

Due to diversity of its specific forms the culture of post-modernity is reacting faster than does the delayed philosophic reflection to the transformations occurring in intellectual and spiritual life. Postmodernism is a philosophy of the culture of post-modernity. It does not appear out of nowhere but reflects, in spite of its own criticism of representativism and historicism, a fundamentally different spiritual situation of the post-industrial world. At the same time, it does not matter, in which specific spheres of discourse the post-modernists are mistaken or tell the truth. A deeper-rooted and “actor-less” approach postulates the perception of a postmodernist philosophy itself as an expression of self-consciousness of a new cultural matrix, which was impossible before. Poets and artists, composers and architects of elitist and, especially mass culture, are the first to notice and express the new spirit of the post-industrial epoch; and that was, as a matter of fact, observed in previous ages – Dante and Petrarch in Italy, Narekatsi and Roslyn in Armenia caught on and expressed the spirit of the Renaissance Age long before the philosophic reflection began to describe it by the rational forms. Does this mean that artists and people of art in general offer an advantage of very specific experience and subtle sensitivity towards the spirit of the age than rationally thinking philosophers? What is this special experience, which requires no strict deductive or inductive reasoning, as well as other rational standards of demonstrative inference, or even “evidences” themselves? Is it not the very special experience of expressiveness meant by Heidegger, when he speaks about “poet Holderlin, perceiving the essence of the world much deeper than Hegel, the philosopher”? (In **Heidegger's** thinking, **poetry** is not a mere amusement or form of culture but a force that opens up the genuine realm of knowledge and truth.)

In order to answer these questions much closer attention should be paid to what is usually called “mystical experience” which lies at the base of the religious experience diversity (William James) or “religious virtuosity” (Max Weber). In conformity with the problem of secularization, appealing to such an experience allows to understand an ambivalent character of secularization legitimating under the banner of free-thinking not only for the secular atheism and materialism, but also for the secular non-church religiosity. For the traditional institutional church a struggle against the external enemy did not pose any hazard; but it was quite another matter to deal with those acting on church’s own territory. Therefore, secularism means anticlericalism, but not necessarily antireligiousness.

Not only atheists and materialists needed secularization and free-thinking, but also those who tried to preserve creative spirit and live mystical experience, contradicting the readymade and stark church dogmata, in the conditions of religious experience of the world. Widely spread forms of new religious movements and civil religions in the post-industrial age are nonetheless a result of secularization rather than atheistic scientism, agnosticism or spiritless intellectualism of the Age of Modernity. At the same time development of science surmounting historic scantiness of classical ideals of scientific rationality, appearance of non-classic and post-classic rationality, especially in quantum physics and transpersonal (humanistic) psychology, set a new and respectful attitude to the spiritual practice of ancient esoteric religions, opening boundless opportunities in the sphere of human spiritual experience of perception.

Usually words such as “*mysticism*” and “*mystical experience*” are used in publications in several completely different meanings thereby leading to terminological confusion. In the early European culture the concept of Mysticism was used in a very narrow sense of the word. Originating in Greek, it initially meant the sacrament accompanying the cults of Demetrius and Dionysus. In the broad sense the word *mysticism* means a supernatural way of perception of the world connected to the process of perception and the result of this perception. It is the very part of perceptual experience that cannot be expressed by means of a usual system of symbols, words, and rational categories. At the same time mystical experience, as it is interpreted in the European and Eastern cultures is not at all an ecstatic and irrational way of experience; it contains also certain objectivity which originates in the inner life of a human being, but at the same time transgressing it. Truly mystical experience – and here philosophers of the West and East concur – most often is not connected to any euphoria, ecstasy or insightfulness. It is just that a human being can clearly sense the other side of the phenomenon – as if he sees customary, usual things from a very unusual

visual angle. Mystical experience – as it is usually understood – is a specific emotional experience of unity or confluence with the ontological fundamental principle of the world or any objective reality in general (God, Absolute, etc.). Sometimes mystical experience stands for all kinds of mysteries (Eleusinian mysteries, mystery of Golgotha), all sorts of esoteric rituals and cult actions, known exclusively to the initiates. Besides, the word “mystery” by virtue of peculiarity of the Judeo-Christian perception of such issues as “belief and knowledge”, “rational and irrational”, has been strongly associated with irrationalism, which in its turn creates non-critical and hostile prejudices towards mysticism among some scientists and philosophers. Meanwhile, the philosophers that have made a considerable contribution to the studies of standards of scientific rationality, not only did not deny the very meaning of the mystical experience, but placed it above these standards. From that viewpoint it is extremely interesting to consider the issue of correlation of scientific rationalism and mystical experience in the works of classics of analytical philosophy – Russell and Wittgenstein.

