

MACIEJ KRZYWOSZ

University of Białystok Faculty of History and Sociology

## **The concepts of the presence of religion in the public sphere of post-secular society. Between José Casanova’s sociology of religion and the social philosophy of Richard Rorty**

**Summary:** With the theory of secularisation crisis in the sociology of religion, the claim about the end of religion, or at least its radical privatization, is increasingly being denied. Therefore there is a need to work out a place for it in post-secular societies. The article presents and compares two radically different concepts of the religious activities in the public sphere. The first of these is the sociologist José Casanova’s proposal of deprivatization of religion, perceiving the benefits of its activity in the public sphere of post-secular societies. The second concept, the Richard Rorty’s privatizing of religion, sees in it primarily a threat to liberal freedoms. Therefore, the American philosopher proposes to remove religion from the public sphere and place it only in the private sphere of the individual. The text ends with the hypothesis explaining the huge contrast between the views of Casanova and Rorty, as to the presence of religion in the public sphere of post-secular societies.

**Key words:** postsecularism; theory of secularisation; sociology of religion; public sphere; social philosophy; deprivatization of religion; José Casanova; privatization of religion; Richard Rorty.

### **Introduction**

On October 14, 2001, in the Church of St. Paul in Frankfurt, Jürgen Habermas, from many years a supporter of secularist theory of modernity, delivered a famous

lecture: *Faith and Knowledge*<sup>1</sup>. It is commonly considered a breakthrough in thinking about the relationship between religion and reason, or faith and the Enlightenment. For the first time, German sociologist noticed, in such a clear and emphatic way, that Enlightenment secularism had not been completed. As a result, religion will not disappear from the public sphere, and proponents of the Enlightenment should learn to coexist with it. In this way, Habermas publicly denied faith in the Enlightenment secularism project. For this reason, the social sciences faced with the task of elaborating a new place for religion within modern societies.

The question presented by Habermas, initiated a discussion about postsecularism in various dimensions<sup>2</sup>. However, the issue of the presence of religion in the public sphere of modern societies has already appeared in sociology and American social philosophy. In the sociology of religion, this problem occurred as a result of the theory of secularisation crisis in the 1970s and 1980s. More and more empirically confirmed revival of religious life in many parts of the world, including the very modernised ones, falsified not only the belief in the end of religion but also forced some sociologists to develop a concept that would make a place for religion in the public sphere. This concept has been worked out by the renowned researcher of religious life – José Casanova.

On the other hand, the growing presence of religion in the public sphere of the United States has resulted in the emergence of a radically different thought. I am referring to the view of the well-known postmodern philosopher – Richard Rorty, who himself preferred to be classified as neo-pragmatist. Rorty initially justified the impracticality of the presence of religion in the public sphere. Then his concept, probably as a reaction to the increasing role of the religious factor in the internal politics of the United States, evolved into a vision of society with a completely privatized religion. For Rorty, religion in the post-secular society ceased to be a neutral phenomenon, but it turned out to be a threat to the values of the liberal society.

The aim of the article is to present and compare two opposite concepts of the presence of religion in the public sphere of post-secular society. The first, justifying the public activity of religion, the second justifying its complete privatization. In the first part of the text, I describe the transformations that took place in the sociology of religion from the domination of the theory of secularisation to the emergence of the idea of post-secularism. In the second and third part, I present, in my opinion, the most significant proposals of the presence of religion in the public sphere of a post-secular

---

University of Białystok Faculty of History and Sociology, mail: uwb@wp.pl

<sup>1</sup> See J. Habermas, *Faith and Knowledge*, in: J. Habermas, *The Future of Human Nature*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 101-115.

<sup>2</sup> Habermas return to the question of the presence of religion in the public sphere in a famous discussion with Joseph Ratzinger. See J. Habermas, J. Ratzinger, *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*, San Francisco 2006 or *Religion in the Public Sphere*, "European Journal of Philosophy", 2006, no 1, pp. 1-25.

society worked out by José Casanova and Richard Rorty. In the end, I compare the above concepts and put the hypotheses explaining such different views.

For the purpose of this article, I understand secularization as a neutral socially process of reducing the influence of religion on various social systems and the religiosity of individuals; the theory of secularization as a scientific concept designed to explain this phenomenon; secularism as a worldview in which religion is intentionally excluded from the public sphere and transferred to the private; and the post-secular society is one that is aware of the failure of the Enlightenment secularism project involves the disappearance of religion.

