

ON THE CHURCH AS COMMUNICATION¹

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ABSTRACT

According to Goethe style is the dress of thought. According to Coleridge style is the incarnation of thought. If style is the dress of thought, style can be changed without changing the thought. If style is the incarnation of thought, style cannot be changed without changing the thought. Following these two contradictory views of style, one could ask: Is a metaphor only the dress of an idea, or is it the incarnation of an idea? If a metaphor is, for example, the dress of a religious idea, then religious metaphors can be replaced with one another without changing or damaging the idea or dogma. But if a metaphor is the incarnation of a religious idea, then one religious metaphor cannot be replaced with another. These are questions that have arisen not only about translating a holy or a theological text, but whenever the Church intended to adapt herself to historical and social changes. Theologians have been preoccupied with the interpretation of metaphors, and they have denied the possibility of changing “official” metaphors. After Christianity had become an established and institutionalized religion, theologians and particularly the clergy were inclined to interpret metaphors as non-metaphors, i.e. they stuck to the literal sense. This is a development that can be observed at the institutionalized stage of every religion. When the Catholic Church faced a culture and a society, or a cultural and social change which challenged the whole system of metaphors, the insufficiency for the literal interpretation of religious metaphors manifested itself and the problem of introducing new metaphors or even a new system of metaphors emerged (cf. the early Jesuits in China). What can theologians do with the expression *Lamb of God* if, for example, lambs are despised in a particular society and swine are respected?

The question can be solved if we consider the very nature of metaphor and its interpretation. A metaphor is both cognitively and socio-culturally determined

¹ See also Lóránt Bencze, *On the Church as Communication*, L.A.U.D., Duisburg, 1996. Lóránt Bencze, *Erneuerung und Entfaltung: Kognitive und kulturelle Annäherungen an Religion und Gesellschaft*, Gabriele Schäfer Verlag, Herne, 2011.

and interpreted. Socio-cultural interpretation can be various and almost unlimited according to geographical, climatical, historical, cultural and of course social conditions. Cognitively based interpretation is determined by the same rules every time and everywhere (assuming that mankind is one race) and therefore, cognitive interpretation in this sense is limited. A proper, well-balanced and deliberated procedure can and has guaranteed the changing of metaphors and even systems of metaphors with only minor changes or damage to “the original idea.” This procedure is not a quick changing of dress but the living growth of an incarnated idea.

ON THE CHURCH AS SEMIOGENESIS

The 20th-century international word *style* comes from Greek and Latin (*stulos*, *stylus*) yet as a technical term with its modern meanings it was unknown for the ancient Greeks and Romans, though the concept of style itself was known. They used different terms such as *genus dicendi*,² *oratio*,³ *dictio*,⁴ *quo modo*,⁵ *genus*⁷ etc.

The same is true of the word *communication*, which became internationally accepted by the end of the 20th century. Although it comes from Latin, its current meanings cannot be found in the Latin translations of the Bible and in Christian theology (cf. *communicatio fractionis panis*, Acts 2,42 or e.g. the apostles were persistent in the *didach/doctrina apostolorum and in the koinonia/communicatio*).

However, the concept of communication was not unknown, but other terminologies were used (*fides ex auditu*, etc.). One may state that communication is a key concept in Christianity. I might even risk stating that Christianity differs from other religions in that its essential starting point is the question of communication, and its whole theology is permeated by the question of communication. Furthermore, if communication is removed from Christian theology, not even one dogma remains, quite simply nothing remains. There is no Holy Trinity, no inner life and communication of the true one God, no incarnation, no opening of God towards the world, no personal communication of God with man in *Logos*, no Church, no “teach all peoples”..., no assignment, no sacraments, i.e. no *katexochen* communication signs, and so on. The development of dogmas,

² Cicero, *DM.*, *Tulli Ciceronis scripta quae manserunt omnia*, Fasc. 5, Orator, Edidit Rolf Westman, Leipzig, Teubner, 1980, 22, 119.

³ Cicero, *M.*, *Tulli Ciceronis scripta quae manserunt omnia*, Fasc. 4, Brutus, Recognovit H. Malcovati, Lipsiae, 1965, 325.

⁴ Cicero, *DM.*, *Tulli*, Orator, 90, 101.

⁵ Cicero, *M.*, *Tulli*, Brutus, 325.

⁶ Cicero, *DM.*, *Tulli*, Orator, 43.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

the history of heresies and schisms can be considered mere communication disturbances. In contrast to *kaqolikos* communication, all of them can be seen as a kind of limitation of universal or comprehensive communication. What is traditionally indicated by the term *heresy* in Catholic theology, is no other than some communication type in Catholic teaching or its possible negation. The anathema of *ecclesia catholica* keeps possibilities open, defends the abundance of types. It has to be mentioned in advance that when I spoke on the one hand about a communication type, semiosis, etc. and heresy, anathema etc. on the other hand, I walked into two different communication paradigms. I tried to turn the two paradigms into each other without mixing them, stating that this in one paradigm correlates with that in the other.

It is clear from the above that I do not want to talk about the external structure of Church communication, how the faithful communicate with the priest, the priest with the bishop, the bishop with the archbishop, the primate or the pope, the pastor with the superintendent etc. but about the internal, semiotic structure of Church communication. However, if this internal, semiotic structure is considered not only statically, but also dynamically, or procedurally, as it is of course presumed by the concept of communication, then I have to speak about semiosis, more precisely about the Church as a kind of semiogenesis. Is this semiogenesis

particular and unique in human development?

a particular and unique development of verbal communication?

Has it been almost entirely neglected by semiotic studies? (from a non-religious point of view)

Would it give very promising research possibilities and results for scientists and scholars, and therefore their neglect is hard to understand? (studied with a semiotic approach)

Would it give the Church herself a unique possibility to find the solutions for her internal crises? (because of the nature of semiogenesis)

Has it always provided a means of solving the problems for the Church?

In this paper analogies will be used. It complies on one hand with the traditional theological thinking, especially if the analogy is functional, and on the other hand it complies with the Anglo-Saxon scientific fashion of our time, where analogy might be only formal. I also follow the technique of *Rhetorica ad C. Herennium*,⁸ which, when describing a phenomenon, used the phenomenon itself. I will use the phenomena of analogical metaphor in describing metaphorical phenomena.

⁸ Tamás Adamik (trans.), *Rhetorica ad C. Herennium – A C. Herenniusnak ajánlott Rétorika*, Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1987.

1. On the basis of the works of Ch. S. Peirce,⁹ Thomas Sebeok¹⁰ and those of others, we can rightly state that communication and life are each other's *sine qua non*. Starting with the fact that if a one-celled organism cannot release any molecules into its surroundings, it poisons itself, and if it cannot build in molecules from its surroundings, it starves; the same happens in high-level communication when the new-born gets every kind of nourishment, sunshine, care, but lacks the love of its mother, and there is no other loving person nearby, the baby dies within a month; even the prisoner in solitary confinement or the selfish lonely adult goes mad. The reproduction, multiplication, life-blood of living beings is semiosis, even at the DNA molecular level, as the division of molecule textures and later the *negative* and *positive* resupplementation, are based on a certain kind of recognition, on semiosis. The technical term *life* is nothing else in Christian theology than the pronouncement of communicational necessity, whether we speak about divine internal life (the *Holy Trinity*), or the relationship between Christ and the Church, or spiritual life, etc. Eternal life is phrased in theology in the concepts of Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophy, namely it is none other than the perfect communication that is deduced from the human experience of fragmentary communication through physically perceptible signs. Hell, eternal death mean a total lack of communication, a lack of communication unbelievable even for human beings who live with the necessity of fragmentary communication.

2. Furthermore, and because the internal communication structure of the Church is built on the analogy of biological life, we find the principle *gratia supponit naturam* (*grace relies upon nature*). In other words, synergesis is the basic feature of the communication structure. It is well-known that synergesis is "the cooperative action of discrete agencies such that the total effect is greater than the sum of the discrete effects taken independently."¹¹ Synergesis characterizes not only communication but life itself. The amount and fullness of discrete physical and chemical processes, inherent in life are more and greater than the amount of these processes taken independently. This surplus can be considered as semiosis. Synergy characterizes communication and most types of communication signs. For example in the case of *signals* (the starter's gun-shot or the green traffic light), the released energy (40 000 hp at the Formula 1 Championship) is in no way proportion to the energy of the signal. But the synergesis of metaphorical expressions is even greater. Simply it is immeasurable, unlimited, but as we will see later, it is not uncertain. Synergesis is always included in semiosis.

⁹ Charles Hartshorne – Paul Weiss Peirce (ed.), *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 1-8. vols., 2. print., Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1931/1958.

¹⁰ Sebeok, Thomas (ed.), *Style in Language*, New York – London, 1960.

¹¹ Yishai Tobin, *Semiotics and Linguistics*, London - New York, Longman, 1990, 48.

István Örkény, a twentieth-century Hungarian writer describes synergesis in an artistic way in one of his “one-minute” stories. It is not by chance that the title of this short writing is: *The Meaning of Life*.

*If a lot of cherry-peppers are strung, we get a cherry-pepper wreath.
But if we do not string them, we won't have a wreath.
Though we have the same amount of peppers, they are just as red, just as hot.
But there is no wreath.
Does it depend on the string? No, not really. The string, as we know, is not important, it is something inferior.
Then what is it?
If we think about this, and try not to let our thoughts wander, but make them follow the right direction, we can find fundamental truths.¹²*

Dezső Kosztolányi, perhaps the greatest twentieth-century Hungarian writer and poet could be quoted after János Balázs about object symbols or object metaphors:

*Only pole and linen,
but not pole and linen,
but flag.
...
My soul, should be, should be-
no pole and linen -
be flag (Flag, 1928)¹³*

Communication, and verbal communication within it, is always more than the amount of its individually added discrete units (sound, morpheme, lexeme, phrase, sentence, turn, text).

3. Communication, semiosis and sign itself belong to a relation system. This is described as a whole world concept in the fable about the blind and the elephant in the Udana collection (cf. Bencze, 1996).¹⁴ Here nothing is equivalent with itself, only in its relations, or rather it is itself in connection with the individual. There is no independent individual, but the individual exists only in relations, and these relations obviously differ and depend on given circumstances. What is common and constant, is the existence that exists necessarily in a relation system and the

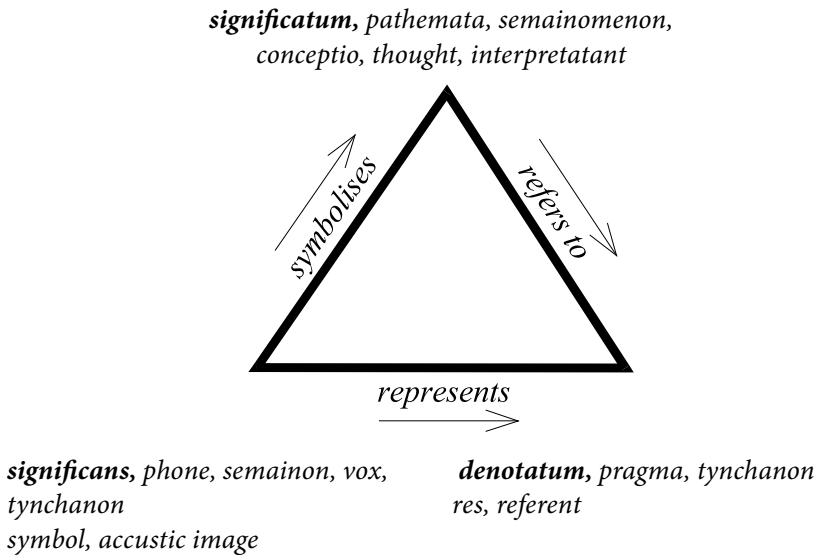
¹² István Örkény, *Egyperces novellák*, Budapest, 1981, 397.

¹³ Dezső Kosztolányi, *Összegyűjtött versei*, Budapest, Szépirodalmi Kiadó, 1964.

