THE THING.
CONCEPTUAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

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БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ, 2018

ISBN 978-619-7372-10-6

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THE THING. CONCEPTUAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

Editors

Teresa Dobrzyńska, Raya Kuncheva

2018

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B560619

П 15 399
Инв. № 165654/20

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TERESA DOBRZYŃSKA

FOREWORD

Things material and the abstractions singled out by human thought (such abstracts becoming – as cognitivists have it – mental objects, resulting from the operation of ontological metaphors) penetrate into our consciousness primarily in the form of ideas or notions encoded in language. This occurs as a result of complex cognitive actions and conceptual processing that lasts over ages and continues through linguistic processes which form the scope as well as the semantic and stylistic value of lexems. Thus, things – singled out and named – become components of the anthroposphere, that is, the reality perceived from human perspective and embedded in conceptual and linguistic categories developed by man. A comprehensive manifestation of such perception and categorisation of reality is a linguistic image of the world, which is the basic component of culture – one that predestines, at the foundation, the anthropocentric character of culture. The existence of the anthroposphere manifests itself, clearly, in literary texts and other works of art that enrich the anthropocentric community perspective with individual dimensions of human experience, and creatively transform or modify it.

Moulded in this way, the anthroposphere is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, assuming diverse forms and shapes depending

on the environment and era – though the mechanisms and processes governing it are doubtlessly of a universal character. The peculiar characteristics of individual cultures are observable through juxtaposing and comparing the systems of notions functioning in various ethnic, social, religious, and other environments, and confronting the meanings of linguistic units in various languages. Interesting results are also stemming from examination of the ways of perceiving material objects as recorded in literature, and of representations of things in a variety of other cultural texts (such as religious art, visual art works, pieces of advertisement, etc.).

In a naïve, unreflective view of the world, things may seem to be objective components of reality. However, they essentially reveal a human touch, display a trace of human activity: it is man who names and categorises them, sets functions for them, creates them with an objective in mind, domesticates them, and approaches them as elements of his own identity. Things are made part of human rituals, depicted and processed in literary pieces and other works of art; and so forth. Identification of these aspects of reality does not preclude independent existence of the material world and its immanent value[1]. Nonetheless, for human communities and societies, as well as individuals, the immediately experienced and the most essential reality is the one that is culturally colonised, captured in a network of ideas and their linguistic exponents; the reality that is made part of social practices and individual behaviours. Human communities give things varied statuses, use them in diverse manners, furnish things with symbolic meanings and create their various representations in a variety of cultural texts. The conceptual image of an object has often a community dimension to it, characteristic of an ethnic or social group. Yet, it may be further modified in the consciousness of individuals – when a thing is possessed by them; when they are in permanent contact with it;

[1] See B. Olsen, *In Defense of Things. Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects*, Lanham: Altamira Press, 2010.

when a thing accompanies man in some particular occurrences and becomes the carrier or medium of a memorised content; or, when it gains some special, individually motivated functions; and so on, and so forth. A similar differentiation is true also with the represented worlds and object motifs in art – in the various currents of art, in the poetics or individual pieces.

Taking all this into consideration, it becomes easy to understand that as components of the anthroposphere, objects are a fascinating area to explore for literary scholars and researches of various scientific disciplines in the field of humanities. Analysis of the ways and methods of encoding objects in language, assigning them to a system of categories, including them in various object-related arrangements and behavioural scenarios, imbuing objects with symbolic contents and transposing them into the realm of art – all enable one to make an essential insight into culture.

The keen and, indeed, increasing interest in material reality and in diverse types of objects filling the world is at times approached as a manifestation of the post-humanistic current. Yet, comments of this sort seem exaggerated, and in fact illegitimate. After all, it is undeniable that things material, including artefacts and objects of natural origin, have a distinct anthropological trait to them, and this attests to the central position of man in the world – a finding that is reconfirmed through studies in anthropological linguistics and in research pursued on the ground of cognitivism.

As components of the human world, things appear in various spheres of human activity, and their presence is not limited to the role of an isolated background. They become part of the realm of factors constituting the image of time and place, forming the background for events occurring in the social and individual life; this makes things witness to human fates and fortunes, social changes, and historical processes. Things become, at times, indexical signs of attitudes in life and exponents of ideologies. They testify to continuance and persistence, and express the identities of people

associated with them. Things solidify the memory, trigger recollections and reminiscences. Having gained a distinctive semiotic trait, they fulfil multiple symbolic functions and participate in a variety of rituals. They become constituents of artistic styles and poetics, since their representations in literary pieces and works of visual art assemble into diverse configurations in the represented world and are moulded according to a variety of genre conventions or imaging practices elaborated for the artistic material in use. The notion of things, encouraged by the experience stemming from contact with physical objects, is the basis for reification – that is, conceptualising humans and other beings as things: an important component of various ideologies and propagandist practices.

The interest in the thus outlined problems of cultural image of things amongst scholars representing various areas of the humanities has exceeded the limits of isolated case studies that were published long before then, as part of investigation into the material reality and its textual representations.[2] Studies in things have in

[2] See e.g. numerous studies published recently in Poland, discussing this problem from various perspectives: S. Wysłouch, B. Kaniewska (eds.), *Człowiek i rzecz. O problemach reifikacji w literaturze, filozofii i sztuce*, Poznań 1999; W.N. Toporow, *Przestrzeń i rzecz*, trans. by B. Żyłko, Kraków 2003 (original version: В.Н. Топоров, *Вещь в антропоцентрическоӥ перспективе*, Москва 1993); J. Barański, *Świat rzeczy. Zarys antropologiczny*, Kraków 2007; M. Kitowska-Łysiak, M. Lachowski (eds.) *Rzecz i rzeczowość w kulturze XX I XXI wieku*, Lublin 2007; J. Kowalewski, W. Piasek, M. Śliwa (eds.), *Rzeczy i ludzie. Humanistyka wobec* materialności, Olsztyn 2008; B. Olsen, *W obronie rzeczy. Archeologia i ontologia przedmiotów*, przeł. B. Shallcross, Warszawa 2013 (original version: Olsen, *In Defense of Things...*, op. cit.); M. Krajewski, *Są w życiu rzeczy... Szkice z socjologii* przedmiotów, Warszawa 2013; A. Zientała, *Poeci urzeczeni. Przedmioty w poezji polskiej (1890-1939)*, Kraków 2014; A. Rebus, M.K. Kornobis (eds.) *Ludzie w świecie przedmiotów, przedmioty w świecie* ludzi, Warszawa 2015; B. Pawłowska-Jądrzyk, D. Dąbrowska (eds.), *Rzecz w kulturze*, Warszawa 2016.

recent time appeared with considerable frequency in the works of cultural scholars, ethnographers, archaeologists, art historians, or in literary studies dealing with analyses of symbols and following the specified literary motifs. Moreover, research into the status of things constitutes an eternal programme in philosophy, which is pursued also nowadays – revisited in different philosophical lines and followed up notably in the philosophical reflection upon language.

The present-day methodological situation in the humanities benefits research in the area in question. Semiotics provides important scientific facilities for research into ways of perceiving things, since the widely-used Piercean semiotic apparatus enables to discover and interpret various types of signs, describe the meaning-related, i.e. semantic, characterisation of objects and phenomena. Research in the symbolic function of material objects used in rituals and in social life, as represented in texts of culture, is pursued by semiotics.

Analysis of notional profiles of things is also fostered by the present methodological situation in linguistics. The development of semantics and pragmatics, and absorption of cognitive theories, enables presently to more adequately capture the mechanisms shaping the associations between language and thinking, and the reality; to reconstruct (even if this be limited to certain segments) the linguistic image of the world.

In its anthropological current, our contemporary linguistics approaches the world as a space of human exploration and the domain of man's creative activity: a space that is modelled with use of notions encoded in language and processed in linguistic texts. Cognitivism, in turn, analyses the mechanisms of creating and processing concepts, notions or ideas and their linguistic exponents, which is of primary importance in respect of investigating the status of things within the anthroposphere. Furthermore, research of things is fostered by the development of cultural studies which analyse the

interactions between human communities and their material surroundings, identifying the categories of objects and their functions in culture (for instance, tools, clothes, furniture, weaponry, toys, adornments, donations, symbols, insignia/regalia, props, fetishes, gadgets, mascots, etc.). This is of considerable importance for literary studies as well – the domain that in the last decades has often allied with cultural studies research. Study of literature itself, and poetics (which precedes it), have always been dealing with images and function of objects in the represented world of a literary work, and thus the achievements of these disciplines in this respect are enormous.

All these incentives encourage one to join the current of research that focuses on the ways of presenting and notion-related filtering of things in literary works and various texts of culture, with the assumption that such research ought to be carried out with wide use of the opportunities offered by the modern humanities. Such a task was undertaken by a group of Polish and Bulgarian literary scholars and representatives of other humanistic disciplines, who presented the outcome of their work at an international conference held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 24th–25th September 2015. The papers delivered at that conference are published in this volume, complemented with some articles from a literary studies conference entitled *Study of Object. Poetry and Things*, which was held in Warsaw, Poland, on 9th–10th December 2014.

The Sofia conference was the fifth discussion meeting organised as part of international cooperation between the Institute of Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences [IL BAS] and the Institute of Literary Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences [IBL PAN]. The texts produced at the preceding stages of common effort between these academic institutes have been published in the volumes: T. Dobrzyńska, R. Kuncheva (eds.), *Память и текст. Когнитивные и культурологичные аспекы – Memory and Text. Cognitive and Cultural Aspects*, with a foreword by T.

Dobrzyńska, Sofia 2005: IBL PAN and IL BAS, Изток – запад publishers, 282 pp.; T. Dobrzyńska, R. Kuncheva (eds.), *Words and Images. Iconicity of the Text – Слова и образы. Иконичность текста*, with a foreword by T. Dobrzyńska, Sofia 2008: IBL PAN and IL BAS, Иван Пенев publishers, 383 pp.; T. Dobrzyńska, R. Kuncheva (eds.), *Vision and Cognition in Language, Literature and Culture*, Sofia 2011, 400 pp.; T. Dobrzyńska, R. Kuncheva (eds.), *Resemblance and Difference. The Problem of Identity – Подобие и розличие. Проблема идентичности*, with a foreword by T. Dobrzyńska, Sofia 2015: IBL PAN and IL BAS, Direct Services publishers, 304 pp.

The present volume addresses a variety of questions from the above-delineated extensive field of issues, as follows:

Chapter I: *THE THING AS SEMIOTIC, LINGUISTIC, ANTROPOLOGICAL, AND CULTUROLOGICAL PROBLEM* summarises the studies presenting the problems under discussion from the standpoint of different humanistic disciplines, such as semiotics, linguistics, poetics, cultural history, and musicology. The general conclusions based on these studies outline the methodological foundation for the research collected in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter II: *MATERIAL OBJECTS AS REPRESENTED IN LITERATURE. CONTEMPORARY TENDENCIES AND REALISATIONS* discusses the outcome of the analyses of individual categories of things as literary motifs characteristic of the poetics of individual authors; these case studies are preceded by a broad outline of the 'turn toward things' trend in contemporary literature and culture, presented basing on the research of Polish literature and literary criticism but certainly of importance also for other national literatures. Cultural studies-related threads of the studies included in this chapter are best visible in the articles on

reception of Van Gogh's paintings, the use of the motifs of mirror and photography as elements of constructing the represented world in literary pieces.

Chapter III: *LOST AND RECONSTRUCTED WORLD. SOME CONSEQUENCES OF HOLOCAUST AND THEIR LITERARY TESTIMONIES* addresses the problem of recording and reconstructing the image of reality in written texts, primarily in works of literature, as presented in the studies concerning the tragedy of the Holocaust. They present a reality which is not only scary but also deeply transformed ontologically: a 'non-reality' that is denied or reversed in its essence, filled with 'pseudo-things'. Material objects surviving the disaster are, however, the only carriers of memory that enable reconstruction of human histories, of what has been irretrievably lost. The chapter in question proposes the notion of 'prop narrative', denoting stories anchored in a relationship with the object functioning as the indexical sign of a situation. The term may prove useful in wider literary-study research.

Chapter IV: *THE QUESTIONS OF REIFICATION* discusses the ways in which the notion or idea of thing(s) has been used in modelling social phenomena as well as in the ideological concepts based on reification – depersonalisation of human beings.

Chapter V: *THE THING AS REPRESENTED IN LANGUAGE: AMBIGUITY OF REFERENCE* revisits the linguistic questions and analyses the phenomenon of inter-language homonymy that disturbs the categorisation of things and the referential function of language in linguistic communication between representatives of different cultures.

It is quite obvious that the studies gathered in this volume can explore the extensive area of the above-outlined problems only to

a limited extent. However, they certainly testify to the conviction that the issues under discussions are really important, and should encourage further research into the multifarious presence of things in language, literature, and culture.

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БАН БИБЛИОТЕКА

I.

THE THING AS SEMIOTIC, LINGUISTIC, ANTROPOLOGICAL, AND CULTUROLOGICAL PROBLEM

IVAN MLADENOV

THE SLIPPING THING ABOUT THE THING

A thing is something that is a thing
(Not Wittgenstein,
but it could be him)

THE THING AS GENERAL IDEA

Medieval nominalism sees names as general devices for sparing the individual consideration of things. The generals are conveniences for understanding and talking about things as pure figments of mind that amounts to abstract cognition. The empiricists, and especially Locke, brought this thought into modern philosophy by the assumption that words are signs of ideas, thus allowing abstractions to facilitate cognitive acts. Yet, Peirce calls Locke, who presented this idea "nominalist", assuming that he misinterpreted the process by which words become general. Modern philosophers usually blame Locke for his understanding of "idea" as a special kind of a "thing", mental or material, but still a thing (based on his view that while there are material things, like tables and chairs, there are mental things locked inside the mind). Whatever else Locke said, interprets according to this model – the mind regards as analogous

to a box, into which ideas can be produced or escape. However, the new researches show credibly that by "idea" Locke meant a mental entity of a specific kind, something like an image or a picture. If an idea is a *mental* image or picture of the qualities, then our ideas of things and qualities are reproductions of them. He shows this best in a passage "What Idea stands for" from the beginning of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding.*

> ... it serves best to stand for whatsoever is the *object* of the understanding when a man thinks, I have used it to express whatever is meant by *phantasm, notion, species, or whatever it is which the mind can be employed about in thinking...* (Locke, John, 1999, Book One, Chapter I, 8).

No doubt, the listed *qualia* are mental, not material. No doubt also that *phantasm*, *notion* etc. are not full copies of the outside reality, they are concepts. Concepts enable the mind to treat things in a bundle and to make assertions about whole classes of objects instead of conceiving each object. Thus, the doctrine of general ideas as signs of things leads to the thesis of economy of thoughts. Charles Peirce's semiotic doctrine describes the process as a *habit-taking-tendency*, which supposedly brings thinking into habits.

Is it possible to find a less general and still common basis for tackling the problem? How about: "is there such a thing as a thing"? Never mind it sounds weird, this is a legitimate question. The traditional tactic would begin with the history of the problem but what history – of the thing as matter, as form, as substance or, as predicated object? It is inevitable when talking about something not to predicate it. Thus, even in this early stage of our inquiry, it is clear that we cannot talk about a "thing" – it immediately turns into a predicated object, by which we perform a minute operation – conceptualization. Therefore, instead of a thing, we have a concept. Why are we calling this a concept? We can start answering this question by simply recalling that an object refers to a manifold,

not to one thing. The "object" is what "lies before"; this is its literary meaning. However, we still prefer to talk about a thing that has independent existence in contrast to qualities, which are dependent. Apparently, talks about the "thing" immediately fall in the usages of the "object" and then turn into questions of name, universal or real. Is this a viable approach? These thoughts arise without even referring to the past and memory. However, we need to go back to the fundamentals.

THE THING AS SUBSTANCE/MATTER

We can go as far back as Aristotle and say along with him, that the first and independent thing is substance. It embraces all kinds of definitions of a thing – it is homogenate, "for itself", a unit, non-contextualized, immanent, unknown. All other qualities are accidences of it. Did we say something important by this notion? Certainly "yes" – that it is incognizable. Only accidences are empirically intelligible. Nevertheless, "substance", which is also the first of Aristotle's categories, is actuality – anything else is in a state of potency to become accidences, or embodiments of it.

Is "substance" a thing, "THE thing"? Matter? The answer is "yes", unless we predicate it, then we produce an accidence of it. Any existence, independent of cognitive activity viz. propositions, subordinates into paradigms. The nature of relations is complex. Also from Aristotle, we know that the characteristics of two things derive from their contingency to a third, for example, form, can be an accidence or similarity of this third, but only if the two things and the third are real. Alternatively, both are real and independently existent (two totally similar things are simply not two). We can conclude that subject does not predicate "substance" but everything else does. According to Aristotle: "Substance" has two senses, (A) ultimate substratum, which is no longer predicated of anything

else, and (B) that which, being a 'this', is also separable and of this nature is the shape or form of each thing (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, V, 8). Does "thing" remain unchanged in a relation, or becomes a component or accidence? It obviously loses its "thisness" and becomes "such" thing. Here is Aristotle again:

> Things are 'relative' (1) as double to half, and treble to a third, and in general that which contains something else many times to that which is contained many times in something else, and that which exceeds to that which is exceeded; [...] as the measurable to the measure, and the knowable to knowledge, and the perceptible to perception (Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book V,15).

Thus, we have roughly "a thing" in Aristotelian sense – it is substance, it may be matter, God, a non-predicated something. However, this manifold of characters seems more a principle rather than a "thing". If we accept substance to be "a thing", the only thing, which has its appearances in all other things, it still continues to be a principle. There is one possibility to avoid this vicious circle suggested by Aristotle again. We may outline basic relations among all things in the universe.

> Those relations are numerical, for number is always commensurate [...]. All these relations, then, are numerically expressed and are determinations of number, and so in another way are the equal and the like and the same. For all refer to unity. Those things are the same whose substance is one; those are like whose quality is one; those are equal whose quantity is one; and 1 is the beginning and measure of number, so that all these relations imply number, though not in the same way" (Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book V, 15).

This quotation shows something well known, that Aristotelian philosophy is evolutionary and it lays down fundaments "broad,

vague and rough, but very solid, unshakable" (CP1.1) as Peirce referred to them. To overcome the broadness of the definition, we may use ... Aristotle. A bit earlier, in Book III of his *Metaphysics* he states: "If there is nothing apart of individuals, there will be no object of thought, but all things will be object of sense, and there will not be knowledge of anything, unless we say that sensation is knowledge." To know things, the first step is to predicate them. As he continues: "Being and unity are the substances of things" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book III, 11). This, according to him is the hardest of all and the most necessary for knowing the truth. That is why we need more non-contradictive statements about substances. In all books of *Metaphysics* the following assertions about substances are repeated: they are basic because they are ontologically independent, other things depend on them, while they do not depend on other things. They are foundations of everything and what happens in the world is explained in reference to them.

Matter, on the other hand, appears to be the carrier of universal substances. In addition, matter participates in any individual. A thing could be a substance and knowing it belongs to "wisdom", according to Aristotle, or to philosophy. "For the end of theoretical knowledge is truth, while that of practical knowledge is action" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book II, 1). Yet, how does the grounding principles of knowledge transform in action, how does this transition occur?

THE THING IN SEMIOSIS

To answer this question, we have to leave Aristotle for a while and see how it appears in modern philosophy that descends from his; we would like to inquire into Charles Peirce's "semeiotic". Peirce describes himself as "an Aristotelian of the scholastic wing, approaching Scotism, but going much further in the direction of

scholastic realism (CP 5.77nI). One of his major achievements is his system of categories, which he describes as "post-Kantian", "ceno-Pitagorean" and based on Aristotle's. The last is easily observable in the earliest of his outlined version. Peirce sketched his categories remarking on phenomenology. The way we grasp objects lies in the heart of *phaneroscopy*, as he later renamed his phenomenology. In the second of his seven Harvard lectures delivered in 1903, he shaped the doctrine of pragmatism by isolating the new three categories. The latter were supposed to become the universal concepts of experience. These are, first, the quality of mere feeling (*Firstness*), the element of struggle, or reaction, or brute facts, evoked either in experience or, in consciousness (*Secondness*), and an intellectual element of the nature of representation or, a sense of learning (*Thirdness*). In Peirce's own words, "we have already seen clearly that the elements of phenomena are of three categories, quality, fact, and thought" (CP 1.423). The fundamental distinction between Peirce and Aristotle concerning categories is this: for Aristotle, both "being" and "unity" are forms of substances. It was the same for Peirce in his early outline of categories; conceptions are mediate representations of relations between Being and Substance. Categories are conceptions: *Firstness*is is immediate representation; *Secondness* and *Thirdness* are mediate. Here is an early draft on categories from a paper delivered to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1867:

BEING,

1. Quality (Reference to a Ground)
2. Relation (Reference to a Correlate)
3. Representation (Reference to an Interpretant)

SUBSTANCE

(EP:1,6)

Soon after this draft, Peirce removed Being and Substance, leaving only the basic relations as he believes the categories represent. He discerns the essence of the processes in the act of cogni-

tion. It is, first the potentiality or mere quality that turns into real by conflicting with another real (second) and, third, we have a mediator between the two, or its representation, or interpretation.

> There are no more Kainopythagorean categories than these three. For the first category is nonrelative experience, the second is experience of a dyadic relation, and the third is experience of a triadic relation. It is impossible to analyze a triadic relation, or fact about three objects, into dyadic relations; for the very idea of a compound supposes two parts, at least, and a whole, or three objects, at least, in all (CP 7. 537).

Thus, in Peirce's sense we can talk of a thing either as a *ground* or, as a predicated thing of a proposition, which is a component of relation. There is no third way. Now we need to clear up what is the "reference to a ground". What is a "ground"? The ground is the basic principle of all things and at the same time a defining principle of any individual thing. The meaning of a ground reveals best as parallel to "logos", yet not in Aristotelian but in a theological sense, as a principle of all things and of each thing. It is "thing-ness", for example "table-ness". The question for a ground should be: "What is the basic condition for calling a certain thing 'table' "? These are the common features of all tables in the world, which make the appearance of each table in our consciousness conceivable as "this table". However, ground, similarly to Logos, is both: a truth condition and a goal of action. Both are contexts for approaching "the thing".

To recapitulate, we could know the thing in Aristotelian sense as 1) matter or substance, 2) accidence, separable from matter, and 3) in reference to other substances. We may know the ground or, "thing-ness" in Peircean sense, as it embodies in or, as it *becomes* "this thing", in other words, dynamically. In the latter case, we know "the thing" *in action*, according to the pragmatist approach. It re-

veals not the qualities of things, as with Aristotle, but the effects they display in action. This action is the process of sign building, which Peirce calls "semiosis".

> It is important to understand what I mean by semiosis. All dynamical action, or action of brute force, physical or psychical, either takes place between two subjects (whether they react equally upon each other, or one is agent and the other patient, entirely or partially) or at any rate is a resultant of such actions between pairs. But by "semiosis" I mean, on the contrary, an action, or influence, which is, or involves, a coöperation of three subjects, such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs (EP 2:411).

We can illustrate Peirce's definition by the graphic below.

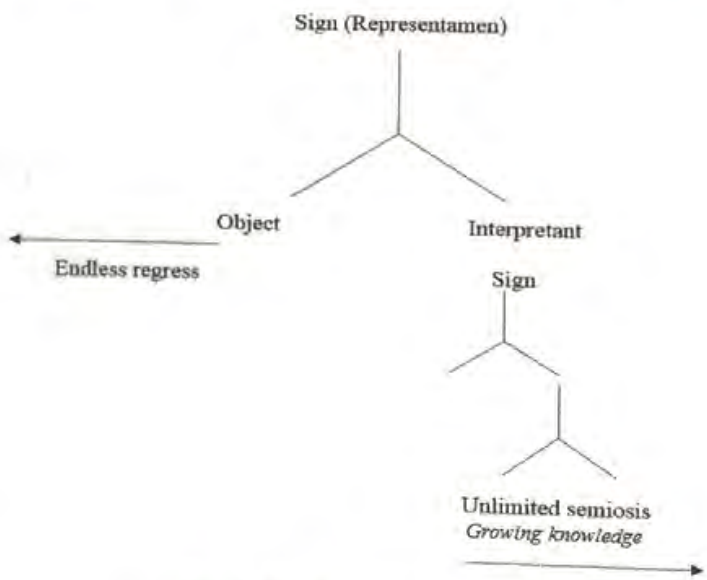


Fig.1 *Unlimited semiosis*

THE THING OBJECTIFIED

However, the open question remains "Can we approach the thing as it is, not in relation to anything else, but "for itself", for example in Kantian sense?" To do that we need to try a phenomenological tactic, outlined by its creator, Edmund Husserl. Husserl's phenomenology asserts that abstraction without general meaning reveals itself as nonsensical. There is not any thinking process without intuitive assumption. Husserl insists on "adequate, categorially formed intuition, completely accommodated to thought, or conversely thought which draws its evidence from intuition, constitute the goal of true knowledge" (Husserl, 2001, 159). To put his view in a shorter context we need to evoke the Kantian assumption that experience has two components: a receptive element of sensory intuition and an element of reflective conceptuality, which Kant called "spontaneity". Yet, Kant explicitly denied that humans had the capacity to *intuit* concepts. Husserl agrees with Kant about sensory matters but holds that in higher order intuitions we do have the capacity to intuit categorical entities. Husserl goes a step further claiming that human beings not only have the capacity to sense mixed categories such as colour but at the highest level we can intuitively perceive logical categories such as unity, plurality and existence. "Vienna circle" philosophers, particularly Moritz Schlick, severely criticized him for this categorical, "irrational" intuition. Gottlob Frege's similar critic on the same issue made Husserl to revisit his view thereafter.

According to a widespread understanding, pragmatism and phenomenology are different in their basics. This is surprisingly wrong; we may list their similitude starting from the very first undertaking of both to rebuild logic as science. Let us evoke phenomenology's main concern as drawn by Husserl – it lays bare the sources from which the basic concepts and ideas of logic flow forth, to give them all the clearness and distinctness needed for under-

standing, and for ... pure logic. In other words, Husserl wants to examine the "phenomenological founding of logic". In his first edition of *Logical Investigations,* he employed this regressive inquiry into the domain of correlation between objectivity and subjectivity. There is much more intuition in his writings than the student of pragmatism or of Kant can withstand. However, Husserl does not take up Kantianism as his goal of investigation, but Leibnitz and mathematics instead. He wants to see logic as a *mathesis universalis* in the manner of Leibniz. He would like to balance it with a new theory of the nature of objects in general, formal ontology; he develops this idea in his Third Investigation. "In other words, pure logic has a counterpart, the pure theory of object." (Dermot Moran in: Husserl, 2001, xlvi). Broadly, Husserl endeavours to distinguish between the meaning of an expression and its power to name or to direct itself to something objective. For example, the "Victor of Jena", "vanquished at Waterloo" can refer to the same object – Napoleon. This shows that the names can have different meanings but the same objective references. The distinctions do not deprive the concept of indicating its essential unity. A thing indicates properly if it serves to show something to some thinking being. Husserl claims: "For signs in the sense of indications (notes, marks, etc.) *do not express* anything, unless they happen to fulfil a significant as well as indicative function" (Husserl, 2001, 103). These conclusions originate from his understanding that "sign" and "expression" are often confused as synonyms. Husserl accepts that every sign is a sign of something, while not every sign has meaning that it expresses. Perhaps this thought comes from Frege's distinction of "Sinn" (sense) und "Bedeutung" (meaning). Yet, Husserl also claims that in many cases it is not even true that a sign "stands for" that of which we may say it is a sign. For him only meaningful signs are expressions by fulfilling the signification conditions. Thus, he excludes much that ordinary speech would call "an expression" from the sign-application. As he counts the many exclusions,

such as facial expression, various gestures, communicative acts, in other words all that do not have any signification value. "Such 'expressions' in short, have properly speaking, no *meaning*" (Husserl, 2001, 105). This view is arguable if "meaningful" is the final cause of a *conscious* act of response. Nevertheless, there are responses, caused by non-intelligent stimuli that are not only in organisms but also among plants and even minerals. Their responses are *lawful*, since they belong to quasi-organized forms of existing. Meaning as such is not a proper attribute but those responses behave in accordance with certain rules. As symmetrical responses, they are "rule-like". Thus, we can hardly call them "insignificant" just because they are caused by non-meaningful stimuli.

If we compromise with Husserl about signification (expression) as the context for appearance of a sign, can we *mutatis mutandis* consider presentation as context for *objectifying* a thing? Does presentation resemble signification?

It is not an easy task to outline Husserl's understanding of "presentation". He considers it a complicated process broadening with the advance of his logical investigations from book to book. Generally, there are two major kinds of presentation, the one, which is somehow passive, and a dynamic one. Husserl would not object to such division as he distinguishes two *concepts* of presentation. Presentation in the first sense is "for itself" or mere presentation based on the level of judgement, wish, question, etc. It is further a presentation grounded in an "act-quality". Examples of this first type would present isolated words or sentences in flux as in Jakobson's *phatic* function. In the second sense, the presentation is no act but "the matter for an act, constituting one side of the intentional essence of each complete act" (Husserl, 2001, 249). The rest of the essence of the act would be the matter connected with the remaining moments needed for a full concreteness. Thus, the meaning of a talk about acts of presentation could carry out a phenomenological analysis in terms of quality and matter. This obscure definition ful-

fils only the fourth out of at least five acts of presentation by Husserl when he lists the most important ambiguities accompanying the terms "presentation" and "content". Nevertheless, it is the most important one, which Husserl calls "presentation as *objectifying act*, in the sense of an act-class necessarily represented in every complete act, since every 'matter' must be given primarily as the matter of such an act" (Husserl, 2001, 261). The other three are: Presentation as *act-material or matter* – those are representations, which determine whether the object is referred to in a perceptually intuitive or imaginatively intuitive fashion. 2. "Presentation as 'mere presentation', as qualitative modification of any form of belief, mere understanding of proposition, without an inner decision, doubt, etc. 3. Presentation as *nominal act* – the subject-presentation of an act of assertion.

Even this complicated model is not sufficient for Husserl and he continues to name more ambiguities emerging out of different acts. By each appearance, he tries to clarify the case. In number five, for example, "the presentation as opposed to mere thinking" he outlines the underlying difference between intuition and concept. "What we intuit *stands before our eyes in perception or imagination just as we intended it in our thought*" (Husserl, 2001, 262). Going deeper into the matter of presentation he reaches more images that are not the real object but images of images or pictures, *intentionally* constituted and these pictures present one and the same thing, but it "cannot be counted as a real moment in the imaginative experience" (Husserl, 2001, 263). The model branches into hopelessly many distinctions added to each act of presentation as the author seeks to accomplish a "phenomenological ostensibility" as he calls the difference between presentation and presented content. He does this arguing with Kant's lack of clearness on the peculiar character of "pure Ideation, the adequate survey of conceptual essence and of the laws of universal validity rooted in those essences" (Husserl, 2001, 376). He even claims that Kant lacks of a phenomeno-

logically correct concept of *a priori*. Therefore, Husserl concludes that Kant could never achieve a strictly scientific critique of reason; respectively he failed to provide a meaningful answer to the 'possibility of knowledge'.

It is clearly impossible to summarise the Husserl's monumental work, even on the narrower issue of presenting the thing. What is agreeable is a parallel to, for example, the equally immense labour of Peirce on his sign-system; we can recall that he promised to his friend Victoria Lady Welby to outline 59049 classes of sign. Another essential comparison between Husserl and Peirce would see both systems as focusing on the same matter. At the core of Peirce's "semeiotic" doctrine is the sign-processes for presenting the object, at the heart of Husserl's – the phenomenological perspective to the same. Both systems are in the Aristotelian-Kantian current of object classification for a similar reason – to deny it. Peirce's signification rely on the sign-net thrown onto a manifold of objects in order to reduce it to categorical unities, while Husserl's distinctions show a scrupulous advance to the object's essence by removing the ambiguities with which the presented phenomena grow over. We cannot know an object unless we know the sum of the effects it displays in action, Peirce would say. We cannot have an object before our eyes unless we remove all the misleading appearances of content aroused between our intentional image of it and its presentation Husserl would claim somewhat closely united with Aristotle. In the case of Husserl, we could carefully assume that the process of presentation resembles the function of signification in Peirce's philosophy. In addition, very generally and not adding too much to the clarification of both concepts, we may think of them as a contribution to the acts of reason. None of them would say that we could grasp a thing by a "direct attack", as it is or "for itself". The mind, according to Peirce works by final causation, and final causation is logical causation. He argues, "A thing appears to direct observation as a

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character of an object, and it is only by inference that it is referred to the mind" (CP 2. 250).

For Peirce knowing a thing, as we have shown, would be within "semiosis", the process of sign building, accompanied by understanding and interpretation that would endlessly *add* nuances of meaning on the side of the interpretants, and equally so regressively moved towards the object's essence. For Husserl the same task would be realized into an objectifying process that endlessly *strips off* the imagination-like presentations of the thing on one side, and fulfilment of the essentialist' content of it in the second part of a propositional statement. We may demonstrate how "different" both views are by quoting Peirce:

> But what evidence is there that we can immediately know only what is "present" to the mind? The idealists generally treat this as self-evident [...]. In like manner, the idea that we can immediately perceive only what is present seems to be founded on our ordinary experience that we cannot recall and reexamine the events of yesterday nor know otherwise than by inference what is to happen tomorrow.[...] But once grant immediate knowledge in time, and what becomes of the idealist theory that we immediately know only the present? For the present can contain no time (CP 1. 38).

This quotation summarizes the two approaches by only adding time to the features of the cognition act. It generalizes the "pre-quantum understanding" of time as a flow. However, that simple view was not characteristic of neither. Even in this quotation Peirce is clearly saying that we know past and future by inference only, while present contains no time. (We cannot resist the temptation to toss here a sentence by Wittgenstein: "The events of the future cannot be inferred from those of the present. (TLP 5. 1361). There are many other passages where Peirce makes clear that he foresaw

the quantum theory. Just out of curiosity, we can mention St. Augustin's famous statement of time, where he says that if they do not ask him, he knew it, but once they do, he cannot answer. Still thinking of time as running in a straight line, he anticipated that while talking about time he puts himself in a position outside of its current, which makes the statement false. We may think so, having in mind many relative claims he made on the same subject, for example, in "The City of God".

The thing must be "real" in order to define the truth about itself. Real should not depend on representation or, as Aristotle implied, it must be something general in all things. Peirce calls this general the object's "character" that is presentable in all individuals. However, he is sceptical about finding such general character.

> Very good: now only tell me what it means to say that an object possesses a character, and I shall be satisfied. But even now, in advance of our study of definition, [we can] sufficiently see that we can only reach a conception of the less known through the more known, and that consequently the only meaning which we can attach to the phrase that a thing "has a character" is that something is true of it. (CP 1.578).

Yet, to define in what way something is true is another tough question. For Peirce, as a logician, the truth of anything attaches to the right thinking of it. He is mostly convinced that "there is such a thing as Truth which is independent of what you or I or any group or generation of men may opine upon the subject (CP 2. 153). However, it is not thinking alone that matters, imagining plays a role too.

> Nothing that we can know or even think can exist without the mind, for we can only think reproductions of sensations, and the esse of these is percipi. To put it another

> way, we cannot think of a thing as existing unperceived, for we cannot separate in thought what cannot be separated in perception. It is true, I can think of a tree in a park without anybody by to see it; but I cannot think of it without anybody to imagine it; for I am aware that I am imagining it all the time. Syllogistically: trees, mountains, rivers, and all sensible things are perceived; and anything which is perceived is a sensation; now for a sensation to exist without being perceived is impossible; therefore, for any sensible thing to exist out of perception is impossible (CP 8.29).

Imagining draws memory into the cognition act. We scratch our thoughts from the past (memory, experience). The metaphor with which Peirce illustrates the role of memory asserts: "Accordingly, just as we say that a body is in motion, and not that motion is in a body we ought to say that we are in thought and not that thoughts are in us" (CP 5.289 Fn. P1). Memory evokes this prethought. There we meet images and thoughts, which flow with different degrees of vividness.

> In retracing our way from conclusions to premises, or from determined cognitions to those which determine them, we finally reach, [...] a point beyond which the consciousness in the determined cognition is more lively than in the cognition which determines it (CP 5.263).

The similarities between both systems are obvious and allow concluding that for both, knowing a thing represents a process of approximation it. In the act of cognition, according to Peirce, we have triads of sensation, perception and reflection. Those triads are instantaneous, they flash at the moment we approach the object. However, this flash is analytic rather than synthetic. Within an instant, there is a process of approximating the essence of the thing, and we know it "for us". If we want to know it "as it is", and for itself, we must retrace the process back to the matter/essence of it. We know the thing in

an axis of increased knowledge by interpretation on one side, and by stripping off its contextual meanings, on the other. The substantial difference from Husserl's phenomenology is that for him we remove the quasi-images of the thing, along with the process of retracing back our intuition about it, thus we embody truth in it. With all the complicated details in both systems, we may conclude that the slipping thing about the thing would always be the thing as it is, in other words, its "thing-ness". We may intuit it or raise our knowledge of it by gathering *all* the effects it displays, but what is *all*?

THE THING AS FROZEN MEANING

Still it is curious whether there is an alternative philosophical tradition, which sees the thing not as an object of approximation but as it is, statically, and we thus easily approach Plato. We will not consider this line in details because there are convincing examples of understanding the thing in the heart of Plato's thought – his dialogues. Moreover, we can find the best illustrations in his most read and quoted one, in *Cratylos*. However, even the strictest teachers advise the students to skip reading its etymological part, finding it boring and out of date. Surprisingly, we can find something covertly there – an explanation of how the name gains its meaning. As is well known, Plato is always double-minded in his hypotheses. At first, he sees naming as a natural process and the one who gives names as a skilled inventor.

> **Soc.** Then, Hermogenes, I should say that this giving of names can be no such light matter as you fancy, or the work of light or chance persons; and Cratylus is right in saying that things have names by nature, and that not every man is an artificer of names, but he only who looks to the name which each thing by nature has, and is able to express the true forms of things in letters and syllables.

Then he diverts to another thesis to the effect that names exist according to an agreement, or convention: "Now, attend to me; and first, remember that we put in and pull out letters in words, and give names as we please and change the accents." At a certain point, Socrates summarizes his view, adding an unexpected and illuminative conclusion.

> **Soc.** The name anthropos, which was once a sentence, and is now a noun, appears to be a case just of this sort, for one letter, which is the a, has been omitted, and the acute on the last syllable has been changed to a grave. [...] I mean to say that the word "man" implies that other animals never examine, or consider, or look up at what they see, but that man not only sees (opope) but considers and looks up at that which he sees, and hence he alone of all animals is rightly anthropos, meaning anathron a opōpe – then he observes it closely and reason about it. Hence human beings alone among the animals are correctly named anthrōpos – one who observes closely what he has seen (anathrōn ha opōpe). (Plato, 1997:118).

With the passage of time, some words connect to others and lose their endings or prefixes. In a contraction of meaningful fractions of the sentence, a new name appears. These are the most common cases of etymology, where parts of the sentences blend and form a new word. Most often, those sentences were imperative, representing commands or exclamations but also explanations or differentiations, clarifications or quality contrasts. The great example with the meaning of *Anthropos* shows all these processes together: originally, this was a sentence, describing that among all animals this one is able to investigate the surrounding world by using his eyes, "investigates by seeing". By examining more examples, it becomes clear that the process is universally valid. So, what is a thing on this semantic level? A bundle of many things that originally represented sentences, mostly orders for action or, simple descriptions. After a while the elements connect to each other, merge and blend

by which they lose some parts and then freeze. The new unit starts to indicate slightly different meaning. In other words, theorizing on a thing resemble creation of a thing. Let us recall Peirce's view. Knowing a thing, for him, means *re*-cognizing it each time we approach it in a triadic act of:1) a comparison with numberless other cases; 2) a verification with the same object as we saw it for the first time in our live, and 3) a conclusion, confirming that it is *this* thing, which is before our eyes. The process of comparison goes on lightning-fast. Again, it is analytical, not synthetically performed cognition act.

THE THING PORTRAYED

Yet, do we always think of the surrounding world, as something never achieved? No, we do not! The greatest advocate of the latter view after Kant is Wittgenstein. The famous opening words of *Tractatus* are: "The world is everything that is the case" (TLP 1). The world is the totality of facts, not of things." (TLP 1.1) However, he is seeing the fact as a unit, but as something composed by more than one fact, as a manifold of "atomic facts". Is the atomic fact an ultimate something? Not at all: "an atomic fact is a combination of objects (entities, things)" (TLP 2.01).

It is worth trying to construct Wittgenstein's doctrine on the reviewed topic. We can do that by showing one of his most fundamental views – about the impossibility of *a priori* knowledge.

5.6331 For the field of sight has not a form like this:



5.634 This is connected with the fact that no part of our experience is also a priori.

He drew the ellipsoidal shape which our eye has and from the obvious fact that "the field of sight has not a form like this" (TLP 5.6331), he asked, why do we not see the world this way? The fact confirms that no part of what we see is *a priori* given; the intellect fulfils the work of the eye. The several conclusions that followed are that "Everything we see could also be otherwise; everything we describe – too and therefore, "There is no order of things a priori" (TLP 5.6334). We are giving this particular example because it is almost the same in Peirce' philosophy. Wittgenstein's philosophy is representational; the logical propositions present the facts as they are by *showing* the logical form of reality or in his words, by exhibiting it. The propositions of logic are tautologies. Therefore, they say nothing. This leads him to a surprising generalization, "The world and life are one" (TLP 5.621). Thus, Being and Substance are equal. However, this is not confirmed on an existential scale. A fact may be "atomic", but in reality there are conglomerates of facts to be observed, in other words they are always in "a state of affairs". State of affairs is the mode in which the facts are presented, according to what they show. The world consists in facts, not in things, since "what is the case" is always factual configurations of things in the state of affairs. In short, after the claim that the object contains the possibility of all states of affairs, and that the possibility of an object's occurrence in atomic facts is the form of the object, it follows that objects form the substance of the world and that is why they cannot be compound. Objects are "pseudo-concept" (TLP 4.1272). After more paragraphs numbered by a serial decimal cipher but ordered under the same cardinal one, Wittgenstein claims, "The formal concept is already given with an object, which falls under it ..." (TLP 4.12721). The object is simple but a concept is already given in it and it falls under this concept. The vicious circle breaks by adding the notes of "introduction and presentation" to "defining". Defining can neither be introducing, nor presenting a formal object as

a primitive idea. For we need an expression for the general term of the formal series of objects.

Wittgenstein uses "object", "thing", and "entity" synonymously but insists that whenever they are used in logic, they are expressed by variable names. The reason is that senseless pseudo-propositions arise by all other uses. Thus, he thinks one cannot say, "There are objects" as one says "There are books" ... It would be senseless to speak of the *number of all objects*. (TLP 4.1272). Also in this paragraph (TLP 4.1272) he claims that the same holds of the words "Complex", "Fact", "Function", "Number", etc. All these objects are formal concepts presented in logical symbolism by variables, not by functions or classes. How objects fulfil the function of a proposition? Wittgenstein's reply is famous – the proposition *shows* the sense. "The possibility of all similes, of all the imagery of our language, rests on the logic of representation (TLP 4.015). The proposition is "a picture of reality, for I know the state of affairs presented by it, if I understand the proposition" (TLP 4.021). This is so because he understands it without its sense being explained to him. Thus, the proposition describes reality.

We have *things* (objects) said to be the possibility of all states of affairs taking part in a proposition. The proposition is an order of facts. "The proposition constructs the world with the help of logical scaffolding, and therefore one can see in the proposition all the logical features possessed by reality *if* it is true" (TLP 4.023). Now, a true picture of reality must have syntax, a lawful order of presentation. The presentation shows formal concepts (facts) as they are in a certain order. If this order is of pictorial art, what assures the understanding of the logical symbolism that is necessary for understanding? Only one answer can provide solution – the relation. Relation consists of both, presentation and "formal concept"; it secures universal and particular meaning of the picture. The thing in the proposition is the carrier of the concept for a picture of reality. Yet, the concept within the syntax of the proposition includes logi-

cal meaning, viz. understanding. The formal concept (fact), lawfully ordered in a proposition exhibits logical sense. Accordingly, "showing," means representing. Let us recall the meaning of *Anthropos* – "investigating by seeing". A logical picture (thought) that is combined with another, represents a concept, creates a (mini) discourse. Let us remember that Wittgenstein wanted to pass silently by things whereof he cannot speak. However, the process resembles seeing with our imperfect eye – the intellect fulfils the work of the represented "picture of reality". We can add this remark relying on several notes Wittgenstein made on reality, which, cannot be *a priori* true (TLP 2.225). Along this line, he claims that thought is the logical picture of the facts, but most interesting is his statement that an atomic fact is thinkable because we can imagine it. Therefore, "The totality of true thoughts is the picture of the world" (TLP 3.01).

Nevertheless, the propositions in the *Tractatus* aim to represent a true picture of the world and their understanding requires a work of intellect. The thing, the object, is simple or is a pseudo-concept. Predicated in a proposition, it becomes part of a formal concept, which secures the transparency of the world-picture. Wittgenstein holds that all propositions can be revealed to be truth-functions of atomic propositions, the latter consisting of unanalysable names, i.e. objects. Objects cannot be "described", which according to him means, "defined", they can only be named. Yet, what is to "name"? Is it a process of signifying? Consequently, is it similar to a process of relating a word to an object? How does this agree with the fact that even the simplest name is made of fractions of former meanings, contracted in one name? Objects (or, *simples*), according to Wittgenstein are "objects of acquaintance, not sense-data but their unanalysable constituents (Glock, 1996, 270). Perhaps the nucleus of the later development of Wittgenstein's thought lies in his understanding of the act of presentation. It becomes more flexible in his later work, allowing that the role of signification as a whole differs from the one

of an atomic fact. Here is a sentence by him, which could easily be ascribed to Peirce, was it not for the very end of it: "One name stands for one thing, and another for another thing, and they are connected together. And so the whole, like a living picture, presents the atomic fact" (TLP 4.0311). This seems like a perfect definition of Peirce's *semiosis*, but a few sentences later, Wittgenstein assuredly stresses his view: "My fundamental thought is that the "logical constants" do not represent. That the *logic* of the facts cannot be represented" (TLP 4.0312). Then, what does the insistence mean that there must be objects if representation is possible? What is implied by the allowance that "the referents of the world-picture do not necessary 'pin' propositions onto reality?" (Glock, 1996, 270 - 271). Is it a roundabout way of confirming his view that what can be shown cannot be said? He strongly rely on the ongoing dispute between Russel and Bradley, where Russel argues that the fact of our language having different types of words for things (objects), properties and relations *shows* that relations are as real as objects and properties (Monk, Ray, 2005, 38). The initial words of the *Tractatus* urge to thinking of the world not as made up of 'things' but as made up of *facts*. According to Monk, "the crucial difference is that things are simple, but a fact is *articulate* [...] it has *parts* (Monk, Ray, 2005, 38). These parts Wittgenstein calls *objects*. It follows that we can know nothing about objects unless they form a fact. Facts, in their turn, correspond to true propositions, and that is how Wittgenstein reaches the conclusion, "The world is the totality of facts".

There are some more important consequences revealing Wittgenstein's concept of word and object (thing). A word alone means nothing. Even when they refer to objects, words mean nothing unless they form a proposition. He says the exclamation "Fire!" is not an exception to this, since it represents an abbreviated proposition something like "there is a fire in this room". Thus, he concludes, language is not made up of words, but of propositions, and, in the same way, the world is not made up of objects but of facts.

In the last two years of his life, Wittgenstein wrote extensively on visual aspect, published posthumously under the title *On Certainty*. These were mostly reflections on systems of thought and world-picture. The central point in these notes is the thesis that our world-picture determines how we perceive things and how we speak of them. The world-picture can be described in propositions, they, in turn, form a system that resembles the one of the language-games from the *Tractatus*. He claims that the world-picture, system and language games are closely related to each other. There are no more traces from the atomism of the *Tractatus*, instead, Wittgenstein argues for a holistic view. He now alerts that meaning, thoughts and words, as well as justifications and argumentations can take place only within a system. The system itself has no justification and it is not based on any grounds. It is not reasonable (or, unreasonable). "It is there – like our life" (OC, 559).

Our point about the thing is that it is analysable as an object only i.e. as related to something else. The view combines all systems outlined but rely on Peirce's thought, that we cannot have a conception of the absolutely incognizable. Let us return to the beginning of this article and remember the literary sense of "object" – "something that lies before". What is this – a contracted sentence? Even the strictest among the discussed philosophers, Wittgenstein, would not claim that the atomic sense of an object – the "thingness" is achievable. It is a slipping reality, lurking before the eyes as embedded in the syntax of the picture of the world.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

THE SLIPPING THING О ВЕЩИ

«Нечто» может быть всем и ничем; его исследование нельзя ограничить. Любая пропозиция, связанная с ним, выглядит предпосланной, его осмысление превращает его же в объект. Объект яв-

ляется «реальным» или «нереальным», а это западня: кто бы мог говорить исчерпывающе на такую тему. Это тема о реальности универсалий и партикулярий, об имени и наименовании, о номинализме и феноменологии, о семиотике и презентализме, переливающая в бесконечность. Настоящая статья делает попытку вырваться из клетки пропозиций путем прослеживания трех доктрин, выходящих за пределы «ключевого слова» (по Витгенштейну). Подходы Пирса, Гуссерля и Витгенштейна рассматривают возможности соотнесения, абстрагирования и понимания в качестве отправного пункта для того, чтобы увидеть «нечто» корректно в неограниченном окружении.

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INTERPRETING THINGS: PEIRCE'S PRAGMATISM AND SEMIOTICS

Pragmatism emerged as the first essentially American contribution to philosophy in the second half of the 19th century. We can trace its origins back to 1872 when a group of future lawyers (Oliver Wendel Holms Jr., Nicholas St. John Green) and philosophers (Charles Sanders Peirce, William James) established an informal society called The Metaphysical Club, to discuss problems of philosophy and science. What pragmatism really is, however, is an issue that has caused considerable debate over the last century and, it could be argued, continues to this day. In 1908 Arthur Lovejoy published an article entitled "The Thirteen Pragmatisms" and one of the prominent European pragmatists Ferdinand Schiller argued that there are as many pragmatisms as there are pragmatists (De Waal 2005: 1). The most frequent opposition within this philosophical tradition is whether pragmatism is a doctrine of meaning or a theory of truth. But what is common to all pragmatists is that their thought establishes as a starting point of inquiry a certain maxim of logic, formulated by Charles S. Peirce in his 1878 article "How to Make Our Ideas Clear."

> Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our concep-

> tion to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the objects. (EP 1: 132)

The function of what is called the *pragmatic maxim* is to attain the highest level of clarity of an idea and to serve as a heuristic instrument for the adequate interpretation of the world. Though Peirce himself altered and revised the maxim considerably throughout his life, and many pragmatists have contributed other revisions of the original formulation, pragmatism as we employ the term here remains first and foremost a method for deriving the meaning of an object through its conceivable practical effects that would be produced under particular conditions.

It is important to understand that Peirce's pragmatism is a part of his threefold semiotic doctrine. This is why we have to pay attention to his concepts of *sign* and *sign-action* (or *semiosis*) in the discussion of pragmatism. Peirce's semiotics studies the general conditions and basic elements of signification (*speculative grammar*), the general conditions of the truth of signs in reference to the objects they represent (*logic*) and the general conditions of meaning in reference to the interpretations determined by signs (*speculative rhetoric*). In the following pages we are going to examine what it means *to interpret things*, according to pragmatism, which as a method for deriving meaning belongs to the third domain of Peirce's semiotics. Pragmatism is dedicated to an empiricist approach to knowledge and stipulates that all that is in the mind has first been in the senses. I argue that *meaning* is a particular effect on the mind forced on it through the manifold of sensations, perception and interpretation. Each sensation is a particular one, a singular event. However, every cognition of a singular object necessarily involves a comparison to another one. This means that *interpretation* contains universal or general elements that are combined in thinking. Knowing reality comprises of a particular set of beliefs about the cognized objects, which function as habits directing future behavior in reference to

those objects. However, before we approach Peirce's pragmatic maxim it is necessary to highlight the difference between a *thing* and an *object*.

THINGS AND OBJECTS

What characterizes the birth of philosophy and of science in general is the introduction of the idea of reality, which we owe to the first philosophers of Ancient Greece (Deely 2001: 3). Philosophy detaches itself from mythology with the realization of a particular mode of existence – the real, which is independent of what we might think about it. Here lies an important distinction between what we call *thing* and what we call *object*. A *thing* is something which exists without a relation to a mind, whereas an *object* has a being only as it is known; a *thing* is mind-independent, an *object* is mind-dependent. Thus, a *thing* does not necessarily have to be known to exist, but when it enters into a relation to an intellect it acquires an objective being.

> Things in the environment may or may not exist as known. When they are cognized or known, they are objects *as well as* things. But, as things, they exist regardless of being known. (Deely 2001: 6)

The following problem arises: could there be such a *thing*, which cannot be an *object*? This amounts to the question whether there is anything in the universe that is unknowable. An *object* which is at the same time a *thing* exists simultaneously in a relation to a knower and in-itself. By the latter we are saying only that an *object* possesses an aspect beyond the relation through which it is known. This is not equivalent to the Kantian understanding of *in-itself*. By the ontological division of *noumenon* and *phenomenon*, Kant argued that knowledge is possible only in the world of

appearance. His *thing-in-itself* ("Ding-an-sich-selbst") belongs to the *noumenal world*, which is inaccessible to the senses. The *thing* cannot be known directly in itself but only as an object of sensible intuition, which is a mere appearance (Kant 1998: 115).

However, pragmatism argues that nothing is in principle uncognizable and Peirce in particular rejects the very idea of a thing-in-itself.

> The Kantist has only to abjure from the bottom of his heart the proposition that a thing-in-itself can, however indirectly, be conceived, and then correct the details of Kant's doctrine accordingly. (CP 5.452)

Pragmatism considers knowledge as acquired only in experience and experience is always mediated and relational. Perceiving individual stimuli by the mind necessitates making comparisons between them and reducing their manifold to unity. Only when such a process is realized we can talk about knowledge. There are certainly *things*, which are yet to become a part of our awareness, but the possibility of them becoming *objects* remains. This means that the totality of the possible phenomenal manifestations of the *thing* as an *object* comprise all our knowledge of it, and there is not any unattainable piece of "truer" knowledge, if only we could get out of Plato's cave. Pragmatism as an outgrowth of empiricist thought focuses on the effects (whether cognitive or physical) that objects produce, not on their essence that cannot be actualized in the sensible world. The idea of empirical verification of knowledge is an important one to that tradition and is such that requires a new way of approaching thought in order to reach sufficient clearness of our conceptions. Such is the *raison d'etre* of what would enter philosophical discussions for the decades to come as *the pragmatic maxim*.