As is well-known, apologia of scientific rationalism as the highest cognitive authority got under way in the Age of Enlightenment and reached its culmination at early stages of analytical philosophy in the 20th century (logical atomism, logical positivism). However, already Russell in his article “Mysticism and logic” notices that “the true unity of the mystic and the scientist is the ‘highest achievement in the sphere of thinking’”. (Russell 1959: 4)

The case of Wittgenstein is more complicated however. Even though his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein 1961). Was declared a “Bible” of logical positivism, the *Tractatus* itself contains unequivocal propositions concerning the limited nature of the strictly scientific cognition and the dilative role of mystical experience in the cognition process. A demarcation line between a strictly scientific and non-scientific discourse passes through the criterion of clarity. In the discourse practice, everything that should be said must be said clearly. What cannot be said clearly should remain unsaid. These assertions of early Wittgenstein inspired logical positivists to such an extent that they missed the essence of the subtle dialectics in *Tractatus* related to discrimination of notions of feeling the unity of the world, which can only be gained through mystical experience, expression of that experience in the discourse practice on the one hand and its demonstration – on the other.

Wittgenstein was from the very beginning annoyed by essentially restricted position held by members of the Vienna Circle, and by how arrogantly they dismissed mystical experience. He never shared a positivist belief in unlimited potential of science but, on the contrary, tried very hard to emphasize its limited nature. That limited nature leaves space for ethics: it is beyond expression, but the boundaries of logic, language, science in an indirect way are pointing at it. The existence of language, logic and science are necessary only in order to somehow allude to the mystical. This is because without a mystical feeling of the world as a whole the latter would lose sense. Ineffability of ethics, as it was in Kant’s case, is missioned to save it from the influence of reason, language, logic which are determined by rigid relations and leave no place for freedom. If logic demonstrates “how the world is”, then “what it is” remains ineffable and mystical. ” 6.44.

Mystical – is not HOW the world is, but WHAT it is.” (Wittgenstein 1961). Mystical – is inconceivable, something that transgresses logic and does not submit to logical necessity. It is the space in between the facts, permitting freedom, ethics and metaphysics. The mystical is the basis of metaphysics, its fertile soil, permitting to look at the world from outside: feeling of the world as a bounded whole – that is what is considered mystical.

“6.45 The contemplation of the world *sub specie aeternitatis* is its contemplation as a limited whole. The feeling that the world is a limited whole is the mystical feeling” (Wittgenstein 1961).

At the end of his book, Wittgenstein confessed that the ladder was necessary exclusively for ascending to the highest aims of understanding – a philosophical position, a position of the Absolute - from which that demarcation ladder is seen as a symbol of logical rationalism solely as a means or, to be more precise, as a bridge to transcendental reality. The ladder should be thrown away for further achievement of the highest goals of comprehension. The reader should put aside

the ladder of the rationally formed propositions of the *Tractatus*; then and only then could he correctly see the world. (Wittgenstein 1961: 654). Thus, having thoroughly investigated the area of boundaries of the rational knowledge (the one that can be comprehended and expressed), Wittgenstein managed to disclose how essential was the role of the Inexpressible in the process of comprehension of the world – something that can only be displayed, visually demonstrated. Wittgenstein attributed to that what cannot be spoken about, also all that is superior: religious experience, ethics, and reaching comprehension of the meaning of life. Hence, silence in the *Tractatus* – is not the silence of lambs, and definitely not in the least the “razor of Ockham”, as it was erroneously understood by logical positivists. Silence in the *Tractatus* is the silence of Hermes Trismegistus, extending the boundaries of consciousness and experience of comprehension; silence – as a necessary condition for concentration and sublimation of the creative spirit, as it has been presented in the works of isichasts, Trappist monks, Sufis, Zen Buddhists, Knight Templars, Rosenkreuz and other esoteric schools and doctrines of the East and West. “Modern researches, - as the founder of transpersonal psychology S. Grof writes, - confirm statements of ancient philosophy and great mystical traditions that people are the infinite fields of consciousnesses surpassing limits of time, space and linear causality” (Wittgenstein 1974: 294).

