From the Holy Tradition to the concept of tradition – the source of different rhetorics

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Dans cet article, la place centrale est occupée par la notion de tradition qui a comme source principale la révélation chrétienne et qui, jusqu'à notre modernité tardive, parcourt un tracé sinueux, chargé de récusations, limitations, fragmentations, de sorte que de nos jours, on se situe dans un autre paradigme, celui de l'homme qui a perdu une grande partie de la signification des héritages de son propre passé. Les moments de l'histoire tels la Réforme, l'Illuminisme, les courants philosophiques (le pragmatisme, le rationalisme), les totalitarismes du 20ème siècle, le capitalisme, ont représenté des défis et de continuelles remises en cause de la tradition. La modernité institutionnalise les idées de nouveauté, d'émancipation et de progrès continuel et de cette manière, ce qui vient par voie de l'héritage est encadré dans le domaine des préjugés. D'après certains, la modernité tardive, d'après d'autres auteurs, la postmodernité nous situe en face d'une multitude de traditions, qui, sur le fond de la globalisation, se décomposent dans des molécules culturelles qui ensuite se combinent de nouveau dans des produits de synthèse et créent un effet de anéantisation. Dans le contexte du monde d'aujourd'hui, pour faire face aux défis, la culture européenne a besoin d'un retour aux sources, à la matrice universelle de la pensée patristique, qui s'est cristallisée quand la chrétienté était une seule réligion non séparée.

In the theological sense, the notion of tradition is the conveyance of the teaching which Christ and His Apostles taught. At the beginning of the Christian teaching, the whole revelation was spread orally and afterwards, the writings of the New Testament appeared. St. Athanasius the Great, talking about "the most primary tradition" names it "the faith which the Lord conveyed, which the Apostles preached, which Fathers kept"[1]. (Vedernikov, 204).

There are many biblical arguments which strengthen the belief in the existence and the necessity of tradition. Therefore St. John the Evangelist says: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that

[1] Vedernikov, *The problem of tradition in Orthodox theology*, translation by Serafinceanu, in the magazine "The Metropolitan Cathedral of Moldova and Suceava", Year XXXIX, No. 3-4, 1963, p. 204.

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should be written." «John 21:25» And in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (2:15), the Apostle Saint Paul says: "So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours". Moreover, St. John the Evangelist points out that he does not feel the need to put in writing much of what he has to convey: "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write them with paper and ink: but I hope to come unto you, and to speak face to face, that your joy may be fulfilled". «2 John 1:12» From what the Apostle said, we begin to understand that what he has to convey are not simple teachings or rules, but there appears a *modus vivendi*, the life lived in grace, the communion in the Holy Spirit, which could be conveyed only face to face, by spoken word. The Apostles could not announce the good news of Incarnation or that of the Resurrection of Christ by means of the epistles, but they had to go to each community, to each polis in order to assert their identity of being witnesses to the death and Resurrection of Christ, to baptise those who were to believe in the Holy Spirit and then to teach them to breathe, to live organically in the Spirit of Truth.

Even from the beginning of the apostolic teaching, their preaching was accompanied by the baptism of those who believed, the baptism meant the appearance of some formulas for the confession of the faith in the Holy Trinity, in the incarnation, the death and resurrection of Christ, in the Pentecost. The Book The Acts of the Apostles offers us evidence of those who were baptised: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" «Acts 2:42».

The Creeds, the Holy Sacrements, the foundation of hierarchy, the prayers specific to the divine worship which are not wholly established in the Scripture, but especially conveyed orally, by repetition, as realities practised, are also part of the divine revelation which is not less significant than Scripture.

Vedernikov, an important Russian theologian, specified clearly with regard to the way Tradition is understood in the Eastern area. Consequently, he draws up some distinctions between the common universal Tradition for all the churches and the traditions of the local churches; between the apostolic Tradition and the much later tradition commonly named churchly Tradition or that "of the Holy Fathers, concerning especially the organization of the divine service and the common organization of churchly life"[2]. From what the Russian theologian specified, we can understand that the Tradition can be defined as the universal apostolic Tradition, namely the teaching preached by the Apostles and conveyed by them to the Universal Church.

St. Irinaeus, who lived shortly after the first half of the 2nd century says: "this Tradition and faith which the (Church) holds from the Apostles, conveyed by them to people, came by the succession of bishops to us". And every time he wants to talk about the content of Tradition he gives as examples confessions of faith, which

[2] *Ibidem*, p. 204.

