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DOI <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31392/cult.alm.2026.1.17>**Honcharenko Kateryna,***Candidate of Philosophical Sciences, Associate Professor,**Head of the Department of Philosophy,**Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities**Dragomanov Ukrainian State University**orcid.org/0000-0003-1162-9464**agneshka13@gmail.com*

**POSTMODERN POETICS OF MEDIAL SACRALITY:
TRANSFORMATION OF CHRISTIAN VALUES IN THE DISCOURSE
OF ORTHODOX CHURCHES OF UKRAINE**

The article offers a cultural-philosophical reading of the axiological discourse of Orthodox Churches in the Ukrainian media sphere as a specific «postmodern poetics» of the sacred. Axiological discourse is understood as a set of statements and communicative practices through which the Church publicly articulates, interprets and justifies a system of Christian values (love, mercy, truth, justice, conciliarity, holiness, etc.). The study argues that under the conditions of the mediatization of religion and what Ukrainian scholars describe as «religious postmodernism», values increasingly operate as media-signs, narratives and images subordinated to the logic of mass communication and the competition of discourses. This results in semiotic recoding: the alethic value of truth is displaced toward post-truth regimes; agape-oriented values of love and mercy are reduced to short-term empathy and symbolic charity; communal conciliarity is reframed as a branded identity of «one's own» community; and eschatological meanings are translated into apocalyptic media plots. The theoretical framework combines mediatization theory, research on post-truth as a cognitive-communicative challenge, and key tools of postmodern poetics (intertextuality, montage/collage, irony, pastiche), which together explain how values become aestheticised and circulated in media form. The article proposes an analytical matrix of value transformations that can serve as a methodological template for further empirical research on the communication strategies of Orthodox Churches in Ukraine. The practical contribution lies in distinguishing the normative axiological horizon of the Gospel from its media-driven and context-dependent representations—an essential step for understanding contemporary religious publicity and cultural conflicts around «traditional values». The paper also notes that a Lacanian distinction between the Symbolic and the Real (as developed in Lacanian-oriented cultural critique) helps to conceptualise moments when traumatic experience breaks through media simulacra and forces a renewed articulation of value orientations.

Key words: axiological discourse, Orthodox Churches, mediatization of religion, postmodernity, postmodern poetics, values, post-truth.

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**ПОСТМОДЕРНА ПОЕТИКА МЕДІЙНОЇ САКРАЛЬНОСТІ:
ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ ХРИСТІЯНСЬКИХ ЦІННОСТЕЙ
У ДИСКУРСІ ПРАВОСЛАВНИХ ЦЕРКОВ УКРАЇНИ**

У статті запропоновано культурно-філософську інтерпретацію аксіологічного дискурсу православних церков в українському медіапросторі як різновиду «постмодерної поетики» сакрального. Вихідним є розуміння аксіологічного дискурсу як сукупності висловлювань і комунікативних практик, у яких Церква

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артикулює, тлумачить та публічно обґрунтовує систему християнських цінностей (любов, милосердя, істину, справедливість, соборність, святість тощо). Показано, що в умовах медіатизації релігії й «релігійного постмодерну» цінності дедалі частіше функціонують як медіазнаки, наративи та образи, які підпорядковуються логіці масових комунікацій і конкуренції дискурсів. Це веде до семіотичного перекодування: алеґейологічна цінність істини зміщується в режим постправди; аґапейні цінності любові та милосердя редукуються до короткотермінової емпатії й символічної благодійності; комунітарна соборність набуває форми брендваної ідентичності «своєї» спільноти; есхатологічні смисли перетворюються на медійні апокаліптичні сюжети. Теоретичний каркас дослідження поєднує концепцію медіатизації релігії, підхід до постправди як когнітивно-комунікативного виклику та інструментарій постмодерної поетики (інтертекстуальність, колажність, іронія, пастиш), які дозволяють описати механізми «естетизації» цінностей у медіа. Запропоновано аналітичну матрицю трансформації християнських цінностей у медіадискурсі, що може бути використана для подальших емпіричних досліджень комунікаційних стратегій православних церков в Україні. Практичне значення роботи полягає у розмежуванні нормативної аксіології Євангелія та її медіалізованих, контекстуально зумовлених репрезентацій, що є критично важливим для осмислення сучасної релігійної публічності та культурних конфліктів навколо «традиційних цінностей». Додатково обґрунтовано, що лаканівська опозиція Символічного та Реального у культурній критиці дозволяє описати моменти, коли травматичний досвід проривається крізь медіасимулякри й вимагає переозначення ціннісних орієнтирів.

