

## **RELIGION AND PROTO-GLOBALIZATION. CONTEMPORARY GLOBALIZATION AS A SECULAR TRANSLATION OF THE MODERN UNIVERSALIZATION OF RELIGION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This exploratory study aims to analyse how certain biblical theological axioms provided the foundations for the universalist ideas of Christianity as the first religion with a globally expansionist outlook. Based on this theoretical perspective situated within the epistemological boundaries of religious history, the imagination and mentalities, we can examine the phenomenon of proto-globalization that emerges in the modern age as having a religious motive at its heart, just as its legitimation and explanation are also religious. It was also from the religious sphere that the first global instruments and solutions emerged to deal with the challenges brought by the process of becoming acquainted with the world, where peoples opened their doors to being known and received, peacefully or otherwise, the inter-influences of that openness. We largely forget the seminal times of the turbulent beginnings of the globalization that today we experience fully but no less turbulently. Some of the instruments created with a religious motivation in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries to respond to the open world are today reproduced, stripped of that point of reference, in different ways and by different means, of which multinationals are the best example. But the modern secularization process ended up cutting the connection with the religious, taking on an areligious, civil nature.

### **PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

Globalization; religion; christianity; education; missionarismo; multinationals

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### **RESUMO**

Este estudo exploratório pretende analisar como determinados axiomas teológicos bíblicos forneceram fundamentos para o ideário universalista do cristianismo como primeira religiosa com um horizonte expansionista à escala global. À luz desta perspetiva teórica situada no perímetro epistemológico da história religiosa, do imaginário e das mentalidades, podemos problematizar o fenómeno da protoglobalização que emerge na Época Moderna como tendo, na sua raiz, um móbil religioso, como religiosas são a sua legitimação e explicação. E foi ainda do meio religioso que surgiram os primeiros instrumentos e soluções globais para atender aos desafios trazidos pelo processo de conhecimento do mundo, em que os povos abriam as portas para serem conhecidos e receberem, em paz ou em guerra, as interinfluências dessa abertura. Esquecemos, em grande medida, o tempo seminal do atribulado início desta globalização que hoje vivenciamos de forma plena, mas não menos atribuladamente. Alguns desses instrumentos criados, com motivação religiosa nos séculos XVI e XVII, para responder ao mundo aberto são hoje reproduzidos, esvaziados desse referente, de modos e por meios variados, de que as multinacionais são a melhor expressão. Mas o processo moderno de secularização acabou por cortar o fio de ligação com o religioso, assumindo um cunho laico e civil.

### **PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

Globalização; religião; Cristianismo; educação; missionação; multinacionais

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We are living through the start of a beginning.

Edgar Morin

Myth is an arrangement of the past, whether real or imagined, in patterns that reinforce a culture's deepest values and aspirations. (...) Myths are so fraught with meaning that we live and die by them. They are the maps by which cultures navigate through time.

Ronald Wright

Global history was born out of a conviction that the tools historians had been using to analyze the past were no longer sufficient. Globalization has posed a fundamental challenge to the social sciences and to the dominant narratives of social change.

Sebastian Conrad

#### **BIBLICAL HISTORIOGENESIS AND THE THEOLOGICAL IDEA OF A FIRST GLOBALIZATION**

The creationist religions, i.e. those of the Abrahamic tradition (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), established a vision of the world in which God is the landlord and the human being created by Him a kind of designated tenant. To use a farming analogy, the man created in God's image (*imago Dei*) is a kind of "benefactor", "custodian" or settler of an Earth that was entrusted to him to explore, become acquainted with, recognize, name (classify) and care for (Kung, 2007, p. 19).

The idea of a delegated possession of the Earth is one of the most complex characteristics of man's relationship with nature, with implications in the understanding of human beings' ecological role, as well as in their acquaintance with and recognition of the world. Judaeo-Christian and Islamic protologies establish that God globally and completely created all of reality: the world and the cosmos. Human beings are given the condition of icon, image, i.e. representative of God on Earth, and are the first to become acquainted with it and recognize it, classifying all they see. In other words, they gradually give names to the created things (Gen 1)<sup>1</sup>.

The sin of the first era of history, from a biblical perspective, subverts this ongoing process. The fall of the first human couple breaks the initial harmony and triggers the disenchantment of creation and primordial paradise. Human history then truly begins, with its procession of successes and failures, joys and tragedies, in a path downwards before reaching complete degradation. This is followed by the punishment of the great flood, but also the preservation, *in extremis*, of living beings from the fury of natural phenomena, thanks to the ark.

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<sup>1</sup> The power of naming new things is a divine prerogative that is theologically connected to the genesic act of creation, but it was given to man as a delegated power (Vaz, 2007). Man therefore receives a kind of divine delegation to name and give identity to the things made available under his dominion. This delegated prerogative is typical of primordial eras (Ricoeur, 1986).