¹⁴ Lóránt Bencze, *Style and Interpretation in Verbal Communication*, (BIBLIOTHECA SEPTEM ARTIUM LIBERALIUM), Budapest, Corvinus, 1996, 30.

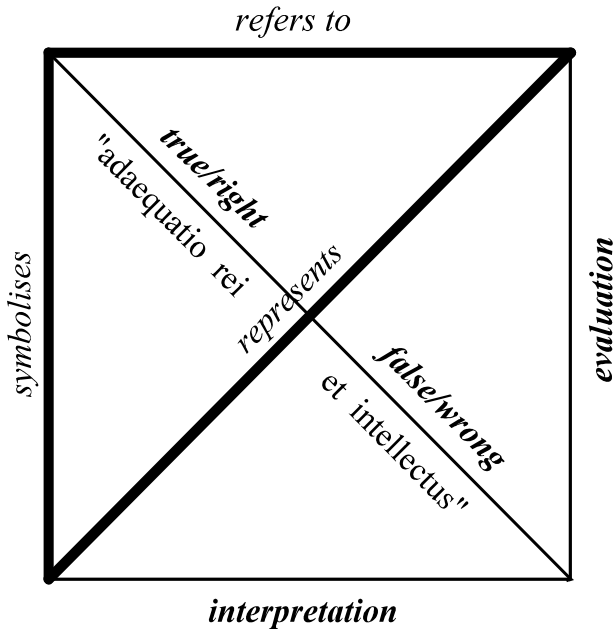
related nature of beings. Beginning with the Christian, more precisely perhaps with Saint Thomas Aquinas's creation concept, the creation of the world by God implies that God keeps the world in constant existence, consequently the world exists only in relation with God, up to the point that bread and wine in relation with the faithful, remain bread and wine in their mere physical and chemical features, but by their nature, namely by their total psycho-socio-somatic relation, they are the body and blood of Christ. Just as a letter is only paper and letters of the alphabet for the postman, yet for me, though it remains paper and letters of the alphabet, beyond that it may mean life or death. The letter transforms itself (*transsubstantiatio*) in relation to me, becomes my mother's letter, my love's letter, such that it is by no means only paper and letters of the alphabet.

To illustrate the above semiogenesis in a relation system and to get nearer to the understanding of the phenomenon that we traditionally call *metaphor* (in its widest sense), we need to outline some traditional and recent terms of sign components and those of the relationship of sign components:



significatum

denotatum

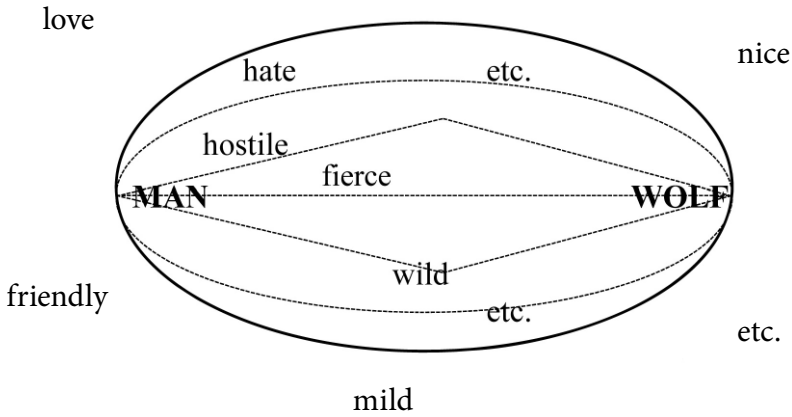


significans

users' knowledge about denotatum

This relation system in the metaphor is a dynamic, oscillating meaning-relation set, some kind of a fuzzy set. It is more or less uncertain what the metaphor might signify but it is clear what it cannot signify. It is similar to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, in which measurement influences the experiment, and we know either the exact place of the electron or its exact velocity, but never both. Similarly, Church communication or councils mostly did not declare dogmas but stipulated what cannot be considered dogma, or what cannot be taught. If we look at it from the point of view of semiosis, anathematizing was the absolute certain recognition of the nature of metaphor and – we might as well add – mystery, in which we certainly know what cannot be said (what kind of semantic marker is excluded), but it is not certain what can be said (what kind of semantic marker is included) within given limits.

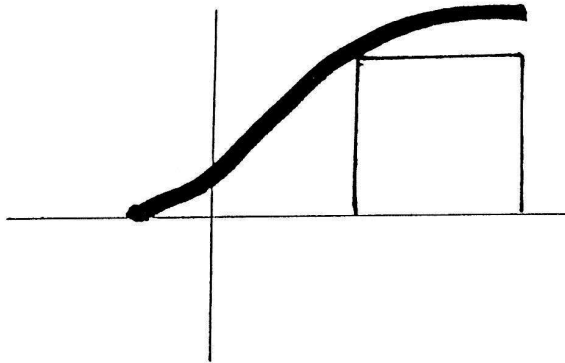
In the famous saying *Homo homini lupus* it can be outlined in the following way:



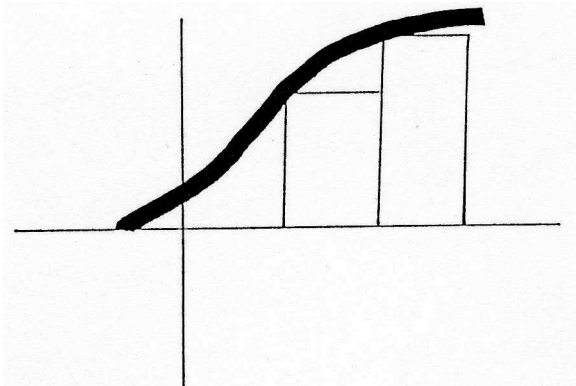
Generalizing and abstract conceptual thinking in contrast with metaphorical thinking select only one or a few of the possibilities (of semantic markers) of the metaphor, and reduce the metaphorical sign. This is why it was important that the anathema always expressed – through abstract, conceptual thinking – only those ideas, i.e. those semantic markers, which were unacceptable for the Church, and not the ones that were acceptable.

4. There is the well-known basic duality in communication that the world itself is *continuum*, but we interpret this continuum as *contiguuum*, i.e. by interconnected and hierarchically arranged discrete elements that we call *categories*. We create the categories in hierarchic order. The first and classical model of the hierarchy of categories is based on the Aristotelian category theory, and it is the so-called *Tabula Porphyriana*. Also zoological and botanical taxonomies originate from this model, as do all kinds of scientific classifications.

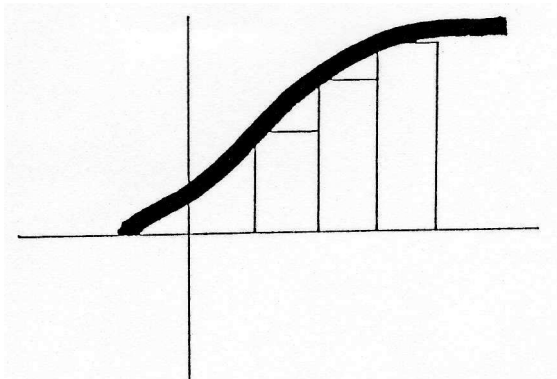
A given society and a given individual operate with smaller and larger divisions/units, or with more or fewer divisions/units depending on how many and what kind of conceptual system relations are needed to interpret the world in a given situational context. Consequently the interpretation of the world in conceptual categories appears as a rougher or finer approach to the world as *continuum*, i.e. in categories the world appears as a *contiguuum* of larger or smaller discrete elements. It can be illustrated by the analogy of the *Lebesgue-approximation*. E.g. the Hungarian word *fa* is the only verbal sign for various concepts (*tree, wood, wooden, timber*):



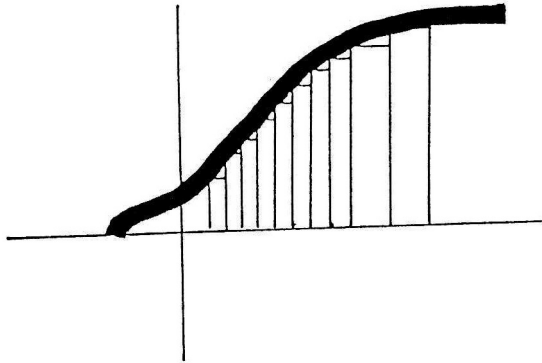
In German two signs are more or less equivalent to the Hungarian *fa*: *Baum*, *Holz*:



English has one verbal sign *bell*, whereas Hungarian uses at least three: *csengő*, *harang*, *kolomp*:



Hungarian has one verbal sign for *snow* (*hó*), whereas the Eskimos use more than fifty:



5. All religions, Christianity among them, prefer a certain kind of sign type. This sign type is called metaphor in semiotics, *trope* in traditional stylistics. Certain variations of this sign type, or metaphor (in a broader sense) characterize everyday language, much more than an average speaker would think. Other variants – I have to stress variants, not uniformity – characterize dreams, tales, legends, myth in general, poetry and rhetorical speeches and texts. Porphyry was the first who thought that myths were symbols, (in our current terminology) metaphors. Much later Vico did the same. This was rediscovered by the 20th-century depth psychology (see more details: Bencze, 1996)¹⁵. But it should not be forgotten that the name of the so-called *Apostles' Creed* or *the Athanasian Creed* is also *Symbolum Apostolorum*, and *Symbolum Athanasium*, and the title of the famous Denzinger handbook, the collection of dogmas is *Enchiridion Symbolorum*.

Symbolon, *assembling*, as we know, was an object broken into two pieces, an object to identify, e.g. a broken coin which would certify the owner, who could claim a previous friendship after a longer absence. Thus it expressed a particular relation and reference. In the 3rd century A.D. it was Saint Ciprian, the bishop of Carthage, who used the word *symbol* to mean *dogma*. The stoics regarded symbols as references concealing philosophical and theological truths; Porphyry has already been mentioned, and the Alexandrian Philo also used *symbols* to interpret the Scripture. This was followed by Origen's allegorical interpretation of the Scripture, and so on. Later symbols, in a special poetic period of European literary history, in the symbolism of the 19th and 20th centuries, received a new application; then in the 20th-century semiotics it became the technical term of an arbitrary (and

¹⁵ Ibid.

conventional) sign (cf. Peirce¹⁶ and the above introduction on the history of the terms *style* and *communication*).

6. A given religion, culture, language, period or writer, all have their own “symbol” systems. A system of such symbols can be called a system of metaphors. From the point of view of theory of science, history of science and sociology of science a system of metaphors is a paradigm of communication. In stylistics, a system of metaphors is a characteristic of style. When religions, cultures, languages, periods and writers are compelled to communicate for some reason, metaphors and metaphor systems clash, disrupt one another, or even the individual and group user, or ultimately the society as the collective user; at this point a change of paradigm takes place. This is similar to the process whereby the virus attaches itself to the DNA molecule, and forces it to form a different kind of cell with different characteristics (cf. Kuhn’s theory)¹⁷. If a lad in India wishes to please his love – some people say – he might call her: *my little elephant*. To address a Hungarian girl this way is not advisable for a Hungarian lad unless he wants to offend her. What is pleasing in one paradigm, can be offensive in another irrespective of the language. When a Gypsy woman whose mother tongue is Hungarian, says to a crook furiously: *Go to hell!* (Menj a pokolba!), a grammar school teacher in the same situation would only say: *What a shame* (Ejnye, ejnye!). The meaning of the two scolding expressions differ, their stylistic values and qualities are not the same either, but in the given usage their reference, pragmatic meaning can be similar, that is to say it could be the mild scolding of the same person by two different speakers (cp. with Frege’s well-known *Abendstern*, *Morgenstern*, *Venus* examples and question, namely the references are the same, but the meaning is different).^{18 19}

At the time when the prophet put a yoke on his neck and walked around the city of Jerusalem, the king arrested him immediately and sent him to jail. If I went around Budapest with a yoke on my neck today, respecting my extravagance, nobody would even notice me, at worst, I would be taken to a mental hospital after a while. The two different kinds of attitudes are the results of two different paradigms. In the first one the yoke is a symbol/metaphor, in the second one it is not a sign simply because it is an unknown object, or it is the sign of something else.

