Thinking about religious space

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The paper examines some features of religious space, its relation with religious phenomenon and social processes; it is stressed that the meeting of people with the meanings of sacred space reveals the significance of religious authority, its close relationship with the social order, confidence. In the post-socialist period all remember the negative consequences of the exclusion of this authority in the Soviet time; in contemporary society the usefulness of authority as a general analytical concept is related with such categories as social stability and socialisation.

The author analyses the relation between believers and space; such aspects as usage of sacred places, the level of trust in them, the significance and meanings of sacred space for people's life. The background of this study is such methodological principles as the strong relation among existential experience and notion (Dilthey 1993), the trust in the subject competence, the M. Maffesoli approach. In the paper the narratives of different places are represented. The being and walking by men and women in the holy space show the level of their identity with religious values. The author uses the concept of M. Eliade that spaces differ; there can be important sacred places and other sites without such meanings. The landscape of every old nation is saturated with representation of sacredness, there are centres of religious practice on local and national scale, and the landscapes are saturated with places, routes to the sacred laces. The relation with oneself extends the meaning of place, includes religious, aesthetic, moral and transcendental aspects, it helps in the formation of solidarity ties. In modern Lithuania many churches were renovated, small chapels are constructed in hospitals and prisons; the State and the Church are seeking to give back to communities the places desecrated in the Soviet period. In cellars of old churches the funeral rooms were constructed or renovated. The author analyses the charity sites near the churches (which help to develop confidence in society, the cultivation of democracy and good activity), the meanings of pilgrimage and cemeteries.

Key words: sacred space, symbolic centre, religious feasts, Church's functions, meanings of cemeteries

INTRODUCTION

The reformation of religious, social and cultural structures in post-socialist Lithuania includes the change of people's behavioural models, the meanings of places, growing plurality in the everyday life of cities and local space. The paper examines some features of religious space, its relation with religious phenomenon and social processes; the authoress uses the information of narratives and informal answers of respondents. This method is realised in sociology as the recognition of competence of the subject; it coincides with the changing situation in this science where the existence of a plurality of perspectives and local, contextual studies vs. grand narratives, disorder, flux and openness are respected (Pineau 1994). The meeting of people with the meanings of sacred space reveals the significance of religious authority, its close

relationships with the social order, confidence. In the post-socialist period all remember the negative consequences of the exclusion of this authority in the Soviet time. In contemporary society the usefulness of authority as a general analytical concept is related to such categories as social stability and socialisation.

In the paper the authoress analyses the relations between believers and space: such aspects as usage of places, the level of trust in them, the significance and meanings of sacred space for people's life. The background of this study is such methodological principles as the strong relation between the existential experience and notion (Dilthey 1993), the trust in the subject competence (underlining the life history method), the M. Maffesoli approach (1989) that sociality is not homogeneous but also the integration of feelings and images. Phenomenologist G. Bachelard demonstrates the many-sided analysis of space in his work *The Poetics of Space* (1969). In the paper the narratives of different places are presented. The being and walking by men and women in the holy space show the level of their identity with religious values, their belonging to the faith.

RELIGION AND SOCIETY: LITHUANIA'S CASE

Religion is the necessary part of human society and culture; it provides common experience, as E. Durkheim noted, that binds people together. According to E. Durkheim, in society there are phenomena (religion, language, professional norms) that are external to the individual and exert some power over the individual. In his works such as *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) or *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912) (Durkheim 1999) he analysed the problem of the increasing pluralism and differentiation in modern society. If in the differentiated modern societies he found that people needed to found ways to affirm their differences (organic solidarity), in less developed traditional societies he noted mechanical solidarity where people were held together by a sameness, a uniformity by which they identified with one another. In his famous study *Suicide* (1897) he showed that in a more differentiated society religion provided the sense of support and meaning that could reduce anomie (a sense of being meaningless and normless).