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are identical in essence, but different in detail. "He says that there are people who don't have the apostolic teaching written on paper in their language, but they have it written in their heart by means of the Spirit and keeping carefully the old Tradition, they believe in one God, Maker of heaven and earth…"[3].

The archbishop Athenagoras of Elias makes a useful delimitation in order to approach the meaning of Tradition: "The Tradition considered as holy is the mystery itself of Christ which continues its saving action and its life in the Church, by means of the sacrements, by the ritual of faith, by the sermon and by the interpretation of the word of God and its adaptation, by means of the divine worship. All the other elements, those related to the local worship customs, to the churchly administration, to the disciplinary methods, to father confessors' asceticism etc. are traditions"[4].

The apostolic Tradition is normative for the understanding of Scripture and the life of the Church. By the continuiy of Tradition, the Scripture goes beyond the simple historiography and becomes a stream of Christian life. Without Tradition, the Scripture remains closed in history, in the past and it is transformed in simple biblical archeology. Tradition is the one which opens the ontological dimension of revelation. All the forms of Tradition suggest the dialogue between the past generations and the life power which is maker of the Holy Spirit.

Father Stăniloae extends the period of Tradition from the apostolic century to the period of the Seven Ecumenical Councils, namely to the 8th century, agreeing with St. Athanasius who states that the Apostles preached and that Fathers kept what Christ conveyed to them. What Fathers achieved by means of the act of preservation is in fact a very dynamic, creative, renewing process, a process of improving and setting up the apostolic teaching according to the historical requirements of their time. The dogmatic formulas of the Ecumenical Councils acquired a doxological structure, pervading the liturgical hymns specific to the divine worship. So that they should not remain bare concepts, these formulas of the dogmas were sublimated into liturgical hymns and consequently, the truth of faith spread into the Christians' souls when they were in a state of prayer and communion, namely when they made up ecclesia.

In his study *Tradition and traditions*, Vladimir Losky defines Tradition saying that it is: "… the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church, life which conveys to each member of Christ's Body the capacity to listen, to receive and to know the Truth in its specific light…"[5]. This definition is made explicit by the Russian theologian who says that:

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[3] Dumitru Stăniloae, *The Holy Tradition. The Definition of the notion and its extention*, in the magazine "Orthodoxy", Publisher: The Biblical and Orthodox Mission Institute, Year XVI, No. 1, January-March 1964, p. 73.

[4] Athenagoras, Archbishop of Elias, *Tradition and traditions*, translation from Greek by Ene Branişte, in the magazine "Theological Studies", Publisher: The Biblical and Orthodox Mission Institute, Year XVI, No. 3-4, March-April, 1964, p. 165.

[5] Vladimir Loski, *Tradition and traditions*, in the magazine "Theological Studies", Year XXII, No. 7-8, July-August 1970, Bucharest, p. 590.

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“Tradition is not the content of Revelation, but the light which pervades the Revelation, it is not the word, but the live breeze which makes possible the hearing of words and at the same time the hearing of silence”[6].

Tradition has also a critical dimension acknowledged by the biblical text. St. Mark the Evangelist recounts in chapter 7: 6-13 the way in which Christ the Saviour points out how the word of God, namely the commandment of honouring parents was suppressed by human custom: “making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do”. Hence we understand that there is a series of traditions and customs which can contravene the divine revelation in the Scripture and the Tradition. They can be local customs, popular traditions, reminiscences of the pre-Christian period “accepted with devotion by all those whose traditionalism is manifested in receiving with infinite trust everything that was spread in the life of Church and remained there by virtue of custom”[7]. St. Paul recommends to his disciple Timotheus, in the same critical manner, to refer to some customs and practices which are not in accordance with the spirit of divine teaching: “but refuse profane and old wives' fables. And exercise thyself unto godliness” «1 Tim 4:7». He conveys to the community in Thessaloniki an explicit way of referring to the whole reality in the sense that everything must be checked in the light of the Holy Spirit. He says: “pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks… Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good”. «1 Tes 5:17-21» Everything must be tried in the light of the Spirit of Truth which dissipates any shadow of evil, any half-shade scattered in the rids of some customs.

