crisis of humanity in the postmodern climate is the death of God. It is no coincidence that this was announced by Nietzsche, the first radically dehumanizing thinker of our era (Vattimo, 1988, p. 22), therefore, the context becomes ready for declaring the death of contemporary man, including his ethical identity, which guarantees him the minimum necessary acknowledgment for coexistence with others, then the self will be a liquid concept, it is evident we are indeed facing the post-human era.

A conceptual approach to Religion :

Religion is considered a fertile ethical resource, and a important factor in keeping ethical bonds in societies, through the idea of approaching God in general or through the legislation of social or psychological values, despite the circumstantial behavioral distortions that affect the religious idea, whether The well-known Spanish Inquisition in the name of Christ, the genocide in Burma in the name of Buddhism, the Zionist crimes in Palestine in the name of Judaism, or the killing practiced by organizations such as ISIS in the name of Islam, which caused a confusion between religious practices (religiousness) as a behavior and a human approach that has overlapping factors, Anthropological, psychological and social, and between religion as a concept and a phenomenon that has its own peculiarities, in the context of this methodological confusion, we find for example what is known as "the new atheism" which represents the parallel ethical position: humans can be ethical without religion, although both religion and new atheism is considered meta-narratives in postmodernism. The new atheism insists on accusing religion of being a historical and social source of terrorism, violence and killing, although we find the opposite, as Dinesh D'Souza expressed that The crimes of atheism were generally committed through an arrogant modern ideology that sees man as the creator of values, not God. Using the latest technologies of science, man seeks to displace God and create a secular paradise here on earth. Of course, if there are some people such the unfit, the handicapped, and the religious dissidents, they must be eliminated in order to achieve this utopia (paradise), this is the price that atheist tyrants - and those who apologize to them - are willing to pay. Here they confirm Fyodor Dostoevsky's saying : If there is no God, everything is permitted (D'Souza, 2007, p. 137). In the same context, refuting the myth of linking religion with terrorism, Professor

Robert Pape studied the suicide terrorist attacks of 188 cases between 1980-2001 and he concluded that these cases follow a strategic logic to force modern democratic states that practice democratization processes to cede lands of those who are called "Terrorists" (Pape, 2003), which clarify that matter has nothing to do - theoretically and practically - with the claim of totalitarianism or religious ideology.

After referring to the problem of methodological confusion between the concept and religious practice, we move on to the concept of religion, which concerns our research. There are many definitions according to the perspective or the field, philosophical, sociological, anthropological, or psychological, and it seems that these approaches caused the concept to be reduced and made it functionally subject to the specifics and the boundaries of the field. Therefore, it is also a methodological problem in dealing with the concept. We will deal with the most prominent ones in order to try to reach a common-based definition that takes into consideration the essentials of the concept, we find in the Islamic deliberative field, the most famous definition of religion as "a divine source that guides people of sound minds by choosing to be righteous at this life, and successful in the afterlife" or in short it is "a divine source guide to the truth in beliefs, and to the good in individual and social behaviors." (دران, p. 33)

for the Western deliberative field, we take some of the prominent definitions in religion studies:

For the psychologist William James, religion is defined as " The feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine. " (James, 2002, p. 38), and for the sociologist Durkheim, he sees it as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church " (Durkheim, 1995, p. 44). According to the theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher : " the essence of the religious emotions consists in the feeling of an absolute dependence. " (Schleiermacher, p. 41)

Herbert Spencer defined it as "the belief in the omnipresence of something that goes beyond the intellect." (Durkheim, 1995, p. 23). George Fraser's definition includes two elements: theoretical and practical which is " a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life. " (Fraser, 2009, p. 125)

If we try, through the above mentioned, to coin a definition that can be comprehensive and connective with the ethical truth, existentially and epistemologically, we will find ourselves close to

the definition of Schleiermacher and George Frazier, because the main factor in religiosity is the aspect of the transcendent or the supreme absolute power, Therefore, we note that Schleiermacher - although he did not clarify the faith and practical dimension - referred to the idea of the absolute in a way that was focused on the ontological aspect of man, as well as Fraser, his definition has semantic and methodological benefits because he focused on the theoretical and practical sides, but he needed an important aspect in the relationship of religion and ethics, which we think is the element of judgment. Other definitions suffer a lack of understanding of the phenomenon, which leads to a reductionist or ambiguous view in dealing with the concept of religion and its effects. The Islamic definition however, despite encompassing the element of belief and practice, does not include all religions and does not clearly highlight the essential element common between them, such as totism, the Egyptian religion and Buddhism..., it applies to Islam more than others, then Judaism and Christianity in a second degree, for the definition of both William James and Durkheim, did not take into account the creedal dimension of faith, especially since the definition of William James is closer to the mystical experience than religion, it is not applicable to religions that believe in the prophets or the holy books. As for Spencer's definition, it was limited to the element of ambiguity that does not give a clear conception of the relationship between religion and the religious man.

With the previous considerations, we can define religion in a nutshell as:

"Belief in the transcendent absolute, or transcendent of the material world, that man believes in his strength, care, and judgment " This seems to be the minimum concept of religion, through which the value of coexistence is valued and it applies to all religions despite the different directives or the contradictory projections, The aspects that enable us to deal with ethics and coexistence, in particular, are: transcendence, absoluteness, and judgement.