THE MAXIM OF PRAGMATISM

The Metaphysical Club existed for a period of eight or nine months in 1872. The term *pragmatism* appears in written form only in 1898 with the publication of William James' lecture "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results" delivered at Berkley (De Waal 2005: 27). However, we find the pragmatic maxim as far back as 1878 in Charles Peirce's article for *The Popular Science Monthly* "How to Make Our Ideas Clear". As we have already mentioned, pragmatism as a new method of inquiry is to a large extent a consequence of the development and success of empirical science. One year prior to the publication of "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," Peirce published another article entitled "The Fixation of Belief", in which he argued against the Cartesian rationalist legacy. Against the principle of universal doubt, he claimed that, if we do not consider our beliefs as premises for future action, be it mental or physical, we would not be able to initiate any actions at all. The goal of scientific investigation and of all thought in general is overcoming doubt and fixing a belief. However, an established belief does not mean that it is a true one: a particular cognition of an object might not correspond to the subjective aspects of the thing. Hence, science and logic must establish the grounds and methods of reaching beliefs that are truthful.

In his 1877 article Peirce discerns four methods for fixing beliefs: the method of tenacity, the method of authority, the a priori method and the scientific one. The first is the weakest because it requires from the knower a persistent evasion of any new intellectual stimuli and exchange of information. Tenacity is against the social nature of our species and it is abandoned with the first collision with a different point of view. The method of authority, on the other hand, relies especially on the social impulse and history consistently proves that it is extremely successful in establishing, maintaining and reproducing the "correct" set of political, moral,

religious and ideological beliefs. The scope of authority, however, makes the method vulnerable. Authority depends on the idea of infallibility and betrays a tendency to regard itself ahistorically. If the current system of beliefs is the only correct one, how are we supposed to ever introduce any new interpretations within it? Those of us who have developed a deeper sense of sociality and particular mental aptitudes are able to recognize that social norms are not the same at different places and in different times (EP 1: 117). This brings us to the method of rationalism or the a priori. According to this method the only stable and lasting truths lie in the mind and are accessible only through a process of retrospection. However, the progress of the empirical sciences in the 19th century was a considerable challenge to that claim. Broadly speaking, pragmatism belongs to the philosophical tradition of empiricism and accepts in principle that the objects of cognition have been first in the senses. This means that the main criteria for fixing beliefs that represent reality sufficiently well would be a method that transcends the limitations of the individual mind and relies on experiment and verification in experience.

> To satisfy our doubts, therefore, it is necessary that a method should be found by which our beliefs may be caused by nothing human, by some external permanency – by something upon which our thinking has no effect. (EP 1: 120)

Peirce argues that the scientific method is the most reliable of the four. This is because sensory experiences are as diverse as the relations we can form in regard to the objects of knowledge. This means that we have to constantly examine our experiences according to the effects they exercise under varying conditions. In case we further our investigations far enough, we would be able to attain a belief that approximates reality adequately even though it would never be an absolute reflection of it.

In "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" Peirce formulates the pragmatic maxim as a guiding principle for reaching the highest apprehensions of our ideas. He begins with questioning the traditional understanding of logicians according to which there is a distinction between a clear idea and a distinct one. The former is such that it could never be mistaken for another (EP 1: 124). The latter, on the other hand, does not include any unclear elements and we can define it in abstract terms (EP 1: 125). The problem with the notion of clear and distinct ideas, according to Peirce, is that this division does not align with the most important criteria of sound reasoning – namely, the ability to reach and create new knowledge. The inadequacy of that opposition supposes the need of a higher level of apprehension of ideas. Peirce comes to his formulation of this third stage of clarity by building on the discussions of The Metaphysical Club, in which the function of thought was considered to be the fixation of beliefs. A belief is something of which we are aware, it removes doubt and most importantly – it establishes models of behavior or habits (EP 1: 129). From those three characteristics, Peirce is able to conclude that the third stage of clearness is one that includes the habits a particular conception gives rise to and he formulates the pragmatic maxim. By the phrase "practical bearings" Peirce does not mean the experiences in the individual mind of an interpreter that a perceived object might create, but the totality of all possible effects that would be actualized under appropriate conditions. This totality is not exhausted by the sum of actual occurrences of a particular event, but also includes those experiences that are merely possible. Moreover, *habit* here is not taken in a psychological sense, but in a logical one. A habit does not encompass singular acts, but rather patterns of thought and action that might arise in all possible consequences for any kind of intellect.

Unlike Peirce, James's 1898 rendition of the maxim includes the feelings and reactions that an object might give rise to in the individual mind.

> To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object...we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve – what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, whether immediate or remote, is then for us the whole of our conception of these effects, so far as that conception has positive significance at all. (James 1907: 46–7)

James thinks that practical effects do not relate to the cognized object but to the individual, who believes that a particular belief is true (De Waal 2005: 37). It was this early and considerable difference regarding the aim of pragmatism that caused the first branching out of the whole tradition. Whereas the interpretation of James is saturated in psychology and he would even align pragmatism with the will to believe, Peirce would insistently claim that the maxim is a method that aims at clarifying the meaning of complex conceptions and removing unclear ideas from science and philosophy.

Throughout his life Peirce would continue to look for a logical proof of his ideas until pragmatism in his thought becomes another name for the logic of abduction. Before we could introduce his ideas on the three kinds of reasoning, however, it would seem necessary to devote some time to the three mental steps that are involved in knowing and to the idea of signs and sign-action.

THE COGNITIVE PROCESS AS A SEMIOTIC ONE

Perception is a process through which we acquire knowledge about the world around us by apprehending things by the senses. Perception has been often viewed as our most basic source of knowledge (Audi 1998: 3). However, it is very important to make the difference between three distinct steps in the cognitive process:

sensation, *perception* and *interpretation*. What we mean by sensation is roughly our impressions, which result from the process by which physical characteristics of the environment reach us through the senses: in our case sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. Our senses are selective: each one "captures" particular stimuli and has its own subjective limits (Deely 2001:7). However, all the senses could do is sense. Perception, on the other hand, supposes *awareness*. Awareness is always awareness *of* something: perception, then, is being aware of a presence, being aware of the stimuli of the external world, which exercise certain effects on us. We could argue that sensation and perception, being preliminary steps of any cognitive act, are involved in the internal order of the information that reaches us. But actual cognition culminates in *interpretation*: that is, the relation of the effects exercised on the interpreting mind by things and the internal order of objects we have created of all the various phenomena of experience. Interpretation is relating the effects of the present experience to a cognitive system of beliefs that map, however imperfectly, the external world. This map has structure, organization and most importantly – a system of rules that govern its elements. However, a thing possesses a singular mode of existence that characterizes its quality of a *here-and-now* presence.

> By a *thing* I mean an object whose occurrence in any universe of reality or fiction is not *ipso facto* constituted by any law or reason, but is an act, arbitrary. An act takes place *hic et nunc* and cannot be generalized without losing its vitality as act. A generalized act is a law; but a law, without an arbitrary to carry it out in each instance, remains an impotent formula. It is legislature without an executive, a judge without the sheriff. Because an act is thus anti-general, and a thing is constituted by an act, a thing is necessarily individual. (Peirce in Bergman & Paavola)

This brings us to our initial claim that interpreting things im-

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plies drawing comparisons between different singular components and necessarily involves general elements. The function of thought is to carry the cognizing subject from a state of indeterminacy (or doubt) to a state more or less determined (belief). This process reflects the necessity to reduce the manifold of sense experiences to unity. Interpreting a thing first and foremost requires being aware of it. But directing our attention to an external presence is only the denotative power of the mind to register a presence. Before we can make any comparisons we need to recognize that presence. This action is separate from and precedes the process of attaching a predicate to the thing, thus transforming it into an object. Presence on its own could not function as a predicate. In this process the function of the copula – which means *is* or *would be* – operates as the conception of being. As such, its only function is connecting a subject to a predicate. Thus, presence and being are the beginning and end of any conception because they represent the reduction of the multiplicity of sense experiences to unity. The conception of being, according to Peirce, is possible only through the formulation of a proposition and propositions consist of a component that represents a thing and another one that represents a quality. Building on the theories of the newly established discipline of physiological psychology, Peirce argues that the only way through which we can know an object is by comparing it to another (EP 1: 5). In other words, to know an object the mind must relate it to another one. But all relations between two objects require the idea of mediation between the two. As two people who speak different languages need a third who can act as interpreter in order for a communicative process to be possible, so two objects require a third element to act as a vehicle of the cognitive process. This element is what Peirce calls a sign.

> A *sign* is a thing which serves to convey knowledge of some other thing, which it is said to *stand for* or *represent*. This thing is called the *object* of the sign; the idea in the

> mind that the sign excites, which is a mental sign of the same object, is called an *interpretant* of the sign. (EP 2: 13)

Thinking is a fundamental evolutionary process that serves to adapt organisms to their environment and according to Peirce this process takes place in the form of interpreting signs (EP 2: 4). This process of *sign-action* he terms *semiosis*. The definition of the sign follows the scholastic term *signum* as that which stands for something else, which began with St. Augustine, but adds a third element in the relation –interpretation. The *sign* mediates between an *object* and a mental effect (the *interpretant*) that the object determines of the mind through the sign. The difference between a sign and a physical entity is that the former is transient and represents a particular kind of dynamic relation between three elements. This transience installs certain limits on its representational capacity and as a consequence the sign represents an object only in a certain aspect of it.

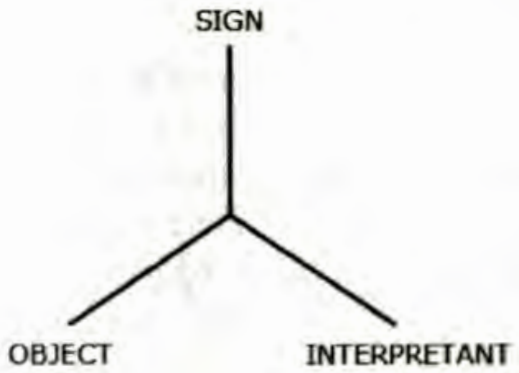


Figure 1. Peirce's triadic sign model.

This triadic model is an instantiation of the sign, which cannot capture the inherent dynamism of sign-action, but serves only as an illustration. Every object determines its significatory element by setting certain restrictive conditions, which have to be observed in

order for successful signification to take place. Therefore, the sign is able to represent only certain characteristics of its object. The interpretant we could imagine as a more developed translation of the sign, as a step to a higher and deeper apprehension of an idea. The key quality of the interpretant is its ability to transform into another sign, which mediates between the object and another, even more developed, interpretant. In this way an interpretative chain is formed, which is characterized by an increased and continuous accumulation of interpretations. The incapacity of the sign to represent the object in its entirety means that new interpretants are produced indefinitely and the process of semiosis is unlimited. But we said earlier that thinking adapts organisms to their environment. This means that sign-processes must produce stable, lasting and accurate interpretations and interpretative schemes that ensure the survival of both the individual organism and the species. Therefore, the main function of semiosis is a homeostatic one: it gives rise to sustainability in the semiotic system, in which we observe a habit-taking tendency. In this process interpretants lose their initial spontaneity and acquire regularity.

The sign is not simply an element of semiosis, but it itself occupies an interval of time and is a process. *Meaning*, therefore, is not a static component of interpretation, but is the triadic and dynamic relation between sign, object and interpretant. In Peirce's semiotics the sign mediates between something passed and something imminent and the effect their relation would produce. Thus, semiotic mediation is triadic, which means that it is not the result of mechanic causality, but is an irreversible evolutionary process that is purposive. It is, therefore, directed to an end that could be included in general description (Houser forthcoming: 32). In the spirit of evolutionary theory, both change and sustainability, defined as the tendency to acquire habits, are characteristic of Peirce's sign model.

The idea of habit is central to the understanding of the interpretant and to the connection between pragmatism and semiot-

ics. As we have already said, the interpretant is the mental effect determined by the sign in the interpreter. In semiosis, this element divides itself into three distinct subelements. One such threefold division that Peirce examined in 1907 is that of the emotional, the energetic and the logical. The emotional interpretant includes the quality of feeling, which means a mere sense of comprehending the meaning of the sign (EP 2: 409). The energetic interpretant includes not only feelings but it evokes an effort, a physical reaction caused by the interpretation of a sign. The logical interpretant operates on the level of the intellect and is general in its capacity to enter into relation. Pragmatism as a method of ascertaining the meaning of complex ideas, we should remind ourselves, studies the general conditions of the references of signs to the interpretants they determine. Therefore, pragmatism is a method directed mainly to the investigation of the operations of logical interpretants, which are of the form of habits. Unlike James, who thinks that the meaning of a given conception is displayed as a form of recommended behavior or expected experience, Peirce focuses on the meaning of objects, displayed in the habits that follow from them. The pragmatic maxim receives another revision.

> ...the whole meaning of an intellectual predicate is that certain kinds of events would happen, once in so often, in the course of experience, under certain kinds of existential circumstances. (EP 2: 402)

Habits represent a tendency for following particular patterns of behavior in similar combinations of circumstances in the future, which become rules of behavior that are reached through a process of logical criticism and controlled thought. If we consider the logical interpretant – because of its general and conditional form – as the true intellectual conception of a sign, then we could examine it as a species of habit: it does not result in further thought, but in initiating adequate consequent actions that follow well-defined yet

capable of adjustments patterns. The logical intepretant is then a self-correcting and self-analyzing habit. It captures the highest level of apprehension of an idea and in order to attain maximum clarity of that idea we should only describe the habit it entails.

> But how otherwise can a habit be described than by a description of the kind of action which it gives rise, with the specification of the conditions and of the motive. (EP 2: 418)

Peirce demonstrates the utility of pragmatism to ascertain the meaning of objects through the habits of thought and action they form. Habits are dependent simultaneously on generality and on concrete instances of actualization under certain conditions. Therefore, they contain both general and singular components, which are inseparable from the purpose inherent in them.

Peirce would continue to develop his pragmatism and search for further proof of its truthfulness. Since pragmatism is a part of speculative rhetoric and as such inquires into the general conditions, according to which signs refer to their interpretants, i.e. the ways in which signs communicate meaning, it is necessary to examine which kinds of reasoning can reach new meanings and new knowledge. According to Peirce, there is only one kind that serves that purpose – abduction.

PRAGMATISM AS THE LOGIC OF ABDUCTION

Peirce argues that there are three distinct kinds of reasoning: deductive, inductive and abductive. Deduction is what we could call necessary reasoning. In this kind of thinking we begin inquiry by setting out from a hypothesis, which is defined abstractly (EP 2: 212). Deductive reasoning does not require from the thinking subject to consider whether the premises of the argument reflect

adequately that which is independent of thought. Instead, the sole requirement is to consider a mere hypothesis from which thought is led to a certain conclusion and not some other. In other words, if the hypothesis is somehow actualized then necessarily the conclusion, which is not stated in it, will always be true. A deductive inference would be a valid one only if there really is a relation between the supposed premises and the conclusion. According to Peirce, all deductive reasoning is diagrammatic in its essence: when a person develops his argument according to the form of deduction, s/he will always construct an image of the hypothesis and continue from it with observation of phenomena (EP 2: 212). It is what we observe that forces upon the mind a suspicion whether the object of cognition is true or false. What is the most striking feature of well developed deductions is the successful introduction of abstractions in them. This means that diagrams are transformed in such a way as to allow features of one to appear in another as objects. This process takes three distinct steps. First, separate propositions are copulated into one. Second, a certain part of the propositions is removed without allowing a possibility for a mistake. And third, a part of the proposition is added again not allowing mistakes. Thus, what we call the meaning of a proposition captures all the necessary deductions that could be drawn from it (EP 2: 214).

Inductive reasoning, unlike deduction, is essential to experimental investigation (EP 2: 215). It starts with suppositions, which being correct would provoke particular effects that are sensible under certain conditions. The risk with induction lies in accepting that experimental confirmation, or verification, provides definitive probability of the theory being tested. This is an idea that Peirce strongly rejects because probability only applies to the actualization of singular events in the course of experience, which fulfill, as we said, particular conditions. But definitiveness could not be reached because mere possibilities cannot be counted and thus included in an experiment (EP 2: 215). Induction begins with an

observation of a single fact and a suggestion regarding the rule that governs it, on which the investigator bases particular prognoses and then tests them empirically. The function of induction is to confirm experimentally the initial suggestions regarding the rule. Therefore, a valid inductive argument would depend on a necessary relation between a theory – which is always general, and an actual event – which is always singular.

Abduction, on the other hand, begins from effects, that is from observed facts, and aims at reconstructing their causes: "Abduction consists in studying facts and devising a theory to explain them" (CP 5.145). The form this kind of reasoning adopts is the following:

> The surprising fact, C, is observed;
> But if A were true, C would be a matter of course,
> Hence, there is reason to suspect that A is true.
> (CP 5.189)

This means that abduction introduces explanatory hypothesis and is the only kind of reasoning capable of attaining new knowledge. While deduction proves what an object *is* and induction that an object *actually exists*, abduction simply demonstrates that an object *might be* if certain conditions are met. Peirce argued that all established scientific theories are arrived at through abductive reasoning. He believed that thinking organisms have evolved a certain tendency to guess somewhat correctly the dynamics of their environment, which tendency includes general elements operative at the level of perception. In logical terms, a *general* is something that could be a predicate to a multiplicity of subjects. Unlike Aristotle, Peirce argues that whereas propositions might include numerous subjects, all of which strictly speaking are singulars, there could be only one predicate attached to them, which is necessary general. But an object is a singular and as such it could not be a general.

> All propositions relate to the same ever-reacting singular; namely, to the totality of all real objects. (EP 2: 209)

This has lead Peirce to the conclusion that perception and abduction are closely related, even inseparable. Since people's ability to form relatively adequate guesses regarding the actual state of affairs in the real world is a particular insight, then this process could not be entirely subject to self-control. Perceptual judgments are forced upon the mind by a process which cannot be controlled and are, therefore, not susceptible to logical criticism. Going back to the pragmatic maxim we focus our attention to the effect of a conception, its purpose and meaning. It is somewhat clear that meaning refers to a particular kind of complex thought – the argument. The end of an argument is the acceptance of a conclusion derived from a particular set of premises. Thus, this conclusion could be termed the meaning of an argument. Moreover, meaning presupposes intentionality, which might lead to the inference that meaning is equivalent to the intended interpretation of a complex sign such as an argument. If the meaning of an argument is this intended interpretation, then the meaning of a proposition and of a term are exhausted with that, which they contribute to the conclusion of the entire argument (EP 2: 220). However, if our ultimate goal is reaching the highest state of apprehension of an idea, which is the goal of pragmatism, then we must be able to form an account of the meaning of a term. To find a satisfactory answer to that problem Peirce thinks we should asks ourselves what the purpose of a term is. A term has little or no utility at all until it is introduced in a larger construct – the proposition. By introducing a term in such a whole, we form a predicate. Whereas a subject has only an indexical role and as such is a singular, a predicate contains general elements. This is what Peirce means by equating pragmatism with abductive logic.

The statement rests on three cotary propositions as he calls

them. According to the first, everything which is in the mind has been first in the senses. Peirce elucidates that *mind* is "the meaning of any representation in any kind of cognition," whereas *in the senses* means "in a *perceptual judgment,* the starting-point or first premises of all critical and controlled thinking" (EP 2: 226–7). The second proposition is that perceptual judgments contain general elements and the third is that there exists no sharp boundary between abduction and perception. Thus, in Peirce's late pragmatist writings perceptual judgments become equated with an extreme case of abductive reasoning. Since abduction is a form of reasoning it is also a form of inference. Adopting an explanatory hypothesis – which is what abduction is – is always subjected to particular conditions.

> Namely, the hypothesis cannot be adopted, even as a hypothesis, unless it be supposed that it would account for the facts or some of them. (EP 2: 231)

If we observe a surprising event and if a rule is true that explains it, there exists good reason to think that the latter is true. All forms of reasoning – deduction, induction and abduction – are forms of inference and it seems that the last is entirely given in perception. According to the pragmatic maxim, a conception is an empty one and has no logical content, if it does not differ from another conception in such a way as to modify the consequent behavior of the mind differently than the second.

> ...if pragmatism is the doctrine that every conception is a conception of conceivable practical effects, it makes conception reach far beyond the practical. It allows any flight of imagination, provided this imagination ultimately alights upon a possible practical effect, and thus many hypothesis may seem at first glance to be excluded by the pragmatic maxim that are really not so excluded. (EP 2: 235)

What makes of abduction a good one is the ability to explain facts and determine their causes. Its purpose, therefore, is to lead to the avoidance of doubt and the establishment of a positive expectation of a future occurrence (belief – habit). This process must always go through an inductive test of experimentation, i.e. through empirical confirmation. Any hypothesis could be admitted in inquiry but it should be at the same time such that allows verification. This is what, at the end, pragmatism aims at.

CONCLUSION

Pragmatism is a philosophical tradition with a rich history, even though it has been undeservedly neglected with the rise of logical positivism and analytic philosophy in the 20th century. What distinguishes it from the school of classical idealism, for example, is its devotion to radical empiricism, to borrow the expression from James. Instead of pondering the Absolute, pragmatists focus on a dynamic investigation of the world and demonstrate a devotion to an evolutionary understanding of both physical and psychical processes. Peirce differs radically from his contemporaries and the neopragmatists of the 20th century in his enormous erudition in scholastic philosophy. It is from the Latins that he obtains the idea of sign, and it is his idea of semiosis that runs through his pragmatism, which is entirely missing in James, Schiller, the Florentine School, Dewey and other followers of the pragmatic doctrine. As we said, most generally semiosis is a term designating sign-action and since all thinking is in signs, according to Peirce, then thinking is a particular manifestation of semiosis.

Thinking is a purposive process of acquiring knowledge. In order to cognize any quality it must be actualized *hic et nunc* in things and abstracted into objects in order to be fit for further comparison and introduced into a structure. This structure represents a

system of beliefs or habits that govern all future behavior, informed by previous experience and positive expectation of particular occurrences under certain conditions. The test for knowing a thing in a pragmatist sense means to be able to make accurate guesses of the effects an object would produce in various scenarios and the causes of those effects. Pragmatism is, therefore, directed to a conditional future sense and focuses on processes of transformations rather than on essences. Meaning is also a process of transformation: not a static element in an epistemic system, but a dynamic relation in a semiotic one. The vehicle of meaning is the sign, which includes a singular component (the object) as well as a general one (the interpretant). The interpretant is a belief, or rather a habit, that refers to the cognized object and directs the future behavior of the interpreting subject. Thus, interpreting things in Peirce's pragmatism and semiotics means the controlled and critical mapping of reality and its transformation into an objective world. While the former is independent of any individual mind, the latter is an entirely mind-dependent semiotic system, which is lawful, purposive and homeostatic.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ ВЕЩЕЙ: ПРАГМАТИЗМ И СЕМИОТИКА ПИРСА

Прагматизм возник в 70-х годах XIX века как первый значительный американский вклад в философию. Изначально он был задуман как метод установления значения, и как таковой связан с семиотической доктриной Чарльза Сандерса Пирса. В этой статье мы обсуждаем вопрос о том, что значит интерпретировать вещи, доказываем, что значение – это эффект на разум, наложенный на него в результате приобретенного опыта. Большое значение имеет различение между понятиями вещь, как разум-независимая, и объект, как разум-зависимый. Интерпретация реальности включает в себя формирование

определенного набора представлений об объектах познания, которые функционируют как привычки, направляющие последующее поведение. Значение – это не статический элемент эпистемической системы, но представляет собой динамическое отношение в семиотической системе. Средством передачи значения выступает знак, который включает в себя как единичные, так и общие элементы. Интерпретация вещей представляет собой контролируемое и критическое картографирование реальности и ее трансформацию в объективный мир.

TERESA DOBRZYŃSKA

IMAGES OF THINGS IN POETRY. THE ANTROPOLOGICAL ASPECTS AND THE CREATION OF A LINGUISTIC PICTURE OF THE WORLD

Before passing to my discussion of various poetic representations of things (whereas *thing*(*s*) will also be referred to herein as *object*(*s*)), I should like to focus for a while on the particular role and the specific characteristics of the notion of 'things'.

While the conscious contact with objects is part of everyday, common and most elementary experiences shared by humans, the extensive and abstract idea or concept of 'things', as consolidated and fixed in our consciousness and (re)confirmed in the uses of language, has resulted from a complex cognitive process. The word *thing* stands for, and refers to, a variety of objects – of the examples at hand: a stick, a match, a column, and so on; thus, objects of diverse origin, size/dimensions and qualities, and of diversified purposes and uses. Thus, what *thing* denotes is natural objects – such as, for instance, a stone – and artefacts – a lamp-bulb being the example. What is more, the scope of use of the word *thing* encompasses material objects as well as things immaterial; following those of the former category, the latter tend to be perceived as separate

beings, or entities, and can be subject to mental/reflective as well as linguistic operations.[1] Let us note that the pronoun *something* has no less an extensive capacity. The extension of the notion of 'thing(s)' and imbuing it with an abstract meaning allows to expand it to varied intellectual contents; to make the point apparent, let us quote some examples: *Talent is a valuable thing*; or, *Being late is a reprehensive thing to do*, etc.

The way such abstract objects are generated – as products of mental operations – is identified by cognitivists in terms of a notional metaphor mechanism: the experience acquired in contact with material things is transposed into the immaterial sphere. Approaching a certain segment of experience as things enables one to speak, describe, evaluate, count, measure (and so on) the determined mental object; in a word, such an object can be treated as if it were a sensually perceptible object. This would fall in the category of 'ontological metaphors', to use George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's concept.[2]

In considering the status of material objects, which constitute a prototypal representation of the notion of 'thing(s)' – that is, the notion's experiential core and the basis for acts of by-analogy thinking – it becomes pretty apparent that, although these objects exist as physical entities and have, in some measure, their objective existence ensured, many of them disclose, in parallel, clear anthropological features: they are perceived from a typically human perspective.[3] Individual material things produced by man, as well as those

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1 The opposition 'real object versus immaterial object, rendered distinct intellectually' is taken into account in a variety of philosophical systems, with varied terms used to denote both elements; for instance, 'natural objects' vs. 'intentional objects'. See P. de Man, *Blindness and Insight*, 2nd ed., Minneapolis, 1983, p. 24.

2 See G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors we Live by*, University of Chicago Press, 1980.

3 The concept whereby the notion of 'thing(s)' is conditioned anthropologically, linking a thing with (the) language and a typically hu-

which were initially natural but became separated by humans from the natural environment and ascribed their specified functions in the area of human activities (for instance, stick – used as a support or a fighting tool; husk of a large fruit – serving as a vessel; etc.): all these objects reveal their dependence on humans, complementing and supporting his corporal functions and enabling satisfaction of strictly human needs. The various actions performed or accomplished with the help of these things, and the very methods of their classification – as fixed in the linguistic qualifications and/or designations, prove that they are joined with the human needs and behaviours, or with certain spheres of social life, as well as with values cultivated within individual cultural communities. Suffice it to recall the names – clearly derivative, shaped by the man–thing relationship – of classes of material objects such as *objects of daily use*, *things lost/found*, *useless things*, *school accessories*, *stage props*, *forfeits* (lottery prizes), *trinkets/knick-knacks*, *valuables*; and so on, and so forth. The anthropological perspective becomes apparent also in the way(s) objects of a symbolic function are perceived – to mention *sceptre*, *altar*, *order/decoration*, and the like; this extends to a variety of objects which in a specified cultural environment are treated as fetishes, amulets, talismans; or, other magical objects

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man perception, transfers things into the cultural space. An oppositional stance is taken by Bjørnal Olsen (see B. Olsen, *In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects*, Lanham: Altamira Press, 2010): placing an emphasis on the needs of research into material culture in areas such as ethnography or archaeology, this author opts for preserving the autonomy of the material world with respect to cognitive acts and language. Opposing a logo-centric attitude, he claims that "things be left as they are in their essential otherness" (p. 91), and "break loose from the textual and linguistic ghetto" (p. 98). This stance cannot however be sustained when it comes to investigating the status of things in poetry: as Lublin-based cognitivists describe it, poetry brings to existence 'worlds beyond words' (cf. R. Tokarski, *Światy za słowami. Wykłady z semantyki leksykalnej*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS 2013).

such as enchanted sword, ring, golden horn, horseshoe, etc. All these things are cultural products and carry senses or meanings that have been ascribed to them and interpreted by people who develop and expand various ritual practices around them.

In his analysis of dependence of the status of objects upon the activity of man, Vladimir Toporov notices that:

> Creation of things forms, chronologically, the last wave of cosmo-genesis and anthropogenesis, the stage of creation that develops at present. Not only does man see and experience this stage but he also, being inside it, attests to it in that he acts as a demiurge, 'maker', *homo faber*.[4]

Creation of things should be understood in this context not only as producing material objects, such as manufacture of implements or ornaments, but also – in a broadest sense – as singling out of separate entities as objects of thoughts and actions, including them in broader conceptual arrangements or systems dependent on the scenarios of human behaviour. This is expressed in the way the conceptual profile of individual elements of reality is shaped, which implies a processing of the physical reality into a culturally determined and familiarised anthroposphere. Things become overgrown with meanings, getting converted into symbols. Art plays a particularly active part in this process of gaining meaningful function by objects and utilisation of their symbolic meanings. Polish philosopher Henryk Elzenberg, who discovered in the development and extension of symbolic semiosphere the quality of enriching the world, wrote:

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[4] As retranslated from: W.N. Toporow [V.N. Toporov], *Rzecz w perspektywie antropologicznej*, Part I: *Rzecz i człowiek*, in idem, *Przestrzeń i rzecz*, transl. into Polish by B. Żyłko, Kraków: UNIVERSITAS, 2003, p. 99.

> To make the world more ideal ... its two mutually alien, but axiologically mutually reliant, halves need being united. Rebuild the world to make it more faultless means to imbue objectiveness with subjectivity, and turn things external into manifestations, aspects and symbols of the internal content. This is what art does, and it is art that functions as a 'rebuilt' world. [5]

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Let us now take a closer look at the varying ways in which objects are shown, or exhibited, in poetry, focusing in particular on attestations of their presence in human lives as elements of everyday experience. Our focus will be on things accessible through sensual cognition, those situated in the core of the notional scope of 'material objects'. Poetry examines and records various spheres of human experience, diverse manifestations of mutual influence between man and external reality. Poetry gives expression to it by transmitting, as a rule, extremely penetrating, non-commonplace images of things emerging in the consciousness of individuals and marked with this individual contact. Yet, another thing to be borne in mind, poetry recurrently furnishes things with stereotypical features, so shaped by the cultural community (which is a less interesting aspect, since such references to things are usual across the types of discourse).

Let us notice, at the outset, that poetic pieces often (re)confirm the permanent presence of certain objects in the life of every person, family, group of people or larger community, portraying objects being 'homebodies' in the world of humans. In such a concept, object becomes a sui generis participant in the occurrences and companion to the human being. It becomes an integral part of the scenarios of

[5] H. Elzenberg, *Kłopot z istnieniem. Aforyzmy w porządku czasu*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK, 2002, p. 231.

the person's actions, co-creates the objective, or material, background of these actions, and forms a permanent element of the situation. The tacit presence of a domestic object may change the man's spiritual condition, or even carry a concrete message: "... learn your tranquillity from things ordinary", the Rev. Jan Twardowski advises.[6]

Through participation in the life of a concrete person or a group of people, the thing gains a special value: no more un-owned or anonymous, it becomes 'somebody's', (inter)related with the man/community, like the azure ribbon in the lyrical monologue integrated into Part III of *Za kulisami* [*Behind-the-Scenes*], a play by Cyprian Norwid: "Give me the azure ribbon – I shall return it // Without a delay ...". The ribbon requested by the dramatis persona is not just any ribbon: it belongs to the woman bestowed by him with love, and represented a small portion of her world.[7]

Such metonymical linkage of experiences is at the heart of the notion of 'keepsake'. A token of remembrance of a person, or a thing recalling some situation or occurrence, expresses nostalgia for the bygone moment, a material connection with somebody/something lost, longing for a world and people that is/are not present anymore or is/are faraway. A thing presented 'in token of remembrance' solidifies the experience, the exciting moment, attests close relationships linking people, and thus has an emotional value independent of its material value. The value of a keepsake is determined by its relation with its relationship, or connexion, with somebody/something dear and the willingness to memorize such a relationship. Thus, an object of small value, or entirely valueless, may become a genuine keepsake:

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[6] J. Twardowski, *Kiedy mówisz*, in idem, *Kalendarz*, selected by M. Hydzik-Żmuda, Warszawa–Rzeszów, Agencja Wydawnicza Ad Oculos: 2003, p. 152.

[7] Let us add that the request to offer the ribbon as a gift evokes the chivalric ritual: fighting dressed in the colours of the beloved lady. Thus, the request is an exquisite affective declaration from the man – and a request that the lady be willing to consider him a close person.

it can be a pencil, a small notebook, a feather, a pebble, a tree-cone, or a dried branch (such as a branch of cypress, which the Hermit from Adam Mickiewicz's *Dziady* (*Forefathers' Eve*)), Part 4, preserves as a memento of his parting with his beloved one. Even if damaged, an object may become a precious memento of an absent or deceased person. As Jan Twardowski confesses:

> things have their own memory of the dead
> thus the broken teapot remembers my mother[8]

In his afore-quoted dissertation, Toporov remarks that:

> The 'sentimental' attitude towards things, and the related feeling of their being close to man and his life, are similarly not founded, as a general rule, upon the 'benefits' stemming from things or upon their functions, but instead, upon their properties as internally experienced by man and associated by him/her with the particular moment(s) in their life. Yet, such an attitude with respect to things is only feasible for a man who can realise that the 'thing-related' level does not exhaust the essence of the matter – the latter being included in another, that is: spiritual, sphere.[9]

The transformation of the nature of an object: replacement of a nobody's, ownerless thing into one participating in someone's life and arousing the sentiment of attachment, may imply conferment on the object of certain features of animated entity, which explains processes of anim(is)ation or anthropomorphisation. Zbigniew Herbert thus wrote of a stool:

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[8] Idem, *List do Matki Boskiej*, from the volume of poetry *Niebieskie okulary* (1980); translation based on the collection: J. Twardowski, *Kalendarz*, op. cit., p. 131.

[9] Toporow, op. cit., Part II: *O bardziej niż „rzeczowych" sensach rzeczy*, p. 134.

In the end one cannot keep this love concealed
tiny quadruped with oaken legs
Of skin coarse and fresh beyond expression
everyday object eyeless but with face
on which the wrinkles of the grain mark a ripe judgment
gray little mule most patient of mules
its hair has fallen out from too much fasting
and only a tuft of wooden bristle
can my hand feel when I stroke it in the morning
[...][10]

As an object that accompanies the man/its owner over the years, the thing is subject, together with him/her, to the passage of time, destruction, or degradation. The community of existence of man and his (her) accompanying things arouses with respect to them the feeling of attachment or devotion, releases a peculiar solidarity with everyday objects or daily necessities which grow older together with their owners. Particularly valuable, and precious, become things that have been in use for a very long time: such objects, even if shabby and threadbare, appear to be associated the strongest with their users (holders, consumers). Piotr Mitzner thus warns against getting rid of such objects, in his poem *Przeglądactwo i wyrzucarstwo* [*Browseism and Removalism*]:

1.
Carried away from home
behind the house
broken stools
shelves and railings
a smashed gallon
a soft challenge
large-scale mowing

[10] Z. Herbert, *Stool* (from the volume *Chord of Light*), in: Z. Herbert, *Collected Poems*, trans. and ed. by Alissa Vales, New York 2008, p. 41.

of things
Got their roots in my
head growing

2.
Don't throw out
too much
throw a half by
way of trial
don't throw
away too far
so you could
reach
whilst still standing here[11]

As a component of occurrences or happenings of importance to a person or human community, objects may gain a sign value based on a metonymic or synecdochal relation, since they are elements of broader systems; they enter into a variety of temporal and cause-and-effect relationships with various object-related orders and occurrences. They are capable of evoking past experiences and becoming indexical signs of situations they have tacitly witnessed[12];

[11] P. Mitzner, *Przeglądactwo i wyrzucarstwo*, from the volume *Kropka*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo tCHu, 2011, p. 70.

[12] The witnessing function is close to the one of keepsake/memento, as in both cases things become, in a way, capsules of memory. A witness functions as someone (derivatively, as an object as well) who accompanied or was present at an occurrence and hence knows what has happened, and can attest to it. In this sense, he preserves the memory of the happening. As for keepsake, it is about a cognisant act of ascribing to the object the function of carrier of reminiscences/recollections of a close relative or dear friend, or some event or happening deemed important. Offering somebody of a thing 'as a token of remembrance' is a means of solidifying the interpersonal bond, since the thing is supposed to remind and re-evoke the person who has given it as a present. Based on this principle,

they may record and render memorable tough, or tragic, experiences. Such is the case of Professor Mieczysław Porębski's pocketknife, made of a piece of metal rim at a Nazi concentration camp, as commemorated in Tadeusz Różewicz's poem *Nożyk profesora*.[13] Transposed years afterwards into a different reality, lying amidst a pile of books on Mr. Porębski's desk, this object reconfirms that his Lager experience was real, and carries a painful charge of emotion. The sequence of reminiscences, blended with scenes from the present-day life, releases a peculiar play of meanings. The pocketknife is no more a banal object (for instance, a letter-opening knife) but turns instead into a witness of the camp gehenna – and thus "bridges the past with the future".[14]

The buttons dug out from the mass graves of Katyn similarly serve as dumb witnesses of genocide – as in Zbigniew Herbert's thrilling poem *Guziki* [*Buttons*] (whose first and last stanza read as follows)[15]:

In memory of Captain Edward Herbert
Only buttons witnesses to the crime
proved unyielding outlasted death
and as sole memorial on the grave
rise up from the depths of the earth
[...]

only buttons proved unyielding
the mighty voice of a muted chorus

keepsake (or memento) becomes 'future-oriented' the very moment it is offered; the moment the content of the keepsake object is perceived or apprehended, it renders realise the past occurrences in the present time.

[13] T. Różewicz, *Nożyk Profesora*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 2001.

[14] Ibidem, p. 7 (repeated on p. 8 of the poem).

[15] Z. Herbert, *Buttons* (from the volume *Rovigo*), in: idem, *Collected Poems*, op. cit., p. 477.

only buttons proved unyielding
buttons from coats and uniforms

In the situations analysed hitherto, the emphasis is on the object's attitude to the man, thus highlighting the relationship's anthropological aspect. The things discussed have a particular status: they are associated with the people and important to them, to a particular individual. Yet poetry challenges, now and then, the apparently obvious affiliation of objects to the universe of humans.[16] One such sceptical reflection with respect to the 'man–object' relationship is expressed in Wisława Szymborska's poem *Rozmowa z kamieniem* [*Conversation With a Stone*]:[17]

I knock at the stone's front door.
"It's only me, let me come in.
I want to enter your insides,
have a look round,
breathe my fill of you."
"Go away," says the stone.
"I'm shut tight.
Even if you break me to pieces,
we'll all still be closed.
You can grind us to sand,
we still won't let you in."
I knock at the stone's front door.
"It's only me, let me come in.
I've come out of pure curiosity.
Only life can quench it.
I mean to stroll through your palace,

[16] This would be a reflexion focused similarly to Bjørnal Olsen's views based on his *In Defense of Things*, op. cit.

[17] W. Szymborska, *Rozmowa z kamieniem*, from the volume *Sól* (1962). The quoted translation (*Conversation with a Stone*), by Stanisław Barańczak and Clare Cavanagh, is from: http://forkedtongues.dreamwidth.org/35685.html.

then go calling on a leaf, a drop of water.
I don't have much time.
My mortality should touch you."
[...]

This particular piece portrays (a) stone as a mysterious entity and, at the same time, as a pretty ordinary object, like a drop of water or a leaf. But even with such commonplace things, the human cognitive powers turn out to be delusive. While the existence of objects is not called into question, there is nothing known of them for certain, or the knowledge acquired appears superficial and, essentially, ostensible; man, for his part, is reliant on the confines set by human experience. In order to cognise a thing, a human being should break the barrier of existential differences – normally, an unfeasible exercise. For all that, in his endeavour to mentally approach the intriguing object, man gives the object the status of person and attempts at entering into a dialogue with it; asks the object questions and receives the answer(s). Man imposes the cognitive schemes he knows upon the separate entity being examined, anthropomorphising or animising things. But these typically human practices only confirm the mutual distinctiveness of the world of humans and the world of things. Although man is capable of carrying out a versatile investigation of their physical parameters, human imagination remains incapable of fathoming the singular nature of objects. No surprise, then, that the 'human I' can hear in reply:

"[...]
You may get to know me, but you'll never know
me through.
My whole surface is turned toward you,
all my insides turned away."[18]

Similar conclusions regarding the pebble, which appears "equal

[18] Szymborska, *Conversation with a Stone*, op. cit.

to itself // mindful of its limits" and "cannot be tamed", are uttered in *Pebble* [*Kamyk*], a poem by Zbigniew Herbert.[19]

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Because of our further considerations of the particular status of things in the poetic universe, it is important to emphasise that objects owe their stabilisation (as singled-out entities) and the perpetuation of their notional profile to the names denoting them. The reflexion on the status of things in the conscience of language users leads to the conclusion that the very existence of an object as a separate being recognised within a given cultural community; ascribing a definite conceptual shape to it depends on the generation of the object's name and on making this name part of the utterance. The intuition that the separation of an object is founded upon this dependence is confirmed by the ethymology of the Polish word for 'thing' – i.e. *rzecz*, disclosing the association between the notion of 'object' with 'speaking' (Polish verb *rzec* means 'to say/utter'. As Aleksander Brückner has established[20], *rzecz* "originally meant 'talk' [*resp.* 'parlance', 'speech'] or 'word'" – and subsequently "converted, like amongst the other Slavs, to the meaning of 'thing'". This shift, of a metonymical nature ('talk' is 'what is talked about'), reveals the aforementioned anthropological determinants of the structure of the world: the human world, or human universe, is the one of 'things pronounced/expressed' – that is, named, singled out, and modelled with words; it is comprised in a conceptual framework/network and (en)coded linguistically by man.

Thus, language is capable of bringing a variety of objects into existence, which takes place owing to the denotative or referential

[19] Herbert, *Pebble* (from the volume *Study of the Object*), in: Herbert, *Collected Poems*, op. cit., p. 197.

[20] A. Brückner, *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego* (a Polish etymology dictionary), Warszawa, 1957, entry ' rzecz' (*thing*).

function of names. Even some paradoxical beings may be created, which are denied existence: "The most beautiful is the object // which does not exist", Zbigniew Herbert once stated, ascribing to such an object a number of properties it 'normally' would not have.[21] The ontological status of things rendered conditional upon their linguistic correlative – i.e. the name – has been facetiously commented by the aphorist Stanisław-Jerzy Lec: "There's many a thing never conceived // of inability to be named".[22]

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In literary works it is language that acts, quite clearly, as the intermediary opening the access to the world – and the world depicted in the text becomes the exact projection of the utterance. Creating and uttering the names of objects, naming them, is tantamount to calling them into existence. This becomes apparent in a particular manner in poetry, which creates a depicted, or represented, world. The discursive technique used in the creation of new notions or concepts and in calling the thus-shaped things into existence is the use of neologism, of which poetry often makes use, shattering the cognitive routine. This technique is used by poets who create poetic universes that are more or less different from the stereotypical images of the world we acquire through daily contact with reality: these seemingly objective images determined by the ethnic language and national culture. A new word introduces a new object in the 'world behind (the) words', thereby modifying the image of reality. This is true with respect to material objects as well as abstract things.

As the type of art that explores the linguistic material in a particular and unique fashion, poetry offers numerous examples of ad-

[21] Herbert, *Study of the Object* (from the volume *Study of the Object*), in Herbert, *Collected Poems*, op. cit., p. 193.

[22] S.J. Lec, *Myśli nieuczesane*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo MUZA, 1994.

vantage taken of the linguistic potency in transforming the world and the things separated within it. Save for constituting new beings/entities, poetry sets in motion other mechanisms too, which imply consequences in the way the image of objects is shaped. The most interesting practices of this sort consist of modification of the conceptual or notional profile of words[23], which leads to a reshaped image of their objects of reference. One practice serving this purpose consists in introducing the name into a specially structured linguistic context. Combined with astonishing epithets and metaphorised, the names of objects evoke entities seemingly identical with their referents (designations) known from the earlier utterances and experiences but conceptually re-profiled and metamorphosed.

We will now explain these practices, using linguistic methods. It is namely demonstrable that modifying or transforming the sense or meaning of a word under the influence of a context, with the resulting creation of unusual objects in the text – which is particularly true for poetry – is based on the activation of lexical and encyclopaedic connotations ascribed to the word in the language code. These lateral components of meaning, accompanying the definitional semantic elements, have been recognised and presented in the pioneering works of Yuri D. Apresyan, Igor A. Melchuk and Lidya Iordanskaya.[24] Below, we take a closer look on the operation

[23] See J. Bartmiński (ed.), *Profilowanie pojęć. Wybór prac*, Lublin, 1993.

[24] See Y. Apresyan, *Leksičeskaja semantika. Sinonimičeskie sredstva jazyka*, Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka, 1974; idem, *Pragmatičeskaja informacyja dla tolkovogo slovaria*, in N.D. Arutiunova (ed.), *Pragmatika i problemy intensjonal'nosti*, Moskva [Moscow]: Nauka, 1988, pp. 7–44; L.N. Iordanskaya and I.A. Mel'čuk, *Konnotatsiya v lingvističeskoj semantike i leksikografii*, in *Wiener Slawistscher Almanach*, 6, 1980. Research in this field is continued in Poland by a team of linguists associated with the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University of Lublin (UMCS), focusing on analysis of linguistic image of the world. Their findings are published in a series of books (colloquially referred to as the 'Red Series') since the

of the discursive mechanisms that activate this meaning-creation apparatus in poetry.

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The creational potential of poetic language is demonstrated, in a masterly manner, by Zbigniew Bieńkowski in his poem *Wstęp do poetyki* [*An Introduction to Poetics*].[25] The considerations and concepts of this author are clearly convergent with the propositions of cognitive linguistics, which researches into the modelling function of language and in creation of concepts, ideas and/or notions in (the) language and text.[26] The said piece by Bieńkowski offers moreover some interesting testimonies of what happens with the content of linguistic expressions subject to meta-linguistic operations in the poet's conscience.

Wstęp do poetyki is a sort of poetical essay or, as Janusz Sławiński once described it, "equally, a linguistic treatise, expository discourse of a philosophy of language, and an instance of use of the language in line with the principles of this philosophy".[27] The subject of linguistic action in this poem is somebody who perceives, in a sensitised manner, and takes advantage of the language's semantic

late 1980s, the first volume having been: J. Bartmiński (ed.), *Konotacja*, Lublin, 1988.

[25] Z. Bieńkowski, *Wstęp do poetyki*, from the cycle *Trzy poematy* (1959); quoted after: Z. Bieńkowski, *Poezje zebrane*, Warszawa, 1993.

[26] Of Polish studies dealing with these issues, the following (by several authors) need being mentioned: J. Bartmiński (ed.), *Językowy obraz świata*, op. cit.; J. Bartmiński and R. Tokarski (eds.), *O definicjach i definiowaniu*, Lublin, 1993; *Kreowanie świata w tekstach*, op. cit.. See also R. Tokarski, *Słownictwo jako interpretacja świata*, in J. Bartmiński (ed.), *Współczesny język polski*, op. cit.; R. Tokarski, *Światy za słowami. Wykłady z semantyki leksykalnej*, Lublin, 2013.

[27] J. Sławiński, *Próba porządkowania doświadczeń*, in *Z problemów literatury polskiej XX wieku*, vol. 3, Warszawa, 1965, p. 271.

and morphological potencies; somebody who has a meta-linguistic awareness well-developed; and, who between man and the reality is capable of discovering a complex area of conceptualisation – as fixed in the system of the language and determined in its further development by linguistic mechanisms. Such a subject has, therefore, an imagination and linguistic sensitivity typical of a poet; he moreover displays creative abilities of poet as an artist who shapes the verbal material.

The fundamental opposition 'man–the world' turns in Bieńkowski's view into the opposition describable as 'man versus reality as perceived through the prism of language', influenced by conceptual categories and profiles fixed in (the) language including such which exist in (the) language *in potentia* and can be developed through creative poetic action. Bieńkowski outlines a vision whereby the world experienced by a poet loses its explicit material form. Linguistically (and multifariously) interpreted, such a world is a modelled or moulded entity, conceptualised from a perspective (or a set of perspectives), including the related ethnical culture and a variety of cultures (which assumes non-transferable presence of a certain point-of-view as contrasted with other standpoints).

The Bieńkowski poem shows a creative imagination of poet as determined by (the) language – the poet who experiences the reality diversely moulded/modelled in the verbal material. In spite of the attempt at rejecting the ballast of linguistic awareness, of the endeavours to reach for a thing that would "only be what it essentially is" (what it is as a *matter* of fact), someone furnished with a sensitivity typical of poet cannot possibly wrench himself free of the sphere of movement of meanings and resume a "paradise of literalness", where word regains its "instinctive sense of the reality". This would only be possible where words remain isolated from the other units of the code as well as from texts – that is, in a dictionary.

The return to the mythical land of literalness, the isolation of words from intra-code relationships that have a bearing on their comprehension and saturate them with additional shades of meaning and connotations, turns out to be illusory. The much desired condition of paradisiacal perfectness of word – unambiguous, and completely (self-)fulfilled in its referential function – reveal the paradoxes of getting liberated from the might of words with use of words. Attempts at forcing one's way through to a reality 'in and of itself' end up in a fiasco, since the speaking 'I' launches the linguistic powers: polysemy, phraseology, the derivative potential of word formation. He realises that there is no escape from a verbalised world. Using a language, one cannot reach beyond the universe of concepts encoded in (the) language.

It is the language of poetry that best reveals the dramatic entanglement in ambiguity and intra-code influences of all sorts. No thing can come into existence without a word; what it needs is acquire a sign equivalent: that is, a name. Once the thing has been named, it loses its non-ambiguity of existence, be it for the fact that its name oscillates in its uses between three functions: a simple, a formal and a material supposition as Occham taught. It is an expression that signifies a given object or a name of an idea, or it represents the very material form of sign (a sequence of phones/characters or a notation). In gaining a name, the thing becomes determined categorially, acquires a notional profile – and, via its name, enters into relationships with other elements of (the) language and is subjected to their semantic impacts. This triggers a sui generis chain reaction within the language system: all the elements of the code may influence all the others by virtue of the words forming part of an organised scheme. In consequence, subject to transformation are not only the meanings of words but also the reality as modelled by them; the reality is thus modelled notionally, or conceptually, by (the) language.

> ... everything real is a frantic, unrestrained, vertiginous, one and multiple, unceasing and acquisitive, continual and incurable word-formation, spreading and reverberating from thing to thing, like from sea to sea.
>
> (*Part One*, IV)

The way things are comprehended is determined by meta-linguistic reflexion. It derives from the inclusion of words in various arrangements of signs. Perception of their content occurs at the background of other (inter)related elements of language. Let us notice that these juxtapositions of words in the consciousness of the speakers – even if restricted to the most incontestable relations, ones that link word-formative and semantic derivatives as well as lexical elements and established idiomatic phrases formed with their contribution – bring out interferences of meanings. Words, moreover, have their textual circulations: they are fragments of somebody's utterances, elements of stylistic repertoire that is used in a variety of discourses – which implies that they can be perceived as a quotation-mark phrase. All these relationships and associations may become a reality in the consciousness of language users. The speaking 'I' in Bieńkowski's poem, equipped with the conscience of a poet (one who personifies sensitivity to associations/(inter)relations of words within the system of language and their dependence on the contexts of utterance), uses a handful of examples to demonstrate spontaneous and unrestrained action of poetic imagination. A word triggers an avalanche of associations and gains certain extended semantic traits that inform the comprehension of things and how they are moulded when influenced by intra-code relations determining the linguistic image of the world.

The expanded sphere of associations that is activated in the poetic language causes that all words lose in the poet's consciousness their direct connection with reality in its initial, unverbalised state, becoming elements of a linguistic image of the world. Putting it differently, the material supposition – word as an element of lan-

guage – comes to the forefront and conceals, in particular, the simple supposition: the referential function of word. Each single word becomes overgrown with additional connotations and reveals a virtually infinite potential of getting arranged into associative chains with other elements of the linguistic image of the world, whereas these elements are surrounded and covered by connotations. In a series of associations proliferating around a word, one comes across a paradoxical coexistence of manifold categories and connotative features, including oppositional or contrasting traits. In this glimmering and shimmering of words and their derivatives, and of meanings of all the elements of language as they are actualised in a piece of poetry, linguistic synchrony blends with diachrony; single words demonstrate their affinity with phrases, idiomatic expressions, and with words used in phrases or expressions being language clichés (*epea pteorenta*); meanings solidified in the language amalgamate with metaphorical or figurative meanings, and linguistic metaphors with living metaphorical/figurative structures. Janusz Sławiński calls the eruption of linguistic influences portrayed by Bieńkowski a "thought pulsating with all the word-radicals".[28]

This chain reaction, in which some words entail or invoke whole ranks of other words, by way of various affinities, relationships or incidental linkages or connections, brings into prominence a predominance of the element of language over the real world, and a domination of meta-linguistic reflexion over the referential function of speech. Bieńkowski's poem expresses ambivalent sentiments: for one side, there is enchantment with the powerfulness of word; for another, one comes across a dismay at the limitless and multi-passage, chaotic course of (inter)relations perpetuated in the linguistic consciousness/awareness – the latter becoming an autonomous universe that isolates man from a reality beyond (the) language.

[28] J. Sławiński, *Myśl pulsująca wszystkimi źródłosłowami*, in *Poezja*, 1967, no. 3.

*

What are things in a poet's imagination, then?

In poetic representations, thing is no more an autonomously existing element of material reality. Instead, thing forms part of somebody's personal experience and a component of the linguistic image of the world as produced within a culture: an image that lasts over centuries and influences cognitive processes of individuals. This image can each time be modified in texts, as words representing things enter into ever-new contexts, forming new or novel 'worlds behind words'.

Not only are things denoted by individual words: indeed, they constitute a projection of the language the creative artist has a command of. Such language is rich, interconnected in a network of manifold and diverse relationships, open to change, and capable of reactivating forgotten forms; it generates texts, thereby opening new spaces for activating new inter-word connections, and new (or novel) visions of the world. In the world, "any thing [may] cause a sense of unreality"[29], and every thing is "perpetual distress and eternal happiness of multiple-meaningness."[30]

Linguistic entanglements of the status of things – things being denoted by their names – is the area of special sensitivity of poets, which is reflected not only in the unveiling of notional or conceptual entanglements recorded in the code but also in creative exploration of this potential: formation of neologisms, introducing novel phrases in poetic texts, and transformation of the conceptual profile of words.

