

Doctoral (PhD) Theses Book

MYTHOS CONTRA FACTUM

Hermeneutical Analysis of Postmodern Myth-weaving

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Objectives

In the last decades new religious phenomena have been appeared, spread and inculturated globally. We could realize mythical contrafacts worldwide, which elements could be joined, separated and rejoined with each other in new integrations almost totally free. These elements we call mythologems. In the postmodern condition constant and flexible mythologems compose belief systems, ideologies, and religions. The incredulity towards meta-narratives and so-called 'Grand Narratives' changed the role and popularity of traditional religions and science as well in the postmodern societies. This new condition serves the spreading of new religious and para-religious phenomena at the same time. In this new situation the inductive understanding of religion became relevant philosophical issue. So the general matter of our dissertation is the religion. Especially the phenomenon of religion as absolute mythology, as transcendent and transcendental human-relation, as existential narration. We research the contrafactive multiplication of this phenomenon in postmodern era. The aim of our dissertation is to philosophically understand and describe Escape-like, existential and social religious phenomena, what could become virtual as well. To fulfill this objective, we had to establish a new hermeneutical method, which could find and examine the 'religio a priori' in the human mind, and the various experiences of Holy. So we could understand the motives and actions of postmodern myth-creation. In the dissertation we define and describe the postmodern religious market as softmodern religious network, and we try to expose and describe the differences from classical market-situations. We can list and summarize these and aims of our dissertation as follows:

(α) One aim is to clearly determine the phenomenological definition of religion, based on research and interdisciplinary critic of earlier religion-theories.

(β) Other aim is the research of religion a priori, based on religious experiences. These experiences can be examined by analysis of religious narratives. We try to confirm that the religious noema is essentially transcendental, and accidentally transcendent. By semiotic analysis of discursive and mytho-logical aspects of religion we want to understand the religious noesis as well.

(γ) Other aim is the philosophical interpretation of narration-like essence of religion. So we had to establish a new hermeneutic method, called inprinting.

(δ) By using this method, we can determine the characteristics of softmodern culture. And we can describe the religious alienation by concept of „cyber” and „negation”. This necessary to understand the actions and motivations of postmodern myth-weaving.

(ε) In the synthetic part of dissertation, through the analysis of elements of religion’s phenomenological model, we try to establish a new, general system of philosophy of religion. In the frame of this system we want to examine the curious postmodern religiousness in wider, general context.

Methods

(1) Critical method-analysis: We critically examine the earlier theories about religion, and we establish our concept on the base of this philosophical critic. One lesson of this analysis is that we have to try to understand the essence of religion from religions itself, from the religious phenomena. So we can avoid to make an own, deductive mythical narration. The birth of science of religion could happen by emancipation from different mythical narratives. So we have to try to avoid to make an other. To avoid it, we dip our new philosophical notions in different philosophical language-games, to secure the disambiguation meaning and denote that our concepts are clear of metaphysics.

(2) Phenomenological epoche and describing: We can avoid the valuation and devaluation of religious phenomena by epoche, by suspension of judgments. The researcher as researcher have to use the method of epoche, because so possible to avoid to make disturbing ontological commintments, and to play a false role of ideologic neutrality. This is the exterior epoche. The interior phenomenological epoche is an other method, by which possible to find and pick up the original position of religious narratives. So possible to describe the inner meaning of religious phenomena without external preconceptions. So, if somebody could see an UFO on the sky, or an angel, these phenomena we will be able to examine on same way, inside narratives.

(3) Hermeneutic inprinting: The inprinting in the dissertation is a stable hermeneutic position and an empiric modus procendi at the same time. The inprinting guarantees that the examine won’t became the scene of expression of an own ideology, but will be the tool of knowing of

religious experiences. So the examination can discuss the situation of Sacred-being-in-the-world as it appears in mythic narratives, and as it acts in reality. For it we had to work out a concrete hermeneutic method, which could answer for the question of „How?“, and not just for the questions of „What?“ and „From?“. So the inprinting on the one hand makes examinable the religious experiences by narratives. On other hand can be view as a myth-analyzer method, what shows for the researcher, which transcendentologies and text-arranger units have to be „heard out“ from universe of mythic narratives. In this context the inprinting is the philosophy of „right hearing“.

