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On the Borderline of the Scripture.

On the Perspective and Method of New Biblical Hermeneutics in Connection with Cultural Anthropology and Art.

Summary

The presented work examines concrete cultural texts from the viewpoint of their associations with the Scripture as well as other texts inspired by the latter, in particular ancient liturgy. We propose a series of concrete confirmations for a thesis on culture “on the borderline of the Writ” in accordance with the one shown by Northrop Frye (*The Great Code*), as well as the work of Polish cultural anthropologists on the cultural apocryphon, and studies of intertextuality. At the same time, we attempt to illustrate the thesis formulated by Roland Barthes, namely, that the “border-experience” is the feature of each significant cultural “text”. The proposed method is based on four known pillars: (1) *sacrum (numinosum)*, (2) the symbol, (3) “existence” as hermeneutics, and (4) the text. In order to express itself in such a “system” reality, the world must be - as a “Text” - drawn into the hermeneutic process. The text is always some interpretation of something, but it is an self-interpretation. It does not, however, emerge “in an empty place”, but interprets the cultural topos that as an “interpretation” reflects an earlier text (not in the chronological meaning but in a genetic one), which formed that topos in a causal/etiological manner. In addition, we notice the occurrence of *sui generis* textual “cascades”, “texts within texts” (an expression coined by Y. Lotman) installed into the text. This special “cascade” form can occur *explicite* as a symptom of intertextuality. Nonetheless, it is often sufficiently *implicite* to transcend the intention not solely of the “author” but even of the text. Then it is the creator of the text, hermeneutically legible, and becomes the text itself. We come across an inspirational example in works by Yerushalmi, subsequently developed in the Derridean conception of the “archive”.

Within the range of the Bible we analyse from this viewpoint unsolvable “borderline” dramas in myths of the Expulsion from Paradise, the Flood, and, in particular, Abraham and Job. We demonstrate how the text itself intentionally reveals the integrating impact of the scandal of suffering upon the Person of God. We present and call the conception as “ascending revelation”, which we regard as hermeneutically invigorating for numerous fundamental myths. In addition, within the myth this phenomenon proves to be a surprising effect and an

antidotum for the provocative hermeneutics in Satan's narrative, as *dramatis persona* and moralist. Seeking the topos of Job, an almost *incognito* protagonist, we indicated premises of the fact that the Book of Job can bring a complementary revelation about suffering, borrowed from the initiation in the Desert topos and parallel (also in the historical aspect) to the Law of Moses. Such an interpretation is indirectly confirmed by analysed in this study the ancient Syrian (Aramaic), and the Talmud.

We indicate a particular feature of the hermeneutic intention of many Biblical texts: due to their self-interpretation they appear to transgress the text onto its hermeneutical "borderline". In doing so we proposed pertinent examples: in the narration about Abraham we discover the ethos of a Syrian immigrant who constructs a homeland by "progressive" means, even within the framework of contemporary secular standards. The religious idea of the Covenant on "Earth" proves to be the outcome of the stand assumed by the Patriarch and not a premise for national theocracy. The second example is that of a certain woman, deeply concealed in the Gospel, but sending powerful signals. We indicate anew the text intention, namely, that Miriam of Magdala is Miriam of Bethany (the sister of Lazarus and Martha) and thus that the St. Luke scene about the sinner woman (who "loved much") also pertains to Magdalene. We argue that this frequently contested view grows stronger upon the basis of discovering "extra-textual" intentions, intensely "translucent" (the term introduced by J. Lotman) in the "hair" and "tears" motifs.

Within the outward impact exerted by the Scripture upon cultural texts we discover inspirations worthy of the name of "revelation", hermeneutically autonomous *vis a vis* the author's awareness as well as beyond rational connections with such Scripture characters and phenomena as Jesus, Magdalene, the Resurrection, and the "end of ages". Our constant task involves indicating also mutual convergences of cultural texts and little-known liturgical texts (i.e. archaic literary texts), connections that cannot be derived historically or genetically - in this sense they are "revealed" to the text. We show, by way of example, the concurrence of the epiphanies of Jesus described by Rimbaud in *Une Saison en Enfer* (A Season in Hell) and by Blok in *Dvenádtset* (The Twelve), as well as the convergence of a Byzantine Easter hymn and *Une Charogne* (The Cadaver) by Baudelaire. Further, we indicate how conclusions, profoundly apt and enlightening for theology, result from the works of the above-mentioned authors as well as Tadeusz Różewicz or Zanussi's *Imperatyw* (Imperativ). In doing so we recognise the *oeuvre* of Kieślowski (*Dekalog*/The Decalogue/Ten Commandments, *Podwójne życie Weroniki*/The Double Life of Veronique/) to be a special medium, whose text is capable

of receiving and emitting such inspirations. Similarly, we study the convergence of literary and Scriptural-liturgical motifs in eschatological intuitions, in particular the series of "legends" about the rejection of Christ in the finale of civilisation.

Special reflection is dedicated to the role played in theology and culture by the phenomenon of the symbol as interpreted by Mircea Eliade, i.e. as a radical differentiation between symbol and sign. We indicate the divergence from Eliade in the writings of Paul Ricoeur and the essential concurrence of the semiotics of Yuri Lotman and Eliade. Moreover, we propose theses in favour of a new, distinct from the symbol, interpretation category for texts: "absent presence" "next to" the text, described by the anthropologist Wiesław Szpilka as the "next to world".

We show how mysteries and, in particular, the ritual are the key and, at the same time, vanishing phenomenon of culture and religion. Upon examples of Eastern Orthodox tradition and the theatrical experience of the "Gardzienice" Centre we encapsulated the non-feasibility of the source-like and indispensable concurrence of the topos of both liturgy and the theatre.

The last domain of explorations is the mystery of corporeality, both in the aspect of the hermeneutic "muteness" of the physical body (*sarx*) in the domain of rational hermeneutics and the existential drama (frailty and death). The problem of the body is also indicated in the light of the phenomenon of the icon, today brimming with misunderstandings. Upon the basis of proposed analyses we infer the impossibility of conciliating indicated cultural phenomena with the hermeneutic diagnosis of reality offered by Plato. That which Platonism "rejected" - material things and phenomena - became the "rejected cornerstone" crucial for semiotics, as an interpretation puzzle of the text as such. We then become closer to the fundamental puzzle: the relation of text and reality.

Finally, we pose questions about the anthropological status of beauty and love conceived as the topos of all art. We notice, contrary to Platonism, the irremovable union of evil and this topos, and propose a hermeneutic thesis, namely, that love and beauty originate from "before the Fall".

Against the backdrop of contemporary Bible studies we acknowledge the factual union of contemporary hermeneutics and Biblical exegesis.