In industrial and post-industrial western societies (despite the struggle for power between different social sections) religion is the agent of social mobility and of resocialisation into dominant values. The religious factor can be considered as the potential to overcome divisiveness and to integrate the whole of an industrial society. In post-socialist society we can note the following significant aspects in the role of religion: of socialization and the process of its privatization. The Roman Catholic Church played a very important role in the process of democratic transformations in Lithuania before and after 1989 revolution. During the Communist regime, patriotism and freedom, the defence of human rights, national identity were associated with belonging to the Roman Catholic Church which was always in opposition to the totalitarianism.

In the Soviet sociological research projects it was obligatory to stress the cult of work and to deny numerous values such as religion, treating them as bourgeois and, therefore, unacceptable. Strong thematic restrictions were placed on sociology. It was forbidden to study religion, politics, and the collective memory. Not only did effective external institutional censorship exist, but an internalized self-censorship was in place as well (Gaidys, Vosyliūtė 1995: 151).

In the Soviet period the role of the Church as the defender of Lithuanian identity and spiritual force of the nation was very strong. Religion, culture and patriotism were identified all the time, for example religious festivals are simultaneously national and local festivals. During 15

years of transformation (to democracy and free market) the society and religious institutions have changed. The fall of the Soviet regime in 1990 was followed by the fundamental changes in the religious life of Lithuania. The process of the revival of religiosity in society has received a considerable amount of research. Religious reality is related with some signs: secularization of society, modernization, the decline of church-oriented activity of people. Since 1990, the role of the Catholic Church in Lithuania is more important, the religious life of people is open and free; some books and periodicals ("Logos", "Aidai", "Naujasis židinys", "Katalikų pasaulis") on religion's philosophy, social issues, history and education have appeared (some classical works were translated into Lithuanian). Sociologists in their analyses concerning the level of religiosity and secularization, religious minorities present the changing strength of the role of religion. Such features of religiosity as church attendance, importance of religious rites, traditional religious beliefs, adherence to religious moral norms, attitudes towards church and its role in social, cultural and political life in the society are analysed. Researches into religion show the changes of religiousness over a 9-year period (during 1990–1999) of independence of Lithuania; the religious commitment of people has increased: "they go to church more often; more of them wish to have religious ceremonies to mark births, marriages and deaths" (Žiliukaitė 2000: 523). Many churches were renovated. Small chapels are constructed in hospitals and prisons; the State and Church are seeking to give back to communities all the places desecrated in the Soviet time. In cellars of old churches (or in special places) the funeral rooms were constructed or renovated. So, the passing away for the community members is going now in a more civilized manner.

The sociological research in the East Lithuania communities (2000–2001) reveals that the development of communities is related to the formation of a new type of relations, the activity of the self-government and local authorities, political parties, non-governmental organizations, and the Church. Now the situation of the Church is changing: it is becoming something marginal to the major centres of power and influence, but traditional religious norms can still legitimate and integrate the social order of industrial and post-industrial societies. In democratic and free market society the Catholic Church began existing in a new situation; its role as an institution during the creation of new norms has been changing. As V. Pruskus has noted, "the state (although it acknowledges an especially honourable position of the Church, formed in course of history *de jure* by its merits in the development of self-consciousness of the nation and protection of its identity) *de facto* ceases considering the Church to be a particular organization. On the base of the standpoint that a civic society is an identical system of various groups, communities, unions, the Church becomes a type of a group of interests. [...] The church recognises a necessity to strive for the realisation of its interests (ideas, thoughts, opinions) in competing with other groups" (Pruskus 2001: 244).

The places of "Caritas" are mostly used by marginals. Different forms of charity exist in the Lithuanian society from the foretime (The everyday life of… 2001). Charity is the last and greatest of the Christian virtues; it is also recognized by moralists in many religions and by nonreligious thinkers. Now the needy are becoming more and more a social and moral obligation; religious organizations, the state or community is undertaking it. Charity is the communication between religious and other organisations, elite layer, some rich firms and the poor people (marginals). The contacts between the givers and the receivers of philanthropy reflect the vital relation between the "strong" and "weak" parts of the society. Charity helps to develop their reciprocal confidence, the cultivation of democracy and good activity, such emotions as mercifulness, contribution. Nowadays philanthropy is improving the life conditions of the lower class and involves it to the work and cultural (religious) activity networks. The "Caritas"

centres in Lithuania exist mostly as organized at the churches. According to our research material, poor people are estimating charity better than the state social help; in their opinion: "because devotees (mostly women) in church organisations are more dedicated and not so formal". So, such "Caritas" centres provide for the marginals the conditions for their resocialisation. The establishment of new cultural centres shows that in the era of globalisation charity is coming from the utmost ends of the Earth; it means the influence and communication with different religions, places and cultures.