The Tradition of the first eight centuries represents the norm of understanding and of living the revelation in the life of Church for all the times. Without living in the past, The Eastern Church is however viewed in the different hypostases of its passage through history by some traditionalist attitudes, namely by a stiffened attachment to the values of the past which are overbid and not too much recontextualised. In order to define the *consubtantiality*, at the first two ecumenical councils, we used the term *homoousios* having the sense of consubstantial, a meaning specified by the present Fathers, but which up to them had been used with another meaning, namely the one which the monks gave it. In contrast with the interests of Fathers during the period of councils, we could place a dispute which took place in the 20th century in the Romanian area around the topic of renewing the calendar from whence resulted two styles: the old and the new style. Therefore, to imagine that we can remain faithful to the Holy Fathers by adopting backward attitudes by which we defy the evidence and the absurd not taking into account mathematical formulae, I am referring here to the issue of calendar, it’s a proof of the fact that the true spirit of patristical thinking is very little understood. They were great because they had courage and also the necessary culture to be people of

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 590.
[7] *Ibidem*., p. 593.

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their time. They were never under the pressure of history but they were those who marked history by the transfigurating breath of the acts and of their teaching.

We made references in the lines above to the two dimensions of Tradition, a historical one and an ontological one. The confessions of faith, the liturgical hymns, the Holy Sacrements are forms by means of which Christ is revealed to us in the Holy Spirit, the horizontal dimension is intersected by the vertical one. In its horizontal character, without the discovery of Christ, tradition becomes devoid of content and afterwards it reaches formalism. In this respect, Father Stăniloae says: "When tradition is understood and practised in an exaggerated way and in big circles in a simple way like a horizontal or exterior tradition, we get to a wearisome formalism and without live content. In these cases we are searching for the renewing of Tradition either by the changing of language or of the rules, either by the effort of finding again the vertical event of meeting Christ in the Holy Spirit in these exterior forms by means of faith, namely by the renewing effort of collaborating with grace"[8].

As for the historical sense of Tradition in the Eastern area, especially after the schism which took place in 1054, it preferred to remain faithful to the eight centuries during which all the forms of religious manifestation of the Church were crystallized. Although for the modernity this attitude seems old and not actual, in reality it contains a prophetic component, because there where *The One* who lives in a mysterious light, *The One who is* reaches the horizontal dimension of our becoming, of the history, leaves only traces of eternity. And the traces of eternity are a projection of a present continuum. Therefore, to place ourselves in the continuity of Tradition is a gesture of deep wisdom because by this we make nothing else but to read the traces of God in history.

In the history in the western part, the moment of Reformation represented a turning point because among others, Tradition was also objected to on the basis of the principle *Sola Scriptura*. According to this principle, the Lutheranism states that "Tradition or more exactly the traditions are not divine, but human orders (traditiones humanae)"[9]. As a reaction to the point of view of Reformation, the Catholic theology drew up the teaching on Tradition, based on the decisions of the Council in Trident (1545-1563), considering it as a "source of Divine Revelation independent of the Holy Scripture"[10]. This independence of the two sources of revelation created the premises for the setting up of new dogmas which deepened the separation between the three important Christian confessions.

With regard to the attitude of some newer protestant theologians, the statements of prof. Kretschmar come as a testimony at a reunion of the Orthodox and Lutheran theologians in October 1959. He "openly stated that it is not possible to discuss about the attitude of the contemporary Lutheran Church towards Tradition starting

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[8] D. Stăniloae, *The permanent and mobile character of tradition*, in the magazine "Theological Studies", Year XXV, No. 3-4, March-April, 1973, p. 154.

[9] Vedernikov, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 201.

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only from [the question] of the kind of interpretation that the reformers of the 16th century gave to this notion"[11]. And the Protestant theologian H. Rückert, in his article "The Scripture, Tradition and the Church", – states that: in the dilemma – The Holy Scripture or the Scripture and the Tradition – a false alternative is included, as firstly, the Scripture is also Tradition and secondly, us, the protestants, live as well with the unwritten Tradition, at least unwritten in the Bible"[12].

Leaving behind the sphere of the theological discussion on Tradition, hereinafter we will tackle a general meaning of the notion of tradition as modernity introduced the theological meaning of tradition in the general pot of changing the way it refers to the values of the past.

In a general sense, tradition can represent a set of observations, a collection of doctrines and teachings, a particular way of living, a way of thinking concerning the world or ourselves, a way of understanding the others or interpreting reality. All these are examples of traditions – David Gross tells us[13] – when they are active and alive in the present even if they have their origin in the past. The same author sets up three necessary conditions so that we can talk about a tradition. Thus he talks about the necessity for perpetuating the tradition for minimum three generations in order to consider it a tradition; it must bring a meaning of the past into the present, namely have a sum of well-known spiritual and moral values in the present; and thirdly, it must create an effect of continuity between past and present.