When St. Paul stood on the main square of Athens, and talked about the statue of an unknown god in his preaching, he changed paradigms. The baptism of the

¹⁶ Hartshorne – Weiss Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 1931/1958.

¹⁷ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1962/1970.

¹⁸ Gottlob Frege, *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik: Eine mathematische Untersuchung über den Begriff der Zahl*, I, Breslau, Koebner, 1884, 5.

¹⁹ Gottlob Frege, *Über Sinn und Bedeutung*, *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, 100 (1892), 25–50.

Greeks in the ancient Church involved a change in paradigms, and metaphors different from the Judeo-Christian metaphors emerged. This is clearly shown in St. John's Logos theory. The change in paradigms began much earlier with Philo, with the Septuagint, and the spread of Jewish culture in the Greek language.

The story of Cain and Abel can be considered the memory of an early change in paradigms, where nomadic society clashed with agricultural society, while the author of the text was undoubtedly on the side of the earlier, nomadic society.

When the bishops of the first councils reshaped the image of the Old and New Testament God through the concepts of Greek philosophy, they actually had to face communicational, linguistic and language philosophical questions, the question of reference. They solved this as if it had been God who had solved it about himself and by himself (cf. Bencze, 1995).²⁰ It really means that they were forced to create the theory of the Holy Trinity in the Greek philosophical paradigm (three persons, one nature), not only for biblical or theological reasons, but above all for linguistic, semantic and language philosophical reasons. The same happened in Christology (one person, two natures).

When the first missionaries reached Hungarians or proto-Hungarians, sometime at the beginning of the 5th century or earlier, they tried to change paradigms from the Judeo-Hellenic Christian theology; about the pregnant woman, the Holy Mother (*Boldogasszony*), who gave birth to the world in pagan Hungarian mythology, they said she was the Holy Mary, the mother of God; similarly concerning the Hungarian world-tree that reached the sky in Hungarian sagas, the missionaries said that it was the tree of life, the life-giving cross of Christ. So much so that even in the 14th-century Germany they called the crucifix on which the Christ figure was nailed to a living tree *Ungarkreuz* (Hungarian cross). These missionaries acted like the ancient Church, or St. Paul in his experiment on the Areopagus. When the Jesuit missionaries reached China, and dressed in Chinese clothes, they did the same as well, changed paradigms not only in their clothing, but also manifesting the change in theology. Again the same seems to happen when in the second half of the 20th century in American religious textbooks the apostles, instead of the fishermen's guild, appear as a pop-group, and Peter or his primacy is cast as a solo-guitarist. Similarly, a recent translation of the Bible for a tribal community and language uses *the swine of God* instead of *the Lamb of God*, because lambs are detested and swine are respected. We have to remember that biblical animal metaphors, e.g. *the lion of Judah*, are really embedded in the fauna of the one-time Palestine. What can an Eskimo do with this? And what about the modern child

²⁰ Lóránt Bencze, Reference and Socially Determined Knowledge I., in Richard A. Geiger (ed.), *Reference in Multidisciplinary Perspective: Philosophical Object, Cognitive Subject, Intersubjective Process*, Hildesheim, Olms, 1995, 391–393.

who gets to know the lion in its zoo cage? Furthermore, in the animal and plant metaphors of a given society animals (and plants) are not only defined biologically, actually not biologically in the first place, but culturally. In Hungarian culture for example *deer* are considered *meek*, although deer are the only bloodthirsty wild animals in our forests, as they are not really satisfied with driving away the intruder, but they also kill it.

It is the same with plants. No wonder that in some parts of the world mass is celebrated with banana pieces as Host. The much talked-of *inculturatio* efforts are similar. The only question is, which changes in paradigms can or cannot be successful, acceptable for a *katholikos* Church community, and what are the criteria for acceptance or rejection. Metaphor-symbol is directed towards the whole person, not only the intellect. What gets lost in a new metaphor and symbol or in a new system of metaphors, and what will get distorted in them? What remains of metaphor's *katholikos*? Up to what point is it still *katholikos*, and when is it no longer *katholikos*? (At this point we can think of the question of media communication, which – of course – has different purposes. This is the question of the so-called *broad-casting*, *narrow-casting* and *non-casting*). Why do we call a change of paradigm later successful, that is to say *katholikos*, for example that of St. Paul in Asia Minor or the Hungarian missionaries, whereas we revolt against the thought of another, happening at present, e.g. the banana Host or Peter as a solo-guitarist, even if we are not the Argus-eyed prefect of the religious congregation in Rome? The answer may be found in the seventh analogy.

7. If style in language is the *attire of thought* as Goethe believed on the basis of ancient rhetorics, then style can be changed without alteration of thought. If style in language is the *incarnation of thought* as Coleridge and Dániel Berzsenyi stated also after ancient rhetorics, then the changing of style is not possible without alteration of thought. If a metaphor is the attire of a dogma, the religious metaphor can be substituted for another metaphor without harming, damaging, limiting or abolishing the dogma. But if a metaphor is so to say the incarnation of a thought or a dogma, religious metaphors can never be substituted. Thus, the question of the translation of biblical and liturgical texts leads to the same problem as the question of the change of paradigms, but the latter is broader.

The Church faced the question of change of paradigms from the beginning, and also the semiotic questions of alteration. This meant the renewal and continuance of the Church under different social paradigms. The Church was able to do this because its source, existence and mission is *the* communication itself. Consequently, so that the Church should remain what she is, she had to change continuously, she had to be different from her earlier self. This is, however, an absurdity in logic. It looks a philosophical contradiction. How was this contradiction dissolved, or how could this contradiction really be illusory in the Church that aims at being

katholika? How can this contradiction be merely the paradox of belief, and not a logical contradiction? It is obvious from the above that in using a metaphor a cognitive and a socio-cultural interpretation are implied. Socio-cultural interpretations may differ for geographical, climatic, historical, cultural reasons, and naturally according to other related social conditions. Cognitive interpretation is, however, limited, as mankind is biologically one species and consequently its way of thinking is always and everywhere defined by the same rules. Thus the Augustinian natural signs (*smoke is the sign of fire*) are intercultural. What is uniquely significant in the theory of sacraments of the Catholic Church from a semiotic point of view is that sacraments are archetypal signs and actions. They are related to human life, and in this relation they are reinterpretations of natural signs. That is why semiosis can come into existence in any kind of cultural paradigm, so to say without damaging truth or dogma. Baptism is related to the beginning of life, birth; the last sacrament is related to danger in life, illness and death; the sacrament of marriage to reproduction, etc. However, this does not exclude that a given socio-cultural context – in which we use a metaphor, or in this case a sacramental sign or a biblical symbol or a visual symbol – should postulate the joint operation of the cognitive and the socio-cultural interpretation, and it should partly be its result. For this reason there is a possibility for a balanced, organically built, slow change or alteration of a symbol/metaphor system without losing or damaging the *original dogma*. Thus in theory it can happen that not only a metaphor is changed, but also the whole system of metaphors, whilst the natural signs remain at its core. When the change of a paradigm is considered *successful* in this sense, then beyond the above-mentioned characteristics some kind of an alloy is realised, just as it happened first between Jewish and Greek Christianity, and later between the Judeo-Christian and Greek-Roman way of thinking in Christianity. This happens similarly but not identically (!) to the technique of translation of literary works, when, for example, the translator brings the rhyme used earlier in the original (source language) back after a few lines in a given work (in the target language), or comes across a fairly identical metaphor in the other paradigm. As for example in Hamlet translated by János Arany the idiom *lép a rigónak* (*a bird-lime to a thrush*) can be considered perfectly identical with the Shakespearean English *springes to catch woodcocks* (*hurkok szalonkákat fogni*) both from the point of view of the English and Hungarian grammatical differences, and the point of view of meaning and cultural paradigms.²¹ Frankly, what is lost for the translator on the swings it is gained on the roundabouts. In the successful alteration of a paradigm, a metaphor can be reinterpreted by a metaphor itself. It is well-known that the

²¹ William Shakespeare, *The Illustrated Stratford Shakespeare, Hamlet*, I, 3, London, Chancellor Press, 1982/2002, 803.

introduction of the Gospel of St. John is none other than the reinterpretation of the Logos-theory of the Jewish Old Testament and the Jewish-Hellenic books on *Wisdom*. The creative word of God (of Genesis), later (in writings on Wisdom) the word playing in the presence of God, the personified word becomes a visible person in the interpretation of St. John's Gospel.

This example, however, shows that semiosis cannot be traced back in a simplified way merely to translation. As we shall see, we have to acknowledge that functionally equivalent codes do not necessarily substitute for one another. A given situational context can never be neglected, and it can never be estimated sufficiently so that we could state equivalence with a naive, positivist, scientific certainty. Christian theologians – following the preaching of Jesus and the Early Church – solved the above problem in a way that they talked about prototypes and types in the relationship of the Old and New Testaments, but they did not unconditionally identify them with one another.

The change in paradigms practically threatened catholicity in Christianity even in Jesus's life (the question of the Samaritans, or that of the curing of pagans by Jesus, etc.), and even in the Apostolic Church (the argument of Peter and Paul on the observance of the Mosaic laws). And it is also threatened at the end of the 20th century. If we sum up the research into the semiotic structure of communication with an example, and we approach semiosis dynamically, the much-disputed problem of women priests in the Roman Catholic Church, for instance, can be considered simply as difficulty in communication, or as the question of semiogenesis. So the solution – if there will be any in the Catholic Church – can be found only on a semiotic basis. It is impossible to have women priests in the strongly Near-East-oriented and patriarchal culture-based Christian metaphor system, resting on the thousand or million-year-old natural signs of the masculine and feminine – and on the archetypes of man and woman. It is simply out of the question. In the Old Testament, on which the New Testament is based, only male priests existed, but there were female priests in religions of “pagan” fertility myths. The relation between God and his people was characterized by the prophets in the Old Testament as a metaphoric relation, namely that of a husband and a wife. In the New Testament the internal life of God originates from the metaphoric relation of the *Father* and *Son*; the relation of Christ and the Church is again similar to that of a husband and a wife. Christian mystics describe the relation of Christ and Christian soul in the lovers' metaphor. The Church is feminine in the relationship between Christ and the Church. However, the bearers of the Christian vocation were the apostles first, and later the bishops, all of whom were men without exception, while lay people were – not only in great numbers, but also in their theological nature – *receptive women*. The idea of women priests simply does not fit in this paradigm, in this metaphor system. If the Roman Catholic or the Orthodox Church introduced women priests,

and thus they unexpectedly disregarded this paradigm, this would do more harm than good to the faithful in this ancient paradigm. Until these Churches find the appropriate, socio-culturally prepared change in their paradigms, and a semiotic system, which differs from the earlier, but is still adequate in its contents, woman priesthood is impossible. The question arises whether it is possible, whether there will be such a change in paradigms at all. As in the Church, the relationship between the clergy and the faithful is in correlation with the active man and the passive woman. The distribution of active and passive differs totally in the paradigm of the female emancipation movement. If we look at this emancipation from the earlier, traditional Church and social paradigm, the emancipation movement caused only trouble and chaos with its destruction of the family, with not accepting the responsibility of having children, with free abortion. All the achievements of emancipation – which are achievements from the paradigm of emancipation – have worked against the introduction of women priests in the Catholic Church. Moreover, it is also implied in this semiotic system that through the celibacy of Jesus and the highly praised celibacy in the Roman Catholic Church as the perfect following of Christ, man conquers manly pride and violence, and rejects the subjection of women and the weak. Had Jesus been a woman, he could not have taught this with his existence in this paradigm, because a woman is, as a matter of course, subjected, weak and poor in this paradigm. *He has dethroned rulers, but has lifted the humble high* (Luke 1,52) etc. are the lines of the song that once broke out of a released, redeemed woman. In the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church this woman is the new, already redeemed Eve, whose redemption was the condition that the redemption of man might take place. In the above paradigm, this woman is the metaphor-symbol of a complex moral and world system. She is a uniquely particular archetype because she combines the ideals of *a virgin and a mother* that can be realized in a woman's life sequentially. Today's emancipated woman tries to eliminate both from her life. Therefore in today's socio-cultural paradigm the *childless-whore* archetype, the *well-dressed female consumer* type have taken the place of the *virgin mother* archetype. It was the reformation that paved the way to the deconstruction of the *virgin mother* archetype (verbal information from the presbyterian Imre Lázár PhD).