Religion: as a horizon for the value of coexistence :

After we discussed the concept of religion, we deal with the value of coexistence ethically, and why religion is its guarantor. All ethical theories have tried to propose a criterion that explains good and evil, such as virtue and happiness according to Plato and Aristotle, pleasure according to Epicurus, and the love of survival in Stoicism, deontological ethics of Kant, and pragmatism... (See for more details : Canto-Sperber & Ogien, La philosophie de morale; Kant , La religion dans les limites de la simple raison), Common to these previous criteria is that they have a ground or self-justifying dimension, even Kant, who thinks that the ethical Law is a reason in itself for man to be ethical ,

accordingly we find ourselves again in the same circle, what gives the law its solidity and legality ? and what motivates the acceptance of the different other and its participation in the public space if one of them has the power? There is no solid motive in the field of man or society that gives absolute value to coexistence, we can't in the ethical dialogue fall into the circular inference: the law is the motive of the law . This is an example of the problems faced by the ethical dialogue within the crisis of criteria.

If we want to clarify the question, how do all human beings agree on a common moral value of coexistence, that killing, violence, assault, and injustice are bad values? What makes them prefer the security and achieve their interests in peace and freedom? it may be interpreted as being in the benefit of everyone, but the reality and the assumptions show that these benefits are variable, so what a society sees as injustice, another may see as justice, and what individuals see as assault and killing, others may see as retribution and punishment, ethics without objectivity is subjective values, and the only way - according of Herbert Marcuse - to rescue some abstract and harmless validity for them seems to be a metaphysical sanction (Marcuse, 1991, p. 151), which can be realized philosophically, not a mysterious feeling, or an idea that doesn't realize man's epistemological and ontological dimension so that no 'naturalist' criterion can answer the question of ethics? Why do we coexist? Especially in postmodern climate which doesn't care about the foundational aspect of ethics at all and rejects dealing with absolute, meaning and criterion, therefore, there is no point in the necessity of ethical values, and there is no guarantee for living, responsibility to coexist, build families, fear for children, or respect the others, we will not be surprised then because the ethical law separated with its sacred dimension or metaphysical background, which still represents an ontological challenge in the current ethical dialogue, i.e those questions posed by postmodernism.

Behaviors and values such as sacrifice, chastity, honesty, and social trust, which constitute the structure of coexistence, do not find any justification in a postmodern space, even Nietzsche himself, recognized that the idea of ethics is a metaphysical idea par excellence (Ferry, 2002, p. 19), so he was clever in his criticism, the idea leads us to look at ethics as transcendent over the benefit, for interest or hedonistic values are self-referential criteria that are contradicted by sacrifice for example as an altruistic concept. Ethics can be with or against benefit, Therefore, ethics cannot be a human reality without an absolute transcendent reference that gives it validity, meaning, and universality. The essence of our problematic is in the foundation of ethics, not in ethical practice, this is again obvious

in the atheistic view or other perspectives that do not admit to the transcendent absolute. as they fall into a contradiction between the denial of the metaphysical resource to ethics, and the recognition of necessary ethical values for society, as there is no justification for any ethical idea without a religious motive, there is no objection to killing children and placing a lower-ranked human being on the evolutionary ladder in laboratories, as long as there is an interest for the majority and for science, but rather there is injustice and looting in the name of human rights and the fight against terrorism, also, the colonial countries have taken several scientific productions For the purpose of controlling societies, and using diseases as an excuse to implement their colonial expansionist goals, as a way to enter African countries, the imperialist countries have taken in the name of medicine, and in the name of humanity, a pretext for colonialism (Morin, 1982, p. 14). So the problem of secular or pragmatic criteria appears, therefore, the necessity of a transcendent absolute - stopping circular inference in a closed material system - to be an ontological reference that guarantees the ethics of coexistence, in the midst of criteria that present themselves in a structure that is not devoid of subjectivity, especially since the judgement aspect in the concept of religion is considered protecting the legality of the coexistence value and its consequences in the ethical reality.

If belief in the Transcendent Absolute is an incentive to be ethical and a justification for the necessity of coexistence value where it's filling the ontological emptiness in the human being and the need for the Absolute, then the factor of judgment and the penalty will protect this value by guaranteeing the evaluation of the ethical act result, or the moral act becomes absurd and devoid, failing to satisfy the ontological endeavor, thus, the reality of the value of coexistence itself implicitly and inevitably imply the idea of accountability, punishment, and reward, which requires the criminalization of the unjust, the murderer and the aggressor, to realize the structure of the ethical act by its principle and purpose, so that the act of coexistence becomes a fundamental value based on a solid existential base, because the elements of the ethical issue are interconnected and dependent on each other, from a holistic perspective.

5- Conclusion

Discussing the dimensions of difference a postmodern climat, we realize its effects in the ethical dialogue: foundation and reality. Where we tried in this research to show that the postmodern space is considered an awkward deliberative field for dealing with the value of coexistence, as it doesn't care about the question of foundation because it's decided by the death of God and truth. It appears

that the coexistence dialogue isn't just a theoretical issue subject to multiple criteria, but rather a crucial practical issue, because we claim that the avoidance and destruction of norms - adopted by postmodernism - is in the end a declaration of the death of ethics, and a dismantling of the human existence essence, which makes us think that religion presents itself again in every ethical dialogue, in terms of proving its normative solidity and as an indispensable factor in the continuation of human society. This also leads us to ask how contemporary ethical theories approach religion as a phenomenon independent of reductionist definitions and functional concepts which make it a subject to epistemological contexts and different deliberative fields.

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