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THE IMAGERY OF MIRACLES ON CATACOMB WALL PAINTINGS OF EARLY CHRISTIANS IN ROME

...As for early Christian art within their material culture, the first artistic expressions date back to the mentioned period of the 2nd century AD, when Christians, in parallel with their growing influence, gained control over their own property. Around the year 200, we encounter Christian pictorial language, murals and ceilings in Roman-Christian catacombs. Catacomb art is thus direct (in some cases partial) material evidence.

This evidence is, in some cases, also based on written testimonies [1, p. 109-111]. Such evidence of Christian art and written testimony can be found in the famous passage in Paedagogus/Logos Paidagogos by Clement of Alexandria (cca. 150-215 AD) with reference to symbols [2]. Clement explains here and advises Christians to use rings with engraved specific images, such as a dove, a fish boat, an anchor, etc. because he considers these symbols to be Christian. He writes that Christian "seals are a dove, a fish, a ship or an

anchor - not a sword or a bow, because Christians seek peace, and also not a cup for drinking because they must remain sober" [3, p. 18-19].

It is thus clear that the catacomb frescoes served as a means of spreading religious meanings. No one can say with absolute certainty the exact expression and evaluation of the iconography of the individual frescoes, and according to Finney, this would likely even be impossible [1, p. 184-185]. Therefore, if we base our research on the presupposition that Christian iconography originated from paganism, and thus paganism plays an important role in shaping Christian iconography, we must also work with the fact that catacomb art is a reference to Christianity and primarily refers to the context of the Christian faith. It is therefore difficult to determine the exact meaning of the frescoes of the iconographic art of the catacombs. In addition to the problem of interpreting iconographic art in the catacombs, we also

come to the next unanswered question of what art patterns (motives) influenced the painters of the catacombs? Several authors (e.g. Wickhoff [4]) argue that, like Roman art influenced by Etruscan art, Christian art, logically, came from a pagan Roman environment, as it was formed in Rome itself.

Strzygowski has a different theory of early Christian art [5]. According to him, the influence on early Christian art does not come from Rome but from Oriental countries.

Strzygowski thus distinguished between the art of coastal cities and the art of the interior, as he thought that the influence came directly from the Orient through coastal cities, from where it spread to the Western world. He claimed that the motifs of the catacomb paintings came from Alexandria and Antioch, whereas the types of depictions in early Christian art, such as the bearded Christ and Mary, came from Syria and Egypt.

[...more at](#)

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“BEING - TOWARDS - DEATH” AND “THE ESCAPE FROM DEATH” IN J.R.R. TOLKIEN’S ‘THE LORD OF THE RINGS’ PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Abstract: The article deals with the theme of death in J.R.R. Tolkien’s epic ‘The Lord of the Rings’, which both the author himself and numerous researchers of the writer’s body of work recognize as key for understanding the entire religious and philosophical content of this work. This theme is analysed in the article within the framework of the semantic opposition, formulated by the concepts of ‘being-towards-death’ and ‘escape from death’. The first concept is borrowed from M. Heidegger’s philosophy, and the second is present both in Heidegger’s and Tolkien’s works. The study shows that a comparison of how Tolkien and Heidegger expound on the theme of death can be productive for a better understanding of their approaches - both in their similarities and differences.

DISABILITY IN THE TEACHING OF JOHN PAUL II AND THE POLISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to try to answer the question: do we find in the attitude of Polish society towards the problems of people with disabilities a reference to the teaching of John Paul II in the spirit of Christian personalism, or a progressive laicization and individualism of faith? Poles’ attitudes towards people with disabilities are influenced by their knowledge of disability, frequency of contact with these people and socio-demographic circumstances. We can see a weaker interest in religion and in the teachings of John Paul II, a distancing from the nomos of Christian doctrine, an inconsistent and surprising image of the Polish Catholic, a clear shift from a Catholic understanding of disability to a policy of integration with the non-disabled, and the realization of a socio-cultural model of disability. Polish society does not give testimony of personal, ecclesiastical and social life, according to what John Paul II taught. Criticism of the Catholic Church in Poland as an institution encourages criticism of John Paul II himself and his teaching. What is needed is a paradigm shift in the approach to disability from helping the ‘ill disabled’ to working to ensure that people with disabilities have equal rights and opportunities.