In the 20th century it can be expected that – from the point of view of semio-genesis – a new and functionally combined change of paradigms could take place in the Roman Catholic Church, but I do not dare to state that it will happen. By no means in the near future. However, it is possible that a part of this change has already taken place unobservedly by the Roman Church. The 20th-century change might not have needed such outstanding figures as Luther and Calvin. Consequently the Reformation of the 20th century may already have taken place in the Catholic Church, or it may be happening just now in a way that those who

live it do not perceive it and do not consider it reformation. We may remember that using incense in the paradigm of the ancient Church was a greater sin than adultery. Using incense in a later paradigm of the Roman Catholic Church became an integral part of her liturgy. An act of sin in one paradigm became an act of virtue in another. It could happen for the metaphor of using incense was reinterpreted and reevaluated with the change of paradigms.

Reformation in the 16th century was an attempt to change paradigms, and the change took place in the Catholic Church paying the price of the Protestant breakaway. From a Catholic point of view, it is beyond doubt that Christian information, namely the dogma system suffered and was reduced by Protestantism. The Second Vatican Council was supposed to bring change in paradigms, and I dare to say it partly fulfilled this task because it established a limited change, which was widely considered as a kind of balancing act towards Protestantism. However, it is a shallow superficial opinion.

The theology or theological aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar seems to be a more profound, rational solution, or at least it seems to lead to a feasible solution. One of the central ideas of this theological aesthetics is image and imagery (... *das Bild, das das endliche Weltwesen notwendig ist, im ewigen Ur- und Überbild eingeborgen werden kann...*)²² The following detail of chain of thoughts: Bencze, 1996 etc.)²³ Balthasar rejected the two extreme standpoints, namely

the (rationalist) attempt at constructing a mere conceptual language (rational), and the (idealistic-mystical) attempt at constructing a language without concepts, a language consisting merely of images.

The starting point is the same in both extremes, i.e. how to grasp phenomena, how to judge the imperfect relation between phenomenon and what we want to depict. Both arrive at the same emptiness:

*Beide Systeme vermögen die Beziehung zwischen Erscheinung und Erscheinendem nicht herzustellen; beide sind Spielformen eines gleichen grundlegenden Mangels. Beide wissen zwar um das Vorhandensein eines Geheimnisses, aber da das eine die Wahrheit im begrifflosen Bild, das andere sie im bildlosen Begriff sucht, gelangen beide nur zu einem leeren Geheimnis.*²⁴

The metaphysical is empty without the metaphorical, the metaphorical without the metaphysical remains blind (Das Metaphysische ohne das Metaphorische ist

²² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit: Eine theologische Ästhetik, III., II., I.*, Einsiedeln, Johannes, 1961–1969, 81.

²³ Bencze, *Style and Interpretation*, 241.

²⁴ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theologik*, Vol. 1, Einsiedeln, Johannes, 1985–1987, 150–151.

leer; das Metaphorische ohne das Metaphysische bleibt blind). (Söhngen quoted by Balthasar).²⁵ ²⁶ Therefore Balthasar, on the one hand, keeps the well-known scholastic theory of knowledge principle (*there is nothing in the intellect which had not been in the senses earlier*), and on the other hand, he emphasizes the ancient character of imagery, i.e. that of metaphors (emphasized by Vico and in romanticism by Herder and Goethe).²⁷ Imagery inevitably induces concepts and phenomena in people, but images/metaphors cannot be entirely put together out of concepts. (Semantics would probably use here the term *seme* instead of the term *concept*). An image/metaphor can be decomposed into concepts by analysis, but the conceptual abundance of images always remains. An image/metaphor is always more than the concepts which are its components, and the amount of concepts which emerges from the image/metaphor²⁸ (cf. above with the certain and uncertain elements of metaphor, or the illustration *homo homini lupus*). The transcendental concepts of beauty and truth are expressed in the perfect unity of an image. The image is eternal surplus–secret which constantly urges us to find new knowledge²⁹ (cf. *sensus plenior – the concept of a more complete meaning*). Images are not incomprehensible cryptographs, but meaningful signs of reality.

Die Bilder sind gewiß nicht unverständliche Chiffren, sondern unmittelbar deutbare Zeichen der Realität. Aber diese Zeichen müssen nicht anders behandelt werden als die Buchstaben in einem Buch: man sieht sie, man liest sie, und doch steht nicht das Schriftbild im Bewußtsein, sondern der in ihm sich ausdrückende Sinn. So müssen die Zeichen des sich offenbarenden Seins zugleich gelesen und übersehen werden...³⁰

However, images have to be understood in their changeable characters and directedness. Thinking in images is dynamic (*Das Phänomen des Ausdrucks aber war kein statisches; vielmehr lag im Bild die Aufforderung, in beweglichem Denken durch Bild hindurch nach dem Wesen forschen.*)³¹ This might be one of the most important thoughts of Balthasar. Abstraction is alienation in ideation, but in real knowledge, i.e. in the knowledge that exists in images ideation returns to perceptibility.

²⁵ Gottlieb Söhngen, *Analogie und Metapher: Kleine Philosophie und Theologie der Sprache*, Alber, 1962, 87.

²⁶ Balthasar, *Theologik*, Vol. 2, 248, Fussbemerkung 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 150, 152.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 155.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 159.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 175.

Reflexion bedeutet Verzicht auf die Breite und Fülle der bunten wahrnehmung, um einer scheinbar armen leeren Begrifflichkeit willen. ... [Abstraktion ist] ein Verlust gegenüber dem Reichtum der Welt der Bilder... Der Begriff hat die Möglichkeit, sich vom Wahrnehmungsbild zu entfernen, sich in seiner Abstraktheit zu verselbständigen und damit einer ähnlichen Irrealität zu verfallen wie das anschauliche Bild. Er entfernt sich dadurch in einer Weise von der Lebendigkeit der Wahrheit... ihm [=das Denken des Subjekts] in der Gestalt des Seins eine doppelte Regel vorgezeichnet ist: die Buntheit und Fülle der Sinnlichkeit verzichtend preiszugeben in die Eintönigkeit des allgemeinen Begriffs, diesen aber nicht anders zugebrauchen, als in einer immer neuen Hinwendung zur Irrealität der Bilderwelt (conversio ad phantasma), mit welcher verbunden allein der abstrakte Begriff Wahrheit und Leben erhält.³²

There is undoubtedly some kind of abandonment of the conceptual essence in images, but this very conceptual abandonment leads to the essence most. (In der Funktion des Bildes liegt auch *ein wesentlicher Verzicht eingeschlossen, und dieser Verzicht ermöglicht die höchste Offenbarung des Wesens. Es ist der Verzicht des Bildes auf sich selbst als ein für-sich-seienden, für sich wichtigen Realität.*)³³ Images assure the freedom of comprehension-interpretation, (but not its complete liberalisation), as the signs in them are not completely closed entities (cp. with the so-called fuzzy sets as analogy). In the perceptible diversification of an image, essence disintegrates for an individual, just like conceptual abstraction is accompanied by an alienation from essence (*Das Wesen zerfällt in der Buntheit des Bildes genauso wie es sich in der Abstraktheit des Begriffes entfernt.*)³⁴ Thus, some specific non-recurring particular always remains in the perceptible (*Gegeben ist in der Sinnlichkeit ein Besonderes, Individuelles, Partikulßres.*)³⁵ while the conceptual is always general. They are both united in the image itself. This way, the general does not become mere abstraction, but analogical relations are created, just as we do not meet man as such, only its individual realisation.

Das Allgemeine existiert aber ebensowenig außerhalb der Individuen, es manifestiert seine Ganzheit ausschließlich innerhalb ihrer jeweiligen Besonderheit. ... es besteht zwischen beiden eine Unterscheidung ohne mögliche Trennung, ein gegenseitiges sich-Einschließen... Was Mensch sein heißt, erfährt man nur, wenn man einen einzelnen Menschen zu Gesicht bekommt, mit seinem einzel-

³² Ibid., 165–166.

³³ Ibid., 162.

³⁴ Ibid., 166.

³⁵ Ibid., 169.

*nen Charakter, seinem einmaligen unverwechselbaren Schicksal. Aber immer wird dieses Besondere ein Mehr sein gegenüber dem Allgemeinen, das in diesem nicht vorgesehen war, aus diesem nicht einfach ableitbar ist wie eine mögliche Anwendung aus einer allgemeinen Regel.*³⁶

Myth is always the appearance of the general in the specific. (*Der Mythos ist, wie gezeigt, immer das Allgemeine im Besondern.*)³⁷ There is mutual complementation in the relation between language and image concerning interpretation. The interpretation of image and thought is only possible if it is joined by the openness and “co-thinking” (reciprocal text-construction) of the interpreter.

*...daß Begriff und Wort auf die durch unsere Welt hin offenen Sinne und von ihnen vermittelten Bilder angewiesen sind, hat jede Philosophie in irgendeiner Weise anzuerkennen, die aristotelisch-thomanische hat es konsequent durchdacht, wobei immer das Komplementäre mitzubedenken ist, daß das vollkommene, das heißt in seinem Wesen erkannte Bild nicht allein durch die Sinne, die Einbildungskraft und das Gedächtnis, sondern nur durch den schon immer in den Sinnen miteröffneten Geist zustande kommt.*³⁸

In Balthasar’s opinion the boundary between metaphor, parable and allegory is very delicate, as Quintilian already stated.^{39 40} However, it is not important from a theological point of view. What is important is the images and the arche-image of God in the New Testament (*Urbild*), the image of the invisible God (*ikon*, Col 1,15),⁴¹ i.e. Jesus wanted and was able to make himself understood through images.

*Jesus Christus so unentwegt durch Bilder (in allen Spielarten der Gleichnisse) das Wesen und die Ankunft des Gottesreiches verständlich zu machen suchte. ... Die zahlreichen Bilder, die er verwendet, haben einen für die Hörer seiner Zeit und Kultur ohne weiteres verständlichen Sinn, einen, den sie nicht zu begreifen, sondern auch unmittelbar bejahen können.*⁴²

³⁶ Ibid., 172.

³⁷ Ibid., Vol. 2, 239.

³⁸ Ibid., 229.

³⁹ Ibid., Vol. 2.

⁴⁰ Quintilianus, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, trans. M.E. Butler, Vols i-ii, IX, I, Cambridge, Mass, London, Harvard University Press, Heinemann, 1953–1960, 1–2.

⁴¹ Ibid., 240.

⁴² Ibid., 71, 240.

Jesus always indicated to his audience that they should move towards an image comprehension and interpretation, when he began his preaching with *Heaven is similar to...*⁴³ These openings are unmistakable signals, just like the opening in Hungarian folk-tales *Hol volt, hol nem volt* (Once upon a time... cf. below the theory of Origen saying that there are some kind of references [*skandala*] in the text whether it is metaphoric or not, or compare with the opening of the famous Székely leg-pulling riddle: *No, akkor mondjunk! – Well, let's say...!*).

Consequently Jesus is the *expression* (Heb 1, 3), the *image* (Col 1,15; Cor 4,4), the *word* of God (1Jn 1,14; Rv 19, 13). At the same time Jesus can be a *symbol* in Balthasar's opinion, if we consider symbol in its original meaning, as an object broken in two, which put together makes the possessors recognizable and credible for each other (cf. Plato Symposium;⁴⁴ sümballein⁴⁵). This recognition – in Ricoeur's understanding – is also a process.⁴⁶ But the application of the concept of metaphor should be handled with care, because in *analogia entis*, namely the similarity of the beings, which has spread since scholasticism, we have to emphasize greater difference between God and other beings (*major dissimilitudo*), preferably negative theology should be used (i.e. saying what God is not). The basic difficulty was present among the apostles and the audience of Jesus, so to say when should the words of Jesus be interpreted metaphorically and when not, if he did not explicitly refer to them (cf. above). This is the conflict of interpretation (cp. Ricoeur,⁴⁷ Balthasar,⁴⁸ cf. below when literal interpretation spread as a religion established its status).

