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## **The ascetic moment in the structure of the liturgy. Radicalisation of a moral gesture in ritual religiosity**

### **Conceptual territories of the problem. Main theses**

The ascetic moment (Latin: *ascesis*; Greek: *Askesis*, plural: *Askeses* – self-discipline, self-control; from the Greek stem *Askein* – practice through training) has been present and active in every liturgical gesture. A liturgical gesture is a sign with disciplined religious symbolic potentiality in semiosis. This is the first thesis. In order to understand it, it is required to employ an anthropological analysis of liturgical experience. It is worth understanding the liturgical gesture as a moral act (or acts, if one categorises them separately in terms of liturgical structure and moral structure), in which there is a transposition of the importance of social relations in its act in favour of the ethical importance of the particular persons involved in this act, i.e. in favour of the autorelation of the liturgical act set against the social relations of this act. This is the second thesis. Its sociological model is the Simmelian concept of social life, which states that it is simultaneously a cross-border life (because it is something more than its social form every time) and an interactive life (because it is a form of connecting and disconnecting interactions every time). The notion of “moment” should be seen from Hegel’s perspective, i.e. in the form in which it occurs in the analyses presented in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in connection with the notion of experience. A moment is precisely the instant in which an object unveils its essence in some experience of it. This is the third thesis.

The point is the liturgical gesture, i.e. the behaviour of a specified communicative intention, a turn towards God in any act, whether public or private. Liturgy (Greek: *λειτουργία* – an act for the people) – represents social acts for a given community in the structures of diverse religions; in ancient Greece, for instance, it used to represent actions undertaken by a particular person or community for a common issue, provided that it

concerned public affairs. Colloquially and commonly understood, the liturgy is a public form of religious cult. It includes a ritualised and precisely specified act and discourse with regard to what is sacred, and it expresses itself through that act. The liturgy belongs to the religious culture of a given society and it is sometimes a discriminant of denominational borders. In whatever way their configuration is understood in diversified cultures and societies, it defines the activities related to worshipping a deity. The condition for it is the actual or implicit participation of believers, which is sometimes regulated in terms of the number of them. Christianity has succeeded to the Judaic understanding of the liturgy as a public homage paid to God. The homage belongs to the meaning of the liturgy. It is a manifestation of the presence of God in religious behaviour. It has some peculiar meaning, i.e. through adoration; it unveils the future life in a habitually limited announcement of it. Thus, it is an act that unveils the final affairs, i.e. the *eschaton*. The liturgy is an anticipation of eternal life, in which – just as it is the case with St. Augustine – needs and necessities wither, being replaced by the freedom of bestowing and giving, by the eternal adoration that governs everything. Such meanings are shown by many researchers, including Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI in his *Theology of Liturgy*<sup>1</sup>.

### Sociological phenomenology of the liturgical gesture

The liturgical gesture is interactive and transgressive. It claims to refer its basic meanings to relations that surpass existence in the immanence of the world. The moment of crossing, or transgression, is present in the liturgical intention. The parties involved in the interaction are active persons. They point to themselves, to God, to His representations, and to the *sacrum*. A ritual confrontation with the *sacrum* is the domain of the liturgy. The confrontation with God imposes conditions. The basic condition is to purify oneself, or at least to suspend the power of this world, which is accepted *a priori* in every relation of social practice. The condition of purification comes from experience: no one is born as an owner of what does not belong to them. No one has access to himself without violence under the rudimentary, primordial conditions of experiencing oneself, or without dissipating the chiaroscuro at best, which allows one to conceal the eschatological meanings of personality. The inherent immediacy of experiencing oneself is both a question and a possibility. Its provisional character becomes unveiled in the liturgy. The liturgy brackets it and suspends the fulfilment of its expectations, i.e. the feeling that it is there where the primary data of a definition of oneself comes from. In the suspension of the logic inherent to the immediacy of the right to define oneself there is a requirement of an indispensable break with this logic, an asceticism that is subversive in a peculiar way. Asceticism is subversive. It enables one to confront oneself with gestures, which no universal requirement can be ascribed to. Asceticism explains its acts through ascribing them to the logic

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<sup>1</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Teologia liturgii. Sakramentalne podstawy życia chrześcijańskiego*, W. Szymona (tr.), Lublin 2012.

of vocation, to a personal call. It is impossible to announce one's vocation consistently without accepting the indivisibility of its particular purpose. Indeed, it is rather expected to see humility in admitting that a break with being-in-the-world goes deeper, not in an act of privilege of a person who overtly demonstrates distance with regard to the order of this world, however, but in the most precise "incognito", in the Kierkegaardian experience of the "knight of faith". Nevertheless, neither his confession, nor any of its normative parts eliminate the challenges of the futility of the excesses of asceticism; they do not free oneself from the need to recognise the implications that surpass its purpose for a particular individual, or from the exclusivity of every original that is the deciding factor for the entire *disputatio de homine*.