A THREAT, A NEW RELIGION OR A CHANCE FOR IMMORTALITY? POLISH OPINION-FORMING PRESS DISCOURSE ON TRANSHUMANISM

Abstract: The conducted research aims to determine the scope of the understanding of transhumanism disseminated in opinion-forming magazines in Poland. Eight weeklies from 2019 to 2020 were analysed, and the study showed that the topic of transhumanism appeared in the studied publications quite rarely. The attitude of the weeklies towards transhumanism also reveals a relationship to each weekly’s worldview. While the discourse of the weeklies generally does not fuel fears associated with transhumanism, it nonetheless shows that social development in Poland has not kept pace with technological development. Especially religious-conservative magazines do little to bring their readers closer to one of the most pressing and up-to-date ethical and theological challenges facing humanity.

GOOD CHARACTER DESERVES RESPECT AND MUST BE THE HERO! HOW CHINESE WOMEN IN INDONESIA PERCEIVE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN AND JESUS IN MARK 7.24-30

Abstract: This study focuses on the correlation between three psychological variables and how Chinese women in Indonesia perceive Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman in Mark 7.24-30 (N = 230, M age = 41.70). The three psychological variables are perceived discrimination, ethnic identity, and well-being. The study evaluates (1) how the three variables relate to positive perceptions on Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman, and (2) how the positive perceptions of the characters in the story relates to perceiving who is the hero in the story. The results show that; (1) perceived discrimination relates negatively to well-being, (2) ethnic identity relates positively to well-being, (3) well-being relates positively to the positive perception on the characters of the story, (4) well-being mediates the relation between ethnic identity and perceived discrimination with the positive perception on the characters of the story, and (5) the positive perception on Jesus’s character relates to perceiving Jesus as the hero of the story. The stronger the well-being and ethnic identity, the more positive the women perceive Jesus and the Syrophoenician woman.

MAJORITY HARASSED BY THE MINORITY? MICROAGGRESSIONS BASED ON RELIGIOSITY IN CONTEMPORARY POLAND

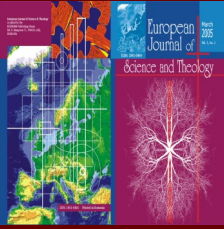
Abstract: Tensions related to the presence of religion, its symbols or moral judgments in the public space are noticeable signs in many contemporary societies. Research shows an increasing level of prejudice against believers, which translates into emerging microaggressions. This phenomenon of questioning and hostility towards religion is surprisingly also the case in societies where the majority consists of religious adherents. The aim of this article is to present and analyse the research results on the extent of prejudices and manifestations of hostility towards believers in 2019 in Poland, on a representative sample of respondents. First, the religious situation in Poland will be briefly discussed, in particular the way the Poles experience religious practices. This will be followed by discussion of the most common manifestations of microaggression included in the classification proposed by David R. Hodge, and a legal analysis of the Polish penal system. Finally, we will present a hypothesis regarding the nature of these phenomena and the challenges they represent to religious freedom.