### **THE THREEFOLD HERMENEUTIC SCHEME OF HISTORY: INITIAL HARMONY / FALL / REGENERATION**

This paradigmatic narrative is – first in the framework of the history of Israel and later applied to Christian history and the history of the nations shaped within this framework – a guideline for the drifting in the great journey of humanity: when human societies reach a state of intolerable corruption, God sends the redeemer. João Medina, when discussing this model of degradation/redemption, contrasts the expectations of messianic movements and the theological logic at the heart of the Jewish doctrinal concept of the pace of history:

which is true above all as regards messianic activism movements that aim to “hasten the coming” of the Messiah, despite the warning that Midrash Tehillim gave in psalm 45, 3: ‘Israel said unto God: O Lord, when wilt Thou redeem us? And God replied: When you have fallen to your lowest depth.’ Or, as warned in the book of Ezra (IV, 34): “Do not thou hasten above the most Highest”. (Medina, 1995, pp. 270-271)

After the first universal punishment inflicted on humanity came the first palingenesis. That was when the second age of the world and the first covenant between God and men, sealed by the magnificent colours of the rainbow. By divine mandate, Noah, captain of the ark of salvation, and his descendants repopulated the four corners of the world, recounting the history of peoples and nations from then on, based on this global view of the refounding of the world established by the reports of *Genesis*. The genealogical and sociogenic basis of humanity was therefore established with the definition of the table of nations and the post-flood settlement of the Earth. In this case, as in others, L. Filipe Barreto (1996, p. 40) explains that, in these biblical books, “through the principles of analogy, figures like Adam, Noah’s Ark, the Flood, Thomas the Apostle, the lost tribes of Israel, serve to locally characterize a culture or integrate each and every sociocultural unit into the universal framework of the world”.

### **HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN PROTO-HISTORY AND THE BUILDING OF THE MYTH OF THE ORIGINS OF NATIONS**

In the light of this global table of the genesis of post-flood nations, the myth-building histories of European nations are recounted by mediaeval and proto-modern historians – in Portugal, Fernando Oliveira and Bernardo de Brito; in Spain, Floriano Ocampo and Esteban de Garibay y Zamalloa – with the aim of giving their kingdoms a biblical, primordial and ancient quality. It is also in the light of that mythical, universal table, a kind of code of the historiogenesis and sociogenesis of nations established in the first book of the Bible that the world is perceived as global, with the presence of man also being global, to guarantee control over the world<sup>2</sup>. It was based on this foundation of peoples

<sup>2</sup> Claude-Gilbert Dubois (1972, p. 18), writing about the problem of origin myths of European nations established at the dawn of modernity, believes that “the genesis of the myth cannot be decoupled from the historical grounds on which it is based. These beliefs have the appearance of allegories, the meaning of which is determined by the historical context; it is

that, on the journeys of the discoveries, the primordial, universal dispersion of humanity and the origin of the nations began to be recognized (Franco, 2000).

In biblical mythological narratives, structured by an aetiological idea that aims to provide a broad genestic explanation of tangible and intangible realities, a religious interpretation of the world emerges that is jointly understood as being global. The universal dispersion of peoples and languages in primordial times narrated by the Bible is based on a divine will. This Judaeo-Christian hermeneutic framework finds its founding guideline in the theological view of history drawn up in the patristics of the first centuries of Christianity, having as its proto-work *Ecclesiastical History* by Eusebius of Caesarea, believed to be the father of ecclesiastical history and also known as the “Christian Herodotus”. Like *Ecclesiastical History*, his work *Chronicle* attempts to produce a universal narrative in the light of the new world view and Christian view of history (Eusébio de Cesareia, 2015), as St. Augustine would later do in a more complete and philosophically deeper way. In fact, the Bishop of Hippo’s theology and philosophy of history, enshrined in his monumental work *The City of God* (Santo Agostinho, 1991-1995), is at the origins of the historiographical thought developed in the Middle Ages, for which God was undoubtedly the dispenser of men’s victories and failures, in a demonstration of divine power over history. As J. Veríssimo Serrão (1969, p. 97) explains:

for authors who interpret successes as an efficient cause, God, through his supernatural power, emerges to lead human destinies and guide the course of history. In this outlook, man emerges as a simple performer of divine will, as the actor of a thought that, according to Leibniz, steers the world by way of a *harmonia praestabilita*, pre-established harmony.

So, that primeval, mythologized globalization, which we could say is genestic, described in the first book of the Old Testament, becomes the foreshadowing of a religious globalization at the beginnings of our age, i.e. in the plan to universalize Christianity, the seeds of which were spread in prophets such as the Second Isaiah. In fact, the embryonic idea of a universal religion corresponds to an evolution of a certain notion of God that is clear and underlined there; there is a gradual shift from a territorial God to a global God. For that reason, the worshipping of God and the acceptance of his message by humans should also be aimed at all of humanity (Wright, 2011).