### **Crucial moments of the liturgical gesture. *Doxa* and *Collusio***

The problem of asceticism emerges from a sense of its literalness. The problem of its interpretation belongs to the suspicion which surrounds every literalness. It draws the definition of the human being-in-the-world from the notion of not having anything for one's own, which is simultaneously *a fortiori* of human existence confronted with the Absolute. The idea that non-possession defines human existence entails a considerably further-reaching conclusion than would be the case with any other relation of possession or power, namely that human life conducted in accordance with its essence would be impossible without the literal rejection of the ownership of one's own self. The belief that the world is not ultimately the homeland of man leads to a conclusion that the authenticity of human life unveiled in the truth about its essence is given voice in the literal refusal of the values of this world. Whatever belongs to its emolument, inevitably leads to its negation. As seen from the point of view of religiosity, which makes a fundamental notion of it, ascesis announces the ideas of moral and ethical radicalism. It lives and breathes the prospect of hope for a new being, for a peculiar territory, where divine generosity is now regaining beings that used to live in darkness up until now. Thus, it attempts to achieve what it cannot actually complete, i.e. an annulment of the participation in temporal processes; in any case, it would be a reduction in the participation in these processes up to a deprived minimum. The assumption of the radicalism of ascesis appears in various trends of evangelical religiosity. It is also present in Simone Weil's religious philosophical anthropology in a form which is glaringly resistant to the commonly understood moral sense of it. As if it were not enough that it has constituted a central issue in this philosophy, especially throughout the last stage of her work, it has also been presented within a structure of a peculiarly demanding notion of "decreation", i.e. the idea of abolition, or revocation, of being, a refusal of its power, which means that an object of a given existence in this particular world is totally subject to it. "Decreation" is a substitution, an ever-provisional replacement of existence bound to certain forms by a social choice of non-belonging to any of them, a replacement of "being-not-in-place" with a return to an ex-

clusively personal responsibility for one's own unfamiliarity in this world. To recognise this notion through the category of substitution requires a confrontation with radical ethical thought, which announces by assumption that this world before us is not the final homeland of man. Indeed, living and breathing the truth about the essence of man is not given voice, apart from the literal rejection of worldly inhabiting. All that exists in it leads to its negation. In the hope of a new land to be rendered habitable by the divine generosity of the revival of beings that used to live in darkness up until now, an ascetic finds himself in a state of an attempt to achieve what is usually unattainable, namely an attempt to abolish his participation in the global game; in any case, to reduce it to a deprived minimum. This attempt encounters chronic criticism of its possibility: a relinquishment or diminishing of participation in the world does not represent some collection of facts guaranteed by the objectivity of behaviour. The ascetic crossing towards a transgression of being takes place in the very act of it exclusively; it never occurs outside of it. It is not the visibility of it that guarantees the prospects heralded by it. These prospects are present as long as it is at work. To some extent, as opposed to or even against all peculiarity of his gesture, although it is not commonly required from someone who enters into some confrontation with God, his essence speaks for all things and all beings: an ascetic is a plenipotentiary of being that demands divine measure. A peculiarly spectacular marginality of a man who refuses to possess himself and his inherent place of living, expresses a particular specificity of the form of marginality that stimulates one to surrender their being-in-the-world to their being-in-front-of-God. In view of this possibility, there can be a certain naïve interpretation of literal asceticism. The naïveté as such, however, forms the basic structure of it. Being naïve before God is a condition for understanding the basic relation of being-in-the-presence-of-God. Naïveté purifies the awareness of the rule of subordination, and the face-to-face relation with God. The importance of this peculiar ascetic excess lies not in the fact that it surpasses everything that binds it to some act of working not connected with the act of relation with God. Its importance lies in the fact that it surpasses, or at least reaches the limit of logic permanently present in its discreet implications, precisely at the moment in which the ascetic is able to confront the Absolute – the only one that is able to satisfy his intentions. Although arguments compelling for the indispensability of the ascetic excess in order to notice the exceptionality of the liturgical act for subjective cognition are not visible, it befits to acknowledge its usefulness in determining the conditions for the final results that it brings about to the possibilities of religious experience. The inner regularity of its form and the discipline of its structure makes it related to the acts of some kind of lunacy, a certain kind of enchantment, some alienation of the subject that acquiesces to the fundamental inappropriateness of all that he is with regard to God, that is, to the experience of inappropriateness equated with the demise of the ego. According to *Expérience et Absolu*<sup>2</sup> by Jean-Yves Lacoste, it would be better to use the word "madness" in this context, rather

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<sup>2</sup> J.-Y. Lacoste, *Expérience et absolu: Questions disputées sur l'humanité de l'homme*, Paris 1994.

than “lunacy” (“insanity”, “enchantment”), for a lunatic is subject to a certain “fatum” and the liturgical madness originates from a choice, i.e. it is an act of freedom. A certain tradition recalls the madmen of God, or the madmen of grace in such cases. The sociology of extraordinary states in religiosity uses the terms coming from comparative religious studies, making use of the notion of thaumaturgy. The madness of adoration and liturgy is thaumaturgy, i.e. it is an act of identifying knowledge with existence. It is not some working of miracles in the common understanding of this phrase, nor is it some religious jugglery. It is thaumaturgy liberated from organisation. On the one hand, it is a certain figure of suffering – as it has been presented in the *Notebook of St. Bernadette of Lourdes*<sup>3</sup> or the *Diary of St. Sister Faustina*<sup>4</sup> – which inevitably leads one to encounter definitions of heresiarchy in their social context and critical reception, which, in turn, doubles the moral and psychological difficulties experienced by these authors. It is also because heresiarchy is permanently present there by virtue of a sociological compulsion, that is, in precise terms, by virtue of a sociological theory of the social regularity of uncertainty produced by every liturgical act if it originates from the subfield of religion. Undoubtedly, both St. Bernadette and St. s. Faustina represent more than conclusively these heresiarchical subfields. Thus, it befits to recall that a subfield of religion is a network of relations between a given individual and a religious institution that controls allowable forms of religious capital in them. A heresiarch confronts his own religious capital with orthodoxy, his own experience with *collusio*, i.e. the negotiated affirmation of initially rejected religious practice.

