



A Comparative Study on the Views of Erich Fromm and Karl Rahner Regarding Eschatological Beliefs of Christianity

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Abstract

In this article, the subject of Christian eschatology is examined from the perspective of Erich Fromm and Karl Rahner. According to Erich Fromm, from the first to the fourth century AD, there were two general beliefs about the status of Christ, and a psychoanalytic approach to the political, social, and economic situation of the people of Jerusalem can reach their fundamental reasons. By adopting the objective method, which is the essence of Freud's and Marx's approach to religion, Fromm reduced the eschatological movements of the first Christian century and the avoidance of these movements in the fourth century to hidden factors in the collective character of people and their economic motivations. However, Karl Rahner critiqued the reductionist approach to the End of Time with a Thomistic reading of Heidegger's phenomenology. According to Rahner, the Marxist interpretation of the end of Time is based on a linear image of Time and ignores the mystery of the Absolute future. By proposing the concept of the Absolute future, Rahner believes that a Christian person reaches self-understanding in the light of belief in "the end of time", but the Marxist approach, by adopting a static approach to man, cannot understand the essence of the theological belief in "the end of time". Despite the challenges raised by the Thomistic reading of Heidegger's ontology, Rahner's point of view is more defensible regarding methodology in discovering the capacities of Christian theology.

Keywords: Karl Rahner, Erich Fromm, Heidegger, Thomism, Eschatology.

Introduction

In the book "The Dogma of Christ", which combines Freud's psychoanalysis and Marx's political sociology, Erich Fromm examines the evolution of Christian beliefs about the place of Christ from the first to the fourth century AD. On the other hand, Karl Rahner's view can be presented. Rahner considers the Marxist reading of eschatological beliefs incompatible with the essence of Christian faith. Rahner seeks to provide a proper hermeneutic for interpreting the eschatological propositions of the Bible in terms of Heidegger's thought about Time. In this article, we compare Erich Fromm's Freudian-Marxist reading of eschatology with Rahner's Thomistic-Heideggerian interpretation of this subject and show the horizon each of them opens for Christian eschatology.

Research Findings

Erich Fromm has a functionalist attitude towards religion and considers it a psychological and social response to human needs. However, by taking the essentialist approach, Karl



Rehner explains the human need for religion with a pre-conceptual understanding of the Absolute or God. This need cannot be reduced to psychological processes since man's transcendental knowledge of God has an innate aspect.

Conclusion

Erich Fromm's Marxist-Freudian approach to eschatology leads to reductionism. The presupposition of Marxism is a linear perception of Time, which is inconsistent with the inherent temporality of man as a dynamic being. The other side of Fromm's social psychology, related to Freud's psychoanalysis, reduces eschatological beliefs to a process in the national unconscious or collective conscience. According to Rahner, this type of reductionism, which has a naturalistic nature, opposes believers' eschatological orientation. The naturalistic approach, which seeks the causal origin of religious beliefs, corresponds to explanatory reduction, and its results are not necessarily acceptable to religious believers. On the other hand, it is possible to use the phenomenological method that relies on descriptive reduction to understand the beliefs of believers empathically. Rahner's method is compatible with the subjective nature of faith as religious consciousness due to the use of phenomenology and descriptive reduction, and, in comparison with Erich Fromm's scientific and extra-religious study, is more defensible for this reason.

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