THE CHARACTER OF SACRED PLACES

According to the concept of M. Eliade, the space is not equal; in the space there can be important sacred places as well as other places without such meaning. Sacred space is a magical one. The landscape of every old nation is saturated with representation of sacredness, there are centres of religious practice on local and national scale, and landscapes are saturated with places, routes to the sacred places. Place is understood as the necessary context for religious actions; through such places the people are related to milieu and to self. The relation to self extends the meaning of place, includes religious, aesthetic, moral and transcendental aspects, it helps in the formation of solidarity ties and the construction of religious community. According to the philosopher of space H. Lefebvre, space is the primary element: "space decides" what activity may arise, but even this "decision" has limits placed upon it. Space lays down the law because it implies a certain order – and hence also certain disorder. Interpretation comes later, almost as an afterthought. Space commands bodies, prescribing or proscribing gestures, routes and distances to be covered. The "reading" of space is thus merely a secondary and practically irrelevant upshot, a rather superfluous reward to the individual for blind, spontaneous and lived obedience" (Lefebvre 1991: 143).

As A. Giddens noted, the nation is like a bounded power container. In our opinion, the nation is the cultural and symbolic power, it is culturally constructed, and the national subjects are inscribed in the national space; the nation has been the dominant modern spatial division. The nation consists of a definite social space within which members must live. The space of a nation is often represented as a historic land where the terrain and people have exerted mutual influence over several generations and have produced a repository of historic memories and associations, the place where our saints and heroes worked, prayed and fought. The space, as noted by Henri Lefebvre, is always under social construction. Religious situation defines the national belonging, is related with communities as authentic. After the period of sovietization the nation's official history is rewritten in some aspect, new versions of national symbols and meanings of national subjectivity are established.

The space of every nation and country is covered by the network of cultural and symbolic centres. As E. Chan noted, "The symbolic centre makes and sustains nationhood. By sharing the same symbolic codes, bonds are created; by undergoing the same rituals, emotional ties are established; and by adopting common myths, history takes root. [...] Identification with the same symbolic centre is an acknowledgment of common destiny" (Chan 1999: 341). Symbolic centre is often the religious (sacred) centre, too. Once the symbolic centre is lost, it cannot be restored by force alone. During the Soviet occupation the character of symbolic centres (both religious and national) was changed by Soviet symbols in Lithuania; it was the period when the society experienced a symbolic decentredness: the national ideas had no representation at these centres. The symbolic centre is made up of a set of values, symbols, rituals and myths that unite the people of a nation.

The destruction of such symbolic centres in Lithuania was related with the occupation and the control by the alien power. With the restoration of independence the Lithuanian society regained the old symbolic centres and their national content. In the conception of a nation we actually have a very strong conjunction with religious feelings and ethnic articulation of identity. After the collapse of the Soviet regime, national activity was welcomed, the old religious symbols and church feasts (especially *atlaidai* (church feasts) in summer) are being displayed and practised. During these church feasts the specific type of culture – auratic culture – manifests; it is the phenomenon the structure of which consists of such elements as 1) festive event, 2) sacred, divine element, 3) aesthetic aspect: the influence of sacral art, 4) euphoria of people.

At present, active cultural and religious life (e. g. church feasts) takes place in these centres (in many of them the old churches are located). Sacred centres are repositories of common memories, myths and traditions and the sites for a range of collective and individual performances of rituals and pilgrimages. The church festivals are both sacred, ethnic and cultural events and civil activism of people because this network of relationships is more or less autonomous from the state. It is the tradition from the old time, from traditional society going to modern society.

