



BOGDAN FERDEK

Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław, Poland | 2nd Department of Dogmatic Theology

ORCID: 0000-0001-5787-0523

The Dogmatic Aspect of Postmodernity in a Theological Perspective

DOGMATYCZNY ASPEKT PONOWOCZESNOŚCI W PERSPEKTYWIE TEOLOGICZNEJ

Streszczenie

Ponowoczesność z jednej strony zwalcza chrześcijańskie dogmaty, a z drugiej strony na ich miejsce proponuje dogmaty własne. U podstaw niniejszego artykułu stoi następujący problem: czy dogmat w przedchrześcijańskim znaczeniu funkcjonuje w ponowoczesności i jak go można ocenić w świetle katolickiej dogmatyki? Droga prowadząca do rozwiązania problemu składa się z trzech etapów. Pierwszy etap ukaże podstawowe dogmaty ponowoczesności, którymi są: postęp, równość, wolność od tragizmu ludzkiej egzystencji. Kolejny etap będzie poświęcony próbom narzucania społeczeństwom postmodernistycznych dogmatów poprzez mechanizmy poprawności politycznej. Ponowoczesne dogmaty mają bowiem nie tylko wymiar doktrynalny, lecz również zobowiązujący. Ostatni etap przyniesie natomiast teologiczną krytykę postmodernistycznych dogmatów. Ponowoczesne dogmaty są *zadłużone* dogmatami chrześcijańskimi. Transcendentną treść tych ostatnich chcą ugruntować w immanentnej rzeczywistości. Stwórczego Boga sprowadzają do twórczego człowieka jako promotora postępu i emancypacji, równość – do negacji wszelkich różnic, wolność od tragizmu egzystencji do transhumanistycznej *śmierci śmierci*.

Słowa kluczowe: ponowoczesność, dogmat, postęp, równość, transhumanizm, poprawność polityczna

Introduction

An unambiguous definition of the term “postmodernity” poses many difficulties, as the concept is associated with both a multitude of thinkers whose views are described as “postmodern” and with the diversity of disciplines to which the phenomenon of “postmodernity” is said to relate. This makes the term “postmodernity” so broad that it is difficult to define precisely. According to Chantal Delsol, “postmodernity is an extension of modernity and at the same time its negation.”¹ It aims to bring about a complete transformation of humanity and the world by destroying the forms in which they have always existed. “In essence, it is about man himself creating everything that is important, everything that concerns him. There is nothing that is *given* anymore; everything is constructed. There is nothing that precedes us: everything is our creation,”² Delsol states. In her book *La haine du monde. Totalitarismes et postmodernité* [Eng. Hatred of the World. Totalitarianism and Postmodernity], Delsol presents a philosophical description of postmodernity, which can inspire an attempt at a theological description of postmodernity. Such an attempt, however, would exceed the scope of this article. Therefore, this discussion will be limited to the dogmatic aspect of postmodernity, with dogma being understood in a pre-Christian sense. In ancient, pre-Christian Greece, the word “dogma” was used to describe a legal decision of the senate or an assertion of a philosophical school, or the ethical principles of human action. The term “dogma” included both doctrinal and obligatory dimensions. It was therefore not created by Christians, but had already functioned in public life and was eventually adopted by them. Does dogma, in the pre-Christian sense, function in postmodernity, and how can it be assessed in the light of Catholic dogmatics?

It might seem that postmodernism is devoid of dogma because its underlying component is relativism, which holds that “there is only one truth, namely that no truth exists.”³ And since there is no truth, there is also no falsehood, and therefore “everything is relative except relativity usurping absolute value.”⁴ The relativism of postmodernism seems to exclude any dogma. However, Agnieszka Kołakowska notes that although postmodernism rejects the existence of objective truth, it is extremely dogmatic, even to such an extent that it wants to embrace everything

1 Ch. Delsol, *Nienawiść do świata. Totalitaryzm i ponowoczesność*, Warszawa 2017, p. 7.

2 Ibidem, p. 17.

3 R. Buttiglione, *Il primato della coscienza nella politica*, in: *Kościół w czasach Jana Pawła II*, Lublin 2005, p. 481.

