

NEO HUMANISM? (WORD COUNT 7404)

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ABSTRACT

This paper will focus on the central place of the theological thinking which neoconservatism - as a cardinal constituent of new right- puts in, at the period of redefinition of the politics and in the transformation of the World. According to our argument neoconservatism is an ideology that recalls the rules of theological thinking into the daily life of the average human person. Neoconservative doctrine covers, analyses and regenerates human person as a simple subject of needs and aims to politicize him/her as such. This politicization is a paradoxical period going through from depoliticization to apolitical. Also, an afford to create the happiest human person while he/she is unconscious of politics and the essential propositions of the social organization do not have to be defended. According to the conservative Humanism, men is the measure of all things, but this man is absolutely theomorphic.

Key words: Theocentric Humanism, Neoconservatism, Neo-political, Anthropocentric Humanism, Transformation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Neo-conservatism's new "*rasyonale*" had a dramatic effect on the political thought of 21st century. At that affection, trying to explain neo conceptualism of Humanism by this "*rasyonale*" is crucial. According to our claim, the new conservative ideology is a style of thought that reintroduces the rules of religious thinking into modern life. The key to reintroducing the rules of religious thought into the life of the average person in the form of political thought is the unique conception of the Humanism of neoconservatism.

We can follow theocentric Humanism, through the frameworks of Jacques Maritain and Dante Germino for Europe in the context of Christian Democracy and can be observed in the context of neo-conservatism through Leo Strauss in America. Considered the most prominent names in conservative thought in Turkey, Hilmi Ziya Ülken, names similar concept as "humanitarian mysticism"¹.

With the political standpoint of theology becoming more dominant in the 1980s and beyond, it can be said that the age of "emancipation" has been closed, and the age of "liberation" has been opened. The key concept that opens the era of liberation is theocentric Humanism.

Whether traditional conservatism, radical conservatism, modern conservatism or neo-conservatism, the first thing that can be told about conservatism is, to take a stand against leaping change.

However, it should be remembered that this order is single and unchangeable. Therefore, the thesis that some alternative goods or truths can be found with human reason is not wrong but meaningless according to the new conservative ideology. According to our claim, the new conservative ideology is an ideology that reintroduces the rules of religious thought into the life of the average person² and perceives and analyses it as the subject of absolute necessity and aims to politicize the ordinary person as such. His/her re-politicizing process implies a paradoxical continuum by including depoliticization and apolitically at the same time with politicization. This consequence is based on the efforts for creating a new citizen or individual who is at most glad when she or he need not stand for the primary components of the society³ and being such, oblivious about the politics. The key to reintroducing the rules of religious thought into the life of the average person is therefore theocentric humanism and this will create

¹ Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *İnsani Vatanperverlik*, Remzi Kitaphanesi, İstanbul, 1933, p:86.

² Erol Göka, Sevinç Göral, Çetin Güney, "Bir Hayat İnsanı Olarak Türk Muhafazakârı ve Kaygan Siyasal Tercihi", (der) Ahmet Çiğdem, *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Cilt 5/Muhafazakârlık*, (in), İletişim Yayınları, Ağustos 2003, İstanbul, p:276-280.

³ Francis G. Wilson, "A Theory of Conservatism," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 35, No. 1. (Feb.).

a “neopolitical” which is the politicization of the attitude that can be summarized as seeking the social, political, economic order and more importantly the daily life to be lived according to the known rules.⁴

At that point, we shall state the difference between modern (contemporary\classical) and neoconservatism. Modern conservatism is a pre-capitalist style of thought. Neo-conservatism was born in Capitalism. Modern conservatism is elitist, its elitist tendency riches through Platonic idea.⁵ Neo-conservatism is populist. Modern conservatism is attached to aristocracy firmly though the neo-conservatism's emphasis is on middle classes. If there is a single point that separates conservatism from liberalism, whose name is often mentioned, writes Gertrude Himmelforb: If there is one empirical test that separates conservatism from liberalism, conservatism is the respect of aristocracy and aristocratic institutions.⁶ While one of the main themes of contemporary conservatism is being against ideology, neo-conservatism appears as an ideology that is a constitutive element of a newly stated hegemony.