Wittgenstein behaved as a mystic also in his private life which facts were mentioned by his contemporaries. In the letter to Lady Morelli in the winter of 1919 upon Russel’s meeting with Wittgenstein in Holland to discuss his *Tractatus* manuscript, Russel wrote: “I leave here today [December 20, 1919, from the The Hague] after a fortnight's stay, during a week of which Wittgenstein was here, and we discussed his book [the *Tractatus*] everyday. I came to think even better of it than I had done; I feel sure it is really a great book, though I do not feel sure it is right.

...
I had felt in his book a flavour of mysticism, but was astonished when I found that he has become a complete mystic. He reads people like Kierkegaard and Angelus Silesius, and he seriously contemplates becoming a monk” (Grof 1988: 82).

In cultures where mystical experience and scientific rationalism have never been at animosity with each other, never confronted one another, “mystics” by no means refuted the rationality and discourse thinking as the highest authority within the limits of its own competence. Moreover, they very often created quite rationalistic (in the broad sense of the word) philosophical systems grounded in the comprehension of their own (that is, rationalization) “mystical” experience. It is difficult to assume that Pythagorean Theorem has nothing to do with its author’s mystical philosophy of figures. It is equally impossible to deny that the mysticism of Avicenna, Ibn Rushd and other Arab philosophers has nothing to do with the greatest discoveries in medicine, mathematics, Arabic numbers, to which the European science owes so much. It is entirely impossible that Newton, the last “magician” of the Middle Ages and the first scientist of the Modern Age, ” as one of his best biographers called him, came to his discoveries in science irrespective of the experience granted to him by alchemy and magic, which, by the way, he never stopped practicing. Inter-subjective verification – in empirical or rationalistic programs of justification of certainty of knowledge - is unable to fit the Procrustean bed all the spiritual wealth and variety of possibilities of human cognition and experience of comprehension. The question about a new type of rationality – non-classic and post - which take into account such properties of the reality, as nonlinearity, openness, irreversibility, nonequilibrium, etc., is put in the context of a synergetic paradigm, which is gradually occupying dominant position in contemporary socio-cultural studies of

“new religious consciousness”. While in earlier times secularism meant the process of liberation from dogmas of clericalism, in the times of post-modernity it generates an oncoming motion towards the mystical experience in scientific rationality, constantly expanding its boundaries. New forms of religious consciousness in the post-industrial society are impossible without deep-rooted transformations of the inner life of the human being, expansion of boundaries of individual experience, cognition and comprehension, which, when taken jointly, act concurrently as cause and effect of the socio-cultural dynamics of the post-industrial civilization.

In the history of world religions mystical experience served as a productive force of their origins and developments. Over time, reinterpretations of the original experience acquired a character of doctrinal speculations. In the mechanically repeated forms of religious practice, original experience was replaced by routine ritualistic actions. As soon as the Christianity became a dominating state religion and the church became a mass organisation, the formality of ritual and symbolic actions became self-sufficient. In cultural anthropology this process is known as

“routinization of a ritual.” Alienation of the original experience has been compensated in the desiring for most accurate and literal knowledge of the Holy Scripture. However, no one could avoid divergent interpretations of meaning in the sacred texts. As a result, the debate about the “true understanding” went beyond the academic hermeneutic disputes and often ended in bloody wars well-known in history.

In traditions of the East and West the relation towards the mystical experience was not identical. In Eastern religions a preliminary preparation and the special psycho-technical exercises for the development of mystical experience were indispensable preconditions of religious practices. Buddhist monk, for example, did not allow disciples to meditate or pray formally without giving him a special training in special respiratory exercises or adequate positioning of his body first. Those who really acquired such experience and knowledge were the principal religious teachers. On the contrary, in Christianity (particularly in Catholicism) the church looked at "mysticism" with suspicion, being afraid that the mystic would put his experience above the church dogmas and would give it an interpretation in the spirit, which may not necessary fall into its traditionally convenient doctrine.

As a result those who tried to preserve and develop the living religious experience within the already existing institutional religions were persecuted, declared dissidents or were forced to go to the underground of esoterism. The great tradition of esoteric culture of the religions of the East and West was established not only in order to protect the "secret" knowledge from the uninitiated but for physical salvation from cruel persecution by religious conservatives who acquired power but lost all contact with the original experience.

A classic of American pragmatism William James in his “Variety of forms of religious experience” (James 1902) convincingly demonstrated that any religious experience is a mystical experience; however, not every mystical experience leads to a given concrete form of religion. James observed that personal religion takes precedence over theology and church. Once established, any church then relies heavily on tradition. James consistently defended the priority of individual religious experience over the "socialized" and “institutionalized” religions. The founders of the church and "religious virtuosity" / in terms of Max Weber / always drew their strength from direct personal experience of communication with the transcendent .