Here we find the central topic of representation, which guides the progress of knowledge and the idea of a created world. The notion of divinity and exclusive faith at the monotheistic heart of a single God favoured the ideal of expansion and religious globalization that became the driving force for other globalizations; representations of the world are similarly important of the globalizing movement. In modernity, as Ramada Curto (2016, p. 286) recalls, “maps of the world are one of the clearest cases of global representations”. These global maps already express the desire and the result of a world in the process of being explored and recognized; unlike what had happened before the

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a way of expressing the demands that belong to a precise period of time and to aspirations in a direct relationship with a historical present”.

modern age, when cartographic representations included a very marked imagined part to be able to cover the knowledge (or ignorance) about parts of the planet that were unknown or known only through news that was of limited accuracy and often fabricated.

### **PROPHECY AND UTOPIA OF A UNIVERSAL RELIGION: THE DRIVING FORCE OF GLOBALIZATION**

Christianity really boosted the globalization of a single God, becoming the first religion with a radically universalist calling. The mandate given to Christ and proclaimed immediately before the episode of the ascension to Heaven – “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16, 15) – projects Christianity as the religion of all of humanity. The goal of its expansion came to be the entire world, the global world. Never in all the history of religions had a religious project so clearly asserted its ambition to reach the entire world and replace, outright, all other religious experiences, which were classified as pagan from the outset. And this idea would become a powerful scientific driving force, i.e. the motive for becoming acquainted with and recognizing the world.

In his canonical epistles, St. Paul talks about the aspiration of a universal announcement of the Good News in terms of new creation: the Word would make all things new. It was in fact the apostle who contributed to denationalizing the founding core of the first Christian communities, winning the debate on this matter, which was critical at the first Council of Jerusalem, against the position held by Peter, who led the Jewish perspective, closed off from Christ’s message. It is Pauline theology that opened the doors of Christianity to non-Jews, underpinning its universalizing project. This prophetic theology takes a concept of the world as humanity’s return to its mythical, ideal *telos*, a concept which, in Portugal, the great, paradigm-setting interpreter António Vieira applied as an interpretation guideline to explain the direction of the first modern globalization, woven by the opening of paths through the seas by the Portuguese and the Spanish. “Such is the story, oh Portuguese people, that I present to you, and, for that reason, in your language. If we are to restore the world to its primitive entirety and natural beauty, a body that is so large cannot be repaired without great pain and feeling among the members who are out of place. Some moans will have to be heard amongst your applause, but they too create harmony” (Padre António Vieira, quoted in Franco & Calafate, 2013a, p. 74). We can clearly see the inspiration underlying Pauline theology in the moans similar to those of childbirth that would have to come before the new creation<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, the first modern globalization is interpreted in the light of a religious paradigm that understands it as new creation, or rather as the fulfilling of divine creation through a process of human acquaintance with and recognition of all the realities created across the landscape of the entire Earth.

<sup>3</sup> See *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*: “for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom 8, 18-23).

Following this globalist programme, the first Christian texts had also established the myth that the gospel would have been preached initially throughout the world by the apostles, sent to evangelize it. The myth of universal initial preaching gradually became stronger: during the Middle Ages and even at the start of modernity, it was believed that the apostles had divided up the parts of the world among themselves in order to evangelize them all.

A religious topic that sparked great interest in Jesuit missionaries was the belief in a superior being recorded in some Amerindian tribes, an idol called Pai-Sumé or Zomé. The Jesuits linked this name to Thomas the Apostle (São Tomé in Portuguese), about whom there was a legend that had embarked upon the first conversion of the East and West Indies. The name and the elements collected and adapted by the missionaries of St. Ignatius were therefore taken as a hidden echo of that first conversion. This interpretation is not plucked from thin air; it is based on another ancient tradition that claimed it would have been Jesus who distributed the apostles throughout the four corners of the Earth<sup>4</sup>, thereby scattering the seeds of the gospel throughout the globe in a first evangelization. Some residual traces would have remained, and modern missionaries should be able to recover it and put it to use<sup>5</sup>.