While modern conservatism does not state any universal codes beyond, conserving the essential traditional social structures and institution peculiar to the given society, neo-conservative ideology insists on cosmological order which must apply all kinds of political and social systems. Once more, while modern conservative thought, defend the national or local traditions and institutions against global or cosmological laws, neoconservatism insists on one clear path which has no alternative. When modern conservatism suggests that religion is one of the constitutional elements of the society among others and by that point of view they were advocating the local beliefs to provide the order of any given society, neo-conservatism states that there is only one source of authentic tradition. It is the Judeo-Christian doctrine. For example, the founder father of political conservatism Edmund Burke says that corrupting Indian or Irish traditions in the name of English Civil Law is as bad as destroying French traditions and institutions in the name of reason and Enlightenment.⁷ Nevertheless, the neoconservatism, by linking the single and legitimate source of civilization and tradition to Judeo-Christian doctrine, invalidates all other practices, customs, and resources that can be put forward for them. There is a universal principle or in respect to neoconservative literature, a cosmological principle, which is reflected in the new conservative ideology, especially in the understanding of theocentric Humanism.⁸ According to this doctrine, which has examples in Islam, too, humans (microcosmos) and the universe (macro cosmos) are created and connected around the same principle. This new universalism, which causes a severe conflict with the basic thesis of conservatism that every society should protect its own, contains a structure that also paves the way for cultural globalization.

2. FRAMING THE CONCEPT: THEOCENTRIC HUMANISM

“*Humanism*” is an elusive word. In fact, the suffix-*ism*, which evokes a clear ideology or theory, is as deceptive as the root *human*, which suggests a stabilized entity. The meanings of the term are heterogeneous, and the successive layers resulting from the historical sedimentation of these meanings have rendered the notion opaque.”⁹

Nevertheless, we can follow the conceptualization of Humanism in its most general framework within the historical process in 3 stages.

*“Humanism I, generally associated with the Renaissance, actually originated in Italy in the thirteenth century and later developed in the rest of Europe. Its promoters, known as “umanisti”, were educators who reclaimed the classical legacy of the “studia” “humanitatis” advocated by Cicero as the way to reach the ideal of “humanitas”.”*¹⁰

⁴ Anthony Quinton, “Conservatism”, A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy, (der.) Robert E. Goodin ve Philip Pettit, Oxford: Blackwell, 1993, ss.244-268, Clinton Rossiter. Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion, Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1962, collective, (ed), Merdan Yanardağ, Yeni Muhafazakârlar (Neo-Cons): Amerika'nın Kara Kitabı, İstanbul, Çivi yazıları, 2004; Robert A. Nisbet, “Conservatism And Sociology”, The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 58, No. 2. (Sep., 1952), Pp. 167-175.

⁵ Anthony Quinton; “Conservatism”, A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy, (der.) Robert E. Goodin ve Philip Pettit, Oxford: Blackwell, 1993, ss.244-268.

⁶ Clinton Rossiter; Conservatism in America The Thankless Persuasion; Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1962, p:24-25.

⁷ Robert Nisbet, Sosyolojik Çözümlemenin Tarihi (İN), "Muhafazakârlık", (ed)T. Bottomore ve R. Nisbet, Ankara, Verso Yayınları, 1990, ss. 97-133; p:112.

⁸ FFI: W.R Harbour, The Foundations of Conservative Thought: An Anglo-American Tradition in Perspective, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, 1982.

⁹ Didier Fassin; Humanism: A Critical Reappraisal, Critical Times 2:1, April 2019, DOI: 10.1215/26410478-7769750, <https://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/2/1/29/671236/29fassin.pdf>, 17.06.2020, p:31.

¹⁰ Ibid: p:33.



This breakthrough is the first step to change the centre of the universe from celestial to earthly.

“Humanism II, related to the Enlightenment, has its roots mostly in England, France, and Germany, with a wide range of philosophers, from Locke and Hume to Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau, and later, Kant. Beyond their substantial differences, these authors share the representation of human beings as rational and autonomous agents; the view that they must free themselves from religious authority and arbitrary power; the idea that their aim should be self-realization; and a belief in moral and political progress.”¹¹

At second stage humanity began to become the centre of the universe and reason took the place of belief slowly but precisely.

“Humanism III, inherited from the Christian tradition, has to do with benevolence and sympathy, which are considered to be specific human qualities inspired by divine laws. Initially a reaction against scholastic theology and the ecclesiastical establishment that developed it as well as against the worshipping of images and the selling of indulgences, which characterized medieval Christianity, it calls for a return to love, charity, and simplicity.”¹²

At the recent stage of matter rationality of contemporary political thought and realism of political ideologies began to be argued. Second world war and the cold rationality of its economic and social reasoning was one of the most effectual factors lying at background of this loss of prestige. Modern man is beginning to fear himself without a transcendental fear of divine punishment human persons declared to inclined bad. Monstral indeed.

Besides these:

“There are certainly other lineages, emerging from specific traditions, including Marxism, with György Lukács, Walter Benjamin, E. P. Thompson, and Frantz Fanon, for whom human agency and class consciousness are interconnected; pragmatism, with Friedrich Schiller, who regards philosophy’s fundamental task as understanding how human beings strive to comprehend human experience; existentialism, with Sartre, for whom human beings must take responsibility for their actions and in so doing contribute to shaping mankind; and various others.”¹³

In Europe, theocentric Humanism, which we can follow in the frameworks of Christian Democracy through Jacques Maritain can be observed in the context of neo-conservatism through Leo Strauss in America. The most prominent feature of both frameworks is that they regard civilization and its part as an extension of the Judeo-Christian tradition and base their analysis on this assumption.

