

*Deus est Machina*  
Religion and Theology  
in the Age of *Deus Technologicus*

By Dimitrios Bekridakis\*

Before and above anything else, the current cultural phase, which is sociologically described as *post-modern*, is a transitional and liminal period. Pluralism and relativism, liquidity and ambiguity prevail in every field of human thought and action, while rapid reorientations are constantly taking place and at all levels, undermining old certainties<sup>1</sup>. Contrary to what had been as a rule until very recently, the most important catalyst of global developments is no longer politics, or even economics, but *technoscience*, spearheaded by cybernetics, in its close association with biology<sup>2</sup>.

Western civilization, in its current postmodern, hyper-technological phase, is distinguished by certain special characteristics which constitute its hybrid and liminal identity. First of all, it is sixfold *post-political* and *post-capitalist*. By the way, this is also the reason why the once-robust modern Marxist and liberal ideological narratives have fallen into disrepute and Western societies are now moving in the intersection

---

\* Dimitrios Bekridakis holds an M.A. in Religious Studies from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens also he is a theology teacher.

1. Z. Bauman, *Πευστοί Καιροί: Ἡ Ζωή τὴν Ἐποχὴ τῆς Ἀβεβαιοτήτας*, transl. K. D. Geormas, Metaichmio Publications, Athens 2009.

2. We are discussing the phenomenon of technoscience in a more thorough fashion in the following papers: D. Io. Bekridakis, «*Machina Ex Deo: στοχασμοὶ γύρω ἀπὸ τὸν θεολογικὸ πυρῆνα τῆς σύγχρονης Τεχνολογίας*», in: D. Geroukalis (ed.), *Μετάνθρωπος: Ζώντας σ' ἓναν ψηφιακὸ κόσμο*, Harmos Publications, Athens 2018, pp. 109-182, and «*Homo ex machina. Ἡ Θεολογία, ἡ ἐπιστήμη καὶ τὸ πρόβλημα τῆς τεχνικῆς*», *Θεολογία/Theologia* 91, 1 (2020), pp. 65-119.

zone of a peculiar *post-democratic techno-totalitarianism*. In a directly analogous way, it is a *post-religious* and especially *post-Christian* culture. Very schematically, this means that the Church, as an institution and a bureaucratic mechanism, has lost its authority; the Christian metaphysical heritage has been discredited; and faith has become a strictly private affair. Nevertheless –and this is the fundamental religious paradox of our times– the postmodern civilization is at the same time a *post-secular* one: it presupposes not the disappearance of the sacred, but the broad deregulation and rearrangement of the hierophanic landscape<sup>3</sup>. In this context, the prevailing liquidity is largely due to the diffusion, through consumer *spectacle* and *pop culture*, of an occultist *individualized narcissistic spirituality*<sup>4</sup>. The following reflections aim at throwing some light on this development.

#### A. Techno-theism and Posthuman Condition

“Almost two thousand years and not even a new God!”, Friedrich Nietzsche agonizingly exclaimed in 1888<sup>5</sup>, shortly before he plunged into the darkness of paranoia – the thinker who, more than anyone else, had the courage to contemplate the abyss that opened up for man after the death of God. Well, it seems that, in the 21st century, the time has come for a new god to be emerged. The difference is, that this deity is no longer transcendent, but absolutely intra-secular – although it is not a manifestation of a physical reality, nor a metonymy of the universal totality, as it has been the case with the pagan and pantheist deities. The new God is impersonal, artificial and synthetic. He is *God as Mechanism*: the *Deus Technologicus*. The historical conditions that led to such a relocation of sacredness are related, on the one hand, to the Christian

3. D. Io. Bekridakis, «Ἡ Διάχυτη Θρησκεία καὶ ἡ ἐπαναμάγευση τοῦ Δυτικοῦ Πολιτισμοῦ», *Θεολογία/Theologia* 94, 1 (2023), pp. 163-201.

4. Chr. Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West: volume 1&2: Alternative Spiritualities, Sacralization, Popular Culture and Occulture*, T&T Clark, London 2005.