4 J. Chyła, *Jezus Chrystus Jana Pawła II*, Pelplin 2007, p. 91.

and take possession of everything.⁵ This observation by Kołakowska will be developed further in this publication. The first part it will outline the basic dogmas of postmodernity. The following section will focus on attempts to impose postmodern dogmas on societies; they possess not only a doctrinal dimension but also an obligatory one. In contrast, the final section will present a theological critique of postmodern dogmas.

1. Dogmas of postmodernity

Progress and emancipation can be seen as the main dogmas of postmodernity. According to Delsol, postmodernism “is about man himself creating everything that is important, everything that concerns him. There is nothing that is *given* anymore; everything is constructed. There is nothing that precedes us: everything is our creation.”⁶ Progress and emancipation are supposed to lead to the abolition of all limits, which are considered evil. The abolition of limits is expected to result in unlimited freedom, unlimited equality, and unlimited happiness.⁷ This will be made possible by the belief that humans, with the aid of technology, can construct everything. Whereas in the past, humanity sought to understand itself, today it aims to construct itself. Nothing is given to humans; everything is perceived as cultural. Consequently, man wants to be his own demiurge – an artisan-like figure responsible for fashioning and maintaining the physical universe – and therefore questions not only the data given to him when he was not yet conscious but also his biological data. Everything is to be subject to his choice, including gender and name. In this rejection of all that has been given to humanity, the pipe dream of human omnipotence comes to the fore. Man attributes to himself the omnipotence that is an attribute of God, thus becoming “like a God” (Gen 3:5). This idea is epitomised in the titles of works by, for example, the Polish philosopher Janusz Kuczyński (1930–2017) in *Homo creator*,⁸ or the Israeli historian and philosopher Yuval Noah Harari in *Homo deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*.⁹ Man seems to be *homo creator* or *homo deus* because, thanks to science and technology, he believes he can imitate God, who defines the boundaries. For God is the one who, in creating entities, defines their limits by being without limits himself.

5 A. Kołakowska, *Czy możliwa jest religia?*, “Teologia Polityczna”, <https://teologiapolityczna.pl/agnieszka-kolakowska-czy-mozliwa-jest-religia> [accessed: 19.07.2024].

6 Ch. Delsol, *Nienawiść do świata...*, p. 17.

7 See *ibidem*, pp. 18–19.

8 See J. Kuczyński, *Homo creator*, Warszawa 1976.

9 See Y.N. Harari, *Homo deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*, Kraków 2018.

The dogma of postmodernity can also be seen in its approach to equality. According to this dogma, even the simplest differences are perceived as inequalities. Differences are not treated complementarily, and postmodernity therefore seeks to eliminate all inequalities. These inequalities are stigmatised and prosecuted by law. The most basic inequality in human society is based on gender, and it is this inequality that gender inequality seeks to eliminate. According to Delsol, “*Gender* discourse is supposed to eliminate inequality at the very base of human society: it is supposed to remove the difference between the sexes [...] Gender discourse eliminates difference where it is most obvious, most constitutive – and constructive!”¹⁰ According to the dogma of equality, there are no two genders. Every human being possesses their own unique gender, as everyone is a mixture of male and female characteristics. This dogma of equality aims to permeate all areas of life – not just gender. In the service of equality, there is the concept known as the *Law of Jante*. It was invented by the Danish writer Aksel Sandemose (1899–1965). In his book *En flyktning krysser sitt spor* (1933), he described the fictional Danish town of Jante, whose residents are bound by the rules: Don’t think you are somebody – Don’t believe that you’re as good as us – Don’t believe that you’re smarter than us – Don’t believe that you’re better than us – Don’t believe that you know more than us – Don’t believe that you’re more than us – Don’t believe that you’re good at anything, which scorn and hurt anyone who wants to rise above others. The Law of Jante is akin to a warning on a train – *don’t lean out*. It applies to everyone, in every position and of every age. Inspired by the Law of Jante, Scandinavians culturally strive for equality. Modesty and even mediocrity are prized; outstanding individuals are not welcome and self-exaltation is strongly condemned. The postmodern dogma of equality imitates the equality preached by Christianity, according to which God loves all people equally. However, transferring this transcendent equality to the immanent world destroys autonomy, entrepreneurship, and creativity. Equality becomes “gleichschaltung,” i.e., the elimination by force of differences in the way people think and act.