“In the 1930s Jacques Maritain advocated a new form of Humanism, an integral humanism, based on “integral realism” and “Christian humanism”, which took its primary inspiration from Thomist philosophy.”¹⁴ Basic principles of adhering to Humanism according to Maritain’s point of view; a) Validation of the values of the person in the society, b) the coexistence of people based on the common good, c) the existence of a free civil society in which people’s talents can be revealed in the best way and where they can fully realize their beliefs.¹⁵

According to Müller, the success of Christian Democracy depends on two fundamental factors: ‘electoral alliances based on the middle class and peasant base’ and ‘the almost complete disgrace of fascism as well as the traditional right.’ In other words, Christian Democracy filled a vacuum. At the centre of Maritain’s approach to democracy, there stands the concept of ‘person’ and its opposition to ‘individual’. In this

¹¹ Ibid: p:33.

¹² Ibid: p:34.

¹³ Didier Fassin; Humanism: A Critical Reappraisal, Critical Times 2:1, April 2019, DOI: 10.1215/26410478-7769750, <https://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-pdf/2/1/29/671236/29fassin.pdf>, 17.06.2020, p:34.

¹⁴ Paul Richard Blum, “Jacques Maritain Against Modern Pseudo-Humanism” Congresso Tomista Internazionale, L’umanesimo Cristiano Nel In Millenio: Prospettiva Di Tommaso D’aquino, Roma, 21-25 /Settembre /2003.

¹⁵ Sergey S. Shestopal, Kateryna V. Astakhova, Victor V. Astakhov; Modern Dimensions of Jacques Maritain’s Political and Legal Personalism, Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, Vol 6 No 6 S3 November 2015 MCSER Publishing, Rome-Italy, ISSN 2039-2117 (online), pp:192-197, p: 193.

context, the “Person” has a spiritual and transcendent nature and has a concern for the common good; and this “person” appears only in a community and when he opens to God. The ‘individual’ is the material pole of man - the self is the centre of the experience of pleasure and the acquisition of material goods within the individual being.¹⁶ Maritain wanted to realize a “theocentric” version of Humanism within the boundaries of a pluralistic and personalist democracy, trying to bring justice to the “man in the unity of his natural and supernatural being. “But “theocentric” did not mean theocratic: Maritain stated that “a new Christian temporal order, though founded on the same principles (analogically speaking) as those of the Middle Ages, would imply a secular Christian, not a sanctified conception of the sacred order.”¹⁷

There is one name differentiating from this perspective who also did a great deal of contribution to the formation of theocentric Humanism is Dante Germino. Germino includes ancient philosophy as a source of Western Civilization, according to him, there are three origins of western thought and also theocentric Humanism, these are; ancient philosophy, Judaism and Christianity.¹⁸

Germino chooses Plato as an example and trues his dialogues, and he tries to prove that the theocentric Humanism was known and accepted at western political thought since Ancient Greek. According to Germino, theocentric Humanism was first mentioned by Plato in the Laws. God is the measure of everything. In his numerous dialogues with the Sophist Protagoras, the philosopher has made this theme. According to Germino, when Plato argues with Protagoras on the argument that “man is the measure of all things, he speaks of everything as they are not or not as they might be, that is, their existence.¹⁹ The philosopher, the wise person, the supreme human being is a theomorph, or it can be said that the philosopher connects his own existence to the creation and sees God as the measure of all man. The thesis that man is theomorphic points to a common framework accepted by all three celestial religions; God created man in His image. This view cannot be mistaken for the thesis that man stands in the centre of the universe, but this perspective opposes the claim that Man is alone in the universe. Theocentric Humanism, which determines the central axis of the neoconservatism, is also found in this sense in the rhetoric of the new right.