(4) Empirical induction: The alloying of hermeneutic method and empiric investigations makes it possible to examine concrete religious phenomena, not just dead texts. This method differs from classic hermeneutic way. Wasn't enough for us to read in a chair, but we had to visit real religious communities. So we could reach inductive philosophical conclusions about understanding of religion, instead of using a deductive theory for make the essence of religion clear.

(5) Falsifiable abduction: As already the father of modern semiotic, Charles Sanders Peirce said, the conclusions can be inductive, deductive and abductive. The induction have to be complemented by abduction, because not possible to go for all religious community and ask all religious people. The scientism of abduction based on falsification; the conclusions have to be opened for criticism of experiences.

(6) Philosophical argumentation and synthesis: In the synthetic part of dissertation we try to establish a philosophical system about religion, by alloying of general philosophical theses about religions with strange, empiric, postmodern religious phenomena. The main method of this part of dissertation is the philosophical argumentation. Our opinion is that the postmodern religious phenomena should take into and discuss in a wider context, to reach a deeper knowing and understanding.

(7) Culture analysis: Based on the phenomenological model of religion, the religion could be described as human relation with the Holiness. But because the „man“ is a social being, the religion is a social phenomenon as well. In the course of culture analysis our aim is to discover and understand this context. So we could observed that the postmodern myth-weaving is a general human phenomenon and practice, the aftermath of postmodern condition and religiousness. And the softmodern religiousness is a special subcategory of it.

Results

(1) The main thesis and result of dissertation is the clarification and verification of transcendental essence and accidental transcendent characteristic of Holiness. In phenomenological base the definition of Holiness is the next: The Holiness is the noematic content of relation-like religious human conscience's sacred Absolutum-experience. Which conscience is casted into Profanity. This content's synthesis-maker, constitual part is the numinosum. From hermeneutic view the numinosum generates transcendental narratives, which forge into synthetic unity the religious human Subjectum in the context of Holiness. This context secure the integrity of religious human Subjectum. The transcendentologies usually appear in the narratives as sacred laws, which establish the Subjectum's cosmos-idea and sacrality-idea as well. This creates a correlative apperception of Sacred and Profanity.

(2) We worked out the concept of Softmodernity. If the Premodernity is the age of 'Grand Narratives', the Modernity is the unredeemed promise of science's absolute narration, and the Postmodernity is the tragic break of Grand Narratives, than the Softmodernity will be a strange human endeavouring to erase the emptiness of Existence. In our concept the new religions and para-religion phenomena are the symptoms of softmodernity, the way-search of atomic Subjectums. The lonely atomic Subjectum during this searching creates mythical narratives with limited validity, but these are alienated from the Subjectum. This alienation is the reason that postmodern narratives became „positive” and „sensous”. This alienated „positivism” and 'sensuousness' shows for the Subjectum, that narratives are still „in live” at all.

(3) By the narrative and descriptive analysis of postmodern Subjectum we could interpret the phenomenon of postmodern myth-weaving, *id est* the creation of poetic theologies by existential syntheses of mythologems. In our interpretation the reason of it is that the postmodern philosophy could properly describe just the end of Grand Narratives, but it doesn't mean the end of integrative human narrations. These transcendentologies secure the undividedness of human individuals. A human's inner, psychic phenomena can be aggregated into human individuum just in context of synthetic 'life story' and other narrations. The religious context is named by Loszev as absolute mythology, by Rudolf Otto as capability for divination, by Máté-Tóth András as *sensus numinis*, by Don Cupitt as transcendental programming. The human being usually cleaves for this integrity, or least for the illusion of it, so tries to preserve

it. When he is not sure about the subsistence of this integrity, he begins to snatch after any narration-fragment as a drowning man, to rescue his integrity, to beplasting his existential holes, to reborn his feeling of safeness. Sometimes it is effectual, sometimes not. As declines his integrity, so increasing the demand for mythic emplastrums, mythologems. These emplastrums are collected by the Subjectum, because just he knows the holes and sores of his own integrity. So became important not just the forms and measures of these mythic emplastrums, but the method of agglutination too. Because the postmodern individual knows about his emplastrum-like integrity, the alienation from himself is almost avoidless. This is the main difference between emplastrum-based mythologies and classical religions (alias absolute mythologies) in our interpretation.