On the other hand, however, liturgical and adorational religious cognition is a choice, a decision countenanced by the dominant *doxa*, socially organised knowledge and instructions for its applications in the field of religion. A symbolic solidarity of both sides, suffering and choice, *doxa* and *collusio*, takes place in this field. In this symbolic representation, its peculiar lunacy (enchantment, “insanity”) and madness at the same time are a testimony to their injuries, the uncompromising sensation of the incommensurability of experience with regard to its aspirations. The madness of the liturgical and adorational religiosity is a chronic doubt in the affiliation to this world<sup>5</sup>; it is a rejection of it, and its lunatic development prevents incorporation into the world. Rejection is not identical to precluding bonds. In a word, a madman of God lives in the world with no affiliation; a lunatic, i.e. a man of enchantment, is alone by definition. Hence there is a high degree of closeness in the relation between them. It is the closeness of a religious *habitus*, which means that they take place within the same field of religion, have the same matrix of religious perception at their disposal, particularly when it comes to basic symbols,

<sup>3</sup> *Notatnik świętej Bernadetty z Lourdes*, M. Deskurowa (tr.), Warsaw 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Św. Siostra Faustyna Kowalska, *Dzienniczek. Miłosierdzie Boże w duszy mojej*, Kraków 2011.

<sup>5</sup> We can learn from a comprehensive study on the idea and experience of madness in religions owing to the work of J. Sieradzan, *Szaleństwo w religiach świata*, Kraków 2005, though madness in this article is not presented as an illness, as it has been portrayed by Sieradzan, but as a cognitive and existential attitude radicalised by complete identification with God; or in any case, in the way it unveils in uttered representations of this identification.

canonical requirements, doctrinal commitments, and normatively determined practices. In a word, this closeness is both a place and a source of the religious structure of cognition and its experience – that are identical with their intention. The eccentricity of madness consisting in a transgression of what is required in religious and adorational cognitive practice on the institutional level, a certain norm, in any case, a standard of the field of religion, which it refers to, demonstrates the intention of transgression every time. The transgressor himself assumes a certain form of rebelliously mutilated being, more deprived than the ones led by other people, renouncing the right to belong to the world, inasmuch as he does not make use of the possibility and the right to belong to the final world, transformed by divine decision. The experience of adorational madness, liturgical cognition and experience has an eschatological prospect. Otherwise, there is nothing it could speak of or unveil. The madness of such religiosity is a calculation with eternity; otherwise, it would be an upsurge of naïveté, of heartfelt inanity without the power of faith. Seen from this perspective, the lunatic moment is dramatically disparate: a lunatic, a man of religious enchantment, is devoid of eschatology. The similarity between them is established somewhere else: a religious madman symbolically represents death, which a man of religious enchantment has already passed through. If, therefore, one would leave the liturgical excuses typical of adorational and liturgical religiosity aside for a while, madness borders on enchantment and, to some extent, it is indistinguishable from it because a madman is a man of enchantment on condition that he does not undertake to recognise its eschatological consequences by virtue of a certain style of thinking and, what is more important, he does not recognise the style of thinking, within which *eschaton* may be exclusively defined as human being that inhabits the world.

### **Liturgical excess. The problem of transgression**

From an ideally privileged point of view such as proposed by the Hegelian absolute knowledge, which negotiates existence with knowledge, a question appears as to what arguments can be accepted in the excesses of religious madness as a type of adorational and liturgical cognition. As Jean-Yves Lacoste advises, it is necessary to indicate ironic and critical attitudes in the behaviour of a madman, the peculiar humour of madness. Is there anything better than such a kind of criticism of experience which announces that it encompasses the entirety of the final truth about the human ego? Undoubtedly, such criticism continuously appears in stances which are in principle external with regard to this experience. Hence the Hegelian eschatology is not particularly necessary in order to unveil aporias of religious madness, as well as it is not necessary to employ religious madness in order to understand the aporias of this eschatology. Nevertheless, it is necessary in order to understand, at least ostensibly, the end of a certain interpretation of proto-final reality, or rather the final result of the first attempt at such an interpretation. One does not need madness in order to get to know the possibilities of *being* on the part