### **From secularisation to postsecularism – the end of beliefs in the end of religion**

In the 18th century, with the appearance of the Enlightenment, the conviction about the decline or even death of religion appeared among the European elite, more and more often. In the next century, along with the emergence of social sciences, this conviction was legitimised scientifically. As an example, someone can refer to the Comte's three stages of the development of human knowledge, from the theological stage, through the metaphysical stage, to the positive stage (scientific)<sup>3</sup>. Or also the view of Karl Marx, for whom religion was mainly a social compensator, and with the emergence of a modern classless society would naturally disappear<sup>4</sup>.

This concept that the more modernisation, industrialisation, progress, and so forth, then the less religion was defined as the theory of secularisation, and became the dominant style of thinking about religion in the 20th century<sup>5</sup>. The development of quantitative research seemed to confirm it. Particularly in Europe, surveys and statistical data recorded declining levels of church involvement of the believers<sup>6</sup>. The interpretation of these data has made many recognised sociologists uncritically accepted the theory of secularisation, for example, Peter Berger<sup>7</sup>. Some researchers announced the end of religion in general. Anthony F. C. Wallace, the recognised anthropologist of religion, stated: „Belief in supernatural beings and in supernatural forces that affect nature without obeying nature's laws will erode and become only an

---

<sup>3</sup> See A. Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, London 1893, originally published in France 1830-1842 as *Cours de Philosophie Positive*.

<sup>4</sup> See K. Marx, *A Contribution To The Critique Of Hegel's "Philosophy Of Right"*, in: *Critique Of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Cambridge 1970, pp. 131-132.

<sup>5</sup> Literature on the subject of the theory of secularisation is enormous. See for example: G. Davie, *The Sociology of Religion*, London 2007, pp. 46-66 or K. Zielińska, *Sporzywokółteoriisekularyzacji*, Kraków 2009.

<sup>6</sup> See T. Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion. The Problem of Religion in Modern Society*, New York 1967, pp. 28-40.

<sup>7</sup> See P. L. Berger, *The Social Reality of Religion*, Harmondsworth 1973, pp. 111-173.

interesting historical memory. To be sure, this event is not likely to occur in the next hundred year (...) But as a cultural trait, belief in supernatural power is doomed to die out, all over the world, as a result of the increasing adequacy and diffusion of scientific knowledge and the realization by secular faiths that supernatural belief is not necessary to the effective use of ritual"<sup>8</sup>.

The situation began to change in the 1970s and 1980s. The Islamic Revolution in Iran, the emergence of a new Christian right in the US public sphere, or the role of churches in the collapse of communist systems in Eastern Europe, followed by a religious revival in many of these countries, forced researchers to revise the theory of secularisation and sometimes its rejection.

The first significant work directed against the dominant theory of secularisation was the Stark and Bainbridge's book<sup>9</sup>, which interpreted the secularisation as a self-limiting phenomenon of traditional churches. In the long run, these processes lead to the appearance of new religious organisations: sects and cults, and so new religious phenomena. Therefore, there is no question of secularisation as the end of religion<sup>10</sup>. This work also initiated a new trend in the study of religions, rejecting the assumptions of the theory of secularisation, namely the economic theory of religion, and its co-author became an intense critic of the theory of secularisation<sup>11</sup>.

Another work that undermined, but also organised the discussion about secularisation and explaining the return of religion from the private sphere to the public sphere (deprivatization of religion) in some modern societies was Casanova's book<sup>12</sup>. The author begins with the significant question: "Who still believes in the *myth* of secularization?"<sup>13</sup> In addition to trying to explain this process, Casanova also outlines the concept of the presence of religion in the public sphere of societies, which can be described as post-secular.

Also on the European continent, started to appear works that critiqued the theory of secularisation and perceiving the religious revival in the various places of the world. An example of such an approach is the work of the French researcher Gilles Kepel. His book *The Revenge of God* was not appreciated until the attacks on the World Trade Center. Kepel explains the emergence of permanent religious fundamentalisms, as the result of failure to fulfil the promises that modernity brought with it<sup>14</sup>.

A deluge of publications that undermine the previously uncritically accepted the theory of secularisation led to a public rejection of it by researchers who in the 1960s

---

<sup>8</sup> A. F. C. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View*, New York 1966, p. 265.

<sup>9</sup> See R. Stark, W. S. Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion*, New York 1987.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, pp. 279-314.