The beginning of modernity did not favour a certain tradition, instead all the heritage of the past was brought in front of the court of reason, this being also justified, to a certain extent, by the excesses of the past. Modernity will favour even the bringing to surface of some gnosticizing heresies as that of the cathars in the West and the bogomil dualism in the East. Although condamned by the Church, these dualistic gnoses did not disappear, instead they resisted in an "underground of existence". Moreover, in the field of literature, the gnostic elements found a very fertile ground because the creativity of some great writers such as Milton with *Paradise Lost*, Shelley with *Prometheus Unbound*, Byron in his work *Cain*, fostered a continuous fascination for characters which can be understood at least with some emphasis, from a gnostic perspective. "Byron applied a reverse exegesis to the Bible, also activating options already encountered in the gnostic treaties. The principle which explains the reversal of traditionalist perspective is connected with the question *unde malum*?"[14]. And about Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837), Culianu tells us that at the height of despair, the poet asks to the artisan of the world, Ahriman, "*supreme giver of all evil*, to cut him the thread of life before he turns

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[11] *Ibidem*, p. 202.

[12] *Ibidem*, p. 202.

[13] David Gross, *The Past in Ruins. Tradition and the critique of modernity*, Publisher: University of Massachusetts Press, Place of Publication: Amherst, 1992 , passim., p. 9.

[14] Culianu, Petru Ioan, *The Dualistic Gnoses of the West*, translation by Tereza Culianu Petrescu, Postface by H.-R. Patapievici, Polirom, Iaşi, 2002, p. 308.

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thirty-five years old”[15]. And the French romanticism represented by Lamartine and Victor Hugo uses at large gnostic elements.

By means of these examples, we can understand that the new context does not account for the unification of two, three traditions, but many different traditions functioned simultaneously in different spheres of activity. What occurs is the loss of the integrating power of tradition by scattering and fragmentation. Fragmentation gave birth to a process of delimitation which differentiated between “rural and urban traditions, traditions at the royal courts and in different gilds, traditions of the aristocratic classes or of the peasants, cultivated or popular traditions”[16]. This fragmentation made impossible the access of the members of society to all these traditions. David Gross tells us that even the way of relating to each of these traditions became differentiated: for some people a tradition is something that must be exactly imitated, with rigourous and meticulous care; for others a tradition is nothing else but an orientative heritage; in some cases tradition becomes an issue of option.

D. Gross maintains that as much as they would have affected the predominance of tradition, both Renaissance and Reformation eventually reactivated other traditions, consequently, they did not come out of the paradigm they objected to. The author maintains that the true change began with empiricism and rationalism. The empiricism defined as true what is acknowledged by means of observation and experience. Francis Bacon was one of those who promoted this way of thinking. This way of thinking considered that in the places where traditions existed, preconceptions of the past were insinuated, which were received ideas, that is why the preservation of tradition in the people’s minds must be stopped, blurred. Despite this, Bacon did not deny the whole of tradition, what he questioned was the true value of tradition.

Another way of thinking was the rationalism which, in order to have certainty regarding knowledge, resorts to the exercise of reason which it considers the most lacking in presuppositions and consequently, a transfer of authority between tradition and reason is produced. Reason becomes a guide for life and for the revealing of truth.

In the sense accepted by Descartes – D. Gross tells us[17] - “when they are closely analyzed, traditions represent nothing else but a chaos of customs and of some unchecked opinions, most of which prove their baselessness in the face of reason”. Descartes adopted the position of including the elements of tradition in a rational construction.

The 18th century brings to attention with much persistency the concept of novelty “in the sense of a new beginning which can be initiated by the human will, not only by God”[18].

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[15] *Ibidem*, p. 308.
[16] D. Gross, p. 21.
[17] *Ibidem*, p. 25.
[18] *Ibidem*, p. 26.

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The capitalism made much regarding the objection to tradition because the economic impact was one which reached all the social classes. The capitalism brings about the idea of interest, personal interest[19], accompanied by an economic advantage based on some rational calculations for the accumulation of capital.