Now church festivals consist of: meeting with holiness, people's gathering, sometimes amateur concerts, different games, marketing, drinking and eating. During this time some Lithuanian symbols – national flag, national costumes – are being displayed and worn. The rite of eating and drinking together is clearly a rite of incorporation, of physical and social union; the sharing of meals is reciprocal, and the exchange of food constitutes the confirmation of a bond. Sharing food during the church festivals is held to signify "togetherness"; hospitality is a very significant element of these festivals. According to Jurgen Habermas (1987), participation in the eating and drinking together in popular meeting places is a significant manifestation of the social development of the public sphere. The central purposes of such meetings in the church and near it is to gain religious status, to worship and celebrate the heavenly, to seek special divine favours, to witness and experience the power of the divine, to communicate. In some aspect it is similar to tourism which is searching for the symbolic and romantic, but in this case there is no involvement to the experience of sacred. There people represent their basic aesthetic needs: they are, despite cultural and individual differences and historical variability, among the most basic and universal needs of a human. A 40 year old woman respondent told: "When I was a child I was going to a small wooden village church with my grandmother, I looked at the priest (his church clothes); it was interesting to see the strange rituals, which I did not understand. The environment of the church was beautiful, colourful, smelling nice. I remember St Mary (a painting) and St Anthony (a sculpture). The second wonderful impression from the childhood was a girl singing a religious chant near a miraculous spring".

The strategy for collecting memory is part of the common sense understanding of what festivals, feasts, holidays are for. Selected sights and moments from holy places are recorded so that they can fit into personal life: stories provide stimulating and satisfying memories in time of boredom or stress, collected fragments of memory point to the self-conscious attempts by people in struggling to have life history. Story telling is the most contingent process of remembering. The social production of memory becomes externalised, situated and staged outside the local community.

The religious and socio cultural role of sacred places and places of worship in modern society is very significant: it reveals new religious meanings and also possible forms of

Christianity movement as well as transformation of traditions. Recently, in order to attract a great quantity of pilgrims and stimulate the growth of a certain place's name, particular attention is given to the architectural aspect of a sacred place, which is among the significant factors which determine the character of Catholic culture. Sacred places are connected with national culture (folklore, religious practice); architectural monuments are forming the component parts of "local", "real" forms of existing religion. Last years are characterized by a growing role of sacred places in the lives of all the categories of people. The particularities of sacred places lie in their possibility of deep psychological influence on people. Sacred places serve different spiritual needs for all layers of people. The most active participants of pilgrimage are women and children. Sick, childless or people who have temporary problems come to such places asking for help of the Saints. A growing number of pilgrimages lead to the increase of income donated by pilgrims to the state and communities. One of the sources of sacred place's incomes is selling different types of literature, images of the Saints, means for praying (rosaries), a great variety of souvenirs and talismans.

Churches are very significant sacred places deeply connected with the history of the country; for example the Gates of Dawn is one of the symbols of Vilnius, the Gates is a famous Catholic shrine, they were built as one of the original nine gates of Vilnius together with the city wall (http://www.vilnius.lt/new/gidas.php?open=30&root=1&sub_cat=161). The picture of the Mother of Mercy of this Chapel is well known among Catholic believers. The image of the Virgin Mary known from the 17th century has the features of both Renessaince style and icon painting. Many pilgrims from the country and especially from Belarus and Poland are visiting this holy place. An officer narrates: "I like to go to this Chapel with my family and friends on Palm Sunday; there is no frost, morning is nicely spring-like. In the small Aušros street and church we meet with our acquaintances, we participate in public worship and feel joyful". Vilnius Cathedral is Lithuania's spiritual and political centre. King Mindaugas built the original cathedral in 1251 after his conversion to Christianity; later a gothic style cathedral was built. The coronation ceremonies of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania from Vytautas to Žygimantas Augustas took place there. Due to fires, wars, and unstable ground, the Cathedral was rebuilt more than once. As a result, gothic, renaissance, and baroque styles are reflected in its architectural history (http://www.vilnius.lt/new/gidas.php?open=30&root=1&sub_cat=161).