<sup>11</sup> See R. Stark, *Secularization, R.I.P.*, "Sociology of Religion" 1999, no 3, pp. 249-273.

<sup>12</sup> See J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> See G. Kepel, *The Revenge of God. The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Modern World*, University Park 1994.

were its supporters. It can recall here the mentioned above – Peter Berger, who in the 1960s was a supporter of the theory of secularization, and in the 1990s began to write about the reverse process – desecularization<sup>15</sup>.

Yet, not all sociologists so radically changed their position. A leading contemporary defender of the theory of secularisation is Steve Bruce, who publishes the books with significant titles<sup>16</sup>. It seems that for some time, as Casanova has pointed out, the discussion among sociologists of religion about the truth or falsity of the theory of secularization has become sterile, and should go beyond the European-American context and move to the global level<sup>17</sup>. However, the conviction expressed by Habermas that liberal Western societies will have to accept the existence of religious communities among them, that is, they will have to live in post-secular reality, seems dominant today.

### **The place of religion in post-secular society – the sociological concept od José Casanova**

I put forward the thesis that the first concept of the presence of religion in the public sphere in post-secular society was developed in the Casanova's book mentioned above. It is true that he did not use the term "post-secular society", which then did not appear widely in the scientific discourse. However, he undertook a reflection on the new place of religion in modern societies, which are aware of the Enlightenment secularismcrisis. Casanova not only analysed the empirical return of religion to the public sphere from which it was and is being removed by supporters of the liberal social order. He also found a place within the public sphere in which religion could be active. He described both of these processes as the deprivatization of religions, of which we are interested in the second thread<sup>18</sup>.

In the Casanova concept, the negative and positive element can be distinguished. The first says, in which of the public spheres of post-secular society churches and religious communities cannot be active. The second (positive) presents the place and broadly defines the scope of activities that they could take.

---

<sup>15</sup> See P. L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: A global overview*, in: *The Desecularization of the World. Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, P. L. Breger (ed.), Washington 1999, pp. 1-18.

<sup>16</sup> See for example: *God Is Dead. Secularization in the West*, Oxford 2003 or *Secularization. In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory*, Oxford 2011.

<sup>17</sup> J. Casanova, *Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective*, "Hedgehog Review", 2006, nos. 1-2, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> See the title of the last chapter of his book: *The Deprivatization of Modern Religion*, in: J. Casanova, *Public...*, op. cit., pp. 211-234.

### **Incompatibility and compatibility of religion with principles of post-secular society**

Searching for a place for religion in the public sphere, Casanova begins by using Habermas's<sup>19</sup> an analytical model of dividing the public sphere of democratic states into three parts:

- a) the state level;
- b) the political society level;
- c) the civil society level.

Casanova has no doubt that the action of churches and religious communities can take place in a post-secular society only at the civil society level. The church's relationship with the state as the established state churches, which until recently was in the Scandinavian countries, and still is in the UK, is an anachronism<sup>20</sup>. It is also adverse, both for the state and for religious institutions. Using the support of state institutions for years makes these churches unprepared for the situation of freedom and religious diversity. Therefore, when this situation arises, they pay for it declining the number of practising believers. The best proof of this is the situation of the former State Lutheran Churches in the Scandinavian countries or the Anglican Church in the UK. According to Casanova, it was the strong relationship of the Franco's state with Spanish Catholic Church that contributed to its rapid secularisation after changing systems of government<sup>21</sup>. So, judging from the sociology of religion, the special relationship between the state and the church in modern societies, sooner or later for the religious institution ends it unfavourably.

According to Casanova, also attempts to take action at the political level by establishing political parties (Christian Democratic) or movements (Catholic Action, American religious fundamentalists fighting secular humanism), are not consistent with the principles of a modern, diverse society<sup>22</sup>. Its multiculturalism and diversity, and especially individualism based on the idea of personal freedom, means that any attempts to connect the religious community with the political community and build on this social order must fail. In my opinion, this is confirmed by the fate of the Italian or German Christian Democratic Party. Currently, they are trying to address their program to all voters, not just declared Christians. Therefore, de facto these parties have ceased to be Christian.

---

<sup>19</sup> See J. Habermas, *Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere*, in J. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms. Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, Cambridge 1996, pp. 329-387.

<sup>20</sup> J. Casanova, *Public...*, op. cit., p. 219.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 213.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 219.