In accordance with the documentation we have available today, Fr. Manuel da Nóbrega would have been the first to disseminate that unusual piece of news in a letter from Salvador to Martín de Azpicuelta, known as Doutor Navarro, on 10 August 1549: “they [the Tupi-Guaranis] have news of St. Thomas and a companion of his; and in this bay there are footprints on a rock that are understood to be his, and others at São Vicente, which is at the cape of this coast” (Nóbrega, 1955, pp. 49-50). He completes this information with a more detailed explanation in “Informação das terras do Brasil aos padres e irmãos de Coimbra” [Information from the lands of Brazil to the fathers and brothers of Coimbra], dating from the same year:

they say that St. Thomas, who they call Zomé, passed through here. This was told to them by their ancestors. And that his footsteps can be found next to a river, and I went to see them to be surer, and I saw with my own eyes four very clear footprints with toes, some of which are covered by the river when it rises. They also say that when he left those footprints he was escaping from Indians who wanted to shoot him with arrows, when he got there the river had opened up and passed around him without him getting wet. And from there he went to India. They also recounted that when the Indians wanted to shoot him, the arrows turned back towards them and the bush opened up a path for him to take. They also say that he promised them that he would see them again. Let him watch them from heaven, and let him be the intermediate between them and God, so that they come to know him and receive the Holy Faith as he hopes. (Nóbrega, 1955, pp. 66-67)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Duarte Pacheco Pereira's (1988) regret had already echoed this mythical narrative.

<sup>5</sup> See Luís Filipe Thomaz's (1991) in-depth study of this topic.

<sup>6</sup> Fernão Cardim (1540-1625) himself, another very renowned missionary, actually mentioned that the Brazilian Indians

This legend was so rooted in the minds of 16th-century and 17th-century missionaries that echoes of it can be found in the works of other authors, such as the great preacher António Vieira, who did not fail to mention it in one of his most beautiful and incisive sermons:

Christ reproached the Disciples for the incredulity and hardness of heart with which they had not believed those who saw Him resurrected; and with this reproach he sent them to preach throughout the world. Rome and Italy fell to St. Peter; Asia Minor to St. John; Spain to St. James; Ethiopia to St. Matthew; Mesopotamia to St. Simon; Egypt to St. Jude; other provinces to the others; and finally, this part of America, where we are standing, commonly and unworthily they called Brazil, to St. Thomas. Now I ask: and why, in this allocation, did Brazil fall to St. Thomas and not another Apostle? I have heard the reason. Some modern authors note that Christ informed the Apostles of the preaching of the Faith throughout the world, after reproaching them for the blame of incredulity, so that the work that they would have to endure in preaching the Faith would also satisfy, as if in penitence, that incredulity and hardness of heart that they had had in not wanting to believe: *Exprobavit incredulitatem eorum, et duritiam cordis, et dixit illis: Euntes in mundum universum*. And as St. Thomas, among all the Apostles, was the most guilty in his incredulity, for this reason the mission of Brazil fell to him in the division of the world. (Padre António Vieira, citado em Franco & Cafalate, 2013, pp. 249-250)<sup>7</sup>

Modern theologians and missionaries had established a more or less consensual explanation for the rarefaction of the global marks of that mythologized first global evangelization, assigning it to historical events and a certain compartmentalization of the world that was becoming increasingly intense. The memory of that first global evangelization would thus have been lost or mere traces of it would have survived to contemporary times. The evangelizing actions of St. Thomas in America and the existence of the kingdom of Prester John, eagerly sought by European explorers and missionaries in inland Africa and Asia, are examples within that mythical imagination of the first global announcement of the Good News.

But it was as if the world that was thought to have been discovered and travelled globally had become closed in on itself, sealed into non-communicating vessels. The world became enchanted, which is the same as saying that it became inaccessible or incomprehensible as a whole (Gauchet, 2004). The beginnings of modernity, with its sea

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arranged their hair like St. Thomas, “of whom they had heard some things, although with some confusion” (Cardim, 1978, p. 106).

<sup>7</sup> The famous preacher used this legendary tradition to unsettle the consciences of his listeners in one of his most exuberant sermons. He reminds them that, if St. Thomas had the luck of evangelizing the lands of Vera Cruz, that was due to a punishment ordered by Christ, because his apostle had doubted the resurrection of the Saviour. The punishment consisted of sending him to preach the Good News to the remotest people on the planet, who had hearts harder than the Pharaoh of Egypt.

voyages dubbed the discoveries, would have been an instrument for disenchanting the world, in accordance with this hermeneutic scheme of history.

### RELIGIOUS REASON AND MODERN PROTO-GLOBALIZATION

The 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries – in other words, 1500 years later – saw a marked resurgence in the possibility of remaking that first dream of religious globalization, the universalization of Christianity, which had been interrupted and delayed after it began to become a reality.

The sea voyages encouraged by the Iberian monarchies of Portugal and Spain were, therefore, legitimated to the highest degree by political and religious leaders based on that primordial religious idea. In fact, as much in the preaching of religious speakers in the Iberian expansionist movement as in the royal legislation that established the reasons for this investment, religious reasons come to mind as the most important for justifying the risks of discovery and expansion voyages (Baptista, Franco & Cieszyńska, 2014, p. 103). Portugal conquered Ceuta and, from there, all of North Africa under Moorish rule to recover the old Christian territories for the Church. It explained its sea voyages with the aim of discovering new peoples to whom to bring the light of the gospel or to rediscover, within Africa or Asia, lost Christian communities surviving from the first evangelization, with whom contact had been lost.