Considered the most prominent names in conservative thought in Turkey, Hilmi Ziya Ülken, names similar concept as “humanitarian mysticism,”²⁰

According to Ülken conservative understanding of Humanism identifies two types of belief. Monotheist faiths and distinguishing faiths. According to this division, the universal and humanitarian movements are accepted as unifying beliefs. Distinguishing faiths, on the other hand, are incapable of producing human actions and ideas in the real sense, since they turn to the values and goodness of a particular society.²¹

According to Jacques Maritain’s assessment of theocentric Humanism as an essential part of tradition and tradition, humanity gradually became distant from the Renaissance and the following ages and lost its features by making it human, making him a mighty and sublime being. The exaltation and elimination of power did not make a man humble, but he humbled him. The person who lost the guardian and guardian of his virtues and virtues is now left alone in the entire universe and has become a mind and body who thinks that he can provide his salvation alone and only by his own hand. This era is now the age of anthropocentric Humanism and has destroyed humanity.²²

3. FRAMING THE DEBATE OVER ANTHROPOCENTRIC AND THEOCENTRIC HUMANISM

According to Maritain “The dialectics of anthropocentric humanism developed within three centuries.”²³

“At the first moment of humanistic dialectics, God, (...)became the guarantor of man’s domination over matter. He was a transcendent God but imprisoned in his transcendence and

¹⁶ Bjørn Thomassen & Rosario Forlenza (2016) Christianity and political thought: Augusto Del Noce and the ideology of Christian Democracy in post-war Italy, Journal of Political Ideologies, 21:2, 181-199, DOI: 10.1080/13569317.2016.1150135, p183-187.

¹⁷ Ibid: p183-187.

¹⁸ Dante Germino, Beyond Ideology: The Revival of Political Theory, Harper and Row, New York, 1967, p:24.

¹⁹ Ibid: p:24.

²⁰ Hilmi Ziya Ülken, İnsani Vatanperverlik, Remzi Kitaphanesi, İstanbul, 1933, p:86.

²¹ Ibid: p:54.

²² Jacques Maritain; “The Range of Reason”, Http://Www.Nd.Edu/Departments/Maritain/Etext/Range05.Htm(4Of11), 04.02.2010, p:72.

²³ Ibid: p:74.



forbidden to interfere in human affairs. He became a decorative God, the God of the classical rationalist world."²⁴

This laicism according to conservatives or secular understanding of beliefs incarcerate human persons creed and lead to a soulless human society which's humanism is briefly anthropocentric. This anthropocentric point of view drags humanity and its values to turn into a dry crust. Humans whom not only boldened but also forget their creator became inhuman and anthropocentric humanism era has prepared the end of humanity.

*"At the second moment, with Romanticist philosophy and the great Idealist metaphysicians, God became an idea. He was an immanent God engulfed in the dialectical progress of the self-asserting Idea and the evolving World. This God of pantheism and of the romanticist world was but the ideal borderline to which tended the development of humankind. He was also the absolute, total and unbending justification of good and evil -- of evil fully as much as of good -- of all the crimes, oppressions and iniquities of history as well as of its conquests and progress, particularly its progress in taking hold of material goods and power."*²⁵

Moving towards second phase humanity expend itself to common good and become not only materialistic but also became a meta.

*"At a third moment, Feuerbach was to discover that God -- such a God -- alienated man from himself; Marx, that He was, but an ideological mirror of the alienation or dehumanization of man accomplished, <http://www.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/range07.htm> (8 of 12)27-Sep-05 20:05:21 The Range of Reason 7 he thought, by private property. And Nietzsche was to become exhilarated by the mission with which he felt himself endowed, namely, to proclaim the death of God. How could God still live in a world from which His image, that is, the free and spiritual personality of man, seemed definitely destined to disappear? God as dead, God in the grave, was the God of the final agony and self-destruction of an age of civilization which had proclaimed the self-sufficiency of man. Atheism is the final end of the inner dialectics of anthropocentric Humanism."*²⁶

This "progression" of humanity seems very dangerous to neoconservatives. So, what can be done in this situation? The progressive age entered by the influence of Enlightenment thought, and the thought that the anthropocentric humanism created by it brought humanity to the edge of the abyss means that conservatives point to the inevitability of a return. The third stage was basically conditioned by this standpoint. The answer to the criticism that the Status qua ante as an orientation means retrogradation and demands that new hegemony put aside humanity's progress as in many chapters, comes from neoconservatism and Leo Strauss, who is considered to be its founder. According to Strauss, when progress becomes a problem, or even when progress brings us to the edge of the abyss and therefore alternatives have to be brought to it, what needs to be done is to stay where we are or, if this is not possible, return.²⁷

Conferring to conservative Humanism, man is the measure of everything, but he is theomorph. Beyond its existence in this World, it has a transcendent presence. Conservatism called the unique concept of Humanism put forward by anthropocentric Humanism as Theocentric. This view gives conservatives the task of establishing, developing and expanding an "equal," "free" and "democratic order, which, apart from what God does," entails not to discriminate between people, the rights granted to human beings as human beings are protected because of their sacred immunity.

Germino states

"in relation to concerning employed elsewhere, it is the period which witnesses the increasing dominance of anthropocentric and metastatic as opposed to theocentric modes of political speculation. Questions relating to man's relationship to a transcendent, divine Being are

²⁴ Ibid: p:74.

