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THE MYSTICISM OF THE FALL

DECADENT DESIRE OF TRANSCENDENCE IN PHILOSOPHY OF XIX- CENTURY

ABSTRACT

Decadence perceived as a cultural and esthetic phenomenon in the 19th Century is one of the most important philosophical problems of modernity. My analysis aims to show if decadence is an actual issue, as being the source of postmodernity, and to what extent terminology of that time is useful to describe the world now. At the same time one can notice that ours is still the time of decadance and we have never been pass the crisis of culture. It leads to the question whether any transgression is possible, and how to find new fundaments for cultural activity. In the time of devaluation of all former principles, is there still room for expectant ones, as the fall is already happening. Exploration of the 19th Century decadence is a way to examine the mechanisms of falling and to finding potential ways of building a new order. Description of the contemporary world from 19th-Century perspective may bring new view of current problems, unseen without the distance of time.

The most important in my dissertation is the tension between esthetics and theology, strongly present in all artistic and literary activity of past ages. It is a sign of fascination, longing for the Absolute and Transcendency, and escapism from a despised world. The rise of interest in mysticisms, asceticism, and all kinds of spiritual movements and associations led to a crisis of old metaphysical system and to searching for new paths. The process of secularization brought in the problem of human constitution linked to the God and the new idea of sovereintgty in earthly life, but also a difficulty with finding new kind of *sacrum*, based not in transcendence but in culture.

The dissertation bases on F. Nietzsche's definition of decadence and S. Kierkegaard's reference to religion. The thesis itself is divided into three chapters in the line of The Fall – Transgression – Mysticism, showing two directions of decadent pursuits. First chapter is concerned with the loss of old values and fundaments and disintegration of the Beauty, Goodnes, and Truth. Falling down with satanist practices and fascinations in evil (according to "Down there" of J.-K. Huysmans and poetry of Ch. Baudelaire). Second chapter is a

presentation of R. Wagner's idea of exceeding the decadence with the new project of *music dramas* and Bayreuth Festival as place of new religion. Wagner believed that art in opera as *Gesamtkunstwerk*, based in the roots of European tradition, can bring authentic experience of *sacrum*. The last chapter is about mysticism as a rescue from Catholicism and new perspective upon religion grounded in Kierkegaard's idea and later continuations of Ch. Baudealire and J.-K. Huysmans.

The conclusion shows that decadent thinking structure is based on religion and 19th Century thinkers can't escape from it. At the end there is a question if transgression of decadence and building a new order of values is possible in the profane, postsecular world, that stays away from the religious paradigm.

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