

SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

Wojciech J. Burszta, ETHNOLOGY TODAY OR THE POWER OF THE PERIPHERIES

The traditional reflection about world anthropological thought contains a dichotomy into the so-called international anthropology and its local (national) variants. This dichotomy is the expression of another, basic opposition which organizes scientific deliberations about the world of culture and science. It is the relation between the „centre” (the metropolis) and the „peripheries” (the province). According to this opposition, the further we find ourselves from the range of the influence exerted by the centre, the more we are doomed to peripheral interests and local topics.

The intention of the article is the deconstruction of this traditional opposition by indicating its purely linguistic-conventional nature. There is simply no centre (source) of culture or central places for the pursuit of anthropology. Anthropological investigations are simultaneously central (because they pertain to Man as such) and peripheral (since they discuss Man upon the basis of an analysis of concrete cultures). The special place held by this science among the other humanities consists i.a. of the fact that for an anthropologist the peripheries do not signify the end of anything but a further prolongation of the centre.

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, HENRI CORBIN — THE TIME OF ERANOS

The hermeneutics of Henri Corbin, an outstanding French Oriental scholar and examiner of the spirituality of Mediterranean cultures, remains almost completely unknown to the Polish reader. This text places it within the perspective of a controversy between historicism and post-Heideggerian hermeneutics which constitutes one of the most important philosophical contentions of our times. Corbin's hermeneutics of Persons accents the supra-empirical dimension of history, which, despite its reality, is a myth from beginning to end, and pursued the thoughts proposed by F. Lessing who comprehends history as the „endowment of meaning to that which in itself is meaningless”. Meaning appears in history owing to the presence of the understanding man. Retaining its originally religious mood, Corbin's hermeneutics engages in an interesting dialogue with the theses of contemporary postmodernists. Its premise, however, presents itself most lucidly in the context of the undertakings conducted by a group which for several decades has created the atmosphere of the Eranos meetings. Their participants (including such celebrated scholars as C.C. Jung, van der Leeuw, G. Scholem and M. Eliade) shared a special mode of thinking about religion and a sui generis perception of the symbol, closely connected with the nonreductionist comprehension of time and history. A sample of this style of thinking is the presented text by Henri Corbin devoted to an analysis of the motif of the luminous man, and the idea of perfect Nature, which comes from his „L' Homme de Lumière”.

Ewa Klekot, THE DEPICTION OF THE FACE OF CHRIST IN CARPATHIAN ICONS

The image of the face of the Saviour holds a special place in the Orthodox theology of the icon. A painting is regarded as an icon both due to the topic of the depiction and the wondrous circumstances of its origin. Catholic art also willingly portrayed the face of Jesus but the two rites placed emphasis on varying kinds of theological and emotional contents of the depiction which resulted both in iconographic differences and in a divergent manner of expression. Uniate art from the Eastern Carpathians, the sub-Carpathian region and Podolia emerged at the

meeting point of two trends of Christianity in specific social and national conditions which characterized the so-called eastern territories of the former Commonwealth. The borderland of religious, national and social traditions enables to examine closer the selection of style, form, means and contents of an art which belongs to various cultural spheres and subsequently their merging into a whole which differs qualitatively from that what comprised its source, and which is known as the Carpathian icon.

Magdalena Zowczak, WHY DOES THE GYPSY STEAL? REASONS FOR POPULATION DIFFERENTIATION ACCORDING TO THE FOLK BIBLE

Legends created by the folk counterpart of the Bible describe typical situations usually connected interchangeably with various figures and events in the two Testaments. This feature is the outcome of an unconscious typology of persons from the point of view of their analogous roles in events with a similar structure. An original typology of this kind does not permit a direct comparison of the folk Bible with the Holy Scriptures.

A characteristic feature of folk sources (both in the past and today) is the interchangeability of Adam and Noah as the first man, and the contamination of the ensuing motifs. The history of Noah's sin is a transformation of the story about original sin and the roles of Eve, Noah's wife and the devil are in both instance analogous, similarly to the roles of their children in the process of the differentiation between men and women. Cain and Cham also appear as the protoplasts of a variously concretised worse part of mankind, affiliated with the evil spirit.

The stereotype of the alien is strongly connected with the folk Bible. The concept of sin does not pertain directly to the stranger who exists in an „upside down” world, outside the recognised order of values. The myth perceives his origin in a situation of the original differentiation of mankind which took place as the outcome of a disturbance of harmony by one of the successors of the protoplast. This disturbance forms the concept of sin leading to a metamorphosis, the emergence of a worse or handicapped species of beings. Sources which mention differentiating sin always contain the scheme of concealment, which is interpreted as an attempt at deceiving God, or its reversal: of disclosure, the revelation of a mystery which is sealed with divine prohibition. Concealment appears i.a. in the most popular motifs which characterize the customs of Jews and Gypsies.

A curious interpretation of the legend about the Gypsy is presented by modern material from Lithuania and the Lemko region, which claims that the theft (concealment) of a nail made it impossible to crucify Christ in a humiliating position, similarly as in the case of the S. Andrew cross, the crux decussata; thus, the Gypsy can steal and cheat without fearing divine punishment. This interpretation testifies to a more ambivalent treatment of Gypsies than Jews in traditional rural culture.