Of no less importance is the dogma of postmodernity, which envisions a bright future where the tragedy of human fate, including suffering and death, will be eliminated. According to Delsol, postmodernism is convinced that it has found a way “to provide sustainable happiness for all. To achieve this goal, tragedy must be removed from existence, starting with collective, political, and

10 Ch. Delsol, *Nienawiść do świata...*, p. 140.

social catastrophes.”¹¹ The envisioned result is a society of leisure, characterised by the eternal student, long holidays, and a prosperous retirement. The pinnacle of removing tragedy from human existence will be the “death of death.”¹² The possibility of freeing humanity from the tragedy of its existence is presupposed by transhumanism, which sets itself three goals: “the repair of the human being [...] increasing its physical-psycho-intellectual capacity and, finally, the transformation of its nature. It is about people pushing beyond their own limitations. In other words, it aims to become an ‘enhancer’ of itself [...] The radical ideologues of transhumanism make no secret of their desire to become masters of life and death.”¹³ Power over life and death will ensure that people can exchange vital organs. Consequently, a person will only die by accident or suicide. The postmodern dogma of a bright future is an imitation of Christian eschatology. It transfers a transcendent eschatology into immanence. However, a transcendental eschatology in immanence is at best, a utopia, i.e. an escape into some ideal time and place. A world free from the tragedy of human existence exists only in utopias.

The common denominator of postmodern dogmas is the transference of transcendence into immanence: a transcendent God becomes an immanent *homo creator*, transcendent equality becomes an immanent “gleichschaltung,” and transcendent eschatology becomes an immanent utopia.

2. The obligatory nature of postmodern dogmas

Postmodernity makes claims to the universal validity of its dogmas. It imposes its dogmas, which are supposed to be the norm for everyone, using the mechanisms of political correctness. Postmodernity endeavours at all costs to put its dogmas into practice by imposing them artificially and forcibly, primarily through political correctness. Political correctness even came to hold a chair in the Department of Philosophy and Sociology at the University of Iowa in the United States. The Chair of the Department of Philosophy of Political Correctness was headed by Professor Saul Yerushalmy, a man who, since the emergence of the term and its application in various disciplines, has endeavoured to make the subject of political correctness a separate field of study. This field exists at the intersection of several other disciplines, such as philosophy, political science, hermeneutics, sociology and linguistics. Political correctness can be defined as

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 251.

¹² Ibidem, p. 196.

¹³ M. Falenczyk, *Transhumanizm czy humanizm. Krytyczne spojrzenie na nową ideologię*, “Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego” 38 (2018) 1, p. 246.