²⁵ Jacques Maritain; "The Range of Reason", [Http://Www.Nd.Edu/Departments/Maritain/Etext/Range05.Htm\(4Of11\)](Http://Www.Nd.Edu/Departments/Maritain/Etext/Range05.Htm(4Of11)), 04.02.2010, p:75.

²⁶ Ibid: p:75.

²⁷ Leo Strauss, "Progress or Return? The Contemporary Crisis in Western Civilization"; *Modern Judaism*, Vol I, Pp: 17-45, p:18.



bracketed or relegated to the private, “non-political” sphere by an ever-increasing number of significant political thinkers.”²⁸

Actually, according to Germino, although Renaissance humanists such as Petrarch, Lorenzo Valla, and Erasmus repeatedly insisted that sought a purer purity in the life of the soul and that Luther and Calvin said earthly activity was meaningless or sterile unless it was done for the greater glory of God. The hope of eternal salvation, he says, has led to the long-term rise of anthropocentric bereavement and activism, as Renaissance and Reform thinkers call upon the Western man to not to turn away from the responsibilities of this life and not shy away from his worldly duties. Similar to this point of view “(I)et us follow M. Maritain through two matters to which he recurs over and over again. He contends that modern civilization has robbed the ordinary man of two great human attributes, Freedom and Dignity. These are so closely inter-related that they may be treated together.”²⁹

More precisely, although conservatives agree with the humanist thesis that man is the measure of all things, they also assume that man has a measure too, and that is undisputed God; therefore, the source of the measure, the law, is unconditionally sacred.

4. BALANCING OUR MORAL IMPERATIVE TO RECONSTRUCT LIBERAL ORDER

The enemy was no longer atheism, deism or blasphemy for the “average Catholic,” a Catholic who wanted integrity, not as a weak and uncertain feeling, but to be a Catholic to the end, to live that way became the main threat. This situation can be interpreted as the gateway of theocentric Humanism to democracy, if not secularism.³⁰

Since the day when the man turned his gaze upon himself, he had been taken prisoner of empty pride,

“his obsession with subjugating the nature, desire to master the World with the ambitions above and beyond everything, the man endured the goods to his mind and finally cut his ties with the land, the World of conscience, feelings, and memories, leaving him alone as a forceful mind, a harsh and emotionless machine, and destroying his own power with a dry and rootless enthusiasm to standardize and rationalize the World.”³¹

In the absence of a transcendental spiritual bond, which does not include direct religious references, Ülken also raises intense criticism of the man whom he calls the³² “machine man”. The only way to produce genuine human doctrines is to have faith.

By the understanding of the new right, if humanity is to be saved, the new age must be the age of theocentric Humanism because as Maritain states “He isolated himself progressively from God. God, the heavenly God of Christianity, or the immanent and evolving God of pantheism, was but the supreme guarantor of our own greatness and power. We expected progress and happiness from the effort of man-centred upon himself and set apart from God. We realized our own dignity; we became the masters of nature. But we were alone. The age was an age of anthropocentric Humanism. It ended in human devastation.”³³

Theology has always held the most crucial place in the human mind and knowledge, and this will continue to be so.³⁴ Although Hilmi Ziya Ülken points to knowing and believing as the two fundamental principles of human spiritual life and arguing knowledge and belief have equal values. He concludes that faith is always the essence of spirit and superior.³⁵ The mind is nothing without the soul.

²⁸ Dante Germino, “Modernity” in Western Political Thought, New Literary History, Vol. 1, No. 2, A Symposium on Periods (Winter, 1970), pp.293-310, The Johns Hopkins University Press, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/468633>, 03-01-2020 12:15 UTC, p:300.

²⁹ G. G. Coulton, The Historical Background of Maritain’s Humanism, Journal of the History of Ideas, Oct., 1944, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Oct., 1944), pp. 415-433, University of Pennsylvania Press, p:418.

³⁰ Bjørn Thomassen & Rosario Forlenza (2016) Christianity and political thought: Augusto Del Noce and the ideology of Christian Democracy in post-war Italy, Journal of Political Ideologies, 21:2, 181-199, DOI: 10.1080/13569317.2016.1150135, p184.

³¹ Hilmi Ziya Ülken, İnsani Vatanperverlik, Remzi Kitaphanesi, İstanbul, 1933, p:80.

³² Ibid: p:83.

*Hilmi Ziya Ülken borrowed the term “machine man” from the Faust of Goethe, whom he frequently expressed his admiration and appreciation for his humanist genius.

³³ Jacques Maritain, “The Range of Reason”, <http://www.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/range06.htm> (15 of 16)27. Sep.05, p:76.

³⁴ Ibid: p:76.