Ключові слова: аксіологічний дискурс, православні церкви, медіатизація релігії, постмодерн, поетика постмодернізму, цінності, постправда.

Statement of the problem. The Ukrainian media space of the early 21st century is both a secular public sphere and an arena of active religious communication. Orthodox churches in Ukraine are present in the public sphere through official websites, social network pages, video streams of divine services, public statements and comments, interviews, and appearances in the news media. In such an environment, the church not only “reports” on events but also offers society an assessment of these events in terms of good and evil, justice, peace, dignity, and mercy; that is, it produces an axiological discourse.

At the same time, the media is not a neutral channel. The theory of the mediatization of religion emphasises that religious communication is increasingly “summarised” under the logic of the media: the media act not only as channels, but also as languages and environments that change the social forms of religion (Hjarvard, 2008, pp. 9-10). Ukrainian religious scholars link modern transformations of values to globalisation processes and “religious postmodernity”, which makes the perception of religious values heterogeneous and prone to eclecticism and syncretism (Filipovych & Tytarenko, 2021, p. 83).

Under these conditions, Christian values in public communications often exist not only as ethical norms or spiritual practices, but also as media signs: word-symbols, visual markers, recognisable narratives and community “brands”. This poses a problem: how to distinguish the normative horizon of evangelical axiology from

its postmodern, mediatized forms, in which values can be simplified, commercialised, or politicised.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The interaction between religion and media is actively studied in international humanities. S. Hjarvard proposed an influential concept of the mediatization of religion, showing that the media become agents of religious change, and religious symbols and practices are included in the “media religion” (Hjarvard, 2008). In the Central and Eastern European context, attempts to map the specifics of the mediatization of religion in light of post-socialist cultural trajectories are important (Guzek, 2021).

In the field of postmodern theory, significant works are those that reveal the “poetics” of the postmodern text – intertextuality, collage, parody, pastiche, as well as the tension between history, theory and artistic narrative (Hutcheon, 1988). In the communicative dimension, this poetics manifests itself not only in art but also in media culture more broadly: in the methods of meaning montage, in hybrid genres, and in the aestheticisation of publicity.

A separate layer of research concerns the phenomenon of post-truth. In the context of cognitive psychology and media communications, it has been shown that “post-truth” is associated with mechanisms of disinformation, motivated thinking, and a crisis of trust that affects the social production of truth (Lewandowsky, Ecker, & Cook, 2017).

In Ukrainian humanities, works that conceptualise religion as a value and describe

the transformations of religious values in modern socio-cultural processes are important (Fylypovych & Tytarenko, 2021). For media discursive analysis, O. Levko's work is indicative, demonstrating how the axiological status of the Tomos was constructed in Ukrainian media discourse and how a symbolic event received value assessments and metaphorical framings (Levko, 2018).

Despite these approaches, the integration of the theory of postmodern poetics (as a mode of cultural semiosis) with the analysis of the axiological discourse of Orthodox churches in the media remains underdeveloped. It is this integration that allows us to see how church values in the media environment are not simply "transmitted" but are recoded in formats close to the aesthetics of postmodern culture.

Axiological discourse and the normative horizon of Christian values. In the general philosophical sense, axiology is the doctrine of values and their hierarchy. In the religious dimension, values determine not only moral norms, but also a picture of the world, an idea of the meaning of life and the ultimate goals of human existence. Therefore, the axiological discourse of the church can be defined as a set of statements and practices of public communication in which Christian values are proclaimed, interpreted and justified, and social phenomena are evaluated through the prism of these values.

The evangelical ethics of love sets the normative centre of Christian axiology: "love of God" and "love of neighbour" are outlined as the basis of the moral law (Matt. 22:37-40), and the commandment of love is presented as a criterion for the authenticity of discipleship (John 13:34-35). In this sense, agape is not an emotion but a normative principle that structures the other virtues (cf. 1 Cor. 13:13).

For a systematic analysis of the value structure of Christianity, Ukrainian researcher G. Pyrig proposes a hierarchical model, where God is at the highest level as an absolute value, then – goal values (salvation, the Kingdom of Heaven), then – means values (faith, sacraments, commandments, virtues), and finally – the values of earthly life, which receive a religious interpretation (Pyrig, 2005).