In the light of this motive, Christianity was projected through all the continents and became a decisive factor in encouraging the first actual globalization. The agents in a world compartmentalized into peoples, nations, cultures and religions, which had been isolated until that point, were connected together and began to interact, engaging with each other and undergoing cultural exchange and transfer processes, acculturation, interpollination, etc.

Religious orders with a missionary calling played a significant role in this process. Religious orders were a proto-mediaeval creation and underwent adaptations and metamorphoses over around a thousand years, particularly the mendicant reform of the 12th century and the foundation of the Jesuits in the 16th century. As mediaeval creations, the multinational character that its organizational model eventually acquired made them into structures that were much better prepared to adapt to the world that would emerge in modernity: a world marked by worldwide mobility (Franco, 2011). In effect, Dominicans, Franciscans and Jesuits, to name just a few, would send missionaries to all the continents via the Portuguese and Spanish imperial networks and using conditions and privileges granted by the Pope to the monarchs of these Iberian kingdoms. The missionaries thereby founded the Portuguese and Spanish *padroado*, or patronage, established to support Christianity's globalization project (Franco & Abreu, 2014).

These orders, which positioned themselves for the great universal goal by updating the mediaeval utopia of establishing a global Christian kingdom with the arrival of the emperor of the last days, created a series of instruments for general application to serve this religious ideal. These included adapting the structure of their organization



and creating a global communication system, for which they explored the advantages of the invention of the press and the birth of mass culture through the multiplying power of writing, mimeographed by the Gutenberg's press (Almeida, 2017; De Koninck, 2003; Martins, 2011). The Jesuits, alongside other missionary orders, played a significant role in this process, starting from the Iberian Peninsula, using the aforementioned instruments of the Portuguese and Spanish *padroados* to project institutions to other continents (Alden, 1996).

#### FIRST GLOBAL NETWORKS AND INSTITUTIONS

The missionary religious orders' missions that achieved an intercontinental presence became a hub for spreading the Portuguese language, which was the first European language, followed by Spanish, to acquire a global dimension. Through intensive correspondence of reports and religious, cultural and scientific treatises, the era saw the first universal database, which operated by becoming acquainted with and mastering all of created reality, accentuating the original idea of human beings as carers, organizers or custodians of a land that belonged to the global God.

The Christian missions financed by the European powers built a global Christianity, becoming instruments for civilization but also for cultural exchange, linguistic exchange, etc. The missions, who were the most intellectually qualified agents of this time, helped bring together information about the world that was being globally discovered. The network of missions, and alongside the colonial institutions that were being created in the European empires – the observatories of the world that allowed people to become acquainted with that same world – formed the first global knowledge repository. In fact, Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians and Carmelites, among others, driven by the ideas of announcing the gospel, recorded and studied what they saw and learned, they recorded the grammar and vocabulary of many languages that had been unknown until that time, they drew up histories of peoples and countries that had not had their history done in the Western manner, etc. Therefore, the religious motivation that led thousands and thousands of missionaries to every corner of the Earth favoured the first great global operation of becoming acquainted with the world.

Similarly, we must not forget the emblematic case of the global initiatives by the Society of Jesus (Lowney, 2006), which set up the first global education network, a system of schools governed by the same rules on every continent where the famous *ratio studiorum*, approved in 1599, was implemented and re-implemented (until the present day) from Japan to Peru. To meet this global education challenge, the first global education handbooks were drawn up in this context and to serve this network, and Portugal was an important platform for this. The books included *Gramática Latina*, by the Jesuit Manuel Álvares, rector of the Coimbra School of Arts, and the famous philosophy manuals that were also produced in Coimbra and formed the *Cursus Conimbricensis*, which would serve as the basis for secondary and pre-university education throughout Europe and other continents, reaching as far as China (Banchoff & Casanova, 2016). This course

trained great proto-enlightenment and enlightenment Europeans, including Descartes, Leibniz and Voltaire.

The new and emerging institutions, accompanied by the construction of global buildings mimicked but with adaptations, had an influence on architecture and religious art, an influence that favoured interconnections and interpollinations that have left marks until the present day. As part of this effort to achieve global Christianization, in which the name of Christ was preached, little by little, on all the continents, there is one particularly representative example of interpollination of language that took place in Asia. What is now Vietnam began to use the Latin alphabet to write its Annamite language due to the influence of the Jesuit missionaries who worked there, who arrived under the Portuguese *padroado* of the East, which worked to propel these priests and those of other orders who started to spread new mission camps into the Far East.