³⁵ Hilmi Ziya Ülken, İnsani Vatanperverlik, Remzi Kitaphanesi, İstanbul, 1933, p:52.



The neoconservatism, which characterizes the last quarter of the last century and the first decade of the century in an almost unrivalled manner, is neither with the traditional conservatism that existed before the French Revolution, nor with the modern conservatism that emerged after the revolution, nor with the conservatism of Continental Europe, nor even in it. It bears distinct and critical similarities with the society in which it was born, American conservatism. Almost the only connection of neoconservatism to its European roots, which is located at the intersection of the political philosophy or political science, but rather at the intersection of the two and on which the most severe scientific and intellectual effort has been made, is property conservatism, which has been classified and defined as a sub-type of conservatism.³⁶

The practical meaning of this situation, given the example of Thatcher, Reagan³⁷ and Özal*, is to place the “middle pillar” at the heart of conservative parties through populism and by changing the appeal of the elitist conservative tradition.

With the crisis of the welfare state and the subsequent collapse of real socialism, the radicalization of the competitive structure of the modern state’s capitalist practice, which atomizes individuals and destroys social bonds, has finally rendered the myth of the modern capitalist state dysfunctional as well as the unity of the nation as the element that establishes coexistence. While objection and rebellion re-establish itself through multiculturalism at one end and micro-nationalism at the other, the dominant language tries to re-establish the legitimacy of the modern state through tradition and religion as an essential part of it. It can be said that neoconservative ideology is used for each country by adapting it according to the specific conditions of that country, although its general framework remains the same.³⁸ Neo-conservatism tries to redefine the foundations and source of social reconciliation with its moral understanding, emphasis on law and order, its structure that encourages a return to family and family values, and its unique understanding of romantic freedom.

5. THE SECULAR AND THE SACRAL?

According to conservative idea, the human mind is limited and flawed. This acceptance is also beneficial for explaining the central doctrines and theoretical skeleton of thought and is the key to the introduction of conservative thought. Nevertheless, it suddenly becomes meaningless when used to compare the idea with its the most famous other “Enlightenment”.

According to the idea of Enlightenment, is human being perfect in nature and unlimited in mental capacity? The fundamental question that needs to be asked in order to understand the point of separation here is; what the initial assumptions of the two approaches are. According to conservatism, the progressive mentality assumed that the beginning was the most flawed and that perfection could only be found at the end. So much so that from the beginning to the end, the movement is essentially a progression from extreme imperfection to perfection.³⁹

Though, according to conservatives, human beings are not imperfect in the beginning; that is, excellence is a feature that can only be attributed to the moment of creation. However, “Creation” took place in another dimension of time.

Creation is not in the logical extension of a chain of time in which the present time takes place. Divine creation takes place in the dimension of a time when there is a phenomenon that is impossible for people to place in the present time. On the other hand, there is no gap between the time of creation and the present. These two dimensions of time adhere to each other as if the existing state of the World was a complete

³⁶ Erik Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*, The University of Chicago Press, London & Chicago, 1952; Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to The Sociology Of Knowledge*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, San Diego, 1985.

³⁷ Kenneth R. Hoover; “The Rise of Conservative Capitalism: Ideological Tensions within the Reagan and Thatcher Governments”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Apr., 1987), pp. 245-268, p:259.

*Tugut Özal, established after the September 12 1980 military intervention in Turkey, was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic affairs to the government. He resigned from this position in 1982. Motherland Party founded in 1983 and was tasked with forming a new government on the arrival of the first general elections held the same year and became the party's 19th Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey. After the 1987 elections, he re-established the government and served as prime minister. 9 November 1989. Özal elected as the eighth president of Turkey's Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Turkey by October 31, 1989 began this task.

³⁸ Kees Van Der Pijl, *Kees Van Der Pijl, Transnational Classes And International Relations*, Routledge, 1998, p:65-77; Henk Overbeek & Kees Van Der Pijl, “Lockean Heartland In Political Economy”, *Restructuring Hegemony In The Global Political Economy*, (in) Routledge, London And Newyork, p: 12-15.

³⁹ Leo Strauss, “Progress or Return? The Contemporary Crisis in Western Civilization”; *Modern Judaism*, Vol I, ss.17-45, p:19.



replica of the original design. How is it possible not to see that what is absolutely forbidden in this way is a social intervention by people in their social lives? It is not enough to say that this discourse reflects impotence and indicates impotence. This discourse establishes, produces, and forms impotence.⁴⁰ In this regard, progress, freedom, or good attainment can only be achieved by exerting the burden of the first sin on the shoulders in this World.⁴¹ For this, it is necessary to work hard, obey the authority, and be thankful to what one has.