Translated by Tristan Korecki

[29] Bieńkowski, op. cit., Part 3, p. 145.

[30] Ibidem, Part 5, p. 154.

РЕЗЮМЕ

ОБРАЗЫ ВЕЩЕЙ В ПОЭЗИИ. АНТРОПОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ И СОЗДАНИЕ ЯЗЫКОВОЙ КАРТИНЫ МИРА

Во вступительной части статьи обращается внимание на абстрактный характер понятия 'вещь', охватывающего разнообразные естественные предметы и артефакты, а также нематериальные предметы, призванные к существованию путем использования понятийных метафор (см. «онтологические метафоры» по Дж. Лакоффу и М. Джонсону).

Последующие рассуждения касаются материальных вещей. Их ментальный образ предопределен языком и культурной средой, в том числе функциями, которые они выполняют в жизни человека (будучи элементами семиосферы и антропосферы). Эту обусловленность образа вещей особенно глубоко и точно показывают поэты. Приводя примеры из разных произведений, автор представляет разный статус вещей в мире человека и разнообразные интеракции между людьми и предметами (в этой связи обсуждаются: символы, талисманы, повседневные предметы быта, иногда подвергающиеся антропоморфизации или анимизации, вещи-сувениры, вещи-свидетели, вещи, лишние по мнению данного лица, и, наконец, вещи как таинственные, автономные сущности).

Задумываясь над спецификой образа вещи в поэзии, автор приводит размышления Збигнева Беньковского, содержащиеся в его поэме *Wstęp do poetyki* (рус. *Введение в поэтику*). Это произведение представляет собой изложение и наряду с этим иллюстрацию концепции поэтического языка. Этот философский, поэтический трактат извлекает выводы из того, что вещи призываются к существованию путем использования названий. Их языковая категоризация, а также их отношения в системе языка и в текстах и являются сутью языкового сознания поэта. Суть поэзии – активизировать метаязыковую функцию. В результате действия данной функции слово включается в сеть внутрикодовых связей и применений в тексте. Как показывает Беньковский, название предмета способно призывать в памяти поэта широкие просторы речевого универсума.

REGINA KOYCHEVA

FROM THINGS TOWARDS MYSTICISM IN THE PATH OF OLD BULGARIAN HYMNOGRAPHY

The case of medieval Christian literatures, and particularly of the Old Bulgarian one, is a characteristic example of letters in close touch with reality. Old Bulgarian literature perceives itself as documentary, as writings that tell the truth, as non-fiction reproducing reality. At the same time the expectation of mentions or descriptions of physical objects (an expectation associated with the mass modern idea of reality) falls short as regards the main branch of Old Bulgarian literature – the chant poetry, the so-called hymnography (Ангушева 2008: 27), which contains an extremely narrow range of names of things, of material objects, because the reality represented by it, is not the person's environment of things, but the world beyond matter where souls and incorporeal spirits reside. Or, as summarized by Krassimir Stanchev, "the work of medieval art... seeks the hereafter" (Станчев 1985: 6)[1].

[1] The passage in the original reads: „произведението на средновековното изкуство... се стреми към отвъдното".

1. THE THING IN THE AXIOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF THE MEDIEVAL CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

In the axiological system of the medieval Christian worldview the thing is regarded as an instrument in favour of the body, but also a means for either the salvation, or condemnation of the soul. As a means the thing, on one hand, is positioned in the lower levels of the Christian system of values, but on the other hand, requires a careful attitude towards itself. Therefore, in the words of the Russian philologist Vladimir Nikolayevich Toporov, in dealing with things "an utmost alertness is required of the person, [namely] that spiritual wakefulness which gives the opportunity to avoid the danger of both spiritualizing and fetishising things, and thus not to be in servitude to the thing, but, on the contrary, to keep sight of the way of salvation" (Топоров 1993: 80)[2]. This attitude towards the thing is a result of the fact that „only "overcoming" things (i.e. overcoming the sinful attachment to possessions – *R. K.*), rejecting them allows the human soul to find God" (Топоров 1993: 82)[3]. So the monk, who has devoted himself to God, during the ritual of his own ordination takes a vow of renunciation of personal property.

A thing, however, acquires special value, if starts to perform a spiritual function assisting the salvation of the soul. This happens through a direct contact between a thing and the sacred in general, or by relating the thought about the thing to the sacred, which takes place mostly in the field of literature. That is why medieval literature, the subject of which is the immaterial, encompasses above all

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[2] In the original: «от человека... требуется и предельная бдительность, то духовное бодрствование, которое дает возможность избежать опасности спиритуализации вещей и их фетишизирования, и тем самым не рабствовать вещи, но, напротив, не упускать из виду путь спасения».

[3] In the original: «только «преодоление» вещей, отказ от них позволяет душе человека найти Бога».

such things that are attracted closely to the spiritual world by being related to certain spiritual phenomena according to the theory of St. Dionysius the Areopagite for whom "visible things are images of the transcendental" (Станчев 1982: 16).

2. THE THING ACCORDING TO OLD BULGARIAN HYMNOGRAPHY

Old Bulgarian chant poetry names sacred objects (joined to holiness still in reality outside literature), as well as things which are ordinary, but impregnated with spiritual content in the space of literature.

In the circle of holy things the highest position in terms of values is occupied by the unique pieces that are most often "participants" in the sacred history of mankind. Such are above all the Cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified; the burning yet non-burning bush on Mount Sinai (Ex. 3:2–12); relics of saints and others. The names of sacred objects have a varying type of presence in hymnography. For example, while the burning yet non-burning bush is traditionally just mentioned in the *theotokia* as a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary (see for example Кожухаров 1991: 36), directing the thought towards Christ's Cross covers a wide range of creative solutions. The Cross is both the basic theme of certain works (such as the Lenten chants for Wednesday and Friday) and a very common model for the arrangement of different components inside a work. This type of arrangement suggests in a non-verbal way the idea of the Cross, as it is in the triodion canons by Constantine of Preslav (Койчева 2003: 182–184; Койчева 2010; Koycheva 2011).

A typical way to refer to the Cross not only in hymnography, but in all the literature of Byzantine-Slavonic Medieval world, is the seemingly puzzling appellation "tree": for example оутврьди насъ сово҃ж Господи древомъ оумерщтвлѣви грѣхъ... 'Heal us through Thy-

self, God, [You] Who mortify sin through the tree...'[4] (*heirmos*/ode 3 from the Old Bulgarian service for St. Methodius – Теодоров-Балан 1934: 67; Hannick 2006: 54, *heirmos* Вγ'8). This manner of speech as if emphasizes precisely the materiality of the Cross of Christ, the substance from which it is made. The appellation nails the denotate to the concrete situation of Christ's Crusifiction, thus removing it from the concept of an "abstract" symbol of Christianity. In fact, this name is motivated by a very important intertextual reference to the Tree of Knowledge from which Adam and Eve tasted the forbidden fruit and became mortal, as it is obvious in the following *troparion*:

> Адамь дрѣвомь древле . изгнань бы(с) изь едема . азь же х[рист]е . дрѣвомь кр(с)та ти . вьведень быхь в нь... 'Adam once was expelled from Eden through a tree. And I, Christ, was introduced into it through the tree of Thy Cross...'
>
> (*troparion* 1/ode 8 from Constantine of Preslav's *triodion* for Wednesday from the second week of the Great Lent – Попов 1985: 481).

Jesus Christ's death on a wooden cross and His subsequent Resurrection are a victory over death by the same means – the tree – by which at the beginning of human history the ancestors became subject to death. Thus the Divine plan of Redemption rehabilitated the compromised thing. This confirms the Christian axiom that every object created by God was created for good and only the abuse turns it into a means to achieve evil.

The appellations of ordinary, not sacred objects participate

[4] As far as the citations from chants are translated into English, their Slavonic language and orthography are not regularized according to the norms of the Old Bulgarian language from the IXth and Xth centuries when these chants were composed, but are given exactly as they are documented in the manuscripts.

in hymnography most often not with their basic, literal meaning, but with some of their figurative meanings, thus becoming heralds of ideas, of phenomena from the immaterial reality. For example, the lexeme стѣна '1. castle wall; 2. wall; fence; 3. rock' (*Старославянский словарь* 1999: 633) enters the chant poetry as a metaphor for mighty protection against enemies: St. Methodius is a "firm wall" – стѣна тврьда – against the enemies (*troparion* 1/ode 4 from the Service for St. Methodius – Теодоров-Балан 1934: 67); the words for 'door' and 'ladder' are included via the metaphorical-symbolic designations of the Mother of God двьрь небесьнаꙗ 'heavenly gate' (Gen. 28:17) and лѣствица небесьнаꙗ 'heavenly ladder' (Gen. 28:12) (*troparion* 3/ode 3 and *troparion* 2/ode 4 from the Old Bulgarian Canon for the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin – Кожухаров 1991: 36); the appellations for chains – via metaphorical expressions of the type of жзы грѣхъ 'the chains of the sins' (*apolytikion* for St. Methodius – Теодоров-Балан 1934: 66); the words meaning 'oil' appear (and not only in hymnography) as a common Christian allegory of charity (*troparion* 3/ode 7 from the Service for St. Methodius – Теодоров-Балан 1934: 69; acrostic of the Funeral canon on the sixth mode – Койчева 2011: 173–174); the mention of the stone in the fixed expression камы вѣры 'the stone of the faith' concretizes the idea of steadfastness, firmness of faith (*troparion* 2/ode 7 from the Service for St. Methodius – Теодоров-Балан 1934: 69); one of the names of the sea is included in phrases like пѫчина житиискаꙗ 'the sea of life' (*troparion* 3/ode 5 from the Service for St. Methodius – Теодоров-Балан 1934: 68); the word for the Sun – in the Gospel designation for Christ правьдѣ слъньце 'the Sun of Righteousness' (*troparion* 2/ode 3 from the Old Bulgarian Canon for the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin – Кожухаров 1991: 35); and many others.

However, when an ordinary thing is used in the Bible as a prediction of a Gospel event, the appellation of this thing functions in the hymnographic text with its basic, literal meaning on which

a spiritual sense of a prophecy is superimposed. An example of this type in the following *troparion* is the mention of the axe as an object predicting the Cross of Christ:

> Єлисеи з рѣкы иземь секырѫ . кр(с)та ти wбразоваше Х[рист]е... 'Elisha, raising the axe from the river, represented Thy Cross, Christ...'
>
> (*troparion* 2/ode 5 from the *triodion* by Constantine of Preslav for Friday from the first week of the Great Lent – Попов 1985: 458, Zheravna *triodion*)

This intepretation of a passage from the Fourth Book of Kings (6: 1–7), which tells how the prophet Elisha miraculously, with a stick as with a magnet, drew out of the Jordan River a sunken iron head of an axe, is widespread in the chants for the Great Lent – compare e.g. *troparion* 1/ode 7 from a canon for the Cross (св. Теофан Изповедник 1992: 31). To our modern views, it is bewildering to liken the axe to the figure of the cross, but this association may be rooted in the heritage of the pre-Christian pagan cultures, namely in the *labrys* (Ancient Greek λάβρυς) – a bilateral axe, which is a major symbol in the Ancient Greek civilization and in some other cultures, and combines in one a cross and a double-bitted axe (c.f. Figure 1).

All literary examples reviewed here, make it possible to specify the theoretical induction on the place of the thing in the conceptual and axiological system of Medieval Christian worldview, embedded in Old Bulgarian hymnography. So, in the case of sacred objects, what is valuable is chiefly the object itself as an imprint of holiness and not so its name. In the case of naming ordinary things however, what is valuable is not so much the thing but rather the spiritualizing thought about it. It is interesting in this regard that according to some etymologists the Old Bulgarian lexeme вещь from the Praslavonic one *vekt̀ь is distantly related to the Greek ἔπος 'word, speech' and the Latin "vox" 'voice; word, speech'



Figure 1. An ancient cross of Crete[5]

(Фасмер 1986: 309–310). It is also curious that at the stage of the Old Bulgarian language the lexeme вѣщь has begun to resemble the verb вѣщати 'speak, narrate, announce', although the two words belong to different etymological nests (compare Sadnik, Aitzetmüller 1955: p. 328/number 1061, and p. 330/number 1072). In modern English, as well, only one sound distinguishes the noun "thing" from the verb "to think", although the etymological bases of the two lexemes are different, too (Harper 2001). Man is destined to rise above the material nature of the thing and to penetrate

[5] The image is taken from the following site: http://gnosticwarrior.com/meaning-of-the-cross.html. More details about the labrys see here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labrys

the essence of the thing with mind, spirit and speech. This task is reflected in the semantics of the Old Bulgarian word вещь, which besides 'thing, object' also means 'essence, gist' (*Старославянский словарь* 1999: 113). The meditation on the essence of the thing is attainable mostly by a spiritually purified mind, since according to Augustine the Blessed we see things mainly in the light of their empirical properties, but actually "things are as God sees them" (Топоров 1993: 79, 81). By relating ordinary objects to mystical ideas Old Bulgarian literature assists precisely this intellectual process and thus brings the listener or the reader closer to the Divine vision of things.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

ОТ ВЕЩЕЙ К МИСТИКЕ ПО ПУТИ ДРЕВНЕБОЛГАРСКОЙ ГИМНОГРАФИИ

Объектом гимнографии вообще, и в частности древнеболгарской песенной поэзии, является нематериальный мир. Это положение предопределяет специфическое употребление наименований вещей в песнопениях и обосабливает два типа предметов – сакральные и обычные. Названия сакральных объектов имеют ключевую роль и разнообразное художественное присутствие в гимнографии. В статье главное внимание уделено характерному имени Креста Христова – дрѣво 'дерево', которое, с одной стороны, подчеркивает вещественность Креста, но, с другой, отсылает к Древу познания. Названия обычных предметов участвуют в песенной поэзии чаще всего в некотором из своих переносных значений, превращаясь таким образом в знаки объектов духовной реальности. Как исключение из этого правила, имена вещей-предобразов евангельских событий функционируют в текстах в своем прямом (предметном) значении, на которое, однако, накладывается высший духовный смысл пророчества. Рассмотренные примеры позволяют сделать некоторые выводы о месте вещи в концептуально-аксиологической системе христианского средневекового мировоззрения, инкорпорированного в древнеболгарскую гимнографию.

MIRYANA YANAKIEVA

THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT AS OBJECT, THING AND BODY

The idea of the topic – a little bit strange one – of the present article came to me after reading a book I discovered recently. Its title sounds intriguingly and attractively: "*The instrument of music. Philosophical study*". It is written by Bernard Sève, one of the most recognized French philosophers of music in our days. The book is published in 2013, but in 2011, the author was a chief editor of a special number of the interdisciplinary scientific magazine *Methodos*, entirely dedicated to the musical instrument. According to him and to the other authors in this number, the instrument of music completely deserves a deep philosophical study, because it represents the "organological condition" of music, whose singularity as art lies exactly in its specific use of the instruments.

The instrument plays a central role in the ontology of the musical work. Music is the only art whose instruments are used throughout the realization of the work. Once finished painting, the painter needs no longer his brush; but when the partition is written, the musician has more need than ever of instruments. As Bernard Sève claims, in order to play the work, the instrument passes from its physical body to its musical body and the natural body of the instrumentalist becomes a musician body.

By the term of "body" the French philosopher means above all a highly organized structure and he describes the musical playing as interaction between four bodies.

The human body and the musical instrument are both such a kind of highly organized structures. But the very concept of body implies an idea of something alive, something having a soul. The representation of the instrument of music as a specific body-soul duality seems to be most adequate when the question is to understand the nature of the relationship between the musician and the instrument. This relationship seems absolutely unique and incomparable to nothing else. It could be described only as a complete interpenetration between a human being and a material object, whose materiality is deeply transformed by the musical playing in something immaterial, alive, transparent, and in the same time, mysterious.

What I said above can partly answer to the question what I mean by the definition of the musical instrument as a "body". Now, I have to explain what kind of distinction between *instrument as object* and *instrument as thing* I had in mind when I chose the title of my present article.

According to the Oxford dictionary, the first meaning of the word "object" is a *thing that can be seen and touched, but is not alive.* In this sense, object and thing are synonyms and I don't find a serious reason to distinguish them.

The second meaning is *object of study, desire, attention.* Synonyms: *target, butt, focus*, etc. As one of the aims of my text is to present the musical instrument as an object of the contemporary philosophy of music, here I will take the term object only in the second meaning. For example, the French poet Francis Ponge points out that the distinction between object and thing can be drawn from the opposition between science and poetry. For him an object is a thing apprehended by science. For instance, a fig studied by a biologist is an object, but a fig described by a poet is a thing ("*Le parti pris des choses*").

For me, here and now, the musical instrument studied by philosophers will be thought as an object, and the musical instrument represented in literature and other arts will be thought as a thing.

Let me recall briefly the famous Heideggerian distinction between "thing" (*das Ding*) and "object" (*das Gegenstand*). The literal meaning of *das Gegenstand* is *that which stands against*. As Bruno Latour points out, all Heidegger's writing "aims to make as sharp the distinction as possible between, on the one hand, objects, Gegenstand, and, on the other, the celebrated Thing (Ding). The handmade jug can be a thing, while the industrially made can of Coke remains an object. While the latter is abandoned to the empty mastery of science and technology, only the former, cradled in the respectful idiom of art, craftsmanship and poetry, could deploy and gather its rich set of connections" (Latour 2004:233). According to this logic, there is a clear hierarchy between thing and object. Of course, the higher concept remains that of thing, because of its poetical potential.

The instruments of music possess a great metaphorical power, which explains why they are so often represented in other arts, especially in painting and literature. This metaphorical power allows the instrument to move from its status as material object to that as quasi-character (for example, the harpsichord in the short story *The Entail* by Hoffmann, the piano in *The Man without Qualities* by R. Musil, the cimbalom in *The Joke* by M. Kundera). We can draw the conclusion that the musical instrument as poetic thing has always two sides: material and immaterial, visible and invisible.

In the following part of my article, I would like to focus my attention to some particularly interesting aspects of the philosophical study of Bernard Sève without any ambition for completeness.

In the very beginning of the study, the author interprets the famous painting by Raphael *The Ecstasy of St. Cecilia*. Since 15th century St. Cecilia is the patroness of musicians, instrumentalists and luthiers. However, in Raphael's painting she has raised her eyes

to the celestial sphere where angels are singing without any instrumental accompaniment. The instruments are flung at the feet of the saint, and the only one that she holds in her hand – the portable organ – is actually unplayable, because the longest pipes, which produce the low notes are on the side of the right hand, while in reality it must be the opposite. According to B. Sève, the main idea of the painting lies in the abnegation of the instrument, and also in a certain religious mistrust of it. Raphael suggests that only vocal music could be recognized as an adequate expression of the soul. The soul must be protected from the dangerous material and technical mediation of the instrument because it could attract to itself the attention that should be entirely reserved to the spiritual sense of music.

The intention of Bernard Sève is to defend the opposite understanding of the musical instrument; not only to think the instrument as a means of music, but also to think music in light of the instrument, which makes the music possible, even before making it real, that is to say before playing it. The musical instrument is not only a material object. To think it assumes that, beyond the incredible diversity of musical instruments and cultural contexts, in which they were and are used, something like a basic logic, a fundamental function or a fundamental human sense of the instrument can be revealed. Like any other technical object, it is a human invention and fabrication, but there is a very important difference. In general, the technical objects are created in order to resolve some problem or to respond to some need. According to B. Sève, the musical instrument is the only technical invention that is not preceded by a problem to resolve.

Another specific feature of the musical instrument becomes more visible through the comparison with the instruments used in the other arts. Among all the „instruments of arts" (accessories, tools or machines), the musical instrument is the only one that is not abolished after use and does not disappear when the work is

done. The reason is that the musical work could not exist without a permanent and active mediation. So, in this case the instrument is not an external and provisional means, but an integral part of the musical work.

As Bernard Seve points out, the human imagination is much freer when it invents a musical instrument than when it invents any other technical object. Each invention of a new sound enriches the world not only with a new object (the instrument), but with a new possibility of sensation.

One of the principal aims of each theoretical project is to propose a definition of its own object. According to B. Sève, the main determinations of the prototypical instrument of music seem to be:

1. A musical instrument is a technical object made by man, it is repairable and modifiable piece by piece; as each tool or machine, it is separable from the body of the instrumentalist.

2. The instrument is separated from the human body, but it is set to work by the body of the instrumentalist. The sounds of the instrument result from the transformation of a bodily energy of the instrumentalist into a sound energy.

3. A musical instrument must possess disparate and sometimes incompatible technical and musical qualities – solidity of materials, convenience of use, ergonomics, elimination of parasite sounds, etc. Each instrument is a more or less stable balance between qualities that are not necessarily converging; a musical instrument is always a compromise.

4. The musical instrument itself, as a plastic object, and independently of its musical qualities, looks often as an object of art.

The author considers in detail and with respectable knowledge each of these determinations. But when he underlines the possibilities for the instrument of music to become an object of aesthetical representation, he does not think about the fact, mentioned above, that the musical instruments, in their material aspect, are (or could be) themselves products of art. Bernard Sève reveals another, more

or less, hidden aspect of the interaction between the instrument and the musical work. This aspect appears when the instrument is aesthetically represented in and by the work itself.

Here is a brief synthesis of the arguments the French philosopher develops in his book.

The musical instrument, as each utility instrument, obeys to the human logic of the use of instruments (such as a pan, a knife, a pen, a computer). Any instrument (in general) is a technical object, which is conceived and constructed in order to achieve certain results. It is invisible in the work process, engulfed in the result of the work. The being of the instrument is out of itself because it is defined by its function. It is a "being-for". The ideal for the instrument is to function as transparent mediation. In Heideggerian terms – to be *zuhanden* (*ready-at-hand*). The perfectly functioning hammer, circulated into the praxis of carpentry, is *zuhanden*. It is unremarked as a hammer, however, it is implicated in the activity of the carpentry. If the hammer breaks, it becomes *vorhanden* (*present-to-hand*) because the carpenter must fix or replace the hammer.

The musical instrument can also "appear" to the listener consciousness in case of a malfunction, a "failure". The "Duck" produced by a clarinet, a violin string, which suddenly breaks during the concert, extort the instrument from its perfect transparency. But for the musician, especially for the composer the idea of "making visible" the instrument means something very different. We think usually that the composer uses instruments not with the intention to make us hear these instruments, but to make us hear his music. But this is not always the case. Bernard Sève analyzes many examples, but here I will take only one.

The aesthetic presentation of the harpsichord in Bach's 5th Brandenburg concerto is a real sound event. The harpsichord playes from the beginning of the piece his role as *continuo*. Suddenly, from measure 154 begins a long solo of 65 measures. It is an artistic event, but it is more an ontological event: the harpsichord

changes its status, it is no longer a *continuo*, it occupies the whole front of the stage. This change of status is the sinews of the aesthetic presentation. Bach has concertos for harpsichord that probably contain an element of aesthetic presentation (as in any solo concerto), but what happens in the 5th concerto is incomparable. By changing status, harpsichord suddenly acquires visibility (audibility) that he had not. It is truly „presented".

The aesthetic presentation of the instrument means to perceive the musical body of the instrument behind his physical body. Playing an instrument means to liberate continuously the musical body of the instrument from its physical body. The spectator sees only the physical body (the only one, which is visible). The aesthetic presentation aims to make existing the actual (invisible) musical body of the instrument in the consciousness of the listener. Aesthetic presentation is not a technical explanation of the acoustic or musical properties of the instrument. It is an artistic and ontological event, a result of which is that the instrument becomes perceptible for the listener exactly as such: as an instrument.

Each instrument can be the source of countless sounds: notes or noises. The sonorous possibilities of each instrument are always much larger than its musical possibilities, that is to say, all the sounds considered as musical in the given context. The instrument has a physical, material body, from which we can draw any sort of sounds; it has also a musical body, which is not a "part" of the physical body but a certain arrangement of this physical body.

Learn to play an instrument means to build or discover its musical body in its physical body. Make a wrong note or produce an unwanted sound means to let the physical body of the instrument prevail over its musical body.

According to Bernard Sève, not only the instrument but also the instrumentalist possesses two bodies. His musician body embraces all artistic skills the musician needs in order to master his instrument. This musician body is rooted in his natural body, whose

physiological and behavioral logic sometimes comes up against that of the musician body. The learning of instrument often requires to thwart the natural movement of the human body and to restrain certain spontaneous movements. The natural body is never entirely supplanted by the musician body. A little fatigue or inattention, and a false note or a rhythmical deviation, produced by the natural body, eclipses, for a second, the musician body.

In contrast, the virtuosity often challenges the physiological laws, and presents itself as a limit state of the musician body. The musician body gets full supremacy over the natural body. It is the human body transformed into an instrument of its instrument.

The musical play presupposes a harmony between these four bodies. This harmony is achieved through a complex set of transactions: the touch, the fingering, and the gestures of the instrumentalist provide an incredible continuity between the two bodies of the instrument and those of the musician.

But the interaction or interpenetration without which music is impossible is not only between bodies. As the Belgian philosopher and writer Jacques Dewitte says in his recent article "The instrumental invention", we can afford to use an outdated and more or less discredited notion and to expose ourselves to the reproach of anthropomorphism, in advancing the idea that the instrument has a soul. We are witness of a permanent miracle, by which musicians make live or relive instruments and inspire a life in them. The musicians establish a real familiarity with their instrument not when they overcome all the difficulties of the playing and control them but when they put to their advantage the very resistances of the instrument, rather than trying vainly to defeat them. The relationship between the musician and the instrument is not one-way. The instrumentalist gives to his instrument a lot of himself, of his forces, time and soul, but the instrument enriches the musician who is devoted to it and usually deeply transforms him. Jacques Dewitte remarks with a little humor that over time the instrumentalist b

gins to resemble his instrument. They form an old couple as funny and endearing as that of a man and his dog, but no one can say with certainty which of the two is the master and which is the docile animal.[1]

André Souris – Belgian composer, musicologist, and writer associated with the surrealist movement, make the following witty observations:

> The influence of the instrument on the instrumentalist achieved not only his character, but also his physical appearance, his intelligence, his conversation, his dress sense, his social behavior. We must also say that certain types of human recall certain types of instruments. Violinists are lively, talkative, correct, and have advanced ideas. They now carry the short hair. Those who play copper instruments are ribald but always well shaved (because of the mouth). Bassists are weighted people, devoted to trade union ideas. Flutists are very sure of themselves and do not admit the joke. The timpanist is haughty, the drum is stubborn, etc.[2]

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[1] In the original: "La relation qui s'établit entre un instrumentiste et son instrument n'est évidemment pas à sens unique : l'instrumentiste donne vie à l'instrument, lequel le nourrit également en retour. L'interprète lui donne beaucoup de lui-même, il puise dans ses ressources pour le faire ressortir dans tout son éclat, mais l'instrument enrichit également celui qui se voue à lui, au point de le transformer et de le métamorphoser dans une large mesure. Par la suite, il peut même sembler qu'il ait façonné l'instrumentiste à sa propre ressemblance. Ils forment un vieux couple aussi drôle et attendrissant que celui d'un homme et de son chien, mais sans que l'on puisse avancer avec certitude lequel des deux serait le maître et lequel l'animal docile" (Dewitte 2011).

[2] In the original: "L'influence de l'instrument sur l'instrumentiste atteint, à la longue, non seulement son caractère, mais aussi son physique, son intelligence, sa conversation, ses goûts vestimentaires, son comportement social. Il faut dire aussi que certains types d'homme appellent certains types d'instruments. Les violonistes sont vifs, bavards, corrects,

In fact, the instrument influences the character and the physical appearance of the musician, but the musician has chosen it. And if he did, it was partly because he foresaw some dreamed opportunity for his own being. Everyone who makes a choice of an instrument indirectly searches through it some anticipated image of himself, which is gradually becoming a reality.

So, the instrument has a soul. Perhaps it is only a metaphor created in order to express the idea that the musician inspires his soul to the instrument. But it could be not only a metaphor. I don't know. In any case, the musicians experience the relationship with their instrument as a relationship with a living creature. As with any intimate relationship, the fusion and the separation with the instrument are equally important. If for Glenn Gould the secret of playing piano partly lies in the aptitude to separate from the instrument, for Claudio Arrau is important to be a whole with the instrument and to have no longer the piano in front of you like an inert thing that you must attack.

By way of conclusion, I would like to remind the main idea of the present text: to reveal the extreme subtlety and complexity of the musical instrument seen through its triple incarnation. The instrument of music appears as a scientific *object*, which requires philosophical reflection, as an aesthetic *thing*, which is represented by artistic means, and as a body, in the sense of something alive, which possesses a soul (not only metaphorically, but really).

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d'idées avancées. Ils portent aujourd'hui le cheveu court. Les joueurs de cuivre sont volontiers égrillards, mais toujours bien rasés (à cause de l'embouchure). Les contrebassistes sont gens pondérés, dévoués aux idées syndicales. Les flûtistes sont très sûrs d'eux-mêmes, n'admettent pas la plaisanterie. Le timbalier est hautain, le tambour têtu, etc. Tous ces caractères pourraient faire l'objet d'une analyse dont les éléments sont donnés par les divers instruments. Ce serait un beau chapitre inédit d'esthétique musicale" (Souris 1976:48).

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РЕЗЮМЕ

МУЗИКАЛЬНЫЙ ИНСТРУМЕНТ КАК ОБЪЕКТ, ПРЕДМЕТ И ТЕЛО

Тема настоящей статьи подсказана книгой «Музикальный инструмент. Философский этюд» современного французского философа музыки Бернара Сева. Автор защищает тезис, что одно из существенных свойств музыки состоит именно в специфическом способе, посредством которого она пользуется инструментами. Например, если художник по завершении своего произведения не нуждается больше в кисти, то музыкант больше всего нуждается в инструменте именно после написания партитуры. Такая уникальная особенность музыкального инструмента делает его достойным объектом философских исследований и концептуализаций. Этот смысл понятия объект и заложен в заглавие настоящего текста.

По ходу анализа, в целях обоснования разграничения между музикальным инструментом как объект и музикальным инструментом как предмет, привлекаются идеи различных поэтов и философов, та-

ких как Франсис Понж, Хайдеггер, Бруно Латур. Возможно самая сжатая формулировка обобщенного вывода на основе их наблюдений заключается в том, что если смотреть сквозь призму философии инструмент является объектом, в то время как если его представить средствами других исскуств, таких как живопись или литература, он является предметом, а точнее, эстетическим предметом. Неслучайно и для Франсиса Понжа, и для Хайдеггера, «предмет» – понятие, более высокого ценностного уровня, чем «объект».

Помимо объекта и предмета в указанном выше смысле, музыкальный инструмент оказывается и телом – как в смысле высокоорганизованной структуры, так и ввиду факта, что само понятие «тело» имплицирует представление о чем-то живом, обладающем душой. Эта идея музыкального инструмента как специфического единства души и тела находит свои сильнейшие и глубокие основания, когда нужно осмыслить уникальную природу отношения между музыкантом и его инструментом.

II.

MATERIAL OBJECTS AS REPRESENTED IN LITERATURE. CONTEMPORARY TENDENCIES AND REALIZATIONS

ALEKSANDER NAWARECKI

OUR PARAPHERNALIA. ON THE POLISH "TURN TOWARDS THINGS".

Conceptualizing the Turn Towards Things

The so-called Turn Towards Things, by the sceptical also dubbed a "things fad", or the "Turn Towards Materiality" first manifested itself at the end of the 20th Century. Placing in there on the time continuum I hereby refer to the approach represented by Ewa Domańska – a renowned Polish academic acknowledged also in the USA, a researcher of "metahistory" and new methodologies in the humanities. To quote from her paper *Things as Others* delivered in 2005 during the International Congress of Historical Science in Sydney:

> „One could consider the currently observed phenomenon of being "enchanted by things" part of a "discourse of the other" dominant in the so-called new humanities (postcolonial studies, gender studies, queer studies, crip and children's studies etc.) as in its diversity it is focused on studying the marginalized "others" in terms of class, race or gender. Things are a recent addition and the humanities work to let them speak to amend the errors of the past

in which things were merely granted the status of passive objects."[1]

In the wake of this academic shift a number of specializations proliferated: the „anthropology", „sociology" or „history" of things, to name a few. Archaeologists offer "biographies of things" as they appear as individual entities (A. Jones) that come to life and perish not unlike human beings (C. Holtorf). The "cultural biography of things" goes a step farther, acknowledging the "age" and "social standing" of a given object as well as its potential richness of overlapping "life stories" (technical, economic, social).

An even bolder idea stands behind the "politics of things" (as one could be tempted to translate Bruno Latour's neologism *Dingpolitik*) whose consequence, in turn, is the concept of the "democracy of things" (L.R.Bryant).

This resulted in loosening, blurring or even reversing the object-subject binary opposition. First the autonomy of a thing was acknowledged, then its material agency (its role as an agent), finally it was given a noble name of a "non-human being". All of these revisions can be considered part of a strongly marked tendency (occasionally concurrent with ideology) called antihumanism, dehumanisation, the critique of anthropocentrism or the enthusiastically acclaimed "turn to the non-human". One could approach the said turn with slight sarcasm (after all the humanities have already seen a number of similar "turns") and mock the object waiting patiently in line, after women, queers and animals to have its emancipation announced by the academics. Yet even one of a sceptical frame of mind cannot but notice that this very process signifies a

[1] E.Domańska, *O zwrocie ku rzeczom we współczesnej humanistyce. (ku historii nieantropocentrycznej).* "Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych." 2005, T. 65, p. 15. All translations of fragments of Polish texts quoted have been made for the purposes of this article unless stated otherwise.

withdrawal from the heritage of structuralism (ossified and over-scientific) as much as a disavowal of poststructuralist "textualism" and "constructivism". Not to mention that it undermines the long supremacy of research conducted from a subjective, narrative and discursive perspective. Has not enough already been said recently about the representation of reality, on linguistic and symbolic mediation or on the almost omnipresent and universal phenomenon of inexpressibility/unspeakability? As if the visible and palpable qualities of reality have been utterly forgotten, like the fact that objects have their smell or even taste, that they provoke admiration, desire or repulsion, happen to be commodities, have their market value, their producers and owners etc. The resurfacing of such a matter-rooted reflection brought the renaissance of the philosophy inclined towards a substantial understanding of reality (Aristotle, Spinoza, Leibniz). One hereby also returns to materialism which, unlike in the 19th century, is by no means tantamount to depriving objects of their aura (Greenblatt's cultural materialism certainly cannot be considered soulless). A number of archaeologists, physicists, chemists, economists or even geologists and biologists (as ecofacts are things as much as artefacts, thus the alliance with ecology) came to aid the newly reborn worldview.

Representatives

From a number of influential authors I have decided to mention those whose works have been translated into Polish – a Norwegian, a Frenchman, an Englishman and a German. Let us begin with Bjørnar Olsen, Domańska's close co-worker, active and prolific in Polish academia and particularly close to my heart due to his hermeneutic approach rooted in the somatic, practical, individual and local. The basis for his dissertation *In Defense of Things: Archaeology and the Ontology of Objects* are his experiences of typical

Norwegian activities such as rowing, sawing and chopping wood, hunting, camping, house construction etc. The title's "archaeology of the object" is not a metaphor, it stems from the experiences of a professional seeker of objects hidden underground, ones he personally excavated, carefully cleaned, polished and displayed in a museum window, with due care not to let it become a dead "exhibit" but a testimony to its world and fate. The second author, and certainly most renowned one, is Bruno Latour, a historian of science (a researcher into the microcosm of laboratories), the author of the Actor Network Theory[2] his "sociology of the non-humans" is derived from McLuhanian reflection on the effects of the new means of communication (the Internet, mobile phones, Facebook, GPS). The devices via which they operate work differently from traditional tools, when connected to the network they activate themselves like an actor on the stage. This is how they acquire their agency and partnership with he human being. Graham Harman in turn is admittedly inspired by Latour's thought. This academic, since 2006 affiliated with London School of Economics and Political Science and its international ANTHEM GROUP team, conceptualised a new realism called "speculative" or even "weird". *The Quadruple Object* (2011, Polish edition 2013) postulates a return to a pre-Kantian cognitive situation: Instead of beginning with radical doubt, we start from naiveté. What philosophy shares with the lives of scientists, bankers, and animals is that all are concerned with objects"[3] This approach works to push objects to the forefront, into the adventurous and alluring "virtual world". Another author to be mentioned is Hartmut Böhme the author of Fetishism and Culture: A Different Theory of Modernity (2006, Polish edition 2013), an extraordinarily meticulous compendium of modern knowledge of objects regarded in terms of the category

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2 See.B.Latour, *Splatając na nowo to, co społeczne: wprowadzenie do teorii aktora*-sieci, Trans. K.Arbiszeski, A.Derra, Kraków 2010, p.108.

3 G. Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, Alresford: *John Hunt, 2011*.p.5.

of the fetish defined in a wide context of religious studies, ethnology, esthetics, economy, psychoanalysis but also literature. Last, but not least, Roger-Pol Droit needs to be mentioned with his *Astonish Yourself: 101 Experiments in the Philosophy of Everyday Life* (2003, Polish edition 2005) – an exercise for imagination, between literature and psychotherapy.

Belated translations

Let me take a trip down memory lane to the 80s and early 90s, to my vain attempts at finding texts on things; only Heidegger came to my assistance and with one essay, as well as a small choice of Gaston Bachelard's works and in one fragment of Derrida's text on Ponge's[4] poetry. Although it was not much still the concept of the "object's subjectivity" that later proved the leitmotif of today's posthumanities already resounded distinctly in these works. Polish readers lacked fundamental translations, partly because the topic of things seemed of secondary importance, not to say trivial. The translations appeared a couple of decades belated and, I suppose, it is only the atmosphere of the "reistic" turn encouraged publishers to translate such works as Barthes' *Mythologies* (2000), Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (2001), Derrida's *Truth in Painting*, Foucault's *The Order of Things* (2005), Simmel's *Bridge and Door* (2006), Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* (2007) and *Berlin Childhood Around 1900* (2010) or De Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (2008). The published series of Heidegger's translations also bears marks of belatedness: *What is a Thing* (2001), *The*

[4] See: M.Heidegger, *Pytanie o technikę*. Trans. K.Walicki. In: M. Heidegger, *Budować, mieszkać myśleć*. Ed. K.Michalski. Warszawa 1972; G.Bachelard, *Wyobraźnia poetycka*. Ed. H.Chudak. Warszawa 1975; J.Derrida, *Sygnowane Ponge*. Trans. S.Cichowicz. „Literatura na Świecie" 1988, Vol 8–9.

Question Concerning Technology (2002), *The Thing* (2007); the fact that the above have not been translated by Polish most renowned Heidegger scholars (J. Tischner, K. Michalski, C. Wodziński) cannot but be considered symptomatic. The full edition of Bachelard's *La poetique de l'espace* (1958), a work of pioneering spatial imagination (also in micro scale), whose affirmative approach to matter (topophilia) still amazes and dazzles, is yet to be published.

Polish works on things

Let us now proceed to a brief review of relevant Polish works on the subject. I consider it reasonable to start with those from the 90s, as precursory as they were oddball – ahead of their times and the "things fad" and strongly marked by individual (re)search and uniqueness of style. The first of them, smallest in volume but most original and influential is Jolanta Brach-Czaina's *Szczeliny istnienia* [Eng: *Crevices in Being*] (Warsaw 1992), a study of everyday existence, weaved from reflections on repeated activities and mundane objects (such as a dusting cloth) but also on organic matter (meat/flesh, fruit). The second work worth mentioning – Stefan Symotiuk's *Filozofia i genius loci* [Eng. *Philosophy and genius loci*] (Warszawa 1997) compiles reflections of a rather phenomenological nature, devoted to things firmly rooted in space (gate, window, well, attic, garbage dump etc.) I would also add my own book *Rzeczy i marzenia. Studia o wyobraźni poetyckiej skamandrytów* [Eng. *Things and dreams. Studies of the poetic imagination of the Skamander poets*] (Katowice 1993) to this brief list as it contains analyses of poetic phantasms (J. Wittlin's spoon, M. Pawlikowska's lifejacket, Tuwim's furniture, J. Lechoń's theatrical props, J. Iwaszkiewicz's old junk, complemented by an attempt at a „theory of the object".

As the next decade was marked by the "turn", accordingly it brought voluminous and systematic academic monographs such as

Marek Krajewski's: *W stronę socjologii przedmiotów* [Eng. *Towards a sociology of objects*] (Poznań 2006); Janusz Barański's *Świat rzeczy. Zarys antropologiczny* [Eng. *A World of things. An anthropological sketch*] (Kraków 2007), Małgorzata Kwietniewska's: *Res. Stadium transformacji pojęcia rzeczy od Hegla do dekonstrukcji filozoficznej* [Eng. *Res. A study of transformation of the concept of a thing from Hegel to philosophical deconstruction*] (Łódź 2009). These in-depth studies worked to catch up to the Western academic discourse and summarized current knowledge on things in sociology, anthropology and history of philosophy.

Meanwhile, in the field of literary theory only one yet particularly gracious and accurate monograph was published – *Mowa rzeczy. „Głosy" przedmiotu w polskiej prozie socrealistycznej* [Eng. *The language of things. The "voices" of the object in Polish prose of socialist realism*] (Kraków 2006) by Justyna Trzcińska-Rosik. The turn of the decades brought two comparative studies. The first – Bożena Shallcross' dissertation *Rzeczy i Zagłada* (Kraków 2014)/ *The Holocaust Object in Polish and Polish-Jewish Culture* (Bloomington, 2011) is an analysis of poetry by Ginczanka, Szlengel and Miłosz as well as of short stories (Nałkowska's, Borowski's and Andrzejewski's) in the light of interdisciplinary Holocaust studies (history, philosophy, economy). The book was written at the University of Chicago and its English edition received enthusiastic appraise in the USA. The second one, also an academic work of a syncretic character, is Zofia Król's *Powrót do świata. Dzieje uwagi w filozofii i literaturze XX wieku*, [Eng. *Back to the world. The history of attention in philosophy and literature of the 20th century*] (Warszawa 2013) which puts emphasis on the poetic perception of objects displayed by authors both Polish (Miłosz, Herbert, Białoszewski) and American (Whitman, Williams, Reznikoff, O'Hara).

2015 proved to be a milestone as it brought 3 voluminous books on the subject, including two monographs of fundamental importance. The first of them – *Poeci urzeczeni. Przedmioty w po-*

ezji polskiej 1890–1939 [Eng. *Enchanted*[5] *poets. Objects in Polish poetry 1890–1939*] (Kraków 2014) written by Anna Zientala proves that the turn of the 20th century and its first decades (modernism) can be considered the most interesting period in terms of a things-related line of research. The author offers an extended study of mid-war Polish poetry while working to reveal its roots in the Young Poland movement. The second book, Jakub Kornhauser's dissertation *Całkowita rewolucja. Status przedmiotów w poezji surrealizmu* [Eng. *The sum of the revolution. The status of things in surrealist poetry*] (Kraków 2015) can be considered complementary as it focuses on the avant-garde. The author concentrates on the influence of Breton's manifestos not only in French, but also in Czech, Slovakian, Serbian and Romanian poetry. What the reader receives in effect is a ground breaking study of surrealism in Central and Eastern Europe and one with an original methodological introduction. It is in the backdrop of these two works where I would place my own book *Parafernalia. O rzeczach i marzeniach* [Eng. *Paraphernalia. On things and dreams*] (Katowice 2014). The said book is a re-edition of essays by Skamander poets complemented by reflections on the status of objects in the totalitarian world (Baczyński's satires and Grass' novels versus the problem of fascism, post-communist nostalgia for the props of the People's Republic of Poland).

The Polish "turn" in conferences

The abovementioned works, often PhD dissertations, have been written in the quiet of the academics' study, whereas the more spectacular "turn to things" was happening during national conferences, seminars and projects that brought fruit in the form of volu-

[5] The word 'enchanted' does not convey the original pun as „urzeczony" literally means enchanted or charmed but also directly references the register of things by containing „rzecz" – „thing".

minous collective publications. This precisely is the genesis of four "representative" anthologies: 1. *Człowiek i rzecz* [Eng. *Human and the thing*] edited by S. Wysłouch and B.Kaniewska, Poznań 1999. 2. *Codzienne, przedmiotowe, cielesne* [Eng. *The everyday, the subjective and the bodily*] Ed. H Gosk, Izabelin 2002; 3. *Rzeczy i rzeczywistość w kulturze XX i XXI wieku* [Eng. *Things and reality in the culture of the 20th and 21st century*] Kitowska-Łysiak, M.Lachowski eds. 4. *Rzeczy i ludzie. Humanistyka wobec materialności* [Eng. *Things and humans. Humanities towards materiality*], Olsztyn 2008. The dates and places of publishing would suggest that the wave of interest in things came from the West and gradually moved eastward: from Poznań (1999), through Warsaw (2002) and Lublin (2007) to Olsztyn (2008). The titles of the publications indicate the loosening grip of the subject's domination (The Human and the object) and embrace the primacy of the object (Objects and humans). The subtitle of the first book: *O problemach reifikacji*, [Eng. *On the issues of reification*] still resounds with a certain anxiety towards "reification", in case of the second it is toned down to being mildly troubled by "the mundane and corporeality", while the last one (*Humanistyka wobec materialności* Eng. *Humanities towards materiality*) evokes only calm academic objectivism. "Materiality" and "objectivity" in their broad sense suppresses an individualized "thing".

Interestingly, the main initiators of these projects, were polonists as they were the ones who organized the first two sessions (though the one in Poznań had "literature, philosophy and art" in its subtitle). The Lublin volume was prepared by philosophers and art historians and it was only the Olsztyn volume that proved fully interdisciplinary, thanks to the participation of historians (Domańska), archaeologists (Olsen), as well as anthropologists, sociologists, researchers in cultural studies, philosophers and philologists.

Polonists contributed almost 40 texts and yet their cognitive

aspirations seem rather cautious. In none of them does one sense the urge to trigger a kind of dialogue with other arts and academic disciplines while theoretical and methodological issues have hardly received any in-depth analyses. The focus has been put on the 20th century; the older and more renowned scholars continued their studies into the works of distinguished writers (Gombrowicz, Schulz, Witkacy, Nałkowska, Tyrmand, Bobkowski, Lem, Konwicki, Różewicz), while the younger ones, who also happen to dabble in literary criticism, tackled the hot topic of those times – the prose of the nineties (Chwin's and Stasiuk's novels being the most prominent ones here as it is in these that the interest in objects is most visible). Przemysław Czapliński's seemingly simple assertion that "we have acquired more things" is in fact of a revelatory character as it aptly paints the picture of our Polish prose of the end of the century.[6] This hypothesis – reinforced and repeated by other critics[7] – seems to be the most important attempt at grasping the Polish specificity, therefore it is worth elaborating.

Back to the past

Why has the Polish prose turned to things so late and yet so collectively? The concurrent political changes, the expansion of modern capitalism and its consumerist "ecstasy" are the obvious factor yet their influence is not visible in poetry which would have one question the validity of taking such a straightforward causality

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[6] See: P.Czapliński, *Rzecz w literaturze albo proza lat dziewięćdziesiątych wobec mimesis*. W: *Człowiek i rzecz....*, p. 207.

[7] In the abovementioned volumes the motif of things in the prose of the nineties has been discussed by the following: P.Czapliński, B.Kaniewska, M.Brzóstowicz, J.Madeyski, H.Gosk, A.Zieniewicz, J.Jarzębski, M.Kłosińska-Duszczyk, D.Nowacki, M.Dąbrowski, D.Czaja, A.Bagłajewski.

for granted. To the contrary, young Polish poetry, as Piotr Śliwiński observed, distances itself from palpable reality, "puts it into quotation marks"[8]. How does one explain that? Is the age of the debutantes the deciding factor? Such a suggestion has been put forth by Janusz Wójcik according to whom particular sensitivity towards the object is the privilege of "old poets" (Iwaszkiewicz, Miłosz, Herbert, Różewicz, Rymkiewicz). Maybe the young do not want to emulate the elders? Such a psychologically-existential key does not account for historical-literary processes; however the example set by the elders signals that the object has by no means been a novelty for the poets. Accordingly, one needs to, or even must, look back if one is inclined to give credit to Jerzy Jarzębski's stance whose thorough analysis of the poetics of the novels from the 90s demands a historical reference going back as far as 1956:

> "After the October Revolution poets have started to re-describe the world of things from scratch. Białoszewski, Herbert, Szymborska – all of them looked at things with extraordinary scrutiny to establish what everything is really is like, what the world we live in is like, and what we ourselves are like. After the 90s watershed this analytical inspection into the world of thing was needed yet again and literature reflects that. Yet the gaze of the writers does not reach the "elements" – Białoszewski's "'floor" or Szymborska's and Herbert's "stone". In fact, the drama is played out on a whole different level, among the signs of acceptance or rejection of the symbolic products of both the communist and the globalist civilizations."[9]

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[8] P.Śliwiński, *Kariera cudzysłowu*. In: *Codzienne, przedmiotowe, cielesne. Języki nowej wrażliwości w literaturze polskiej XX wieku*. Red. H.Gosk. Izabelin 2002, p. 277–290.

[9] J.Jarzębski, *Pamięć rzeczy: paradoksy enumeracji*. W: *Codzienne, przedmiotowe, cielesne...*, p. 100.

In terms of the history of poetry the civilizational and political context has changed, however the contemporary dialogue with the products of "globalism, though important and current, is overshadowed by the "October". As if the bygone poetic achievements that situated the object in the centre of attention seemed of a founding character. For that reason another researcher representing the same viewpoint as Jarzębski, considers them "an attempt at building a new literary anthropological paradigm: one based on the binary opposition human/thing".[10] By way of this statement the young scholar announces a rather "risky hypothesis" and yet is this risk not illusory? It smacks to me of a vested polonist truism though I would prefer not to be sarcastic as, eventually, what we are all touching here is a common problem with the remembrance of the 1956 "reistic" turn. Such a thesis is not a novelty; oft repeated and simplified (particularly in textbooks) it became banalized and turned into a platitude. And precisely for this reason one needs to revisit those simultaneously known and unacknowledged facts.

Poetic revolutions of things after 1956

In 1956 Miron Białoszwski's *Obroty rzeczy/The Revolution of Things*), a volume of humungous influence and importance, was published, bringing such poems as: "Bless, O Floor!", "A Table Song Almost Of The Universe", "The Beaux Arts of My Room" or "Translation of An Umbrella". A year later (1957) Zbigniew Herbert published his *Hermes, a Dog and a Star featuring such poems as:* "Furnished Room" and "A Knocker" as well as poetic prose: "The Violin", "The Button", "Objects", "Harpsichord", "Shell", "The Well", "Still life", "In a Closet""; "Wringer" etc. In 1961 brought

[10] P.Arbiszewska, *Sznurowadła, zegarki, kamienie. Rzecz w literaturze*. In: *Rzczy i ludzie. Humanistyka wobec materialności.* Ed. J.Kowalewski, W.Pasek, M.Śliwa. Olsztyn 2008, p. 326.

Herbert's volume under a telling title Study of The Object, therein: "Wooden Bird", "Drawer", "Chimney", "Clock", "Careful with the table", "Chairs". One also needs to mention Białoszewski's forerunner, his friend and master – Stanisław Swen-Czachorowski. One finds many a masterpiece in the poetry of those three and yet the primacy of genius in object description certainly belongs to Szymborska of those days and too the grand elders – Iwaszkiewicz, Miłosz, Jastrun (close to Rilke) as well as, though younger, the ascetic Różewicz. One also certainly cannot dismiss the importance of the "turpist" Grochowiak, "surrealist" Harasymowicz, "fairy-like" Nowak, "funereal" Rymkiewicz, or the "linguists" – Karpowicz and Wirpsza. The topic evolved in the New Wave generation to reach its peak in Barańczak's *Triptych with Concrete, Fatigue and Snow* (1981) and Zagajewski's *Canvas* (1990), though it is Julian Kornhauser who proved most true to things. And the above is certainly not a complete list of poetic achievements.

Without the so oft-exercised "reism" Polish poetry of the 20th century would likely not be so well understood abroad, Herbert or Zagajewski probably would not have been so thoroughly translated while Miłosz and Szymborska's road to being awarded with the Nobel Prize would have been longer. And what was it like in Poland? Polish reviewers spotted the recourse to things almost instantly, critics have discussed it widely and the most important "object" poems of the 60s have quickly become incorporated into textbooks. Commentaries from such critics as K. Wyka, J. Kwiatkowski, A.Sandauer, J. Łukasiewicz, J. Trznadel, P. Matywiecki or J. Prokop (*Lekcja rzeczy*, Eng. *The lesson of things*) point to a variety of intellectual traces: from Marxism, trough phenomenology and psychoanalysis to theology. One can consider Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz's study of Herbert's "Chair" representative and symptomatic: elaborate to such an extent that it took the form of an extensive philosophical treaty. And yet upon reading the abovementioned one senses want and insufficiency as the

judgments of the critics were often passed "on the go", what is more – as they concerned the art of their peers or younger colleagues they often lacked distance; also censorship was the impeding factor. It is a pity that none of those poems ever fell into the hands of Heidegger, Gadamer or Derrida, as we would then likely know their meaning better.

How was that possible?

The above described "epiphany" or maybe a "triumph" of things in Polish poetry was a distinct trend starting in the mid-50s and lasting throughout the next three decades (until the martial law). Krzysztof Karasek, its participant, trying to fathom this phenomenon in retrospect (1986), remarks:

> "What does it in fact mean to make things the centre of one's interests? – the poet asks – The thing is the last and the ultimate island, it is a rescue raft an enslaved individual can hold on to. Seen in this light it is the ultimate material (sensual) argument for the existence of the world, and, paradoxically, for being in the world; the measure of human freedom (...) It should not then come as a surprise that also in Poland poetry is closest to the object precisely in the times when the individual's lack of autonomy reaches a desperate, clinical phase. The mid-50s triggered this need for asylum in many, particularly the most mature ones. Only the rudimentary was left: the chair (Białoszewski), the drawer (Herbert), the poker (Grochowiak). The thing perceived as lonely and ascetic, beautiful and hideous becomes the ultimate haven, the ultima thule."[11]

[11] K.Karasek: *Post scriptum do Ponge'a*. „Literatura" 1986, Vol. 1 p.17.