a philosophy that aims to increase tolerance of differences in culture, race, gender, ideology, lifestyles, sexual orientation and otherness of opinion and behaviour. Political correctness aspires to be the only acceptable view. If someone disagrees with this supposedly right view, they are labelled a bigot, sexist, deviant or prejudiced.¹⁴ Political correctness grew out of opposition in US academia to various types of discrimination based on gender, race, ancestry, religion, worldview and disability. Its guiding principle is the abolition of all forms of discrimination, with tolerance of difference being the means to this end. Political correctness has created its own language that eliminates words that might offend someone, e.g., a drinker is “spatially confused,” a prostitute becomes a “private, paid sex specialist,” and a madman becomes “perceptually different.”¹⁵ The language of political correctness eliminates all evaluative words except those that political correctness itself evaluates. This language eliminates negative judgements because it is based on the assumption that there is no objective truth, that there is no right and wrong and that everything is a set of equal differences. Consequently, political correctness – on one hand – “does not kill anyone, does not eradicate opinions, but induces people to conceal them or to refrain from any attempt to disseminate them.”¹⁶ On the other hand, it is “the imposition of a particular way of thinking, beyond which it becomes difficult – if not impossible – to express one’s opinion without risking great unpleasantness.”¹⁷ In this way, political correctness becomes a collar imposed on people’s thinking. The consequence of political correctness is that “democratic society is rapidly turning into an unfree herd and minds, instead of liberating themselves, are becoming dependent and submissive.”¹⁸

The weapon of political correctness is mockery. “To mock is not necessarily to ridicule in order to destroy, but above all, and sometimes even exclusively, to make something seem worthless.”¹⁹

An example of mockery might be the words of a contemporary ideological militant: “You are ridiculous, out of date. You smell of naphthalene”. Mockery discredits any attempt at criticism because the adversaries are considered the embodiment of evil and madness. They speak of their backwardness, savagery

14 A. Leśniak, “*Political correctness*,” czyli o etycznej wrażliwości języka, “*Studia Ekonomiczne. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach*” 313 (2017), p. 150.

15 *Ibidem*.

16 P. Ślęczka, *Prawda jak powietrze*, “*Ethos*” 79–80 (2007), p. 158.

17 Ch. Delsol, *Nienawiść do świata...*, p. 222.

18 *Ibidem*, p. 223.

19 *Ibidem*, p. 69.

and stench.²⁰ Religion is particularly targeted with mockery. This was shown by Leszek Kołakowski (1927–2009) in his essay *Jezus ośmieszony*. “Those who dare [...] to preach in their own name the evangelical precepts about greed and riches, compassion and love expose themselves to mockery – you do not say: ‘this is not true’, but rather: ‘this is ridiculous, this is ludicrous’. Why? Is it because these are clichés? But, after all, we incessantly repeat clichés that are at least as worn out, though far less important, without blushing. In short: within the educated or semi-educated social classes, it is shameful to be a Christian – not even because Christianity is not intellectually respectable, but because it is morally ridiculous.”²¹ Mockery proves more effective than hard terror, as it puts minds to sleep without batons.²² People are no longer afraid of the criminals from Łubianka, but they are panic-stricken at being seen as backward and old-fashioned. All it takes is for the media to label an opinion as old-fashioned for it to be immediately renounced.

Political correctness uses familiar terms, but it hides different meanings behind them. It often redefines Christian concepts in the spirit of Marxism, which was merged with liberalism in 1968. An example is the concept of “tolerance”. According to Benedict XVI, “The real danger we face is the removal of tolerance in the name of tolerance.”²³ Postmodernity, convinced of the validity of its dogmas, lays claim to their total validity. By imposing its dogmas, it strikes at human freedom. According to Benedict XVI, “No one is forced to be a Christian. But no one must also be forced to live a ‘new religion’, the only one capable of giving norms and binding on all humanity.”²⁴ Postmodernity, on the one hand, forces us to live our own lives and, on the other hand, suppresses Christian dogma. According to Benedict XVI, “Christianity feels subjected to an intolerant pressure that first ridicules it – as something belonging to a current of strange, false thinking – and then, within a framework of apparent reasonableness, wants to limit the space of its life and action.”²⁵ The paradox of political correctness is that “the intolerance that political correctness was supposed to cure has turned into the intolerance of political correctness.”²⁶ For political correctness sometimes leads to the clamouring intolerance of the few, and, lacking arguments, it demonises and