5. Fr. Nietzsche, *Ὁ Ἀντίχριστος*, transl. Z. Sarikas, Ekdotiki Thessalonikis Publications, Thessaloniki 1986, p. 24.

disenchantment, which paved the way for the development of science, and, on the other hand, to the gradual prevalence of the newer technical spirit in all fields of human life and action<sup>6</sup>. The bankruptcy of traditional metaphysics has made technoscience the Western civilization's only great redemptive narrative<sup>7</sup>. The *technical spirit* has been transformed into the carrier par excellence of the modern man's unsatisfied desire for redemption within History. Its individual *qualities* (transcendence and exploitation of nature, substitution of senses, perception, experience and even thought, subordination of the will to the processes of production, automation, autonomy, measurability and calculability, liberation and transposition of energy, methodical anonymity, reversal of the evaluative relationship between end and means) have been dissolved, surrounded by the metaphysical aura and the social prestige of sanctity. Thus, in practice the technical spirit has come to be regarded as "*the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life*" of the most popular new world religion. We call this religion here *Techno-theism*; *Techno-theism* is not identified with some naive deification of machines; instead, it involves the mechanization of the very concept of the Sacred. It is understood as an extended narrative framework, characterized by specific world-theoretical principles and doctrinal assumptions, symbolic stock, ritual system, priesthood and institutional manifestations, moral evaluation and political implications. Above everything else, though, *Techno-theism* offers a solid salvific perspective, which consists in the *humanity's deified modification* through technology. By conceiving the concept of divinity in exclusively technoscientific terms, Techno-theism seems to gradually replacing the anthropomorphism of traditional religions with a postmodern *techno-morphism*. This techno-morphism finds its emblematic expression in the case of the most advanced versions of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The paranoically "intelligent" conscious machine is now interpreted by humanity as a fundamental *hierophany* – i.e., it represents an existential *challenge* linked to the revelation of the very truth of being within the context of History. This becomes apparent

---

6. Sp. Kyriazopoulos, *Η καταγωγή του τεχνικού πνεύματος*, Athens 1965.

7. D. Noble, *The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention*, Penguin Books, New York 1999.

through the way in which the AI development is universally treated: it is irresistibly attractive and fascinating to the masses, while at the same time it exerts awe and terror. According to Rudolf Otto's famous formulation of the Sacred, it is a "*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*"<sup>8</sup>. On the one hand, it is praised and glorified as the resourceful metaphysical intervention that will lift the plaguing humanity out of its deep cultural, social and spiritual crisis; on the other one, it is exorcised as a repulsive harbinger and at the same time the main agent of a dystopian future. This ambivalent attitude of humanity towards the mystery of technology permeates every aspect of the browsing into the vast virtual continents and colors the subject's empirical perception of the digital animism of algorithms and simulacra, networks and screens. Particularly significant are the implications of the postmodern Techno-theism's prevalence in shaping the image that modern man has of himself, the meaning of his existence and the possibility of his salvation from the horrors of history. This image is no longer constructed according to the terms of modern humanism. The *humanist legacy of five centuries is being imploded before our eyes under the weight of the dizzying technological progress which it has brought about*. The techno-theosis promised by transhumanism represents both the hysterical aggravation and the ultimate fulfilment of modern humanism's terms and conditions without exception.

"Am I human? Am I a machine? There is no answer to this anthropological question. Therefore, as Jean Baudrillard had already commented –somehow sarcastically– in 1990, we are somehow dealing with the end of anthropology, which has been surreptitiously seized by machines and recent technologies"<sup>9</sup>. To put it simply, anthropology's total eclipse means that the key questions posed today about man have a *post-anthropological* character. The organic intellectuals of the techno-system are now considering *Homo Sapiens* as an endangered species<sup>10</sup>,

---

8. R. Otto, *Τὸ Ἱερόν: γιὰ τὸ ἀνορθολογικὸν στὴν ἰδέα τῆς θεότητος καὶ τὴν σχέσηη του μὲ τὸ ὀρθολογικόν*, transl. Eleni Ladia & Ioanna Papaioannou, Harnos Publications, Athens 2019.

9. J. Baudrillard, *Ἡ διαφάνεια τοῦ κακοῦ: Δοκίμιο πάνω στὰ ἀκραῖα φαινόμενα*, transl. Z. Sarikas, Exandas Publications, Athens 1996, p. 70.