In the Soviet period, many churches were rebuilt inside and survived as museums (Museum of Atheism in Vilnius Church of St Casimir, Museum of Science in Church of SS John, Picture Gallery in Vilnius Cathedral etc.). Some of them changed their functions and were turned into shops, sport halls, warehouses, premises for associations and so on. The communities question the issue: if the building is dedicated to worshiping God forever, can it be used for other purposes? It is important to restore the sacred places (and buildings) and give them back to people of the city, to society, to humanity.

In modern discourse about sacred buildings we can hear that in market conditions some of them are changed into secular ones: in some countries "places of worship (the churches and accompanying reconstructed monasteries) have been put onto the market are turned into coffee shops, warehouses and retail areas, the monastery has been changed into offices" (Gazeta Wyborcza 2000).

A very significant sacred place for people is cemetery. Each cemetery reveals the social structure and differentiation of past society (its events, cities or locations). For example, in Antakalnis (Soldiers') Cemetery in Vilnius the soldiers of different nationalities and countries are buried: Polish soldiers, French soldiers of Napoleon Army, Soviet soldiers of WWII, the

border guards murdered by the Soviet Army at Medininkai border in July, 1991, and civilians killed by the TV Tower on January 13, 1991. "Pieta", the monument by a famous Lithuanian sculptor S. Kuzma dedicated to the memory of the latest victims of the Soviet regime, has been erected in the centre of the burial complex.

Founded in 1810 by Bernardine monks, the Bernardine Cemetery is perhaps the most attractive and romantic cemetery in Vilnius city (now under restoration) (Girininkienė, Paulauskas 1994). There one can see mossy graves of many famous Vilnius University professors, scientists and painters of the 19th century. Rasų Cemetery, founded in 1801, is the final place rest of Lithuania's social elite. In 1841–1850 a neo-gothic church was built in the centre; many famous people, country's heroes rest here.

Nearly every Lithuanian community or settlement and city has old cemeteries of historic and educational value. A look at them can reveal much about the lives of people of the past; it is the possibility to enjoy wonderful works of art and architecture of the monuments. Cemetery is a holy place where the nature and human destiny are intertwined; man is feeling there harmony with the whole world. Visitors of such places remember their relatives and friends with such feelings as awe, dignity and serenity, reverence; they contemplate eternity, holy things and man's destiny. Cemetery is a quiet and sad place; much contemplation can take place there. A 52 year old woman says: "To visit a cemetery for me is very important, I feel more human after it, not so lonely". One can learn about the philosophy prevailing looking at the decoration and epitaphs on the tombstones. Going to a cemetery can have many educational values as well. The transcendence in this place helps people to think about moral questions in the relations among people, for example the feeling of guilt. It is considered now as dysfunctional in culture, but it is very important for human moral development; it can motivate the reconstruction of a valued self-identity, while avoidance of feeling of guilt prompts devaluating of the former self. Margarita of mature age narrates: "By my mother's grave I remember her goodness and my unfulfilling; there I think that I want to be better". Cemeteries are places of learning that tie the young and old generation together, places of explaining who we are and where we have come from. In cemeteries we can learn about the lives of people who make up a community and city, who were heroes, we also learn about landscapes and plants. In our collective spiritual crisis time the visiting of cemeteries gives memory for the person: the possibility to witness the symbols and rituals, to experience such emotions as suffering and compassion.

THE SACRED OBJECTS OF ART

Since the institutionalization of Catholicism in Lithuania religious practice and the traditions of society's spiritual life were related with sacred art (professional and folk). The church architecture and interior, paintings, sacral music, such events like the Church processions (their artistic decoration) in the space of the towns and villages are unchanged since old times. During wars, occupations many churches suffered a lot, but folk memorial monuments – crosses and roadside shrines with statuettes of the Saints – have survived in small towns, villages or in cities. For example, the churches of Vilkaviškis diocese located on the West border of Lithuania were destroyed or heavily damaged during WWI and WWII. A number of the churches were or are being rebuilt, part of them function in other buildings adapted to the Church purposes. As it is noted "many valuable works of art and liturgical articles were destroyed or scattered over other places by the wars and robberies that took place in the churches closed during the Soviet years" (Lietuvių sakralinės… 1998: 15). The researchers of art are gathering data on the

destroyed sacred objects. The relics of the old Lithuanian faith (paganism) survived in various spheres of folk culture.