20 Ibidem, p. 259.

21 L. Kołakowski, *Jezus ośmieszony*, Kraków 2014, pp. 23–24.

22 Ch. Delsol, *Nienawiść do świata...*, pp. 228–229.

23 Benedict XVI in conversation with Peter Seewald, *Światłość świata*, Kraków 2011, p. 63.

24 Ibidem, p. 64.

25 Ibidem.

26 W. Roszkowski, *Czy to wszystko nowomowa?*, “Gość Niedzielny” 21 (2008), p. 66.

intimidates instead of discussing. Political correctness is therefore the “daughter” of previous regimes, which has donned silk gloves and abandoned the legendary torture chambers, replacing them with stately offices of anonymous bureaucracies.²⁷

Political correctness does not align with common sense. Józef Herbut (1933–2009) provides three interpretations of common sense. Firstly, it is the natural capacity for understanding, without which a person is deemed “weak-minded,” “limited,” or “stupid.” Secondly, common sense is the ability to exercise practical, fair judgement in everyday matters. Thirdly, and finally, common sense is the ability to know fundamental truths.²⁸ To sum up, common sense is the source of beliefs whose veracity is “felt” by most people. The concept of *common sense* is familiar to the Bible, as evidenced by the story of David and Abigail. David blesses Abigail’s common sense: “Thank God for your good sense and for what you have done today in keeping me from the crime of murder and from taking my own revenge” (1 Sam 25,33). Common sense is thus clearly linked in the Bible to the ability to think. While Abigail’s common sense prevented bloodshed, political correctness – which disregards common sense – serves to destroy the opinions of opponents. This is particularly true of Christian dogmas, which are identified with various forms of fanaticism. Political correctness ostensibly respects the principles of freedom of thought, but in such a way that everyone engages in censorship without acknowledging it. In this way, it makes everyone both a prisoner and a prison guard, because they fear thinking differently and, consequently, fear contesting postmodern dogmas. Advocates of postmodern ideology claim that they do not wish to wage any civilisational war but defend only the fundamental values sometimes called *European values*. Postmodernity, however, does not tolerate criticism of its dogmas, which confirms its aspirations to create a definitive, closed and “only right” world. Censorship is applied to anyone who contests the dogmas of postmodernity as a means of preventing someone’s well-being from being violated, whether by word or deed. This form of censorship is referred to as “selective freedom of speech”. It is intended to curb any form of verbal attack on a particular race or minority.²⁹ Within this selective freedom, upholding only the right postmodern dogmas, lie the seeds of a new totalitarianism. Postmodern ideology, in fighting totalitarianism, paradoxically creates a new form of it.

27 Ch. Delsol, *Nienawiść do świata...*, p. 66.

28 J. Herbut, *Artykuły i szkice. Z metodologii i teorii metafizyki, filozoficznej analizy języka religii oraz etyki i metaetyki*, Opole 2008, p. 171.

29 A. Leśniak, “*Political correctness*”..., p. 151.

3. A theological critique of postmodern dogmas

Postmodern dogmas seem to transfer the transcendent into the immanent world. Postmodern dogmas are thus grounded in the immanence of transcendent concepts. In place of the creative God, postmodernity places the creative man. Postmodernity, therefore, seeks to create the equivalent of transcendence by forging a hybrid of it and technology. This hybrid of transcendence and technology renders all relevant concepts of postmodernity secularised and technicised theological ones.³⁰ Replacing the creative God with the creative man is a postmodern variation of the old temptation to be like God (Gen 3,5). In this scenario, the image of God – man – wants to be like his Prototype – God.