Consequently, the only level of the public sphere in which religion can be active is the sphere of civil society<sup>23</sup>. According to Casanova, Western Christianity has accepted the separation of church and state and the principle of religious freedom as a fundamental human right. Thus, the individual's freedoms have ceased to be threatened, and religious institutions have stopped to look for a special relationship with the state „and become free religious institutions of civil society“<sup>24</sup>. Casanova, giving examples of religious activities at the civil society level, recalls the anti-abortion movement and the pastoral letters of the American bishops<sup>25</sup>.

### **Social benefits of the presence of religion in the public sphere. Criticism of modernity from a religious modern point of view**

Placing religion in the public sphere of civil society, can makes someone to ask about the benefits that could be gain from this by post-secular society. According to Casanova, the presence of religion in the public sphere allows something that the liberals do not notice, seeing only threats in any form of the public presence of religion.

Churches and religious communities that have already accepted the principles of the modern society that is the separation of church and state and personal freedom can provide, a desirable critique of modern values from the modern, internal point of view. Currently, we are witnessing a crisis of the Enlightenment rationalism and idea of progress. Modernity, which was supposed to bring freedom, justice and peace, is increasingly associated with violence and exploitation, in many places in the world. A helpful way out of this impasse may be the activity of religion in the public sphere of post-secular society. This activity is not only justified, but it can even be „desirable from a modern normative perspective“<sup>26</sup>.

Casanova distinguishes three forms of religious activity in the public sphere of the post-secular society.

First, religion can protect „the traditional lifeworld against various forms of state or market penetration“<sup>27</sup>. Here the author gives an example of the mobilisation of American Catholics and Protestants against abortion, but he would certainly also include the activities of Catholic Churches in defending human rights in Poland or Brazil<sup>28</sup>.

Second, religions can undermine the principles on which are based the largest social systems, i.e. the state and the economy<sup>29</sup>. Religions can remind that being a

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 219.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p. 220.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem, p. 219.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, p. 221.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 228.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, pp. 219, 228.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem, p. 229.

superpower is not always worth the human victims and cause wars, and the profit of some cannot lead the others to poverty or environmental destruction. The autonomous values of these systems, i.e. power and profit, cannot be absolute values.

The third form of the positive presence of religion can be the defence of the concept of the common good. Contrary to the liberal and libertarian ideas in which the common good does not exist or is reduced to the sum of the individual goods<sup>30</sup>.

The presence of religion in the sphere of civil society manifests itself through acts of communication, and this leads to the revival of the public sphere and the continuous construction of the concept of the common good. „By going ‘public’, religions as well as other normative traditions can, therefore, contribute to the vitality of such a public sphere”<sup>31</sup>– Casanova concludes.

### **From uselessness to the dangers of religion in the public sphere Richard Rorty’s concept of radical privatization of religion in post-secular society**

Rorty’s view on the presence of religion in the public sphere of post-secular society radically differs from the above-presented Casanova’s concept. He perceived the religion itself quite differently than the sociologist of religion. For Casanova, it always has a social dimension. Rorty „thinks of religion as, its best Whitehead’s ‘what we do with our solitude’, rather than something people do together in churches”<sup>32</sup>. Predictably, he declared himself a supporter of the “Jeffersonian compromise”, clearly separating religion from the public sphere, believing that religious beliefs „are not essential to a democratic society”<sup>33</sup>.

Rorty criticised the presence of religion in the public sphere, used pragmatic argumentation. Although he was an atheist himself, he did not use the arguments commonly associated with the secularist atheism of Richard Dawkins or Christopher Hitchens. Therefore, to mark his separate position, he described it as anticlericalism<sup>34</sup>.

From the neo-pragmatism point of view, he considered that religious beliefs appearing in the public sphere of post-secular society are primarily a cutting off, a stopping of conversation<sup>35</sup>. This was due to the source of their origin, namely the preference for a religious dictionary which is not shared by all members of society.

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, p. 231.

<sup>32</sup> R. Rorty, *Religion As Conversation-stopper*, in: R. Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, Harmondsworth 1999, p. 169.

<sup>33</sup> R. Rorty, *The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy*, in: R. Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Philosophical Paper. Volume 1*, Cambridge 1991, p. 175.

<sup>34</sup> See R. Rorty, G. Vattimo, *The Future Of Religion*, S. Zabala (ed.), New York 2005, p. 33.