So, through its religious and political actors, Portugal was, along with neighbouring Spain and later followed by the emerging European powers, a pioneer and leading figure in the modern stance of setting up a field of experiences and knowledge, enriched by the different contacts, confrontations and exchanges mentioned. Boaventura de Sousa Santos discusses some of that continued momentum in his book on Portugal:

the first moment of expansion was an extremely creative time. It forms an area of chaotic possibilities that are as vulnerable to fulgurations as to adventurism of its own or by others, as exciting as they are mediocre, as justifying of *The Lusiads* as of *The Practical Soldier*<sup>8</sup>. That creativity allowed Portugal to be one of the leading parties in the first European modernity, Iberian modernity (...). It is the modernity of Pedro Fonseca, the Portuguese Aristotle, and of Suarez, the modernity of the *Conimbricenses*, as they were known at the time. Pedro da Fonseca's work had 36 editions and was read by Descartes and Leibniz. In other words, what came to be known as European modernity, from Descartes to Kant, was in fact a second modernity, the modernity of Central Europe, which was fed by Iberian modernity. The latter was a modernity that, having been led by countries that quickly descended into decadence, was not recognized as such in the following centuries. This modernity that Portugal in some way lost was a long period of dependent insertion that generated what I previously called the problem of the past. (Santos, 2011, p. 78)

#### UTOPIAN THOUGHT AS A RESPONSE TO THE CRISES OF GLOBALIZATION

During this time, a euphoric feeling was generated in old European Christendom that the history of Christianity and the Christian Church, until then limited to a small

<sup>8</sup> *Os Lusíadas* [The Lusiads], by Luís de Camões, is an epic poem about the Portuguese discoveries, widely considered to be Portugal's national epic. *O Soldado Prático* [The Practical Soldier], by Diogo do Couto, criticizes the administration, military and political system used in Portuguese India.

portion of the planet, could be globalized, achieving the plan of universalizing Christianity, but also remembering the prescient prophecies that achieving this goal would herald the end of the world or the beginning, not without tumultuous events, of a virtuous age of peace and holiness, the last age of history, the Great Sabbath<sup>9</sup>.

Nonetheless, it was rapidly understood that this expectation of change in the course and nature of human history was not materializing. On the contrary, the spread of traditional conflicts continued and worsened, and they were joined by new divides that were sparked in the history of European Christendom<sup>10</sup>. Europe underwent religious divisions, confessionalizing Christianity, and the fratricidal wars that bloodied it also became global as a result (Eire, 2016).

The disappointment arising from the failed expectation of an acceleration of history towards a final palingenesis was answered by utopian thought. By analysing the evolution of the process and models for building utopias in modernity, we can understand the progress in the perception of a world that was beginning to be seen as global and the answers given to the concerns that stemmed from that, which were also global<sup>11</sup>. At this point, we go back to José Mattoso's important note about the assertion of awareness of the possibility for human perfectibility in modernity:

I begin by noting that belief in the future and the notion that humanity is moving towards a better world express one of the typical ideas of Western civilization in the modern age. This was not how people thought before the time of the discoveries, even in other continents. To greatly simplify things, it could be said that when the Europeans began to get to know other civilizations and realized that they had superior military technology, they thought they would be able to dominate the universe and therefore move towards a society that covered all of humanity. This idea took centuries to grow and

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<sup>9</sup> It should be remembered that from a Christian perspective the final stage of history would involve the evangelization and conversion of all peoples; that is why, in modernity, a conviction emerged that a decisive stage of that progression had begun. Fr. António Vieira was, in Portugal, like other European authors, an excellent interpreter of this emerging awareness. Convinced that the ongoing global evangelization, which the voyages of the discoveries had enabled, would be a special determination from God and a special calling for the discoverers, he did not hesitate to compare the Portuguese discoveries to a new epiphany: "the first calling of the Gentiles was 'in the days of Herod': *In diebus Herodis Regis*; the second practically in our days. The first was 'when Christ was born': *cum natus esse Jesus*, the second when one thousand, five-hundred years have passed since the birth of Christ. The first was 'by way of the Kings of the East': *Ecce Magi ab Oriente venerunt*; the second by way of the Kings of the West, and the most western of all, who are the ones from Portugal" (Padre António Vieira, quoted in Franco & Cafalate, 2013c, p. 354). This idea was developed in "Sermão da epifania" [Sermon on the epiphany], preached at the Royal Chapel in 1662. This Christian theology of history clearly follows a philosophical determination of history in which the formation of the Portuguese Christian empire is a decisive step forward, which evidently differs in terms of quality from preceding history. So, in the 16th century, the history of salvation acquired a universal breadth: from a universality in power it shifted to an almost complete universality (Valente, 1980).

