

## THE SACRED IN MODERN SOCIETY

1. Violence is the sacred. Everywhere and every time order is falling down, structure loses its possibility to secure order between human beings, groups, violence rises up and with it the sacred.
2. The sacred is there when people are proclaiming violence, for what reason ever. Eventually they are totally convinced that they are right, that they absolutely need violence. Nevertheless, as soon as violence comes to the surface, it has its own laws and mechanisms. You control the violence, but very soon the violence is controlling the violent. Hence Mt. 26,52: all who draw the sword will die by the sword. All old and all so-called primitive people knew: Violence is like a fire. It consumes the fire-makers and all around. The guilty and the innocent random. That so many innocent people. The sacred is all consuming. In fact IRA people know. And so, when they kill innocent people, they are not too concerned. It is in the game.
3. The more society, culture is drifting to chaos, the more all utterances become violent. Politicians become more and more violent in their appearance and their words. They are threatening people, threatening with violence. They become more and more manichaeic, dividing the world into the good and the bad. They constantly make myths. Good myths about themselves, bad myths about the others. There is not any longer a place in the middle. There are not any longer outsiders, seeing the real relationships. Only the myths count and with the myths the hunt for the scapegoats is going on.
4. There are two sides in all ritual. The ritual, leading to the expulsion of the scapegoat, ritual, leading to the chaos, which will be dissolved, by the expulsion of the sacrificial victim. And the side of ritual after the expulsion of the victim, ritual which serves peace and the continuation of peace. Ritual in Northern Ireland, even the 12<sup>th</sup> July one, in which in a sense partook the whole of the population was, before the troubles, ritual after the expulsion of the scapegoat. More and more Northern Ireland rituals have become ritual before the expulsion, drifting to and driving to chaos, violence, the sacred.
5. It belongs to the violence, which is the sacred, that transcendence disappears. All order, all structure disappears, and so does transcendence. The remnants of transcendence are used in the mythical fight against the opponents, the other side, the bad ones. In fact as soon as we are in the sacred all differences on which culture is built disappear, everybody fighting against everybody. So too the difference between transcendence and culture, which is kept in order by it, disappears.
6. I made this short paper because I promised to make one about the sacrum, the sacred, in modern society. I hope that it is possible to order the different expressions of violence and the sacred in Northern Ireland. Maybe we have to go on and make a more thorough analysis.