The political challenge was addeed to the economical challenge, namely the absolutist state in the 17th and 18th century. From the feudal, agrarian state with a descentralized society, the passage was made to the centralized absolutist state whose authority in all the social spheres was increasing in all the countries from Spain to Russia. The effect was a greater pervasion and disturbance of the traditional forms of social life and a greater politicization of civil society. Despite this, the 18th century is the century of a hermetic unity summarized by the maxim *Un roi, une loi, une foi* [20]. This century "owes its resistance..., to consistency and rigour with which it kept this unity requirement and which it extended to all the fields of spirit and life. This claim is not only required in science, but also in religion, politics and literature"[21].

The 18th century brings a diminuation of the idea of unity which loses its force, but the nucleus of the idea of unity is transferred to reason. If for the metaphysical systems of the 17th century "reason was the area of *eternal truths*", for the 18th century, reason is conceived in a simpler and not too pretentious way. This century "does not regard it as a stable content of knowledge, principles, truths, and more than that, as an energy, as a force which can be caught only in the action and its effect"[22].

The Enlightenment is concerned with the hermeneutical problem and with understanding in a rational way and without prejudices the tradition which it analyses in a cartesian way, by questioning it. "Well, the tendency of Enlightenment is that of not admitting any authority and of deciding everything from the judging perspective of rationality. Consequently, the validity of the conveyed tradition, of Scripture and of any historical document, is not simply given; the potential truth of tradition depends more on the credibility conferred by reason. It is not tradition, but rationality the last source of authority. What is presented to us in written form must not be also true"[23]. Starting from these premises, the Enlightenment eventually becomes historical research. This research, being influenced by the area of natural sciences, will change tradition into an object of critical examination. Reason "is not the vault of the spirit in which the truth, like an old coin, is kept in good conditions ; it is the reason and the original spiritual

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[19] *Ibidem*, p. 28-29.

[20] Casirrer Ernest, *Philosophy of Enlightenment*, translation and chronological table by Adriana Pop, Postface by Vasile Muscă, Publisher: Paralela 45, Piteşti, 2003, p. 37.

[21] *Ibidem*, p 37.

[22] *Ibidem*, p. 28.

[23] Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, translation by Gabriel Cercel and Larisa Dumitru, Gabriel Kohn, Cătălin Petcana, Publisher: Teora, Bucureşti, 2001, p. 209.

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force which leads to the discovery of truth, to its determination and its certification"[24].

In France, the Enlightenment represented an explicit anti-traditionalism in comparison with other intellectual movements as the ones already mentioned, the empiricism and the rationalism which triggered implicit mutations. For the French enlighteners, tradition was still a strong presence which manifested itself in institutions such as the Catholic Church, the folklore of the people in the countryside and the power structures of aristocracy. Moreover, these thinkers found that the idea of tradition had been frequently used in an ideological way by the resurgent aristocracy which wanted to recover a part of the old state lost during the domination of the absolutist state. For this class, the defense of tradition means the defense of privileges. As a middle class, the philosophers resorted to an attack on both classes, the superior class of aristocracy and the class of peasants, discrediting what both classes exalted as the beauty and the sacrality of tradition. The philosophers noticed that in the rural environment where tradition creates the rule, the narrow-mindedness, the ignorance and the provincialism are present[25]. Things became clear for the enlightenment thinkers because they understood that the idea of tradition must be objected to in its integrity in order to achieve a real progress. Therefore, at an ideological level, a mutation was produced which didn't delay the production of effects in the concrete manifestations of life.

In *Praise of Theory*, Gadamer talks about three moments or periods of Enlightenment. The first one places it in antiquity, "when Homer' and Hesiod's image of the world, which they knew from epopees and myths, was replaced by the new passion for knowledge"[26]. The second period is named the Century of the Enlightenment and the third period would be the 20th century, the century of industrial society when science is extended to technique and technology.

What Gadamer presents with regard to the Enlightenment of the 20th century is a change of paradigm. The challenges are different because industrial society which is centred on continuously making work efficient, on its results, on the research for the improvement of performances, makes an intense use of the prerogatives of reason. "In today industrial society, we couldn't talk about the blind faith in authority or in the domination of priesthood. I think that the prejudices of our time of which reflection should free us, the courage of thinking are the state of prostration determined by the technological dream and the craziness of the emancipating utopia"[27]. Nowadays, science tells us more clearly about the limits of the possibilities of the world we live in. The concrete problems we are facing today, the increase in the population, the problems concerning food, water, pollution, the problem of energy indicate the fact that the mechanical model

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[24] Ernst Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[25] David Gross, *op. cit.*, passim, p. 34-35.