These remarks written on the margins of a commentary on Ponge refer to the Polish specificity – the experience of communist oppression and longing for freedom. One could escape from Stalinism only into the world of mute matter but Polish poets (similarly to the German ones from group 47), regained their respect for the concrete as early as right after the war, as it seemed the only point of reference for artistic activity post-Auschwitz. The ethical turn to elementary values was being played out in the scenery of post-war debris, experienced as long-term living in ruins, looting, shady businesses thriving on stolen Jewish and German belongings. If one third of Polish society were forced to resettle, then the so called "'repatriates" (former exiles, hostages, fugitives, settlers etc.) had all experienced having their possessions confiscated, robbed, destroyed or lost irretrievably in cattle wagons. The relatively stable life in People's Poland was not free of the experience of poverty and permanent shortage of goods either, while it forced one to settle for shoddiness and trash, commercial refuse. Family souvenirs acquired cult status and became worshipped with semi-religious zeal (particularly if one had managed to save them during one's stay in a concentration camp or gulag), pre-war products inspired respect and nostalgia, while commodities from the West were treated not unlike sexual fetishes or idols endowed with supernatural powers.

In the wake of the Polish thaw when one could finally write both about the luxurious and the trashy, Polish artists were eager to draw from the contents of their experience. This knowledge of matter proved utterly different from the kind of sensitivity represented by their Western peers, one so accurately depicted in Georges Perec's *Things* (1965). The totalitarian state loosened its iron grip but a poet scrutinizing a thing, whose loyalty to the object, stubborn, bent to see a stool as a stool, violated the dialectic rules of socialist realism. After all, by sanctifying the concrete one exorcised ideology!

Writing about things, bordering on "antisocialist activity" never hampered subtle intellectual reflection. This can certainly be considered one of the peculiarities of our poetry with its cognitive aspirations and functionality in the face of permanent weakness of academic philosophy and theology. I am convinced that the merits of Polish reception of Neo-Kantianism, phenomenology, existentialism or even personalism or the philosophy of dialogue are best depicted by the "reistic" poems of the aforementioned authors.

The joy of a reclaimed garbage dump

As the time has come to start heading towards a conclusion, I would like to point to three most important groupings of things and, by the same token, three historical moments and three literary generations that consecutively came into prominence. Each of these represents a period of a momentary relief after a catastrophe and terror. The social sentiments of those days could best be described as the "joy of a reclaimed garbage dump"'. The phrase comes from Kaden-Bandrowski's novel *General Barcz* (1923) and aptly conjures up the atmosphere of Poland Reborn, with its retreat from the themes of war and the romantic heritage which allowed one to turn to the everyday and thus giving us the first generation of modern eulogists of the objects. Another breakthrough, albeit of somehow "central" and greater importance began in 1956, as said earlier, in the wake of the political thaw. Yet this very outburst of joy owed much to its forerunners: Białoszewski learnt the language of things from Liebert and Gałczyński, Herbert from Iwaszkiewicz and Miłosz, Szymborska from Pawlikowska, not to mention that all of them drew from Tuwim.

Finally, the third wave came after the Round Table, with the June 1989 elections. The times when warlike deficiency of materi

goods came to an end and the turning tide made commodities of all shape and color accessible more easily. One could shamelessly hoard them, play and enjoy or become sickened with them. The overabundance of things was kept out of poetry (loosely associated with postmodernism) created by writers from one generation: S. Chwin (1949), J. Pilch (1952), A. Jurewicz (1952), M. Tulli (1955), M. Bieńczyk (1956), P. Huelle (1957), Z. Kruszyński(1957), A. Stasiuk (1960), P. Szewc (1961), O. Tokarczuk (1962). All of them were born in the times when Herbert and Grochowiak debuted, raised on Skamader poetry read in primary school and on Białoszewski and Szymborska in high school, echoes of which can likely be found in such novels as: *Hanemann*, *Terminal* or *Dukla*. The traces of those readings are ostentatiously visible in recently published book by Jan Tomkowski (1954) – *Czarny elementarz* [Eng. *The Black ABC*], where school reality is depicted by recourse to the esthetics known from the volume *Hermes, pies i gwiazda*. Reading the miniatures with familiarly sounding titles (Organki, Nalepki, Wycinanki, Racuchy, Bałwan, Czarny balonik) [Eng: Harmonica, Stickers, Cut-outs, Drop scones, Snowman, Black baloon] I certainly recognize the "gadgets" of my generation.

Paraphernalia

It is now high time for elaborating on the title's "paraphernalia", an attractive word amongst the synonyms of things as it is close to matter,[12] yet only rarely employed, not only in Polish. Absent

[12] The trouble with writing on things begins already with the use of the word „rzecz" [Pol.thing] itself which in Polish is not derived from Latin *res* ("material goods", "property", "wealth") but from "rzec" (announce, declare), therefore from "mówić" -speak (in 16th century "rzecz" signified a delivered speech), The second Slavonic name for things, Old Church Slavonic *vešьt* oraz Russian *veščь* also remained in etymological

in many dictionaries it has been granted the fullest definition by Zbigniew Kopaliński in his *Słownik wyrazów obcych* [Eng. Dictionary of foreign words]:

Paraphernalia, personal things, belongings; accessories; equipment; arch. The married woman's personal belongings. Ethym. – Medieval. Latin *parafernalis* (bona) arch. Plural. Neuter. From paraphernalis 'belonging to the wife' from Greek *paráferna* 'wife's property brought beside the dowry see: *par(á) – phérnē* – 'dowry'.[13]

As per the primary Greek model the paraphernalia do not cover the totality of the dowry but only its part, the one "outside", "beyond" or "beside" (gr. *para*) the bride's possessions. The goods excluded from marital exchange, omitted in the prenuptial agreement and therefore not subject to control of the family funding the dowry or of the husband-to-be. While the jewellery constituting the dowry was secured in the treasury, the paraphernalia remained in the intimacy of the boudoir. What was kept within the married woman's reach were objects close to the body, so intimately contiguous as cosmetics, jewellery (rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, brooches) or the ones working as the body's extensions, comple-

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connection (reaching back to ancient Indo-European community) with "speech" which resounds, for instance in Latin *vox* (voice", "word"). The French upon transforming Latin rem in *rien* (signifying "nothing") efficiently "dematerialized its meaning while replacing it with the noun *chose*, which, like Italian *cosa*, derived from Latin *causa* ("cause". "case") is also of abstract character. For that reason the majority of researchers have greater fondness for employing the category of the "object" although Latin *obiectum* also does not refer directly to matter but is tightly connected to the antithetic notion of the subject (*subiectum*). The object thus exists in a necessary relation with the subject, conditioned by it or even made secondary to it. An object recognized by subject can, for instance, be thought, an idea, spirit or another abstract phenomenon, therefore the materiality of the "object" is not obvious, maybe even secondary.

13 W.Kopaliński, *Słownik wyrazów obcych i zwrotów obcojęzycznych* Warszawa 1978, p. 718.

menting it not unlike prostheses (glasses, wigs, canes, fans). Other paraphernalia (bibelots, devotionals, writing devices etc.) literally stayed within reach and it is their "handiness" as much the above-mentioned "prosthetic" quality that is, as Heidegger observed, the fundamental characteristic of things.

What does the phrase "woman's personal belongings" mean today? The first image it conjures: the depths of a woman's purse – a soft asylum for a thousand little items. Another: the humbler contents of a boy's pocket or of a desk drawer; more organized is the traveller's suitcase or a mechanic's toolbag, but all of them are similar sets. The dictionary suggests that the past meaning of the paraphernalia went beyond the feminine realm or even became masculinized to become associated with a more "masculine" or "professional" set of tools described as "accessories", "utensils", and finally with the general and neutral "equipment". These objects organize our environment, accordingly their usefulness and agency increases. Tangibly close and endowed with trust they still could grow distant or rebel as only the familiar can become alien and the ordinary turn out uncanny. This precisely is the dynamics of the paraphernalia, the dialectics of closeness and distance referencing the primary constituents of imagination, conjuring up phantasms on which literature feeds and poetry in particular.

In this light it appears to me that it is precisely the paraphernalia that are the most frequent "protagonists" of Herbert's or Szymborska's poems. Maybe instead of Białoszewski's "things" and Grochowiak's "object"' one should more aptly be talking about their paraphernalia? The notion corresponds perfectly also to Tuwim's choice of props, but also to Pawlikowska or Liebert's affection for objects and likely to the whole "reistic" current in Polish poetry.

But this word expresses even more as it belongs to the "labyrinthine" family of lexemes with the prefix "para" such as: paradigm, parallel, paradox, paraphrase, parameter, paragraph, paranoia or paraclete. This prefix lends every lexeme its quality of "signifying

at once proximity and distance [...] something at once inside a domestic economy and outside it, something simultaneously this side of the boundary line, threshold, or margin, and, at the same time beyond it" as it an „ 'uncanny' double antithetical"[14] one. For this reason out of a multitude of words Jacques Derrida chose and employed *parergon* to deconstruct the binary opposition between the marginal and the central. J. Hillis-Miller, on the other hand, developed a fondness for the word parasite formed from Greek *parasitos* ("near the seed"), which allowed him to reconcile in a "convivial" fashion the antagonistic roles of the host and the guest, feasting harmoniously by the same table.

A similar ambiguity is to be found in "paraphernalia"; some dictionaries hastily identify them with the dowry albeit in the original sense of the word and its correct interpretation it denotes the goods "outside" the marital register; therein one finds the most personal of the bride's belongings, sealed with her touch but not with a formal note, a notion that detaches itself from formalized rules of possession and inheritance. By the same token could the paraphernalia stand for the things freed from all taxonomy?

The paradox of the closest thing, subjected to us and docile in an absolute fashion but at the same time emancipated as outlawed speaks volumes about the poetic paraphernalia. Polish poets, often not even leaving their homes, enclosed in the everyday, amongst the tamed lares and penates still have been able to discover the unfathomable, mysterious or even wondrous dimension of objects in commonplace surroundings; and in this precisely consists the charm of Białoszewski's *The Revolution of Things* and of many other poetic "highs" and "departures".

Inscribed in the poetics of paraphernalia the dialectics of matter and spirit, of the ordinary and the uncanny, works both ways though. One can distinguish that in the reception, academic in

[14] J.Hillis-Miller, *The Critic as Host*, In: *Critical Inquiry*, Vol.3, No. 3 (Spring, 1977).

particular, of the poetic "studies of things". A plethora of poems on things have been written, many of them exquisite, but as time flies the audience and the critics have grown accustomed to things within reach, familiar therefore not requiring additional commentary, more and more often left without mention, slowly falling into oblivion. The poetic paraphernalia shared the fate of "personal belongings" remaining outside the law's jurisdiction, and in this instance – outside the academia, or, to be more precise – literary theory. And when a new, expansive, academically codified discourse of the "turn to things" appeared right before our eyes then our poetic paraphernalia somehow evaporated.

Conclusion

By way of a conclusion I would like to quote at least a fragment of a poem, accordingly I will turn to Zbigniew Herbert's "Revelation":

I shall sit
Immobile
My eyes fixed
Upon the heart of things

A dead star
A black drop of infinity[15]

A surprisingly similar sentence can be found in Graham Harman's dissertation mentioned at the beginning of this article „The *object* is a dark *crystal* veiled in a *private* vacuum"[16]. The same glow in the darkness, atmosphere of mystery, contemplation of the object

[15] Z. Herbert, *The Collected Poems: 1956–1998*, Ecco, 2008.

[16] G. Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, Alresford: John Hunt, 2011, p. 47.

as inspired as it is ironic. One could think that despite the passing time and the difference in genres the *The Quadruple Object* (2011) and *The study of the Object* (1961) have been written by the same person. This impression of proximity and alliance is touching one thus it would be hard to believe that the English philosopher fathomed the nature of things deeper than the Polish poet. Half a century has passed and no progress is yet to be seen. Is it because the contemporary "turn towards things" in Poland moved at a pace so languid that any initial sense of freshness wore off? From the perspective of our familiar poetic experiences this turn could seem but a return, the return of the well-known, therefore not likely to stir emotions. Let me repeat: Polish literary theory seems surprisingly at a loss (or maybe embarrassed) towards the "national" paraphernalia revealed in our mid-20th century poetry. Long ago it was and not so long ago at all. And the storehouse of things once opened in poetry still remains the center of Polish, if not international, "poetry of the object". There will be no greater turn.

РЕЗЮМЕ

НАШИ ПАРАФЕРНАЛИИ. О ПОЛЬСКОМ «ПОВОРОТЕ К ВЕЩАМ»

Автор настоящей статьи воспроизводит «поворот к вещам», начало которого в Польше приходится на рубеж XX и XXI веков. При этом он упоминает главные идеи и их представителей (Олсен, Латур, Харман, Бёме), приводит серию междисциплинарных конференций и публикаций (Познань 1999, Варшава 2002, Люблин 2007, Ольштын 2008), а также важнейшие отечественные издания – книги предшественников данного направления (Брах-Чаина, Сымотюк), авторов культуроведческого мейнстрима (Краевский, Бараньский,

Кветневская) и немногочисленных литературоведов (Чаплиньский, Шалкросс, Зентала). «Поворот к вещам» в отечественном варианте лишь в незначительной степени отражает польский исторический опыт предыдущего столетия – острую нехватку вещей (ущерб от войны, массовые переселения, эмиграция, бедность, тоталитаризм), а также благоприятные для вещей моменты стабилизации (после первой и второй мировых войн, после 1956 и 1989 годов). А между тем литература, в частности поэзия, сосредоточенная на парафернaлиях (то есть, на личных вещах, принадлежностях, аксессуарах), превосходно выражала эту специфику. Это течение интимистской лирики, близкой к повседневной жизни, уходит корнями в начало XX века (Стафф). Оно получило развитие в межвоенный период (скамандриты, Павликовская, Либерт), а его расцвет приходится на период после «оттепели» (Бялошевский, Свен Чахоровский, Херберт, Шимборская). Его продолжали выдающиеся поэты (Гроховяк, Харасымович, Баранчак, Корнхаузер). Литературные критики, сопутствующие этому явлению (Выка, Сандауэр, Прокоп, Лукасевич) вполне осознавали его значимость, а следы поэтического «урока предмета» сохранились еще в прозе последующего поколения (Хвин, Стасюк, Хюлле, Беньчик, Токарчук). По существу «поворот к вещам» в польской культуре совершился еще в середине XX века – надо помнить об этом, если же польский «поворот к материальному» не будет считаться лишь проявлением постколониальной имитации западных направлений.

WOJCIECH KALISZEWSKI

KINGDOMS OF ABANDONED SCRAPS: ZBIGNIEW HERBERT'S SONG OF THINGS DISPENSABLE[1]

Song of things dispensable (*Piosenka o rzeczach zbędnych*) is a sad title. Stirred by it, the imagination tends to evoke images of cellar and attic recesses, the hiding places of objects once deposited at them, like some indifferent tacit graveyards: and many of such objects are crippled, corrupt, worn-and-torn, spurned, and completely useless now. But, amidst those amassed things, things that have been made miserable by time and occurrences, there is a smouldering memory of the other, better, warmer days, the days full of sunlight: and this is, probably, the saddest thing about it. It therefore seems that the silence prevailing there will be split up by an explosion of invocations; a song will erupt, and things congealed and dust-covered will be reanimated. Seen from the perspective of uselessness and rejection, the past seems to be gaining an unusual character, glistening with a glare of heroic time, one that is worth of an epic story. It seems that the rhapsodist has already raised his foot and is about to measure the hexametric rhythm. But the foot, raised, would not fall; the pause is on; there is no-one to create an

[1] See Annex attached.

epic in praise of the virtues of things dispensable: merely a song, a canzone, has been dedicated to them.

The song primarily carries an invitation and incentive for arduous and patient construction of the world with use of things that are small, petty and inconspicuous, always proving necessary and important: and here a cognitive paradox comes into play. Is not Zbigniew Herbert's poem on 'things dispensable', things superfluous or redundant, a lecture on the real values of such things – and so, an axiological treatise? If this is the case – if we really feel that the modest and overly temperate form conceals matters of primary importance to human life – then the *piosenka,* canzone, eventually sounds to us as a canto that saves what has been doomed to inexistence.

Based on a notebook note, Zbigniew Herbert wrote his *Piosenka ...* in January 1951 and had it printed with the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* in October of the same year, dedicating it to Stefan Kisielewski, initially with the annotation reading "To the apostle of things forgotten and ... of objects".[2]

It was already then that the young Herbert displayed the skill of deriving the completeness of meanings of all the elements of the depicted world from a fractional concrete: the technique he later on masterly developed, practised, and rendered so precise in his other poems and essays. This poet infallibly sought the sources of utmost importance from the standpoint of values. One such source was, for instance, the famous pebble that cast light on so many secrets hidden in the structures of cathedral churches. In this sense, the author of the 'chanson' in question is a truly apocalyptic author, one who takes off the black-cloth, unveiling and disclosing things hidden, which tend to be neglected in the daily rush whilst remaining the carrier(s) of principal values that prove independent of ideological tendencies of any sort.

Piosenka o rzeczach zbędnych is composed of two threads; to be

[2] Quote after Z. Herbert, *Utwory rozproszone (rekonesans),* selected and edited by R. Krynicki, Kraków, 2010, p. 365.

more precise, it unfolds alongside two textual lines intertwining into a cohesive whole – each having a peculiar and clear strophic, rhythmic, and metrical pattern. Each of these lines is, moreover, reflected in the graphical record as an arrangement of differing compositional structures. If one is to stick to the rules of 'song' (chanson/canzone) pattern, as indicated in the title, then the poem is found built of two dialogically interrelated refrains, or choruses, which – like the grapevine on a house's façade – enwind the invisible, unrecorded and not plainly apparent core scheme of the story-telling stanzas. They are but an elusive sketch, and yet it seems to us that we can spot, and read, them. Actually, the presence of the stanzas marks open-ended spots, ones that are open to our imagination through the recurring expressive refrains. Herbert keeps these stanzas hidden, as it were, beyond what is written-down. Therefore, what constitutes the core thread of this poem is concealed in its subtext stratum. Hence the crucial importance of the reader's imagination: it namely helps spot and read/interpret what is present and what is absent in the text. This structure, so unusual as it is, triggers a tension that is dramatic also in its genre-related aspect. The choruses are as if the ancient tragedy voices, the *stasima* commenting upon the mute *epeisodia*. In effect, the unstated, or the inarticulate, renders the stated/expressed twice as valuable, poetically as well as morally.

The first line is a sequence of distiches. The predominant [4 + 6] decasyllabic, accompanied by lines of similar span and with even diaeresis segments [4 + 5] or [4 + 7] makes the distiches unfold to a majestic rhythm. Such a type of rhythm is becoming with sapiential utterances[3],

[3] Such connotations of decasyllabic [4 + 6] are confirmed by the tradition of the format's applications in Renaissance theatrical plays and its uses in proverbs; cf. M.R. Mayenowa, *Miejsce 10-zgłoskowca w literaturze XVI w. (Przyczynek do rekonstrukcji systemu)*, in *Europejskie związki literatury polskiej. Praca zbiorowa poświęcona Zofii Szmydtowej*, Warszawa, 1969; reprinted in M.R. Mayenowa, *Studia i rozprawy*, selected and edited by A. Axer and T. Dobrzyńska, Warszawa, 1993.

ones that build a cognitively systematised image of (the) reality:

Najważniejsze są wióry świata	Curls of the world is what matters most
śmiecie, piórka, rozbite lusterka[4]	rubbish, feathers, looking glasses broken

Apart from a lexical and substantial arrangement, the highlights of things of paramount importance with which this poem opens form a clear axiological scheme. Out of the entire universe of beings, Herbert selects things that fill a coherent but, given the context of description of the world, surprising semantic field. Rejected and marginal objects, such that have lost the clarity of their contours and perspicuity of their shapes yielding to the criteria of usefulness and aesthetics, are granted with ennoblement. There is nonetheless something more to the paradoxical concept whereby the offal of the world is added the quality of grandeur and dignity: it is not just poetical extravagance or provocation. It is through this axiological judgment that Herbert discovers a new facet, or form, of the world. The enumeration operates as epiphanical evocations. Truth and beauty are concealed behind this ordinariness or even dreariness and deformity. Most importantly, however, the judgment is the (cognising) subject's primary cognitive conclusion. The one who watches and makes the point – a great absentee, the one of whom we are told by the main non-chorus line of the poem, at bottom (in the Herbert poem, it would be a figure from the unrecorded *epeisodia*) – is a character of the specific dimensions of the time and space, one that lives in the middle of the twentieth century. A character thus singled out and, in parallel, integrated in the real world cognises the structure, the limits and internal divisions of this world. He cognises and judges things based on what surrounds him as well as pursuant to the philosophical and theological perspective that is close to him.

[4] This and all the subsequent quotes from *Piosenka o rzeczach zbędnych* are based on Z. Herbert, *Utwory rozproszone* ... op. cit., p. 87.

All this being said, his world is, above all, one that has been destroyed in a literal sense: it is a world of smashed objects, cities, houses, farmhouses and barns, diffused by the disaster of war: let us bear in mind that Herbert wrote this poem just a few years after World War 2. But this was not the end of the story: the wartime battlefield was seized by the new occupiers who endeavoured to destroy and trample what was left over from the war disaster. The world has lost its internal borders which once enabled depth perception and direction setting. We therefore find the speaking character standing amidst debris and rubble, pieces of trash, some 'looking glasses broken'.

Secondly, the system of primary values had been imbalanced in this world: these are the circumstances determining the reality being represented. It is not some illusionary or fictive reality, let us reaffirm. Things that had once lasted on the fringe of the world and what has been left over at dumping grounds is what has remained of the reality's picture. It is now in these petty and trivial things that things of 'utmost importance' – the linking element between the past and the present – are taking refuge: things real and concrete, forms reachable, giving one a sense of existence. It is in the fine scraps and remains thrown into the perimeters of the world that what offers the world a hope to survive is getting revived. There is considerable power in the weakness of this sphere: a strength that is capable of regenerating the world. Theological implications of such approach stem directly from the Christian belief in the redeeming strength of Christ: there was no coincidence in the fact that He was born surrounded by poor people and wretched objects.

The things mentioned in *Piosenka* ... form a peculiar system whose 'airiness' is most unusual: they are, as it were, deprived of weight and trained in the taming of our concepts or ideas regarding the infiniteness and eternalness of what is ample and reliable. It is a world of mortal and, in this sense, accidental things. Relationships emerge among them, which determine movement in space. For

Herbert, the space is real in the sense in which a human biography attested by sensual sensations can be real. The poet would not mark the space with an ideal, Kantian character – one that is "neither an accident, nor a substance, nor a relation; it is [instead] the subjective [and ideal] condition, necessary because of the nature of the human mind, of coordinating all *sensibilia* ..."[5]. A key of palpability is at work: Herbert tells us what happens in reality; his intention is to feel the real. Yet, this clarity is quite peculiar: the things evoked in the poem appear not to the utmost of their characteristics but through some of their features. The poet confines himself to outlining the objects; their shapes are not encircled with a thick line of detailed description. The objects are chiefly characterised through capturing the relation(ship)s between them, rather than (as it often happens) determination of distinctive features. There are almost no denotations or epithets. The reason might be that the role of adjectives has been severely restricted and challenged by history:

tonie małe w wielkim	the small sinks in the large
tonie piórko w wodzie	feather sinks in water

Within the poem's world, the description of things is reduced to a stylistically simple record of physical laws. These laws are morally indifferent, neither good nor evil. In turn, the response of the watching 'I' is (of necessity) subject to moral evaluation. Hence, the phrase *nie płacz* ('don't cry'), punch-lining the stanza and shifting the emphasis from a description of things to action, is morally marked.

Weeping over what has once been marks our existence and sympathetic love. Also, it signals one's close-in on the abundance of change that marks the world. Changes frighten us; we instinctively stick to the shapes we are familiar with, interact with things not

[5] I. Kant, *On the Form and Principles of the Sensible and the Intelligible World*, 3, 14, 5.

subject to nothingness. Whilst crying, we labour under a delusion that we can reinstate unity to what has been demolished. We grief over the bygone world and ourselves-of-the-past. The true life, however – the one that is light-struck with the truth of the temporality and eternity – calls for going beyond this borderline of security. And, however paradoxical this may sound, it fulfils its potential in the unfulfilled. The phrase 'don't cry' opens a future to us, calls for action, demands that things weak and powerless be loved. And it is at this very moment, as if from the opposite side of the stage, that we can hear the other chorus, singing the refrain "*Najważniejsze są niespełnienia*" ('Things unfulfilled is what weighs the most'). Non-fulfilment is expectation, and belief in a future tense. It teaches one patience and humility, and perseverance in a true love. Whatever has not imprinted its footprints in matter/materiality, carved no signs in it, remains a promise and a hope for continuance. Seen as a lack of final closing or a potential status, non-fulfilment is close to a spiritual matrix anything that lives draws from. But, on the other hand, early annihilation of hope, dispersion, destructive impact on what is, is also a lack of fulfilment. Then, non-fulfilment stands for a return from a disaster to the earlier condition; to the source. The 'shadows from a dried well' glancing at us seem to be pointing to the well, telling a story of it. The 'shadows' can legitimately expect our assistance. It is our moral duty to listen to this account. We are now at the poem's culminating moment. The planes of worlds are intersecting at this point; the living and the dead, landscapes of yore and of the present, cross their paths. Although, as the voice of the second chorus suggests, "shadows will not blossom // the dead shall not return", the past is crying to us, and becomes tangible. The space above this world is not empty. Those who have departed from here, from the visibility and temporality, are now "soughing in heaven's shell". Opening a metaphysical perspective, the metaphor is indicative of the extent to which our senses are restricted. 'Soughing' is an incomprehensible signal, alien to our perception; and so

it usually tends to be rejected. Soughing, rustling, humming seems redundant to us. And wrong we are, for this is an essential sign of presence and a message that expects to be accepted and comprehended. Therefore what we perceive as uncompleted/incomplete, crippled, and of no importance, becomes axiologically renewed in Herbert's poem. The locution 'don't cry' is, let us repeat, a call for taking action, which is to save our world from nothingness, or nihility; it encourages one to love things helpless. What it needs is a morally keen audition and eyesight; what we have to do is see and hear. Albeit

uśmiechy nie zbawią	smiles can redeem no-one
rzęsy nie wstrzymają	the lashes won't defer
– smutku nie odpędzą	– or drive sadness away

it is things that are petty, transient and vulnerable, details and fragments that comprise and conceal what lasts permanently. Whilst it is not easy to control emotion, the effort eventually brings solace and helps understand the challenge being faced. Failed fulfilment of one's potential cannot give a reason for mockery: it is supposed, instead, to lead to a creative refurbishment of the forms of the world. This is the task Herbert poses to the poem's character/speaking 'I'.

The kingdoms of superfluous things are, actually, *real* kingdoms where one can get to know the reality. Things perishing in the past and passing time, losing their perspicuous characteristics; things fading out and thus superfluous, unneeded, were perceived by Herbert as carrying a chance for (a) future. The kingdoms of things dispensable are, therefore, not merely a cemetery we visit out of our sentimental attachment to the past: instead, they are the source of things living. And this marks the very difference in comprehending and creating an image of the world. The "rubbish, feathers, looking glasses broken", enumerated and repeated in the first and in the last stanza, build an allegorical scheme that hides an image of the past. Yet, this allegory is extremely reserved and deli-

cate, veiling what it hides like a transparent wrapper. The literal and the allegorical meaning of the evoked objects are combined and, ultimately, consolidates into a semantic unity within the poem's language. 'Broken looking glasses' are useless objects and may cause sorrow, but they also mark a smashed image, a catastrophe of the order, and then they must trigger a much deeper and more serious reflexion. The allegorical reading and understanding of the sense, or meaning, of 'things dispensable' is the key to *Piosenka* ... It is in this light that the principle of continuity of the world, so important to Herbert, surfaces. Standing in defence of this continuity is the supreme moral obligation, set by the poet to the poem's 'I'. Looking behind oneself, glancing into a 'dried well', noticing some 'awkward smiles' is, after all, nothing else than 'touching the reality' to the fullest; an active and creative furbishing of its forms and shapes. It is a search for what is deep and remains shrouded in mystery.[6] It is man's duty to complete and fulfil, here on this earth, what has not been completed/fulfilled. Herbert comprehended the creative process, one that completes the labour of creation, as 'touching the reality' in a peculiar manner. As he put it elsewhere, "Paracelsus once said that the creation of the world by God has remained uncompleted and that man had been constituted in order to finish the creative effort. This is a most beautiful humanistic confession."[7] The poet concludes this point with the most apt conviction which sheds appropriate light on the terrene condition of humans *and* things: "The sense of fragility and faintness of human life would perhaps seem less depressing if these be made part of the

[6] For a symbolic meaning of *well*, see D. Forstner, *Die Welt der christlichen Symbole* [The World of Christian Symbols], (1st ed. Innsbruck, 1967) [Polish ed.: eadem, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej*, Warszawa 1990, p. 67]; W. Kopaliński, STUDNIA, entry in idem, *Słownik symboli*, Warszawa 1990, p. 405.

[7] Z. Herbert, *Dotknąć rzeczywistości*, in idem, *Utwory rozproszone...*, op. cit., p. 340.

chain of history – and history is communication of the belief in the purposefulness of efforts and strivings. Even awe will then become nothing else but calling for a hope."[8]

In Herbert, minor things associate with what is of utmost importance in the scale of values. These associations occur as things are part of the Providence's design. After the poet's death, in 2000 the literary quarterly *Zeszyty Literackie* published his *Breviarz. Drobiazgi* [A Breviary. Odds and Ends], which gave voice to a late (written 1997) but constant message: "Be praised, o Lord, for that thou hast so established that things minor, such as the capillary vessels, merge with things important, and that I finally do not know myself how to classify my own left wounded leg, for the leg is bothersome, but without it I would not have stopped, every now and then, by the graves of my fallen mates, so that I might take a rest, and muse."[9] Such is the role of things belonging to the kingdom of what is slight and forgotten. Herbert, in his both ironical and allegorical facet, reinstates the appropriate measures to our memory and our deeds. The movement of things dispensable is a movement toward our conscience. It is a movement of things that bring to the surface a world that has been condemned to oblivion. Feathers, trash, and other such stuff are among these things – and so are mute witnesses to things dramatic:

Tylko guziki nieugięte

przetrwały śmierć świadkowie zbrodni

z głębin wychodzą na powierzchnię

jedyny pomnik na ich grobie[10]

Only buttons witnesses
to the crime
proved unyielding outlasted
death
and as sole memorial
on the grave
rise up from the depths
of the earth

8 Z. Herbert, ibidem, p. 340.
9 Z. Herbert, ibidem, p. 303.
10 Z . Herbert, *Guziki,* in idem, *Rovigo,* Wrocław, 1992, p. 21.

Herbert dialogued with the past by intermediation of objects like these: petty, not infrequently abandoned, scraps. He would collect them – not in the way an antiquary or collector would do: taking such objects and holding them in his hand, he turned into a different person, one that starts everything from scratch. As he said, of importance for him was "... touching the stones, whereon half-blurred records of the old vicissitudes remained; evoking the shadows, so they could cherish our compassionating ..."[11]. What he meant by that was joining the ranks of those who have once been. A guardian of minor things, Herbert was a poet of metonymy. Using particles and fragments, he would recognise the once-lost whole and reconstruct its sense/meaning.

An inconspicuous poem, composed, as it were, of refrains only, *Piosenka o rzeczach zbędnych* has finally sounded to us like a powerful canto. Its tacit sounds seem to produce pure and sonorous tones – the sounds of hope in the kingdoms of abandoned scraps.

ANNEX

Zbigniew Herbert

Piosenka o rzeczach zbędnych	**Song of things dispensable**
Stefanowi Kisielewskiemu	*To Stefan Kisielewski*
Najważniejsze są wióry świata	Curls of the world is what matters most
śmiecie, piórka, rozbite lusterka	rubbish, feathers, looking glasses broken
tonie małe w wielkim	the small sinks in the large
tonie piórko w wodzie	feather sinks in water

[11] Z. Herbert, *Dotknąć rzeczywistości,* ibidem.

– nie płacz
Najważniejsze są niespełnienia

kąty, zmarli, cienie z wyschłej studni
cienie nie zakwitną
zmarli nie powrócą
– szumią w nieba muszli
Najważniejsze są niezdarne uśmiechy
pożegnalna pieszczota i rzęsy
uśmiechy nie zbawią
rzęsy nie wstrzymają
– smutku nie odpędzą
śmiecie, piórka, rozbite lusterka
najważniejsze i niepotrzebne

– don't cry
Things unfulfilled is what weighs the most

corners, the dead, shadows from a dried well
shadows will not blossom
the dead shall not return
– they sough in heaven's shell
Awkward smiles those matter the most all the same
farewell-bidding caress and eye-lashes
smiles can redeem no-one
the lashes won't defer
– or drive sadness away
rubbish, feathers, looking glasses broken
things primary things dispensable

РЕЗЮМЕ

ЦАРСТВА ОСТАВЛЕННЫХ МЕЛОЧЕЙ - *PIOSENKA O RZECZACH ZBĘDNYCH* (ПЕСЕНКА О ЛИШНИХ ВЕЩАХ) ЗБИГНЕВА ХЕРБЕРТА

В статье проводится анализ стихотворения Збигнева Херберта *Piosenka o rzeczach zbędnych* (рус. *Песенка о лишних вещах*). Поэт называет мелкие, обычные предметы, зачастую поломанные, уничтоженные, выброшенные, создавая из них сеть отношениий, которые подталкивают к размышлениям о ценностях, присутствующих в нашей жизни. В понимании Херберта, именно такие предметы и являются настоящими следами существования. В том, что хрупко, что выброшено, нередко скрывается большая сила, способная возродить нашу жизнь и вызвать нравственное потрясение.

Стихотворение Херберта, написанное простым и ясным языком, представляет собой философский, но при этом глубоко лирический жанр поэзии. Для поэта предметы – это не только доказательство реального существования мира, но и, что отмечается в статье, источник человеческих эмоций и переживаний.

JOANNA ADAMOWSKA

"LOOKING AT THE SUNFLOWERS, THINKING OF THE ROOTS". TADEUSZ RÓŻEWICZ FACES VINCENT VAN GOGH'S PAINTINGS

Vincent van Gogh was one of Tadeusz Różewicz's favourite painters. In a conversation with Stanisław Bereś, the poet mentioned van Gogh among his beloved visual artists: Vermeer, Bosch, Breughel, Rembrandt, and Hals[1]. Interviewed by Adam Czerniawski, Różewicz remarks he considers van Gogh's biography much unusual, regarding him as one of the 'secular saints' in culture, comparable in this respect to Simone Weil, Ludwig Wittgenstein, or Franz Kafka.[2] Różewicz's fascination with van Gogh's art was reportedly incited by his reading of the Dutch painter's *Letters to His Brother*, a volume the Polish poet happened to get hold of right after the war. These letters appeared as a painful testimony of the painter's tragic vicissitudes and inestimable source of knowledge on

[1] Stanisław Bereś and Joanna Kiernicka, *Poeta po końcu świata*, in J. Stolarczyk (ed.), *Wbrew sobie. Rozmowy z Tadeuszem Różewiczem* [conversations with T.R.], Wrocław, 2011, p. 340.

[2] *Tadeusz Różewicz w rozmowie z Adamem Czerniawskim* [T.R. talks to A.C.], in *Wbrew sobie* ..., op. cit. p. 115.

his artistic consciousness. As testified by Różewicz's literary output, he perceived the great Dutch painter's works as strictly interrelated with his biography, which he found evoked throughout with gravity, with no attempt whatsoever at a belittling mythologisation. A passage from Różewicz's prose piece *Strawiony* essentially renders his attitude toward van Gogh: "I visited a museum of Modern Art ...saw there a painting by Francis Bacon [...] it was a wayfarer... he walked down a cart track, at sunset... Bacon has repainted that wayfarer, who was van Gogh... some yellows and reds were pouring out of him, he has broken down, spilled across the surface... simply, a worse picture was made [...] if his great (according to our contemporary concepts) painter tries to make images out of his own nervous system, he should shun using van Gogh in such endeavours... for that beggar and martyr... has indeed processed himself into paintings... may Bacon... process his beloved Velazquez instead... the one who has a nervous system and a painting technique of the sort that it may feed you, it may be decomposed... but, 'hands off' Van Gogh! He has done everything as far as decomposition is concerned... may Bacon... be prevented from messing around with van Gogh's ear! He has got, after all, so many old photographs, newspapers, clippings... my annoyance was great... for I do consider Bacon one of the greatest among our contemporary painters"[3].

And this is not Różewicz's first-ever 'argument' against another artist over a specified work of van Gogh. Watching carefully each of the paintings of his beloved artist, the poet tends to polemicise with some eminent commentators of these works. Characteristically, demanding that the meaning of each of these works be 'appropriately' interpreted, Różewicz interprets them in the context of his own literary ideas and axiological convictions.[4] Struggling for van Gogh, he struggles for his own vision of art.

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[3] T. Różewicz, *Strawiony*, in idem, *Proza 2*, Wrocław, 2004, p. 280.

[4] Cf. A. Skrendo, *Tadeusz Różewicz i granice literatury. Poetyka i etyka transgresji*, Kraków, 2002, pp. 244–5.

The poem entitled *Korzenie* [The Roots], from the volume *Zielona róża* can be considered as an instance of such controversy, with the speaking 'I' arguing his point. This piece expressly shows the ways in which the poet reads the senses or meanings behind the great works of painting, and how he values and re-contextualises them, 'looking at himself' in them as a creative artist.

Korzenie	**The Roots**
Światłoczuli	The aesthetes
Esteci	Photosensitive
o jednym oku	single-eyed
mówiąc van Gogh	saying van Gogh
malują słońca	paint the suns
potrącają słowem	poke a bough of blooming
gałązkę kwitnącego migdału	almond with the word
widzę go w nocy	I can see him in the night
widzę go	I can see him
w Borinage	in Borinage
pod ziemią	under the ground
ogień	fire
pożera ludzi	devouring the people
z oczami	with the eyes
z bijącym sercem	with the heart beating
z językiem	with the tongue
w zamurowanym	inside the immured
chodniku kłębi się	pavement he swirls
niebo jest wysoko	the sky is high up
wznosi się wyżej	soaring higher
kret bez oka	an eyeless mole
van Gogh	van Gogh
dotyka światła	touches the light

patrząc na słoneczniki	watching the sunflowers
myślę o korzeniach	I think about the roots
pogrzebane w ziemi	buried inside the ground
prą do słońca	they push they way up to the sun
nie znają	knowing no
światła	light
korony	crown
Kiedy w środku nocy	When in the midst of the night
obcy człowiek	an alien man
powiedział mi	greeted me
dzień dobry	good day
zobaczyłem go	then I saw him

[1959][5]

This enigmatic text constitutes an episode in Tadeusz Różewicz's dispute with the poet Julian Przyboś. The conflict between the 'master' and his 'disciple', who was growing autonomous, intensified, as is known, in the late 1950s and finally led to a hasty breakup of their mutually friendly relationship. Since the details of this dispute have been quite extensively described[6], I shall now limit myself to recalling the findings that characterise the essence behind it in a lapidary manner.

"This is an antagonism that is not quite surprising, in fact Jacek Łukasiewicz wrote in 1972. "What we encounter about Przyboś and Różewicz is, after all, two extremely differing stances with respect to poetry, its potential and its tasks; and, two extremely different conclusions stemming from the recognition of an ethical function of poetic action. ... For Różewicz, poetry h

5 T. Różewicz, *Poezja 2*, Wrocław, 2006, pp. 194–5.

6 For a critical survey of the research state-of-play, see the article A. Skrendo, 'Przyboś i Różewicz. Paralela', in idem, *Poezja modernizm Interpretacje*, Kraków, 2005, pp. 140–74.

all too often been a nice piece of lies, this not having prevented it from becoming an enemy of the truth: politicians tend to perfidiously abuse these this falsehood (Goebbels recommended his propagandists to make use of 'poetical truth'). Poetry has, perhaps, proved unable to design a new visage of the world, for it was not born to a new and beautiful world but, instead, surrounded by a dilapidating and rotting civilisation. A poet's work is done in vain, since poetry tends to get distorted together with the civilisation and the olds forms of culture that have lost their cohesiveness"[7].

Andrzej Skrendo warns us, however, against seeing the reciprocal relation between Przyboś and Różewicz as a mutual opposition: such simplifying juxtaposition ought rather to be replaced with pondering on the poets' mutual co-/interdependency.[8]

Let us now take a look at the discussion Różewicz has with Przyboś in the poem *Korzenie*. The first stanza offers a handful of readable references to the former's utterances on van Gogh. Przyboś had penned a foreword to the first edition of Władysław Strzemiński's treatise *Teoria widzenia* [Theory of Vision], published in 1958 in Krakow[9]. In his analysis of Strzemiński's output as a visual artist, Przyboś emphasises that Strzemiński's post-unistic works, meant and conceived to synthesise any and all elements of seeing/vision, and focused on the problem of light and colour, prove to be this artist's most exploratory, revelatory and original achievement. Very much like van Gogh, the Polish artist painted the sun, but – as opposed to the 'naïve', in Przyboś's view, likenesses

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[7] J. Łukasiewicz, 'Autokomentarz Różewicza', *Odra*, 1972, no. 1, p. 101 (quoted after A. Skrendo, 'Przyboś i Różewicz ...', op. cit., pp. 144–5 [footnote]).

[8] A. Skrendo, Przyboś i Różewicz ...', op. cit., pp. 140, 141, 142.

[9] On Różewicz's reception of Strzemiński's *Teoria widzenia*, cf. T. Dąbrowski, 'Fragmentaryczne widzenie', *Twórczość*, 2004, no. 10, pp. 78–85; R. Cieślak, *Widzenie Różewicza*, Warszawa, 2013, pp. 100–113.

of yellow spheres whirling in the Dutch artists' pictures, the sunny paintings of Strzemiński were a 'rational' (or 'comprehending') implementation of the 'frantic daydream' shared by painters. For the author of the treatise on seeing and vision "painted not an image, but an **afterimage**, of the sun; he rendered the colour of the interior of the eye that has looked at the sun. ... These paintings are like protuberances of colours, like explosions of light, colours and forms, uncongealed in a *fuite en avant*. ... There is nothing of the like sort not only in Polish painting but also in the modern painting art overall."[10]

In his reminiscence of Julian Przyboś, the painter Jerzy Tchórzewski stresses that some artistic loves transformed this poet's way of seeing, sometimes not quite appropriately: Przyboś "would often accept an image prompted by his own imagination, moved by some idea, as the testimony of his eyes"[11].

Tchórzewski mentions the Przyboś's fascination with Strzemiński as an example of such deformed reception, and quotes a fragment of his talk with this author, which they had in the latter's apartment, in presence of Tadeusz Różewicz:

"'Just look, Jerzy, what a light is beaming out of this picture, making you squint. It is as if you'd be looking at the sun.'

It was not making you squint, no light beamed out of this picture; but it did beam in the poet's imagination, moved by the impudent idea that was at the root of Strzemiński's solaristic paintings, this one probably being a draft sketch used in making one of them. I could not squint myself, even as a favour, for I would've had a gig-

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10 J. Przyboś, *Przedmowa do pierwszego wydania. Nowatorstwo Władysława Strzemińskiego* [Introduction to the first edition. Strzemiński the innovative artist], in W. Strzemiński, *Teoria widzenia*, Kraków 1974, pp. 10–11.

11 J. Tchórzewski, 'Człowiek, który widział w nocy', in J. Sławiński (ed.), *Wspomnienia o Julianie Przybosiu* [a book of recollections on Przyboś], Warszawa, 1976, pp. 222, 223.

gle of my own; so I moved my sight toward a landscape hanging at the other place.

'And how about this picture?', I asked.

'This one is one of my wife's, but it is her schooldays piece.'

There was more light to that one. This is what I thought, but did not dare confess. The light was, in any case, mild and did not intend to glare the spectator; nor was it meant to be the central character at all."[12]

In Różewicz's *Kartki wydarte z „dziennika gliwickiego"*, we can find a record of a similar conversation between the author and J. Przyboś, with the two gentlemen talking to each other in front of a Henryk Stażewski painting at the Contemporary Art Exhibition in Warsaw's Zachęta gallery.[13]

There is no coincidence about the fact that the discussions with Przyboś have been recorded by Różewicz and Tchórzewski, both of whom belonged to the generation of the 1920s, called the 'Columbuses'. As Tchórzewski emphasised in his memoir, his generation tried to face the tragic experience of their time, "stand the encounter with the night, which means, exhaust the gloom down to the very bottom, without illumining it."[14] It was the opposite with Przyboś who "would not acknowledge of" the darkness, and endeavoured to "illuminate through" that night with "the strength of his sight".[15] This difference in the attitudes towards the reality and art caused the mutual misapprehension between the artists, inciting later on the conflict between Różewicz and Przyboś. The poem *Korzenie* also testifies to such lack of conflux: one finds there another reference to Przyboś's words – specifically, to his poem en-

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12 Ibidem.

13 T. Różewicz, *Kartki wydarte z „dziennika gliwickiego"*, in idem, *Proza 3*, Wroclaw, 2004, p. 343.

14 J. Tchórzewski, 'Człowiek, który widział ...', op. cit., p. 221.

15 Ibidem.

titled *Cztery strony* (from the book *Równanie serca*, 1938): "With the bough of blooming almond Vincent van Gogh restored my sight over the world".[16]

As is known, in the years 1888–90, van Gogh many a time painted blossoming trees. Coming after the artistically unproductive and psychically destructive winter season, they marked a symbol of reviving hope for the painter. One of the paintings, featuring boughs of almond tree in bloom set against azure sky, intended as a gift for the painter's newborn nephew, was – as its maker reassured – one of his serenest works, elaborated "the most patiently and in the best manner, with more tranquillity and sureness of the hand"[17].

Therefore, the interpretation of van Gogh's output as proposed by Przyboś triggered Różewicz's objection: he challenged the argument, put forth in the introduction to *Teoria widzenia*, that the solar images were (allegedly) naïve, as well as the simplified and selective reception of the painter's works proposed in *Cztery strony*, where only the most 'optimistic' paintings (as Różewicz would have put it) were taken into consideration.

In *Korzenie*, Różewicz contraposes the superficial view of Przyboś with his own view of the famous *Sunflowers* – as a work from the highlighted colours period, the years marked with an explosion of the painter's talent and the moment of his peaking potential under the sun of the South.[18] Contemplation of van Gogh's one of the most popular paintings, which moreover epitomises this artist's posthumous achievement in artistic and commercial terms, and which has been trivialised by innumerable treatments and

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16 J. Przyboś, *Cztery strony*, in idem, *Wiersze zebrane*, Warszawa, 1959, p. 141.

17 V. van Gogh, *Listy do brata* [Letters to his brother], transl. by J. Guze and M. Chełkowski, Warszawa, 2002, p. 492.

18 Van Gogh has several 'sunflower paintings' to his credit; Różewicz does not specify which piece of the cycle he actually means.

popular reproductions or replicas, arouses in the poem's persona a thought about another work – most probably, a 1882 pencil sketch known as *The Roots in a Sandy Ground* ("watching the sunflowers // I think about the roots"). The drawing portrays a black tree with its boughs twisted and its roots protruding above the sandy ground. Similarly to the drawing *Sorrow*, featuring a naked, sorrow-imbued figure of Sien, Vincent's then-mistress, *The Roots in a Sandy Ground* was designed to depict hardships of life and struggling with adversities. 'Roots' reappeared as a motif in the artist's works on a few occasions afterwards.[19] Różewicz uses this motif, of which the painter was fond, to present his own interpretation of the sources of van Gogh's works, and the artistic power of his paintings. He evokes a noted episode in the painter's biography: before he discovered his actual calling, Vincent worked at the Borinage coalfield as a missionary. In spite of his earlier failed attempt to undertake theological study, the young van Gogh's daydream of evangelising the most indigent could come true with this activity. He pursued this task in his peculiar way: passionately, uncompromisingly, which his superiors found unsuitable and overeager. To act efficiently and really bring help, Vincent started living like a miner: he quit his comfortable lodgings, distributed his modest possessions amongst the poor, and actively participated in the everyday, extremely hard existence of the coalmen. He would descend into the mine to get a first-hand experience of the miners' labour. He tended the wounded after a fatal explosion, and aided their families. He happened to save the life of a miner who was given no chance to survive by his doctors: Vincent was with him at his bedside for several weeks and nursed him. These personal experiences Vincent had gained through his 'great university of poverty', as he described his time at Borinage, formed, in Różewicz's opinion, a hidden source of his later creative work as a painter.[20] This would hold true not only for van Gogh's

[19] One of them being *Tree Roots*, one of the artist's last paintings (1890).

[20] Cf. van Gogh, *Listy do brata*, op. cit., pp. 83, 93–4.

depictions of peasants and workers, the examples being *The Potat Eaters* or the drawings of poor alleyways of the Hague, but also th sun-imbued paintings made when in Arles. Death, suffering, com passion: these are the Różewiczian 'roots' of van Gogh's creativ work – and, the 'roots' of Różewicz's own poetry. *The Roots* gives u a number of signals attesting that when talking about the famou painter, the poet says things about himself; this affinity become patent especially in the last, somewhat enigmatic, stanza:

Kiedy w środku nocy	When in the midst of the night
obcy człowiek	an alien man
powiedział mi	greeted me
dzień dobry	good day
przeczułem go[21]	then I presaged him

In the later versions of this poem, Różewicz altered the fina phrase: 'then I presaged him' into 'then I saw him'. This modifica tion helps reinforce and underline the act of cognition, of gainin an insight into the essence of the other (creative) human being Perhaps it is all about the moment of unexpected and astonishin encounter of the poet with the great painter; the while in which sense of community is discovered, based upon a similar ethical an artistic sensitivity. The depiction applied in the poem suggests tha its author identifies a common ground between the Borinage expe rience and his own wartime trauma. The image of perishing miner recalls the pit/grave metaphor which reoccurs in Różewicz's verse In his poem *Obietnica* (in the volume *Czas który idzie*), the 'I' say of himself: "I a man beaten up in that war ... I a pit full of reminis cences // one lying upon the other"[22]. The death pits into which th Nazis threw the corpses of humans they had killed is the hard exis

[21] T. Różewicz, *Korzenie*, in idem, *Zielona róża. Kartoteka*, Warszaw 1961, p. 18.

[22] Idem, *Poezja. 1*, Wrocław, 2005, p. 280.

tential fact at the root of this metaphor. The poet had once found a photograph of one such site by the body of a killed German gendarme; it was reproduced in an illustrated monograph of the poet, penned by Zbigniew Majchrowski.[23] The picture of pit/grave is associated in many of Różewicz's texts with the motifs of mole, roots, grains or seeds sprouting/dying back atrophying in the ground:

[...] we mnie zebrały się słowa	[...] in me words have gathered
Niewypowiedziane	Unutterable
którym nie nadano kształtu	that have been given no shape
Och jak kiełkuje jak rośnie we mnie	Oh how it is sprouting growing inside me
milczące ziarno	a tacit seed
umarłych owoców	of dead fruits
idzie do światła	goes to the light
przebija ślepą glinę	pierces through a blind clay
mojego ciała	of my body
przełamuje zdrewniały język	breaks my ligneous tongue
Są nim słowa	It is formed of words
dziesięciu młodych poetów	of the ten young poets
którzy zginęli w Warszawie [...]	who perished in Warsaw [...]
Jest w nim szept	There is whisper in it
młodych dziewczyn	of the young missies
które nie będą tańczyły	who will not be dancing
w majową noc	in the night of May
pod koronami drzew	under the trees' crowns
dziewczyn	missies
których drobne kości	whose tiny bones
i małe czaszki milczą w ziemi	and small skulls hold their tongues in the ground

1954[24]

[23] Cf. Z. Majchrowski, *Różewicz*, Wrocław, 2002, p. 109.

[24] T. Różewicz, *Równina*, in: idem, *Poezja. 1*, op. cit., pp. 364–5.

Nasze pomniki	Our monuments
są dwuznaczne	are ambiguous
mają kształt dołu	they are shaped like a pit
nasze pomniki	our monuments
mają kształt	are shaped
łzy	like a tear
nasze pomniki	moles
budował pod ziemią	built our monuments
kret	under the earth
nasze pomniki	our monuments
mają kształt dymu	are shaped like smoke
idą prosto do nieba	they go straight to heaven[25]
1958[26]	

In another poem, *Nad wyraz*, Różewicz terms poet's labour 'sunless' (*bezsłoneczna praca*)[27]; in *Opowiadanie dydaktyczne*, he addresses Andrzej Wróblewski, the departed painter, and himself at the same time, with the phrase '[you] blind mole' (*ślepy krecie*)[28]. Van Gogh, the 'eyeless mole', is similarly described in *Korzenie*.

The image of poet/artist-mole has in all probability been derived from two sources, one of them being Czesław Miłosz's known poem *Biedny chrześcijanin patrzy na getto* [A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto], featuring an image of mole – guardian of the dead:

Powoli, drążąc tunel, posuwa się strażnik-kret
Z małą czerwoną latarką przypiętą na czole.
Dotyka ciał pogrzebanych, liczy, przedziera się dalej,
Rozróżnia ludzki popiół po tęczującym oparze,
Popiół każdego człowieka po innej barwie tęczy.[29]

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[25] T. Różewicz, *Selected Poems*, transl. by Adam Czerniawski, with an Afterword by Tom Paulin and John Osborne, Kraków, 1997, p. 73.

[26] Idem, *Pomniki*, in idem, *Poezja. 2*, Wrocław, 2006, p. 147.

[27] Idem, *Nad wyraz*, in idem, *Poezja. 1*, op. cit., p. 405.

[28] Idem, *Opowiadanie dydaktyczne*, in idem, *Poezja, 2*, op. cit., p. 295.

[29] C. Miłosz, *Wiersze wszystkie* [collected poems], Kraków, 2015, p. 224

Slowly, boring a tunnel, a guardian mole makes his way,
With a small red lamp fastened to his forehead.
He touches buried bodies, counts them, pushes on,
He distinguishes human ashes by their luminous vapour,
The ashes of each man by a different part
of the spectrum.[30]

Importantly, in one of his texts on Różewicz, Miłosz takes up the motif and describes him thus:

ryje w ciemnej ziemi	he ploughs through the dark earth
jest łopatą i zranionym	he is a shovel and a mole hurt
przez łopatę kretem[31]	by the shovel

A somewhat different but no less essential aspect of the 'mole' symbolism is exploited by Różewicz in his pieces focused on Franz Kafka. Directly borrowed from Kafka's short story *Der Bau* [The Burrow], the mole in Różewicz's *Pułapka* is a metaphor of artist, his solitary life, isolation, inability to build interpersonal relation(ship)s; his fears, neuroses; and, lastly, his mystery that resists straightforward interpretation.[32]

The use in the poem *Korzenie* of the description 'mole' with regard to van Gogh seemingly covers both of these aspects. Van Gogh the eyeless mole is an artist who painted not what he 'saw' but rather, what he managed to 'touch', painfully experience with his whole self. With the expressionistic representation, the reference to the

[30] Translated by Czesław Miłosz [the English version accessible at various websites].

[31] Ibidem, p. 1216. In *Elegia. Pamięci Cz. M.*, an elegy written after Miłosz's death, Różewicz facetiously and polemically refers to the one-sided, and not completely true, characterisation proposed by the Nobel Prize-winning poet.