The consequence of the situation connected with differentiating sin is the transformation of originally similar creatures into an animal, a bird or a person who belongs to a worse category, half-animal or demonic, in other words — into an alien.

Krystyna Gieryszewska, THE INTERPRETATION OF JUDAS

The traditional culture regards Judas as the initiator of generations of persons who commit suicide. Places and objects connected with people who hang themselves are to possess a power which is particularly perilous but also indispensable during the winter-spring solstice, and thus during Holy Week. In south-eastern Poland Holy Thursday is an occasion for hanging

an effigy of Judas. The function of this rite is to ward off death and evil, and to stimulate growth (the sexual symbolics of the effigy). Religious motifs, ritual practices and the appearance of the figure also indicate persons whom the community regards as traitors. They include all those who do not observe the values and norms that are binding among „our own“, that is, those who are described as a „Jew“ (the alien), the young girl who refuses to marry, the mentally deranged, and the suicide victims. Respondents compared Judas with St. Peter — both are traitors, ambiguous and medial figures, although St. Peter guards the heavenly gates and Judas atones for his sins in Hell. Satan captures the soul of Judas instead of the spirit of Jesus for which he lay in wait on the cross. The fatalism of the lot of the Iscariot was expressed by his rank as the thirteenth apostle.

Krzysztof Kocjan, FOLK EVALUATION OF SEXUALITY. APOCRYPHAL MOTIFS IN THE FOLK VERSION OF THE STORY OF ADAM AND EVE

The story of Adam and Eve is one of the most popular motifs of „folk Christianity“ presented in two forms: oral and in various depictions. Despite the basic concurrence of the folk and Biblical versions attention is attracted by the rather numerous apocryphal motifs. The creation of Eve which is the outcome of the intervention of the devil, or the product of an accident, is connected with the origin of sexual differentiation. In turn, sources dealing with the original sin disclose its sexual nature: sexual intercourse between Adam (eventually the devil or Lucifer) and Eve. The apocryphal motifs create a rather cohesive system, reveal the permanence of the sexual element in folk consciousness, and explain the present-day human condition as the consequences of an accident or alien (demonic) intervention, completely independent of man who thus remains blameless.

Agata Wieczorek, THE COMIC ASPECTS OF ST. PETER

The comical aspects of St. Peter consist of the combination and contrast of the sacrum and the mundane in a single person. In a series of stories about the wandering of the Lord Jesus on Earth, St. Peter discloses his faults and a total lack of understanding of the Lord's verdicts. Other sources depict the saint as a bumbler (for instance, when he wishes to win people's favour or when he substitutes for God in ruling the world). In the folk tales, St. Peter is not only a slightly foolish and ineffectual egoist but also a dishonest coward. The fact that in certain sources he appears interchangeably with the devil is particularly worthy of attention.

Stanisław Węglarz, THE CONCEPTION OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC DIFFERENTIATION OF PRESENT-DAY FOLK CULTURE

Interest in the ethnographic regionalization of the country dates back to the nineteenth century (O. Kolberg, W. Pol), and continues to this day. At its basis lies the conviction that it is possible to distinguish certain units in the form of regions (ethnographic groups) which are characterized by a constant, typical complex of features. It was also presumed that these quests will enable to discover a „complex of Polish culture“, in other words, an ensemble of traits characteristic only for that national variety. This assumption was supported by the belief about its native qualities. One can list three approaches to regionalization: „objectivistic“ (the exploitation of objective determinants such as costume), „intersubjectivistic“ (which accents the „feeling of distinctness in group consciousness“ as the foundation for distinction) and the „integralistic“ approach which combines the two previous ones. The author indicates that the constant exploitation of endoethnonyms (groups' names), exoethnonyms (names given to groups by scholars). The author notes that at the basis of reflections about peasant culture, ethnographic groups and regions there lay an unconscious supposition according to which peasant groups lived in isolation, without a constant exchange and permeation of neighbouring cultures. This image demonstrates that both the peasants and their culture were treated as alien and as such were mythologized.

Iwona Kabzińska-Stawarz, THE DANCE AROUND TREES IN THE „SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS“

The article presents an analysis of a fragment of a chronicle known as *The Secret History of the Mongols*. It describes the election of Kutula to the throne of the Khan, and the dance around a tree which was performed in connection with this event. The author demonstrates that the dance was not solely the outcome of the joyful mood of the attending Mongols, as the Chronicle claims. In the given context of the election, it constitutes a symbol of life and changes, as well as the establishment of a new historical, social and symbolic order, if we accept that the elections were an example of initiation, accompanied by ascribed symbolics. The dance also fulfilled magical functions. It was supposed to ensure Kutula the assistance and protection of the forefathers (mythical and human). Finally, the dance was also a means of communication between people, and between man and the forces of Nature which rule over him. A key role is played by trees standing in the centre of the dance area which are counterparts of the cosmic tree (the tree of life).



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