of death in relation to God, for the basic liturgical figuration in Christianity, i.e. Good Friday, does not deny *being* an exceptional experience of this relation; to the contrary, it demonstrates the certainty of it. If, however, it would not have anything more to convey, there is always its practical aspect, a deep conviction that all theories are not rejected at their theoretical level, but are significant inasmuch as they initiate some practices indispensable for disproving them. The thaumaturgy of a madman of God says that in the act of liturgy he is a realisation of the wisdom of a sage, or the one who had acquired absolute knowledge of a given moment or at a given moment. In particular, however, it is the wisdom of an instant, in which a certain history of an absolute spirit heading towards some final state occurs. On the one hand, a madman of God does not deny the wisdom of the sage of religion. He does not doubt the preservation of grace is the condition for leaving the world devoid of God or his pagan version. It is the condition for wallowing in the closeness of God. On the other hand, however, it does not call into question the value of theological teaching, which is the pleasure of wisdom. It also does not doubt that correctly understood morality has eschatological implications. However, it is a wisdom that defines in the first place. It is self-aware of its true magnitude of experience, which nothing can be equal to and beyond which there is nothing. It is extravagant in this respect. It does not grant credibility to anything except itself. Simultaneously, by virtue of not belonging to the organised world outside God, it draws upon abilities of ever-exceptional symbolisation and the anticipation of its possible states from itself. This is because it does not demand its representativeness to be acknowledged, nor does it demand its projects to be deemed a paradigm for transforming current states into the states of an absoluticised future. Its asceticism requires a refusal of appropriating anything related to any appropriation, so, in a way, it refuses itself the right to achieve *eschaton*. However, it is not a sabotage of ecclesial religiosity inasmuch as the latter verifies evangelical requirements. It is worth denying the temptation of an inertial identification of liturgical asceticism with some variety of Quietism.

A madman of God is not counted among the supporters of this religiosity of individualistic structure, constantly renewed in numerous forms. He is rather an opponent of the undifferentiated attitude, a person who is directed by the reduction – just as in the structure of Quietism – of all forms of religiosity to a single act of faith. A madman of God demarcates the borders of his belonging in his non-belonging to this world, but he does not cease to inhabit it. He uses this structure in order to finally get rid of it. He wants to exist solely in the manner of liturgy.

### **Topicality of the problem of the socialisation and individualisation of religiosity**

A liturgical gesture every time renews a certain motif from the discussion on the opposition of individualisation and socialisation, of what is personal and what is social,

of what is communal and what is personal. It addresses broad meanings about the co-presence of each other, if not their definitions. It continuously circulates between the experience of the identity of a person, the issues of their sameness and difference, as well as of the borders between a person and the Other. These are chronically active issues in every type of ritual and ceremony of belonging, in broad threads of their practices, ranging from holidays of various kind, to rites of gift and rites of communication, to work, play, war, travel and exclusion, to hunting and social tales. Their radical antitheses are the rites and ceremonies of mass consumption. At the same time, their critical moment is the consumption pursued by a mass – the sense of belonging to a certain entirety. “Stoning someone” – as Rolland Munro sarcastically notes – “is a rite of community through its common act; when it is undertaken by oneself, however, then it is murder”<sup>6</sup>. Defining something as a ritual and ceremony simultaneously defines its social source. At the same time, it indicates the particular moment of its *masse*, that is, its reference and origination from the specifics of a given mass of people, just as collective panic is indicated by the crowd, reactions of collective hatred to a mob. In a word, there is no space for a rite outside a certain community, active in its act or presumed, imagined as a mass, as presented by Canetti<sup>7</sup>. However, the opposition of an individual and of a society erodes in the process of ritual abolition. The rite of religious liturgy brackets it, although it does not abolish its social basis. It presents it as mutual causation, a dependence that cannot be removed from any interaction or an intention of it. However, it deprives it of a contending intention; indeed, it treats it as mutual clues. A clue indicates the origin and sources of being. The being of an individual – both as an individuality and a person – has social clues, even if that being in its own understanding suspends them. Indeed, in many forms of social behaviour this being is subject to suppression, an illusively literal oblivion. The pressure of a certain culture typical of or dominating the culture of the West, namely for individuals as social beings to present themselves as individualities, every time has its social sources, including Christian ones in the first place. Individuality is a game pursued by an individual within the structure of a certain social entirety<sup>8</sup>. What allows one to play their individuality within the field of social being seems to require a particular oblivion/suspension of variable forms of socialisation, which are made possible owing to the processes of individualisation. The expressiveness of this trend in mass consumption makes this turn towards an entirety in order to negate it two times with a phenomenon

<sup>6</sup> R. Munro, *The waiting of the mass: the endless displacement and the death of community*, in: *The Consumption of Mass*, N. Lee, R. Munro (ed.), “The Sociological Review”, 2001, p. 114.

<sup>7</sup> E. Canetti, *Masa i władza*, E. Borg, M. Przybyłowska (tr.), Warszawa 1996. Canetti’s meaning: the mass pursues its 1) growth, 2) equality, 3) density, 4) homogeneous direction and aim.