<sup>10</sup> Note that, in general terms, "the moment European nations asserted themselves, the unity of Western civilization became stronger; two apparently contradictory but actually complementary phenomena, the dialectic of which is one of the greatest characteristics of the period we are studying. The discovery and exploration of exotic world would, at the same time, fan the tensions among Europeans and further pinpoint the community of their destinies (Delumeau, 1994, p. 48; Nisbert, 1980).

<sup>11</sup> The millenarian utopia, very developed and widespread, under various forms and manifestations, in the Middle Age, starting, especially, from the matrix mentioned in chap. 20 of the *Apocalypse* of John, knows a very special accomplishment, standing out for a well-worked theological architecture and for a global vision of the history that intends to be, besides its prospective character, a critical reading of the institutions of the Church of the present (Delumeau, 1997).

transform into a principle of action. In certain currents it took on rational and moral forms, in others economic and technical aspects prevailed, and in yet others it manifested itself as a belief in social and political progress. (Mattoso, 2012, pp. 63-64)<sup>12</sup>

It is in this context that important currents of utopian thought were designed, in order to respond to the challenges that human societies were facing in the new global world-view and the dramas and expectations arising from it.

Two clear currents of the utopian solution for humanity's destiny can be distinguished in this modern process of acquaintance, recognition and concern with humanity's drift through a world that was becoming global: one exclusivist and the other inclusivist.

The exclusivist current is antiglobalist and is based on a very pessimistic perception of the general state of humanity and the possibility of its being regenerated as a whole. Representative utopian works from this current include Thomas More's *Utopia* and *The City of the Sun* by Tommaso Campanella. The possibility of building a happy society included, in this perspective, a new closure, i.e. it involves creating an isolated space, projected onto a limited area, where a small portion of humanity may live with clearly defined rules and values that are different from those of most of humanity. These elitist and antiglobalist utopias were born at the beginning of modernity within societies or countries like England, which defined itself as an island-country, isolated from the European continent, and Italy, split into a jigsaw of city-states<sup>13</sup>.

Inclusivist utopias, however, began to be developed more intensely at the turn of the 17th century, at a time when knowledge of the planet was more mature and the imperial presence of European powers stretched across continents. This current of thought is paradigmatic for the idea of asserting hope in a better future for humankind as a whole (Dias, 1960).

One highly emblematic utopia is the utopia of the Fifth Empire envisioned in Portugal, which had António Vieira as one of its most brilliant representatives. Similar creations were produced in Spain, and the Fifth Empire ideology would find metamorphic genealogy in several countries and at several times up to the 20th century. Fifth Empire utopian thought, especially in Vieira's case and in his most representative works (*História do Futuro* and *Clavis Prophetarum*), takes the entire world as a borderless stage for the possibility of humanity living happily in a context of essential Christian unity, but allowing diversity of cultural expressions and civic traditions. Vieira's utopia and the solutions he presents for a world fractured by wars among European powers arising, as already mentioned, from territorial ambitions and the confessionalization of Christianity in separate

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<sup>12</sup> In fact, the use of utopian speculation is, according to Fr. Manuel Antunes, "the ripe fruit" primarily of times of crisis and times of criticism. "The utopia conforms to the emergence of individual and collective transformation that mankind experiences with the demand for hope ingrained in its nature, with the capacity to extrapolate reality and recreate new worlds through the combined action of imagination and reason, in the drive to project itself within the realm of the possible. Thus, utopia has to do with ideology, with eschatology, with mythology, with prophecy and with foresight" (Padre Manuel Antunes, quoted in Franco, 2007, p. 403).

<sup>13</sup> On the subject of utopia, see Ricoeur (1991).

churches, are inspired by religion but aim for the progress of humanity in terms of a life of peace, fraternity and widespread well-being (cf. Franco & Mourão, 2005). In fact, as the French scholar Raimund Cantel (1963) properly analysed, such proposals were the forerunners of the secular projects for peace in the world devised in the 19th and 20th centuries, among with the idea that was behind the construction of a world authority for regulating relations between peoples and establishing harmony among nations.

Modern utopian thought, which has Christian foundations, is a good indicator of perception of a world that was becoming global and the growing awareness of potential, but also of the serious problems that were stemming from the globalizing movement. This movement, which became unstoppable and remains so to the present day, both opened the doors to relations among peoples, which began to see each other head on, dispelling myths and stereotyped views of the world, and – let us be under no illusions – fuelled old and new antagonizing stereotypes.

In any case, this founding time of globalization revolutionized not only old world-views but also the very idea of science and the possibilities of knowledge for human progress. Today it is clear that the “discoveries” helped produce a new science and a new culture that changed the view of the world as a planet and the European world, in both the field of external relations and in the inner areas of human thought. As David Wootton (2017, pp. 75, 79-80) well demonstrates in his recent substantial work,

the idea of discovery is contemporaneous with Columbus’s plans (...) for it is discovery itself which has transformed our world. (...) Before discovery history was assumed to repeat itself and tradition to provide a reasonable guide to the future; and the greatest achievements of civilization were believed not to lie not in the present or the future but in the past, in ancient Greece and classical Rome. It is easy to say that our world has been made by science or by technology, but scientific and technological progress depend on pre-existing assumption, the assumption that there are discoveries to be made. (...) It is this assumption that there are new discoveries to be made which has transformed the world, for it has made modern science and technology possible.