(4) In the dissertation we debate the phenomenological conception and definition of religion. According to it the religion is a dynamic human relation with the external reality of Holiness. Based on this concept we could create a criterion for religions, which is able to divide off religious and para-religious phenomena. The main difference between them is that the religion is able to work out the substantial self-establishment (alias self-constitution) of Subjectum in a narrative context. The para-religions are or not able to work out self-establishment at all, or if yes, this establishment is not substantial, just sensuous, *id est* sensational. This non-substantial establishment is usually based on non-absolute myth-emplastrums. As can be seen, this criterium is Subjectum-oriented and Subjectum-dependent, and not based on the narration's metaphysical content, but based on believing relation. In the result we can say that the transcendental Subjectum-criterion is our religion criterion. We could describe the essence of relation for Holiness as strong, experienced, emotive relation, which establish the safeness of religious cosmos for believer. In conclusion those narratives, which able to establish the world-idea and Subjectum-constitution inside this world (or cosmos) by strong, emotive relation, can be named religions.

(5) After the fashion of / difference of / pattern of serious music and light/popular music, we inducted the terms of serious religions and light religions. In this dichotomy the light religions are not un-serious and desipient, maximum over-earnest; and the serious religions are not heavy, maximum stodgy. In this case over-earnesting means excessive activity, which seems a tool for self-proving. This characteristic reveals itself by overcomplicated inner language and organization, by shtick denominations, and by too complex communal events. So these communities became insider and sensuous. Who wants to attach, that have to learn, to accept

and to be able to shape this inorganization. Requisite of it is the permanent novelty, a permanent feeling of *mysterium fascinans*. We've detected that the communal life and the sacred acts are overlapped each other in softmodern communities. The praying as classic method for making discursive contact with the Holiness usually disappears or becomes very weak and accidental. The tradition in this softmodern, light religions became matter of research and novelty, what have to discover. The tradition is no more stable base at all. These religions's narrations so give account of the insecurity of sacred fundamentals. The softmodern churches usually have the sense of unapprehendedness. They usually alienated from his own religions, became curious, free-time-central, opened and easy-digestible.

On the other side of the partition in the serious religions the tradition is the stable base, the narration is more static, and all novelty are disturber. The musical parallelism can be broaden. The light music easily reach mass of people and became attractive. The serious music contrarily much more gives meaty recreation for a smaller group of people. And of course all light music simply can be transformed into world music. But nowadays the serious music hits usually spread in lightsome variations as well. In the case of religious narratives the situation is similar. The narrations of light religions are popular and folksy. The serious religions would like to be popular too, but they have to decide to involving into a market-race, or not. And this market situation is not clear market situation, as we've denoted yet... Have to be understood, that our serious-light discription want to be descriptive, and not evaluative. It should be used regard of it.

(6) We've introduced in our descriptive analysis of religions the category of sacred laws, to denote the substantial, constitutive, ergo transcendental aspect of *numinosum*. The sacred laws can be ethical, cosmological, etc. But the constitutive act always can be observed. This transcendentalism's essence is rather an emotive relation, and not a simple, rational metaphysical construction. The sacred laws can be interpreted as complementation of Eliade's sacred categories, because in this laws the believers could experience the Holiness. In this context can be understood our earlier statement, that the essence of Holiness is transcendental and not transcendent. Not every believers of traditional churches have some explicit transcendent experience, but the religiousness of them is not arguable. The experience of Holiness in the common days possible for most believer, and they not need to wait for transcendent God-appearance to have this special religious experience. What is more to wait for it in a rational way is usually fruitless, as the believers say. The real experience of

Holiness is usually happens in common days, by the observation of providence, and by similar phenomena.

(7) We have described the changing of object of religion, the changing of Holiness in religious narratives. The positions and roles of religious Subjectum and Holiness seem to became turned. The Subjectum, who traditionally voluntarily subject himself under Holiness, nowadays in softmodern religions rather try to rule the Holiness, by permanent formation of Holiness's fundamentals. So the softmodern religious Subjectum flowingly change the object of his religious relation, and thus his religious experience is changing too. The Subjectum not correlated to a constant Holiness, which has steady tradition, and not seed the Profanity and his own existency with structures of Holiness, but rather the wayward and chancy attributes of Profanity can be read out from Subjectum's religious narratives about Holiness. So not the Subjectum mirroring contrary Holiness, but the softmodern Subjectum tries to reduce the Holiness to himself. In this relation the ethical evangels insensibly disappear. In our interpretation this strange upside-down situation is one characteristic of postmodern religious alienation, which we call „negation”. (The negation is the opposition of hegelien religious positivism.)