<sup>8</sup> The issues of individuality are active by rule in Polish sociology of the trend of Florian Znaniecki’s humanist factor and Józef Chałasiński’s sociology of the nation. Its most distinct expression can be found in the studies pursued by Jan Szczepański. See: J. Szczepański, *Korzeniami wrośłem w ziemię*, Ustroń 2003; *Odmiany czasu teraźniejszego*, Warsaw 1973; *Dzienniki z lat 1935-1945*, D. Kadłubiec (ed.), Ustroń 2009; *Rozważania o Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw 1971; cf. *Jan Szczepański. Humanista – uczoney – państwowiec. Księga wspomnień*, J. Kulpińska (ed.), Warsaw 2005.

of exceptional cultural and psychological significance. This doubleness expresses itself as an erasure, a temporary liquidation of a socialised form in the acts of the play of individuality. It appears as a certain result: consumption is a liquidation of mass through its individual assimilation. If such a phenomenon takes place, socialisation trains itself with otherness as something that has already belonged to the overpowered processes: the mass is a non-assimilated entirety and through that fact it becomes assimilated as an unfamiliar one. The bond with this mass ceases to exist in the acts of communal solidarity. Where the mass speaks, the voice of the community remains silent. A religious rite disciplines the mass, determining its value for exclusively specific functions: multiplication, defensive power, mourning, feast, and war. The rite of liturgical religiosity negates the mass in any of its functions. It emerges from the rights of a community to determine and control the processes of individualisation. Once they are taken over by the mass, liturgical religiosity announces its abdication, and exposes it by designating a space in the spheres of damnation for it. *Massa damnata* is the destiny of the mass as an antithesis of a community. It is the domain of the Leviathan and it comes as no surprise that Hobbes' Leviathan is its doctrine.

It is so in Simmel, just as in Durkheim, where the issues of bonds is affectively expressed in the sense of belonging at least to something larger, if not to a certain entirety. However, this sense compellingly substantiates from the priority of individuality. Its autonomy and separation inspires pressures contrary to them onto their own desertions, or at least limits. If the meaning of individual consciousness – what Derrida calls presence – is a result of negating the mass, a possibility appears that meeting people unfamiliar to oneself causes a reverse result: the ability to react to each other becomes specified in the medium and as a result of the phenomenon of the mass. It is now possible to accustom and assimilate the Other and otherness in the mass. It is shown as a continual multiplication of presence – that is, the presence of an individual that is self-aware, albeit always temporary, in the consumption of the mass. Does this ability to react have any range? According to Benedict Anderson and her *Imagined Communities*, a rejection of any large-scale measure is the basic challenge that a community has to face. However, the idea of a community on large scales, such as a nation, is not self-contradictory because “even members of the smallest nation never know the majority of their kinsmen and kinswomen, nor do they meet them or hear of them. Nevertheless, an image of their community is alive in their minds. Their kinship makes it possible, just as it was made possible for many millions of people to be ready to give their lives for its limited representations in the last two centuries or so”<sup>9</sup>. The essence of a community consists in the continuous possibilities of recognising oneself and of establishing mutual contact between its members. Transactions between persons are its element and norm. Is there, however, something like a mass community as a species of society? Is this phrase not self-contradictory? Certainly, society does not exist, provided that one deems the scale to be an issue of

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<sup>9</sup> B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London 1983, s. 15-16.

communal agreement, just as it was said in the famous, widely quoted statement of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom between 1979 and 1990, Margaret Thatcher: "there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families". This ordinary negation of a mass community, but not of the mass as a category, is particularly annoying for those minds that express a critical attitude towards the cultural and moral meaning of the notion of community<sup>10</sup>. They deem the phenomenon of a community the same as any collective belonging, or presence among others. In such an attitude, the categories of the mass are constantly represented in notions of some collective identity. This can be observed in the essays of Zygmunt Bauman and Rolland Munro, as well as other scholars with similar interests. Their analytical attention satisfies itself with an observation of the replacement of what used to constitute a community with the mass. In the common use of these categories, the mass is something essentially external with regard to the community. Of course, it appears as a certain necessity and is annoying as a by-product of the process of reduction in the attempts to attach importance to the external world. The mass is the non-digested *residuum* of some entirety – a substantial entirety, i.e. an entirety resembling the substance, the purpose of which is to obviate the processes of modern, Heraclitean flux. The constancy and continuity against flux is the axial structure of this attitude. The mass is what reason is unable to deceive. Its activity resembles that of a frog's perspective, in which consumption is presented as the solution to the mystery of movement and difference instead of the mass and identity. But such a reduction, to reason itself, is something more than a suppression of this blessed confusion, which, as it is commonly known, used to make pragmatists severely doubtful. It is the basis for the reason that constitutes its foe. It is not only a community *per se*, but also the inner community of the mass of cognition, that is, the formed entirety of cognition, within which the subject in the process of cognition can find and define himself. "There is only one state of mind" – wrote C.S. Peirce – "from which" one can depart, namely exactly the state of mind in which one is actually located at the time in which one is departing – a state in which one is loaded with an immense mass of already formed knowledge of which one cannot get rid of, even if one wants<sup>11</sup>. Admittedly, the reason could determine the starting point and act further, step by step. But there is a trap. It is the circumstance that even this activity has already been structured by having its place in this mass. From the point of view of pragmatism, the cognitive mass is a continuous, autonomous and irreplaceable process. Thus, it is the same as the Heideggerian "having-been-thrown into the world". We can find ourselves in it in some kind of entirety of relations that have already been given by objects in language and the world. A question appears as to what actually is this "having-been-thrown". What is the argument of the

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<sup>10</sup> This is what Alain Touraine's sociology does. "Society" is an empty word for a sociologist" – he wrote, declaring monastic loyalty to the critical trend in contemporary sociology, in: A. Touraine, *O socjologii*, M. Warchała (tr.), Warsaw 2011, p. 35.