In the 18–20 centuries there existed roadside shrines all over the country. This fact shows authentic sacral art lasting for centuries; there was more to folk art than ornamentation and colour. All the sacred places have their interpretations and meanings.

Lithuanian religious art has firm foundation in ethnic folk culture, the Indo-Europeans and Baltic ancient culture. It is known that necro-cult was highly developed in old Lithuania. The road of the Roman cross to our country was very contradictory, because it was related with the offensive of crusaders from the West, who brought much physical and spiritual suffering to the people. Ancient Lithuanian ornamental forms are related with Christian symbols into one whole.

As A. Stravinskas noted, "Lithuania has retained quite a rich heritage of roofed pillars, pillars and chapels above which suns radiate in the form of crosses as their iron pinnacles". They had and have a great aesthetic value; "unusually bent and sometimes twisted edged iron forms are not only graceful, light and delicate tracery shapes, but also retain a play of light and shadow, have lively, rhythmically vibrating lines. The iron top of the monument set in delicate tracery, its tortuous lines are especially impressive against the blue of the sky" (Lietuvių liaudies menas...1992: 21).The old architecture of the country – churches and belfries, chapels, pillars, roadside shrines – are harmoniously grown into the Lithuanian landscape. Many of the iron tops (their prototypes were from wood) now are in museums, while others are in the Lithuanian landscape: above churches, chapels, on churchyard gates, in cemeteries. Almost in every churchyard there is a belfry which completes the sacral ensemble. The architecture of the belfries and other wooden sacral buildings can be characterized by the functionality, distinctness of proportions and silhouettes and the simplicity of forms (Jankevičienė 1998: 14). The invention and creation of sacred places in Lithuania are now related with the building of crosses as holy objects by people in communities. In the Soviet time the building of crosses was the process in the affirmation of the symbolic centre which was real, but not under the Soviet command. The Soviet administration destroyed crosses, but it was impossible to destroy all the crosses because they symbolized resistance to the Soviet domination. The building of new crosses was unofficial people's activity in religious and national sphere, it was a national ritual. Those centres were and are very important sacred and symbolic centres in Lithuania and in the whole world.

The creation of crosses symbolises the national movement; social symbols have an emotional meaning, the role of symbols is related with the mobilisation of people. The cross expresses and conveys the idea of community and belonging to the native country or family, having common meanings and values.

Symbols refer to ideas, thoughts, beliefs, feelings and needs, shared by the members of a collective. They are socially created and communicated to form part of a common consciousness or social reality.

The meeting of people with such beautiful sacred objects develops their religious feelings, aesthetic sensibility and taste. The respondent Marta, a 50 year old woman told: "In the church, its art helps me to concentrate, heightens my religious heart. Religious music is very exciting for me. At home I have a sanctified image (it is my family heritage), some books and stamps on religious theme".

In Vilnius the first buildings for religious purposes appeared in the 14th century. At first, Gothic churches were predominant, they were one-or three-nave edifices, with or without

towers by the corners of the façade, they were austere, simple, only the unique and elegant St Ann's Church of gothic period is distinguished for its exceptional splendour. Churches of the style of Renaissance were rectangular or cruciform with a tower in the main façade; they were decorated with pilaster strips, pilasters and arched niches. Early, since the 17th century (Vilniaus architektūra 1985: 377), and late Baroque is characteristic to some religious buildings in the city. Church processions were very emotional in the city. According to the written sources of the 17th–18th centuries of religious celebrations in Vilnius, it is possible not only to reconstruct the sequence and size of the procession and the distance which was walked, but also the classes of society (Griciūtė 2003: 157). Nowadays the Church is organizing such ceremonies, too.