The doctrine of Islam rejects this assertion only about the first sin. This system of thinking, which envisions a cosmic hierarchy similar to the teachings of Farabi and Ibn-i Sina, was the product of a Theocentric (God-centric) acceptance intertwined with the general principles of the Ptolemaic understanding of the universe, provided that the new Platonic roots are not assumed to exist.⁴² So, it is not possible to change, transform, or perfect beyond a limited and cut-out space for punishment or exams.

This thesis brings with itself the belief that good or perfect cannot be established in this World. “*Summum Bonum*” (common good) is not possible in “*bios theoretikos*” which is tided by time and history, but it is possible only at eternal life beyond time.⁴³ In the best order to be established in this World, people are jointly impotent, one and all.⁴⁴

Therefore, a question emerges, how is that different from idealism? Would putting men to the centre of the unknown be enough to declare the paradigm of neoconservatism as “modern”? Unlike traditional and modern conservatism (the streamline of traditional conservatives and modern conservatives support and use an information theory based on agnostic thought), the neoconservatism is based on the so-called gnostic scientism. On one side, “gnostic scientism”⁴⁵ can be interpreted as an effort to reconcile science and religion. On the other hand, it provides a framework that allows the modernization of individuals and societies in terms of fundamental rights and freedoms, without detaching them from religious thought. It can be said that this epistemology underlies what conservative idea describes as the field of spiritual sciences, instead of Humanities.

However, the gnostic attitude, which is said to be adopted in the epistemology when the sparring comes directly to the discussion of whether God is comprehensible or incomprehensible; Strauss expresses his opinion by referring to a “single and mystical god.”⁴⁶

However, it is in such a way that particular law can become a fundamental law.

The mystical and unknownness of God makes His law perfect; Germino’s views on the subject are parallel to this aspect. God is unteachable, just to be experienced. Following the path of God means following the good in man, making the most beautiful part prevail. At this point, when the source is unknown and mystical, how the neoconservative ideology relies on Gnosticism in terms of the theory of knowledge is a problematic issue, as we stated above. If we assume that we are talking about political thought, ideology, or paradigm with high internal consistency, the new conservatism is expected to admit that, ultimately, following an Agnostic thought system. However, such an assumption cannot be made of interest in neo-conservatism. The problem is not specific to the measure or the theory of knowledge, but rather to the general formation of conservatism. The ambiguity of neo-conservatism emerges as eclecticism on the theoretical level and pragmatism on the discourse level.

⁴⁰ Marcel Gauchet, "Anlam Borcu ve Devletin Kökenleri İlkelerde Din ve Siyaset", Devlet Kuramı, (Der) Cemal Bali Akal, Dost Yayınları, 2005, p:59.

⁴¹ With his quote from Luriaya, Strauss tries to prove to us why this day is not more precious than yesterday. Liberation to Luria means only return, the reunification of the first whole or tikk. For Luria, Christ is the end of the ongoing repair process. The path to the end of everything is also the path to the beginning. “The fact that the present is closer to the ultimate atonement in time does not mean that the present is superior to the past, especially the classical past, in terms of wisdom or wisdom. (Strauss, Leo. “Progress or Return? The Contemporary Crisis in Western Civilization”; Modern Judaism, Vol I, ss. 17-45, p:18).

⁴² Oğuz Düzgün, “Bir Modernizm Eleştirisi İmkânı Olarak: Descartes”, Sosyal Bilimler Araştırmaları Dergisi/Social Sciences Research Journal, Cilt/Volume: 1 Sayı/Issue: 1 Haziran/June 2018, P:52.dante.

⁴³ Dante Germino, Beyond Ideology: The Revival of Political Theory, Harper and Row, New York, 1967, s 26.

⁴⁴ Marcel Gauchet, “Anlam Borcu ve Devletin Kökenleri İlkelerde Din ve Siyaset”, Devlet Kuramı (Der) Cemal Bali Akal, Dost Yayınları, 2005, p:48.

⁴⁵ Eric Voegelin. The Collected Works Of Eric Voegelin, Volume 1 0 Published Essays 1940–1952, (Ed)Paul Caringella, Jürgen Gebhardt, Thomas A. Hollweck, Ellis Sandoz, (In) “The Origins Of Scientism (1948)”, and “Gnostic Politics” (1952), University Of Missouri Press, Columbia And London, 2000. Ayrıca Bkz: Thomas M. Lessl. “Gnostic Scientism and The Prohibition of Questions”, Rhetoric & Public Affairs, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2002, Pp. 133-157.

⁴⁶ Leo Strauss, “The Mutual Influence of Theology and Philosophy”, The Independent Journal of Philosophy, Vol III, 1979, p:112-15.



In the debate about God's measure, the concepts used do not include paradigmatic claims such as Gnosticism or Agnosticism. In the text of Strauss, the terms of comprehensive, incomprehensive are used. This discussion is not intended covering the whole process of human knowledge, but to explain the question of knowing God.