Balthasar also elaborated another complete theology on the similarities of theatre and mythical language. Similarity was raised by Saint Thomas Aquinas and later by Calvin that the world is *theatrum gloriae Dei* – *the world is the theatre of the glory of God*, i.e. on the *topos* world-theatre.⁴⁹ This is theodramatics, in other words, the divine-human comedy-drama theory (*Theodramatik*). When Balthasar studies Christian theology with the help of the terms of the entire drama theory, drama history and theatre performance, he really does not do anything else but translates the ancient, symbolic and mythical language into the language of a present-day field of art (European drama), more precisely into the language of present-day sciences and humanities (the language of drama theory) – it seems, *salva veritate*, i.e. with the aim of saving the original content. This aim appeared

⁴³ Cf. *ibid.*, 72.

⁴⁴ Patón, *Összes művei*, Budapest, Európa, Bibliotheca Classica, 1984, 191d.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁴⁶ P. Ricoeur, *Conflict des interprétations*, Paris, Seuil, 1969, 324.

⁴⁷ P. Ricoeur, *Le métaphore vive*, Paris, 1975.

⁴⁸ Balthasar, *Theologik*, Vol. 2, 249.

⁴⁹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Válogatás a teológus műveiből*, trans. Ferenc Szabó – Gábor Kerényi, Mai írók és gondolkodók, 3, Róma, Detti, 1989, 35.

in the work of Protestant Paul Tillich⁵⁰ and others, and even in official Roman Catholic Church statements.⁵¹ These efforts can be traced back to the influence of Karl Barth, who considered historical criticism merely *thinking after* (*Nachdenken*), whereas the real interpretation of biblical texts is *thinking together* (*Mitdenken*). In the latter an indirect identity is established between the exegetist/reader and the biblical author, and the Bible becomes the reader's own idea. *The relation of this God to this man is established* (cp. Barth,⁵² Balthasar⁵³). Balthasar also relies on this, and therefore Christian theology and Christian religion in his interpretation are no other than hermeneutics, in which the hermeneutics of the former is directed towards the latter, while the hermeneutics of the latter gives the norm to the former.^{54**} As a consequence there is a certain restriction in interpretation, which is combined with a certain freedom in interpretation (cf. the question of actualisation and manipulation in interpretation⁵⁵). This harmony of restriction and freedom, namely the limitation of both is the same for every (verbal or sign-like) manifestation, similar to the possible interpretations of the metaphor in contrast with the theories of total deconstruction and total reconstruction (cf. above the interpretation of the anathema, or the illustration: *man is to man a wolf*).

8. The appearance of the media in the 20th century accelerated the change in paradigms, or at least forced acceleration on the Church. One of the most famous representatives of the media wrote about the *idiot media*. In this paradigm a media consumer on the other hand is a *consumer idiot* (Gábor Czákó, verbal information). As a consequence of the already mentioned so-called *broad-casting*, *narrow-casting* and *non-casting*, the media censors in such an effective way that Church censorship never rivalled it, only the communist terror came close to it. The freedom of speech propagated by the media is rather pseudo-freedom, just as the Great October Revolution was a pseudo-revolution in Antal Szerb's opinion, or pseudo-change happened in the political system of the Eastern-European countries in 1989, and

⁵⁰ Paul Tillich, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. I-X, Stuttgart, Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1959/1968.

⁵¹ *L'interprétation de la Bible dans l'Eglise*, La Documentation Catholique 91, 1994, 13-44.

⁵² Karl Barth, *Szöveggyűjtemény Karl Barth műveiből*, ed. József Poór, trans. Károly Pröhle, Budapest, 1984, 98-102.

⁵³ Balthasar, *Válogatás*, 49.

⁵⁴ ** *Sofern alle Theologie Auslegung der göttlichen Offenbarung ist, kann sie als ganze nur Hermeneutik sein. Sofern aber auch die Offenbarung Gottes in Jesus Christus Selbstausslegung Gottes ist – worin zudem Gottes eigene Deutung seines Weltplans im ganzen und im einzelnen enthalten sein muß –, ist auch sie Hermeneutik. Die erste kann nur auf die zweite hin ausgerichtet und durch sie normiert sein. Aber da die zweite sich nicht in sich selber abschließen kann, ohne die Freiheit des Menschen und damit sein freies Verstehen zu berücksichtigen, ist diese zweite wiederum auf die erste hin offen* (Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theodramatik*, II/I, Einsiedeln, Johannes, 1973-1983, 81.).

⁵⁵ *L'interprétation*, 1994, IV.

the pluralism of the media is entirely pseudo-pluralism. The consumer idiot will never know what really happens in the world because the completely free “game” of the media with *broad-casting*, *narrow-casting* and *non-casting* makes it almost impossible. Since in this game we never know when manipulation takes place and to what extent, manipulation is almost complete and perfect. The media create the world for the media consumer. The media choose elements, fragments, viewpoints, etc. of the existing world, and put them together arbitrarily. The duality of fiction and reality in earlier literary forms (novel, narrative, travel diary) simply ceased to exist. The manipulation produced by digital technique cannot be proven and followed. A consumer idiot has a theoretical right to freedom of opinion and information, but in practice he hardly can live and hardly lives with this right. He neither has the time nor the money for this. What can the poor consumer idiot do if he goes to protest *against* the government, and in the evening he can see himself in the news cut in the wrong way at the protest *for* the government. If a typical corner is not filmed near him, how can he prove which protest he took part in, and who will be interested in it the following day, or three days later if any correction happens at all.

It is possible in any changes of a paradigm that what appears an unsolvable question in one paradigm, does not even appear in the other (cf. *incensing* above). In Christianity for example *sin* and *redemption* (the latter is a paradigm which emerged in the time of an ancient economy and slave society), *good* and *evil*, *true* and *false*, *sincerity* and *falsehood*, etc. are concepts excluding each other, contradicting each other; they are constantly, obsessively reoccurring Christian concepts in the opinion of a radical liberal society. These concepts simply do not exist in the media. Consequently, with a slight exaggeration, the communication of the Church and the media is nothing other than the conversation of the deaf. Sometimes it happens that the Church – just like in the analogy of the Indian boy’s love declaration – addresses the media or today’s society, and the address seems the same as if the Hungarian boy addressed the Hungarian girl by saying: *my little elephant*, and of course the *idiot media* and the *consumer idiot* are offended. Well, naturally it is also true the other way round. Both the media and today’s Hungarian society are against life, family and children if we consider them from the paradigm of the Church. It is indisputable that the Church cannot give up her standpoint, cannot be against life, family and children. The question is whether the standpoint of the Church could be expressed in the paradigm of the media. It could be done, yet it will be a difficult, painful process to change paradigm in her communication. In other words, how can the Church manage to have a change of paradigm exclusively in communication, and at the same time ensure that dogmas do not change, get distorted or disappear. The Church ought to change to the fast and effective paradigm which characterizes the media. It was in this way that

Apostle Paul did not begin his preaching with condemning idolatry, but talked instead about the idol of an unknown god, without approving polytheism. (From a rhetorical approach Apostle Paul used the device of insinuation with success at the beginning of his preaching, but without success at the end.)

However, there are some means the Church cannot use, and some in which it cannot compete with the media, even if the Church acts in accordance with “*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season*” (2Tm 4, 2). Yet the Church should communicate, if possible, in the paradigm of her audience, as Jesus’s preaching took place in the paradigm of his contemporary audience (Near-East, agricultural-nomadic, etc. society). What is the case today? What is the current paradigm?

First of all, we have to acknowledge that the media does not belong to the Church, and it never will, the Church has missed the opportunity. The Church has no media experts in Hungary. Today’s religious programmes broadcast on radio and television are sometimes rather anti-Christian in their impact for they are not media-like. Actually, they show an old-fashioned socio-cultural paradigm on the screen and through the microphone. Neither the archaic Hungarian of the Protestant sermons, nor the baroque scenery of the Catholic mass broadcasts are really media genres, especially if consumer idiots have to watch them in pubs. I asked a pious, twelve-year-old boy, who attended mass and religious teaching regularly, what would happen if television broadcasts of religious teaching were shown in pubs. He reacted: *They would throw beer bottles into the TV screen* – and he showed how to throw the bottle with great expertise. He did not know that religious teaching could be watched on television in pubs, for he did not visit pubs, yet he knew what to expect from the crowd living in a different paradigm. How come Church leaders, priests, ministers who organize these broadcasts, do not know it? Why is it not on their agenda? Why is it not clear that all media programs are for a heterogeneous audience? Both competent and non-competent, both the faithful and non-believers can watch it everywhere, in bed, at the sink, in a pub, and in ministries. Why do they have mass broadcastings in pubs, and make lovers watch it in bed?

Effective ways of giving information must be acquired not only in theory but in practice, and in the paradigm in which we live, using the language and the means of the media, but with certain distinctions. Similarly, the New Testament was written in Greek, and also the classic European (pagan) culture was available in Greek, but the two cannot be considered the same. From a certain point of view the two cannot be separated, but at the same time they cannot be confused.

To use a quite rough and simplified example, but still quite well-founded one: A parish priest is not supposed to post advertisements on the door of the parish church with a naked woman hugging the ad, as happens in certain media commercials, in order to draw the attention of the people to priests, churches, and the

Church. This really would be a change in paradigm. But the result is questionable. For the very reason that people would note only the change in paradigm not the advertisement itself. I, myself, have had similar experiences in teaching. The image which draws the attention beyond measure, the extremely special analogy (in other words the mode of transmission) fascinated my students and took the place of the information (the message) I intended to convey. After all the Church should not compete with the media in the sense that it should pour out better hogwash for the consumer idiot than the media. Firstly, because there is a possibility that she will not succeed in producing hogwash, and secondly because pouring out hogwash contradicts quite obviously the mission of the Church. It is similar to the situation when a priest wants to become a pimp so as to *get closer to the people and have a sense of reality*, etc. I can tell in advance that he will not be successful. In the first five minutes somebody will strike a knife in his back. If not, he will starve because he will talk the girls out of their work, he will not beat them, etc.

Failure does not easily go away and lasts a long time because it is not only the Church who cannot change paradigm or only with difficulty. Ordinary people cannot do it either, least of all scientists. In 1993 a proud professor from one of the well-known universities in Hungary asked a Catholic professor who taught at a re-established Catholic college: *“Just tell me whether the clerics suppress you?”* “No” said the appalled Catholic professor. *“There is no Catholic priest at our College. Theology is taught by a young father of three.”* But the Marxist professor from the university did not give up easily and asked a further question: *“Do you have to wear a cassock?”* Seeing this stupidity the Catholic teacher almost lost his patience and said: *“No, it is compulsory to wear the latest fashion.”* And this was the end of the edifying conversation. Stupidity remained petrified. This professor instructs future teachers in pedagogy at the university.

From the standpoint of semiosis this university professor is neither dull nor stupid. Simply he cannot change paradigms. In fact priests or the faithful who think according to the traditional Church paradigm are unable to understand why liberal parents who grew up on pornographic fiction revolt against the crucifix in a school. Speaking in the paradigm of such parents, one can say they revolt at the sight of the *convulsing, bloody, naked body of a man nailed on the gallows*. Let us try to think about it a while. Had Jesus not been crucified in the Roman way, but been executed on the gallows, we would wear small, silver gallows and not crosses. Churches would be full of gallows, the bishop would wear gold gallows on gold chain, and so on. And if Jesus had died for us in the twentieth-century America, we would have small electric chairs on our necklaces. It is really horrible just to think of this for us Christians in our traditional paradigm. However, as *God sacrificed his only-begotten Son on the cross*, it obviously implies the image of ancient, superstitious human sacrifice. When the soldiers of King David besieged a

town, the king of the town sacrificed his son on the town wall, and David's soldiers marched away because from that time on they thought the town unconquerable (cf. the Hungarian Kelemen Kőműves Ballads). The same happens if we consider that in the Eucharist we take Christ's body and blood. From the point of view of another paradigm, this is nothing else than sublimed cannibalism. The metaphor of the love act found in the Old and New Testaments is interpreted literally in certain religions and Christian sects. And when a bishop in the 4th century tore the picture of Christ off a church wall, or later the icons were broken into fragments, it was nothing other than disruption in interpretation. It was not noticed that *unio mystica* is really *unio semiotica*. We can say after Heidegger that a metaphor-symbol interpreted as a non-metaphor or as a metaphor is similar to that of striptease and artful fashion. Striptease hides beauty by showing a woman's body whereas refined dressing reveals beauty by concealing the body.