[32] Cf. T. Różewicz, *Dramat. 3*, Wrocław, 2005, pp. 290–1; and, idem, *Dramat. 2*, Wrocław, 2005, pp. 138–9.

elements in van Gogh's biography that have been mythologised by the mass culture bears no trace of naïve sentimentalism. Contrary to Przyboś and Strzemiński, those 'photosensitive single-eyed' aesthetes (being one-eyed is, in this case, a metaphor of incomplete and limited seeing – as expressed, in Różewicz's view, in their respective 'solar' works of art), the van Gogh by Różewicz is an artist blinded by suffering; a painter whose creative work 'sprouts' out of his borderline experience; 'rooted' in the existential hardships, it turns into an expression of compassion. His artistic intransigency, stemming from an ethically radical stance, causes moreover that Różewicz's van Gogh is a Kafkian mole: solitary, misunderstood, concentrated on his own vision rather than the life-'as-it-is', in search of his own truth in unattractive places and in dark recesses of his soul. The speaking 'I' may experience an encounter with the great artist, 'presage' and 'see' him –which means, understand him: this being potentially possible as he considers himself an author having similar, existential and artistic, 'roots'.

РЕЗЮМЕ

«... СМОТРЯ НА ПОДСОЛНУХИ, ДУМАЯ О КОРНЯХ» КАРТИНА ВИНСЕНТА ВАН ГОГА В ВОСПРИЯТИИ ТАДЕУША РУЖЕВИЧА

В статье представлено увлечение Тадеуша Ружевича биографией и творчеством Винсента Ван Гога. Автор проводит анализ поэтических текстов, посвященных конкретным картинам – то есть, *Подсолнухам* и *Башмакам*, а также описывает споры между Ружевичем и известными до тех пор знаменитыми толкователями произведений великого голландца: Юлианом Пшибосем, Владиславом Стрже-

миньским, Мартином Хайдеггером, Мейером Шапиро и Жаком Деррида. Ружевич, останавливаясь перед отдельными картинами своего любимого художника, обычно входит в полемику с их выдающимися комментаторами. Наряду с этим поэт, требуя «адекватного» прочтения смысла творчества художника, сам объясняет его в контексте собственных литературных идей и аксиологических убеждений. Важное послание текстов Ружевича на тему картин Ван Гога – показать существенность интеллектуального и одновременно с тем этического вызова, каким и является интерпретация произведения искусства.

ANGEL V. ANGELOV

„AUF EINE LAMPE" VON EDUARD MÖRIKE: AUTONOMITÄT UND HETEROGENITÄT DER „KLASSISCHEN"

Eduard Mörikes Gedicht „Auf eine Lampe" ist das am häufigsten besprochene seines gesamten lyrischen Werkes, worauf sich aus der Bibliographie zu den kritischen Ausgaben seiner Werke schließen lässt. Aufgrund des Disputes, der mit einem Brief Martin Heideggers an Emil Staiger[1] begann, hat „Auf eine Lampe" eine zusätzliche kulturhistorische Signifikanz erlangt und ist in die Geschichte der Literaturwissenschaft der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts eingegangen. Die Geschichte der Interpretationen dieser Verse könnte im Kleinen zeigen, wie sich in den vergangenen sechzig Jahren die Herangehensweisen sowohl an den lyrischen Text, als auch an die deutsche Literaturgeschichte verändert haben[2]. Bis in die achtziger Jahre war man vor allem bestrebt, die poetischen Be-

[1] Später schlossen sich zunächst der stets zu Polemiken aufgelegte Leo Spitzer an, kurz darauf I. Appelbaum-Graham und dann erneut Spitzer, W. Schneider, W. von Nordheim, H. Politzer, S. Burckhard und R. Guardini – alle in den 1950er Jahren.

[2] So schrieb auch A. Holschuh: „Die gesamte Forschung zu diesem Gedicht aufzuarbeiten, bedürfte es einer Monographie." (Holschuh, *Wem leuchtet*, 576).

sonderheiten des Gedichtes herauszuarbeiten, wie auch seine Zusammenhänge mit anderen Werken der Dichtkunst – von Mörike selbst, von Goethe, Schiller, Keats und hellenistischen Dichtern. Seit Beginn der neunziger Jahre rückt das Augenmerk mehr in Richtung der sozialen Funktion des Bildes der Lampe sowie in Richtung des Verhältnisses zwischen der Lampe und der Stimme, die die Verse spricht. Die wesentliche Änderung besteht jedoch nicht darin, dass neue Deutungen angeboten werden, sondern in der sozialkritischen Analyse der Herangehensweisen Staigers, Heideggers und Spitzers an das Gedicht. (Lindenberger, *Ideology*, 398–408)

Im ersten Teil des hier folgenden Textes werde ich einige Interpretationen der Verse analysieren, die repräsentativ für eine gewisse moderne Grundhaltung zur Literatur sind. Diese Grundhaltung erhebt das literarische Werk in den Rang eines heiligen Textes, und der Verfasser der Interpretation spielt die Priesterrolle, die Rolle des Herrschers über das heilige Wissen, in welches er die nicht Eingeweihten einweiht. Die künstlerische Form ist wie eine Gottheit, und die, die sie auslegen, sind ihre Kultdiener. „Die ideale Kunstgestalt steht wie ein seliger Gott vor uns da", zitiert Heidegger zustimmend aus Hegels „Ästhetik" (Heidegger, *Briefwechsel*, 31). Die von mir analysierten Interpretationen sind scharfsinnig, einige durchaus auch virtuos. Was ich in Frage stelle, ist nicht die Scharfsinnigkeit oder die Sensibilität für den poetischen Text, sondern die Werte und die soziale Funktion dieser Auslegungen.

Ferner möchte ich versuchen, die Instabilität der klassischen Form der Lampe zu begründen, wie auch ihren nicht einheitlichen Ursprung, in dem sich antike, orientalische und Elemente des 19. Jahrhunderts mischen. Des Weiteren werde ich die soziale Funktion der klassischen Form erörtern.

I

AUF EINE LAMPE

Noch unverrückt, o schöne Lampe, schmückest du,
An leichten Ketten zierlich aufgehangen hier,
Die Decke des nun fast vergessnen Lustgemachs.
Auf deiner weißen Marmorschale, deren Rand
Der Efeukranz von goldengrünem Erz umflicht,
Schlingt fröhlich eine Kinderschar den Ringelreih'n.
Wie reizend alles! lachend, und ein sanfter Geist
Des Ernstes doch ergossen um die ganze Form –
Ein Kunstgebild' der echten Art. Wer achtet sein?
Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst.
(1846)[3]

Im Jahre 1950 hielt Staiger in Amsterdam und in Freiburg im Breisgau den Vortrag „Die Kunst der Interpretation" (Staiger, *Kunst,* 7–28). Martin Heidegger wohnte der zweiten Vorlesung bei; ohne sich an der im Anschluss aufgekommenen Diskussion beteiligt zu haben, schilderte er in zwei Briefen an Staiger seine Interpretation des Gedichts (Heidegger, *Briefwechsel,* 28–42). Leo Spitzer machte sich mit dem veröffentlichten Briefwechsel zwischen Heidegger und Staiger vertraut und bot eine weitere, eigene Interpretation (Spitzer, *Wiederum,* 133–147). Alle drei halten daran fest, dass das Gedicht vom Wesen des Kunstwerks als solches „redet". Die Unstimmigkeiten beginnen mit der Diskrepanz in der Auslegung eines Wortes im letzten Vers, machen aber schon bald die Unterschiede der drei Hermeneutiken bezüglich der Frage sichtbar, worin das Wesen eines Kunstwerks besteht.

Die grundlegende These in Staigers Interpretation ist, dass die Zeit, in der der Dichter gelebt hat, gegenüber dem Ideal der

[3] Der Text ist der Ausgabe von Göpfert entnommen (Göpfert, *Mörike,* 85).

klassischen Schönheit und der klassischen Kunst gleichgültig geworden ist. Sein Augenmerk ist auf die individuellen poetischen Schönheitsbezeugungen und auf die literarische Tradition, in der sie möglich werden, gerichtet.

Für Heidegger ist der literaturhistorische Kontext nicht wesentlich. Die beiden Leitgedanken in der Interpretation des Philosophen sind: die schöne Lampe ist ein wahres künstlerisches Gebilde, das symbolon (σύμβολον) des Kunstwerkes oder, in Hegels Sprache, „des Ideals". Als „ein Kunstgebild der echten Art" bringt die Lampe das sinnliche Scheinen und das Scheinen der Idee zusammen, und das Gedicht ist das in der Sprache ruhende Symbol des Kunstwerkes überhaupt. In Heideggers Interpretation nehmen Kunstwerk, Sprache und Schönheit das Wesen einer Epiphanie an. (Heidegger, *Briefwechsel*, 40)

Der Artikel „Wiederum Mörikes Gedicht ‚Auf eine Lampe'" stellt das für Spitzer typische Herangehen an eine explication de texte dar. Ohne Kenntnis nicht nur der deutschen Syntax, Semantik und Phonetik, sondern auch der Eigenheiten des schwäbischen Dialekts können wir das Wesen der poetischen Ausdrucksweise nicht erfassen. Kreishaft in sich geschlossen, wohltemperiert, lachend-ernst ist Spitzer zufolge das künstlerisch Schöne bei Mörike. „Die schöne Lampe mit ihrer doppelten Kreisform und ihren gebändigten Stimmungsgegensätzen hat dem Dichter zu einer Definition des Kunst-schönen verholfen." (Spitzer, *Wiederum*, 134) Das einem Gegenstand gewidmete Gedicht (Dinggedicht) gelangt zum Wesen der Kunst, und die Lampe nunmehr als künstlerische Form wird zum Symbol dieses Wesens.

Die Erfahrungen, die Spitzer in den neuen wissenschaftlichen Kreisen und dem Lebensumfeld in den USA gewonnen hat, beeinflussten seine Interpretationsweise – der Vergleich mit Keats' „Ode on a Grecian Urn" wurde später vielfach verwendet und ausgebaut. Die amerikanischen Erfahrungen regten ihn zur Kritik an der Heideggerschen und überhaupt der deutschen philologischen

Grundhaltung dem Text gegenüber an. „Der deutsche Philologe hat hier viel von dem englischen Kulturmilieu zu lernen, in dem „verstehen" als demütiges, „unter etwas stehen, um es zu erkennen" *(to under-stand)* gefasst wird, in dem das *understatement* als Tugend gilt und eine ausgesprochene Abneigung gegen *overinterpretation* herrscht." (Kursiv: L.S.). (Spitzer, *Wiederum*, 143–44)[4] Eine derartige Behauptung lässt sich natürlich leichter aufstellen als beweisen. In diesem Disput offenbart Spitzer das Misstrauen eines Philologen gegenüber Verallgemeinerungen, die nicht konkret am Text des Gedichts nachweisbar sind.

Alle drei beschäftigen sich mit Etymologien, jedoch auf unterschiedliche Art: Staiger und Spitzer deuten die Bedeutungen innerhalb des Gedichtes bzw. in Mörikes Werk, während Heidegger Bedeutungen weiter entwickelt bzw. Bedeutungen schlicht erfindet, gleich, ob sie im Gedicht vorhanden sind oder nicht, wie es mit dem Licht der Lampe der Fall ist. Seine Interpretation ist eine Erschließung, er nutzt den Vers als Anlass für Überlegungen, die auch unabhängig vom Gedicht gemacht werden können. Die Rhythmik gehört zu den wesentlichsten Besonderheiten dieser Poesie. Heideggers Behauptung, in Vers 10 „Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst" liege die Betonung auf ist, zeugen von seinem Unwillen, die Versrhythmik zu berücksichtigen, denn hier handelt es sich um einen Jambus, bei dem die Betonung auf schön liegt, wie Staiger bemerkt. Staigers Interpretation ist eine Wechselwirkung mit

[4] Man kann wohl eine politische Dimension in Spitzers Äußerung gegen die deutsche Germanistik sehen. Der Erkenntniswert einer Äußerung, die für *under-standing* plädiert, macht das aber belehrend, *überstehend*, finde ich für fraglich. Diese Kritik schließt vermutlich nicht die deutsche Romanistik und ihre Geschichte. In den Debatten, an denen Spitzer sich in den USA häufig beteiligte, verteidigte er die deutsche romanistische und Denktradition (neo)romantischen Typus des 18.-20. Jahrhunderts.

dem Gedicht; Wechselwirkungen kann es viele geben, und darin liegt der prinzipielle Unterschied zwischen dem Herangehen Heideggers einerseits und dem Staigers und Spitzers andererseits. Die Interpretationen der Letzteren brauchen das Gedicht, sie existieren wegen ihrer Verbindung zu diesem.

Die Grundfrage des Disputs ist die (Un)abhängigkeit des Kunstwerks und der Schönheit von der Beachtung durch den Menschen. „...die rechte Art eines Kunstgebildes, die Schönheit des Schönen waltet nicht von Gnaden der Menschen, insofern sie das Kunstwerk achten oder nicht, ob sie, was schön ist, in ihren Genuß nehmen oder nicht. Das Schöne bleibt, was es ist, unabhängig davon, wie die Frage *Wer achtet sein?* beantwortet wird." (Heidegger, *Briefwechsel*, 39) Diese Unabhängigkeit verleiht der Schönheit und dem Kunstwerk ein göttliches Wesen. Sowohl Heidegger, als auch Staiger stellen die These auf, die Grundstimmung des Gedichts sei Wehmut. Für Heidegger kommt die Wehmut von der Sprache her, für Staiger dagegen ist die Wehmut Teil des Gefühls des Dichters selbst.[5] Mörike hielt sich für einen Epigonen, weshalb er es nicht mehr wagte, sich über die Schönheit mit derselben Entschiedenheit zu äußern, wie es Goethe getan hatte. In Staigers Interpretation „dient Mörikes Gedicht als Allegorie, die das zu jener Zeit übliche Bild der deutschen Literaturgeschichte untermauert. In der Generation nach Goethe konnten laut diesem Bild der Literaturgeschichte auch die begabtesten Dichter nur Epigonen gewesen sein, Nachfolger einer so großen Tradition, dass alles, was auch immer sie schreiben würden, wie ein Niedergang aussehen müsste." (Lindenberger, *Ideology*, 402)[6]

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[5] S. die Einleitung von W. Wögenbauer zu dem Briefwechsel zwischen Heidegger und Staiger. (Wögenbauer, *Briefwechsel*, 34–37).

[6] Im zweiten Satz des angeführten Zitats resümiert Lindenberger das Herangehen P. U. Hohendahls, auf dessen Buch zum Entstehen der deutschen Nationalliteratur er verweist.

Alle drei Interpretationen sehen in dem Gedicht das Bild des Endes einer unterbrochenen und beinahe nicht mehr möglichen Kommunikation zwischen Kunst und Publikum. Zur doppelten Geschlossenheit, die Spitzer aufdeckt (die Lampen- und die Gedichtform) kann noch die Geschlossenheit des Raums ergänzt werden (das Lustgemach). Das lyrische Ich betrachtet die Lampe, erfreut sich an ihr und definiert sie als „Kunstgebild' der echten Art". Es ist der einzige Eingeweihte bzw. gehört zu den wenigen, die eingeweiht sind. Das Sichselbstgenügen des Artefakts und die Eingeweihtheit des Betrachters sind die wichtigsten Botschaften des Gedichtes. Gerade der beschauliche Blick festigt im letzten Vers die selige Selbstgenügsamkeit der Schönheit, so dass sogar die Bindung zwischen Eingeweihtem und kostbarem Gegenstand unterbrochen wird und die Schönheit, die Kunst zu einem für jedermann unzugänglichen Geheimnis werden. Die Lampe wird zwar tatsächlich zum Symbol, jedoch nicht jeglicher Kunst, sondern der modernen Verselbständigung des Artefakts.

Sowohl Staiger, als auch Heidegger vertreten eine konservative Haltung: das Heutige hat sich entfremdet, ist von der Welt der in der Lampe verkörperten künstlerischen Schönheit abgefallen. Und da sie der Meinung sind, das Schöne existiere unabhängig von der Beachtung durch die Menschen, gehen sie der Frage, wer die in der Gestalt der Lampe verkörperte Schönheit ansieht, nicht nach. Die Schönheit existiert in einem Tempelraum. Das lyrische Ich gibt zwar nicht preis, wer es ist, spricht aber eindeutig aus der Position des Priesters in diesem menschenleeren Tempel. Der schöne Gegenstand wird zum Ersatz für ein religiöses Symbol. Es ist jedoch keine wahre Religiosität in der Beziehung des lyrischen Ich zu dem Ding – Geheimnis; es gibt keine Gemeinschaft von Eingeweihten, die das Geheimnis sozialisieren würde. Der kostbare Gegenstand, ob als Symbol oder als Sein, wird weder zum Geschenk, noch zum Versprechen, sondern befindet sich im Zustand des Vergessens. Das Kostbare wird nicht geteilt,

woraus Isolation und Vergessen folgen, was für Staiger melancholisch anziehend ist, während Heidegger die Existenz des Schönen außerhalb jedweder Gemeinschaft gefällt. Die Interpretationen aller drei werden Mörikes Kunstverständnis gerecht, denn auch andere Gedichte Mörikes lassen ein Bild der in sich geschlossenen, isolierten Existenz entstehen. Die Selbstgenügsamkeit ist die Ursache der wehmütigen Stimmung. Ob bei einer Änderung der Grundhaltung das Geheimnis der Schönheit nicht zu einem Geschenk werden könnte?

Auch die drei Herangehensweisen sind, jede auf ihre Art, in sich geschlossen. Vor allem Staiger entwickelt kontinuierlich sein Konzept des eigenen Territoriums der Literaturwissenschaft, ihrer Eigenständigkeit gegenüber den anderen Geisteswissenschaften. Dieses Konzept, das die Spezifik sowohl der schöngeistigen Literatur, als auch der Reflexion darüber sucht, scheint mir beispielhaft für die Modernität und ihre isolationistischen Verfahren. In seinen Analysen nimmt Staiger nicht einfach die Haltung eines belesenen Mannes oder fähigen Interpreten ein, sondern die eines Eingeweihten – er lüftet die Geheimnisse der deutschen Literatur des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts. In Arbeiten aus den 1960er Jahren kritisiert Staiger den Perspektivismus und Relativismus der zeitgenössischen Kultur und misst diese an den unerreichbaren klassischen Epochen in der westeuropäischen Literatur. Für die deutschsprachige Literatur ist dies selbstverständlich die Weimarer Klassik. Das, was Staiger liebt und als dessen Repräsentant er sich fühlt, ist die klassische Art von Literatur, deren künstlerische und moralische Werte er vertritt. Das Klassische ist bei ihm nicht institutionell begründet und nicht zu bestimmten, vor allem politischen Zwecken oktroyiert. Die klassische Literatur in Europa ist ein „Gipfel" der Kunst und der Werte, und die antike und (west)europäische ist die Weltliteratur. (Staiger, *Gipfel*)

Seine Analysen einzelner Werke oder Stellen sind eindring-

lich. Die soziale Funktion dieser Position halte ich jedoch für problematisch, denn sie geht von einer Wahrheit und vor allem einer Zugehörigkeit aus.[7] Was die Nationalität betrifft, ist das die zum Deutschen, sozial gesehen – die zum Aristokratischen und Elitären. Die Zusammenhänge, die Staiger zum Schaffen Mörikes herstellt, sind nur in der deutschen Literatur angesiedelt. Der Zusammenhang zu den Dichtern des Hellenismus wird in der Ähnlichkeit des Schicksals Mörikes und das der Dichter der hellenistischen Epoche begründet. Dieser Zusammenhang mit der Antike wird von Mörikes Leben und Werk selbst erbracht, die Staiger von innen her zu interpretiert. Die sprachlichen Zusammenhänge, die Heidegger für gewöhnlich herstellt, beruhen auf altgriechischen Wörtern. Im Gegensatz zu beiden behandelt Spitzer das Gedicht in einem allgemeineren, westeuropäischen Kontext.

Man kann durchaus sagen, dass jeder sein spezifisches Fachwissen nutzt. Jenseits dieses Wissens jedoch reduziert Staiger die deutsche Literatur an die Werte der Weimarer Klassik, wie er sie interpretiert. Bei Heidegger finden wir auch hier eine konsequente Aneignung des Altgriechischen von der deutschen Sprache; wenn das Altgriechische das wahre Heim des Seins ist, dann bewahrt das Deutsche bis heute noch das Scheinen des Seins. Beide Positionen enthalten sowohl soziale, als auch politische Implikationen – Geschlossenheit und Ausschließlichkeit. Sie bemühen sich, die Klassik unwandelbare Größe durchzusetzen und die Existenz unabänderlicher sozialer Werte zu vermitteln. Heute jedoch fetischisiert ein derartiges Streben nach Ausschließlichkeit einfach seinen Gegenstand und/oder harmonisiert dessen Zwiespältigkeit. Der Fetisch kaschiert gerade den sozialen Mechanismus, der ihn zum Gegenstand der Anbetung gemacht hat. Der Zweck der Verehrung

[7] Staiger hat zum Aufsatz von Spitzer in „Trivium" Anmerkungen hinzugefügt. Ich frage mich ob Staiger der Meinung war, Spitzer gehörte nicht zum Kreis der Eingeweihten in der deutschen Literatur?

des Klassischen besteht darin, das Historische in die Ewigkeit übergehen zu lassen.[8]

Ähnlich ist auch die Haltung Hans Georg Gadamers, der „Auf eine Lampe" als methodische Illustration am Ende seiner Betrachtung über Verhältnis von Text und Interpretation verwendet. Gadamer hatte das Gedicht speziell wegen des Streits von Staiger, Heidegger und Spitzer gewählt. Die kurze Interpretation verdeutlicht noch einmal, und zwar am konkreten Stoff, seine Herangehensweise an das Thema der Schönheit und des Kunstwerks. Ohne die Bereitschaft des Aufnehmenden, ganz Ohr zu sein (Gadamer besteht auf dem Hören), würde kein dichterischer Text sprechen. Gadamer scheint seine Interpretation auf die Wechselwirkung zwischen dem gesprochenem und dem gehörten, rezipiertem dichterischen Wort zu begründen, doch es erweist sich, dass das Verstehen (das Hören) im Grunde schließlich verschwinden und den Text sprechen lassen muss; so wie bei Heidegger die Sprache spricht. Der dichterische Text ist eine Autorität, und Ziel der Rezeption ist, die Stimme der Autorität wiederaufleben zu lassen.

„So versteht unser Verstand nicht nur, was da über das Schöne gesagt wird und was die Autonomie des Kunstwerks ausspricht, das von keinem Gebrauchszusammenhang abhängt – unser Ohr hört und unser Verständnis vernimmt den Schein des Schönen als sein wahres Wesen. Der Interpret, der seine Gründe beibrachte, verschwindet, und der Text spricht..." (Gadamer, *Text*, 359–60) Gadamer deutet das „(Kunst)Gebild" als etwas, das von innen nach außen geschaffen wird, sich entfaltet und schließlich seine eigene Gestalt erlangt (Gadamer, *Text*, 358). Dieses Wortverständnis – als ein naturnaher Schaffensprozess, der sich in eine vollendete plasti-

[8] 50 Jahre nach der Publikation der „Kunst der Interpretation" als Buch, wurde ihm eine differenzierte Analyse gewidmet. (Rickes u. a., *Die Kunst der Interpretation*). Die Problematik des Sammelbandes ist viel reicher als der Titel denken lässt. Staigers Herangehen an „Auf eine Lampe" wird nur passim erwähnt.

sche Gestalt „ergiesst", verdeckt das Vorliegen einer harmonisierenden soziallen Haltung, die der Kunst zugeschriben wird und die die Konflikte verdecken will.

Die ursprüngliche Ähnlichkeit mit der Rezeptions- und Wirkungsästhetik ist sowohl konzeptionell, als auch als soziale Funktion nur scheinbar. Das Kunstwerk, und vor allem das als klassisch erhöhte Werk, ist weder vom Umfeld seines möglichen Gebrauchs, noch von den historischen Milieus seiner Rezeption abhängig. Auch bei Veränderung dieser Faktoren, bleibt es stets unveränderlich, in ein und demselben Licht scheinend. So erlangt das klassische Kunstwerk die Funktion eines heiligen Textes.

II

Die Suche nach Parallelen zwischen sprachlicher und visueller Form bietet mehr Interpretationsmöglichkeiten, deshalb werde ich im Weiteren sprachliche Formen von Lampen mit „echten" Lampen vergleichen. Die Wechselbeziehung zwischen Wort und Gegenstand ist begründet, denn „Auf eine Lampe" ist ein Epigramm. Ein Epigramm kann als Kommentar zu einem Gegenstand fungieren, dessen Materialität und meisterhafte Herstellung werden durch den Kommentar betont; der Gegenstand bekommt eine zusätzliche Präsenz in seiner Umgebung, seine Individualität wird verstärkt. Epigramme sind im dichterischen Werk Mörikes keine Seltenheit. Moritz Enzinger verweist auf die Epigramme mit dem Titel „Inschrift...", wie auch auf jene, die Gegenständen gewidmet sind. Er thematisiert ihre Verbindung zur späten altgriechischen Epigrammatik und zur Ekphrasis.[9] „Auf eine Lampe" wird als „Dinggedicht"[10] definiert, als eine einem bestimmten Gegenstand

[9] Zur einer möglichen Beeinflussung Mörikes durch Herder s. (Enzinger *Kommentar*, 17–20).

[10] Der Terminus „Dinggedicht" wurde 1926 von Kurt Oppert einge-

gewidmete Versschöpfung. Ob wir es nun als Epigramm oder als „Dinggedicht" definieren – das Wesentliche besteht darin, dass das Gedicht den Gegenstand nicht nur beschreibt und/oder kommentiert, sondern ihn zugleich ganz und gar erschafft, wenn es den Gegenstand nicht gibt, oder ihn als einen anderen als den realen erschafft.

1846 schrieb Mörike zwei Versepigramme: „Inschrift auf eine Uhr mit den drei Horen"[11] und „Auf eine Lampe". In " Inschrift auf eine Uhr..." sprechen die Horen selbst über sich, in „Auf eine Lampe" richtet jemand, der sich ebenfalls im „Lustgemach" befindet, Worte an die Lampe. Nehmen wir um der Ekphrasis willen an, dass irgendein Gegenstand die Anregung zu dem Gedicht gegeben hat. Das Wort ist jedoch ein Medium mit eigenen Eigenschaften, so wie auch das visuelle Medium, so dass, auch wenn wir auf der einen Seite das Gedicht hätten, und auf der anderen eine Zeichnung oder Fotografie der Lampe (1846 wäre das bereits möglich gewesen), dies die Erschaffung eines imaginären Gegenstandes durch das Wort im Bewusstsein des Lesers nicht beeinträchtigen würde. Die Ekphrasis beinhaltet auch die Beschreibung imaginärer Artefakte, denn sie hat nicht nur die Funktion zu beschreiben, sondern zugleich auch imaginäre, nichtstoffliche Dinge und Ansichten mit Worten zu erschaffen.

Spitzer erwähnte, dass laut Paul Friedländer die Ekphrasis in „Auf eine Lampe" ihr Vorbild in Theokrits Idylle „Thyrsis", Verse 27–56 habe. Dieselben Verse Theokrits verwendete Leconte

führt. Zu einer ausführlicheren Begründung des Terminus s. Nordheim *Dingdichtung*, 76–78. Nordheim verweist an mehreren Stellen auf die Dissertation M. Burgers von 1945 zu Mörike. Die Dissertation ist mir nicht zugänglich. Einige Verfasser von Interpretationen lehnen diesen Begriff als unpassend ab. S. auch: Martini, *Dinggedicht*; von Wilpert, *Dinggedicht*.

[11] „Die Horen, Göttinnen der Jahreszeiten, gewöhnlich ihrer drei, seltener zwei oder vier, je nachdem man das Jahr einteilte." (Mörike, *Werke II*, 930)

de Lisle in seinem Gedicht „Le Vase". So bekräftigt Spitzer seine These von dem antiken Ursprung der klassischen Form bei Mörike, wie auch von dem Zusammenhang – aufgrund der gleichen Haltung zur Antike – zwischen Mörike und den zeitgenössischen französischen Dichtern. (Spitzer, *Anmerkung*, 33–34) Holschuh schließt sich der These, dass die altgriechische Tradition Mörike beim Schreiben des Gedichts beeinflusst habe, an und zitiert dafür wiederum aus „Thyrsis", Verse 29–33 (Holschuh, *Wem leuchtet*, 578, 584)[12]. Es handelt sich in Theokrits Idylle um Szenendarstellungen und um den dekorativen Schmuck auf einem Milchbecher aus Holz; die frisch gemolkene Ziegenmilch soll die Belohnung für ein Lied sein. Sowohl der Schmuck, als auch der Duft (nach dem frischen Holz des eben erst hergestellten Bechers sowie nach dem Wachs, mit dem er versiegelt ist) sind Teil der Belohnung. Die Ekphrasis verfolgt hier einen synästhetischen Zweck, sie will nicht nur den Gegenstand in unserer Vorstellung erzeugen, sondern auch seinen Duft, als „sei er in den Quellen der Horen gereinigt" (Vers 150).

Ich nahm an, dass es eine Bleistiftzeichnung einer „antiken" Lampe oder einer Lampe antiken Typs von Mörike selbst gibt, die zeitlich mit dem Verfassen des Gedichtes zusammenfällt. In seiner Mörike-Werkausgabe vermerkt Harry Maync: „Ein Gretchen gewidmetes Blatt zeigt Mörikes Bleistiftzeichnung einer antiken Lampe." (Maync, *Ausgabe* I., 425) Mörike hat zahlreiche Zeichnungen angefertigt, viele davon werden von kommentierenden Prosa- oder Verstexten begleitet.[13] „... in vielen Fällen sind Gedicht und

[12] In der Tat ist in den Ausgaben mit Übersetzungen griechischer und römischer Dichter, die Mörike überarbeitet und ergänzt, die Ekphrasis keine Seltenheit. In der Ausgabe von 1864 „Anakreon und die sogenannten Anakreontischen Lieder" findet sich der Teil: „Dem Epigramm und dem Idyll verwandte Stücke / Bildwerk und Malerei beschreibend". (Mörike, *Werke II*, 874, 890–893).

[13] Zu Mörike als Zeichner s. *Mörike-Handbuch*, 226–236.

Bild so eng miteinander verbunden, dass das eine ohne das andere nur schwer verständlich wäre." (Reck, *Zeichnungen*, 10) Ich fragte wegen der Zeichnung einer „antiken Lampe" bei der Mörike-Gesellschaft an. Die Antwort, die ich von dort erhielt,[14] widerlegte die Anmerkung in Harry Maync's Ausgabe. Nachdem eine Zeichnung also nicht existierte, suchte ich nach Lampen und deren Darstellungen aus der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts, die zumindest einigermaßen der Beschreibung im Gedicht entsprechen würden.[15]

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[14] „Sehr geehrter Herr Professor Angelov,

Herr Dr. Wulf von der Mörike-Gesellschaft hat mir Ihre Frage bezüglich Mörikes Gedicht „Auf eine Lampe" weitergeleitet. Da mir selbst nicht bekannt ist, daß eine solche Zeichnung existieren soll und wir hier im Mörike-Archiv auch keinen entsprechenden Nachweis haben, habe ich doch zur Sicherheit die Frage mit dem Mörike-Spezialisten Professor Dr. Hans-Henrik Krummacher erörtert .... Auch er hat mir bestätigt, daß es eine Mörike-Zeichnung einer „antiken Lampe" nicht gibt. Allerdings hat er in seinen Aufschrieben notiert, daß es eine Zeichnung einer Obstschale mit Verzierung gibt (SNM Inventar der Bildabteilung Nr. 1770), die früher einmal fälschlicherweise als Zeichnung einer „Öllampe" katalogisiert war. Vermutlich bezieht sich Herr Maync darauf. Diese Zeichnung hat aber lt. Professor Krummacher absolut nichts mit dem Gedicht „Auf eine Lampe" zu tun. Wir hoffen, Ihnen damit weitergeholfen zu haben, Herzlichst Ihr Albrecht Bergold / Mörike-Archiv im Deutschen Literaturarchiv" (10. März 2009). Das Schreiben Herrn Bergolds weist die Möglichkeit eines direkten Vergleichs der visuellen Gestalt (der Zeichnung) und der sprachlichen Gestalt der Lampe im Gedicht zurück.

[15] Bei jeder Ekphrasis ist die Frage (ob ein Gegenstand oder eine Landschaft dafür den Anstoß gab) berechtigt, aber nur individuell zu entscheiden. In ähnlicher Weise hat Mörike bei seinem Kommentar des Gedichts „Aphrodite auf einem Diskos" von „Anakreontischen Liedern" versucht, die genaue Form und die Stelle des Bildes auf dem Gegenstand durch die Beschreibung wiederherzustellen. Für dieses Gedicht s. auch unten. „Da man nicht ohne weiteres annehmen darf, es habe bei dieser Beschreibung kein wirkliches Bildwerk zugrunde gelegen, so ist die Frage nach dessen

Mit fiel auf, dass im Gedicht nicht nur das Licht fehlt, das die Lampe ausstrahlen könnte, sondern auch das Brennen, begleitet vom aufgrund des Dochtes unvermeidlichen Rauch. Rauch und Brennen als Bilder der Vergänglichkeit werden im Gedicht nicht erwähnt, im Unterschied zur Beschreibung der Lampen in Portici in Goethes „Italienischer Reise". Das Genre der Reiseaufzeichnungen impliziert eine andere Glaubwürdigkeit als die der Dichtung. Bei Goethe lesen wir von Dochten und von einer Flamme, die ein wahres Kunstgebilde, das eine jede Lampe ist, erleuchtet. (Goethe, *Italienische I*, 229)[16]

Darstellungen von glänzendem Öl in der Lampe und brennendem Licht auf den zierlich gebildeten Leuchtern kommen in Schillers Gedicht „Pompeji und Herculanum" (1797) vor. (Schiller, *Werke B. I*, 234–36) Wahrscheinlich sind einige Darstellungen auf Goethes Reiseaufzeichnungen zurückzuführen. Für das Thema ist für mich von größerer Bedeutung, dass die festliche, wie auf einer Bühne präsentierte „Restaurierung", die Schiller – angeregt von den wiederaufgenommenen Ausgrabungen in Herculanum und Pompeji – vornimmt, verlangt, dass Lampen und Leuchter strahlen. Sie sind Bestandteil des wiederauferstandenen Lebens – wären sie erloschen, würde das bedeuten, dass es kein Leben gäbe. Schiller verwendet das Wort „zierlich" drei Mal: als Attribut der Zimmer (die zierlichen Zimmer), des Hermes (der zierlich geschenkte Hermes) und – was einen intertextuellen Bezug zu Mörikes Gedicht schafft – der Leuchter (den zierlich gebildeten Leuchter).[17]

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näherer Beschaffenheit nicht vorweg abzuweisen." (Mörike, *Werke II*, 927)

[16] Man erfährt nicht, aus welchem Material die Lampen selbst sind, ihre Gestelle jedenfalls sind aus Bronze. Ausführlicher wird ein Eimer beschrieben, aber auch hier wird die Art des Materials nicht erwähnt.

[17] Als Attribut von Sandalen erscheint „zierlich" auch in der intertextuell bedeutsamen Szene aus Schillers „Braut von Messina", im ersten Aufzug, siebenten Auftritt.

In „Pompeji und Herculanum" sind die Szenen in Bewegung, es herrscht sogar geschäftiges Treiben im Unterschied zur Stille in „Auf eine Lampe".

Das Klassische ist dann möglich, wenn es die Elemente, die das von ihm angestrebte Ewigkeitsbild stören, verdrängt und vergisst. Die Lampe, die nicht leuchtet, sondern nur das Lustgemach ziert, wird von einem funktionalen zu einem ästhetischen Gegentand, zu einem Artefakt. Die mögliche historische Zeit ist ebenfalls ästhetisiert und damit ihrer Historizität beraubt. Das Schöne ist selig, und der ästhetische Gegenstand erlangt einen zweideutigen religiösen Status, indem er zu einem Gegenstand der Bewunderung wird, beinahe zu einem Fetisch. Lampe und Lustgemach sind Raum einer in der Realität nicht möglichen Harmonie. „Auf eine Lampe" ist die Utopie des Ästhetischen. Offener thematisiert wird die Verbindung von Religiösem und Ästhetischem im Gedicht „Die schöne Buche" von 1842. Hier gibt es sogar mehr Darstellungen des Kreisförmigen als in „Auf eine Lampe": die Buche, der sie umgebende Rasen, das Gebüsch und der äußere Kreis der Bäume werden für ein Heiligtum gehalten, in das das lyrische Ich von der Gottheit (genius loci) des Hains geführt wird. Wie die Lampe erlangt die Natur hier den Rang eines heiligen Artefakts; die Buche und die anliegende Umgebung sind eine isolierte und harmonische Welt, in der das lyrische Ich ganzheitlich und nicht entfremdet ist. Auch in der „Schönen Buche" wird das antike Versmaß, das Distichon (Wechsel von Hexameter und Pentameter) verwendet. Auch in anderen Gedichten findet sich die Verbindung von Religiösem und Ästhetischem – „und wiederum bildet das Erlebnis der Schönheit ... nur das Medium für die Entfaltung einer religiöser Erfahrung." (Nordheim, *Dingdichtung*, 79) Im Gegensatz zu W. von Nordheim bin ich jedoch der Auffassung, dass die „ewigen Mächte" („An eine Sängerin", Vers 6) nicht nur rettend sein können: das lebensspendende Sonnenlicht (der Sonne liebes Licht, „Verborgenheit", Vers

8), sondern auch archaisch und bedrohlich: Mutter Nacht („Um Mitternacht", Vers 6 – der Mutter, der Nacht).

Unter klassisch verstehe ich die Ideal- und Normwerte, die seit dem Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts in Europa entstanden sind, deren scheinbare Unveränderbarkeit in den Wandlungen der Geschichte als Stütze dienen sollte. Die Aktualisierung der Antike ist ein Grundelement des Klassischen, und die Kunst (die des Wortes, die Musik und die bildende) ist ein wirksames Mittel, um diese Werte durchzusetzen. Die erste Anregung dafür kam von den Ausgrabungen in Pompeji (1737) и Herculanum (1748)[18]. Zunächst durch die Schriften Winckelmanns, später durch die von Malern, Schriftstellern und Reisenenden vermittelten Italienbilder wurde die „edle Größe" der Antike als Wissen und als Objekt der Bewunderung in West- und Mitteleuropa verbreitet.[19]

Bei seinem Besuch in Portici am 18. März 1787 hielt Goethe seine Eindrücke von den bei den Ausgrabungen gefundenen Lampen fest. „Die Lampen sind nach Anzahl ihrer Dochte mit Masken und Rankenwerk verziert, so daß jede Flamme ein wirkliches Kunstgebilde erleuchtet. Hohe, schlanke, eherne Gestelle sind bestimmt, die Lampen zu tragen, aufzuhängende Lampen hingegen mit allerlei geistreich gedachten Figuren behängt, welche die Absicht, zu gefallen und zu ergötzen, sobald sie schaukeln und baumeln, sogar übertreffen.." (Goethe *Italienische I*, 229) Die Definition der Lampen als Kunstgebilde ist also bei Goethe und bei Mörike die gleiche. Im zitierten Absatz erschafft die Beschreibung, das Wort, ein Bild der Gegenstände, welches, auch wenn es recht

[18] Die Publikation, die die Funde in Herculaneum, Pompeji und Stabiae beschreibt, ist im Internet unter der Adresse http://www.coe.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/arc/ercolano/tomo08/frame.html einzusehen. Band Acht befasst sich mit den unterschiedlichen Leuchtkörpern.

[19] Zur Rolle der Antike in der Bildung in Deutschland in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts sowie im Werk Mörikes s. *Mörike-Handbuch*, 27–32; 86–90.

БАН
БИБЛИОТЕКА

allgemein ist, uns die Möglichkeit gibt, sowohl die Nähe, als auch den Unterschied zwischen diesen Lampen und dem Bild der Lampe bei Mörike zu beurteilen. Die Frage, ob Mörike von dieser Passage der „Italienischen Reise" beeinflusst war, führt in eine andere Richtung; für das hiesige Thema ist ausschlaggebend, dass es sich um zwei Bilder antiker Gegenstände handelt – ein dokumentarisches und ein imaginäres.[20] M. Enzinger rekonstruiert überzeugend einen Mikrokontext, in dem Mörikes Gedicht als Anstoß oder Erinnerung entsteht. (Enzinger, *Kommentar*, 36–41).

Das Klassische kommt in „Auf eine Lampe" im Versmaß des Senars zum Ausdruck[21], aber auch im Material, aus dem die Lampe gefertigt wurde (weißer Marmor), sowie im Material für die Verzierung (Bronze). Weiß und Marmor wurden gerade vom Klassizismus, der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts seinen Anfang nahm, und seinen späteren Weiterentwicklungen zum Haupterkennungsmerkmal der Antike gemacht. Die weißen Marmorstatuen verkörpern das neue Ideal des menschlichen Daseins.[22] Marmor wurde auch außerhalb der Skulpturen und Skulpturengruppen verwendet: allein seine Verwendung war bereits ein Idealisieren – die Verkörperung von Ewigkeit, Erhabenheit und Schönheit. Das Weiße bildet den Kontrast zur stofflichen und farblichen Fülle, zur fehlenden Strenge und üppigen Festlichkeit von Barock und Rokoko. Der Marmor (bzw. Stein) suggeriert Beständigkeit und Unvergänglichkeit, die weiße Farbe bedeutet Reinheit, selbstverständlich mora-

[20] Einen Zusammenhang zwischen Goethes Reiseaufzeichnung und Mörikes Gedicht stellte erstmals Enzinger her (Enzinger, *Kommentar*, 38–39).

[21] Eine treffende Erläuterung der Beziehung zwischen Versmaß und Thema findet sich bei Hötzer, *Mörikes*, 193: „In dem Gedicht ... wird die mehrfach gestraffte Durchführung des Themas ausgeglichen durch ein leise und leicht fließendes Versmaß."

[22] Zum Verhältnis von Menschlichem, Göttlichem und der Herausbildung des neuen Ideals durch die Marmorfigur und Gipsbüste im Klassizismus s. Klotz, *Neuzeit und Moderne*, 42–45.

lische. Deshalb stellt das Weiße des Marmors die moralische Lauterkeit des Klassischen dar, doch nicht unbedingt auch der griechischen Antike, deren Marmorstatuen farbig waren. Farbe und Material verknüpfen sich im Klassizismus zu einer gemeinsamen Illusion von Wertebeständigkeit, Bereitschaft zum heroischen Widerstand und Erhabenheit und erzeugen so das Bild des Klassischen als „edle Einfalt und stille Größe"[23].

Der Tanz der Kinder in der Lampenform bringt die Vorstellung vom Klassischen als Heroik und Größe ins Schwanken, doch der Geist des Ernstes, der um die Form ergossen ist, stellt das vom klassischen Bild erwartete Gleichgewicht wieder her. Bezeichnend für die Umgestaltung, die der Klassizismus des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts mit dem Erbe der Antike vornimmt, ist die in der Antike unmögliche, im Biedermaier jedoch durchaus mögliche Kombination von Bronze und Marmor in „Auf eine Lampe"[24]. Zwar wurde Bronze auch in der Antike verwendet, doch der Einsatz von Metall (und zwar vorwiegend Eisen) ist speziell für die Moderne kennzeichnend, sowohl bei Hausrat, als auch bei Industriewaren und Großprojekten wie Brücken und Eisenbahnen. Das Klassische ist nicht antik, es ist ein umformendes Erschließen und Aneignen. Bei den in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts hergestellten Lampen sind tanzende Knaben, die an Cupidos erinnern, ein häufig verwendetes Schmuckmotiv. Zu

[23] Die allgemeine Charakteristik, die Winckelmann den altgriechischen Meisterwerken beimisst, bezieht sich auf die Kunst der Malerei und der Bildhauerei. „Das allgemeine vorzügliche Kennzeichen der griechischen Meisterstücke ist endlich eine edle Einfalt, und eine stille Größe, sowohl in der Stellung als im Ausdrücke." Diese Charakteristik der klassischen Kunst (im Gegensatz zur Fülle an Worten, Gefühlen und Materialien des Barock) gab es bereits, bevor Winckelmann sie auf die altgriechische Kunst anwandte. (Winckelmann, *Gedancken*, 30–32, 444)

[24] Auf der Suche nach Lampen aus der Biedermeierzeit stieß ich auf eine Stehlampe, deren Fuß aus Bronze und Marmor gefertigt war. Sie war nicht genauer datiert, nur als „Biedermeierlampe" definiert.

Recht verbindet R. Schier „ergossen" mit dem Gießen der Lampe aus Eisen, obwohl dies praktisch nur für die Ketten gilt, an denen sie aufgehängt ist (Schier, *Consciousness*, 37–39).[25] Ich möchte Schiers These Nachdruck verleihen, indem ich zwei Verwendungen aus Anakreons Epigramm „Aphrodite auf einem Diskos" zitiere, das Mörike in die von ihm erstellte und überarbeitete Anthologie „Anakreon und die sogenannten Anakreontischen Lieder" (1864) aufgenommen hat: „Eine Zauberhand hat Wellen/ *Ausgegossen* auf den Diskos. (Vers 2–3) ... Auf des sanft *ergossnen* Meeres/ Fläche... (Vers 12–13)" Die Wellen und die Meeresfläche sind höchstwahrscheinlich auf das Metall des Diskos gegossen.[26] S. Weckler ist ebenfalls der Ansicht, dass die Lampe weder ein antikes Vorbild hat noch als antikes Bild gedacht, sondern ein Kunstgegenstand ist, den Mörike nach seinem Geschmack erschaffen hat. (*Mörike-Handbuch*, 148) Mörikes Geschmack stimmt in diesem Fall mit dem Zeitgeschmack überein.

III

In der griechisch-römischen Antike waren die Lampen meist aus Keramik, seltener aus Metall und noch seltener aus Marmor (Der Kleine Pauly, 469–470).[27] Es gab Marmor-Kronleuchter, an

[25] Zu einer gusseisernen Lampe zwischen 1815 und 1825 s. Himmelheber, *Biedermeier*, Nr. 405.

[26] Das Zitat entstammt der Ausgabe Mörike 1970: 892–93. Zu diesem Vergleich wurde ich durch einen Artikel von Holschuh angeregt (Holschuh *Wem leuchtet*, 578). Er führt „Aphrodite auf einem Diskos" zur Bekräftigung seiner These von der altgriechischen Tradition an, die Mörike beeinflusst habe und hebt speziell die Worte „Ausgegossen, ergossnen, Kunstgebilde" kursiv hervor.

[27] Von den von mir durchgesehenen Katalogen und Monografien, in denen es keine Marmorlampen gibt, möchte ich folgende anführen: Bailey, *A Catalogue*; Kuzmanov, *Antični lampi*. Eine „künstlerisch bedeutsa-

deren Ecken die Lampen aufgehängt wurden (Rich, *Wörterbuch*)[28]. Bei den antiken Lampen stellen die Öffnungen für den Docht und die Luftzufuhr ein wesentliches Funktionselement dar, während für die Verzierung (sofern vorhanden) Geschmack und Vermögen des Besitzers, die Fertigkeiten des Herstellers sowie die Konventionen des historisch-sozialen Umfelds ausschlaggebend waren. Wenn Gegenstände Schönheit und Funktionalität miteinander verbanden, so gehörte dies in den Bereich der Formgestaltung oder des Kunstgewerbes, es wäre so etwas wie Kunst, aber eben doch keine autonome Kunst. Die Frage, ob es in der Antike Marmorlampen gegeben hat, könnte weitere Auskünfte über das Verhältnis des Klassizismus zum gegenständlichen Umfeld der Antike geben. Die Antike erstreckte sich über recht viele Jahrhunderte, so dass in einer Periode Marmorlampen vorkommen können, in einer anderen geschlossene figurale Kompositionen (wie etwa der Reigen der Kinder) und in einer dritten Periode Kompositionen mit gemalter oder plastischer Dekoration und zwar an der gleichen Stelle einer Lampe, an der sich auch die Komposition bei Mörikes Wort-Lampe befindet. Doch selbst wenn es genau eine solche Lampe gegeben haben sollte, so hätte sie auf jeden Fall eine andere Funktion gehabt. Mörike erschafft eine Lampe à la Antike, die das aktuelle Verhältnis eines bestimmten historischen Umfelds zur Antike wiedergibt. In diesem Umfeld wurden Gegenstände im Gebrauch, die eine gewünschte Vorstellung von der Antike weckten.

Einen Abschnitt seines Vortrags widmete Staiger dem Vergleich zwischen Mörike und den hellenistischen Dichtern: „‚Auf eine Lampe'" legt mindestens einen Vergleich mit griechischer Lyrik nahe. Der Titel meint zwar keine Inschrift. Er klingt aber

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me" Marmorlampe ist jedoch ausführlich bei Beazley, *A Marmor Lamp*, 22–49 analysiert.

28 In erwähntem Wörterbuch fand ich eine ausführliche Beschreibung mit Illustrationen der in der Antike verwendeten Arten von Lampen, Leuchtern und Kronleuchtern.

gleich wie die Überschriften eigentlich epigrammatischer Dichtung. In der „Anthologia Palatina", ... finden wir denn auch geistesverwandte Stücke, und zwar besonders aus der Zeit der hellenistischen Poesie, ..., also aus einer Epoche, mit der sich Mörike gern beschäftigt hat...." (Staiger, *Kunst*, 24). Staigers Grundgedanke, dass sich ein Vergleich zwischen Mörike und den hellenistischen Dichtern ziehen lässt (das Besingen von individuellen Räumen und edlen Gegenständen, das Fehlen eines politischen Bezugs), kann man bestätigen. Beschränke ich den Vergleich jedoch auf das Bild der Lampe in den Epigrammen der Epoche des Hellenismus (4.-1. Jahrhundert v.Chr.), dann fällt nicht die Ähnlichkeit, sondern der Unterschied auf: bei Mörike ist die Lampe ein anmutiges Artefakt von eigenem Wert, während sie in den Epigrammen ihre Hauptfunktion bewahrt, nämlich eine Lichtquelle und nicht Gegenstand einer Beschreibung oder Bewunderung zu sein. Das lyrische Ich verleiht ihr eine Seele und spricht sie meist als Zeugen von Liebesbegegnungen an. In einigen der Epigramme kommen als Leuchter die in der Antike am meisten verbreiteten Keramiklampen vor. Das Material, aus dem die Lampe hergestellt ist, und die Frage, ob sie anmutig ist, sind dabei unwesentlich. Das Wichtigste ist, dass ihr Licht eine Kraft jenseits der physikalischen besitzt. Die Lampe erhellt die Liebesszenen, denn Licht und liebevolles Zusammensein sind Synonyme, ihr Antonym sind Dunkelheit und Trennung; bei einer Trennung flackert die Lampe (der Docht) auf und erlischt. Kein anderer als die Lampe kann Zeuge der Liebesnacht sein (V. 4). Das Zugießen von Öl in die Lampe und ihr Licht stehen im Zusammenhang mit Manneskraft, das Erlöschen, mit dem Wunsch nach männlicher Schwäche.[29] In den Liebesepigrammen in Buch V ist die Lampe

[29] Aus Platzmangel gebe ich nur die Zahlen der Epigramme an: V. 7, 165, 166, 279; VI. 333). Angaben aus *Anthologia graeca*. Die römischen Zahlen bezeichnen das Buch, die arabischen das Epigramm. S. auch S. 27–40 der Einführung.

ein Bild der Lebenskraft, die Liebe öffnet sich dem Kosmischen im Grundwiderspruch zwischen Licht und Dunkelheit. Zwar haben sowohl die hellenistischen Dichter, als auch Mörike eine Vorliebe für private Räume, doch das Bewohnen dieser Räume ist unterschiedlich. Ob die Lampe nun eine Metapher für liebesvolles Zusammensein oder Trennung ist[30], in beiden Fällen (brennend und erloschen) ist sie am Liebeserleben beteiligt, während bei Mörike der ästhetische Gegenstand durch Verselbständigung und Abgeschlossenheit entsteht.[31]

„Auf eine Lampe" kann als Metonymie der sich in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts durchsetzenden modernen ästhetischen Form dienen. Eine starke Legitimation (wenn auch nicht die einzige) ihrer Durchsetzung ist die erklärte Erbschaft der Antike. Deshalb bin ich der Auffassung, dass es historisch durchaus begründet ist, das Gedicht in den Blickwinkel zu rücken, den Schillers „Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen" eröffnete, wie es Ilse Graham Appelbaum tut, während Heideggers These, dass „das Gedicht das in der Sprache ruhende Symbol des Kunstwerkes überhaupt" sei, die Universalisierung einer historischen Leistung bedeutet. Graham Appelbaum verweist auf die Beschreibung, die Schiller (im fünfzehnten Brief) von der Statue der Juno Ludovisi abgibt: „In sich selbst ruhet und wohnt die ganze Gestalt, eine völlig geschlossene Schöpfung ...; da ist keine Kraft, die mit Kräften kämpfte, keine Blöße, wo die Zeitlichkeit einbrechen könnte." (Schiller, *Werke V.*, 618–

[30] Zur Synonymie von Licht, Lampe und Liebe s. Grillparzer „Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen", 1840, und zum Zusammenhang mit „Auf eine Lampe" s. Politzer, *Heros Lampe*, 432–437, und hier auf S. 433 die zusammenfassende Formulierung „Darüber hinaus ist sie [die Lampe] das herkömmliche Sinnzeichen der Leidenschaft, die sich in ihrem Licht entfaltet und mit dessen Verlöschen erlischt."

[31] Eine ausführliche literaturgeschichtliche und psychologische Analyse der Beziehung Mörikes zur Antike s. bei Enzinger, *Kommentar*, 20–26.