A person who has been created together as part of a created absolute reality has no chance of making changes or progress in his mind. Beyond that, in fact, for changing, correcting, or healing something, it must be missing, wrong, or flawed. Whereas, we understand from the interpretation of Dante Germino that by opening a word from Plato and a quote from his state, in a designed, invariant and harmonic order governed by the Divine mind, nothing can be mistaken or suffer from error,⁴⁷ that we see that people see and change as errors or incompletions, what he tried to correct stemmed from the fact that humanity had ignored the original principle, assuming that there were alternatives instead of following the only right path and following it. The genuine underlying concept lying at the heart of theocentric Humanism is to suppress consent and renew it with active consent which is practical obedience. In other words, theocentric Humanism primarily focuses on the experience of re-thinking of the ideals of the Enlightenment and modernity.

The realistic view will allow us to realize that a world in which man is the measure of everything is not a new one, but an assertion that has never been entirely accepted. The neoconservatism has aroused religious thought from a few hundred years of sleep.

The question to be asked after these explanations of the new traditionalism in which the neoconservative doctrine directly links the humanist paradigm to belief, to Judeo-Christian tradition, and the assumption that this tradition is the foundation of western civilization, suggesting that there is no other way of salvation than how people shape their lives around the principles of this doctrine, we can, or we cannot conclude that neo humanism is equal to fatalism.

6. CONCLUSION

We can say that the new mentality and principles of the contemporary society that the neoconservative ideology aims to establish bears the traces of theocentric humanism.

Since conservatism is a modern style of thought as Mannheim⁴⁸ states, it has revealed an understanding of humanism that is loyal to the humanist inspiration of modernism but opposed to the view of enlightenment that regards the human being as mind and body. According to conservative humanism, man is the measure of everything, but this human is "thoemorph". It has a transcendent existence beyond its presence in this world. Conservatism calls the unique understanding of humanism that anthropocentric humanism confronts as "theocentric".

Theocentric humanism describes people in three ways; It comprehends the creation before falling into this world with its existence in this world and its existence after leaving this world. He argues that equality can only be realized in these three cases as a result of treating the person in accordance with the essence given to him.

The main criticism of this way of thinking is directed to the "anthropocentric humanism", which is claimed to come from the rigid rationalism of the enlightenment age. One of the essential points that conservatism opposes to enlightenment with religious references is that no reality is accepted except for strict scientific reality.

This new mindset beyond the political theory and political philosophy was reflected itself in political practice by Reagan's, Thatcher's and in Turkey in Özal's rhetoric.

From Burke to Voegelin, Conservatism embodies a strong warning against the confusion of politics and religion - which generates the Crusader logic - while defending the importance of religion in individual and community life.⁴⁹ "What Burke considered in more general terms was what the civilian role of religion was. The title role of religion was to provide the urge for good behaviour. Burke believed, like most people

⁴⁷ Dante Germino, *Beyond Ideology: The Revival of Political Theory*, Harper and Row, New York, 1967, p:18.

⁴⁸ Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to The Sociology Of Knowledge*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, San Diego, 1985.

⁴⁹ Harbour W.R, *The Foundations of Conservative Thought: An Anglo-American Tradition In Perspective*, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame 1982; s. 24.



of his time, that only the hope of eternal life or the fear of hellfire could prevent human beings from showing off⁵⁰. Leo Straus' approach to the matter is also very similar to that of Burke. According to neo-conservatives, if the man is adequately educated, raised in a constructive environment, and restrained by authority, innate talents such as rationality, sociability, diligence, and honesty can reveal. Nevertheless, then no matter how they are trained, reared, or restrained, he can never escape the innate qualities of irrationality, selfishness, laziness, depravity, and corruption. So neoconservative doctrine or ideology or style of thought is not fatalist but presumes a generic human.⁵¹

With the political standpoint of theology becoming more dominant in the 1980s and beyond, it can be said that the age of "emancipation" has been closed, and the age of "liberation" has been opened. The key concept that opens the era of liberation is theocentric Humanism. Emancipation is inherent to human consent, whereas liberty is external to human will. In conclusion, it can be said that the neoconservative ideology, more holistically, the thinking of the new right in a wide range, from daily political language to advertising spots, placed the mindset and the impotent being in the centre of the universe as a measure of everything.

Do not think; just do it!

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⁵⁰ Iain Hampsher-Monk, Modern Siyasal Düşünce Tarihi, Yayına Hazırlayan Necla Arat, Say Yayınları, İstanbul 2004, s. 348.

⁵¹ Clinton Rossiter. Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion, Alfred A Knopf, New York; 1962, s.22.piration from Thomist philosophy.



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