<sup>35</sup> See title of Rorty’s text: *Religion As Conversation-stopper*.



According to Rorty, religious arguments are inconclusive, and they do not contribute anything to the public debate. They do not lead the revival of the public sphere and do not support social conversation, as Casanova believes. On the contrary, they cut it off, through their particularism. „The main reason religion needs to be privatized is that, in political discussion with those outside the relevant religious community, it is a conversation-stopper“<sup>36</sup>. To active in the public sphere, a religious language should be translated into secular language, understood and shared by all members of a democratic society.

This text provoked a discussion and polemic of the thinkers who are not atheists, like Rorty<sup>37</sup>. Therefore, the American philosopher has returned to the question of the presence of religion in the public sphere. He partially agreed with the critics and revised his position.

Rorty refined his views by dividing the religious communities into parish “congregations” and “ecclesiastical organizations”. To the latter, he included Catholic bishops, leaders of the Mormon Church and famous in the US televangelists<sup>38</sup>. His criticism focused on these groups. The objections, he raised against them, did not depend on the inconclusiveness and subjectivity of the arguments taken from religious dictionaries and the stopping of the public conversation, but on the fact that ecclesiastical organizations „create unnecessary human misery“<sup>39</sup>. Therefore, not as an atheist, because militant atheists are for Rorty, just as religious fundamentalists, but as anticlerical he hopes that one day ecclesiastical organizations will disappear from the face of the Earth. In his utopian vision, the American philosopher believes that their followers will merge with people such as Rorty, and will take care of the realisation of the ideals of social justice<sup>40</sup>. And as soon as the utopian project is realised, the need for the functioning of religion in the public sphere will disappear. Consequently, religion will return, where Rorty has always seen its place, that is, to the private sphere.

In the article, the American philosopher enlarged criticism of the presence of religion in the public sphere. It no longer refers to the content of religious beliefs. They are not „irrational, or intrinsically wrong-headed“<sup>41</sup>, as atheists claim, but they lead to increased misery and suffering in the world. Rorty admits that in history there have been situations when religions were on the right side. He recalls the figures of Gustavo Gutierrez – founder of the theology of liberation and Martin Luther King. However,

---

<sup>36</sup> R. Rorty, *Religion As Conversation-stopper*, in: R. Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope*, Harmondsworth 1999, p. 171.

<sup>37</sup> See N. Wolterstorff, *Why We Should Reject What Liberalism Tells Us about Speaking and Acting in Public for Religious Reasons*, in *Religion and Contemporary Liberalism*, P. J. Weithman (ed.), Notre Dame 1997, pp. 162-181.

<sup>38</sup> R. Rorty, *Religion In The Public Square. A Reconsideration*, “*Journal of Religious Ethics*”, 2003, no. 1, p. 141.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 142.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*.

the overall balance of religion is unfavourable: „such organizations will always, on balance, do more harm than good”<sup>42</sup>. Rorty justifies his thesis, by referring to the history of European Christian anti-Semitism, combining it with the 19th century pogroms and the Holocaust. There would be no such events, according to him, when no presence of hostile elements to Jews in the public teaching of the churches<sup>43</sup>.

Then he presents the situation of contemporary American homosexuals, who are publicly condemned by some religious communities which referring, as in the case of European anti-Semitism, to a religious dictionary<sup>44</sup>. This comparison probably has led to a conviction about the similarity of the fate of European Jews and American homosexuals. In Rorty’s vision, ecclesiastical organizations do not allow people to live as they consider appropriate and thus undermine the fundamental freedoms of a liberal society.

Analysing the text, someone can see a clear change in the arguments on the removal of religion from the public sphere. In the 1990s, religion stopped the public conversation, convincing only the convinced. Its presence in the sphere of post-secular society did not make sense unless the religious arguments were translated into secular language. A few years later, Rorty accepted the objections of his adversaries that the arguments derived from religious texts have the same right to be present in the public sphere, as the arguments from philosophical dissertations. However, he recognised that some of them, promoting by ecclesiastical organizations in the social sphere, contribute to increasing human suffering. Therefore, these organizations should meet with social ostracism, and thus be active only in the private sphere of believers<sup>45</sup>.

## Conclusions

With the increasing role of religion in the modern world and the theory of secularisation crisis, the conviction that Western societies will not be atheistic but will be post-secular is becoming more and more common. This situation forces the sociologists of religion, as well as social philosophers, to elaborate a new place for religion in the public sphere. The article described two radically different concepts of the presence of religion in contemporary, post-secular societies.