619) Im zweiundzwanzigsten Brief gelangt Schiller zu folgendem Schluss: „... nur der ästhetische [Zustand] ist ein Ganzes in sich selbst, da er alle Bedingungen seines Ursprungs und seiner Fortdauer in sich vereinigt. Hier allein fühlen wir uns wie aus der Zeit gerissen;" (Schiller, *Werke V.*, 637) Das vollständige gegenseitige Durchdringen von Material und Form, wie auch die dadurch ausgelösten Gefühle und das, worin das Wesen der Kunst liegt, entdeckt Schiller bei den alten Griechen. Die Verfasserin vertritt die Ansicht, dass „Auf eine Lampe" Schillers Kunstauffassung bestätigt. (Graham, *Mörikes Gedicht*, 330–332) Im Bild der Lampe bei Mörike gibt es keine Funktionselemente, denn sie würden das Alltägliche einbringen und die anmutige Festlichkeit des Artefakts, sein Dasein außerhalb der Zeit zerstören. Einen Eindruck von Ewigkeit vermittelt auch die runde Form des Efeukranzes aus Bronze, der den Rand der Schale umflicht, und die goldengrüne edle Kupferpatina (patina nobile) bewirkt Ähnliches – der Zeit zu widerstehen, und mehr noch, sich über sie zu erheben. Der Efeu ist wie alle immergrünen Pflanzen ein Sinnbild der Ewigkeit. „Schlingt fröhlich eine Kinderschar den Ringelreih'n." Es fragt sich, was unter „fröhlich" zu verstehen ist – ein braves Sich-im-Kreis-drehen, wie es Spitzer annimmt, oder ein lebhafterer Tanz. Im einen Fall hätten wir es mit Ausgewogenheit, Gleichmaß und Feierlichkeit zu tun, mit etwas, das die Kinder zum Ausdruck des Gedankens der Klassik machen würde, im anderen Fall mit Lebhaftigkeit, Unbändigkeit, mit all dem, das Heidegger mit dem Dionysischen in Verbindung bringt (obwohl er das Dionysische in der goldengrünen Farbe des Efeukranzes sieht).Wenn der fröhliche Tanz der Kinder nicht ganz artig ist, sondern eher wild, würde dies das Gleichgewicht der klassischen Form ins Wanken bringen. In Spitzers Interpretation werden das Exzessive, das Korybantische zwar benannt, jedoch als negative Eigenschaften, die nicht zur klassischen Form gehören. Sowohl Spitzers, als auch Heideggers Assoziationen sind jedoch auf die Antike ausgerich

tet, wenn auch auf zwei entgegengesetzte Darstellungen von ihr, die aber nicht weniger der Moderne angehören.

IV

Das Ruhen in sich selbst und die Loslösung von der Zeit können außer einem Ideal der ästhetischen Form und der Schönheit auch den Verzicht auf Kommunikation und auf Vitalität bedeuten – ein seliges Verweilen in Selbstgenügsamkeit. „Die Götter der griechischen Kunst sind selig, insofern ihr Gefühl Gestalt geworden ist. Dies ist die Seligkeit, die Mörike der – personifizierten – schönen Lampe zuspricht; die Seligkeit eines jeden, von äußeren Bezügen losgelösten, in eignem Gleichgewichte sich erhaltenden Kunstwerks." (Graham, *Mörikes Gedicht*, 332) Doch eben diese Selbstgenügsamkeit und der darin verborgene Anspruch auf ewige Gültigkeit bergen die Gefahr, dass die ästhetische Form, die Lampe, zu einem Idol und/oder Fetisch wird. Und nicht von ungefähr wirft ein Religionsphilosoph wie Romano Guardini die Frage auf, was mit der Existenz des Dinges, mit seiner Schönheit geschieht, wenn es nichts mehr mit Menschen zu tun hat, was das einsame Seligsein in sich selbst zu bedeuten hat. Ist die Schönheit anfangs anziehend, so bleibt das Ding mit der Zeit nicht mehr „selig in sich selbst", weder im Gefühl des Betrachters, noch in der Offenbarung seines eigenen Wesens, sondern es wird erschreckend. An einigen Stellen seiner Überlegung spricht Guardini vom Unheimlich-Drohenden als dem Zustand eines Wesens, das jeglicher Verbundenheit beraubt ist, und sogar vom Magisch-Drohenden der Schönheit, sofern sie selbstgenügsam ist. Guardini spricht zwar nicht vom Idol, doch ich glaube, dass es das ist, was er als „magisch" bezeichnet. (Guardini, *Auslegung*, 30–33)

Da ich der Auffassung bin, dass die Lampe in bedrohlicher und drohender Isoliertheit existiert, kann ich – unter Berücksichtigung der Willkürlichkeit der Lesart – den ersten Vers („Noch unverrückt, o schöne Lampe, schmückest du") nicht nur als „Noch unverrückt, oder noch stärker: unverdrängt" auflösen, sonder auch als „noch nicht verrückt, schmückest du". Es gibt keinen Grund, die Lampe zu personifizieren, indem man ihr einen Seelenzustand zuschreibt, andererseits aber wendet ist sie im Gedicht personifiziert – die Stimme des lyrischen Ichs spricht sie an.[32] Ich wähle diese willkürliche Deutung von „unverrückt", um die Bemühung aufzuzeigen, mit der das Klassische als Harmonie der Einzelteile und Ausgeglichenheit des Ganzen dargestellt wird. Eine Bemühung, die den drohenden sozialen und psychischen Konflikt, das fehlende äußere und innere Gleichgewicht verdecken soll.[33] Einen Zustand potentieller Verrücktheit beschreibt Mörike in einem Brief an Johannes Mährlen vom 7. Mai 1829. Beim Lesen des Briefwechsels zwischen Goethe und Schiller, „in heiliger klassischer Atmosphäre" und sozusagen „die Seele der Kunst" anschauend, am Ende

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[32] Als Argument für diese Distanz weist Weithase darauf hin, dass die Anrede „o schöne Lampe" lautet, und nicht „du, schöne Lampe", und dass auch die Überschrift nicht „An eine Lampe", sondern „Auf eine Lampe" ist. (Weithase, *Versuch*, 78).

[33] Bennett bietet eine Interpretation, in der er „unverrückt" als „nicht verrückt" (nicht wahnsinnig) liest. (Bennett, *Politics*). Dieser Gedanke steht bei ihm nicht im Zusammenhang mit klassischer Kunst, doch bestärkt mich sein Artikel in der Überzeugung, dass eine solche Lesart möglich ist, wenn auch wohl nur für ein Sprachverständnis, für das das Deutsche nicht Muttersprache ist. Eine Bestätigung der Bedrohung – nicht nur äußerer (ein Verrücken der Lampe), sondern auch innerer (Verlust des Gleichgewichts) – ist, so scheint mir, auch in Weithases Beobachtung erkennbar: „Das Nachdenkliche, ja Bedenkliche, geboren aus dem Wissen um die Möglichkeit des Verrücktwerdens und der Störung der alten Ordnung, zeigt sich am Gedichtanfang in einem etwas verlangsamten Tempo." (Weithase, *Versuch*, 74).

des Lesens, bereits nach Mitternacht „...geriet meine Phantasie auf ganz fremde Abwege; ich durchlief die benachbarten Zellen des Irrenhauses und wühlte in der nächtlichen Fratzenwelt ihrer Träume; auf die schöne Tagesklarheit Deines Büchleins grinsten tausend Narrengesichter, die mit ihren tiefpfiffigen Augen mich fast überredeten, die Philosophen liegen in einem entsetzlichen Irrtum, und nur sie, die Narren, wären hinter die Gardine des göttlichen Verstandes gekommen..." (Mörike, *Werke und Briefe*, 30) Schilderungen oder Thematisierungen von Zuständen, die den Verstand gefährden, lassen sich auch in „Maler Nolten" und in der Zeichnung „Traumerscheinung" nachweisen.

Albrecht Holschuh wehrt sich vehement gegen Interpretationen, laut denen nur die Lampe selig sei, denn es „vollbringt bei Mörike die Leistung ein Betrachter.... ... Am Anfang ist die Lampe bloss schön und ohne Wirkung. Dann tritt der Mensch ins Gemach und gibt ihr durch seine Sprache Leben. Wenn am Ende das, was schön ist, selig in ihm selbst scheint, bleibt zwischen dem Ich und dem sprachlichen Kunstwerk kein Unterschied." (Holschuh, *Wem leuchtet*, 591) Der Behauptung, die Schönheit genüge sich, wie alles Göttliche, selbst, hält Holschuh entgegen: „Nein: ohne Menschen keine Götter." „Daß Generationen von Literaturwissenschaftlern beim Besprechen von „Auf eine Lampe" die menschliche Hälfte vernachlässigt haben, hatte ... zwei Gründe. ... der bedeutendere Grund, befreit sich das Kultur-Establishment nur zögernd von einer menschenunfreundlichen Kunstauffassung. Auch heute noch (im Jahre 1991, Anm. d. Verf.) wirkt der Glaube an das autonome Kunstwerk als Rechtfertigung für die Geheimnisträgerei einer Kulturpriesterschaft." (Holschuh, *Wem leuchtet*, 592)

Holschuh kritisiert mit Recht die Interpreten, die die Auffassung vom autonomen Kunstwerk vertreten, geht jedoch nicht der Frage nach, ob das Kunstwerk in der Moderne nicht Anlass für eine derartige Interpretation gibt, ob die Reflexion, die er stichhaltig

kritisiert, nicht der künstlerischen Form entspricht, wie sie sich im 19. Jahrhundert in Europa herausbildete und entfaltete. Mit anderen Worten – ob die moderne Kunstform nicht Autonomie und Sakralisierung anstrebt. R. Selbmann folgt Holschuh und erklärt sogar noch nachdrücklicher, dass die bisherigen Lesarten des letzten Verses falsch sind. „Auf eine Lampe" sei kein Plädoyer für das autonome Kunstwerk, sondern genau das Gegenteil; es gehe um die Subjektivität der ästhetischen Wahrnehmung, die sich als objektive ausgebe (Selbmann, *Erotik der Poesie*, 593–595). Die Interpretationen von Holschuh und von Selbmann, veranschaulichen eine unterschiedliche Haltung nicht nur zu „Auf eine Lampe", sondern zum poetischen Text überhaupt. Dennoch gewinnt man bei beiden Autoren den Eindruck, dass das Kunstwerk keiner Kritik unterliegt, dass das Herangehen an die Kunst nur hermeneutisch-affirmativ sein kann. Diese Position ist aber den von ihnen kritisierten früheren Interpretationen gleich.

V

Für das seltene Wort Lustgemach gibt Grimms Wörterbuch folgende Erklärung: „gemach, in dem man zur lust weilt." (Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*)[34] Erstmals belegt ist „Lustgemach" bei Adam Olearius in seiner bearbeiteten Übersetzung des „Persianischen Rosenthals" von Saadi. „Lustgemach" ist im Sechsten Buch, Erste Historia anzutreffen. Hier geht es um das Gleichnis eines sterbenden Alten, der, obwohl hundertfünfzig Jahre alt, bedauert, dass er einige Gerichte der Tafel seines langen Lebens nicht noch länger genießen kann. In der Erzählung kommt das Wort „Eiwan" vor, das Olearius mit „Lustgemach" übersetzt und es, um es den deutschen Lesern näher zu bringen, mit Speisezimmer vergleicht. „Diesem

[34] Ebenso „Ein Lustgemach ist ein bequemes Zimmer mit Bett, in dem man sich aufhält um lustvolle Dinge zu tun." (*Deutsches Semina*)

[Eiwan] war nicht ungleich der Römer coenaculum." Einige Zeilen weiter erläutert der Autor, was Sandelholz bedeutet und wofür es im Orient verwendet wird. (Olearius, *Persianischer Rosenthal*, 123–24)[35]. Der Kontext, in welchem „Lustgemach" auftritt, kreiert eine Atmosphäre orientalischer Exotik (das Alter des betagten Mannes, die Speisen des Lebens, das Sandelholz), die gleichzeitig mit der für den europäischen Barock charakteristischen Synästhesie verbunden ist, wie auch mit der Erweiterung der Kenntnisse und des Einfühlungsvermögens der Europäer in Bezug auf den Orient. „Lustgemach" gehört zu den zweigliedrigen Wörtern, die im 17.-18. Jahrhundert für Räume verwendet wurden, in denen man sich diverser sinnlicher Genüsse erfreuen konnte. Worte wie Lustraum, Lusthaus, Lustschloss, Lustgarten, Lustwald, Lustpartie oder Lustort überwinden nicht die Zeit, sondern die Zwängen unterliegende Lebenswelt, in der Ängste und Sorgen herrschen. Diese Worte erzeugen Bilder einer diffusen, doch ersehnten Welt, unabhängig davon, ob sie für persische Lustgemächer, chinesische Landschaften, für Neapel oder abgeschiedene barocke Sommerschlösser, Pavillons oder Gärten verwendet wurden. Die Exotik impliziert Ferne, geografische und kulturelle; sie drückt die Sehnsüchte der Europäer, am Ende des 18. und in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts nach einem Verhältnis zum Genuss aus, dass in ihrem eigenen Milieu nicht, anderswo jedoch als imaginär durchaus möglich war.

Lustgemach kann jedoch auch jenes Gemach der Lust bedeuten, in dem für gewöhnlich das Ehebett stand (thalamos) – eine Metonymie sowohl für die Sexualität, als auch für den Ehebund selbst. „Auf eine Lampe" verbindet den imaginären Orient und das europäische Artefakt. Das Wort, das das Artefakt bezeichnet, „Kunstgebild", vermittelt sowohl etwas Organisches, als auch etwas Kunstvolles, aber ebenso auch orientalische

[35] Auf dem Einband des mir zugänglichen Exemplars stand 1654 als Erscheinungsjahr, auf der Titelseite jedoch Anno MDCLX.

Pracht. Grimms Wörterbuch gibt einerseits seine Verwendung bei Herder an, die den Muskelaufbau als ein verflochtenes Kunstgebilde aus Fasern beschreibt, und andererseits die Verwendung bei Schiller, die auf den Orient verweist. In der „Braut von Messina" (1803), erster Aufzug, siebenter Auftritt beschreibt Don Manuel die prächtige gegenständliche Atmosphäre eines Basars: „... wo die Mohren zum Verkauf / Ausstellen, was das Morgenland erzeugt / An edelm Stoff und feinem Kunstgebild." (Schiller, *Werke II*, 849–850; v. 812–45) Zur natürlichen Kunst der Natur in der Bedeutung von „Kunstgebild" (Herder) kommt die meisterhafte Fertigung von Gegenständen: die einen sind antik, wie die Leuchter, die Goethe in Portici sah, die anderen ungewöhnlicher, weil exotisch. Und somit verschmelzen natürliche und kulturelle Eigenschaften (Antike und Orient) miteinander in der Gestalt der Lampe und, was entscheidender ist, in der Gestalt des „Kunstgebilds der echten Art". Das Gedicht erzeugt ein heterogenes Bild des Klassischen.

Vergleichbar damit ist die Verwendung „Lustzelt" im ersten Teil von „Peter Schlemihls wundersamer Geschichte" (1813) von Adelbert von Chamisso. Das Wort steht in einem Kontext, in dem die auf spektakuläre Weise aufgetauchten Dinge sowohl der europäischen Moderne, als auch dem sinnenbetörenden Orient entstammen: englisches Pflaster, ein Fernroh[36], ein golddurchwirkter türkischer Teppich und „... drei schöne, große Rappen mit Sattel und Zeug". Die Handlung spielt auf einem Hügel mit Rosensträuchern, von dem aus der Ozean zu sehen ist. Der Hügel, das Tal, der Rosenhain und die Verletzung der schönen Fanny an den Dornen können sowohl auf das Bild der Rose in Europa bezogen werden, als auch auf das, was die Europäer in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts als Orient begreifen. Das Zelt wird über dem Teppich aufgespannt, mit dessen Maßen sein Grundriss übereinstimmt; das

[36] Das für „Fernrohr" verwendete Wort ist hier Dollond, benannt nach seinem Hersteller John Dollond (1706–1761).

so entstandene Bild erinnert an eine orientalische Miniatur (Chamisso, *Werke I.*, 19–21).

Um den Gedanken von Lust und Erotik zu untermauern, wäre noch zu ergänzen, dass der Mikrokontext des Verses „Die Schöne bleibt sich selbst selig" aus „Faust" zwei Arten weiblicher Schönheit einander gegenüberstellt: die eine ist erstarrt, ohne Leben, die andere, mit unwiderstehlicher Anmut, voller Vitalität und Lebensfreude. Der erste Schönheitstyp, der sich selbst selig ist, erweckt Assoziationen mit der Leblosigkeit einer Statue (ein starres Bild). Es wäre unbegründet, so wie auf die Verse 7399–7405 aus dem „Faust" bezogen, auch bei „Auf eine Lampe" nur von ästhetisch empfundener Schönheit zu sprechen, die bar jeder Erotik ist. Es gibt einige Interpretationen, nach denen das Gedicht eine gewisse Erotik birgt. Die Verfasser stützen sich dabei sowohl auf eine Textanalyse, als auch auf den Einfluss der altgriechischen und römischen Dichtung auf Mörike. (Selbmann, *Erotik der Poesie*, 595–97)[37] Mörike beschäftigte sich fortwährend mit antiker Dichtung, er übersetzte oder bearbeitete schon vorhandene deutsche Übersetzungen, versah sie mit Anmerkungen und Vorworten.[38]

Ich sehe keinen überzeugenden Grund, nur eine der möglichen Bedeutungen auszuwählen, seien sie nun lexikalischer oder kulturgeschichtlicher Natur, ich beziehe sie lieber gleichzeitig in meine Überlegungen ein. Aus diesem Grund ist das vom „Lustgemach" erschaffene Bild der Lust und der Erotik (un)klassisch, ausgehend vom Klassik-Verständnis der zweiten Hälfte des 18. und der

[37] Selbmann vertritt die Auffassung, „Auf eine Lampe" sei erotische Dichtung.

[38] Die Anthologie „Classische Blumenlese" erschien 1840, die Übersetzungen Anakreons 1864. (Mörike *Sämtliche Werke II*, 830–940). Chronologie und Kommentar zu Mörikes Beschäftigung mit dem Schaffen altgriechischer und römischer Dichter s. Unger, *Mörike Kommentar*, 151–159. Ebenda zur „Anthologia graeca" (152–153).

ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Das Gedicht „Auf eine Lampe lässt uns das Klassische als Ergebnis einer modernen Bündelung und Vermischung zweier Richtungen denken – auf der einen Seite haben wir die Tradition, die von der europäischen Antike kommt, und auf der anderen die orientalische Exotik, die für einen Teil Europas (einschließlich Deutschland) im gesamten 19. Jahrhundert aktuell war. In beiden Fällen ist „Lustgemach" jedoch ein Raum der Lüste. Das Klassische ist ex-zentrisch; der Raum, in dem die Lampe „scheint", ist (außer)europäisch.[39]

Nicht zuletzt zeigt das Bild der Lampe in dem Gedicht die Verhäuslichung der Klassik, die Wandlung vom Städtischen und Heroischen zur Melancholie und Verzierung (die schöne Lampe, an leichten Ketten zierlich aufgehangen, schmückt...). Die Lampe gehört kompromisshaft zur klassischen Kunst, denn es umgibt sie ein „Geist des Ernstes", der jedoch keine Strenge beinhaltet, wie es das klassische Ideal verlangen würde. Das Wissen um die klassische Antike, aber auch um die Lust an ihrer gegenständlichen Nachbildung ist zu einem Wert geworden, den die gebildete Schicht in Deutschland miteinander teilte. Der Markt antiker und antikisierender Gegenstände und von Kopien antiker Funde in unterschiedlicher Größe (meist aus Gips, aufgrund seiner Materialeigenschaften und des erschwinglichen Preises) unterstützte die beschauliche und individuelle Begegnung und Aneignung von verschiedenen Elementen der Antike. In einem Brief an Luise Rau vom 10.-11. Dezember 1831 schreibt Mörike: „Es (Goethes „Wilhelm Meister", Anm. d. Verf.) setzt mich wunderbar in Harmonie mit der Welt, mit mir selbst, mit Allem. Das, dünkt mich, ist das wahrste Kriterium eines Kunstwerks überhaupt. Das thut Homer und jede Antike Statue. Eine gute Gipsfigur muss einmal

[39] Eine andere Interpretation des Wortes „Lustgemach" deutet es al Fest- und Tanzsaal. „Saal in einem meist großen Haus, wo Feste, Tänz veranstaltet werden."

in unser Zimmer, das sag' ich Dir." (Mörike, *Werke und Briefe*, 239). Das Bild der Lampe vermittelt das Erlebnis des Klassischen in geschlossenen, überwiegend privaten Räumen in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts. In dem Moment, da man eine maßstabsverkleinerte Kopie des Parthenon, des Diskuswerfers oder der Pallas Athene haben konnte, gesellte sich zur monumentalen und öffentlichen Dimension des Klassischen das Familiäre und Gemütliche. Zwar ein historisches Interesse vorhanden ist, die Statuen aber sind zu Statuetten geworden. Die Statuetten aus hellenistischer Zeit passen jedoch vollkommen zum häuslichen Raum und Geschmack der Biedermeier-Zeit. Mit dem Angebot von Kopien von Statuen unterschiedlicher Epochen der Antike „verhält sich" der Markt "historischer" als die sehnsuchtsvolle Idealisierung der Antike als heiliges Maß, einzigartige Harmonie und klare, oder appolinische Heiterkeit. Dieses Bild der Antike ist nur möglich, wenn man zielgerichtet vergisst, dass es in der Antike auch das Gegenteil der genannten Charakteristika gegeben hat, und dass ihre kulturelle Geographie die des Mittelmeers ist, uneinheitlich und mit widersprüchlichen Tendenzen.

Das private Erschließen der antiken Klassik durch Besitzen verleiht den Gegenständen eine ästhetische Funktion, die sie zuvor nicht besaßen. Die Ästhetisierung des Gegenstandes kommt dadurch zustande, dass dieser über den Rahmen der realen Kommunikationsbeziehungen, in denen er (in diesem Falle die Lampe) existiert hatte, hinaus getragen wird. Die Ästhetisierung macht den Gegenstand zu einem Museumsexponat[40], wodurch die Wahrnehmung des Gegenstandes außerhalb der Zeit verstärkt wird. Der Gegenstand wird über die Unsicherheiten und Wandlungen der Geschichte hinweg zur Klassik erhoben.

[40] Eines ähnlichen Verfahrens – der Entfremdung eines (meist) alltäglichen Gegenstandes von seiner Funktion – bediente sich Ende der 1950er und in den 1960er Jahren die Spätavantgarde, nur mit entgegengesetztem Ergebnis – der Entästhetisierung.

Diese Tendenz, künstlerische, historische und Naturgegenstände öffentlichen musealen oder in privaten Sammlungen zusammenzustellen, wird ab dem zweiten Jahrzehnt des 19. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland offensichtlich. Der Gegenstand in „Auf eine Lampe" ist zu einem Artefakt geworden – schön und sich selbst genügend.[41]

S. Fliegner sieht die kulturhistorische Tendenz, Gegenständen verschiedener Art Museumsstatus zu verleihen, in der Idylle „Der alte Turmhahn". Die Wetterfahne in Form eines Hahns wird nach hundertunddreizehn Jahren Dienst abgesetzt, doch vom Pfarrer mitgenommen, der ihn auf den alten Ofen in seinem Arbeitszimmer stellt. Das neue „Lebens"-Umfeld des Turmhahns gewährt ihm Schutz vor den äußeren Gefahren und weist idyllische (ahistorische) Eigenschaften auf.[42] Später erhält der reale Wetterhahn, dem die o.g. Idylle gewidmet ist, auf regelrecht magische Weise gleichermaßen den Status von Ewigkeit und von einem gedruckten Bild. Mörike nahm den ausrangierten Veteran mit in seine Wohnung, brachte ihn 1866 zu einem Fotografen und verschickte danach die Fotografie als Visitenkarte. Als moderne Erfindung nimmt die Fotografie durch die Vervielfältigung zwar die Einzigartigkeit des Wetterhahns, doch bestätigt sie zugleich mittels der visuellen Form das Althergebrachte des Gegenstandes. Heute befindet sich der glückliche Wetterhahn im Schiller-Nationalmuseum Marbach, ist also im buchstäblichen Sinne zu einem Museumsstück geworden. (Fliegner, *Dichter*, 193–194)

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[41] S. Fliegner nimmt eine kurze, doch äußerst interessante Analys von „Auf eine Lampe" vor, und zwar unter dem Aspekt des Verhältniss von Kunstgegenstand und Industrieerzeugnis. Ihre Studie positionier Mörikes Werk unter den verschiedenen Formen von künstlerischer Ge selligkeit und kunstbezogenen außerberuflichen Tätigkeiten in der erste Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts (Fliegner *Dichter*, 192–193).

[42] Zum Verhältnis von Idylle und Geschichte in „Der alte Turmhahn s. A. Böhn im *Mörike-Handbuch*, 150–152.

Von privaten Räumen auf das Nationale übertragen, sollen die ästhetischen Eigenschaften das Bild sozialer Harmonie erzeugen, welches seelische Behaglichkeit vermittelt und Konflikte bemäntelt. So wird eine konfliktfreie nationale Identität möglich. Im Unterschied vom privaten Räum, verlässt dieses Bild jedoch das „Reich der Schönheit" und wird zur Ideologie, zu einem Instrument bestimmter Interessen und bestimmter potentieller oder tatsächlicher Macht.

Ich habe mehrere Öllampen/Leuchter in Museen in Ungarn, Bulgarien, Griechenland aufgenommen, um mich über die Massenverbreitung dieses Erzeugnisses auch außerhalb der damaligen deutschen Länder zu vergewissern. Von denen zeige ich hier nur eine.

Der Leuchter ist „auf leichten Ketten" aufgehängt. Die Form und die Ausschmückung sind stilisierter von der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts, das Material aber ist nicht Marmor, sondern Messing. Der Leuchter ist kein kostbares Erzeugnis, sondern ein Massenprodukt.



№ 1. Öllampe (Leuchter), Messing. Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts. Ich habe keine Daten über der Herkunft und die Größe. Regionales Ethnographisches Museum, Plovdiv



№ 2. Öllampe (Leuchter), Messing. Detail. Regionales Ethnographisches Museum, Plovdiv

Mein Dank gilt Dimitar Iliev, Darin Tenev, Anita Kasabova, Mirena Slavova, Dorothea Tabakova und Ivo Panov für die Beratung zur Interpretation der Worte „reizend" und „Lustgemach".

Übersetzung vom Bulgarischen – Elvira Bormann

Besonders verpflichtet bin ich für die Redaktion der deutschen Fassung Herrn Dr. habil. Dobri Witschew.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

«К ЛАМПЕ» ЭДУАРДА МЁРИКЕ: АВТОНОМНОСТЬ И ГЕТЕРОГЕННОСТЬ «КЛАССИЧЕСКОЙ» ФОРМЫ

Из всего поэтического творчества Эдуарда Мёрике чаще всего толкуют стихотворение «К лампе», о чем можно судить по библиографии к критическим изданиям его сочинений. Благодаря спору, начавшемуся с письма Мартина Хайдеггера Эмилю Штайгеру, произведение «К лампе» приобрело дополнительную культурно-историческую значимость, превратилось в часть истории литературоведения второй половины XX в. История толкований стихотворения показала бы в миниатюре как менялись подходы и к поэтическому тексту, и к истории немецкой литературы за последние шестьдесят лет.

В первой части статьи анализируются некоторые из толкований стихотворения в качестве представительных для определенного современного понимания литературы. Это понимание возводит литературное произведение в ранг священного текста, а толкователь входит в роль жреца – обладателя священного знания, в которое он посвящает непосвященных. Художественная форма представляется божеством, а толкователи – служителями ее культа. Не ставятся под сомнение проницательность или чувствительность в отношении поэтического текста этих толкований, а их основания и социальная функция.

Во второй части сделана попытка обосновать как нестабильность классической формы лампы, так и ее гетерогенность, в которой античные, восточные элементы смешиваются с элементами XIX века. Рассматривается также социальная функция классической формы.

Делается вывод, что то, что обычно толкуется как классическое в стихотворении «К лампе», является смешением усвоения определенной античной традиции с экзотикой, идущей с Востока, популярной в европейских странах в первой половине XIX в. Классическое в форме лампы – нестабильное, а пространство, в котором она сияет не/европейское.

"AUF EINE LAMPE" BY EDUARD MÖRIKE: AUTONOMY AND HETEROGENEITY OF THE 'CLASSICAL' FORM

Eduard Mörike's poem "Auf eine Lampe" is the most frequently interpreted of all his poetical works, which can be proved by the bibliography to his critical editions. The history of the interpretations in a miniature manifests how the approach towards the poetical text as well as to the history of German literature during the last sixty years changes.

In the first part of the article, I analyse several interpretations of the poem, which are representative for a specific modern attitude towards literature. I do not bring in question the interpreters' perspicacity or sensibility but their grounds and the social function of their interpretations.

In the second part, I try to give proofs of the instability of the lamp's classical form, as well as of its heterogeneity, in which intermingle Antique, Oriental and European elements from the nineteenth century. I also discuss the social function of the classical form.

I conclude that what is usually presented as a classical form in "Auf eine Lampe" is an intermingling in the adoption of the Antique tradition and the Oriental exoticism, which was popular in various European countries during the first half of the nineteenth century. The lamp's classical form in Mörike's "Auf eine Lampe" is unstable and the space where the lamp 'shines' is non-European.

EWA DUNAJ-KOZAKOW

OBJECTS, THE ONLY THINGS WORTH ANYTHING. MIRROR AS THE OBJECT/SUBJECT OF POEM

"There is a group of authors who get into me ... and there are such who keep out of me, or enter reluctantly ...".[1] Thus, in an ostentatiously 'barbaric' manner, Jacek Podsiadło flags up the problem of 'poetry incomprehensible', or rather, the need to find a new language of description (new criteria for evaluation) of the contemporary poetry: "to find a key that would facilitate the cracking of the access code to such creative output".[2] What the reader's discomfort is about is, namely, that "the [r]eading becomes an activity which has a great deal in common with stalking".[3]

Podsiadło counterpoints his 'sense of discomfort' with a citation from Andrzej Sosnowski: "... when the activity of reading poetry – strange as it is, after all – appears, a degree of complication and a wrest of the innocence occurs to the extent that almost anything becomes permissible. ... What is it that I am attracted

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1 Jacek Podsiadło, *Daj mi tam, gdzie mogę dobiec*, Tygodnik Powszechny, no. 24/2000, p. 9.

2 Ibidem.

3 Ibidem.

by in the language? The rhythm? Certainly so. I am attracted by the opportunity for meanings to appear beyond any intentionality; I am attracted by the movement of the language into beyond the predictable or acceptable senses. Language creates some space within which it leaves the field clear for itself to show its talents – or, to record its tallies, so to put it; methinks the record and the display are more or less the same thing in this context. There is always something exaggerated, something going beforehand in the labour on language: things that appear in passing, as it were; beyond the control of an intention and purpose, or perhaps, predestination."[4]

Podsiadło makes his point even clearer through replying to a question posed by Karol Maliszewski: "Why, then, not just 'bumble'?"[5] "I would answer, not contrary to what a writer or critic might intuit, perhaps – since the 'bumble' is so saturated with erudition, juggling semantic and syntactic acts (the latter within the limits of the law, though) and all the rest of it, that you are made believe a Supreme Will that organises it, itself remaining obliterated from the sight of the lesser folk."[6]

Entering into polemic with Podsiadło, in this same weekly magazine (*Tygodnik Powszechny*), Jacek Gutorow asks the following questions: "*What is* incomprehensible poetry? Can a poetry be 'comprehensible' or 'incomprehensible' by itself? What makes a piece of poetry 'hermetic'? The ease with which critics tend to use such set phrases is astonishing."[7] Gutorow suggests that one should rather "... start reading, using his or her own sensibility".[8] And, he

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4 Ibidem.

5 Karol Maliszewski, *Precyzja chaosu*, quoted after J. Podsiadło, op. cit., p. 9.

6 Podsiadło, op. cit., p. 9.

7 Jacek Gutorow, *O poezji niezrozumiałej*, Tygodnik Powszechny, no. 35/2000, p. 12.

8 Ibidem.

concludes his argument with a rather arbitrary ascertainment: "For me, reading poems ... is not an act of 'torture' but is a great adventure instead. What is the charm of this adventure about? First, there is, simply, no ready-to-use explanation; then, the adventure is unpredictable – which is true not for 'certain limits' but it goes so across the meaning of the poem. Does everything have to be explained, or explainable? Would a poem comprising within itself all the possible solutions and tracks of the reading be a poem still? Has such a piece of poetry ever existed?".[9]

This somewhat showy discourse was, clearly, a sort of a game for the behoof of the readers; yet, above the surface of intellectual play one can find quite serious conclusions showing how unbefitting or, indeed, useless some traditional cognitive instruments have become with respect to the poetry whose paramount feature is, apparently, 'incomprehensibility'. We can also read between the lines an invitation to make interpretative attempts, however extremely subjective or doomed to failure they might be.

Encouraged by the aforementioned ascertainment, I have revisited the poems of an author who is considered to be one of the outstanding exponents of his generation, and made an attempt to 'stalk'. I see Andrzej Niewiadomski as one of those authors who do 'get into me', albeit many a reader would consider his poetry 'incomprehensible'; such is his ironical self-portrayal, at least.

Offstage, we have been acquainted with each other for a number of years, sharing the workplace (a university) and contributing, each of us in their own way, to the literary activities of a rather small milieu. I read poems by Niewiadomski attentively, and have reviewed his volumes of poetry for the literary-and-artistic periodical *Akcent*.

Niewiadomski offers an extremely dense poetry, full of multilayered meanings and connotations, which imply an underlying requisite to search for tracks or tropes encoded by the author, com-

[9] Ibidem.

pletely beyond any 'logical sequels of (inter)relations'[10]. Although the discussion on the contemporary (apparently, 'incomprehensible') uses the peculiarly hermetic output of Andrzej Sosnowski (primarily, his volume *Opera. Konwój*) as an on-call example, each of the comments I will quote herein below may equally refer to Niewiadomski's poems.

Before he ever entered the discourse of 'poetry incomprehensible', Niewiadomski emphasised the need to find one's own pitch "... outside the one-sided (and boring) poetry of existence, ... in a world where a new poetic quality is formed of a convolution of various elements or the life beyond them, one in which you are more demanding toward yourself – escaping and confusing the chases, and toward the reader – trailing where a certain game is played, perhaps not for the sheer sake of the game."[11]

Paradoxically, a situation like this gives the reader extraordinary opportunities, consisting in a thorough freedom of choice among the various research methodologies, overlapping methods of reading/interpreting, and associations – without getting bothered about charges of oversubjectivised reception or overinterpreation. For if, while aware of the discourse convention, we intently listen to the rationale behind the postulates proposed by the adversaries, we shall certainly spot the subjective nature of the assessments and judgments pronounced.[12]

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[10] Podsiadło, op. cit., p. 9.

[11] Andrzej Niewiadomski's statement made in an interview entitled *Misja. Styczeń 1998* (interviewees: Arkadiusz Bagłajewski, critic and historian of literature, editor-in-chief of Lublin-based quarterly Kresy, and Andrzej Niewiadomski, poet and literary critic, editor of Kresy; in Przemysław Czapliński, Piotr Śliwiński, *Kontrapunkt. Rozmowy o książkach*, Poznań 1999, p. 137.

[12] In presenting the major phenomena identifiable in the works of young Polish authors, P. Czapliński and P. Śliwiński, having made reference to Janusz Sławiński' article *Zanik centrali* (Kresy, 2/1994), coin the phrase "...our necessarily arrogant 'index of young poetry'"; in Przemysław

In his essay on 'poetry incomprehensible', which followed up the discourse commenced in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Niewiadomski finds that "Poetry is not anything identifiable with a sustainable pattern, be it self-therapeutic, biographical, based on myth and magic, or on a sense of cultural continuity. What poetry is about is, basically, elusive: the unutterable relationship between a 'voice' ['*głos*'] and a 'destiny' ['*los*'], a script and an existence, if such a relationship exists and remains undisturbed by the sonority of a 'rhyme' (the relationship between multiplicity of random voices and circumstantial existence whose only expression is undeciphered voices). As intended by the author, poetry ought to be something barely 'graspable', 'opaquely shaped'.[13] Thus, the reader who reads poetry and quests for its meanings is expected not really to linearly reconstruct the story being woven but, rather, to spot a "... turn with a sequence of signs .."[14] and an "...unpredictable distance between the sign and the reality."[15]

"Hence, the proposed reading is a suggestion to unceasingly follow the repositions within a space that is continually enriched with new signs (drawn, after all, from a 'tradition'); to trace the changes of the position of the 'I' in relation to these signs: an 'I' that is, to a large extent, (being) created by these very signs and which instantaneously destroys any situation that begins telegraphing some permanency, or even a simulation of it".[16]

Andrzej Niewiadomski's verse volume entitled *Tremo* continues and extends the author's previous book, *Locja*. The persona and character is a sailor, a traveller, who has unexpectedly arrived ashore

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Czapliński, Piotr Śliwiński, *Literatura polska 1976-1998. Przewodnik po prozie i poezji*, Kraków 1999, p. 319.

13 Andrzej Niewiadomski, *Poezja niezrozumiała, czyli o nadzwyczaj trwałym nieporozumieniu krytycznym. Rekonesans badawczy*, Teksty Drugie, no. 4/2004, p. 129.

14 Ibidem.

15 Ibidem.

16 Ibidem.

(though not at a destination port). In spite of his exquisitely mastered sailing skills, versatility in maps and courses set, the sailor is not capable of sailing forth any longer. His wayfaring turns into an errance, from port to port, from one harbourage to another. Apparently, no direction or point of compass is identifiable anymore; no order of space or time determinable. The reason is, perhaps, that the world in which the speaking 'I' moves about is composed of words, rather than occurrences, places and/or persons: a universe that is 'reflected' in the writing individual's consciousness, as if in a large multifaceted mirror.

A word of French origin (*trumeau*), '*tremo*', renderable into English as 'pier glass', stands in Polish for an antiquated tall mirror, usually stretched across the wall and at times equipped with movable side wings; or, sometimes, permanently fixed above the fireplace or on the ceiling. A sheet inside which you can watch a thing (yourself) in its (your) entirety, from three angles at a time, as in a cubistic painting. The mirrored image is like a freeze-frame: objective, cool, emotionless. It reveals things the unaided eye cannot see: chaos, decay, and evanescence.

Nie pamiętaj, zniszcz i wyrzuć	Remember not, damage and banish
rzeczy, które nie są już potrzebne:	the things no-one needs anymore:
marynarska czapka, mundurek z błyszczącą kotwicą,	a sailor hat, a uniform with a glistening anchor,
spodenki ostrzępione przez wiatr	a pair of pants jagged around by wind
i czas: niech odetchną szafy, odpoczną serca uszczknięte przez mole,	and time: let the wardrobes breathe easy the hearts, nipped off by moths, relax,
łokcie na stołach, zafrasowane.	the elbows, troubled, on the tables.

Szkoła nawigacji	The school for navigation
rozpoczyna się raz jeszcze,	starts once again now,
od nowa:	anew:
lekcja konkretów i muzyki,	a lesson of the nitty-gritty,
lekcja języków i pięści,	a lesson of tongues and fists,
obłoku i piachu,	of cloud and of sand,
kolebki i przepaści.[17]	of cradle, and precipice.

Among "the things no-one needs anymore" is a little-tight sailor-style uniform: a symbol of infancy, naivety, immaturity, and naïve boyish daydreams of overseas voyages and extraordinary adventures. Now, these dreams will never come true. But the landscapes which appear, so to put it, 'in return', are also composed of things and objects that are real and material, and of their images (post-stamps, drawings, photographs, maps and plans, images reflected in panels of water or ice, in clouds, window panes in buildings, and mirrors). These landscapes are almost desert, inhabited, perhaps, by some figures-phantoms; they appear reminiscences or daydreams (how about the addressee?). Only some objects are left: buildings, equipments, implements, with which one might reconstruct some remains of a story, fragments of a history, not quite falling into place. True, the ascertainment "There is no man and no woman, ... the eye and the echo // are tacit about woman" [*Nie ma mężczyzny i nie ma kobiety, ... nie ma mężczyzny, o kobiecie milczy // oko i echo*] (*Kolaps*, p. 25) loses on acuteness with the pastiche tone employed, connoting the phrases of Wojaczek or Świetlicki; and yet,

Tu już naprawdę niczego nie ma.	There's nothing left in here, really.
poza niczym są tylko muzealniczki,	Outside of the nothing are (female) museologists,
bibliotekarki i kustoszki... [18]	librarians, and curators.

[17] Andrzej Niewiadomski, *Inwokacja*, in idem, *Tremo*, Lublin 2010, p. 5.
[18] Andrzej Niewiadomski, *Katedra*, in ibidem, p. 31.

Not only the reader but also the 'I' in these poems is doomed to follow the tracks, disturb them, incessantly face the unintelligibility and ambiguity/polysemy of the world. Reading, as well as writing, is a "collision between the elusive essence of existence and the elusive essence of poetic action".[19] Objects – or, in fact, their reflections, tell their own stories leisurely: "image consoles those unknowledgeable of things".[20]

Magdalena Jankowska has prompted one possible trace to follow; let us call it 'crypto-self-biographism': "What I have found pleasant in the reading of these poems is that a subject with an individualised biography appears through an anonymous tissue of the reality; earlier on, this was hardly noticeable."[21] Thus, if the central character's story is to be approached as a sort of a game making use of autobiographical motifs, it can be recognised that the sailor is unceasingly accompanied by a melancholic sense of disassociation with the world. This alienation is a deliberate choice, since there is always some choice between the circumstances of life and existential adventures. It is the speaking character's decision to assume an 'outside view' perspective, a distanced look at the world, without entering into any close relationship. The 'I' affords himself the exclusivity of non-comprehension, a luxury of staying outside the theatre of the world, which is described with cool reserve and, at times, irony.

"The individual rules settle in a new form and new understanding of poem as energy, element, movement, impression – a poem-action in lieu of a poem-meaning; a poem that would not (re)present a reality, for it *is* reality: an alternative, linguistic one. Poetry is not representation, interpretation, or antinomy of (the)

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19 Niewiadomski, *Poezja niezrozumiała* ..., p. 133.

20 Quoted after Niewiadomski, op. cit., p. 129.

21 Magdalena Jankowska, *Kapsle i etykietki – 4 III 2014*, Blog na stronie: https://magdalenajankowska.wordpress.com/category/uncategorized/page/8/ [accessed 16.11.2014, 19:03].

reality; nor does it lead to a *truth* of reality. There is nothing that poetry and reality have in common ... . Autonomisation of the linguistic reality sets the poem's space free of (the dominance of any) real actuality – this having been (ever since Plato and Aristotle) the assumed foundation for literary mimetism – in favour of language, the materially (thus, *really*) fontal foundation. It is words that poetry consists of: meanings are secondary, freely interchangeable, dependent on the context of writing/reading; and thence, mobile and transitional."[22]

Journey/migration is the fundamental topic of Niewiadomski's poetry. The 'I' of the poems is not a pilgrim or tourist, though

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[22] Maja Staśko, *Porozumialcy. O nowej poezji.* (Cz. 1) – http://ha.art.pl/projekty/felietony/4000-porozumialcy-o-nowej-poezji-cz-1, [accessed 2014-12-03, 20:52]. The essay also recapitulates Niewiadomski's own insights into contemporary poetry: "In 2004, in his essay *Poezja niezrozumiała, czyli o nadzwyczaj trwałym nieporozumieniu krytycznym. Rekonesans badawczy* [Poetry incomprehensible, or, A certain eminently persistent misapprehension amongst critics. A research reconnaissance] (Teksty Drugie, no. 4) diagnosed the 'incomprehensibility' of contemporary poetry on the basis of poems of Andrzej Sosnowski. His Decalogue of the qualities of such works consisted of the rules of: (i) sublimity (after Lyotard); (ii) higher-order mimetism – one that refers not to reality as such but, basically, to a disordered talking about reality and a possibility of such talking; (iii) repetition and difference, as opposed to identity and contradiction; (iv) rivalry and interpenetration and mutual cancelling out of discourse and suggestion, reflexion and wording/timbre; (v) the tension between the construction and lack of construction in the poem (the loop of rearing-and-demolishing of verse constructions);

(vi) fragmentation; (vii) linguistic heterogeneity; (viii) incessant interchangeable of macro- and micro-perspectives; (ix) mediation between extreme variants of attitude toward (the) reality (intellection which suspends categorical choices); (x) (x) the search for a territory 'without qualities'. In conclusion, this critic finds that "Niewiadomski's Decalogue ... has [not] gone out of date: the features under discussion may still be used in describing the mechanisms of new poetry."

– should one refer to the classification proposed by Zygmunt Bauman. His travel is coercive and involuntary; he is never free of the painful awareness of the Earth's rush through the Universe. It is a mental journey, too – with the character recording the changes taking place in his consciousness, and watching himself from the inside. The concurrence of the processes of ambulating in time and space, in a literal and metaphysical dimension, reveals an instability and changeability of all things. Hence the necessity to study navigation (*navigare necesse est*) and the awareness that the sailing ineluctably comes to an end (*vivere*). There is nothing awkward about the character travelling without enthusiasm or curiosity, as would be regular with wandering. He knows all too well all the deceitful promises of all ports and harbours; he can notice monotony in any variation of landscape and humans:

Pęcznieją porty i domy rozpusty,

ale wszystkie są przystanią tych samych

towarów i uciech.
Samotni żeglarze zapełniają
jeszcze dzienniki,
ale ręce przywykły już tylko
do lin i koła steru,

zaciskają się pętle coraz
dłuższych podróży.[23]

The ports and bawdyhouses
are swelling,
all of them harbouring
the same pieces
of commodity and pleasure.
Solitary sailors still fill
out their logs,
their hands only accustomed
to the ropes and
[steering wheel,
the nooses of ever-longer jour
neys are tightening

Ritualisation and repeatability of any occurrences imply fatigue, repletion, sense of exhaustion, inner burnout. The days grow longer and longer; time becomes tactile.

None of the once-well-tested methods or rules prove to be of any use in this arduous endless drifting: "All whatever is o

[23] Niewiadomski, *Inwokacja*, op. cit., p. 6.

use finally fails sometime"[24] (*Locja*, pp. 8–9). The *tremo* creates phantoms and simulacra which become multiplicated in the mind of a traveller who simultaneously wanders across the space and time, observing the world and himself, appending to every image his multilayered commentaries and associations; what is more, he feels the compulsion of ironic distance. Rather than astonishing or triggering delight by their unexpected combination of colours and shapes, the kaleidoscopic multiplications arouse fatigue and strenuous effort which aims at adding order to the chaos (albeit it is known upfront that such endeavour is doomed to failure).

The space of Niewiadomski's poems basically consists of provincial town (province is everywhere, it is within us too): sometimes given a name (Lublin), some other time recognisable through certain topographical details. It is described with no sentimental affection, with unceasing sense of unfamiliarity and disinclination: "Never have I seen a severer penury, ... Never have I seen // a deeper kitsch, ... It's a third time in a row that I've come // across a church fair that wouldn't concern me, as usual."[25] (*Nigdy*, p. 19). Some poems evoke reminiscences of other landscapes: towns of the North, or ports; but again, they lack colour, appear lukewarm, pale, as if enveloped in clouds or mist, seem to be some old maps, or etchings from a mediaeval book, rather than images of real landscape.

The landscapes of these poems are blurred, fuzzy and faded. Whites and greys are predominant; winter is permanent – or, in any case, fog shrouds trees and buildings, rendering the view unreal: "Whiteness growing from far and near, ... decolourising the shades, the rainbow deprived of // its colours, the eye of the thunderstorm growing // pale (cyanic, grey, hoary), fading ink,

[24] „Wszystko, co przydatne, kiedyś wreszcie zawodzi".

[25] „Nigdy nie widziałem większej nędzy, ... Nigdy nie widziałem // większego kiczu, ... Po raz trzeci z rzędu trafiłem tu // na odpust, który mnie, jak zwykle, nie dotyczył."

empty // image ..."[26] (*Biel*, p. 69); "So much of white, ... the water is white and vitreous, // the bodies glazing and reflecting in one another, // this has never been 'described', no-one would // have been named 'white', not anyone"[27] (*Carne vale,* p. 70). The images are indistinct, diffuse: "... rather unreliable, nebulous" [*'raczej niepewne i mgliste'*] (***, p. 68); the shapes seem to alter: "Water is a form that gives shapes to everything around"[28] (*Świat bez przymiotników*, p. 59); it is hard to discern and differentiate between the reality and a phantasmagoria when everything "... is thawing, falling, freezing"[29] (*Praxis. Odbicia,* p. 39). Hence, anyone who would attempt to describe "... the irreconstructible. ... the zones ungraspable neither // with the sight or a map"[30] (*Katedra*, p. 31), condemn themselves to failure upfront. What remains is wandering about, for "... the bindings of the panes contained // nothing but light. ... light is instead, above an empty city, depleted // of movement and corporeal light, of illusion, of colours resembling // a light"[31] (*Lublin. Bezokoliczniki, bezprzymiotniki,* p. 17). Anything we do to one another // with things, reciprocally, makes the word boggle, // what we do with the word has nothing // to do with things"[32] (*Rachunki*, p. 46). Let us add one more remark,

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[26] „Biel rośnie zewsząd, ... odbarwia odcienie, tęcza pozbawiona // kolorów, blednące (sine, szare, siwe) // oko burzy, niknący atrament, pusty // obraz ...".

[27] „Tyle bieli, ... woda jest biała i szklista, // ciała szklą się i odbijają się w sobie, // nikt nigdy tego nie 'opisał', nie // nazywał się 'biel', nikt".

[28] „Woda jest formą, która nadaje // kształty wszystkiemu wokół".

[29] „... topnieje, pada, zamarza".

[30] „... co odtworzyć się nie daje. ... strefy, których nie ujmuje // ani wzrok, ani mapa".

[31] „... okładki szyb nie zawierały/nic ponad światło. ... światło jest zamiast, nad miastem pustym, opróżnionym // z ruchu i światła cielesnego, z iluzji, z podobnych światłu // kolorów".

[32] „Wszystko, co czynimy sobie/nawzajem z rzeczami, nie mieści się w słowie,/to, co wyprawiamy ze słowem, nie ma nic/do rzeczy".

ambiguous, taking away every shred of hope: "The lie of the eye is invulnerable"[33] (*Kiedyś spłonęło tu wszystko,* p. 15): this (as suggested by the original phrase) means 'unbearable', and thus 'oppressive – and insurmountable too.

"We are close to a 'breaking point', Niewiadomski seems to suggest, as we have become the nourishment of the visible, live under pressure of the visible, with signs infinitely multiplying and referring one to nothing but signs."[34]

"Reading Niewiadomski is like knocking at the stone's front door in the Noble Prize winner's [i.e. Wisława Szymborska's] poem. ... Embracing and synthesising the impressions, reflexions, all that trail, the tracks scattered within the text is not an easy thing to do. Andrzej Niewiadomski's poetry stems from an experience of inexpressibility. 'There are places a poem would not ever touch', this author ascertains. ... This reading experience ... resembles some driftage amidst flotsam-and-jetsam, amidst objects and corpses drifted by the current."[35]

In her review of one later volume by Niewiadomski, Anna Kałuża aptly warns against describing these poems using 'a language and concepts of existence'. The cultural allusions, pastiche references, cover quotations, travesties (the reviewer mentions the names of Sosnowski, Świetlicki, and Zagajewski, among others) "will clearly point out to us a meta-textual and ironical consciousness."[36]

'*Nie ma*' – the Polish phrase basically meaning 'there is/are no ...'; 'somebody/something does not exist' – appears to be the most frequently reappearing expression in *Tremo*. The poem enti-

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33 „Kłamstwo oka jest nie do zniesienia".

34 Radosław Kobierski, 'Andrzej Niewiadomski, *Dzikie lilie*', dwutygodnik.com/literatura [a Web literary bi-weekly], 146/2014 (accessed 16.11.2014, 19.03).

35 Kobierski, op. cit.

36 Anna Kałuża, *Melancholia i ironia*, Tygodnik Powszechny, a suplement: 'Nagroda poetycka Silesius', no. 19/2013, p. 55.

tled *Wiersz na strunie „nie", wiersz po stronie „ma"* (p. 62) connotes Rafał Wojaczek's song *Czemu nie ma tancerki*; Niewiadomski is not a rebel, though: the '*nie ma*' is uttered by him thoroughly resignedly, ascertaining fatigue and disillusionment with the world. Instead of blood and flame, as in the *poètes maudits*, there is snow (*Biel*, p. 69), rime, cold twinkles of glass panes, a wintertime landscape resembling a drawing in a sketchbook: "the details fade away, the posters get discoloured"[37] (*Od siebie*, p. 54).

The world described in Niewiadomski's poetry is constructed like a kaleidoscopic jigsaw puzzle. Many of his poems offer reappearing motifs of mirrored image: bright light-imitating spots; reflected lights; two concurrent aspects: the real world and its projection; finally, an illusion based on a mirror reversal of the left and the right side. "For instance, to the left: the towers of the churches, ... to // the right: the bare hill with a hump-shaped rock. ... To the left, there's Echo ... to the right: // an ice texture, snow, vapour, fog, a slim streamer. ... it is not an open window, // nor is it straight ahead, or reflect a pensive face ... it reflects // the shoulders, a moving body, entire, departing // toward a direction unknown"[38] (*Tremo,* p. 38).

Descriptions of the world constructed in this way yield the effect of concurrent narratives: whilst attempting to record the thoughts, they appear as reports and commentaries full of multilevel associations ("This has no frame, the glass is invisible")[39] (*Praxis. Odbicia*, p. 39). Laboured sorting out of the story, 'executing poetry', is an attempt at finding a key that would make

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37 „szczegóły zacierają się, blakną plakaty".

38 „Na przykład po lewej stronie – wieże kościołów, ... na // prawo łyse wzgórze z garbem skały. ... Z lewej Echo ... z prawej – // tekstur lodu, śnieg, para, mgła, nikła wstęga. ... nie jest otwartym oknem, // wprost nie jest i nie odbija zamyślonej twarzy ... odbija // plecy, cia ruchome, całe, odchodzące/w niewiadomym kierunku".

39 „To nie ma ram, a szkło jest niewidoczne".

the word and the thought, the front and the back, one: an attempt that is doomed to failure ahead of time. Whereas the poet is in control of the word (as in *Wiersz bez czasowników*; *Wiersz na literę O.*; or, *Wiersz na strunie „nie"*), the images that unceasingly reflect in his consciousness, the overlapping strata of associations and recollections, are free of the rules of language and incompliable with grammar.

The *tremo* mirror constitutes a specific filter, showing an objectivised image, one that is stripped of emotion. It reveals things as they are, rather than as we would like to see them. But, is this really so? An image reflected in the mirror comes across the retina of the looking individual. Is mirror, then, not a magical object reflecting not a world but the consciousness of the speaking 'I'? Of the one that records the views and his own associations, reflects the images reflected, and co-creates images? The description of a town: "There's nothing to look at, actually, ... nothing standing out, ... marks of folds // carving shapes in signs of eyesight"[40] (*Rondo (2)*, p. 51) clearly reverberates with disillusionment as a creasy asphalt surface spreads in front of the wanderer's eyes, instead of the ocean.

