

POKALISZ CUM FIGURIS



CYTATY Z BIBLII SCENARIUSZ I REŻYSERIA
 JERZY GROTOWSKI
 WSPOMAGANIE REŻYSERII RYSZARD CIESIARSKI

SYMON PETRUS ANTONI WŁOZKOŃSKI

JUDASZ - ZYGMUNT MOLIĆ
 ŁAZARZ - ZBIGNIEW GYNKUTIS
 MARIA MAGDALENA - RENA MIRECKA
 MARIA MAGDALENA - ELIZABETH ALBAHACA
 JAN - STANISŁAW SCIERSKI

MIŁOŚĆ RYSZARD CIESIARSKI
ASYSTENTA RYSZARD CIESIARSKI

KOSTYUMY - WALDEMAR KRYCIEK

TEATR-LABORATORIUM
NS W UŁE BADAŃ METODY AKTORSKIE
 W POŁCZU

REDAKTOR
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Wydanie 1000 - 1000 - 1000

ZE ZBIORÓW
IRENY I CELESTYNA KWIEŃNIOŃ
W KATOWICACH

INSTITUTE OF ACTOR'S RESEARCH
LABORATORY THEATRE
WROCLAW – POLAND



APOCALYPSIS CUM FIGURIS

THESE PROGRAM NOTES
ARE NOT AN INTERPRETA-
TION OF THE PRODUCTION
BUT CAN HELP YOU TO FOL-
LOW THE ACTION SHOULD
YOU NOT UNDERSTAND
POLISH. YOU ARE WEL-
COME TO TAKE THEM HOME
WITH YOU, BUT PLEASE LEA-
VE THEM BEHIND BEFORE
TAKING YOUR SEAT.

THANK YOU.

A P O C A L Y P S I S C U M F I G U R I S

ANTONI JAHÓŁKOWSKI SIMON PETER

ZYGMUNT MOLIK JUDAS

ZBIGNIEW CYNKUTIS LAZARUS

RENA MIRECKA
ELIZABETH ALBAHACA MARY MAGDALENE

STANISŁAW SCIERSKI JOHN

RYSZARD CIEŚLAK THE SIMPLETON

CITATIONS FROM THE BIBLE AND
THE WORKS OF DOSTOYEVSKY,
T. S. ELIOT, SIMONE WEIL.

WALDEMAR KRYGIER, DESINER

LUDWIK FLASZEN, ADVISER

RYSZARD CIEŚLAK, ASSOCIATE ANIMATOR

GROUP WORK

JERZY GROTOWSKI, ANIMATOR



INSTITUTE OF ACTOR'S RESEARCH
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A P O C A L Y P S I S C U M F I G U R I S

SOME INTRODUCTORY NOTES

1. *Apocalypsis cum Figuris* evolved from acting exercises and improvisations. When needed, words were improvised. The final stages of rehearsal were spent looking for the verbal matter that was needed to replace the improvised lines and the quotations which had been used as stop-gaps. The idea was that, wherever the spoken word was essential, it should appear in the form of quotations from sources which could be regarded as the work not of one writer but of the whole of mankind. Such texts were found primarily in the Bible and in *The Brothers Karamazov*, supplemented by passages from the poems of T. S. Eliot and from Simone Weil.

2. Despite the title, this production is not a dramatization of The Revelation of St. John. In his prophetic vision the author of Revelation foretold the second coming of Christ. Likewise in the production He (or is it?) also seems to appear in the singular figure of the Simpleton, forcing the company to make what it can of this Second Coming which they have called forth for their own low entertainment.

Another link with the Apocalypse may be seen in the associations which this word has picked up in colloquial speech.

3. The production uses the names of characters from the Gospels which have certain traditional and recognized associations. But to call someone Simon Peter or John need not be a biblical allusion: these are popular names everywhere. Judas is not only a name but also a byword for betrayal. In the same way Mary Magdalene is commonly identified with a fallen woman, and Lazarus is, at any rate in Polish, a term of abuse for a shiftless wretch. Thus the name do not conjure up solely Gospel associations, though these do in fact crowd in upon the people as the drama unfolds.