[26] Hans Georg Gadamer, *Praise of theory*, translation by Octavian Nicolae and Val Panaitescu, Foreword by Ştefan Afloroaei, Polirom, 1999, p. 68.

[27] *Ibidem*, p. 73.

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extending to the infinite does not have a real support. The myth of the endless progress became utopian. Nowadays, cybernetics is the one which points out to us the model to be followed more appropriate to the real situation of humankind, to the biological model of the self-regulation of organisms"[28]. Gadamer insists on saying that the message of today science tends to realize more and more the fact that the earth is only given as a rent and this message is "less credible or actual because it would coincide with the religious message of the theology of creation"[29].

If in the 18th century Kant's urge *sapere aude* was meant to bring the emancipation out of the protection of authority and out of many mystifications of tradition, nowadays the same urge acquires a totally different significance, it can be considered "as an appeal to our social reason to wake up from the technological sleep"[30].

Stepping forward to a postmodern sense of tradition, this is regarded as a curiosity. Tradition began to be an obstacle on the path of the idea of novelty, of emancipation: "Nowadays, the general sense is that the fight against tradition is outdated, that modernism became triumphant, novelty not only won this confrontation, but it became institutionalized everywhere"[31]. The attitude towards tradition is one of indifference, is considered as being irrelevant, sometimes fragments of it can be borrowed without investing them with a special significance. "Showing a low interest for the past, for this one in particular and even less interest for stressing some diachronic tensions between past and present, postmodernism tends to dehistoricize everything it reaches"[32]. We can talk about the death of the meaning of tradition, not about the death of tradition itself.

D. Gross thinks that tradition was defeated, but not destroyed. What was defeated was that traditional way which represented an influence on all the social spheres. At present, the binder of society is the political power, the market interests and the media culture. Consequently, there reappears another instrumentalization of the elements of tradition.

When we think of tradition, the notions of time and space come into play. At a certain time and in a certain space, the values of the past were conveyed in order to be preserved in good conditions which can be a way of surviving. A component of tradition was never conveyed, handed in order to stiffen a society, but the conveyance always implied a wish to bequeath. The forms of tradition permanently bore something related to the human being.

In postmodernity, things changed radically because the elements of different traditions lack their specific temporality and spatiality and are transformed into cultural products. In this respect, Jean Baudrillard says that: "our time will never be that of duration, our only temporality is that of the cycle and of the transit of fluids.

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[28] *Ibidem*, p.74.
[29] *Ibidem*, p. 75.
[30] *Ibidem*, p. 76.
[31] David Gross, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
[32] *Ibidem*, p. 59.

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In essence, our only culture is that of hydrocarbons, of refining, cracking, of breaking the cultural molecules and of recombining them in synthesis products"[33].

All this breaking and recombination transforms the heritages of the past into cultural objects which resemble much to the objects of consumption in the hypermarket and which have no other aim but to maintain us in a state of magnetization, of integrated mass, of fascinated and completely disoriented continuous human flow.

Jean Baudrillard notices that the hyperreality of culture is characterized at the same time with the loss of the temporal dimension and implicitly with the loss of memory: "At the same time with the traditional museum begins this cut-out, this regrouping, this interference with all the cultures, this unconditional aestheticization which gives the hyperreality of culture, but the museum still remains a memory. Culture has never before lost its memory to the detriment of storage and of functional redistribution"[34].

The social issues acquire the form of a mass of objects and as the mass grows, sociality is brought to an end and the mass becomes the place of social implosion.

J. Baudrillard considers that in the interbellum period, the myth pervaded the cinema owing to the violence of history. Nowadays, history pervades the cinema because its stake was dismissed from our lives by a kind of global neutrality. "The great event of this period, the great traumatism is this agony of the strong frame references, the agony of the real and of the rational which opens an era of simulation. While so many generations and especially the last one lived in the backwater of history with the euphoric or catastrophic perspective of a revolution – nowadays we have the impression that history withdrew, leaving behind an indifferent confusion, crossed by flows but emptied by its references"[35].