Aspiring to be like God, man wants to reclaim the lost paradise through technological progress. In this paradise, the ideal of equality, which the Apostle Paul expressed with his words: “So there is no difference [...] between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus” (Gal 3,28) is to be realised. Postmodernity seeks equality between men and women by removing the differences created by gender. “In order to avoid the hegemony of one gender or the other, an attempt is made to erase the differences between them, considered as the result of historical and cultural conditions. In such closing of the gender gap, the bodily difference, called gender, is minimised, while the cultural dimension, called mankind, is recognised as paramount and primary.”³¹ When the Apostle Paul writes that “there is no difference between men and women”, he does not intend to negate the difference between man and woman. Instead, he means that “in Christ, the rivalry, enmity and violence that degenerate the relationship between man and woman are surmountable and have already been overcome.”³² Regarding gender differences, “Masculinity and femininity are revealed as belonging ontologically to the creature and are therefore destined to last beyond present time, obviously in a transformed form.”³³ This transformed form of masculinity and femininity that ontologically belong to creation is the equality of man and woman on the basis of complementarity, and not the abolition of gender differences. “Differentiated from the beginning of creation and remaining so for all eternity, man and woman included in Christ’s paschal mystery therefore no longer see their differences as

³⁰ D. Misztal, *Religijne aspekty transhumanizmu [Religious Aspects of Transhumanism]*, in: P. Grabarczyk, T. Sieczkowski (eds.), *Granice sacrum. Wymiary religijności w myśli współczesnej*, Łódź 2017, p. 152.

³¹ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *O współdziałaniu mężczyzny i kobiety w Kościele i świecie*, Kraków 2004, p. 7.

³² Ibidem, p. 25.

³³ Ibidem.

a motive for their disagreement, which must be overcome either by negating them or by simplifying them, but as an opportunity for interaction, to be cared for in mutual respect for their differences.”³⁴ Postmodernity seeks to realise this transcendental ideal of the equality of man and woman in immanence, but it does so by replacing the complementarity of the sexes with their negation.

In a paradise regained through the possibilities of science and technology, another transcendent ideal from the heavenly Jerusalem will be reduced to immanence: “And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore” (Rev 21:4). This transcendent ideal from the heavenly Jerusalem seeks to realise transhumanism in the immanent world. It is the recreation of humanity by humanity itself through the power of technology, through which people will be freed from the tragedy of their existence. This tragedy is composed of death and hardship that bring tears to our eyes. Transhumanism, therefore, is also oriented towards transcendence. It offers man a salvation of a scientific and technological nature.

In fact, postmodern dogmas are *indebted to* Christian dogmas. They aim to ground the transcendental content of the latter in immanent reality. They diminish the creative God to the creative man as a promoter of progress and emancipation, reduce equality to the negation of all differences, and redefine freedom from the tragedy of existence to the transhumanist “death of death.” Postmodern dogma is not only doctrinaire but – as is only right – intolerant of other views. Postmodernity takes its dogmas no less seriously than Christians took their dogmas. For Christians, the rejection of dogma meant heresy, and for postmodern man to reject some postmodern dogma is an Orwellian *thoughtcrime*.

In addressing Kołakowska’s question “Is a postmodern religion possible?” the answer is that postmodernism is not a religion, although it is religiously indebted. This indebtedness originates from the belief that man, made in the image of God, has come to believe that he is like God, his Prototype.

Translated by Wojciech Lubaczewski

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 26.