The changing of interpretation itself is a change in paradigm. István Vas, a Hungarian poet – for quite different reasons and without semiotic terms – stated in the 1960's that Judaism was graphocentric in the first thousand years B.C. if we compare it to the iconcentric religions which surrounded it. We can add that when a religion becomes rigid, the interpretation of its sacred texts will become graphocentric to such an extent that the metaphors are interpreted literally (cp. the metaphors of Exod 13, 14–16 and Deut 6, 1–8 and the development of tefillim). How rigid is the religion of the Roman Catholic Church? And to what extent does she interpret her metaphors as non-metaphors? At the very moment when a metaphor is not interpreted as a metaphor, the question of interpretation in communication becomes simplified. A sacred text, for example, can easily be translated into another paradigm or language, but at once this religion is stuck in a ghetto that is surrounded by an iron-curtain. Origen⁵⁶ observed previously, the laws and moral principles of sacred texts cannot be interpreted as metaphors. But at the moment when we interpret any texts non-metaphorically, we treat it as a law (cp. tefillim above), and there is no way out. In the second half of the twentieth century, liberation theology in Latin America, which developed under the pressure of external social and cultural paradigms, does not differ in any way from tefillim. The image of biblical redemption and that of liberation, the glorification of the poor and weak, etc. originally really referred to social poverty and political liberation. However, in the Old Testament usage and quite certainly in the New Testament, this terminology is metaphorical and refers to moral conduct. They cannot only

⁵⁶ Origen, *De principiis*, Origenes Werke, Fünfter Band, De principiis, IV, Hrsg. Im Auftrage der Kirchenväter-Commission der Königl. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften von Hofrat prof. Dr. Paul Koetschau, Berlin, J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1913, 2, 9.

be taken literally. Indeed if we follow the development of the usage of metaphors, in the first place they should not be taken literally.

When a religion is institutionalized, its *preaching*, message become theology, just like philosophy it will proclaim abstract, general, timeless truths in contradiction to its early paradigm, which was a given message in a given situational context. Stress is strongly shifted towards the particular message in the case of prophets, charismatics, founders of religious orders, in the life of saints, with Buber's terminology⁵⁷ towards *I and Thou* relation. As soon as a saint founds a religious order or writes rules, his charismatic movement becomes institutionalized, the particular situation becomes general, the unique novelty becomes accepted paradigm (cf. Balthasar's quoted concept on the relation between image and concept, and their complementation).

In Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church compared to graphocentric Protestantism and iconocentric Eastern Christianity seems to be the representative of a comprehensive semiosis. Stress in the Catholic Church is not only on verbal signs, words, iconic and metaphoric signs or their conceptual expression (i.e. on theology), but on semiosis itself. This is the reason for sacraments, these complex signs mediating grace, which have been emphasized in the Catholic Church. Therefore not only denominations, but also ecumenism is a question of semiotics. In the Catholic Church both verbal and visual communication – the communication of the five senses altogether – mediate grace, as the incarnation of *Logos* included semiosis manifested by all five senses (cf. *Communio et progressio*).⁵⁸ For the faithful, Jesus was not only a master of effective communication, but he was *the* communication of God himself.

The Church and incarnation contradict with one of the most immoral media principles which says: *information is sacred, opinion is free*. The etymology of the word information shows (*in-formare*, to intrude on somebody and mould him – after Károly Csébfalvi, but also cf. *Concilium*)⁵⁹ that this is a lie. I usually illustrate this by one example, and this might be sufficient. A mother visited her daughter in a hospital. Entering the ward she saw her daughter's empty bed and asked the patient in the next bed: "*Where is my daughter?*" The patient answered: "*In the mortuary.*" This answer carefully complied with and observed the sacred media principle. The patient told the truth, not his opinion. But he did not take into consideration that the information intrudes on the other person and moulds that person. It kills or keeps living beings alive from the communication of the

⁵⁷ Martin Buber, *Ich und Du*, 10., Auflage, Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1979.

⁵⁸ *Communio et progressio* on the means of social communication written by order of the Second Vatican Council, 1971.

⁵⁹ *Concilium*, 1995, 31/3.

protozoa onwards to the personal communication of man. For the faithful, in the incarnation of Christ and in the foundation of the Church by Christ, Christ informed, and God informed the world.

The trinity of the Gospel, the Church and society with its given culture are in dynamic interaction.⁶⁰ Members of the Church have to acknowledge that our entire *knowledge is socially justified*.⁶¹ The knowledge justified by the Church is a certain interpretation of the Gospel, and it is confronted with the socially justified knowledge. The Church, as the continuation of Christ's work, should not only be speaker-oriented – as she is now, just as God would be in himself without the world he created. The Church should be also listener-oriented, just as Jesus was in his parables. The Church should be like God is in Christian faith, i.e. a Holy Trinity, who is the creator of the world, who was incarnated to redeem the world and who has manifested his internal life to the world.

Therefore, Christian communication will be effective if beside an adequate change in paradigm and semiosis, the Church finds a complex, integrated, comprehensive – in this sense *katholikos* – communication, which evades and surpasses the media. Now the media, under the leadership of the *intolerant liberal orthodoxy* (it is again an American socio-political term!) are on the point of becoming a conservative, out-dated means of communication. In the current socio-cultural paradigm, the Christian good news (*Gospel*) can only be professed effectively against the media through means that are technically and with regard to semiogenesis at a more advanced stage than what we call media today.

One of the possibilities could cost a great deal of money. However, the Church does not really have capital, so some other ways should be sought. Nowadays there are hundreds of multi-millionaires who have much more money than the Vatican with its much talked about richness. I would like to illustrate the way out again with an analogy. When the production of popular films, which attracted millions of people, started to cost hundreds of millions of dollars, some brilliant directors made films for ten thousand or even for one or two thousand dollars. These films, costing only a few thousand dollars, brought in just as much profit. We have to look for such “films”, or we just have to find them because they exist. Only a fragment of the budget of the traditional Churches in Hungary should be spent on this purpose in the next few years. There are still some Christian experts, they are ready with their elaborated programs, but Church authorities have not invited anybody to do the job. Church authorities have no idea of paradigms changing around them.

In human communication both coding and decoding depend on culture. They

⁶⁰ Robert J. Schreiter, *Abschied vom Gott der Europäer: Zur Entwicklung regionaler Theologien, Mit einem Vorwort von Edward Schillebeeckx*, Salzburg, Pustet, 1992, 43.

⁶¹ Philip J. Davis, *Applied mathematics as social contract*, ZDM 1, 1988, 11.

take place in a situational context, but semiosis itself is given in man. In communication, a message appears in a certain socio-cultural paradigm. Message and paradigm must not be confused, though they cannot be separated either – especially not in metaphors. The earlier mentioned cognitive and socio-cultural interpretation also cannot be separated and must not be confused either. This double opposition allows for the possibility of reading a message but makes it also very complicated. The development of the Church in her entire history – from a semiotic-stylistic viewpoint – is nothing other than the fulfilment of this possibility.⁶² This possibility is a kind of Christological model (*inseparability and inconfusability*). This model gives the Church not only the possibility but also the certainty in communication to generate semiosis at the time and in the case of a change in paradigms. If either the principle of inseparability or that of unconfusability is violated, the message is damaged, and troubles occur in communication. When members of the Church are inclined to judge literary, cultural and media phenomena, they tend to break the principle of inconfusability. They do not notice the special signs (*skandala* in Origen's terms) in the way or genre of communication or in the different circumstances of situational context, though – as I have mentioned above – Origen previously called the attention to them. Origen's idea could direct us in interpretation, practically indicating: *watch out, this is not your world, it is different, this is a metaphor in this paradigm*. In such cases, members of the Church are inclined to act in the same way as a country woman, when she sent money to the slave heroine of a Brazilian television series. At the same time, the metaphorical meaning is inseparable from the non-metaphorical (literal) meaning. We cannot, so to say, throw out the so-called original meaning from the metaphorical meaning because the metaphorical meaning is based on the original one, as Aristotle stated.⁶³ In other words, we must not violate inseparability. This happens in the banana mass, at least for the traditional European Christians.

Traditional rhetoric dealt with this as a question of onomasiology and semasiology. Accordingly, it may happen that we have the *name*, but there is confusion about what it refers to. Jesus's name is in the New Testament, but it can also appear in a novel. The *name* is the same, but the content is not necessarily the same, and we do not have to expect the same content. Naturally, for the members of the Church Jesus's name is inseparable from the Jesus of the Christian faith, and therefore Jesus's name and figure is interesting in any kind of context. But the faithful must know that Jesus may appear in another paradigm.

⁶² Matthias Wörther, *Vom Reichtum der Medien: Theologische Überlegungen, Praktische Folgerungen*, Würzburg, Echter, 1993, 68.

⁶³ Aristotle, *Topica*, transl. introd. E. S. Forster, Cambridge, Mass, 1960, 139b. See also Lóránt Bencze, *Uncertainty Principle and Symmetry in Metaphors: Computers & Mathematics with Applic.*, Vol. 17, No. 4–6, (1989), 697–708.

It may also happen that the content is similar or the same, but the *name* differs. These are Christ-like figures, characters of a novel or film. They must be discovered by the faithful even if quite different names are used. But the faithful should not confuse the grains of truth with Truth itself, the *logoi spermatikoi* with the personal, incarnated *Logos*.

Inseparability and inconfusability can be found in other relations (Church – world; grace – nature). The Church exists in the world, but cannot be identified with the world, thus she exists unconfusably with the world. In the relation of the two sexes, for example, love and sexuality are inseparable but cannot be confused. Nowadays Christians on the one hand tend towards separation, radical liberals on the other hand towards confusion.⁶⁴

We can state (mainly following Balthasar) that in communication and semio-genesis which is the Church herself, there is always a particular communication, as it is lived by the faithful here and now. But there is communication as such, communication in itself, incarnation, independent from a man, even if he does not live in it. In other words, inseparable and inconfusable, according to the analogy of the Christological model.

ON THE LITURGY AS ECOSEMIOSIS

It is a general Christian teaching that the Church, the deeds of the church, her words, especially the sacraments are signs that

mediate grace,
mediate divine life,
fulfil human life.

According to speech act theory, these signs can be said to be illocutions or/and perlocutions or performative verbs, at least for the faithful.⁶⁵ Various types of liturgical performances (eucharist, liturgy of the word, prayer in the community etc.) are always

calls for action and/or
performance of action and/or
fulfilment of what is said for the faithful who participate in it (e.g. declaring a marriage).

In the “technical terms” of the New Testament the words that are uttered (by Jesus and by the Church) come true immediately (cf. Lk 4,21; Mt 8,8; Lk 7,7). It is also well-known that Thomas Aquinas put *sacramenta in genere signi*, i.e. he looked

⁶⁴ Ibid., 82.

⁶⁵ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford, 1962.

at sacraments as sign types.⁶⁶ He was and the Roman Catholic theology has ever since been interested first of all in the *defectus* of sacraments, i.e. – in linguistic terms – how a speech act is damaged or how and to what extent communication fails in sacraments. Theologians have also been interested in categorizing liturgical acts, in defining subtypes of them, and have been preoccupied with the possibilities of interpreting them (i.e. which should be interpreted as law, which as allegory, etc.). In the theology of the Eastern Church, liturgy has been religious teaching and religious experience.⁶⁷ This attitude of the Eastern Church was neglected in the Western (Latin) Church – except in the practice of the Benedictines – till the liturgical movements of the 19th–20th centuries. The reason for this neglect was the overemphasis of the *ex opere operato* factor in the West.