<sup>11</sup> Ch. S. Peirce, "Collected Papers", vol. 5, p. 416, za: R. Munro, op. cit., p. 117.

possible renewal of relations with the consumption of the mass as a certain entirety, that is, its establishment and necessity? What is it in the social world?

### **Social entireties as structures of movements. Religiosity with regard to the movement for the substantiation of community**

As it is commonly known, the idea to study what is social in a similar manner to that of studying objects comes from Durkheim. The anthropological version of his thought proposed by M. Douglas and Baron Isherwood is more intriguing<sup>12</sup> because it addresses the social world in the aspect of its consumption and circulation of goods. By acknowledging that any choice between the goods is an outcome of culture, it automatizes its participation in culture through an authorship of thinking: the consumption of goods takes place because they are good for thinking. The consumption of goods ensures the circulation and re-creation of culture. However, there is an analytical limitation to this assertion: the creation and re-creation of culture in the circulation of goods applies to societies or communities that are relatively isolated, or, in any case, coherent in time and space. Does this regularity occur in differentiated societies, which are chronically incomplete in any respect and fragmented? In what way does a play of such culture take place in time and space under the conditions of societies marked by territorial and historical discontinuity? An answer appears at the level of social anthropology: a given society is a variant form of the dominant structure and that structure, in turn, is determined by economic conditions. More or less overt factors of the modern market determine the lives of particular individuals and social entireties. The market values goods, services, work, communications and religions; it is the propaganda of money in a never-ending range of products and innumerable possibilities of determining how to live a numerable life within its demands. An overt product of these "innumerable possibilities" is the process of their continuous and surely expanding movement. It is accompanied by a culture of exerting pressure on the multiplication of chances for consumerist aspiration: you can always do more. An inseparable symptom of this is opening the ground for the chances for expanding one's personality with new possibilities in any field: you can be wherever you want, with no limitations. Its ideology is a never-ending transformation. As Dan Rose noticed, it is "here and now that becomes a boundless transformation through its products of the repeatable movement of not only old goods, but also beliefs, traditions, values, the imagined autonomy of our cultural histories being supplanted by their market modernisations"<sup>13</sup>. Subsequent movements determine the purity of a product,

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<sup>12</sup> M. Douglas, I. Baron, *The World of Goods: towards an Anthropology of Consumption*, Harmondsworth 1980.

<sup>13</sup> D. Rose, *Quixote's Library and Pragmatic Discourse: toward understanding the culture of capitalism*, "Anthropology Quarterly", 1990, vol. 63, no. 4, p. 158.

as well as its glamorous newness. The act of moving is the condition for the reality of what is. A yesterday's thing – whether a value or a good – appears as a novelty. Hunting – according to the example provided by Dan Rose – is presented as a sport to those people who want to disconnect for a while from the tiresome world of business and everyday life, precisely in order to feel like a landowning gentleman if only for a moment. Cross-nationalisation, just like the cross-bordering of cultural roles and practices in any field, belong to the model of culture. The cross-nationalisation of religion covers relocations of beliefs, rituals and religious practices across any borders, whether political or geographical, actual or symbolic, in actual and symbolic space, using new means of imagination and narrative identities. This process applies especially to the great religions of the world and it is also the condition for their liveliness, both as great formations and traditions of culture and as their particular, sometimes autonomising, constituents – literature, art, fashion, narrow-range practices in the field of health, forms of recreation, tourism, science, etc. The movement of religions through the relocation of their particular forms and elements of symbolic culture also encompasses local religions, neo-traditionalist movements and cults that are particularly connected to a given territory. These phenomena have already belonged to the tradition of globalisation and creolisation trends observable in secularised territories, as well as to missionary techniques which have been known and effectively proven since the time of the expansion of the Jesuits, both in South America and in Asia (especially in China). The crucial element of this process is the movement of things and the very notion of reality. Reality belongs to the process of becoming of what is formed and reformed in a certain campaign. The question about reality is an issue of its formation and consumption: formation and boundless consumption is a re-creation of the world of things and a continual production of its physical and symbolic use. Reality and imagination do not maintain, as Anderson asserts, their precedence in the order of the construction of social structure, which would provide a differentiation between the actual possibilities of a community and its illusions. In the dominant forms of capitalism as culture, reality as such becomes the product of it. Its meanings and the way in which it is expressed only partially and more frailly belong to the power of tradition. What is expressed, formed and ordered by the word, meaning and norm is a voice that has been chosen in an apparently free manner, a virtual object rather than the voice of the community, its norms, its narrations, and its aspirations. Things as the objects of consumption and production have privileged cathexes, which means that they attract or repel, create environments of change and are their machines. They speak. Who or what gives them the right to speak? It is the continuous circulation of goods, of commodities. It replaces the rights of the community, its local policy, up to the level of decisions on the issues of utmost importance for the community, such as the reconstruction of bonds, including family bonds. Inasmuch as tradition knows the requirements and laws of incorporating and excluding persons from the circles of kinship and it is some paternal authority that actualises them, the society of the mass does not know the law of the one who should inaugurate these bonds – a woman, a man. As Mary Douglas notes, tradition lets the