10. Y.-N. Harari, *Ἡμὸς θεοὶ: Μιὰ σύντομη ἱστορία τοῦ μέλλοντος*, transl. M. Laliotis, Alexandria Publications, Athens 2017.

even at the biological level – because at the symbolic level, as Michael Foucault has already convincingly shown, it has disappeared long ago. Overtaken by evolution, which now is not perceived as a natural process but as a technological one, human beings are heading towards oblivion. Whether one refers to the assertions of *Transhumanism* – the multifaceted ideological movement – about the possibility and desirability of transforming the human condition through the extensive upgrading of the subject’s psychological, mental, and physical abilities, or focus on the *Posthumanism*’s millenarian vision of the *supra-technological singularity*’s imminent advent<sup>11</sup>, technology is perceived as the humanity’s ultimate possibility. Consequently, the 21st century appears as the *Pleistocene of the Posthuman*, the era of the replacement of human existence by the inhuman technical arrangement. This development should not be surprising, as it fully obeys to the internal logic and dynamics of the modern technical spirit. From the moment that the machine became “intelligent”, i.e. humanoid (robot, algorithm, AI) it was only a matter of time before man would turn into *machine-like* – i.e., posthuman. Having been created “*in the image and likeness*” of a techno-morphic deity, posthuman is a transcendent existence: it exalts humanity to its utmost limits, transcending the latter. Of course, the demand to break through the human limits is not new but a very old one; yet it is only in our age that it has become possible for it to be formulated in terms that are no longer traditionally religious, but exclusively techno-scientific. Thus, salvation is now understood as *a technologically powered process of implosion of the human within the posthuman*. As such, it stands as the antithesis of the theological narrative about the humans’ perfection within the God-human. In our age, but infinitely more in the future, there will no longer be any reason for someone to remain a human being when, through technology, he or she could become the glorious idol of one’s human self, which will have been withdrawn as obsolete. This deified *human simulation* is the unburnt bush of the techno-theistic hierophanic condition. Through its burning agony for redemption, one hears the resounding voice of the *Deus Technologicus*’s will – the all-powerful and all-seeing mechanism.

---

11. Th. Tasis, *Φιλοσοφία της ανθρώπινης αναβάθμισης*, Harmos Publications, Athens 2022.

We shall conclude this section with a political observation: Techno-theism is the most suitable religious form to provide metaphysical justification for the two things that global oligarchy unreservedly venerates: *panoptic overextension and corporate greed*; through spectacle and consumption, it has led the masses to become addicted to the superstition of screens and the bloody worship of multinational behemoths. By ontologically underpinning the market transformations of the commodified consciousness and the authoritarian politics of constant surveillance, the mechanical deity is being projected as the product that outshines every other product and the control that surpasses all other controls. Thus, the spirituality of Techno-theism is neither the perverse religiosity of the heretics (after all, the notion of heresy itself is meaningless in the context of the postmodern relativist pluralism), nor the allegedly blasphemous anti-religiousness of the atheists (hidden in its *banalité*), but the *pervasive digital idolatry* of the techno-occultists of Hither without Beyond.

## B. Prolegomena to a Political Theology of Technique

Faithfulness to the Gospel of the Jesus Christ's Resurrection is a gift of the Paraclete who transforms history, referring it to its ultimate – though always invisible – Lord. Consequently, the experience of the Christian faith must not be allowed to go hand in hand with escapist tendencies from modern civilization, however hostile the latter may seem to be to it. A faith that fears history is a faith without love; love eliminates fear<sup>12</sup>, opens itself to everyone and it is the judge of everything. If faith is left to be terrified by the deluge of changes, the storm of the unknown, and the insecurity generated by the postmodern, liquid, hyper-technological times, it risks becoming a refuge of fearful consciences desperate to escape from life itself. This does not mean that culture never ceases to function as a source of suffering for the subject – quite the contrary. But the struggle against misery, oppression and the debasement of the

---

12. 1 John. 4, 18.

human condition is not served by liberal psycho-theologies that adhere to correctional therapies and methodically pave the way to the compliance with the techno-system's authoritarian and unscientific dictates. The contemporary political and technological challenges are equally not met with vegetarian theologies related to the imaginative revival of some idealized neo-orthodox community, where the person and eros will be glorified anew and existence will follow the path leading from fission to relationship. Nor, finally, is there any value in the hysterical cries of the panicky fanatical pietistic and moralistic people, with which they hope to exorcise the legions of the "daemons that are coming from the heretical and godless West", aiming at preventing the Orthodox from moving from purification to enlightenment and theosis.