Eye and looking is, intentionally, one of the most frequently reappearing motifs in *Tremo*: "The eye ... illusionism ... the eye" (*Wiersz na literę O*, p. 61); "The eye. ... A line underneath the surface // of clouds, movement is no movement if within whiteness. The thought // never closer to a window or an eye"[41] (*Wiersz bez czasowników*, p. 60). The eye and a mirror, the retina and a glass slab; between them, an image, a phantom of reality, afterimage: instantaneous, flowing, uncertain, as ephemeral as a thought. Everything is changeable; even the eyes seem to be 'making change',

[40] „Właściwie nie ma tu na co patrzeć, ... nie wyróżnia się nic, ... ślady po fałdach // rzeźbią kształty w śladach wzroku".

[41] „Oko ... iluzjonizm ... oko"; „Oko. ... Linia pod powierzchnią/obłoków, w bieli ruch to nie ruch. Nigdy/myśl bliżej okna i oka".

like loose change, fine coins: "I've sat myself and am looking around at everything, ... Now the eyes are changing, sometimes // reversing, // I don't resent anymore, // it must be iridescent, they have to change colour: that's even // more beautiful (and better)"[42] (*Bilon* – p. 44).

The 'duality' of the speaking/looking 'I', being the wayfarer (the eye) *and* the mirror (the *tremo*), evokes the motif of duplication/multiplication: "... torridity, chirrup, alien light, reflected light, ... fire and whiteness ... I shall master two tongues // foreign; one of them is called a 'language', // of the other almost nothing, so little, // can be said"[43] (*Kanikuła albo wiersz hermetyczny*, pp. 65–6); "... It was much later that I wrote // the twin poems ... No-one holds the key to a poem // nor a key to the abyss"[44] (*Grudzień, puder*, pp. 36–7). For a poem creates, rather than imitating; its creative effort occurs simultaneously on multiple levels: observing, selecting, fragmenting; linguistic equivalencies, structure of the piece and meta-textual references; finally, concretising and interpreting by the reader – these, and other, are the levels forming the 'executing of poetry'[45].

Every poem is yet another pane of the *tremo*, showing cubistic and fragmentary reflections, altogether making up an unorderable or even uncontrollable whole. The retina, the mirror (*tremo*), a light-imitating spot on the window pane, surface of water (a pond or sea), sheet of ice, smooth surface of snow, glistening hoar-frost all create overlapping and repeated volatile images. Suffice it to al-

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[42] „Siadłem i przyglądam się wszystkiemu, ... Teraz oczy się zmieniają/czasem/zamieniają, nie mam już pretensji, // mienić się musi, muszą – to nawet/piękniej (lepiej)".

[43] „... skwar, skwir, obce światło, światło odbite, ... ogień i biel ... opa nuję dwa języki/obce; jeden z nich nazywa się „język", // o drugim praw nic, tak niewiele/da się powiedzieć".

[44] „... Znacznie później napisałem // bliźniacze wiersze ... Nikt nie m klucza do wiersza // ani klucza do przepaści".

[45] Niewiadomski, *Tremo*, p. 57.

ter the angle of vision to make a completely different world seen. The mirror is not merely an object through which to recognise the reality, as it reflects an 'inner image' and shows not what 'is' but what the persona can see. In this sense, (the) *tremo* becomes the subject of the poem and the reflected images its (poetic) message. Or, to rephrase, the poem is itself a mirror, immersed in a hypertextual space whose presence, marked by the numerous (aforementioned) allusions and references, composes a sophisticated and very conscious ambiguity, multileveledness, polysemanticity, and polyphonicity of the poetic utterance.

The *tremo*, which is a sort of great quantifier setting the framework for each of the poems in the volume, may connote other trains of meanings as well: the slanted slabs are the reality-deforming kitschy halls of mirrors from a provincial fairground (camp), as well as a distorting mirror (comicality, satire) or 'reversed compass points' (fabulousness, fantasy, grotesque).

what is more, the journey deeply into the depths of mirrored reflections is not merely a search of oneself but also a journey into the depths of language – a language that is a mirror, too. The process of writing consists in exclusion of the automatism of ordering, selecting, and hierarchising that distort and deform the image. After all, a poem is 'thought out': and, this attitude is juxtaposed against the ironical 'execution of a poem':

To już jest ten czas, kiedy należałoby
przestać kłamać. To jest ten czas, kiedy –
nie mówiąc do końca prawdy – należałoby
powiedzieć to jasno, tak, żeby wyglądało
na mówienie „od siebie". I żeby w ogóle

This is the time now when
one would rather
stop lying. This is the
time when,
not telling the entire truth,
one should
say it clearly, so that it
looked like
speaking 'through yourself'.
And that it at all be on

wyglądało – jak zbawienia – krystalicznych
historii i obrazów, łagodnych wiosen,
bezdeszczowych jesieni. ...[46]

the look out, like a salvation, for crystalline
histories and images, suave spring-times,
rainless autumns. ...

Otherwise:

A gdyby tak jeszcze raz zacząć od starych rzeczy i sezonów?
Może dałoby się nie tyle coś wyjaśnić, co nadgryźć brakujące
ogniwa? Nasza nieautentyczność stanie się bardziej wiarygodna ...[47]

Or perhaps, one should begin again, from things and seasons old?
Maybe not quite explaining something, but rather, eat into the missing
links? Our inauthenticity will then become more reliable ...

It is hard not to observe, though, that the author does allow the reader to be satisfied with simple conclusions and distances himself against attempts at naïve searching for 'authenticity' and 'truth': a poem is merely supposed to LOOK LIKE it be spoken 'through oneself'. The activity of writing ('executing poetry') is enclosed by the poet in quotation marks, sometimes literal but more often metaphorical, meta-textual, made of citations, allusions, pastiche references, wordplays and puns. The titles of the poems from the fifth part of the volume *Tremo* may themselves serve as examples: *Wykonywanie poezji* ['Executing poetry'] (pp. 57–8); *Świat bez przymiotników* ['A world without adjectives'] (p. 59); *Wiersz bez czasowników* ['A verbless poem'] (p. 60); *Wiersz na literę O* ['A

[46] Andrzej Niewiadomski, *Od siebie*, in idem, *Tremo*, p. 54
[47] *Da capo*, in ibidem, pp. 40–1.

poem starting with an 'O'] (p. 61), *Wiersz na strunie „nie", wiersz na strunie „ma"* ['A poem on the string 'No'/A 'Credit'-entry poem' (the title comprising an untranslatable pun on the phrase '*nie ma*' discussed above)] (p. 62), *Wiersz na wierszu, wiersz na błędach* ['A poem upon a poem, a poem from mistakes'] (p. 63), *Wiersz o możliwościach* ['A poem on possibilities'] (p. 64), *Kanikuła albo wiersz hermetyczny* ['Canicule or a hermetic poem'] (pp. 65–6); and so forth, up to the self-ironic and pastiche **** (Wyniosło mnie, wstąpiłem, wszedłem)* ['*** (I've been elevated, have acceded, entered'] (p. 68).

The outstanding feature of Niewiadomski's verse is, to my mind, a striking self-awareness expressed in multilevel commentaries imposed one upon the other; in multilayer sequences of images which, repeated over and over, form new meanings each time. The consistency in constructing metaphors, seen in individual poems and across the volume, which forms a sober and well-thought-over composition, is delightful.

"I think that there is an opportunity in mutual clashing of various traditions, juxtaposing the options I have enumerated, and in exceeding their limits. Who knows: perhaps this post-avant-garde current would be the most productive one? ... This is not to stand for a 'postmodernism' as the 'trend'. What this may refer to is individual poetics systems at the intersection of various tendencies, astonishing syntactic, linguistic/stylistic, or metrical facts."[48]

The poems in the *Tremo* volume call for concentration, thought, careful (and, in some cases, repeated) reading – possibly leading to a conclusion that there is no 'poetry incomprehensible'.

> Można się przyzwyczaić do słów i nie pamiętać, co
> się wydarzy. No dobrze, już wie, jest „mgławicowy" i

[48] Quoted after Anna Legeżyńska, Piotr Śliwiński, *Poezja polska po 1968 roku. Książka dla nauczycieli, studentów i uczniów*, Warszawa 2000, p. 126.

„migotliwy", co by tu jeszcze dodać, niech będzie:
„hermetyczny". Można nawet polubić, kiedy
nie ma innego wyjścia i można nie pamiętać, co
z nim, który musiałby pójść dalej tym tropem, nie
wiedząc,
co migoce i gdzie, zasnuta mgłą jest powierzchnia czy
głębia? Nie potrafię o nim niczego powiedzieć,
ale on – jeśli odnajdzie to w sobie – będzie powtarzał
„nie rozumiem" już inaczej. O tym niewiele się wie,
ale można pisać listy o guście, można powtarzać,
można się przyzwyczaić.[49]

You can get accustomed to words, not remembering
what
is going to happen. All right, now he knows, it is 'neb
ulous', and
'flickering', what else could you add, all right then:
'hermetic'. You can even get to like it when
there's no alternative and you may not remember what
about the one who would have to follow up the track,
unaware
of what is flickering and where it is, whether it is a sur
face that is
enshrouded in mist, or a profundity? I can say nothing
of him,
but he, if he can find it inside himself, will be repeating
'I don't understand' otherwise from then on. Not
much is known about it,
but one can write letters about taste or sense of style,
can repeat,
and get accustomed.

[49] Andrzej Niewiadomski, *Wiersz o możliwościach*, in idem, *Tremo*, p. 64.

РЕЗЮМЕ

ТОЛЬКО ПРЕДМЕТЫ ЧЕГО-ТО СТОЯТ. ЗЕРКАЛО КАК ОБЪЕКТ И СУБЪЕКТ СТИХОТВОРЕНИЯ

Мир, описываемый в поэзии Анджея Невядомского, построен наподобие мозаики калейдоскопа. Заглавное трюмо – это старомодное зеркало во всю стену, с боковыми подвижными створками. Это зеркальная гладь, в которой можно увидеть вещи полностью (или самого себя в полный рост), даже с трех сторон в один и тот же момент, как на кубистской картине. В стихотворении беспрестанно повторяются мотивы зеркального изображения: блики, отраженный свет, деление на две стороны (реальный мир и его отображение) и, наконец, оптический обман, заключающийся в том, что зеркало переворачивает левую и правую стороны. Построенные таким образом описания мира создают эффект параллельных повествований: попытка записи размышлений создает поток сообщений и комментариев, изобилующих многоуровневыми ассоциациями.

Самым важным свойством стихотворений Невядомского представляется четкое самосознание, которое находит свое выражение в наслаивающихся, многоуровневых автокомментариях, в многослойных последовательностях образов. Ведь трюмо – это своеобразный фильтр, который вроде бы показывает объективированное, лишенное всяких эмоций изображение, обнаруживает вещи такими, какими они и есть, а не такими, какими мы желаем их видеть. Но вряд ли это верно?

Зеркало как волшебный предмет становится субъектом стихотворения. Этот прием позволяет показать не мир, а его изображение, размывая при этом границы между словом и его отсутствием, между вещью и ее описанием, отражая отображения, фиксируя послеобразы и коннотации, передавая как можно вернее всего сложные и изменчивые состояния (под-)сознания поэта.

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"SOMEONE'S BRINGING US TO A STANDSTILL, TO MAKE A SILLY PICTURE."

From one picture to another – between things: motion, immobility, illusion, and photography in Wiesław Myśliwski's novel Widnokrąg

> People tend to think they live more intensely than animals, or plants, to say nothing of things. Animals forebode they live more intensely than things. What things do is they persist; their persistence is more of a life than anything else.
>
> (Olga Tokarczuk, *Prawiek i inne czasy*[1])

> Can one say, in the way painters do, that we are sized up by things – by the things we look at, as it seems to us? That the partners of seeing reverse their roles?
>
> (Edouard Pontremoli, *L'excès du visible*[2])

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1 Olga Tokarczuk, *Prawiek i inne czasy*, Wydawnictwo W.A.B., Warszawa 1997, p. 43.

2 Edouard Pontremoli, *Nadmiar widzialnego. Fenomenologiczna interpretacja fotogeniczności*, tłum. M. L. Kalinowski, słowo/obraz terytо-

> On choosing the exposure time, the photographer will only create a metaphor of movement which is decoded by the addressee as a movement. He can freely choose the way he would like to present an object moving in relation to the camera. The photographer may apply with the same process various exposure durations which, in turn, cause varied images of motion. [...]
> Another method for metaphor of movement is to combine a series of pictures into a chronological sequence. The linear image of time manifests itself not only within a particular photograph: we literally 'read' the visual information in succession, like a book.
>
> (Lorne Liesenfeld, *The Silent Presence of Photography*[3])

Wiesław Myśliwski's novel *Widnokrąg* [The Horizon] opens and concludes with photography; or, more specifically, with a photograph. The beginning and the end, from one picture to the other, constructs a compositional frame of the text. However, in a different order, the one of mythopoetic construction of the fictional world, or universe, the end becomes the beginning. The circular movement, along the line of horizon, delineates the limits of a world (a universe), builds its dynamism, marks out the trajectories of peregrinations, their pace and meaning. Above this horizontal plane the cupola of the sky is raised, stretching between the first and the last photograph. The two dimensions – the space of the sky and the space of the earth – form in *Widnokrąg* the stage on which a spectacle of migrations, excursions, climbing treks, sky-high flights

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ria, Gdańsk 2006, p. 155.

[3] Lorne Liesenfeld, *Cicha obecność fotografii* , Uni-Druk, Luboń bei Posen, p. 110-111.

and imaginary travels is taking place. It is a stage where hard-to-co-ordinate movements, deliberate or fast, halts on the run, and heart arrests, toilsome stairs-climbs and euphoric flies of imagination are all harmonised – whilst the inanimate standstill of a photograph seems to be the most vivid concentration of the impetus of life. The stage is one of the truest illusion and the most illusory truth; of life and death; and, of photography.

The first and the last picture is objects, things, whose status proves ambiguous, understated or unspecified, and paradoxical. On the one hand, the things are not completely real. On the other, the material aspect of these pictures, their tranquil objectivity are incontestable. From a different angle still, these things are dead but alive all the same; immovable, and yet motion-generating. Apparently, the products of human hands – or, perhaps, self-creating cuttings of the matter of the universe; looking like traces of the camera's eye, or maybe, of God's eye. Who has made them, where they come from, what kind of dialogue they have reciprocally entered; how they organise the novel's narrative; what are they – and, 'are' they there at all? The paradoxical objects, with their perverse motionlessness, the ones that set the story in motion – a story that flows from one picture to the other.

Between the first and the last photograph, the life rushes on, trip-trots, flies about, trails along, and retraces its steps. From the first photographic frame to the last, the sun wanders through the sky, and the earth oscillates within the rim of horizon. The photographs, the first and the last one, fix the turbulent firmament, outlining images of imagination, daydreams and night-dreams on the dome of the sky. Yet, the turn of the world between one photograph and the other, a pirouette of time on the photographic pointe-shoes, is not a simple course of things, or run of life: it is, instead, a motion full of riddles and paradoxes, a double-dimensioned motion: terrestrial and celestial, real and imaginary, in a tangle of the physics of everydayness and the metaphysics of photography.

Liesenfeld's afterthought concerning the ways in which motion/movement can be taken through photography refer to the exposure time and the linking of a series of pictures into a chronological sequence. Picture, photography and photographing are in *Widnokrąg* the topic and a motif; a metaphor and a model – rather than an illustration. They strike root and grow into the textual tissue at the key moments: at the outset and at the end, and at the slight pauses in the course of the plot, appearing as allusions, incidental sights, non-committal reflexion. If we were – as part of an interpretative game, rather than methodical analysis – to set Liesenfeld's thoughts against the literary-and-photographical text authored by Myśliwski, it would become apparent that the novel metaphorically comprises both types of photographic dynamism. Should the exposure be linked with the presence and intensity of the legacy light, then the intenseness of the sun is pretty excessive in *Widnokrąg*: the sun roams across the sky and, seemingly, pauses wherever the camera appears. There is another way of creating an impression of movement, also used in the Myśliwski novel: pictures getting arranged into a chronological sequence. A peculiar sequence, though: between the opening and the conclusive picture, series of images rush in glittering activations and slowdowns: no more photographic images, but frequently constructed in a photographic fashion.

1. THE PROLOGUE AND THE EPILOGUE: PHOTOGRAPHS.

The picture appearing in the prologue and that in the epilogue are two variants of a portrait of the father and the son. With the first picture, the opening sentences go as follows: "This small meagre little guy in the photograph, his eyes goggled, in a gabardine coat, as if too large for him, burdened with his apparently too-big

hat – is my father. Next to him, in the navy-blue sailor-like suit, with the short knickers, in a white sailor cap on the head, wearing the sandals and knee-high socks, is me."[4]

The other picture and the conclusive sentences go thus: "He squatted down right beside and opposite to me, and watched me, excited, take out sand from the hollow. All of a sudden, giving vent, as it were, to the joy he was bursting with, he bent his small head deep down and, staring me in my bent-down eyes, 'Dad', he breathed out with his voice still gasping of the carrying of water: and this particular moment was preserved by someone – someone who stood, as one might guess by the photograph, at a short distance from us and looking down at us, so that not a hem of the sea could fit in, or anybody in the background."[5]

The relationship between the first and the second photograph is not limited to the similarity of the motif, but there is adjacency to it: the son from the first-shown picture reappears as a father in the last. There is, thus, a double structure to the pair of pictures, which reinforces the significance of the fatherly-filial relationship: when read 'from picture to picture', it shows (in the first photograph) the father and his son and (in the second), the father and his son; read athwart the image, 'from character to character', it shows the father and the son (in the father characters), and the father and the son again (in the child characters). This double structural linkage, or relatedness, of the photographs plots out the major line in *Widnokrąg*: the one that links Piotr, the central character, with the father (on the one hand) and with the son (on the other). A parallel of the development of this reciprocal relationship is drawn by the movement of the sun in the sky: the sun climbing up to the zenith accompanies the juvenescence of little Piotr (Piotruś), and when the sun declining westwards becomes a more frequent motif,

4 Wiesław Myśliwski, *Widnokrąg*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2007, p. 7.

5 Ibidem, p. 605.

Piotr symbolically lets go of his father's hand, and takes little Paweł (Pawełek) by the hand. The importance of this construction, which is crucial to the novel, is emphasised by the symbolical and real absence of the mothers in these pictures. As to the first, "Mother is not with us. This must be a Sunday then. ... Mother is probably cooking a dinner, for what else could have she done in that summer and sunny Sunday, as can be seen in the sun-illumined photograph."[6] The absence of the mother in the second picture raises no comment whatsoever: Pawełek's mother has disappeared much earlier, in an unclear and irresponsible manner, and Piotr brings up his son on his own.

The forms of non-appearance of mothers in both pictures inform us of the structure within which the father-son relationship develops, but there is more to it: with the construction of a photographic image and a meta-photographic context – which draws what has, literally and metaphorically, remained beyond the frame – these forms build an image of two worlds.

The world of the first picture carries the charge of nineteenth-century metaphysics of photography and nineteenth-century convention, which associated photographing with death, immobilisation, and hunting a victim[7]. The first picture displays a father and a son posing to a photographer, pausing, lining up: "We hold one another's hands and look somewhere into space, ahead. The father, with those goggled eyes of his, me, with my sight screwing into *a grimace against the sun. ... But I am not sure whether those eyes of my father are really seeing things. Were it not for the summer sun ablaze around us, you could say that they are begging for brightness in the surrounding darkness. Or perhaps, in the lightness of this sun, moving their sight beyond the horizon, they suddenly beheld something which is attainable to human eyes only in some ultra-vision – something*

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[6] Ibidem, p. 7.

[7] Cf. Bernd Stiegler, *Obrazy fotografii. Album metafor fotograficznych*, trans. J. Czudec, Universitas, Kraków 2009, pp. 39-43, 140-142.

they, horrified, are not ready to believe."[8] *This image is preceded in the text by an elaborate description of follies of the daemonic Gefreiter* Hanke, the only holder of a still camera in the village. Is he the one who takes the picture? Perhaps, who knows; although Hanke would take no pictures on Sunday, let us note: "Yet on an ordinary day of the week, you would not pass through the village without encountering Hanke hunting people, with that camera on his breast, repeatedly from early in the morning, like a devil hunting for souls, and he'd take the snaps. Snap. Snap. ... The village was in a blue funk whenever Hanke appeared with that camera of his. The mothers would remove their kids from the road, take off the pots drying on the fences, or the drying clouts from the clothes-lines; for, God forbid, he would go do the snap! If there was someone driving the cows, he'd turn back. Or, if there was somebody driving a cart, then he'd whip up the horse and fly, while it was too late, for Hanke was within sight, then he'd leave the horse and the cart and the whip, and rush into the nearest curtilage, or den in the closest insulation shelter. ... 'Hanke's taking pictures', the ill-omened tidings ran around, passed from one person to the next."[9] No-one could tell whether *Gefreiter* Hanke was raging around the village with a photo-camera or with a weapon, snapping or shooting, photographing of killing. And where it is, in which of the worlds, that the casual victims of his diabolic practices would come to life some day: "And they stood there still, as if they wouldn't know if they were still there, in the world, or just in that photograph."[10]

The figure of the father from the first picture, his pose and look, have to them a clear ambiguity of hunting metaphors of photography: "Maybe it seemed to him that he was facing a gun-barrel aiming at him, waiting for the shoot to come out. He is perhaps holding my hand even tighter, as if to bid me farewell. He might be

8 Ibidem, p. 18-19.
9 Ibidem, p. 20-21.
10 Ibidem, p. 24.

willing to communicate something to me, but the words have just stuck in his throat. Or, perhaps, all the grownups had the eyes like that then, but it was invisible as long as they were alive; this only comes out on the photographs from those years, when the photographs, tired finally of the length of memory, faded, and grew grey. I'm just dazzled by the sun."[11]

The sun in the second picture is different – and the whole photo appears different. There is no daemonic photographer any more, no victim hunting; no death; no shutter snapping. There is a scene featuring the father building a sand castle for Pawełek; the little boy brings water in a bucket. Nothing is known of the one who took the picture: "And, who on earth could that have been, for there's no-one such preserved in my memory? Was it, by a chance, some father of one of those Jacuś or Ireczek boys with whom Paweł played?"[12] The last picture is nothing of a posed portrait from a Sunday stroll: it has caught the world in a vivid commotion, lively emotions, and movement: "And he [= the photographer] was probably mainly concerned about Paweł, for my bent-down head is looming from behind the photograph's edge, as if it were some shadow over Paweł's joy; one even gets the impression that it even disturbs the joy with which his obtuse eyes, raised to me as they are, are burning. This joy lights the photograph up, like the sun. As if unable to contain himself within it, with that bursting joy, he has even kneeled down and, almost touching my invisible eyes with his beaming face, he'd burst out, 'Want me to bring more sea for you?'"[13].

Two pictures – and two models of meta-photographic thinking: the one siding with shooting, horror, death, and the one keeping up with entertainment, joy, and life, in the penetration and permeation of reality and imagination, physics and metaphysics, build two poles between which *Widnokrąg* spreads. There is motion be-

11 Ibidem, p. 26.
12 Ibidem, p. 605.
13 Ibidem, p. 605.

tween the two pictures, the two poles – also marked with a duality: realness and daydream; everydayness and fantasising. The trajectories of movement, its altering velocities, tracks and trails cross and overlap, drawing a complicated map of the characters' rambles.

2. BETWEEN THE EARTH AND THE SKY.

Amidst this chaotic changeability, two types of movement/motion seem of particular importance. The earth is elemental and the horizon essential to the horizontal movement, which in the novel's universe is associated with a flatland landscape and mostly appears in the moments when the plot is set in the countryside. The air is the element, and stairs the key motif, of the other type of movement, one that imitates, in approximations, the path made by the sun through the dome of the sky, the soaring and descending; such movement is associated with the peculiar, hummocky topography of the town – and it is the urban landscape that sets the stage for it, in most cases.

Both types of movement, and/or motion, are described by the reflections, scattered across the text, on the nature of horizon and 'the nature of stairs'. The nature of horizon is approached by the narrator as follows: "Who knows, it might be so that expectation is part of the nature of horizon, because I was following those faraway red flashes, as if I would've been expecting something from the horizon too."[14] As to the nature of stairs: "When long ago I was running down these stairs, pouncing, the people admonishing me were probably not concerned about me twisting my leg or doing myself some other mischief, but rather, about respecting the nature of these stairs. But I didn't yet know, at that point, that human fatigue is the nature of stairs".[15]

14 Ibidem, p. 602.
15 Ibidem, p. 326.

Expectation and fatigue seem to be figures of significance for the routes set by the characters, for the paces, decelerations and accelerations of their movements.

Each of the two types of movement portrayed in this novel, the one plotted on a plane and the soaring/descent motion, have two dimensions to them: everydayness and fantasy.

3. THE EARTH, THE HORIZON.

The earthly, flatlands-bound everyday life of the characters is set and goes on in constant motion, whose rhythms and paces outline the map of progresses and recurrences, chaotic getaways and organised ventures, strolls and unrestrained roaming. One comes across deportee migrations, moving in waves to the rhythm of the warfront shifts; herds of cows driven west to east; travels by waggon, footraces across the pasture, slogging long kilometres in the mud to join a collectivity session; there are horseback hacks; subtle and camouflaged, but meaningful, motions are made. Horizon is pivotal to such type of movement, in a double sense: as an element of the landscape, which tends to be reflected upon in the context of the limits of seeing/vision/visibility, the borders of the worlds and the understanding of the world, and as an inner compass facilitating orientation in the world. With the former function, as an element of the landscape, horizon is defined in terms of knowledge as well as imagination. An explanation given by the teacher exemplifies the defining through knowledge: "He stretched his hand forward and, twirling as if around an axis rusty with age, with his hand stretched forth, he said, 'Here, the line all around, between the earth and the sky, the one that encloses us. Should you be willing to approach it, it will always be drawing back from you, keeping the same distance. And you will always be in the centre. What it confirms, though, is that the earth is round-

shaped."[16] The imagination-laden definition comes out, for instance, in the narrator's comment on the sea: "For it seemed to be enclosed within this horizon like an end-line of the world, preventing itself from getting bleared by imagination, or by thought, as if it constituted imagination and thought by itself; as if imagination and thought only be a defectiveness of overabundance in the face of it."[17] Horizon as an element of one's internal equipage, acquired as a human being grows up, is thus described by the narrator, the moment he watches his son: " ... gradually, the hardly visible but ever less crossable borderline is getting settled between the two of us, one that defends us from each other – or, putting it more strictly, one that defends him against me. This line is perhaps already encircling his own horizon, one that would not have much in common with the spot on the hill where we happened to be standing, at the threshold of the stairs, or with the city."[18]

4. THE EARTH: IN SEARCH OF A LOST SHOE.

Amongst the many kinds of motion/movement in the flatland-related variant, the peregrination of Piotr, a little boy, and his parents to the adjacent commune, in search for a job for his father, seems to be the most significant. The wandering has a specificity to it: all three, carrying their luggage, are laboriously working their way to the destination – and once there, the purpose and the vector of their peregrination become altered. Piotruś has lost his shoe on the way, so he retraces his steps and, now only accompanied by his mother, starts and goes against the flow. This is a different type of movement, slowed-down, with a purpose not to reach a goal but to watch attentively, and at times contemplate, the surrounding

16 Ibidem, p. 261.
17 Ibidem, p. 601.
18 Ibidem, p. 322.

environment. Tension goes along with both peregrinations: Piotr's mother sets the environment in a sort of nervous vibrating motion and speeds up continually, always willing to move faster, get somewhere on time, forestall or outrace somebody in something. She is accompanied by her husband, who seriously suffers from a heart disorder: now, his function is to resist any burst of energy. Passive, weary, and exhausted, it is him who slows down the procession, demanding frequent pauses. Between these two contradicting forces, two velocities, Piotr pursues his motion; situated halfway between his mother and his father: he slows down at times and then hastens again, helpless at his mother's excessive energy and no less helpless at his father's lack of vigour. Losing his shoe, just one shoe, he unconsciously finds a solution to the problem of how to stand on his feet again amidst all these contradictions; and, he gives both of his parents exactly what they seek: the father stops for good at the destination point of his first travel, in order to finally take a real rest; whereas the indefatigable mother sets off to walk the way which will repeat the one she has just made: the direction being reverse now. The shoe remains lost, which is a meaningful situation: around this shortage the mother's energy develops and accumulates for a good deal of time; her world speeds up as the father's world slows down.

The roam in search of the lost shoe, the regret because of the inability to find the lost thing, became an occurrence that in the mother's memory was to conceal another pain and remorse: "It is possible that she was not very much concerned about the shoe; for whenever she rebuked me because of it, I could feel that this lost shoe helped her release some pain, when she was filled up with pain. I couldn't understand one thing, though: why that particular shoe? She kept on reminding me about this shoe till her last breath. And she kept on rebuking the father for having left her behind so early; rather than seeing his death as an instance of death as to which she knew he had had no choice but to consent, she would approach it as a breach of trust he committed by his own choice and in secret

from her. She would always speak about that death of his with a tint of deception; with a conviction, glowing somewhere inside the words she uttered, that he could have stayed alive if he wanted to."[19]

5. THE EARTH: KAZIUŃ, 'I'M MOVING ON NOW'.

So, there is the mother, wandering around in search of the lost shoe, firmly believing in a successful outcome. And, there is moreover a parallel figure – the other wanderer, named Kaziuń. He would not go to look for a shoe; his mission is of higher importance: what he wants is reach for the point where the sky meets the earth. He firmly believes he will get there someday, though the others are doubting it: "In any case, there was nobody ready to believe Kaziuń when he told them, stretching his hand out toward the horizon again and again, that he's going to reach over there, see?, the place the sky touches upon the earth, and then on, merely uphill, and in a day or two I'll be here, right above you, lads. The thing I've got to do first is getting there. One day, with a stick thrown over his shoulder with a small bundle hanging on it, he finally said, 'Do watch my cows for a while, let them have a good meal. And then, get them driven to Sroczyński and tell him I'm not going back. I am going up there'. Stretching his hand forth toward of the horizon, he twisted around as if he were not aware yet which direction to go. And, he moved on."[20]

Before he did, Kaziuń would lecture Fredek and the other listeners on his own philosophy of motion/movement, and of life: "... 'cause the toughest thing is to move on. Not really to reach where you're headed but to move on. Make the first step. The first step, mind you, is not made by your legs: it is made by your heart. It is the heart that moves first, the legs following it. For this to

19 Ibidem, p. 368-369.

20 Ibidem, p. 261-262.

happen, not only do you need power but you need a purpose too, for to prevail your heart and say, 'I'm moving on now'. Which is much tougher than to say, 'I'm going to die now'; but again, to say 'Let me get born now' makes you a little less trouble. And this is what Fredek was not certain about – whether he could ever do it, say to himself one day, 'I'm moving on then'. Will not the whole of this village, these fields, meadows, cows, the father, mother, and death, cling onto his legs? Kaziuń is a different story, there's no-one to fasten onto him, even the cows he grazed were not his; those at the Sroczyńskis' will sigh with relief all right once he goes, as they would have to look around and find some younger goatherd soon."[21]

Kaziuń disappears indeed: first, from the pasture and then on, gradually, from the story; finally, from the people's memory. He would not be back to the village. He returns in a vision of Piotr, in a final scene that precedes the description of the last photograph: "The sun was descending lower and lower toward the horizon, growing larger, redder, increasingly sharpening the borderline between the sea and the sky. The sea, halted over there by the sky, and the sky, arrested by the sea, were damming each other up, overlapping, forming as if a thick stitch, red with the red rays of the setting sun. All of a sudden, emerging, as it were, from the other side of the stitch like from behind a brink, the old Kaziuń from the pasture appeared against the stitch – a tiny object, just a corpuscle, he. ... Wearing the same old hat, the stick on his shoulder, the bundle hanging on the stick, just as he was when leaving us then at the pasture, he walked along the stitch, disappearing once into the redness of the solar rays, his hat sticking out, hardly spottable, and then emerging from behind these rays again. He only seemed to be bent down more, as if he found it hard to fit in there, in that tight adjacency of the sea to the sky. He tottered along, making steps that seemed smaller than usual

[21] Ibidem, p. 264-265.

of tiredness, perhaps, or caution, minding that the sea would not wash him off."[22]

Piotr's mother and her pertinacious wandering in search of the lost shoe, and Kaziuń, with his travel to the edge of the earth and the sky, offer two examples of wandering in time-and-space, two different registers, purposes, speeds, two varying paces and philosophies, connected with a principle of life, a strength which Kaziuń named, 'I'm moving on now'.

6. THE SKY, THE STAIRS.

The sky-scraping peregrinations of the *Widnokrąg* characters consist of climbing and descending, shining up and running down, going up and going down. The travels from the countryside to a town involve surmounting the hillocks, taking the effort to move upwards, whereas moving around the town where Piotr lives with his parents calls for dealing with the stairs every day. Treadmill is the parallel figure to horizon (as inspected in a round-about outline), its metaphor being the cyclical nature of countryside rituals; the cupola/dome of the sky – the model for semi-circumferential movement – would match several metaphorical images: the stomach of Piotr's pregnant wife; the vault of a cellar where people hid from bombs; the cellar above which the tango-dancing Misses Poncka dwelled; and, primarily, the stairs in the small town: the ones whose nature is human fatigue, as Piotr has observed.

The stairs organised the life in the town, with its structure and topography: "The stairs began right behind our house and ascended, almost straight up, with slight deviations to one side or the other ... up to the very top of the hill on which the town was situated. Or, conversely: since everything is conditional upon where we are located in space, as the space determines our feelings and

[22] Ibidem, p. 603-604.

ideas and, in consequence, our fate – the stairs began at the top of the hill whereon the town was located, and cascaded down the most precipitous of its sides, to the place where that extensive plain had its origin."[23]

Two instances of movement/motion seem particularly meaningful in the subcelestial variant: Piotr's wanderings up/down the stairs (with his father and, afterwards, with his son) and his fantasising about flying.

7. THE SKY: 'LET'S TAKE A LITTLE REST'.

The stairs in the town slow down the pace of life (it seemed to the locals that they "hoist these stars at their feet, as some punishment of sorts, apparently"), though they urge the heart forwards and exhaust its forces prematurely: "... on a flat ground, people tend to be benign, living slower, sleeping slower, talking slower, and then the hearts beat in them at a slower pace. Here, you'd get up, think, now to those stairs again, and you think at once you wouldn't do anything at all; you regret that the day has started already. And so it is, day by day, one week after another; then, for how long will this heart of yours do its job? It could trail you a hundred years across an even surface. And here, well, it's like with the father. You just cannot walk decently; such is this town, you know."[24] Piotr's father, a cardiac, needs seeing his doctor often. Piotr accompanies him in the expeditions to the medic, through the stairs, dozens of stairs: the father slows down, stops, tells stories about battles, moves on, slows the marching down, and gets moving again. After his father's death, Piotr is told time and again that it was *his* fault, or inadvertence; had they walked to the doctor another way, his father might have been still alive. Without his father, Piotr would tackle "these stairs by leaps, two, three steps

[23] Ibidem, p. 28.
[24] Ibidem, p. 339.

at a time, and down the stairs, five or six, so his mother could never conceal her astonishment, almost on the verge of fear, about me being there right back."[25] Years afterwards, the stairs become the venue where two poles of time adjoin each other, and so do the two pictures - the one from the prologue and the one from the epilogue; as he climbs the stairs with his son Pawełek, Piotr would stop at the stairs, uttering his own father's words: 'Let's take a little rest': "At that very moment, I just realised that I took Paweł with me all the way to here with no other purpose but to rehearse these words, 'Let's take a little rest'. I felt something like pangs of conscience with respect to him, as I have guilefully drawn him into a role which, after all, was my own role, and I was overwhelmed by the fear that I might perhaps be unable to be up to the role."[26]

The rhythm of slowdowns and accelerations while wandering up and down the stairs seems to act as an initiation into the role of father, an entry into the space of passing away, a check of dying. Piotr's dead father is present in this space, in this climbing palimpsest: "He could have guessed, perhaps, that we are standing somewhere high out there, on these stairs, because I was getting the impression as if he strongly wanted to lift my head and glance towards us, but he didn't manage. I could moreover feel, most clearly, the warmth of his hand in the handrail on which my own hand was resting, and you could even sense within it something like tiny slight pulses of his heart, although I was not completely sure whether the heart has really been the reason. For how on earth would it have been plausible for the heart to reach, from deep down upwards, up to here, our place, where we stood with Paweł, along an ordinary wooden banister, which was moreover decayed, affected with illness like his own heart, which was hardly beating."[27]

His peregrination with the mother in search of the lost shoe,

25 Ibidem, p. 28.
26 Ibidem, p. 326.
27 Ibidem, p. 327-328 .

which is meaningfully entitled 'In search of the lost shoe', was the way they made to find the missing item in the pair. His wandering along the stairs, after the father's death, now with his own son, was a way of searching for the lost time; a way to the missing link: the way to the father.

8. THE SKY: THE FLIGHT.

The peregrination of Kaziuń, who, carrying his bundle, made a journey to the bounds of the earth and the sky, has a lot to do with the other (apart from climbing the stairs) variant of skyward travels: the flights made by Piotr, the wanderings of his imagination, their varying paces, and sudden landings.

"I was completely unaware at that point of the Icarus story, but when you looked down from the hill upon that flatland stretching down there, you could be pretty tempted to spread your hands full wide, flutter them in the air a few times, and soar above the plain, higher and higher. ... I could see myself many a time with my hands spread out tearing me off the hill, floating me up, me soaring above the stairs ... so my mother couldn't accidentally spot me, be it for the shadow I am casting on the ground ... but, unfortunately, our basement-apartment door faces the plain and out of this door I can see my mother dashing, driven by the premonition, must be so, for she couldn't have heard my flowing flight, could she, and now I can hear her screaming chasing me up to the sky, 'Bought the sugar?! The salt?! And the bread?!'.

I am instantly losing the power in my hands, I can feel something pulling me down, like a kite by the rope; I'm descending, falling down, and appear before her, ashamed, as I haven't bought the stuff, 'cause I've bought myself some halvah, and lost the rest to the chappies, in a round of dodgeball." [28]

[28] Ibidem, p. 27-28.

The roaming up the stairs, down the stairs, and the illusions of flying nurtured by Piotr refer, on the one hand, to the way of his mother and to the way made by Kaziuń; otherwise, they add to Kaziuń's spell, 'Now move on', another spell, 'Now go back'. The four stories, four peregrinations suspended between the earth and the sky, pursued at various paces, with different purposes, and within different orders – real and imagined, encircle the plenitude of the horizon, the plenitude of fate, and life; a beginning, an end, and a new beginning.

9. PHOTOGRAPHY, ILLUSION.

Widnokrąg opens with a photograph and concludes with one. François Soulages, a photography critic, has grasped the essence of photograph thus: "A picture remains a question mark about itself, the reality, and ourselves. It is in the course of the quest, and through it, that we move forward – whilst the transcendental object remains beyond our reach."[29]

Widnokrąg begins and ends with a photograph, which is not merely a picture as a material object, or thing: the photograph is also photography, the practice of photographing, whose principle is stopped movement: fast or slow, earthly or skyward. In terms of the construction of this novel, photograph(y) adds its own spell to those of Kaziuń's 'Now move on' and Piotr's desire 'Now go back': the spell being, 'And now, stay there' – endure, persist, do not disappear. Between the first and the last picture, the first and the last sentence, the first and the last moment, there is a game going on in this novel, with photograph(y) creating its illusions – itself turning out to be a paradoxical product of illusion:

"I obviously could not realise what that moment would be-

[29] François Soulages, Estetyka fotografii. Strata i zysk, tłum. B. Mytych-Forajter, W. Forajter, Universitas, Kraków 2007, p. 119.

come for me. Perhaps I was even displeased at someone's keeping us there to make some silly photograph. And this is why I cannot tell for sure now whether it was *Gefreiter* Hanke, though I really cannot think of anybody else; but, who else might that have been? There was no-one having a photographic camera in the village. Then, if this be ever plausible, I should say nobody took that picture of us; it has merely, as is customary with photographs, been found years afterwards among the other pictures."[30]

This article is an output of the project "The age of theory. The Century of Polish theoretical literary studies", NCN 2014/13/B/HS2/00310.

РЕЗЮМЕ

«КТО-ТО ОСТАНАВЛИВАЕТ НАС ИЗ-ЗА ГЛУПОЙ ФОТОГРАФИИ». ОТ СНИМКА К СНИМКУ – МЕЖДУ ВЕЩАМИ: ДВИЖЕНИЕ, НЕПОДВИЖНОСТЬ, ИЛЛЮЗИЯ И ФОТОГРАФИЯ В РОМАНЕ «ГОРИЗОНТ» ВЕСЛАВА МЫСЛИВСКОГО

Снимок как материальное создание, снимок, понимаемый как вещь – это предмет с неясным, неоднозначным, парадоксальным статусом. Он неподвижен, но трогает; мертв, но полон жизни; скрывает в себе время, специфику которого Ролан Барт определил как «прошло-будущее» (passé-futur). В романе Веслава Мысливского «Горизонт» парадоксы фотографии как вещи имеют особое измерение, с них начинается и ими заканчивается история, они придают ход и темп действию, организуют его траектории, являются нарративным

[30] Wiesław Myśliwski, op. cit., p. 25.

стимулом и наряду с этим тайной, документом и чем-то магическим, создают сеть отношений между героями. При этом же неизвестно, откуда они взялись, чем они являются и действительно ли их существование в качестве вещей в романе вполне достоверно (*реально*).

Настоящий текст – это предложение такого подхода к роману «Горизонт», в котором первый и последний снимок создают и организуют мир романа, а снимки-вещи живут сами по себе необычайно оживленной жизнью. Они представляют собой начало движения жизни, его конец и новое начало.

III.

LOST AND RECONSTRUCTED WORLD. SOME CONSEQUENCES OF HOLOCAUST AND THEIR LITERARY TESTIMONIES

JERZY KANDZIORA

JERZY FICOWSKI'S "A READING OF OBJECTS" IN ESSAYS ABOUT BRUNO SCHULZ[1]

1.

Jerzy Ficowski, a distinguished Polish poet (d. 2006), spent many years preserving and reconstructing the biography of Bruno Schulz – world-famous artist, writer, and mythologist. He successfully located some of Schulz's manuscripts, especially correspondence and art; however, the majority of works and letters were lost during World War II. Bruno Schulz, a Pole of Jewish origin, was shot by Karl Günther, a Gestapo officer, on the streets of his hometown of Drohobycz (today: Drohobych) in the eastern part of the interwar Second Republic of Poland. 18-year-old Ficowski found out about the death in the spring of 1943, shortly after sending a letter from Warsaw to Drohobycz, a "declaration of faith" inspired by reading Sklepy cynamonowe [The Cinnamon Shops]. The en-

[1] The title of the paper refers to Jerzy Ficowski's *Odczytanie popiołów* (A Reading of Ashes, 1979), a collection of poems on the culture and annihilation of the Jews. The paper is part of a research project financed by the National Science Centre in Cracow (decision no. DEC-2011/03/B/HS2/04352).

tire Schulz oeuvre exerted a strong influence on Ficowski's highly sophisticated and magical poetry, and the act of salvaging was to be conducted in his poems and two biographies of the writer from Drohobycz (Regiony wielkiej herezji [Regions of the Great Heresy] (1967) and Okolice sklepów cynamonowych [Around the Cinnamon Shops] (1986).

Objects, items, and material traces play a vital role in the discussed search and if at the Sofia session I decided to present literary endeavors focused on objects it is because I believe in their extraordinary power to attract attention and in their ability to mediate between our "today" and the past, to which they can lead. Embedded in Ficowski's biographical tale on Schulz, objects and items assume the form of a prop-centered narration, a prop-centered tale. The particularly interesting Schulz-themed essays in Okolice sklepów cynamonowych feature precisely these touches of matter. The author applied an approach consisting of arranging an entire essay around a single, salvaged object – a document, an item, a graphic work, a drawing, or a figurative motif – from the universe connected with Schulz's oeuvre. Prop-focused narration places the reader in a tangible, material, and concrete reality, distinctly outlines the world's horizon, and allowed Ficowski to use such reality as the foundation of an entire symbolical stratum and to derive from it diverse, opalescent poetical meanings.

The literary and historical, or – in broader terms – cultural context involves two traditions connected with the role of the object in collective memory. On the one hand – the Enlightenment tradition of collecting, gathering, and museum practices, which treat objects as representatives of a larger whole and a collection – as a "diminished universe"; on the other hand – the Romanticist tradition of regarding objects as a medium, material carrier of memory and emotions confronting oblivion. Two books representing a broad cultural spectrum from the bo

derline of literature, art, and anthropology excellently document these traditions. The first one – Zbieracze i osobliwości. Paryż – Wenecja. XVI – XVIII wiek [Collectors and Curiosities. Paris and Venice. XVIth to XVIIIth Century] by Krzysztof Pomian (1987)[2] - deals with modern collecting, together with its inherent category of curiosity and encompasses cabinets of curiosities, collections of ancient artifacts, pinacotheca galleries, and private museums. Moreover, its range also includes earth science and biological sciences. The second publication – Stanisław Rosiek's Mickiewicz (po śmierci). Studia i szkice nekrograficzne [Mickiewicz (After Death). Necrographical Sketches and Studies][3] – reconstructs the Romanticist cult of mementos, including the essential category of passing, exemplified by the post-mortem twists of fate of Adam Mickiewicz's personal belongings. Its chapters feature such titles, as: Obroty rzeczy (Twists and Turns of Things), Pieniądze i rzeczy (Money and Items) and Kamień z Hawru (Stone from Le Havre).

A closer examination of Ficowski's prop-centered narratives about Schulz in the Okolice sklepów cynamonowych series, however, does not make it possible to unambiguously insert it into one of the two centuries-old currents of celebrating objects – Renaissance-Enlightenment scientism described by Pomian and the sentimental-Romanticist emotionality depicted by Rosiek.

Ficowski is the author of Dobrodziejstwo inwentarza [Lock, Stock and Barrel][4], a small and highly personal book accompanying the Gabinet Jerzego Ficowskiego [Jerzy Ficowski's Cabinet] exhibition in Sejny (1999) and a sui generis guidebook to his collections. Could this be a clue leading us to the Enlightenment formula of collecting objects, associated with cabinets rather than an

2 Gallimard 1987; Polish edition: Zbieracze i osobliwości. Paryż – Wenecja XVI-XVIII wiek, translated by Andrzej Pieńkos, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1996.

3 słowo/obraz terytoria, Gdańsk 2013.

4 J. Ficowski, Dobrodziejstwo inwentarza, Pogranicze, Sejny 1999.

exceptionally devout approach? The Ficowski collection features ammonites from the area of Łuków, a pre-war telephone, assorted butterflies, a granite stone from a column of Warsaw's demolished Russian Orthodox church, a cartridge case of an anti-aircraft missile from 1939, an old music box. In other words, this peculiar collection is distant from Linnaean taxonomy, a systematic attitude, and the ambition to be representative in any given field.

Ficowski has always emphasized the essentially functional role of his collecting, the fact that the gathered objects were intended to stimulate poetic imagination. When asked by Magda Lebecka what he, as a poet, must do with objects for them to stir his imagination and create a metaphor, he replied:

"It is up to the objects to d o s o m e t h i n g – to be affiliated with me and to remain in a state of community and dependence. This is a question of converging certain places and time. They are always connected with time long gone by and constricted so that it would not pass without a trace. If there are any meaningful amulets in my life, then these exhibits play this role. Upon return, time is never the same; the past becomes overrun with the cuttings of imagination – it is experienced and imagined in equal measure"[5].

Ficowski thus conceived items neither as cult objects (in the Romanticist manner) nor as systematic collections of certain categories of objects (a microcosm built with the Enlightenment belief that the world can be grasped as a collection), but rather as a p l a c e w h e r e p o e t i c c o n c e p t s a r e b o r n, of major importance for his works; Ficowski traced his poems back to the one-off revelations initiated by objects. And this is exactly how I would like to interpret Ficowski's prop-centered account about the writer from Drohobycz – as r e v e a l i n g the truth about

[5] Człowiek Pogranicza. Z Jerzym Ficowskim rozmawia Magdalena Lebecka [2001], in: Wcielenia Jerzego Ficowskiego według recenzji, szkiców i rozmów z lat 1956–2007, selected and compiled by P. Sommer, Pogranicze, Sejny 2010, p. 717.

Schulz by using the key of one-time poetic revelations.

2.

Let us trace the process of poetic mediation involving an object using the example of four biographical essays. Henrietta i Jakub is a tale of two headstones designed by Schulz for his parents. The story of their construction and devastation, along with the entire Jewish cemetery in Drohobycz ("The great Jewish cemetery died a tragic death, like so many other cemeteries. Its post-war site has long been occupied by blocks of flats of a residential district", RWH 125)[6] forms a parable about the frailty of matter and the immortality of art. After all, memory about Schulz's parents was more effectively preserved in the world of his short stories than by headstones lost without a trace: "Solid Trembowla sandstone, which was intended to preserve the memory of Henrietta and Jakub for centuries to come, floated into nothingness. Had it ever occurred to their son that his work, achieved by elusive imagination and a pen, would be their most lasting memento?" (RWH 125). In other words – we are dealing with a "prop-centered" narration about the passing of matter and the eternity of art.

Yet another factor proved to be decisive for the inimitable character of the essay. The legible exemplum and parable were in this case complemented by Ficowski's subtle poetic game of making states or degrees of realness perceptible. The main

[6] RWH = J. Ficowski, Regiony wielkiej herezji i okolice. Bruno Schulz i jego mitologia, Pogranicze, Sejny 2002. The abbreviation is followed by an exact quote location. When there is no separate footnote, I also use this volume to quote Ficowski's essays from the Okolice sklepów cynamonowych series, originally published by Wydawnictwo Literackie in 1986.

fabric of the tale in question essentially involves the varied intensity of substantiality. Its world is organized by beings, half-beings and non-beings, a changeable intensity of existence, both when Ficowski meticulously described matter and the appearance of the headstones, when he wrote about "the Trembowla sandstone" as if touching the non-existing stone, and when he quoted fragments of Schulz's birth certificate, with particular emphasis on the surprising poetic quality of the official wording – "former property owners" [Translator's Note – a play on words, which in Polish also mean "former reality owners"] (RWH 127) – referring to the financial standing of the parents of Bruno Schulz's mother, Henrietta (Hendel) born Kuhmerker. The rhetoric of a prop, a parable becomes illuminated by a ray of poetry endowed with an entirely individual character and derived from the deep sources of Ficowski's poems.

Elements of poetry also emerge in the biographical "prop-centered" essay Druga strona autoportretu czyli podanie Brunona Schulza [Self-Portrait's Reverse, or the Application of Bruno Schulz] (1995) focused on Schulz's pencil self-portrait. Dating from 1939, its reverse features a draft of the writer's application for enlistment in the Soviet Trade Unions of Western Ukraine, written in the second half of September, after the Red Army invaded Poland and established a reign of Soviet terror. Ficowski describes the draft as "primitive – matching the level of its reader's requirements – confessions [written] in a hurry and a state of tension" (RWH 416) and included reproductions of both sides of the page: the self-portrait and the application (RWH 417–418).

The essay conducts a detailed exegesis of the dozen or so sentences that compose Schulz's application. We learn about the historical context and the veritable game of survival played after the entry of the Red Army. This is the first poetic palimpsest in the essay: from beneath the outwardly loyal expressions used by Schulz there emerges the truth about a period when authenti

creativity came to an irrevocable end and became replaced by an era marked by fear of Soviet dominance. The interpretation proposed by Ficowski ascribes significance to each occasion when Schulz crossed something out, to his hesitation and stylistic undertones. Ficowski quoted Schulz:

"My paintings and subsequent literary output, which brought me some acclaim, did not perform a social function; rather, it was intended to serve the liberated masses as a form of pleasure, a pure game of imagination offering a taste of life and happiness" (RWH 416).

As the sketch progresses, the palimpsest seems to shrink and finally achieves the size of an i d e o g r a m of sorts. The exegesis of the text leads us to the original point of departure – a sheet of paper, the self-portrait mutilated by Schulz's nervous handwriting:

"He wrote, crossed out, then wrote again on the reverse of his excellent self-portrait, not minding that the scrawls were showing on the other side of the page, with the paper so thin and transparent that the lines of the draft disfigured the drawing" (RWH p. 416).

We gradually become aware that this two-sided record is a certain symbol, an ideogram to be precise, of the artist's oppression and death. At the end of the essay the motif of a contorted, deleted face is considered in an already unambiguous exegesis and its poetic intention is confirmed:

"[...] his first death – as a writer – the death of Bruno the Great in the second half of 1939, preceded the other death [19 November 1942 – J. K.] by almost three years. Perhaps when writing his Application – Pact he was still unaware that the verdict had already been pronounced" (RWH 421).

Several other Ficowski's essays on Schulz follow the formula of a "prop-centered tale" and increasingly resemble the author's original output, rendering a unique collector's item as their point of departure: a salvaged work (a manuscript, a graphic composition)

or even a single recurring motif (object) present in Schulz's works.

In the essay Ekslibrisy czyli Stanisław Weingarten i inni [Bookplates, or Stanisław Weingarten and the Others] four preserved ex-libris bookplates made by Schulz for Weingarten and Goldstein play the role not only of independent objects, artifacts described and evaluated at the end of the text, but also m o t i f s b i n d i n g a narrative that is not really about the titular bookplates but about the people of the Schulz period. The essay focuses on Weingarten, a Drohobycz resident, the writer's childhood friend, later a clerk at the "Galicja" oil company, an enthusiast of Schulz, and a collector of his works, often portrayed in Schulz's graphic works and drawings, as well as on Maksymilian Goldstein, a Lvov banker, a collector of Judaica, another acquaintance of Schulz. In addition, Ficowski described the circle of young artists – residents of Drohobycz in the 1920s (Mundek Pilpel, Michał Chajes, Maria Budracka and others), to which Schulz and Weingarten belonged. We also hear the voices and see the figures of outsiders, owners of houses in Drohobycz and later Lvov and Łódź, where Weingarten stayed as a subtenant, and learn the history of his collection, whose fragments appeared from time to time in Łódź antique shops after the Holocaust.

Each tide of such details deeply immerses the reader in the social and linguistic idiom of Schulz's biography and acts as a remarkably intense mediation with the period and the context, until we appear to lose the contemporary vantage point, from which the bookplates are discussed. The genealogy of characters is recorded in detail: "This descendant of Dawid Halewi, a famous seventeenth century Lvov rabbi, was the initiator and founder of the Jewish Museum in Lvov, a banker, and an affluent man" (on Goldstein), along with names of places, the appearance of bourgeois interiors, the ranks of officials, and the names of institutions: "Prior to World

[7] J. Ficowski, Okolice sklepów cynamonowych. Szkice, przyczynki, impresje, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1986, p. 27.