This approach allows us to distinguish the dogmatically immutable level of values (God, salvation) from the level of their social and cultural

representations. It is at the level of "earthly" values and public representations that the most significant tension arises between church norms and secular/media axiologies.

Postmodern value context and poetics of media culture. The postmodern cultural context is often described as a situation of multiple "truths" and competing narratives, in which universal claims to truth are increasingly suspect. In the realm of media communication, this manifests as audience fragmentation, genre hybridisation, and the primacy of image over argument. In terms of the mediatization of religion, this means that religious meanings circulate in forms dictated by media logic, from short message formats to visual "eventfulness" (Hjarvard, 2008).

Classic descriptions of postmodernity point to several interrelated features that are important for the analysis of church discourse: first, the "distrust of metanarratives" as universal stories that claim to legitimize truth (Lyotard, 1984); second, the production of simulacra and hyperreality, where signs can replace experience and practice (Baudrillard, 1994); and third, the fluidity ("rarity") of social forms and identities, which complicates the stable reproduction of value systems (Bauman, 2000).

Postmodern poetics, as described in the literary and cultural traditions, captures the ways meaning is produced through intertextuality, collage, parody, pastiche, and genre play (Hutcheon, 1988). In media culture, these mechanisms manifest themselves as a montage of disparate codes: sacred and political, theological and pop culture, liturgical and advertising. This is important for the analysis of church communication because even traditional theological messages can be packaged in formats that resemble the aesthetics of postmodern "spectacle".

A separate dimension of the postmodern situation is post-truth. In conditions of information overload and low trust, social "truth" can be formed not so much through fact-checking, but through the emotional persuasiveness of narratives. Post-truth research shows that such regimes are supported by mechanisms of disinformation and cognitive biases, as well as a crisis of epistemic authority (Lewandowsky et al., 2017). In religious discourse, this risks mixing theological truth with media "plausibility" and political interpretations.

Ukrainian researchers of religion emphasise that globalisation and secularisation transform

the perception of religious values, making them unstable and prone to shifts under the influence of religious postmodernity and pluralism (Filypovych & Tytarenko, 2021). This directly applies to the media space, where values become elements of public competition – a symbolic resource of identity, mobilisation, and legitimisation.

Matrix of postmodern recoding of Christian values in media discourse. To combine axiological analysis with the cultural poetics of postmodernity, it is appropriate to consider postmodernity not as a “separate set” of values, but as a context in which existing Christian values undergo semiotic and practical reformatting. That is, we are talking about a model of “was (normative value) – became (mediatised version)”, where media genres, visual codes, and the logic of public resonance play a key role.

On this basis, we propose an analytical matrix that captures typical directions of the postmodern transformation of Christian values in the media environment. It does not claim to be a complete classification. Still, it can serve as an operational tool for further empirical research into church communication and for analysing how the normative meanings of Christian axiology are transferred to the regime of signs, images, and communicative strategies.

1. Truth in the normative Christian sense is related to revelation, fidelity to the Gospel, and responsibility for the word. In the postmodern media space, it is often recoded into a post-truth mode, where truth functions as an emotionally appealing narrative capable of mobilising an audience regardless of the degree of correspondence to the facts. In church discourse, this creates risks of losing trust in authorities and of increasing competition among multiple “versions” of truth, in which church testimony can be perceived as one of many narratives rather than a claim to universal truth.

2. Love and mercy (agape), which in Christianity mean sacrificial, active love and long-term service to one’s neighbour, are often reduced to short-term empathy and “symbolic charity” as a public event in the mediatised postmodern logic. That is, the emphasis shifts from practice to representation: what is important is not so much long-term service as its visibility, “showiness” and communicative effect. The risk in church discourse lies in replacing ethical practice with representation, when a moral act is evaluated by media recognition rather than its inner spiritual dimension.

3. Catholicity and unity as a church value, which presupposes universalism, communion and “unity in Christ”, in the postmodern media context can take the form of a branded identity of the community, reinforced by the markers “ours/strangers”. Unity then functions not as a theological and ecclesiological principle, but as a sign of group belonging, a symbolic password of the “right ones”. Hence, the risk of narrowing universalism to group loyalty, when “unity” begins to mean primarily the political or cultural solidarity of “ours”, rather than the openness and catholicity of the Church.