A theology committed to the immeasurable *redemptive potential of the Resurrection* as a "fundamental hierophany"<sup>13</sup> is diametrically opposed to all the above. It is fully aware that it is impossible for modern man to be at peace unless the world in which he lives is equally transformed. The technological man cannot be redeemed while he is trapped in an irredeemable and alienated technical universe. If there is something that we should overcome or abandon, it is neither the scientific quest, nor the inventive aptitude or the technical work, but the specific world-view, ideological and political "regime of truth"<sup>14</sup>, that has emerged from the absolutized technical spirit. A new political theology of technique must stand against the idolatry of the Code and simulation; by drawing on elements from the Christian heritage, it will dare to name and judge with a prophetic mouth all the tyrannical metastatic cancers of technocratic totalitarianism. If Christianity is to reclaim a role in the technological developments that absolutely determine humanity's fate, theology *should receive anew the machine culture in a transformative way*. By saying this, we do not mean that it is enough for theology to rush at every occasion and opportunity demonstrating its agreement with the modern scientific worldview, in an attempt to remove the stigma of anti-scientism and

---

13. V. Adrachtas, *Υἱὸς Ἀνθρώπου: Ἡ Ἀνάσταση τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὡς πολιτικὴ ἱεροφάνεια*, Sacra/Profana Publications, Athens 2013.

14. M. Foucault, *Ἐξουσία, γνώση καὶ ἠθική*, transl. Z. Sarikas, Ypsilon Publications, Athens 1987.

regression that has accompanied the ecclesiastical discourse for centuries and in search of a position and a role within the techno-system. Such an uncritical acceptance of the technical spirit's terms does not offer a substantial service towards a more successful response to the challenges posed by technological growth; on the contrary, it exacerbates the deadlocks, allowing the techno-system to operate fully unchecked. In contrast to the defeatist and compromised attitude that the liberal wing of theological thought has maintained for almost a century in the face of technoscience, it can formulate a *prophetic theology of technique*, laying the theoretical foundations of the struggle for the trajectory towards the abyss to be reversed, which is disastrous for humanity and the planet. This is the great theological battle of our time: *the battle for the liberation of the machine*. It will be inspired not by technophobia, but rather by love of science and admiration for technological achievement. In order to succeed in this mission, theology must activate the spirit and morale of its tradition without copying its letter. For what is traditional is not what belongs to tradition, i.e. the past, but what constructs tradition, i.e. reinterprets the meaning of the past in the present.

Here it suffices to cite here an example to understand this. The Cappadocians and their successors, the erudite Church Fathers and Teachers, claimed from the pagans, with admirable boldness and robust authority, the Greek philosophy and education – the life-giving spirit of the age – as something that had always belonged to them and they belonged to it. The determination and skill with which they carried out this work, even directly opposing with the imperial power of the time (Julian), have been crucial factors in the gradual change of the existing cultural paradigm. The fact that classical thought and Greek letters were closely intertwined with the paganism's mythological and symbolic system did not prevent the Cappadocians from adopting and re-inventing them under the aegis of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If they had been hesitated and discouraged by the justified fear that such a reception would have distorted the ecclesiastical fact, then Christianity would have shrink to yet another insignificant Jewish sect, while the decadent late antiquity, having already lost a long time ago its hierophanic foundations («Πᾶν

ὁ μέγας τέθνηκε!»)<sup>15</sup>, would have surrendered without any resistance to the barbarity of the invaders from the North and Asia. Having captured analytically and insightfully the needs and demands of the people of their time, not only at the spiritual and theoretical level but also at the level of socio-political reality and daily life, the great theologians of the past selectively synthesized the ancient Greek wisdom with Christian virtue; thus, they laid the foundations for the development of a supreme civilization, which determined the destiny of mankind for centuries.

As this civilization has, in its turn, declined, and its hierophanic pillars are collapsing (“God is dead! And we killed him!” – Nietzsche), what we need now is *a new mind and dream*, i.e., the prophetic discernment and will for justice in order for a cosmogony to be triggered. Just as early patristic theology demythologized Greek thought and rendered ancient paganism an untrustworthy religious-political proposition, so too the modern theology is obliged to deconstruct postmodern technopagan superstition, undermining its semantic foundations. A nihilistic eschatology, i.e. an anti-hegemonic political theology with a prophetic toxicity and an eye on the new world of God that is coming, might be able to reinterpret the Covenant and discern the meaning that the fundamental hierophanic Event of the Jesus Christ’s Resurrection can have for overcoming the crises and deadlocks of the supra-technological present. There is hope then that theology can have a catalytic effect in redirecting the emerging posthuman paradigm, leading it away from the suffering that the “absolutist philosophy of technology”<sup>16</sup>, has in store for the world towards the path of justice, social liberation and the formation of a fundamentally new historical subject.

---

15. Plutarch, *Περὶ τῶν ἐκλελοιπότηων χρηστηρίων* 17.

16. H. Marcuse, *Ὁ μονοδιάστατος ἄνθρωπος*, transl. M. Lykoudis, Papazisis Publications, Athens 1971, p. 168.