There was therefore a transformation in the view of the world that is reflected in the linguistic shift that the idea of science and the possibility of history actually becoming a movement of progress with an outlook of growing perfectibility.

Another of the most important consequences of this process, following which Europe became an imperial continent with global dominions, was the establishment of a civilization, so-called Western civilization, that aggrandized its value system, wishing to validate its values as universal and starting to want to impose them on all of humankind. Even today we have not actually overcome the ethical paradigm that continues to generate debate about the existence of universal values, and those values are identified with Western civilization. Nevertheless, it is no longer possible to impose universal values using a single civilization framework as a reference. It is necessary to recognize, within the

framework of the international community, the existence of a basic range of values common to all civilizations, cultures, peoples and religions that make it possible to assume a *homo fraternus, inter pares*, an ideal person able to live in brotherly harmony with nature in order to guarantee, in his role as caretaker, the best ecological harmony possible.

### PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS

When we try to understand the movements that created global interactions and interconnections, we cannot fail to remember that the historian's work in this field is not, as Sebastian Conrad (2017, p. 16) writes, "writing a complete history of our planet", even exploring a certain movement of history, be it religious, cultural or political. Instead, we can only aim to bear "in mind global connections and structural conditions" so we can try to understand some very long-lasting dominant features and their changes at key moments that later unfold into a great maturation. In fact, as Conrad reminds us, "global history, then, is not a synonym for macro-history. The most interesting questions often arise at the intersection of global processes and their local manifestations".

Considering this conveyor belt of theory, and taking into consideration that we are situated in the domain of religious history, of imagination and mentalities, we can discuss the phenomenon of proto-globalization triggered in the modern age as having its roots in a religious motive, just as its legitimation and explanation are also religious. And the religious world also produced the first global instruments and solutions for meeting the challenges caused by the process of becoming acquainted with the world, in which peoples opened the doors to being seen and discovered and to receiving, in peace or in war, the interinfluences of that broad opening up.

Today, in the 21st century, we largely forget the seminal time of the troubled start of this globalization that we fully inhabit, although with no less trouble. Many of the instruments that were created in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, inspired and motivated by religion, to respond to the global world that was opening up to Europe at the time are today reproduced in varying ways and by various means, of which economic and financial multinationals are the best example (although without the religious allusion). In fact, the modern process of secularization ended up cutting the tie with the religious, taking on a non-religious, civil slant.

Nonetheless, we cannot forget that the era of proto-globalization was an excellent time for reviewing and reforging old myths and devising new solutions with a view to building more perfect futures for a humanity that displayed all of itself at the time through written knowledge and the contacts of global voyagers. The religious had, at this dawning moment of globalized modernity, a decisive and guiding role in the never-ending human process of constructing and deconstructing narratives and utopias, which are maps of the meaning of humanity; and it is those maps that we keep making and remaking, untiringly, today. It is worth remembering this highly insightful passage by Ronald Wright (2004, p. 19):

our civilization, which includes most of its predecessors, is a great ship steaming towards the future. It goes faster, further and carries a greater load than any of those that came before it. We cannot foresee all the dangers and pitfalls, but by reading the angle and the direction of the compass, understanding its design, its safety history and the knowledge of its crew, we can, I believe, trace a rational route between the rapids and the icebergs that appear in front of us. (...) We have a tendency to consider our age to be exceptional and in many ways it really is. But the lack of a global vision experienced in the present, the way our eyes follow the ball and not the game, is very dangerous.

The same unease in relation to the future of humankind remains and disturbs unsettles people's hearts. Today – unlike the prevailing expectations 500 years ago, which were located on a more spiritual plane and explained by theology – the problem of the very survival of humanity arises, due to the deterioration that it has produced in the nature its calling was to care for. More than ever, the urgency of a reform for humanity itself and its awareness in relation to the created, or generated, or formed world (depending on our religious and scientific stance) is required, demanded and considered. The proposal for a global ethics defended by Hans Kung (2007), seeking points of understanding and common values based on the different ethical heritages generated by the different religions in the world, is more and more relevant in the current context. For its part, that necessary global reform will largely involve the groundwork argued for by Edgar Morin (2015, pp. 98-99):

the only present that can prepare us for the future will be achieving a reform of knowledge and thought, which I call complex thought, which will not grant us infallibility but will allow us to make fewer mistakes and have fewer illusions and blindnesses: a global thought.

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