4. Holiness and repentance as an internal ascetic process and ontological transformation of a person in the tradition of the Church are often recoded into the format of personalised “stories”, media roles and moralising clichés. In such a mode, repentance easily becomes a genre – a “dramatic narrative”, and holiness – an image or role, reproduced in recognisable media templates. The risk is that morality turns into a communicative genre, and the church word – into moralization without asceticism, where condemnation or “correct formulas” replace the practice of spiritual life.

5. Eschatological hope, which in Christianity is the basis for trust in God and the prospect of the Kingdom of Heaven, in the postmodern media environment is often transformed into apocalyptic plots, dramatisation, and “end-of-life scenarios” that work well in the logic of news, hype, and alarming infomercials. Under such conditions, eschatology becomes a media plot resource rather than a spiritual virtue. The risks here are sensationalization and the production of anxiety rather than hope, when the expectation of the future is reduced to fear or conspiratorial schemes rather than to trust and spiritual endurance.

Thus, the proposed “matrix” allows us to describe a key mechanism: in the postmodern media space, Christian values often move from the plane of normative meaning to the plane of semiotic coding, where format, speed, emotionality, and symbolic recognition become decisive. It is this tension between theological normativity and the media logic of representation that constitutes one of the central problems of analysing the axiological discourse of Orthodox churches.

Communication strategies of Orthodox churches in the postmodern media environment. In the postmodern media space, Orthodox churches are forced to combine at least three strategies.

The first strategy is the maintenance of the “grand narrative” of salvation and truth. It is implemented through appeals to Scripture, liturgical language, and the categories of sin and repentance, holiness, and martyrdom. In terms of axiology, this is an attempt to preserve a hierarchy where God and salvation remain absolute values (Pyrig, 2005).

The second strategy is adaptation to media logic. It manifests itself in short messages, visual images, personalised communication, and intertextual techniques. Describing the media construction of Tomos’s value status, researchers show that value assessments of the event are accompanied by metaphorical frames and discursive “packaging” that make the value recognisable and communicatively compelling (Levko, 2018). It is here that postmodern poetics (collage and genre hybridity) becomes a resource of church publicity.

The third strategy is the risk of “slipping” into simulation, where values become rhetoric without corresponding practice, or markers of political/group identity. In post-truth terms, this means that truth can be replaced by an emotionally appealing narrative (Lewandowsky et al., 2017), and, in terms of mediatization, that values can function as self-sufficient signs, separated from ethical content (Hjarvard, 2008).

The philosophy of culture shows that these strategies are not mutually exclusive: the same church institution can simultaneously speak the language of normative axiology, adapt to the media, and experience the temptation of simulation. Therefore, the analysis of the axiological discourse of Orthodox churches in Ukraine requires both theological sensitivity (to the content of values) and culturological attention (to the forms of their media poetics).

Lacanian Perspective: Truth, Structural Misrecognition and the Breakthrough of the Real. To clarify the mechanisms of postmodern “post-truth”,

the Lacanian opposition between the Symbolic and the Real may be productive. The Real in this approach is not simply “actual reality”, but rather that which does not lend itself to full symbolization and breaks into the linguistic order as a traumatic excess (Lacan, 1978).

Lacanian-oriented cultural criticism, related to readings of mass culture and cinema, emphasises the paradox: truth can appear as an effect of false vision, while the traumatic Real “shakes” the stability of narratives and forces them to restructure (Žižek, 1992). In axiological discourse, this means that, under the conditions of media simulacra, it is traumatic events and experiences that can actualise questions about normative values (truth, mercy, justice), not as rhetoric but as an existential need.

Conclusions. The axiological discourse of Orthodox churches in the media space is not only the transmission of dogmas, but also the public articulation of a system of values and the evaluation of social phenomena in terms of this system.

The postmodern context (mediatization, audience fragmentation, post-truth) leads to a semiotic recoding of values: they increasingly function as media signs, narratives, and visual images, subject to the logic of public competition.

The proposed matrix “normative value – mediatised version” allows us to describe typical shifts: truth – post-truth; love and mercy – short-term empathy and symbolic charity; communion – branded identity; eschatology – apocalyptic media plot.

Orthodox churches in Ukraine combine strategies of maintaining a grand narrative, adapting to media logic, and (sometimes) risking simulation. Further research should focus on empirical corpus analysis of church media texts and visual materials to quantitatively and qualitatively describe these strategies in dynamics.

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