These names are conferred on his companions by the bearded man who is called Simon Peter. He himself arrogates the function of the First Apostle. The „investitures” as Gospel figures are made in the very se-

cond scene. First he casts as Saviour someone who would look more at home in the part of Lazarus — (and who does, in fact, end up that way). This pseudo-Saviour has his feet washed by the newly designated Mary Magdalene and no sooner is Judas nominated than he identifies Lazarus as Christ. But Simon Peter corrects his apparent mistake and assigns the role of Christ to the Simpleton, which produces a chorus of laughter all round. In this way irreverent horseplay ushers in a sort of Second Coming.

In Polish the word „Simpleton” suggests certain associations: an innocent, gullible half-wit, living outside the accepted conventions, gawkish, often deformed, but in mysterious communion with the supernatural. The demoniac and the village idiot are familiar figures in Slav tradition. They tended the village cattle, begged in church doorways, formed a butt for the children and now and then struck superstitious terror into the old. This was the medium in which sanctity, perhaps even Christ himself, was wont to be revealed to country folk.

4. There is a distinct correspondence between the performance and the Gospels' account of Jesus. It is not, however, an enactment of this narrative. When the audience enters the hall before the performance begins the come into contact with actors who belong to the here and now, not to some other age, or some other time and place. They have not stepped out of a different period from ours or out of a different story. It may be that, exhausted by their debauchery, they have lied down soaked in sperm, sweat and drinks spilled on the floor. But presently, at a signal from the master of ceremonies, something like the affairs related in the Gospels will begin to loom out of the sodden atmosphere.

The revellers start coaxing out of each other the attributes of those Gospel figures, jostling each other into their situations, discovering in themselves resemblances to their spiritual and human make-up, often twisted and caricatured in the process —

and all by means of that unwitting logic which causes human beings, their masks and their role-playing, to gravitate almost automatically in moments of truth towards the eternal figurations of myth.

5. The course of the scenes is not governed by the sequence of events recorded in the Gospels. It is dictated by the distinctive logic of this symposium.

In one scene, when a youth and a girl are found standing side by side like a betrothed couple about to be married, a sort of wedding procession spontaneously forms up behind them and singing marches off around the auditorium: an extempore situation turns into the marriage feast of Cana. At another juncture one of the men lies down and pulls his shirt over his face as though dead. When the others start holding a noisy wake, the Simpleton silences them by banging his staff on the floor and addresses the 'corpse' in the words Jesus spoke when raising Lazarus from the dead: 'Lazarus, come forth'. A practical joke seems to have been played at the Simpleton's expense.

In the sequence performed by candlelight the echoes of the Gospels assert themselves even more strongly. When Simon Peter brings in the candles, the proceedings merge into the Last Supper with Judas throwing out the idea of the sacrifice of the passover lamb. Holding candles, the company circles the Simpleton, baaing and chanting moc-

kingly 'Glory be to the Great and Just One', and this singular apotheosis makes him go to pieces and collapse. Now that the sacrifice, although bloodless has been accomplished, mass can be said. It is Simon Peter who starts celebrating in Latin. Seeing mass is being celebrated, there accordingly appears a place of worship. And seeing there is a place of worship, there is also buying and selling and eventually the cleansing of the temple.

A moment later, during a conversation between Simon Peter and the Simpleton as they kneel opposite each other in the now deserted room, Judas and Mary Magdalene dress up for the Gospel scene of the women keeping vigil by the cross. But the supposedly crucified man — in the person of the Simpleton — is alive and at hand, awaiting the final reckoning with Simon Peter. Like Christ, he is not even dead, but misunderstood, deformed, tormented by his fellows. And Simon Peter dispatches him with the words spoken by Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor to Christ who had upset the settled routine of the Church by his living presence just as the Simpleton has, by his overpowering earnestness, wrecked the anticipated course of the gathering.

6. 'Go and come no more': this is the final line spoken by Simon Peter after the candles have gone out and the Simpleton's Latin liturgical lament has ended. Who is Simon Peter turning out?

CHARACTERS AND SPEECHES

SIMON PETER

A bearded man. His lines come mainly from the Grand Inquisitor's speech in *The Brothers Karamazov*, from the passage in which he taunts the prisoner condemned to the stake who has turned out to be Christ.