Following the viewpoint of Thomas Aquinas and considering the question from the viewpoint of semiotics, it is obvious that if the sacraments are sign types, they are in one *genus* with human speech. Besides, sacraments are connected not only to human speech acts but also to human nature as a whole for they are connected to basic turning-points of human life, e.g. the sacrament of baptism is connected to birth, the sacrament of marriage is connected to sexuality and race preservation, etc. That is why liturgy as religious experience and as communication is also a kind of ecological system. It is also a pattern that reinforces ecological thinking and acting in those who participate in it. Liturgy is a vital part of human communication and of (human) ecology. According to the Christological model liturgy, communication and ecology cannot be separated and cannot be confused.

The sine qua non of liturgy and that of the sacraments as signs within the liturgy are

the matter (*materia*), i.e. perceivability, and

the symbolic/metaphorical nature, i.e. the perceivable thing symbolizes and refers to something else, it is not simply itself, it is for something else. The symbolic/metaphorical nature is not just the result of a cognitive procedure. It is of psychosocio-somatic character and is socio-culturally justified in a given community.

Attention must be called to the fact that information flowing in communication is *in-forming* – as the etymology of the word reveals it. Information penetrates into human personality and forms it (cf. above ch. i.). Information is creative.^{68 69}

⁶⁶ S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Opera omnia* ut sunt in indice thomistico additis 61 scriptis et ex aliis medii aevi auctoribus curante Roberto Busa S. I., III, qu., Stuttgart – Bad Cannstatt, Fromann-Holzboog, 1980, 83.

⁶⁷ Alexander Schmemmann, *Liturgy and Life: Lectures and Essays on Christian Development Through Liturgical Experience*, 2nd ed, Department of Religious Education, New York, Orthodox Church in America, 1983.

⁶⁸ Bencze, *Style and Interpretation*, 11.

⁶⁹ *Concilium*, 1995, 176.

In the liturgy the experience through the five senses is semiogenesis at the same time. This experience is a symbolic/metaphorical one, and is a type of holistic human communication, for liturgy is connected not only to

the five senses, but also to
turning-points of human life as mentioned above, to
seasons, to
constellations of the sun, moon and stars, i.e. to the
cosmos.

The place of the liturgy is also a metaphorical sign, the shaping of the liturgical space is also a sign and/or a system of signs. This architecture of the liturgical place is also of psycho-socio-somatic character. This character includes the socio-culturally justified cosmic determination. We can think of the churches in an eastward position, of light effects in churches, pictures and statues and their arrangements, black Madonnas in Africa, etc. Thus the liturgical space communicates just like people and objects in it.

The liturgy prefers both verbal and non-verbal signs that are iconic, especially metaphors (cf. the categorization of signs by Peirce).⁷⁰ As we have seen above in metaphors artificial, conventional and iconic signs amalgamate in a special harmony. Certainty and uncertainty in the interpretation of a metaphor are a semiotic incarnation of predictable and unpredictable, of expected and unexpected.

In theological terms the aim of semiosis in liturgy is *metanoia* (*conversio*), i.e. radical conversion of life, a renewing without destroying. In ecological terms the aim of the liturgy is to achieve a sustainable development of man and his physical and socio-cultural environment, i.e. to achieve balance and harmony without the extermination of conflicting factors. The idea of ecological democracy is a struggle for harmony by preserving opposites without curtailing them within reasonable limits. The violent elimination of opposites in human society is tyranny, while the violent freedom of opposites is anarchy. In ecology both have been eliminators of balance ever since homo sapiens appeared on earth with his autonomy. Ecological thinking cannot even exist without theonomy. Theonomy – in opposition to autonomy that characterizes modern European thinking and results in the destruction of ecological balance, in merciless exploitation of man and his environment, in environmental pollution beyond description – is a humble approach not only to the Creator of the world, but also to the created world. Creation is not just a past action of unknown temporal distance. It is a permanent creating, i.e. a continuous action of creation without any time limit as Thomas Aquinas suggested, as a free-thinking philosopher and not as a faithful theologian (cf. Sth.⁷¹ *Videtur*

⁷⁰ Hartshorne – Weiss Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 1931/1958.

⁷¹ S. THOMAE AQUINATIS, *Opera omnia*, I, XLVI, 1–2.

quod universitas creaturarum, quae mundi nomine nuncupatur, non incoeperit, sed fuerit ab aeterno. ... Respondeo dicendum quod mundum non semper fuisse, sola fide tenetur, et demonstrative probari non potest: sicut et supra de mysterio Trinitatis dictum est. ... Unde demonstrari non potest quod homo, aut coelum, aut lapis non semper fuit). The basic consequences of theonomic and ecologic thinking and behaviour in man are:

1. A respect of the individual and difference. This respect is that of a social interest. In this respect individuals, persons are planted in the family, nations in the Church, peoples in mankind, reason in emotions, virtues in instincts, grace in nature (as Bishop Prohászka pointed out)⁷².

2. A respect of tradition and an openness to something that is new in opposition to tradition. We are able to walk only if we take a step forward with one leg and leave the other in its place (as an adage by Baron József Eötvös pointed out).⁷³ We look forward all the time like a car driver, yet we have mirrors in our car that enable us to look backwards and sideways if necessary (after Károly Csébfalvi, verbal information).

3. Our love of man and nature manifests itself neither in crazy transformations of man and nature, nor in underutilization or waste. It manifests itself in a wise coexistence of living creatures through the journey of life.

Liturgy can be said to be the main source and shaper of such a theonomic and ecologic thinking and behaviour. Liturgy informs the world of the infinite love of its Creator. The liturgy is an unconditional, universal (*katholikos*) and love-principled participation in the world. Liturgy is a direct support to man who suffers from the world and an indirect support to the world that suffers from man.

Finally, we should not be surprised that the death of God in the 20th century has simultaneously been the death of nature. The consequence of the unlimited autonomy of man was the devastation of the internal and external environment of man. If we look at environmental pollution, nuclear, chemical and political catastrophes that have been taking place up to now in the 20th century, we realize that our rationality of sciences has resulted in a crazy irrationality (e.g. nuclear catastrophes, chemical pollution). Theonomic and universal (*katholikos*) ecological thinking and behaviour have been aborted by capital, by media and politicians controlled by capital and media.

On the contrary, in liturgy one can meet the wisdom of ecology, for liturgy is of theonomic, universal and holistic thinking. Liturgy is the hope and demand for the end of fear, terror and expulsion. The *metanoia* (*conversion, renewal*) that is

⁷² Ottokár Prohászka, *Elmélkedések az evangéliumról*, Róma, Anonymus, 1952.

⁷³ József Eötvös, baron, *Vallomások és gondolatok*, comp., ed. Miklós Bényei, <http://mek.oszk.hu/05200/05249/05249.htm>, accessed 12 February 2017.

required in liturgy is the restoration of achievable harmony and sustainable balance. While ecology is *the relation of plants and living creatures to each other and to their environment*,⁷⁴ liturgy is – as its etymology shows – a common work and a work of community for each other and for each other's environment. Ecological relation and cosmic mutual dependency in liturgy is *koinonia*, i.e. the unity of departed, living and future mankind and world. Liturgy is a unique ecological information flow that is directed by the above-mentioned inseparable and inconfusable respect for the Creator and the creature. For the faithful it includes the revelation of the information flow within the Creator (Holy Trinity), the information flow between Creator and mankind (incarnation of the *Logos* in Jesus Christ) and of course the information flow between Creator and creatures in general (*logoi spermatikoi*). The ecology relation and the information flow include daily giving and receiving, taking and dropping, building and unbuilding, etc. In the liturgy of the faithful, in this common action of a human community, the daily forbidding and allowing takes place (cf. Mt 16,19, *potestas solvendi et ligandi*). Both are to sustain balance and to achieve harmony (following the ideas of *Human Ecology* by Imre Lázár).⁷⁵

According to the above explication, liturgy is also an ecological pattern system that aims at a psycho-socio-somatic synthesis, a holistic life and synergetic actions. Though this pattern concerns the total regulations of the whole man and his environment, yet its actual appearance is socially justified in a given society and culture. Originally, not in the 20th century, bread and wine as sacrificial/metaphorical gifts could appear only in an agricultural society of a given climate, in a society that could produce bread and wine and in which they are items of daily consumption. The same can be said about religious and theological terms. The term *Logos* could appear in the hellenistic society in which it had various meanings like *order, speech, word, order of the world*, etc. The theology of this *Logos* can be partly identical with, partly different from its Hungarian – more or less – equivalent term *Ige*, the meaning of which is connected to *word, verb, yes (igen), true, (igaz), truth (igazság), igéz (to enchant, to charm, to fascinate)* etc. See also the Hamlet translation of János Arany which is similar to, as well as different from Shakespeare's Hamlet (cf. above). Consequently liturgy – as an ecological pattern system and as (metaphorical) actions which aim at sustaining an (human) ecological system – depends also on climatic parameters and can gradually change as much as a given socio-cultural system changes, also depending on climatic differences or changes.

Therefore the symbolic/metaphoric system and the linguistic system of liturgy can gradually change. Verbal and non-verbal metaphors and iconic phenomena in general can be universal (*katholikos*) on the one hand, for and if they are connected

⁷⁴ *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995.

⁷⁵ Imre Lázár, *Human Ecology*, manuscript, 1996.

to universal human phenomena (like baptism is connected to washing with water, etc. cf. above). On the other hand they change, if they are connected to changing (socio-cultural) phenomena (cf. the above-mentioned theologies of *Logos* in Greek and of *Ige* in Hungarian). We can also think of the different and identical semantic markers in *Our Lady, the Holy Mary, Gottesmutter, Regina coeli, Boldogasszony* (“happy woman” in current Hungarian and “pregnant woman” in old Hungarian) and of the identical reference of the enumerated “names.”

Liturgy is an ecological pattern system not only in theory, but in praxis. Liturgy preplays an ecology that man needs to have to sustain human and environmental ecology. It is well-known that the playing of children (and young animals) is a preparation for situations to come in life. Playing is a simulation of expected and unexpected situations. The more we play, the more we might be able to cope with forthcoming events. Thus playing aims at decreasing unpredictability and increasing predictability, i.e. at negentropy. This playing is also similar to first language learning, in which the more attempts at learning a given (phonological, morphological, syntactical, textual, metaphorical) structure, etc. are produced by a child, the more probably and more quickly he will acquire the proper knowledge and usage of a given language phenomenon.

Liturgy is a performance and/or imitation and/or representation of patterns, examples, models, archetypes and archetypical/metaphorical acts. Ancient cannibalism appears in a sublimated and “innocent” way in the eucharist whenever Jesus’s words are repeated: *Take this and eat, this is my body, ... drink from this wine, for this is my blood* etc. Ancient human sacrifice appears in the biblical and theological expressions that God as Father loved the world so much that he sacrificed his only son for it. The so-called *orans* gesture (the opening of arms) is even more ancient. It also reminds us of animals, especially of dogs when they surrender themselves in playing. This gesture is probably the same as that of approaching and embracing a friend, a child or a lover.

The basic difference between liturgy as playing and (theatrical and other types of) playing is that liturgy is not only imitation but also a fulfilment of what is played. What is performed comes true for the faithful (cf. the *Theodramatik* of Hans Urs von Balthazar). Thus liturgy is not just a special system of (metaphorical) sign types, a special system of playing, a performed drama of aesthetic values, etc., but for the faithful, liturgical events are metaphors of real events and real events themselves like Jesus’s death and resurrection were both symbols of rebirth, human sacrifice etc. and real rebirth and real sacrifice. In theological terms liturgy is

the appearance of heaven on earth,
 the appearance the divine in the human,
 the appearance of the supernatural in the natural.