The postmodern world is the one which gives up meta-stories, the founding stories. It is a world of a dance of some objects devoid of gravitation, of a ground of foundation in which the different forms of violence are given up. The neo-avant-garde art outlined in *happening*, *performer*, *tagger*, seems to belong to the new urban barbarisms. As soon as a new surface is available in the big metropolises (walls, shops, underground), it is covered by tags, a kind of signature which is a "savage, illegible inscription, without other sense than that of taking into account the violence of soiling"[36]. The way of receiving this form of expression becomes especially relevant in order to understand the new mentality which appears. Paris signaled this "recovery" by setting up the savage act of inscription in the museum of French monuments and in this way: "aestheticization of the non-aesthetic

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[33] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and simulation*, translation by Sebastian Big, Publisher: Idea Design&Print, Cluj, 2008, p. 49.

[34] *Ibidem*, p. 52.

[35] *Ibidem*, p. 35.

[36] Claude Karnoouh, *Farewell to difference. Essay on late modernity*, translated by Virgil Ciomoş, Horia Lazăr, Ciprian Mihali, Publisher: Idea Design&Print, Cluj, 2001, p. 51.

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cancels any aesthetic or social and "pacific" revolt, tames the true urban violence, integrating it in a common entertaining commercializing activity"[37].

Claude Karnoouh uses the term simultaneity in which coexist "Heidegger affair", the tag or the rap by promoting it in a great media show. This cohabitation is called by Karnoouh "radical immanetism"[38] in which all the differences, both diachronic and synchronic ones are abolished.

J. F. Lyotard says that the former poles of attraction made up of state-nations, parties, professions, institutions, historical traditions are abandoned and "everyone is sent to himself. But everyone knows that this self is little"[39]. It is too little because everything that placed him in a position or another is now cancelled, it does not have a centre of gravitation anymore, he does not find an identity of his own in which he takes part together with others and which he asserts in front of the other's otherness.

In the face of this paradigm seeming without solution, Karnoouh hopes in a «savage», but neither of some exotic lands, nor the tragic Greek hero, but he refers to the one who lives within us, the one who objects to the grotesque and deadly technical barbarism, either we call him *the revolted man* or *the rebel*, he represents the emblematic figure which Ernest Jünger transformed into the character of our possible resurrection, a fighter against the uniformization of the postmodern world»[40].

Andrea Riccardi considers the phenomenon of globalization as a «roller», which, however, cannot tread on everything and to which identities can resist. Moreover, he considers that: "Globalisation is a great occasion – not only a necessity imposed by times – for the setting up of personal identity in the context of a larger horizon: stating who we are in the face of the neighbours and of the world"[41].

Nowadays, there are no pure identities, all of them witness a crossing due to the interactions of the global world, but as Tzvetan Todorov wrote, of all the cultural belongings, the strongest is the national one, in which the traces left in the mind by "family and community, language and religion"[42] coexist.

In such a context of postmodernity in which man was uprooted, it is necessary to emphasize the impact of globalisation on at least two spaces belonging to Europe which not too long ago had different destinies, the occidental part and the former sovietic block. The rhythm of globalisation is rather dephased when we refer to the two parts of Europe. In the Eastern part, identities are less attenuated, traditions are striking in society although they were confined in the communist

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[37] *Ibidem*, p. 51.

[38] *Ibidem*, p. 52.

[39] Jean François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, translation and foreword by Ciprian Mihali, Publisher: Idea Design&Print, 2003, p. 31.

[40] Claude Karnoouh, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

[41] Andrea Riccardi, *On the civilization of cohabitation*, translation from Italian and notes by Geanina Tivdă, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2008, p. 66.

[42] Tzvetan Todoran, apud Adreea Riccardi, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

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period and the tradition of the Eastern Church which is on the way of acquiring a new acknowledgement. On the basis of the apostolic and patristic Tradition, the East outlined a universal matrix to understand the revelation, by means of which it has the possibility of reassessing the church life in each historical period.

A. Riccardi appeals to Olivier Clement whom he names: "a European able to feel deeply western culture as well as eastern sensibility" and whom he quotes as referring to a fundamental mission: "Calling the spiritual at the heart of European culture". And he adds: "If we do not want to go back to the man of caverns, we must discover the interior man in the caverns of man"[43].

The future has the option to choose: it can take the spiritual man out of the catacombs of his postmodern exile or on the contrary, it can abandon him in the state of amorphous mass destined to implosion.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the the European Social Fund in Romania, under the responsibility of the Managing Authority for the Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 [grant POSDRU/88/1.5/S/47646]

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[43] Andrea Riccardi, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

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