ATHEISM VS. FAITH THE EARLY CHURCH AND THE REVELATION IN ENGELS’ VISION

Abstract: Our study aims to make a theological diagnosis of how dialectical and historical materialism ‘explained’, at the horizon of the nineteenth century, the emergence of Christianity and its assertion as a global religious phenomenon. The main thesis we are analysing in our approach is the premise that the Marxist view on religion is built upon, that is: any religious fact does nothing but express in mythological forms the effects generated on the religious consciousness of the popular masses by the accumulation of historically determined antagonisms and economic-social tensions. Such a thesis, from our theological perspective does not have only historical limits, but, especially, ideological limitations related to the historical materialistic paradigm of the human history based on ‘class struggle as a driving force of social development’. To this end, we will go through the main coordinates of Friedrich Engels’s vision of the birth and ‘horizontal’ development of the early Church, while trying to assess the theological-historical viability of his vision and interpretations that rely on a simplistic and difficult to accept causal determination between social inequalities and economic deprivations and religion. At the same time, we will look at how the German thinker uses the text of the canonical ‘Revelation’, cited as the most reliable source of knowledge of early Christianity, to base the ‘official’ view of Marxism on faith, the eschatological teaching and expectations of the early Christians.

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ATTITUDES TOWARDS FAITH AMONG INHABITANTS OF POLAND AND HUNGARY MODERATING ROLE OF AGE, EDUCATION AND PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Abstract: The paper addresses the aspect of attitudes towards faith among inhabitants of Poland and Hungary. These particular two Central and Eastern European countries were chosen because they were the first states from the former communist bloc to sign concordats with the Holy See. The authors assumed that age, education and place of permanent residence would constitute important factors differentiating attitudes towards religion among the inhabitants of the two countries. The paper uses statistical data from Round 9 of the European Social Survey, compiled by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. An analysis of data concerning attitudes towards faith has shown that Poles, regardless of their age, education and place of residence, are by far more religious than Hungarians are. However, both in Poland and in Hungary, the share of believers in the youngest age groups is lower than in the oldest groups. These data allow us to predict that in the next decades of the 21st century, secularisation processes will be progressing in both countries.

THE FRAGMENTED SELF A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Abstract: The problem of unity or disunity of the self is discussed from the point of view of various disciplines. The first part of the study concerns the notion of self-fragmentation present in Human sciences (particularly in Psychology and Cognitive sciences) and its relationship to religious views. The focus is on the narrative self and its fragmentation through narrative practices. In the second part, I examine Jacques Derrida's work on deconstruction and its implications related to the fragmentation of the self. Deconstruction is presented in terms of formalism in Mathematics. The final part concerns the possible splitting of the conscious self of the observer in quantum mechanical (QM) experiments. Specifically, I consider the quantum mechanical interpretations of 'splitting brain' suggested by von Neumann and the 'many-minds' suggested by Albert and Loewer.

A SHORT INTERVENTION OF ROGER BACON

Abstract: According to Bacon, there are four main obstacles in the search for truth: submission to an unworthy authority, influence of habits, prejudgments and hiding one's ignorance. The latter is the worst among the four. Truth can be reached through reason and experience. Reason is fallible; he reaches a conclusion but does not eliminate doubt. Only the man of experience cannot be wrong, says Bacon. Experience is twofold: external, through senses and internal, a spiritual one in seven steps, among which the first is the illumination regarding natural things and the highest is mystical rapture. Thus, for Bacon faith does not oppose reason and Philosophy is a necessary step for the exercise of faith and for the search for truth. The following text is about such an intervention of Bacon that leads from Plato to Aristotle, regarding a well-known saying: 'Amicus Plato sed magis amica veritas'.

THE IMAGERY OF MIRACLES ON CATACOMB WALL PAINTINGS OF EARLY CHRISTIANS IN ROME

Abstract: The topic of miracles was ubiquitous in early Christian art, whether on sarcophagi, frescoes, glass or ceramics. Our article deals with the depiction of miracles on the preserved frescoes in Christian catacombs in Rome between the 1st and the 4th century AD. The study explains why the early Christian Church chose the topic of miracles in catacomb art and which are the most common depictions of individual miracles on frescoes. Based on a socio-historical method, it presents an analysis of early Christian frescoes depicting Jesus performing miracles of healing. It also compares individual frescoes with contemporary texts and comments on miracles. The frescoes of miracles in a religiously pluralistic environment represented a unique and original iconography created by the early Church, which preferred the depiction of miracles over the crucified Jesus or other motifs from Scripture.