Here is what Simon Peter says to the Simpleton towards the end of the performance when they are kneeling in opposite corners of the empty room:

And instead of firm foundations for assuaging man's conscience once and for all, you chose everything that was misty, obscure and unusual, everything that was beyond the strength of men; you acted as though you did not love them at all — you who came to give your life for them. You wanted man's free love so that he should follow you of his own free will, attracted and beguiled by you. Instead of the strict ancient law, man had in future to decide for himself what was good and what was evil, having only your image before him as guidance. But did you never imagine that he would eventually reject and challenge even your image and your truth, if he were weighed down with so fearful a burden as freedom of choice? In the end they will cry out that the truth is not in you, since they could not have been left in greater confusion and suffering than you have done by leaving them with so many cares and impossible problems.

*
* *

And why are you looking at me so silently and quizzically with your gentle eyes? Get angry. I do not want your love because I do not love you myself. And what have I to hide from you? Do you think I don't know whom am I speaking with? All I have to tell you is already known to you. I can read it in your eyes. Would I conceal our secret from you? Can it be that you want to hear it from my lips. Well, then, listen. We are not with you but with another; that is our secret. We have not been with you but with another a long time —

*
* *

Know that I am not afraid of you. Know that I, too, was in the wilderness, that I, too, fed upon locusts and roots, that I, too, blessed freedom which you have bestowed upon men, that I, too, was preparing to take my place among your elect, among the strong and the mighty, eager to make up the number. But I came to my senses and refused to serve lunacy.

LAZARUS

With a thick crop of fair hair. Most of his lines come from the Book of Job.

Here is what he says to the Simpleton when, after having seemed to be raised from the dead, he turns on him viciously, accusing him of being to blame for all the evils of life and stoning him with bread pellets:

Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease; But man dieth and wasteth away, yea, man giveth up the

ghost and where is he? Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day; Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me, or why the breasts that I should suck? For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters. I was not in safety neither had I rest, neither was I quiet.

JUDAS

Moustached. He has the appearance of a small-town fancy-man of comfortable middle age. His speeches are almost entirely parables from the Gospels, but so scissored and interpreted as to give their moral a dubious ring and make him sound like an informer or agent provocateur. Here is what he says just after the Simpleton has been cast as Christ, as he dances attendance on Simon Peter, all the time whispering in his ear:

A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden: Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

MARY MAGDALENE

The only woman in the cast. At various junctures she comes out with some key verse from the Song of Solomon. Here is a sample:

Our bed is green.

*

There will I give thee my loves.

*

My beloved put in his hand by the hole.

*

My beloved is white and ruddy.

*

I have put off my coat, I have washed my feet.

*

His legs are as pillars of marble.

JOHN

A barefoot youth in a cap. In the second half he is stripped to the waist. His lines are taken mainly from Revelation but they slip out suggestively and cynically twisted.

As the Simpleton and Mary Magdalene stand in a corner of the stage about to enjoy the intimacy which has just been arranged for them by the others, John tears off his tunic and cap and, barechested, points to Mary Magdalene, addressing the Simpleton:

Come hither: I will show unto thee judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend, and go into perdition, and they shall wonder when they behold the beast that was, and is not.

Towards the end, in the candlelit sequence, just before he is driven out by the Simpleton as the last of the money-changers in the temple, he makes the following profession to him in a speech adapted from Simone Weil:

You came into my room and said: 'Poor is he who understands nothing who knows nothing. Come with me and I will teach you things you never dreamed of.' You told me to leave and go with you to the attic, where from the open window one could see the entire city, a sort of wooden scaffolding and a river on which boats were being unloaded. We were alone. From a cupboard you took bread which we shared. The bread truly had the taste of bread. Never again did I perceive such a taste. You promised to teach me but you taught me nothing. One day you told me: 'and now go'. I never tried to find you again. I understood you came to me by mistake. My place is not in that attic. Anywhere else: in the prison cell, a railroad waiting room, anywhere but not in that attic. Sometimes I can't keep from repeating, with fear and a remorseful conscience, a little of what you told me. But how can I convince myself that I remember? You won't tell me, you are not here. I well know that you don't love me. How could you have loved me? And yet, there is within me something, a small part of me which, in the depths of my soul, trembling with fear, cannot defend itself against the thought that maybe, in spite of everything, you... Oh, Jesus!

