

Visual Expressions of Lived Religion among Roma in Slovakia

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Raslavice

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- Some functions of images in religion (Morgan 2003)
 - order space and time
 - imagine community
 - communicate with divine or transcendent
 - collaborate with other forms of representation (text, music, architecture)
 - instruments of influence
 - displacing rival images and ideologies



Toporec

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- 'Majority' Christianity
 - 'Majority Christianity' in Slovakia as perceived by Romanies, is 'white Christianity'. They reflect it as ethnically and culturally rooted, as invented and intended for majority
 - 'Majority Christianity' as perceived by Romanies, is too formalistic. Real religiosity should be „measured“ by intensity of religious emotions („belief in heart“, „belief from heart“).

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'Majority Christianity'

- 'sacral TOPOPHILIA'
- 'sacral CHRONOPHILIA'
- DOCTRINAL mode of religiosity
- COVENANTAL type of religiosity

'Roma Christianity'

- flexible SPATIAL relocation of sacrum
- flexible TEMPORAL relocation of sacrum
- IMAGISTIC mode of religiosity
- CONTRACTUAL type of religiosity

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(Harvey Whitehouse, 1995, 2000):

- A) DOCTRINAL MODE:** repetitive, heavily discursive, low-intensity religious experience that tends to produce a hierarchically organized abstract community
- B) IMAGISTIC MODE:** imagistic mode is characterized by low-frequency, non-discursive, intensive religious experience that bonds small communities

„ROMA CHRISTIANITY“ as IMAGISTIC mode of religiosity:

“Roma Christianity”, with its informal structure, flexibility, focus on the present, immediate communication with God, interpretations of religious norms, amorphous and egalitarian character, intensive religious experience, imagism and realism of religious ideas, “invasion” of irrationality and spontaneity (miracles, dreams, magic, visions, etc.) obviously belongs to the imagistic mode of religiosity.

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(Simon COLEMAN, 2004):

- **A) COVENANTAL TYPE:** covenantal communities articulate a logic of moral involvement and long-term mutual obligation
- **B) CONTRACTUAL TYPE:** contractual ones invoke a pragmatic, short-term logic of calculative strategy and promotion of self-interest

„Majority Christianity“ = covenantal type

„Roma Christianity“ = contractual type









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- Pentecostal and Neo-protestant movements reject depiction of divine persons

'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image'

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- Jehova witnesses – strong aspect of visual perception of religion