(8) In the dissertation we've discussed and analyzed deeply the postmodern religious alienation in the context of changed relation of Sacred and Profanity. If we consider the Profane and Sacred as two adversary angle and approach to things, than the essence of religious alienation will be so describable, that in postmodern era the permanent changing of these angles inside one Subjectum became possible. The believer sometimes construe and interpret the things according to religious messages, sometimes not. Sometimes acts according to it, sometimes not. This phenomen is not about different conceptions of Holiness. It is about consideration or condemnation (un-consideration) of Holiness. This is a special attribution of postmodern religious alienation. The alienation means the contradiction of essence and real existence. The essence of religion in phenomenological base can be defined as the normative and constituent safeness of situation of Sacred-being-in-the-world. If the believer can't experience it and can't project oneself into it, this can be called alienation. The postmodern alienation could be explained as consequence of opposition of modern scientism and religious messages. But the vanishing of subjectums's safeness is general symptomatic of postmodern era, not just the characteristic of members of softmodern churches.

(9) As extreme consequence of postmodern alienation we've exposed and analyzed the phenomenon of „turned Subcreationism”, which act could create the religion of virtuality, and created the „cyberism” of Holiness. The cyber is a new mood of Holiness in our interpretation. In Subcreative beliefs the believer re-records and applies elements of a virtual narration – eg. a fable, a piece of fantasy literature etc. – to everyday interpretation of „real” world's phenomena. This light, fluid world-creation is the fruit of postmodern era. This era is transitional, and not opened for the past, but much more opened for the future. The postmodern subjectum gravitates to prophecies, because the natural divination had been assassinated from him by technological constructions, by the vanishing of Grand Narrations. This subjectum is ready and able to compensate his sign-absence from the virtual cyber space to make new denotations and connotations, to build up from patterns of virtuality his own empirical field. This turned Subcreationism facilitates the fulfilment of his own dark prophecies. The normal, literary Subcreation can be understood in the context of Tolkien's Escape, but the turned subcreationism also has additional extrem characteristics.

(10) We've described the flexible dogmatism, what secure the unfalsification of religious narrations. This classical flexibility serves the guardianship of sacred fundamentals. So the profan arguments can't affect and break the fundamentals of a religion. But in softmodern religions this flexible dogmatism turns into flexibility of fundamentals. In this situation the provisional changings became permanent, and the changes not serve the guardianship of sacred fundamentals, but the fundamentals are cheerfully ready to change too. The softmodern religious fundamentals and transcendentologies are already seem to be flexible. It has least tree results. First of all any criticism against softmodern narrations are even more impossible, because any elements can be integrated easily into poetical theologies (including elements of different disciplines of science). Other result that the Holiness, *id est* the core of narration became simply figurable too. The third result is that the chance of religious alienation became greater.

(11) At the end of our dissertation we defined and described one human form of consciousness, the religion a priori. In our interpretation the religio a priori is the „necessary postulation” itself, considered as a form of human consciousness. By necessary postulations the subjectum, who is relative and contingent, correlate to something absolute. In this absolute he is mirrored, and able to consider himself as a synthetic undividedness. The Subjectum so becomes able to transcend himself from world, and stride out from world's homogeneity, so

create himself and his correlation to world. So the human being became member (citizen) of two worlds. One world is his own, the other is the world of objects. By the earlier he becomes synthetic unit, by the other he becomes operative, active existentia. The characteristic of this form of human consciousness is the ability to making syntheses at all. But the necessary postulation can be observed not just in religious subjectums, but it seems to be a general human form of consciousness. To show is, we've analyzed the phenomenon of conscience too. In the religions the human being becomes the citizen of not two, but three world. The third world is the sphere of Holiness. This generates the context of triple transcendentologies of Human, World and Holiness.

Relevant publications

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