In mystical experience, transcendental is experienced as self-evident, therefore, unlike speculative mysticism, real mystical experience, according to James, is always described in epistemological terms of “ radical empirism” (James 1912). James's approach is particularly important when religious experience loses its initial and self-confirming evidence because it allows to explain and to understand epistemological reasons for the development of secularism.

It was not incidental that the process of secularization unfolded on a mass scale in the 17th century alongside the era of the Enlightenment. The desacralization of theocratic authority and the separation of the church from the state occurred in parallel with the processes of sacralization of science and human reason. Earlier in medieval Christian Europe "sacred" and "profane" were clearly distinguished and interacted, with unquestionable superiority of the religion-based "sacred" values.

During the Enlightenment it became obvious that science and human reason contain inexhaustible opportunities that significantly exceed human achievements of the past. Every new technological achievement broadened unquestionable domination of man over the external world. Science, based on human mind, started to "win" back one area of public space after another from religion. Eventually, the “ultimate questions of life” remained in the competence of religion .

However, religious answers did not serve even in this limited area as a reliable stronghold for belief. A steam engine, railways and new technological inventions carried out a revolution in human mind within few decades. An individual began to trust more his own capabilities than transcendent forces, the legitimation of which became with each technological discovery more and more difficult for the dominant church .

In the process of secularization secular stands out as autonomous and self-sufficient. Secularization drives dominance of religion from public space and compels people to recognise that everything in the world is in its essence merely secular. The "Death of God " in Nietzsche's philosophy meant only that the world found its own reasons and does not need a transcendent justification. The humanity came of age, as Kant put it in his evaluation of the Enlightenment. However, banished from the public space in the era of the Enlightenment religion began to go back in the postindustrial societies. Destroying the monologism of the Enlightenment and its total technological and scientific rationality, the postmodernity simultaneously also "deconstructed" and destroyed secularism in its classical sense. As a result, the displacement of traditional religions from the public sphere not only could not eliminate the natural need of mankind for religious experience but also led to the emergence of new forms of religiosity.

Durkheim was the first who, from the sociological point of view, proved a natural and necessary character of religion for the existence of the human society, irrespective of the degree of its domination in a society and concrete forms of manifestation. Cultural anthropology does not yet know a single case of existence of human culture without those or other mechanisms of a sacralization, cults, symbols and religious representations from the earliest primitive forms to the advanced ones.

Even in a highly secularized and atheistic Soviet society the Communist ideology had its own saints, cult idols, symbols of faith, the mechanisms of sacralization to suppress resistance of non-believers. This was a "transformed form" of religion, which used all methods of traditional religions, down to the symbolic and magical procedures for naming all the major streets, squares, cities and factories, or mimicry of immortality in the Mausoleum. In terms of the degree of political domination and forms of cruelty this ideology is not inferior and in some ways even superior to medieval Jesuit practices. That continued until a new dissident movement emerged that targeted the dominant ideology . Anti-Soviet talks and jokes by soviet intellectuals symbolized the beginning of the desacralization of the Communist ideology. The new stage of socio-cultural desacralization allows us to understand the paradox of secularization and the underlying antinomy of the "sacred - profane."

The paradox of secularization is that trying to eliminate the antinomy of the "sacred-profane" secularization does not actually eliminate but rather generates new forms of this antinomy. These new forms historically appear not only as secular quasi-religious ideologies but also in the form of new religious movements, demanding at the same time, a radical renewal of traditional religions. No external evidence can be long enough to keep reliably faith in God, if this belief is not supported by that "inner sense" which is repeatedly described in world literature as a mystical experience

If there is a mismatch between internal experience and external images by which institutional or not-formal religions are guided, our representations about God also may not be adequate. In such cases, as Hegel says in his " Philosophy of Religion", "people having a bad concept of God will have the bad state, bad courts, bad economy and bad history» (Hegel 1827: 259). From this point of view, secularization performs an important function of a hospital attendant or, in the Protestant theological terms, "negative theology " (Paul Tillich), clearing the way for the original internal experience of transcendent reality without which sociological or cultural substantiations of religious fearlessness in human existence cannot get final justification. Between the sacred and the profane, the rational and the mystical, the immanent and the transcendent there is no impassable gulf, but a bridge which is symbolically designated as the ladder of Wittgenstein. There is no need to throw away the ladder, even though that was what Wittgenstein suggested to do. One should rather ascend and descend on it, as was the case in the Pythagorean school, where

students were given a right to express judgments only after several years of painstaking study “to be able to keep silent”.