The existing sacred art in Church practice reveals the interrelations between text and image, demonstrates how expressions in plasticity transform the pictorial into narrative and the narrative into pictorial. A woman told: "I always evaluate the church from aesthetic point of view; images are stimulating my thinking. I'm retired, I like thin small church, because there I can see all the pictures, enjoy, be transcendental". The believers are affected by sacral music or paintings; they are further understanding and outliving the religious matter. The narratives and thought of the Church, as suffering and pain, God's love and mercy (and others) are reflected in the Church art. Images of Saints in reproductions were spread out and remain popular. Paintings of angels, Holy Mother, the Saints are influencing the sacred and cultural identity of the Lithuanian people. The respondent Birutė told: "It is very beautiful and fine that churches are decorated, gorgeous. I like and understand the old style, pictures, and sculptures. It helps me to think about the suffering of Christ and where is the border of a human being. The nicest picture for me is the Madonna with the child because they are alight, jolly". The young man thinks differently: "The decoration of churches must be moderate: tinsel has no influence on faith".

The integration of Lithuania into the European Union and pilgrimage offer the possibility to see different types of churches; a 40 year old Gražina told: "The church of a new style in Krakow, in Nowa Huta, made a very great impression on me. It presented the relation between the God and the whole world, the universe. For the first time I saw Christ rising to the height, to heaven from the cross, the chancel was like a palm. The other cathedral – of Köln – is very large, impressive; I admired the cathedral of Mainz through organ music".

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Apmąstant religinę erdvę

Santrauka

Straipsnyje autorė pabrėžia posocialistinės visuomenės narių elgesio pokyčius, besiplečiantį miestų bei mažesnių vietovių žmonių gyvensenos pliuralizmą, aplinkos pasikeitimus. Atskleidžiami religinės erdvės bruožai, jos santykiai su socialine realybe bei religijos raiška. Autorė remiasi neformaliais respondentų atsakymais, mokslinės literatūros analize, savo įžvalga. Pabrėžiama religinio autoriteto kaip bendros analitinės koncepcijos ryšys su socialiniu stabilumu, socializacija, moraliniu patvarumu. Tyrinėjamas įvairių religinės erdvės vietų naudojimo lygmuo, jų reikšmingumas bei prasmių įvairovė. Tyrimo pagrindai siejami su šiais metodologiniais principais: egzistencinio patyrimo ir sąvokų sąryšio (W. Dilthey), pasitikėjimo subjekto kompetencija (įvertinant respondentų atsiliepimus apie įvairias vietas), M. Maffesoli'o nuostata, jog socialumas nėra homogeniškas, bet ir vaizdų bei pojūčių visuma.

Religija kaip kultūros elementas jungia žmones, yra jų bendro patyrimo dalis (E. Durkheimas); socializmo metu Bažnyčia buvo opozicija totalitariniam režimui, atliko svarbų vaidmenį nacionalinio identiteto formavimuisi. Nors ir veikiant sekuliarizacijos procesams, religija tapo svarbia visuomenės sąmonę, aktyvumą ir moralines normas veikiančia jėga. Atskleidžiami šventos erdvės ypatumai, šventų vietų kaip simbolinių centrų ryšys su nacionaline atmintimi. Aiškinamas religinių švenčių kaip šventumo auros kūrimas, bendravimas, sakralinių jausmų konstravimo metas. Čia dalyvaujantys įgyja religinį statusą; religinių vietų patyrimas įtraukiamas į dalyvių išgyvenimus, jų gyvenimo istorijas, tampa bendra kultūros dalimi. Tyrinėjama, kokį poveikį ideologiniai iššūkiai darė religinės erdvės pokyčiams, kaip sovietmečio draudimai ribojo šventų vietų reikšmę. Analizuojamos maldos namų estetinės funkcijos, kapinių vietų prasmės.

Raktažodžiai: religinė erdvė, švenčių samprata, šventumo išgyvenimas