



Philosophy and Globalization I

Introduction

Globalization is one of the most widely spread recent cultural, social, economic and political phenomena which has strongly marked the discourse of the humanities and social sciences at the beginning of the third millennium, a new era observing the end of the old and the birth of a new not-yet-defined world. What we have in hand is a new, not-yet-constituted era which poses multiple challenges and in which there is room for novel theoretical paradigms in an attempt to define this new emerging world: a world-system theory, liberal democracy as the *eschaton* of history, catastrophic paradigms of an ecological and population cataclysm, the clash of civilizations, the theory of multiculturalism, bioethics, the theory of globalization, etc.

Much like the aforesaid concepts and phenomena marking the current era, the concept of *globalization* has only recently been widely adopted – words ‘global’, ‘globality’, ‘globalization’ and ‘globalism’, as well as concepts of ‘global market’ or ‘global ecology’, were truly unknown almost up to the very end of the 20th century. Furthermore, discussions of world issues used the derivatives of ‘international’ rather than ‘global’ relations. The recent popularity of this new concept has resulted in innumerable contradictory definitions of the same. While, normatively speaking, some associate globalization with progress, prosperity and peace, some others consider it to be retrogression, disaster and decay. As far as the definition of globalization is concerned, no one is indifferent and countless are confused. The common and indisputable trait of all its definitions is the view that globalization is a process of economic, social, cultural and political activity, which transcends nation-state borders, and that it pertains to the world as a whole. It is within this context that the multi-dimensionality of the globalization processes comes to the fore: the simultaneous activity of economic, political, ecological, cultural, and communication factors at the level of the world system. Globalization is, thus, a complex and controversial process of the building of the world as a whole by creation of global institutional structures and global cultural forms, i.e. the forms that have been produced or transformed by globally accessible means. It is disclosed as a) the *free market-economic unification of the world* with uniform patterns of production and consumption; b) *democratic integration of the world* based on common interests of humankind, such as equality, human rights protection, rule of law, pluralism, peace and security; c) *moral integration of the world* concerning some central humanistic values, essential for sustainable development of humanity.

Globalism is a related concept, which is frequently also used as synonym for globalization. However, while the concept of globalization terms a value-free phenomenon, an objective present-day reality, globalism principally connotes a subjective, voluntaristic and ideological standpoint – much like all the other “isms” do – and represents a viewpoint, doctrine and ideology that promotes the principles of inter-dependence and unity of the whole world, of all nations

and states instead of national and state particularism. In contrast to the cognate concepts of *cosmopolitanism*, which places emphasis on the cultural identity of the pre-national “citizen of the world”, and *internationalism*, which promotes the ideology of revolutionary “brotherhood” amongst nations, the idea of *globalism* rests on post-national economic, information and inter-cultural planetary binding and inter-dependence.

It is a fact that various ideological movements of resistance to globalization have been emerging in response to globalization, and that violent and destructive mass demonstrations staged in the various corners of the world are but a manifestation of this fact. They are diagnosed as black, red and green protectionism. Black protectionism swears by the traditional values of the nation-state, while stimulating a neo-liberal economic environment which cancels such conservative values. Green protectionism features an anti-modernism which contradicts the globality of the ecological crisis, and fears that besides the nation-state it might also lose its budgetary funds allocated for environmental protection policy. With persistence blinded by utopianism, red protectionists consider globalization to be a cause for the Marxist resurrection of the class struggle.

If we are to believe that globalization is not an all-embracing process of transformation, but is rather a process of transition to global society or the beginning of the global age, the question is whether there exists a desirable alternative to globalization at all.

The indisputable multi-dimensionality of both the concept and the phenomenon of globalization points to the need for both an interdisciplinary discussion of the same as – primarily – the *conditio sine qua non*, and a philosophical reflection. The processes of globalization have already been ruling the world in a number of ways, and have already conclusively determined the structure of the new epoch, which is why Minerva’s owl must not stand still.

Within the context of globalization, the principal task of philosophy is to conceptualise and differentiate between the diverse dimensions of the intricate and complex processes and problems of globalization, to conduct a proper conceptual analysis, to distinguish between both the various approaches to globalization and its dimensions, and to make appropriate judgments about its normative aspects. The globalization of liberal economy must be followed by a distinct conceptual analysis and a normative request for the *globalization of responsibility* in an attempt to protect both the global future of the humankind and the global public goods (from clean drinking water to a clean environment and the ozone layer, from a rich biodiversity to a rich cultural diversity). Moreover, the social traps that accompany the ideology of the current neo-liberal globalism promoted by corporations and the dictate of the free market must be exposed.

In this sense, philosophy and its fundamental branches and disciplines, such as social and political philosophy and particularly ethics, as well as bioethics, are presented an opportunity to develop – together with social sciences, with natural and technological sciences, i.e. from an interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary perspective – their own individual and social consciousness and conscience concerning not only the ethical implications of globalization, but also the corresponding gnoseological and methodological questions.

For the above reasons, the international philosophical and interdisciplinary conference *Days of Frane Petrić* has been an ideal forum to approach and reflect on the relationship between philosophy and globalization – in accord with its carefully nurtured tradition of interdisciplinarity and pluri-perspectiv-

ism. Therefore, we invited philosophers, ethicists, bioethicists, theologians, as well as experts in the fields of the other humanities, social, natural and technological sciences, i.e. experts in sociology, political science, economics, cultural studies, physics, biology, climatology, technological studies, etc., from Croatia and the world to embark on a creative discussion of this perhaps most pressing issue and phenomenon shaping the environment of both our individual and social lives.

The Days of Frane Petrić as the international academic and cultural manifestation has from its very beginnings promoted an interdisciplinary and multiperspective approach – instead nourishing the standpoints exclusive regarding disciplinary narrowness, ideology and worldview. It is thus designed in such a way so as to create fertile environment for creative and tolerant dialogue among different sciences, disciplines and worldviews, like all the other conferences organized by the Croatian Philosophical Society. Never have *The Days of Frane Petrić* been entirely or exclusively philosophical convention, especially not a philosophical convention of only one orientation: Marxist, Christian, analytical, Heideggerian, etc. Since the very beginnings among the participants, there have been philosophers of different orientations, scholars working in humanities, social, natural and technological sciences, theologians, artists, etc. In brief, all the people participating in the creation of the spiritual *cosmos*, which corresponds in an appropriate way to the mental makeup of the distinguished erudite scholar from the city of Cres, whose name this manifestation proudly carries.

In accordance with the interdisciplinary and multiperspective environment, this symposium on the relations of philosophy and globalization included eighty-nine papers that were presented over three days, in plenary sessions and three sections, by participants from fifteen countries: *Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Hungary, Macedonia, Germany, Poland, Slovenia, Serbia, Spain and Croatia.*

The papers published in this issue represent a selection of proceeding materials from the international symposium “Philosophy and Globalization”, organized by the Croatian Philosophical Society in the framework of the 17th *Days of Frane Petrić*, Cres, September 21–24, 2008. As a matter of fact the selection of papers in English and German are divided in two issues of *Synthesis philosophica*, this and the next one. Ten papers from this conference written in Croatian language have already been printed in the philosophical journal *Filozofska istraživanja*, No. 113. And, finally all this contributions will be collected and printed in the book with the same title: *Philosophy and Globalization.*

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