The first of them, by Casanova, not only allows its presence in the public sphere but also lists the benefits that a post-secular society could derive from the deprivatization of religion. The second concept, by Rorty, not only does not see the benefits of the presence of religion in the public sphere but sees its uselessness, as well

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, p. 145.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, pp. 145-146.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, p. 148.

as the threat to the values of the liberal society. In this situation, according to the American philosopher, the most appropriate place for the religious activity is the private sphere.

Thus the question appears, how to explain this interesting contrast between the views of these recognised researchers. I think that these differences arise from three causes.

The first ones have the character of personal experiences. Rorty repeatedly described himself as an atheist, deprived of the experience of religious spirituality<sup>46</sup>. Casanova, as far as I know, did not make personally any declarations about his religiousness, but since he also deals with theological research and is rewarded for it<sup>47</sup>, even the elementary religious sensitivity must have.

The second source is cultural capital took out from home. Rorty, as he recall<sup>48</sup>, grew up in a family of Trotskyists, where he obviously did not receive any religious socialisation. In his house, on the shelves were books devoted to the assassination of Trotsky or the Moscow Trials, unlike many other American families, where was the Bible. We know less about the cultural capital of Casanova, but from the information available on the Internet<sup>49</sup> it follows that he studied theology<sup>50</sup>. So he probably had to take at least elementary religious education from home.

Thirdly, later this cultural capital had to affect intellectual and research choices. The Rorty's philosophical background was greatly influenced by reading, the classical pragmatist – James Dewey, who perceived religion as a socially dangerous phenomenon. He claimed that „Men have never fully used the powers they possess to advance the good in life, because they have waited upon some power external to themselves and to nature to do the work they are responsible for doing“<sup>51</sup>. This passage was cited by Rorty himself in one of the articles<sup>52</sup>.

In his academic career, Rorty only dealt with writing and reading texts and journalistic activity. There is nothing strange in it. After all, he studied and lectured philosophy. More precisely analysing his texts, one can see a large number of liberal stereotypes about religion, often identifying it only with an aversion to homosexuals or anti-Semitism. His image of Christianity sometimes comes down to pogroms

---

<sup>46</sup> See. R. Rorty, *An Ethics For Today. Finding Common Ground Between Philosophy And Religion*, New York 2011, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> See <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/people/jose-casanova> [access: 08.04.2018].

<sup>48</sup> See. R. Rorty, *Trotsky and the Wild Orchids*, in: *Philosophy and Social Hope*, Harmondsworth 1999, pp. 3-20.

<sup>49</sup> See <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/people/jose-casanova> [access: 08.04.2018].

<sup>50</sup> See <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/people/jose-casanova> [access: 08.04.2018].

<sup>51</sup> J. Dewey, *A Common Faith*, in: J. Dewey, *Later Works of John Dewey*, vol. 9, Carbondale and Edwardsville 1986, p. 31.

<sup>52</sup> See R. Rorty, G. Vattimo, *The Future...*, op. cit., p. 41, footnote 2.

legitimated by religion, during which Poles and Russians were to gang-rape Jews women, with the passive attitude of the clergy<sup>53</sup>.

Casanova, who has an M.A. in theology had to contact with people and texts which a more openness to religion. He could see the positive value of the presence of religion in the public sphere of various societies and its role in the transformation of many countries from totalitarian to democratic states.

I think that the reasons presented above have resulted in a different perception of religion, and in its vision in the public sphere. For Casanova, familiar with the religious life probably from his own experience and scientific research, religion appears in a natural way as a phenomenon mainly of a community nature, which „transcends any privatistic, autistic reality, serving to integrate the individual into an intersubjective, public, and communal ‘world’”<sup>54</sup>. For Rorty, religion is more like what a person does privately with his loneliness. Unsurprisingly then that all forms of collective religious life in the public sphere arouse his anxiety. Moreover, cultural capital and the liberal stereotypes taken from the home and the media make him impossible to notice that religion gives strength to overcome individual and collective problems in everyday life. The question, to resolve which problems this energy will be used in the future – whether, for the real help with the social exclusion or instrumentally for a dirty political fight, this is an entirely different story.

---

<sup>53</sup> R. Rorty, *An Ethics...*, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>54</sup> J. Casanova, *Public...*, op. cit., p. 216.