father speak instead of the bridal couple on this issue. The legitimisation of the right to speak for the circulation of goods constitutes their power of expression and expressing bonds that are initially intended only to be expressed, in order to be ultimately created. The mass produces the reification of interpersonal and social relations on all scales, from emotional spontaneity to institutions, organisation, cultures and collective orders. The availability of things as carriers of social relation expresses an illusory freedom of manipulating the outer world, while it holds their consumers captive. The availability of cars for young people, as well as their right to discretion on the issues of the regulation of intimate acts, have moved from the status of fathers to the status of daughters, from the status of a community to the status of an individual who exposes himself as an object in the world of its circulation, in order to present himself expediently and hire himself. Social bonds as the territories of interchange and the hire of individuals are a simple historical trend and they are not limited by any propaganda of freedom of the individual or human rights. The more an individual attempts to establish their individual value and individualise their existence, the more their existence becomes reified, repeatable and powerless. Objects, including their virtuality and the very virtual world, connect people to a greater extent than they do it themselves. If objects that function as bonds replace the local policy of a community and oust it through their cathexes, the power of their virtuality transfers onto interpersonal bonds, eliminating borders and the communities' rights to control them. The largest consumers of the mass – war, illness and famine – continue their workings regardless of the advancements of the consumption of wealth, public health or liberalised forms of discretion in the construction of social bonds. Mass destruction and activities undertaken on the mass scale, such as erstwhile socio-cultural plagues as the likes of the mass masochism of medieval flagellants, the mass hysteria about St. Vitus dance, totally analogous to the most recent historical events of the latest wars, the newest illnesses and occurrences of famine, produce anonymity as the rule of culture and make discretion an invalidation of the voice of the community. The secret of the mass consists in the number. The secret of the mass consists in the pace at which it is multiplied, in the pulsating rhythm of accentuating it, in the common choral manner of expressing and naming it. The word choir comes from the Greek *khoreia*, which also means slander, or calumny. Therefore, what is the choir as a figure of the community, if its sociocultural function in the society of the mass conceals radical criticism of it? J. F. Lyotard in his work *The Postmodern Condition*<sup>14</sup> points out a certain property of it: “just as measure gets the upper hand of accent in the production of sounds (except for speech), the rhythmisation of time is to support our memory in order to become immortal drumming, which protects numbered life in the lack of significant separation of time, in order to intend it to be ground”. According to Lyotard, there is a concurrence between this hidden function of every “narrative knowledge” and the functions of the criteria for the forming and unification of the fields of competence and the social rules of regulation.

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<sup>14</sup> I.-F. Lyotard, *Kondycja ponowoczesna*, Warszawa 1997, p. 22.

This is precisely what a religious community opposes, restoring the objectivity of a method that grants chances for regaining the truth about the society in liturgical religiosity through a radicalisation of the experience of *sacrum*. Radicalisation is a cognitive madness which knows how to use this method. It confirms that the condition for access to a religious goal in its message of a social goal is the discursivity of a religious act, which expresses itself literally in liturgy. Existence in the liturgical manner has been established in the social factuality of the being of an individual, a peculiar right to factuality in the social community. Of course, it becomes active in a continuous stress of the highest rank – for it is the Christian liturgy and the discourse about the Cross that are at stake. This discourse does not accommodate the suspension of the presence of the community; to the contrary, it involves its conciliatory presence through the liturgical act. Liturgy is a gesture and knowledge, a continuous copy of itself as a method of re-creating the community against pressure from the mass. Its motive is determining the topic of the transformations of the social anonymity of the mass into the authenticity of the expression of the community, a suspension of the rules of the mass, which are always ready for reifying action, and setting them off against the renewing momentum of the community in spite of the repeatability of the gesture. The inner mimetic movement of the liturgical gesture, for it imitates itself in signifiedly disciplined series, is not born into a structure of reification. The source of this ability is the creational potential of the symbol of every liturgical gesture. It justifies itself by a peculiar, actualising symbolic potential of the discourse of sign and word, a symbol that is regaining here and now the power it is after. Actual being in the community is a scene for the liturgical gesture. The madman of God is the figure of the liturgical scene.