References

- Benedict XVI in conversation with Peter Seewald, *Światłość świata*, Kraków 2011.
- Buttiglione R., *Prymat sumieni w polityce*, in: *Kościół w czasach Jana Pawła II*, Lublin 2005.
- Chlewiński Z., Herbut J., Janeczek S., Kowalczyk S., Mariański J., *Ideologia, II Istota*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka VI*, Lublin 1993, p. 1409.
- Chyła J., *Jezus Chrystus Jana Pawła II*, Pelplin 2007.
- Delsol Ch., *Nienawiść do świata. Totalitaryzmy i ponowoczesność*, Warszawa 2017.
- Falenczyk M., *Transhumanizm czy humanizm. Krytyczne spojrzenie na nową ideologię*, "Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego" 38 (2018) 1, pp. 243–263.
- Harari Y. N., *Homo deus: Krótka historia jutra*, Kraków 2018.
- Herbut J., *Artykuły i szkice. Z metodologii i teorii metafizyki, filozoficznej analizy języka religii oraz etyki i metaetyki*, Opole 2008.
- Jaroszyński P., *Ideologia*, in: A. Maryniarczyk (ed.), *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii IV*, Lublin 2003, pp. 731–734.
- Kongregacja Nauki Wiary, *O współdziałaniu mężczyzny i kobiety w Kościele i świecie*, Kraków 2004.
- Kołąkowska A., *Czy możliwa jest religia?*, "Teologia Polityczna", <https://teologiapolityczna.pl/agnieszka-kolakowska-czy-mozliwa-jest-religia> [accesssed 19.07.2024].
- Kołąkowski L., *Jezus ośmieszony*, Kraków 2014.
- Kuczyński J., *Homo creator*, Warszawa 1976.
- Leśniak A., "Political correctness," czyli o etycznej wrażliwości języka, "Studia Ekonomiczne. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach" 313 (2017), pp. 147–160.
- Misztal D., *Religijne aspekty transhumanizmu*, in: P. Grabarczyk, T. Sieczkowski (eds.), *Granice sacrum. Wymiary religijności w myśli współczesnej*, Łódź 2017, pp. 135–156.
- Ratzinger J., *Ku „dojrzałości” wiary w Chrystusa*, "L'Osservatore Romano" 6 (2005), pp. 29–31.
- Ślęczka P., „Prawda jak powietrze”. Wojciecha Chudego filozofia kłamstwa społecznego, "Ethos" 79–80 (2007), pp. 152–164.

THE DOGMATIC ASPECT OF POSTMODERNITY IN A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Summary

Postmodernity, on the one hand, combats Christian dogmas, while, on the other, proposes its own dogmas in their place. At the core of this article lies the following problem: Does dogma, in the pre-Christian sense function in postmodernity and how can it be evaluated in the light of Catholic dogmatics? The path to resolving this problem consists of three stages. The first stage outlines the basic dogmas of postmodernity, which are: progress, equality, and freedom from the tragedy of human existence. The next stage focuses on attempts to impose postmodern dogmas on societies through the mechanisms of political correctness. Indeed, postmodern dogmas possess not only a doctrinal dimension but also a binding one. Finally, the last stage presents a theological critique of postmodern dogmas. Postmodern dogmas are *indebted* to Christian dogmas. They aim to ground the transcendental content of the latter in immanent reality. They diminish the creative God to the creative man as a promoter of progress and emancipation, reduce equality to the negation of all differences, and redefine freedom from the tragedy of existence to the transhumanist “death of death.”

Keywords: postmodernity, dogma, progress, equality, transhumanism, political correctness

Author's note

Bogdan Ferdek SThD – born on June 22, 1956, in Ozimek. Lecturer in dogmatic theology at the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław. Member of the Theological Sciences Committee, Polish Academy of Sciences; the Society of Dogmatics Theologians; Polish Mariological Society; the Polish Section of the Bonhoeffer Society; and a consultant of the Committee for the Doctrine of the Faith of the Polish Episcopate. Author of the following publications: *Zukunft als theologisches Problem* (2000), *Teologiczna futurologia* (2001), *Eschatologia Taboru* (2005), *Nasza Siostra – Córka i Matka Pana* (2007). Co-organiser of Christological conferences in cooperation with the Faculty of Theology, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, as well as philosophical and theological conferences in cooperation with the Institute of Philosophy, Wrocław University; e-mail: bferdek@pwt.wroc.pl.

Citation

Ferdek B., *The Dogmatic Aspect of Postmodernity in a Theological Perspective*, „Colloquia Theologica Ottoniana” 40 (2024), s. 9–20. DOI: 10.18276/cto.2024.40-01.