The various technical terms I have used here express various approaches and meanings, but identical references. Following them, we can look at liturgy as a play and simulation that aims at sustaining ecological balance, establishing harmony. Liturgy in its psycho-socio-somatic nature treats and conducts events that are lived by man as tragedies of dissonance and imbalance in his ecology (death and resurrection, birth and rebirth, etc.). Liturgy is a therapy of ecological disaster that occurred to man, and a means of avoiding imminent disasters.

Liturgical play includes dialogues in the sense a dialogue takes place not only between two, but among many. Dialogue in liturgy is not only a cross-cultural communication, but a cross-creature communication (cf. the interpretation of Solomon Marcus that *dia* in Greek does not mean only *two* but also *through*).⁷⁶ Dialogue is a human and linguistic type of ecological information flow as it is mutual. Mutuality in dialogue ensures the respect of the other. The very essence of dialogue is – among others – the acknowledgement of the necessity of mutual attention, mutual dependence, etc. Therefore dialogue is the best means for man to achieve harmony without the elimination of opposites. Liturgy is nothing other than dialogues between God and man, between Christ and Church, between Christ and soul, between priest and faithful, between individual and community, between two people within a community.

If we consider liturgy as a semiotic and ecological play and a guarantor of system it will throw light on some of the crises of Western European (especially Roman Catholic) Churches, on the lack of priests and the uncertainties of the faithful. Both in the Roman Catholic Church and in Protestant Churches priests/pastors became social leaders. This type of leader appears both in the demands of priests/pastors and in the expectations of the faithful. In the terms of analogies and approaches outlined above we can say that priests became *regisseurs*, directors or/and playwrights in the same way that man in Western European thinking won for himself the right to become an absolute ruler of internal (human) and external (environmental) ecology. If we look at the role of a priest at the beginning of the 6th century in the Rule of Saint Benedict, we are shocked to find that a priest is not a leader, not a director, not a manager. He is “simply” a sacramental instrument:

If any ordained priest asks to be received into the monastery, do not agree too quickly. However, if he is fully persistent in his request, he must recognize that he will have to observe the full discipline of the rule without any mitigation ... He should, however, be allowed to stand next to the abbot, to give blessings and to celebrate Mass, provided that the abbot bids him. Otherwise, he must recognize

⁷⁶ Solomon Marcus, A Dialogue about Dialogue: Confrontation Among Various Perspectives, *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique* XXX/1 (1986).

that he is subject to the discipline of the rule ... Whenever there is question of an appointment or of any other business in the monastery, he takes the place that corresponds to the date of his entry into the community, and not that granted him out of respect for his priesthood (Rule Ch. 60. Translation from the edition by Timothy Fry).⁷⁷

He ... must not presume to do anything except what the abbot commands him ... he may not therefore forget the obedience and discipline of the rule ... He will always take the place that corresponds to the date of his entry into the monastery, except in his duties at the altar, or unless the whole community chooses and the abbot wishes to give him a higher place for the goodness of his life. Yet, he must know how to keep the rule established for deans and priors; should he presume to act otherwise, he must be regarded as a rebel, not as a priest (Rule Ch. 62).⁷⁸

In these quotations the role and function of a Christian priest was – so to say – clearly defined and declared. The distinction between *ex opere operato* and *ex opere operantis* was not yet confused and this confusion did not impose an unbearable burden on priests and an irresolvable contradiction on the faithful. In the community planned by Saint Benedict the freely elected head of the community (the abbot) – after his election – runs the community as one man management. At the same time this manager is obliged to ask for the advice of the whole community that elected him, or at least that of the seniors (Rule Ch. 3).⁷⁹ Yet he is not obliged to follow the advice. In addition there is no discrimination concerning either the eligible person as abbot or the persons who may give advice: *Goodness of life and wisdom in teaching must be the criteria for choosing the one to be made abbot, even if he is the last in community rank (Rule Ch. 64).⁸⁰ ... The reason why we said all should be called for counsel is that the Lord often reveals what is better to the younger (Ch. 3).⁸¹* The (human) ecology and the balance of individuals, society and their environment in the Rule of Saint Benedict are guaranteed in the rules that aim at struggling for a harmony that preserves contrasts and opposites uncurtailed. This harmony of uncurtailed contrasts and opposites is – among others – guaranteed for the Rule states that

the manager should rule and decide, but at the same time in his decisions he should adapt himself to the circumstances, – in other words – to the situational context that is made of the given individuals, society and environment,

⁷⁷ Fry, Timothy (ed.), *The Rule of St. Benedict in English*, Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, MN, 1982.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

he should rule first of all by his example and actions, not with his words,
 he should not neglect either the internal (intellectual, spiritual, emotional, etc.)
 or the external (natural and man-made) environment, playing one off against the
 other, consequently

he should not be discriminative (e.g. not only a priest, but also *a man born free
 is not born to be given higher rank than a slave...*), yet

he should *apply the same discipline to all according to their merits ...* ,

he must vary with circumstances ... ,

he must *serve a variety of temperaments ...*,

he must accomodate and adapt himself to each one's character and intelligence...

(Rule Ch. 3).⁸²

The question of woman priesthood is put in another light in the ecosemiotic view of the liturgy (cf. the semiotic approach above in ch. i.). In the ecosemiotic view of the liturgy, the question simply either does not arise or if it happens to arise, it is of no significance. Emancipation movements in European culture were born parallel with the destruction of environment in European civilization. If – in the traditional Christian thinking – one compares the *ex opere operato*, i.e. *the sacramental* function of priests to the archetype of Holy Mary cult (*virgin, mother*), then priesthood looks insignificant, undesirable and almost contemptible for a woman who thinks in an ecological way. Current European thinking – wherever spread on the globe – is in plain contradiction to (theonomic) ecological thinking. It caused troubles both in the external and in the internal environment. As we have seen this anti-ecological thinking totally changed the biologically and psychically determined role of a woman. It replaced the archetype of *virgin and mother* with the archetype of *sterile whore* (cf. above ch. i.). As in all fields of environmental pollution, this European civilization wants to get rid of the trouble by means of substitute actions (cf. conferences instead of actions – in opposition to the Rule of Saint Benedict: action instead of words, etc. as mentioned above), women want to be put into the archetype of (celibate) priesthood. There are several ecological and ecosemiotic somersaults in this emancipational thinking and desire, among others that priesthood and celibacy are not connected to each other by a divine law (not even in the Roman Catholic Church), that sterility and celibacy can easily be confused, yet should not be. They have totally different aims. The sterility that most emancipated women undertake is a flee from responsibility and destroys both internal (psychic) and external (childlessness) ecological harmony. European welfare societies will not be able to pay pensions for there will be too many retired people and too few young people who are active workers. Celibacy aims at the unconditional support and service of disadvantaged strata of society, e.g. widows,

⁸² Ibid.

children, handicapped, mentally retarded, sick, etc. Consequently celibacy aims at a kind of restoration of (human) ecological harmony and balance.

As we have already seen liturgy is an action that is multimedial and includes the operation of all the senses. Besides and within action and speech essential parts of liturgy are

the art of singing and (instrumental) music,
 the art of gestures and mimicry,
 the art of moving the body,
 the art of clothing the body,
 distance in actions,
 dancing, etc.

All the actions and speech in liturgy have both literal and figurative (metaphorical) meaning. Thus in Christian liturgy the essential and existential convergence of metaphorical and non-metaphorical opposites, of timeless and time, of divine and human, of eternal Creator and permanently created, etc. cannot be either separated or confused. This convergence results in humble, forgiving and honouring behaviour in man and guarantees an (human) ecological harmony. When on the one hand one speaks of the therapeutic function of liturgy, one acknowledges the balance-producing and restoring function of liturgy. On the other hand one cannot do anything with liturgy if one has no ecological thinking, i.e. one is selfish, powerful, satisfied with oneself, has no sense for the metaphorical etc.

Liturgy is a series of ecological and ecosemiotic actions that *in-forms* self-restraint in man (cf. above ch. i.). Liturgy broadens man's view towards the metaphorical in the non-metaphorical in his experience of the world around him. The metaphorical calls his attention to the characteristics in creatures that are beyond usefulness. This stimulates man to turn to a sustainable development.

Repetition and memory also play an essential role both in metaphorical thinking and in liturgy. Ecological and ecosemiotic balance are permanently endangered. Therefore ecology and ecosemiosis must be permanently sustained by repetitive actions. In liturgy repetitive actions, i.e. tradition and creative actions, though they seem contradictory are kept in harmony (as mentioned above). Just as the metaphorical can be interpreted on the basis of the non-metaphorical, liturgy is neither pure emotion nor pure rationalism, neither exclusive mysticism nor exclusive science (cf. the ideas of Balthasar and Prohászka in ch.i.), neither rigid tradition nor superficial renewal. In liturgy emotion and rationalism, mysticism and science, tradition and renewal, etc are inseparable and inconfusable. European civilization has tried to find substitutes for all of these harmonized contrasts and opposites of liturgy. In these substitutes contrasts and opposites are both confused and separated. In liturgy the greatest sinner is tolerated, but the smallest sin is intolerable. In European civilization, for example, in tyranny the smallest sinner

is not tolerated, while in anarchy the greatest sin is tolerated, etc. In both cases the (human) ecological and ecosemiotic system is destroyed.

Liturgy is a perfect pattern of ecology and the producer of ecological thinking for liturgy always takes place in a community (*koinonia*), as we have seen above. Therefore it is also not accidental that metaphors of love are mainly of nature (external environment) and of religion and liturgy. On the other hand metaphors of the liturgy are also and mainly from nature and from love (cf. Christ and Church as lovers in the New Testament, the poetry of John Donne,⁸³ Saint John of the Cross,⁸⁴ etc.).

Another consequence of the *koinonia* of liturgy is that it requires personal presence. Therefore radio and television broadcasts of both the catholic mass and the Protestant liturgy of the word are against the very essence of liturgy. Broadcasting and media require the production of new religious genres to fulfil the missionary task of the Church, not murdering her “old genres”, and not shaping the liturgy into cheap imitations of media genres.

Ecology and ecosemiosis of liturgy include a behaviour and state of permanent gladness, joy, happiness and jubilee. This is the joy of being, the joy that “I am and thou art,” and “it is good to me that thou art” (after Prof. Péter Nemeshegyi). I happened to see a Catholic programme on television in Hungary. All the time everybody complained, everybody was bitter: “*Only three of us work at the parish*”... “*How terrible it was for forty years of communist suppression*”... “*We do not have this, we do not have that*”... “*We have failed because Hungarian society is such and such, people are such and such*”... etc. If there is no liturgy, no faith then *in-forms* participants of liturgy, these catholics are right. Yet if liturgy exists, they are all liars.

It is also not accidental that aesthetics has occurred implicitly whenever I have analysed any (human) ecosemiotic aspects of liturgy. Any neglect of the aesthetic aspect weakens the very nature of liturgy, decreases the effectiveness of liturgy as a psycho-socio-somatic phenomenon. Therefore the translation of the artistic Latin texts of the liturgy into a cheap colloquial Hungarian after the Vatican Council II. in the 1960's was a crime against liturgy.

Theonomic human ecology is an integral part of ecology as a whole. Liturgy shapes human ecology and ecosemiosis, and that is why with the neglect of liturgy the whole ecology is damaged. This is what mankind has faced in the last two centuries. Autonomy without theonomy cannot result in a sustainable ecology. Ecology cannot exist without the ecosemiosis that liturgy imbues into its par-

⁸³ John Donne, *The Works of John Donne*, <http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/donne/donnebib.htm>, accessed 12 February 2017.

⁸⁴ John of the Cross, *The Works of Saint John of the Cross*, http://www.jesus-passion.com/John_of_the_Cross.htm, accessed 12 February 2017.

ticipants. Without the renewal (metanoia) that is produced by liturgy freedom becomes media-slavery, environmental pollution and self-destruction. The problem of metaphor looks an ephemeral and insignificant question if it is considered only from a literary or linguistic point of view. Yet, if we look at it from an ecological and ecosemiotic point of view metaphorical thinking is of vital importance for man and his world.

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