If the madness of the madman of God communicates a peculiar opposition to the rights pertaining to the community in the element of liturgy and if it is precisely its element that it contradicts, it uses a certain regularity of the Simmelian differentiation between faith and religion as a differentiation between the factors of changeability, spirit and element and the factors of structure, routine and reification. Its argument is the sense of the last word, thinking in terms of the source meanings of religious promise, and belonging to the craving for a non-mediated relation with God. It sides with the element, change and spirit. However, it is satisfied by every sign of temporary being in opposition to the speculative theology that preaches some other presence of God than the one after the announced Second Coming, to the reputedly unfulfilled knowledge of Easter. At the same time, it does not even attempt to locate all eschatological meanings, which it accustoms in its liturgical acts, in the presence of the factuality it experiences. The madman of God, that man of grace, an antithesis of a sage of theological knowledge, a man of religion, precisely because he continuously wishes to experience final states, so to speak, or angelic states, more than anyone else, undertakes to subtly anticipate them, which intensifies his critical appetite towards those who have already been seeing their personified forms. Therefore, he notices the actuality of the socially communal norm, which pedagogically announces the need for translating the craving for eschatological states and contact with

God into excessive conduct. Thus, the liturgical knowledge he experiences allows him to recognise the powerlessness of the paradox of the theological sage, who would demonstrate the ultimate Transfiguration in the temporariness of his knowledge. Such a sage remains deaf to the criticism pursued by the man of grace and is also not particularly immune against the threats of his own wisdom. Hence the criticism pursued by the man of grace acts in those works which remain unknown to his protests. It appears in the moments when he becomes aware of this, when the consciousness of the man of religion starts learning from it.

### **Conclusions: how is it possible to pursue liturgical criticism of one's own notions?**

Inasmuch as philosophy is a science about the beginning of things, religion is a science about their end. The coming of time, the fulfilment of time – this is the formula of the liturgical status of knowledge, or, to put it in more precise terms, of knowledge based on notions. Seen from Hegel's point of view, the access to notions means the end of cognition. Knowledge is cumulative and evolutionary by nature. The mind participates in the continual dialectics of the very reason, where a thesis meets its antithesis. Their meeting opens up a new synthesis, from which a new thesis emerges in turn. If it is a process of understanding, its psychology requires the representation of the world, which constitutes its consciousness of the notions that encompass its organisational rules and the truth of these representations, to undertake a certain movement. Representations are intuitions of the world to become thoughts, i.e. notions. The maturity of a man and of the process of rational understanding requires an ability to conceptualise, i.e. the very reason, which is given in a certain experience of the world just as it is given in its representations. This can be observed in Hegel's writings. According to such an interpretation, the man of grace, the madman of God, requires to be transformed into knowledge. Is it really necessary if the idea of the immediacy of cognition in the religious homage paid to God, i.e. liturgy, is to maintain any of its value, some justification, social non-falsification in the violence of norms which it has to be subject to, the pertinacity of a knowledge which always locates its notions within the limited field of religion, giving away the control of it and satisfaction to the institutional apparatus? Knowledge in a given field of religion not only judges and condemns any ambiguities of the immediate *Gefühl*, cognition through the spontaneity of sensation, through becoming accustomed to the cathexes of *sacrum*, its self-revelatory, epiphanical message. Notional knowledge limits the appearance of the meanings of religious representations to what is unthinkable, to what is as the last word indefinable, beyond comprehension. Hegel simply knows that a notion is something more than a mere constituent of the relation between man and the Absolute. The experience of thought is typical of not only that existence that has reconciled itself to its fate.

When the being of a man pays appropriate homage to the Absolute in liturgy, when it unveils in religious representations, then it relates to the notions that define it just as it relates to the norms that set a certain norm for all experience, according to which no accident can constitute a norm that would not be already determined by another norm. Thus, the notions determine the *sacrum*, the field of revelations, whereas the field of religion as understood by Bourdieu governs the rules of its movements and the abilities of its epiphanies<sup>15</sup>. In order to expropriate them, it is first required to make them the source of salvation. The liturgy as such – of course – rejects such a theory of itself. Liturgy is the voice of God Himself that gains independence. If it is a thought, then its content comes from a divine source. If liturgy takes place in a “stroke of cognition”, without which it is impossible to investigate what is actually the revelation of the *sacrum*, then one should accept Hegel’s argument that knowledge implies a certain privilege on this issue. Even then, however, the basic arguments of Hegelian eschatology are negated by its own logic because extra-empirical knowledge admits the existence of people, provided that it would be subject to interpretation, i.e. precisely a particular type of experience. The problem of the “stroke of cognition” is significant. Liturgy appears in the stroke of cognition. It appears as an issue that urges one to express it in words. Its main argument is *Summum cogitabile*, all of the most important things to be thought, the Person *par excellence*, who not only speaks, but also forces one to listen, or at least remain silent, during this speech. The *sacrum* makes one think and this making is a hint given to the thinking that the workings of “logos, the Word of God”, are responsible for misunderstanding Him, if it does not make one able to confront Him. Liturgy requires knowledge. Knowledge calls for liturgy. And it seems that this innocent guile of the logic of the subversion of experience with regard to its notion established the liturgical criticism of notional knowledge. In any case, this is the conclusion drawn by Jean-Yves Lacoste after reading Kierkegaard’s works. The sociologies of religion draw inspiration from philosophy and this remark, apart from its obviousness in its starting point, is conveniently acceptable. In the point of destination, in turn, it unveils the possibility of posing inconvenient questions: How does liturgical experience of diversified cultural schemes, if it insists on the rule of the ascetic moment of liturgical gesture, announce some truth about social life? Of course, there are repeatedly various solutions to this issue.

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<sup>15</sup> T. Roy, *Bourdieu on Religion*, London 2007; A. Wójtowicz, *Współczesna socjologia religii*, Tyczyn 2004, p. 30-32.