THE SIMPLETON

Dressed in a black coat, with bare legs, carrying a stick. His lines are taken mainly from T. S. Eliot, especially those verses in which he refers to the breakdown of faith, the disappearance of values, the defeat of traditional human endeavours. His first speech comes when Simon Peter questions the point of a Second Coming:

*Because I do not hope to turn again
Because I do not hope
Because I do not hope to turn
I no longer strive to strive towards such things
(Why should the aged eagle stretch its wings?)
For what is done, not to be done again
May the judgement not be too heavy upon us
Because these wings are no longer wings to fly
But merely vane to beat the air
The air which is now thoroughly small and dry
Smaller and dryer than the will*

His last speech is spoken on the deserted stage and is a reply to Simon Peter's accusation:

My house is a decayed house.

*The goat coughs at night in the field overhead;
Rocks, moss, stonecrop, iron, merds.
The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea,
Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter.*

*After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
And issues, deceives...*

*Gives too late
What's not believed in, or if still believed,
In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon
Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with
Till the refusal propagates a fear. Think
Neither fear nor courage saves us. Unnatural vices
Are fathered by our heroism. Virtues
Are forced upon us by our impudent crimes.*

*I that was near your heart was removed therefrom
To lose beauty in terror, terror in inquisition.
I have lost my passion: why should I need to keep it
Since what is kept must be adulterated?
I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch:
How should I use them for your closer contact?*



THE TEXT IN SOME OF THE ENSEMBLE SCENES

Below are some examples of what is said in a few of the scenes. A commentary appears on the left, the lines on the right. They are given in the same sequence as they occur in the production

After the scene in which Simon Peter gallops around on the Simpleton's back, and when the latter lies exhausted on the floor, everyone hovers over him uttering snatches from the Bible.

They sound like vague, mutilated admissions of guilt, not for what has actually just taken place, but guilt in general, as though they were trying to justify themselves.

These invocations from the Song of Solomon follow straight after the love-making scene between the Simpleton and Mary Magdalene. Now Judas and Lazarus take up the roles of bride and groom.

In the scene of drunken gibberings cut by dancing and the singing of *Quantanamera* everyone stands bunched together in the middle of the room shouting each other down with quotations from the Bible, while the Simpleton scampers around them trying to attract their attention. But the words of the Bible assume lewd and sickening overtones in the context of their behaviour. Simon Peter drools through his sleep about something to do with incest. Lazarus gleefully recalls his gruesome misfortune. Judas harps provocatively away at his garbled parables. Mary

Judas. *Whosoever entereth the fold not by the gate, but by anther way, is a thief and a robber.*

Mary Magdalene. *Our bed is green.*

Lazarus. *Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose?*

John. *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.*

Judas. *He that hath ears to hear let him hear. To whom shall I liken this tribe? It is as children that sit in the square and call to their companions saying, We played the pipes, but you danced not.*

*
* *

Judas. *How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse, thy neck is as a dove's.*

Lazarus. *How fair is my love.*

Judas. *Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart on the mountains of spices.*

*
* *

Simon Peter. *There thy mother is in danger, there she that bare thee is ravished.*

Mary Magdalene. *I have put off my coat, I have washed my feet.*

Lazarus. *They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves against me. He cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground.*

Judas. *Then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in the field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him,*

Magdalene flaunts her physical attractions. John recites passages from Revelation which become gross sexual allusions.

Wilt then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay.

John. *And another came crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle. And another cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And he thrust in his sickle into the earth, and the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress.*

*
* *

This is the dialogue which begins when the lights have gone out and Simon Peter brings in the candles pushing events towards the Last Supper.

Judas. *Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.*

John. *Give us of your oil; for our lamps have gone out.*

Simon Peter. *Lord, dost thou wash my feet?*

The Simpleton. *What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Ye are not all clean. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that one of you shall betray me.*

Simon Peter. *John, ask him who it is he means.*

John. *Jesus, who is it?*
(The Simpleton marks Simon Peter's head with fire)

Judas. *But me, Lord?*

Simon Peter. *Judas, son of Iscariot, we are together.*

The Simpleton. *Yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come, so now I say to you.*

Simon Peter. *Lord, whither goest thou?*

The Simpleton. *Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Before I am delivered unto them, sing we a hymn to the Father, and then go we out to meet him that sat at the table with us.*

*
* *

The last line of the performance, spoken by Simon Peter to the Simpleton in total darkness.

Go and come no more.