War I he worked in the Stroh, Sokal and Lilien banks and subsequently in the Lvov branch of the Austrian Creditanstalt; during the interwar period he was a proxy at the Lvov branch of the Warsaw Discount Bank" (also about Goldstein)[8]. The same holds true for the romances and flings of the Drohobycz youth: "Staszek [Weingarten] was then in love with my sister Paula, known as Pepcia, while Schulz was more interested in me" (an account of Maria Budratzka-Tempele)[9], all depicted in a "box"-like, digressive manner and with reverence for even the slightest details.

It is difficult to resist the impression that we are witnessing a s é a n c e of sorts, in which the incessantly summoned bookplates, prior to being described, play the role of a m e d i u m , a c r y s t a l b a l l making it easier to take glimpse at the past and bringing us much closer to the fairy-tale, poetic topos of travelling in time and space.

The prop in Okolice sklepów cynamonowych essays tends to act as a carrier of a significant, key feature or motif of Schulz's art. We can speak of a pars pro toto figure, the seminal, salvaging role of a single artefact testifying to the artistic principle of many other Schulz's works, lost during the war. The Feretron z pantofelkiem [Feretory with a Court Shoe] essay focuses on the titular motif of a woman's shoe originating from Schulz's graphic composition Procesja [Procession], part of the Xięga bałwochwalcza [A Book of Idolatry] cycle made with the cliché verre technique in the 1920s. Here Ficowski directed his attention to the rule of a sublimation of masochistic longings, which especially dominated Schulz's artworks.

When writing the essay, Ficowski had at his disposal highly concrete evidence, a letter by Tadeusz Lubowiecki, one of Schulz's friends, discussing the writer's masochistic practices. Lubowiecki wrote: "Schulz was a textbook example of a masochist par excel-

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid, p. 26.

lence". Ficowski, however, did not pursue this path nor quote Lubowiecki's account. Instead, he too created a specific sublimate of masochism and fetishism, as if following Schulz's example. In doing so, he did not depict the concrete, but rather the aura, the ambiguity, the understatement, the s u b l i m a t i o n . After all, it is the mysterious process of "transforming" biological determinants into a work of art that Ficowski found truly interesting (hence the Eucharistic nomenclature as the essay's stylisation element). This is a way of thinking that reverses dark theories concerning the self-destructive nature of masochism in general, and of Schulz's masochism in particular (best exemplified by Sandauer's theory that the writer's shooting by a Gestapo officer was a suicide of sorts)[10], that discovers a compensatory outcome and actually describes how in this celebration of art the sublimatory transformation of unfulfilled internal desires becomes an artistic manifestation.

Here, a prep consisting of a feretory with a court shoe is to some degree an apogee of this process, but Ficowski's essay broadly encompasses the climate and aura of all mysticism, spiritualism, along with the ratio elements present in semi-legal areas. It wavers between scientific terminology ("hylozoism", "hierophanies", "idolatry"), which essentially remains a poetic salute towards neo-positivism and the Vienna Circle, between the aura of modernist occultism linked with early twentieth-century clinical psychiatry and an already entirely Eucharistic celebration, full of deification and heretic sacrum, with the narrator occasionally assuming the role of a priest ("Let's try to hold a ceremony" RWH 109), thus saturating the text with the joyful content of the Gospel, the heretic liturgy of the word together with an oft-repeated chorus "Hosanna! Hocus-pocusanna!".

[10] Ficowski discussed this thesis proposed by Artur Sandauer more extensively and polemically in another essay dedicated to Schulz – Przygotowanie do podróży (Preparation for a Journey).

3.

Back to the initial question posed by these reflections, concerning the Enlightenment or Romanticist tradition of cultivating objects, which defined Ficowski's sensibility in his essays on Schulz; I shall not propose an unequivocal solution since both traditions have merged into a single whole. Let us leave this dichotomy behind in order to pronounce that the literary, profound reactivation of Schulz's world *through an object* expresses Ficowski's conviction that a single discovered artifact, a manuscript, a particle of matter *must suffice for Schulz's entire output and biography*, in place of the thousands of letters lost in burned down apartments, the legendary unfinished novel Mesjasz, and the vanished graphic works and paintings, short stories and personal notes.

Second, these prop-centered tales also rediscover Schulz by reaching the very essence of his works, the *most important characters and components of his poetics*. A process of substantial transformations involves objects and matter, as in the essay about the changing degrees of reality, with the gravestones of Schulz's parents as its point of departure. The text about Schulz's self-portrait and application from the period of the Soviet occupation contains a palimpsest quality, a diminution of "I", and a disintegration of the individual. Finally, a procession of the writer's friends mythically emerges from few preserved bookplates, just as Schulz's double, Józef, created brand-new worlds and stories out of old decalcomanias, bits of illustrated magazines, and Rudolf's stamp albums. The world of Schulz, seen through Ficowski's imagination and, simultaneously, enriching the latter, returns in its full splendor.

Transl. Marek Chojnowski

РЕЗЮМЕ

«ПРОЧТЕНИЕ ПРЕДМЕТА» СОГЛАСНО ЕЖИ ФИЦОВСКОМУ В ЕГО ОЧЕРКАХ О БРУНО ШУЛЬЦЕ

Статья ставит своей целью анализ очерков польского поэта Ежи Фицовского, посвященных Бруно Шульцу, прозаику и художнику, польскому еврею, который был убит в Дрогобиче в 1942 году. В настоящее время Шульца относят к числу выдающихся представителей авангарда польской довоенной литературы. В центре нашего внимания находится понятие «реквизитный рассказ». Итак, предмет, реквизит, артефакт являются зачином отдельных очерков о Шульце, оставаясь при этом источником поэтических реминисценций прошлого. На примере четырех эссе Фицовского описываются способы инструментализации реквизита, в частности: его отнесение к правилам параболы, придание ему роли посредника, устанавливающего связь между читателем и кругом друзей Шульца, открытие в нем существенного художественного принципа творчества Шульца и, наконец, его трактовка в качестве идеограммы, когда сохранившийся, хотя и поврежденный артефакт (а именно автопортрет Шульца) становится знаком или фигурой духовной смерти художника в первые месяцы войны. Эти детальные анализы дополняются размышлениями на тему свойственной просвещению и романтизму традиции, связанной с культурной значимостью предмета в общественной памяти.

KINGA PIOTROWIAK-JUNKIERT

"NOTHING WORSE THAN ONLY NUMBERS". THE POETRY OF ANDRÁS MEZEI ON SHOAH

Let my right hand shrivel
If I forget about the tattooed left
András Mezei *A21179*
Muzeum Yad Vasem –
motto on the wall

THE CONDITION OF HUNGARIAN POETRY ON SHOAH

The reflection on the poetry of András Mezei about the experience of Shoah should begin with questions about the condition of the Hungarian poetry and the position of the undertaken topic of war and extermination of Jews in afterwar lyrics by the Danube. The first problem which arises while dwelling on this issue is the question of auto- and hetero-representation[1]. These notions are used by Ágnes Heller in the text on „the politics of biological identity". In the context of the Jewish literature in Hungary, these notions can be treated as phenomena of „social and literary identity". Whether or not the author belongs to the Jewish circle of writers

[1] Á. Heller, *Wykłady i seminarium lubelskie,* Lublin 2006, p. 36.

and what influence it has on the literary outcome are of pivotal significance. The next question pertains to the poetical language and the search for new forms of artistic expression which communicate the writer's talents while maintaining the cultural *decorum*. The last issue refers to the interpretation of works which strive to get away from decorativeness and which are concisely factual and consistently hermetical.

The Hungarian debate around the topic of Jewish poetry relates to a basic but still unresolved issue: is it more adequate to use the notion of „Hungarian poetry" about the Jewish condition, or the notion of „Hungarian-Jewish literature" [*zsidó-magyar irodalom*]? This dilemma dates back to the 19th century assimilation processes of the Hungarian Jews when it was noticed that the issue of „Jewish literature" is in fact a political and social problem. Béla Pomogáts (*Magyar irodalom vagy zsidó-magyar irodalom*), who has researched the origin of these notions, points to their not so much complex but absurd character. If the Jewish authors who write in Hungarian are denied the right to include their artistic output in the general Hungarian heritage then should authors who come from the German borderland (Ferenc Toldy) or Slovak families (Sándor Petőfi - the national bard)[2] be treated likewise? And how do you draw the lines between the multicultural works of art by Hungarian writers? Can we speak about such a phenomenon as „national literature"? Lack of consequences, hostility and antisemitism (including „literary antisemitism" from the times of Béli Kuna's dictatorship in the 20s) have shown that the artificial separation of Jewish literature demonstrated the lack of possibilities and willingness to develop tools which could support cultural assimilation of artists of Jewish background. Pomogáts writes:

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[2] B. Pomogáts, *Magyar irodalom vagy zsidó-magyar irodalom?* In *A határ és határolt. Töprengések a magyar-zsidó irodalom létformáiról*. Szerk. P. Török, Budapest 1997, p. 111.

> I don't believe in the notion of „Hungarian-Jewish literature". Hungarian literature, similarly to other European literatures, has never been homogenous and monolithic, it has not been homogenous enough to provide area in its spiritual unity for variegated forms of human and community identification (...). Our literature has a rich historical and intellectual tradition in a regional sense as the literature of the Danube region, Alföld, Transylvania and the area of today's Slovakia, but also in a religious sense as Catholic and Protestant literatures. Each of these have their own historical dynamics and a separate spiritual dimension.[3]

The problem with understanding the special status of Jewish literature in Central and Eastern Europe seems to be recognised and leaves no doubt that it is a multilingual phenomenon. The works have been written in Modern Hebrew (Ivrit), Yiddish and the regional language (Hungarian in this case). By choosing as its medium the language of the community of its creators, this literature naturally becomes part of the national heritage. The difficult coexistence between Hungary and their national minorities (including Jews) in the Hungarian culture has been visible in cultural breakthroughs led by artists of Jewish origin.

The group of artists united around the literary journal „Nyugat" (1908–1935) can serve as an example. They are the embodiment of all concepts of the development of artistic practices that are comparable with the greatest achievements of the West - France, Germany and England. The literature now considered as fundamental for the development of contemporary Hungarian prose and lyric poetry have been created under the auspices of the journal where the majority of Jewish writers published their works: Ernő Osvát, Ignotus, Miksa Fenyő, Oszkár Gellér, Milán Füst, Ernő Szép[4]. A similar case took place around the successor of Nyugat –

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3 Ibidem, p. 117. If not otherwise stated, all translations are mine.

4 This topic is covered in the extensive monograph: J. Kőbányai, *Szét-*

the journal of „Magyar Csillag" – which united Aladár Komlós, Dezső Szomory, Károly Pápai, Zoltán Somlyó and many others. The creation of artificial divisions inside literature led to a situation in which key achievements of Jewish authors were and at the same time were not Hungarian accomplishments, e.g. the development of European modernism by the Danube in the masterworks of authors from „Nyugat".

The history of the debate on „Jewish literature" can be analysed in parallel with the growing Zionist movement in Hungary. In the light of the pro-national policy of the late 19th century and anti-Jewish propaganda of the interwar period the most frequent solutions of the difficult issue of social coexistence were severing all artistic ties, exclusion from the literary canon of Jewish writers and publishing bans. Thus conceived "artistic racism" brought about a situation in which all forms of writing practice became a manifestation of identity allegiance. The most dramatic aspect in the history of this problem was the fact that both sides of the conflict wrote in the Hungarian language which was the main medium of artistic exploration and its inspiration. After liberation in 1945, when Hungarians were trying to restore their war-torn country, in the midst of the few who came back, another wave of hatred was directed at Jews. Ágnes Heller writes in the essay: *A „zsidókérdés" megoldhatatlansága* (*The insolubility of "the Jewish question"*):

> Few neighbours coming back from Auschwitz were welcomed with arms wide open. The majority was treated as intruders and were led to understand that it would have been better if they too had been exterminated as most Jews in the gas chambers. So the first spontaneous answer to Holocaust was a new wave of antisemitism. At the times it was justified by the fact that people did not want to give back the appropriated Jewish property. They already got used to

szálázás és újraszövés. A „Múlt és Jövő", a „Nyugat" *és a modern zsidó kultúra megteremtése*, Budapest 2014.

the fact that they owned the Jewish things and apartments in which they had been living for some months.[5]

The afterwar period turned out to be a most important lesson for Hungarian poetry. The discussion on the war was mostly led by authors whose works were defined by the narrative framework of experience of fighting and being the victim: János Pilinszkyi (1921–1981) who wrote about gulags and Miklós Radnóti (1909–1944) – a Catholic from a Jewish family murdered by the Nazis. Pilinszky as a Hungarian witness of the struggles at the front, the author of verses on horrors of fighting and the camp experience (*Ravensbrücki passió / Ravensbrück's passion, Francia fogoly / The French prisoner, Harbach 1944, Harmadnapon/ On the third day, Egy KZ-láger falára/ On the wall of a KZ-lager*)[6], Radnóti as a victim of the nazi Endlösung, murdered in the death march while coming back from Serbia to Hungary as a representative of the Jewish people though in fact not linked with the Jewish culture, a conscious Catholic (baptised as an adult) and a recognised expert and cultivator of the grandest achievements of the school of French lyric poems. Radnóti's poems found while exhuming the writer's body from a mass grave were published in the volume of *Bori notesz* (*Hetedik ecloga / The seventh eclogue, Nem tudhatom/ I can't know, À la recherche.., Tétova óda / A hesitant ode, Erőltett menet/* Forced march, *Razglednica 1–4*[7]) show a totally different writing phenomenon which is based on expressing the most intimate truths and knowledge of endangered life (Serbian camps in

[5] Á. Heller, *A „zsidókérdés" megoldhatatlansága vago mért születtem hébernek, mért nem négernek? Múlt és Jövő*, Budapest 2013, p. 40.

[6] All except the last work were published in Polish in the volume: J.Pilinszky, *Apokryf*, wybrał, przełożył oraz wstępem opatrzył. J. Snopek, Sejny 1999.

[7] One volume of poetry by Radnóti (in notebook format) has been published so far in Poland: M. Radnóti, *Spienione niebo*, wybór, posłowie i przypisy K. Sutarski, translated by T. Nowak, F. Netz, K. Sutarski, T. Śliwiak, Kraków 1980.

which men appointed for forced labour were held and made to work) through classical poetic forms – odes, eclogues, sonnets, a deep positioning of the texts in the broad context of literary erudition, in reference to masterpieces of world poetry and prose. What can be easily assumed and what is confirmed by studies of Hungarian critics, it was supposed to prove the particular artistic strategy that was forming and crystalising in the time of the greatest dehumanisation. As if poetry was the impossible antidote for inhumane, anonymous camp death. As if the borderline experience of death could be balanced or answered through literature and, ipso facto, as if the power of artistic creation could accompany humiliation and dehumanisation.

Despite the key role which Pilinszky and Radnóti played in the creation of afterwar Hungarian lyrical poetry, especially in the shaping of the framework of textual representations of the war experience, their presence in the readership's awareness did not translate into a more substantial and purposeful building of the literary canon on Shoah. The topic mainly functioned in the circle of writers connected with the Jewish culture whereas their publications were frequently read only in hermetic groups. However, it does not change the fact that this literature was present, though marginalised and removed from mainstream discussions about literature after 1945.

Gábor T. Szántó, considering the nature of the difficult presence of Jewish literature in Hungary, points to the fact that after World War II, the Jewish topic was treated as a relic of the past, a peripheral topic which only concerned those who left the country in 1956 at the latest as they were going to Israel or another place chosen as their life and literary emigration destination. Amongst the writers who represented the highest artistic level and cherished the dying and disappearing part of the former Central European world he names: Imre Kertész, Ágnes Gergely, Magda Székely, Pál Bardosa, György Dalos, Mihály Kornis, György G. Kardos, Péter Nádas and András Mezei[8]. All of them write about the topic of afterwar experience in a

[8] G. T. Szantó, *(Magyar)-zsidó írónak lenni.* In: *A határ és határolt...*

different way. They search for different literary figures of speech and discuss „the new language" of arts. The strategy fulfills a major role in the post-transformational literature when it is crucial to balance the *decorum*[9]. Szántó's article allows to understand the reason for the artistic choices. „(...) the descendants do not understand the writings on the graves, or those engraved in the walls of the synagogues and the remnants of the prayer books (...) – the Hungarian critic opines - the fact of being a Jew is a black hole which does not encourage intellectual discoveries, anxiety and guilty conscience brought about the appearance of the closed *terra incognita* of the soul[10]. Those who could understand the quoted words as a reproach are the Hungarians who avoid the topic of „the Jewish question" and the participation of the Hungarian people in improving the work of the Nazis by the Danube. Afterwar Jewish literature did not require intellectual ability from the Hungarian readership, did not focus on religious contexts, did not list the not always obvious historical nuances – it was devised in the grim „shadow of the trauma", it wanted to develop the space for communicating the truth about the burden of the negated being and the social rejection. It was the vision of the lonely, abandoned, recovered or appropriated objects that became one of the most universal metaphors.

FACTOGRAPHIC POEMS

Resolving the question of the literary affiliation of Mezei (1930–2008), a poet who belonged to the generation directly experienced by war, does not require much thought, because as the

p.253.

[9] I wrote about one such textual concept in: K. Piotrowiak-Junkiert, *Pisanie Zagłady w literaturze węgierskiej po 1989 roku.* Casus *Mihálya Kornisa* (Podanie), „Porównania" 2014, no. 14, p. 83–98.

[10] Ibidem, p. 253.

author of several poetry and prose volumes, essays and critical texts he undertakes the topic of Jewish culture[11] which he successfully shaped for years both in Hungary and Israel[12]. He is considered one of the most important Jewish writers by the Danube. His writing is devoted to representing the experience of Shoah and came into existence due to the need of creating a poetic idiolect which would allow to develop vocabulary that could express and define the Jewish identity of the author.

In the opinion of critics and interpreters of literary works, Mezei is one of the greatest representatives of authors who create the so called „tényversek", these are „factographic poems" / „poems about things", „poems about facts"[13], that create – as it was expressed after some years by Itámár Jáoz-Keszt – the epic poem about Shoah. The concept of factographic poems was based on creating small fragments, pieces, or even „scraps" of the new whole, a whole which carries the mark of the difficult and impossible knowledge of what had been violated, destroyed, ruined and wrecked[14]. For

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[11] A. Mezei made his début in the circle of Hungarian poets with the publication in the legendary anthology *Tűz-tánc* [*Fire dance*,1958] that presented young writers who express a revolutionary resistance towards the political situation. The authors of the volume (András Mezei and Gábor Garai, Mihály Ladányi, Imre Györe) shortly after when they became „the voice of the generation, chose their own artistic way. Mezei in 1961–2007 published 21 poetry volumes and 8 novels but also publisti texts honoured with major literary awards including. Attila József.

[12] Mezei spent a year in Israel (1949–1950). Later, the legendar anthology of Hungarian poets who wrote in Hebrew was published: *csodaszarvas* (1988).

[13] It is worth mentioning that this poetic form is similar to the so calle „poems-objects" and „poems-documents" by Władysław Szlengel. It w described more in-depth by analysing the significance of the space fille with objects in B. Shallcross, eadem, *Rzeczy i Zagłada*, Kraków 2010, 51–74 (chapter entitled *Dandys i żydowskie rupiecie*).

[14] I. Jáoz-Keszt, *Tényversektől a soá-eposzig. Mezei Andrásról.* In: *Izr*

Mezei the starting point for carrying out a private reconstruction of the memorised prewar and war times was factographic knowledge. Let's take a closer look at two poems which represent this poetic concept – *Numbers* (*Számok*) from the volume of *Adorno* 1993:

NUMBERS (SZÁMOK)

No cry of sorrow nor shriek of pain
nothing more horrific than sheer numbers:
51 days, 147 trains
to take 434 thousand Jews away
and 200 SS-men
and 5 thousand Hungarian guards
willingly, by the hundreds
first to the ghetto,
then to brick factories,
and when they plundered everything from
the railway cars,
80 Jews to each car,
famished and thirsty straight to Mengele
from the day of the German aggression
forced but ready to serve
not refusing to obey the Germans
they were simply obliging,
half a million Jews in the province:
only 10 percent left alive.[15]

(translated by
K. Piotrowiak-Junkiert)[16]

eli szellem ma (2000–2010). Kőbányai János interjúi, Budapest 2010, p. 127.

[15] A. Mezei, *Adorno*, Budapest 1992, p. 29.

[16] All translation in this article, unless stated otherwise, are mine.

THE FACTOGRAPHIC POEM

To make sure they took all the Jews
the guards combed
the entire Derecske
where they found the 93 year old
Grandma Krammer
and Éva Németi's younger brother
who was 3 years old
they dragged them towards Nagyvárad,
rushed to the others
not to delay the deportation
so that the nearly six millions
will not miss these two.[17]

Zsolt Koppány, while analysing Mezei's factographic poems described them as a form that goes beyond the typical „prose description". „There is a multiplication of facts but in order to bring the composition to a master level, he begins to scrape this surely most external layer of reality" – writes the critic in *Remember! 1944–2004*[18]. The pivotal aspect is to find the answer about the nature of „the scraping, „scratching" [*kapargatni*]. These words unite two contexts of meaning: going beyond the established borders in the form of destruction and the awareness of a multilayer structure of the world. Poetry undertakes the challenge and puts the reader in a position of somebody who needs to be confronted with the lyrical image. There is no place for ambiguity. Everything focuses around the nearly encyclopedic communication around which Mezei positions a couple of people usually using their names/

[17] Ibidem, p. 35.

[18] Zs. Koppány, *Remember! 1944–2004. A Holokauszt rekviemje-Mezei András tényveresei*. In: *Az öreg tölgy és vastag ága*, Budapest 2004. I use: http://www.mek.oszk.hu/10300/10319/html/ [date of access: 27 May 2015].

surnames. The volume *Adorno* is full of names (Mojse, Árie, Sára, Ráchel, Ábrahám – from the poem *Family history or* Sanyi from *Listu Nusi*), place names (Majdanek, Treblinka, Nagyvárad, Derecske, Auschwitz, Szombathely), dates and camp numbers. Such an unambiguous identification eludes the war statistics and shows the unquestioned seriousness of being which cannot be drawn up by means of mathematical algorithms. However, the significance of the described strategy should be noticed: factographic poetry by rejecting the lyrical background of a poetic text, limiting or even blocking the intuitive „ambiguity" of the language of somebody who wants to tell, who does not want to forget or shed even one second of pain and in fact forces one particular interpretation. Behind the pretense of economy and succinctness resulting from the accumulation of dates and numbers, there looms the need of reading the poetic message as a metaphor of the human being confronted with the History: degraded, deindividualised and mostly depersonalised. Paradoxically artistic tools that create the effect of „factography" are simultaneously elements of a strategy of „text that is sensitive to the hidden metaphoric code". Thus, Mezei unites two competences in his works: the competence of the archivist, witness, informer (who breaks social and political silence) and interpreter who fills a gap in the knowledge of what happened in Hungary but, first and foremost, wants to provide his own diagnosis of the violated humanity. People whose death he watches, describes and defines the world of numbers, can be „written down" by means of a series of numbers. This painful finding also pervades the poetry of other authors.

János Kőbányai compared this strategy to the Orphic gesture pointing to two other writers who also experienced a child's memory of Shoah – Mágda Székely (1936–2007) and Ágnes Gergely (born 1933). The first as a wife, the other – as a great poet of Shoah (and privately as a friend) tried to create a textual substitute for the reality in order to find epistemological tools for it.

As children they survived Shoah and their fundamental experience was to lose one of their parents and live in a torn family. To legitimise their own heritage by means of creating poems about it was both a human and an artistic decision.[19]

Ágnes Gergely confirmed her identity status on a number of occasions by writing expressive poems showing the essence of memory taking place in an intimate world of text to which access is granted only to the person who remembers. In Gergely's works the border demarcated by memory also seems to be a safe area. The poet in her key poem *Ajtófélfámon jel van – Sign on my door jamb* (1963) presents her postwar attitude that was based on avoiding certain activities that were inherently connected to the dead, the biological sphere of being that dissolves after death into small particles. For Gergely, coming to the cemetery is the gesture that cherishes this side of existence:

> I don't have memories
> and if I do I don't tend to them
> I never roam the cemeteries
> I don't care for organic chemistry

However, the next verses contradict the situation of the speaking „I" in the first stanza which subconsciously surrenders to the stronger wave of memory that wishes to revive the image of the father killed by the Nazis. Recalling the dead– significant in the context of reflection about Mezei's poetry – is possible thanks to „vegetative memory", instinctive and focused on recreating elements connected with the physiology of the body[20].

[19] J. Kőbányai, *A magyar-zsidó költészet 150 éve.* In: *A magyar-zsidó irodalom története. Kivirágzás és kiszántás,* Budapest 2012, p. 189.

[20] The topic of corporeality in female poems on Shoah is taken up in: K. Somogyi, *Van-e a holokausztirodalomnak neme? Székely Magda, Gergely Ágnes, Beney Zsuzsa verseiről.* In: *Trauma, geneder, irodalom. A társadalmi nemi szerepek jelentősége a trumatikus tapasztalatok irodalmi*

observed behaviours, manners and habits:

> But sometimes around November
> when there's fog and behind the damp glass
> I gasp for breath,
> though I can't see your figure
> from the vegetative memory
> your movement seeps through
>
> I feel that between your long nervous fingers
> the thermos and the can opener tremble (...).[21]

The phrase in the title does not pertain to Jewish symbols but to the memory of the father. Mezuzah is not the sign but the person lost in childhood, taken away to the so called forced labour and killed there. Gergely devoted other poems to her father (i.a. *Apu, Bolond munkaszolgálatos*) which were the basis for treating her works as part of art that deals with the war times.

A significant similarity can be found between the poetry focused on building an intellectual distance that loses with the permanent impulse to remember and the artistic practices of Mezei. The poet in the act of writing the prothesis and phantom of the war reality later sees the finished work of art as a metonymy of a world that is impossible to comprehend with the human mind. He uses poetics of objects which suddenly appear in all the verses bringing a deep message and provoking to interpretation that will venture to read the meanings hidden in those objects. Some of the objects seem to be grim relics of those whose memory is not maintained in the new but not beautiful country:

értelmezésében, szerk. B. Győre, A. Menyhért, G. Szabolcsi, Budapest 2014, p. 147–164.

21 Á. Gergely, *Ajtófélfámon*, Budapest 1963.

In the sealed Jewish shop
there are as many sandals for the harvesters
scarfs in dots, strings, straps as kerosene
in the container
matches, a mouse trap, crystallised sugar
(...)
lamp shades, candles, oil lamps
stickers and angels for one fillér
(...)
Hungary will be richer
since they give orders to close down Jewish shops (...)
[*First step*]

The unique ability to "see" can be noticed here. The poet fulfills her own mission and clearly points to a particular afterwar anamnesis – recalling the old lost and due to this almost unreal reality. The objects are the incentive to initiate memory work that is based on ploughing through past events. The perspective of an object is of key importance - it is a static, material, inanimate and passive space but it connotates the human world which is transient, painful, dynamic and tragically unfolding in the midst of merciless history. It can be concluded that two poetics, Mezei's and Gergely's, combine the concept of talking about the living by means of looking at the remnants of the old world. It is obvious that even this attitude allows to form conclusions that correspond with the earlier theses: if you can enclose the fate in an object, if the object provokes to depict the silhouettes of the dead, then the seriousness of the past life, *nolens volens*, cannot remain intact. In a sense the abandoned objects that are sometimes recovered from the war's turmoil silently describe the outcome of the human being's fate. The bottom line is that it aligns to the material world and it is a bitter disappointing equals sign.

As a lonely creator of afterwar awareness, groping in the dark, unsure of the possibilities of the language and constantly transgressing its borders, Mezei attempted at developing several topics

which confirmed his intuition. Itámár Jáoz-Keszt – a Hungarian poet from the Jewish circle of the creators of Hebrew, while talking with János Kőbányai *From factographich poems to the epic poem of Shoah* mentioned that:

It is very difficult to write about the Jewish experience in Hungary. It is almost impossible. He began to write official poems on the Jewish fate several years after, only in the mid 80s. Before that he wrote in hiding. He published it but hid the topic in the poems (...). If you permit me to speak of myself, I played my part in it: András – I say to him – you've created something totally new.[22]

Mezei's artistic innovation was met with formal and aesthetical resistance that was based on not fulfilling the directive to maintain the paragon of bravery and heroism which were the only preferred and accepted forms of literary representation of the experience of Auschwitz in the 60s and 70s. Imre Kertész was in a similar situation when he tried to find a publisher for his first novel *Lost fate* and heard that he „was late with the topic"[23] and the artistic form of the proposed work was not permissible as it does not meet formal requirements. Other forms than the brave and the heroic were not allowed because – as János Kőbányai says – there was no place for them in literature. The literary *main stream* opted for existential visions whereas the topic of Shoah was marginalised"[24]. Nonetheless, Mezei built his poetic bastion consistently. The next steps leading to the creation of factographic poetry steered towards attempts to write poetic apocryphs and biblical commentaries [*Genezaret, Jakob, Jezus tava*], and those finally resulted in the shaping of a unique concept of writing about Shoah. Irrespective of the period of Mezei's writing, he always decisively opts for conscious observation which allows to notice the lack and the time passing which is

22 I. Jaoz-Keszt, *Tényversektől a soá- eposig*... p. 134.

23 I. Kertész, *Dziennik galernika*, translated by E. Cygielska, Warszawa 2006, p. 27.

24 *Izraeli szellem ma*..., p. 135.

a destructive force. The poetry that arises from the reflections, the poetry that stores and chooses the form of encyclopedic message by counterbalancing the gaps in public knowledge of the times of war and the fate of Jewish families in Hungary. On the basis of these poems, the reconstruction of places and railway tracks that took away the Jews from the province but also the Budapest ghetto can be carried out.

Maturing enough to be able to speak about one's experience with the voice created for the need of the poem, developed into a highly complex process whose first indications were noted after the war ended and – as can be boldly ascertained are still valid – the Hungarians did not attempt to work out the trauma and rejected on a number of occasions any endeavours to discuss the war and come to terms with the past.

The times of the political transformation of 1989/1990 did not bring the expected social and cultural thaw. The continuously marginalised output of the writers of the second and third generation that struggle to come to terms with the identity of their ancestors in the realm of literature, made them choose the artistic experiment. The writers prefer tabooed literary genres that were excluded or at least undesired on the genological map of camp writing: fairytale (G. Németh, *Zsidó vagy?*, 2004)[25], grotesque (G. T. Szántó, *Lágermikulás*, 2004)[26], satire, allegorical novel (G. Schein, *Lázár*, 2004)[27], stylised as medieval sequence (Sz. Borbély, *Halotti pompa*, 2014)[28], etc. On the map of formal and genological experiments „factographic poems" occupy a special position as living, poetic

[25] G. Németh, *Zsidó vagy?* Pozsony 2004. Gábor Németh's novel *Zsidó vagy?* is written as a fairytale that present a child's experience of getting to know the difficult Jewish identity. The fairytale and its oneiric colour eliminate the reader's feeling of horror and dread of being.

[26] G. T. Szántó, *Lágermikulás. Elbeszélések,* Budapest 2004.

[27] G. Schein, *Lázár*, Pécs 2004.

[28] Sz. Borbély, *Halotti pompa*, Pozsony 2014.

chronicles of Shoah, transcripts and reports that serve to remember about those whose names were substituted by series of numbers.[29]

Transl. by Jolanta Sypiańska

РЕЗЮМЕ

«НИЧЕГО СТРАШНЕЕ, ЧЕМ ОДНИ ЧИСЛА». ПОЭЗИЯ АНДРАША МЕЗЕИ ПЕРЕД ЛИЦОМ ШОА

Статья посвящена приближению поэтического концепта *Андраша Мезеи* (1930-2008), который в своем творчестве (имеется в виду том *Adorno*) создает новую поэтическую форму, так называемые «фактографические стихотворения» [*tényversek*]. Их можно определить как живые, поэтические хроники Холокоста, как фактографическую хрестоматию, архивы, которые призывают нас помнить. «Фактографические стихотворения» основаны на образах, сосредоточенных вокруг материального мира, пронизанного данными и цифрами. Поэт требует обновления сознания жестов и военных событий, превращения непоэтических образов в отправную точку для новых размышлений над человеческим состоянием. Рассуждения по поводу поэзии Мезеи дополняются фрагментами текстов двух поэтесс, которые пишут о Холокосте в Венгрии – *Магды* Секей и *Агнеш Гергей*.

[29] The series of poems by Géza Röhrig, published in the volume *Hamvasztókönyv* (Budapest 1995) is a separate topic in the Hungarian poetry.

JACEK LEOCIAK

NON-BRIDGE OVER NON-STREET. ON THE WOODEN FOOTBRIDGE OVER CHŁODNA STREET IN THE WARSAW GHETTO: FROM TEXTUALISATION TO MYTHOLOGISATION

Reflections on the wooden footbridge over Chłodna Street, which was built and functioned in the Warsaw ghetto, are a part of my research on the ghetto topography and the spatial dimension of the Holocaust experience, which I have been carrying out for a long time (from research on the shaping of the ghetto territory, through the issues connected with the relations between topography and living in limit situations, to studying the biographies of the streets in the Warsaw quarter of Muranów).[1] This type of research

[1] Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, "Topography and Communications," in idem, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City* (Yale University Press, 2009) [Polish edition: *Getto warszawskie. Przewodnik po nieistniejącym mieście* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2001)]; Jacek Leociak, "Topografia i egzystencja," in idem, *Doświadczenia graniczne. Studia o dwudziestowiecznych formach reprezentacji* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2009); Jacek Leociak, *Spojrzenia na warszawskie getto* (Warsaw: Dom Spotkań z Historią, 2011).

interests should be situated within the methodological framework of the 'topographic turn' in contemporary humanities, which – without delving here into terminological discussions and conceptual distinctions – has its source in more recent theories of cultural anthropology, philosophy, and sociology, and also in humanistic geography, that is, new cultural geography and – and these two already have their long tradition – urban sociology and anthropology. It is noteworthy that this 'spatial turn' opened up an interdisciplinary perspective. In the categories closer to literary studies there is the concept of 'geo-poetics', whose subject – in the shortest of terms – "would be topographies – records of places in texts of culture."[2] In the sphere of these multi-faceted investigations are, for instance, distinctions between place and space, which are crucial to my reflections, the repertoire of spatial themes, the 'instrumentarium' of spatial concepts (the issue of territory, boundary, liminal areas, and itinerary), and topographic imagination.[3] Finally, there is also what I would like to call 'the topography of experience' on the one hand and 'the experience of topography' on the other.[4]

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[2] Elżbieta Rybicka, "Geopoetyka (o mieście, przestrzeni i miejscu we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach kulturowych)," in *Kulturowa teoria literatury. Główne pojęcia i problemy,* ed. Michał Paweł Markowski, Ryszard Nycz (Cracow: Universitas, 2006), p. 480.

[3] See Elżbieta Rybicka, ibid. Elżbieta Rybicka, "Zwrot topograficzny w badaniach literackich. Od poetyki przestrzeni do polityki miejsca," in *Kulturowa teoria literatury 2. Poetyki, problematyki, interpretacje,* ed. Teresa Walas, Ryszard Nycz (Cracow: Universitas, 2012) (see the extensive bibliography of this subject matter). Małgorzata Czermińska, "Miejsca autobiograficzne. Propozycja w ramach geopoetyki," *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2011).

[4] I discussed the topographies of experience and the experience of topography in my book *Tekst wobec Zagłady. (O relacjach z getta warszawskiego)* (Wrocław: Fundacja Na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 1997) (particularly in chapter "O autorach, miejscu i czasie") and in my book *Doświadczenia graniczne* (particularly the chapter "Topografia i egzystencja").

HISTORY

The wooden footbridge over Chłodna Street was one of the most spectacular examples of the spatial and transport anomalies that the Warsaw ghetto residents had to cope with as well as one of the most prominent symbols of the closed quarter, besides the brick wall.

Such a transportation solution – a wooden bridge over an Aryan[5] street – was first introduced by the Germans in the Łódź ghetto, which was ultimately closed on 30 April 1940. Initially covering just over four square kilometres, its territory underwent certain changes: it was reduced, extended, and divided. Two vital communication arteries for this part of Łódź passed through the ghetto. They were: Zgierska Street (the exit road in the direction of Zgierz) and B. Limanowskiego Street (the exit road in the direction of Aleksandrów). Because they were Aryan, they were excluded from the territory of the closed quarter and separated from it by walls erected along the pavements. Cutting through the ghetto territory, those Aryan streets divided it into three parts. Initially, the traffic between them moved through special passages with gates guarded by the German police and the Order Service functionaries, that is, Jewish policemen. That state of affairs compiled the pedestrian traffic within the ghetto and the street traffic on the Aryan streets that cut through the ghetto. That led to numerous collisions and

[5] I consistently write "Aryan side" or "Aryan" without quotation marks, because I think that that was precisely how the word "Aryan" was used in the ghetto – literally and not in inverted commas. This is also an example of the kind of incorporation of a strange, oppressive, and imposed language (here: the vocabulary) when its strangeness is internalised and rejected at the same time. This is rejection by failure to translate, thus emphasising the strangeness and distance of the untranslated word. In the Holocaust historiography one often sees, for instance, the term *Endlösung* (that is, the final solution; the full, canonic form of the term is: the final solution to the Jewish question).

provoked abuse of the Jews who were trying to cross those streets. It also made the closed quarter's borders less hermetic.

> That was why in early 1940, three wooden footbridges were constructed over those streets: two over Zgierska Street (over Kościelny Square and Wolbromska Street) and one over B. Limanowskiego (near Masarska Street). The cost of their construction, approx. 60,000 RM, was incurred by the ghetto. [...] Using those tall footbridges was torture for the ghetto residents, particularly the elderly. Winter only made it worse as one had to walk up the icy steps. Those who used those footbridges also had to take into account the risk of being shot by the German guards. The footbridge over Zgierska Street, near Kościelny Square, became one of the ghetto symbols. Its silhouette is featured on a number of commemorative objects, for instance, in the background of the famous portrait of Ch. M. Rumkowski by Pinkus Szwarc, in paintings painted in the ghetto, and on everyday use objects such as lighters. Sadly, the footbridges were also the site of a number of suicides, particularly during the initial period of the ghetto's existence.[6]

The Warsaw ghetto had four wooden footbridges. Let them be listed in chronological order. The first one was over Mławska

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[6] Entry "Mosty" [bridges] in "Leksykon" (ed. Wojciech Źródlak), in *Kronika getta łódzkiego / Litzmannstadt Getto 1941–1944*, vol. V *Suplementy*, ed. Julian Baranowski et al. (Łódź: Archiwum Państwowe w Łodzi, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2009), pp. 319–320. More about the bridges in the Łódź ghetto see also: Isaiah Trunk, *Łódź Ghetto. A History*, trans. and ed. Robert Moses Shapiro (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), pp. 294–296; Joanna Podolska, "Mosty getta (Zgierska – Masarska – Podrzeczna)," in *Litzmannstadt-Getto. Ślady. Przewodnik po przeszłości* (Łódź: Piątek Trzynastego, 2004), pp. 34–38.

Street, in the north-eastern part of the ghetto, erected probably in February 1941, which was when Emanuel Ringelblum mentioned it in his *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*: "A wooden bridge joining two ghetto streets has been built on Mławska Street."[7] The next footbridge was on Przebieg Street (between Muranowski Square and Bonifraterska Street), built in mid-1941. "A wooden bridge has been erected on Przebieg Street," wrote Ringelblum, "because of the Christian boarding house located at the end of this street."[8] The next bridge, or actually a footbridge, was constructed over Żelazna Street at the intersection with Leszno Street, most probably in the late autumn of 1941. It became necessary due to the shift of the ghetto borders during that period. Back in April 1941, the Collegium building at Leszno 84, on the corner of Żelazna Street, was included in the ghetto. Before the war it used to house Private Male Lower Secondary School No. 89, whereas now it was a transit centre for those leaving for labour camps and then there was the *Arbeitsamt* – the *Judenrat*'s Labour Office. In November 1941, the building was excluded from the ghetto, but it was fenced in and still treated as a part of the ghetto. Now located on the Aryan side of the street (odd numbers), the Collegium building could be accessed only via the footbridge that led to it over the Jewish side of Żelazna Street (even numbers). The footbridge over Chłodna Street, at the intersection with Żelazna Street was the largest and most famous construction. It joined the 'large ghetto' (north off Chłodna Street) and the 'small ghetto' (south off Chłodna Street). There were also plans to erect footbridges in other parts of the ghetto, but they were never realised.

The Chłodna-Żelazna intersection was one of the busiest places in the Warsaw ghetto. Aryan Chłodna Street wedged into the ghetto

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7 Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego: wrzesień 1939–styczeń 1943*, introduction and ed. A. Eisenbach, trans. A. Rutkowski (Warsaw, 1988), p. 239.

8 Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego*, p. 293.

territory, dividing it into two parts. By the late autumn of 1941, the western border of the ghetto reached as far as Wronia Street, which meant that the section of Chłodna Street west of Żelazna Street that reached Wronia Street was within the ghetto borders. The traffic arrangement there was particularly complicated. To go from the small to the large ghetto one had to cross Chłodna Street. There was no other way. The Chłodna-Żelazna intersection was constantly swarming with pedestrians. There were obstructions and traffic jams, so crossing the street required a long wait. The Jews walking through that passage between the two parts of the ghetto were often harassed or beaten. The gendarmes who controlled the traffic used sophisticated torture. A fragment of Ringelblum's entry of 19 and 20 November 1940:

> Physical exercise with rocks or bricks on the corner of Chłodna and Żelazna streets for those who were too late to take off their hats. The elderly Jews are also ordered to do squats. Scraps of paper are scattered about and the Jews have to pick them up from the mud, and those who bend over are kicked. [...] The hell on Chłodna and Żelazna Streets persists. Whole groups are ordered to pass very quickly, driven like dogs.

Two days later he adds:

> What is the purpose of exercising with bricks on Chłodna Street? The Jews are handed two bricks: a lighter one and a heavier one. It is impossible to maintain balance when bending over. In order to bypass Żelazna and Chłodna Streets one has to walk way down Chłodna Street and then cross to Krochmalna Street through Chłodna Street 29. The Germans learned about that and bricked in the passage through that courtyard.[9]

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[9] Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego*, pp. 198, 201, 202–203.

This is how Władysław Szpilman remembered that place:

If you walked down Żelazna Street you could see a crowd of people on the corner of Chłodna Street at quite a distance. [...] the German guards were bored [...] One of their favourite entertainments was dancing. Musicians were fetched from the nearby side streets [...] the soldiers chose people out of the waiting crowd whose appearance they thought particularly comic and ordered them to dance. The musicians took up a position by the wall of a building, space was cleared in the road, and one of the policemen acted as conductor by hitting the musicians if they played too slowly. Others supervised the conscientious performance of the dances. [...] The crossing opened, closed and opened again, but the unfortunate dancers had to continue skipping about in waltz-time - panting, weeping with exhaustion, struggling to keep going, in the vain hope of mercy.[10]

In the spring of 1941, the Aryan traffic on Chłodna Street changed its character from civilian to military. With the preparations for the war with the Soviet Union, the Germans moved army supplies from the west to the east. "Now day and night an endless line of armoured vehicles, tanks, ambulances, motorised artillery, and lorries with infantry moved along Chłodna Street, headed east. Occasionally there were some artillery and infantrymen too. Sometimes one was obliged to wait for hours to cross from one ghetto to the other," wrote Henryk Makower, a physician from the ghetto, while in hiding on the Aryan side.

Stanisław Adler, a solicitor, historian, and the chief of the Organisation Desk of the Order Service (*Referat Organizacyjny Służby Porządkowej)*, who on account of his position was particularly sensitive to the issue of transport in the ghetto, mentioned the following in his memoir written in hiding on the Aryan side:

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[10] Szpilman, *The Pianist: The Extraordinary True Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939–1945* (New York: Picador USA, 1999), pp. 66–67.

> A major obstacle was growing on the corner of Żelazna and Chłodna Streets. In the first half of 1941, Chłodna Street's roadway "belonged to the Aryans." The heavy transit traffic of thousands of vehicles of various kinds, mostly military, moved down the street. [...] Jewish vehicles could drive down Żelazna Street and across Chłodna Street only when the Polish policeman who was controlling the traffic had no Aryan vehicles in sight. Sometimes more than a quarter would pass before the Jewish cavalcade could move. One had to cross the treacherous intersection as fast as possible, because the traffic could be stopped again at any second. The same rules applied to the pedestrian traffic or actually the pedestrians' running.[11]

After the correction of the ghetto borders in the autumn of 1941 the whole western side of Żelazna Street was excluded from the ghetto. Consequently, the whole length of Chłodna Street became Aryan. The Aryan traffic moved down Chłodna Street and a section of Żelazna Street. The two streets were blocked with the wings of an iron gate, which either stopped people and cars or let them pass through. This is how Maria Wisłowska, an eye witness, remembered that iron structure:

> In the middle of Żelazna Street, opposite Sommer's café, a strange structure was erected – the fruit of the great German ingenuity: four gates perpendicular to each other; when closed, they created an iron cage, as in a menagerie. They opened only in pairs, letting trams and pedestrian traffic down Chłodna Street (its whole roadway was Aryan) or, when the other two gates were closed, they allowed the Jewish rickshaws to cross Żelazna Street. Pedestrian traffic was banned. That iron box on the corner

[11] Stanislaw Adler, *In the Warsaw Ghetto 1940–1943. An Account of a Witness* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1982), p. 115.

of Chłodna and Żelazna Streets opened and closed all day long.[12]

The concept of building the wooden footbridge over Chłodna Street on the corner of Żelazna Street first appeared in November 1940. *Judenrat* Chairman Czerniaków's diary includes the following annotation dated 22 November 1940: "We are to erect a wooden footbridge on Chłodna Street."[13] During the same period, Ringelblum writes the following: "There is talk about erecting two bridges (viaducts): one between Solna and Ciepła Streets and one between Bonifraterska and Przebieg Streets."[14] In September 1941, the *Judenrat* officially presents a project to build a bridge over Chłodna Street in an attempt to amend the catastrophic traffic situation in the narrow passage joining the two parts of the ghetto. The 11 September 1941 entry in *Judenrat* Chairman Czerniaków's diary reads: "Jaszuński is working with a construction technician on a memo for Auerswald regarding the ghetto borders in order to protect the quarter south of Chłodna Street. The proposition concerns a bridge over Żelazna Brama Square [Iron Gate], over Chłodna Street, or perhaps a barrier on the corner of Żelazna and Chłodna Streets and a wall along both sides of Chłodna Street."[15] The project is rejected, for the time being, which Ringelblum mentions in mid-September 1941: "They have also rejected the Jewish Community's project to erect a bridge joining the two parts of the ghetto."[16] With the war against the Soviet Union in its *Blitzkrieg*

12 Maria Wisłowska, "Ulica Chłodna," *Stolica* 17 (1970).

13 Czerniaków, *Adama Czerniakowa dziennik getta warszawskiego: 6.IX.1939–23.VII.*1942 (Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1983) [English edition: *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom*, ed. Raul Hilberg (Ivan R. Dee, 1999)], p. 167.

14 Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego*, p. 203.

15 Czerniaków, *Adama Czerniakowa dziennik getta warszawskiego*, p. 214.

16 Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego*, p. 319.

phase, military transports move east down Chłodna Street. The issue of erecting a bridge over Chłodna Street recurs on the occasion of the shift of the borders and the actual exclusion of Chłodna Street's roadway from the ghetto. "For now, A[uerswald] demands a project of a footbridge over Chłodna Street," writes Czerniaków on 9 October. "He was told that there were technical difficulties, a dense underground network. He ordered preparation of a new project of the bridge over Chłodna Street."[17] The 8–9 November 1941 issue of *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, a reptilian newspaper, reads: "The two Jewish quarters are to be joined with viaducts suspended above the roadways. One of them is to be erected on the corner of Chłodna and Żelazna Streets and the other one is to lead from Wielopole Street over Elektoralna Street to the northern part [of the quarter]. Similarly, the Jewish cemetery is to be joined with the Jewish quarter with a bridge over Okopowa Street."

December 1941 saw the beginning of the construction of the bridge over Chłodna Street on the corner of Żelazna Street. It was the largest engineering construction in the ghetto. Engineer Mieczysław (Mosze) Ring, who worked in the Technical Department of the Jewish Council (*Wydział Techniczny Rady Żydowskiej*), proudly reminisced in his testimony submitted to the Yad Vashem Archive about the master project of "the bridge over Chłodna Street, which was so well designed and executed that it was admired even by professionals."[18] On 17 December 1941, Mary Berg wrote: "Simultaneously with the construction of the walls on Chłodna Street a bridge is being built to join the pavements on both sides of the street, because the roadway itself is to be a transport corridor for the Aryan part of the city. All the construction materials are to be provided by the Jewish

[17] Czerniaków, *Adama Czerniakowa dziennik getta warszawskiego*, p. 220.

[18] Yad Vashem Archive (later: YVA), 03/536.

Community."[19] Henryk Makower describes the completed bridge in a slightly ironic tone:

> A beautiful massive wooden bridge, two-stories tall broad and comfortable, had been constructed in the very heart of Warsaw. Only carts, hansom cabs, and rickshaws were allowed to drive under it. The rickshaw drivers used that to make a profit, transporting people under the bridge for 30 groszes per person. [...] The iron gate on hinges completely blocks the street between the Jewish and the Aryan quarter. Whenever the blue policeman orders a change of the traffic direction, the Jewish Police functionaries jump to both parts of the gate and change its position. After the last 'Aryans' have passed through, the last Jewish rickshaws hurriedly drive through the already closing passage. This two-way traffic of armband wearers across the bridge is incessant, from morning to curfew. Sometimes sparser, at other times it becomes so congested that it is difficult to pass through.[20]

The northern end of the wooden two-story construction was opposite the middle part of the façade of the corner tenement at Chłodna Street 26, while its southern end was opposite the meeting point of the tenements at Chłodna Street 21 and 23. The tenement at No. 26 was one of the most recognisable constructions on Chłodna Street. Erected in 1899 and designed by Stefan Szyller, a famous architect, art conservator, and representative of historicism in architecture (the designer of, for instance, the university library, the Warsaw University gate, and the building of the Warsaw University of Technology), it stood out with its characteristic

[19] M. Berg, *Dziennik z getta warszawskiego* (Warsaw, 1983), p. 132 [English edition: *The Diary of Mary Berg: Growing up in the Warsaw Ghetto* (London: Oneworld Publications Limited, 2007)].

[20] Henryk Makower, *Pamiętnik z getta warszawskiego. Październik 1940–styczeń 1943* (Wrocław, 1987), p. 175.

form. The cut off corner of this three-story building wedged into the intersection of Chłodna and Żelazna Streets. The tenement was richly decorated, for instance, with half columns and pilasters and a series of busts in niches on the last floor. It was topped with a small round tower with an onion-shaped cupola over the corner and a two-storey insertion over the doubled central axis of the main façade.[21] During the interwar period and the occupation, on the corner of the ground floor was Stanisława Potrzebińska's Pub for Everybody [*Bar dla Wszystkich*], famous in the neighbourhood and captured in numerous photographs from the ghetto period, often with the bridge and the iron gate in the background. The same as in the Łódź ghetto, the residents of the Warsaw closed quarter were obliged to cover the full cost of the construction. The bridge was opened to the ghetto residents on Monday, 26 January 1942, and it functioned until the liquidation of the small ghetto, that is, until mid-August 1942.

"Within less than a week all the residents of the small ghetto went north across the bridge. The steep arm of its stairs attracted crowds of people carrying bundles and suitcases which held the contents of their home for when it is gone. The crowds did not stop on the border of the bridge. They were driven further and further in [...]. One day, an incredible thing happened: there were no people on the bridge. There was nobody in the small ghetto either. A city without people, as in a fairy tale," wrote Adolf Rudnicki immediately after the war.[22] Still in hiding on the Aryan side of Warsaw, Henryk Makower annotated a dramatic epilogue to the history of the footbridge over Chłodna Street:

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[21] Jarosław Zieliński, *Atlas dawnej architektury ulic i placów Warszawy. Śródmieście historyczne*, t. 2, (Towarzystwo Opieki nad Zabytkami, Warszawa 1996), p. 39.

[22] Adolf Rudnicki, "Wielki Stefan Konecki," in idem, *Żywe i martwe morze* (Warsaw, 1956), pp. 76–77. The short story was originally published in the collection *Szekspir* (Warsaw, 1948).

> The heyday of the bridge was when the crowds of people streamed frantically across it, when some of the remaining junk and rags were transported underneath it by rickshaws, hansom cabs, and carts in order to salvage them from the small ghetto, suddenly excluded from the Jewish quarter.[23] But now the Jews not only drove under the bridge, but pedestrians were also allowed to walk under it. Long columns of poor souls, escorted by the SS and Ukrainians, went that way for their final walk to the Umschlag[platz] [...]. The footbridge then became deserted. Only from time to time would a Jewish Police functionary walk under it. Finally, I do not recall the exact date, labourers appeared by the bridge and traffic resumed there, just as during Auerswald's times. But that time it was the death of the footbridge. Our faithful friend did not live much longer than those for whom it had been built."[24]

TEXTUALISATIONS

Let us analyse the ways of textualisation of this engineering phenomenon of the footbridge in the Warsaw ghetto. I shall analyse two types of texts of a radically different character and situated on two opposite poles. The first type is the texts published in the 'reptile press'. The other one is the sphere of personal document literature, produced both *hic et nunc* and *post factum*, characterised by, for instance, the blurring of the borders between genres.[25]

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[23] During the great deportation campaign (22 July–21 September 1942) there was a wave of internal resettlements, which reached its apogee between 10 and 16 August, when, for instance, the small ghetto (the area south off Chłodna Street) was liquidated.

[24] Henryk Makower, *Pamiętnik z getta warszawskiego*, p. 176.

[25] See Jacek Leociak, "Literatura dokumentu osobistego jako źródło do badań nad Zagładą Żydów (Rekonesans metodologiczny)," *Zagłada*

A few words about the reptile press – an important phenomenon of everyday life in Poland under the German occupation. Those were newspapers published in Polish and German as well as the German-language press published in the Reich and distributed on the occupied territories.[26] Let us enumerate the dailies: *Nowy*

Żydów. Studia i materiały 1 (2005).

[26] More about the Polish-language occupation-period press see particularly the excellent monographic study L. Dobroszycki, *Reptile Journalism. The Official Polish-Language Press under the Nazis, 1939–1945* (Yale University, 1994). Lucjan Dobroszycki (died in New York in 1995) defended his doctoral dissertation about the reptile press in the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences (*Instytut Historii PAN*). But when he decided to emigrate in 1969, with the pressure after the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign, the final typeset of his book waiting at the PWN publishing house was destroyed. Its first fragments were published in *The Polish Review* 1 (1971), while the whole book was published in German in Munich in 1977, followed by its English edition, which I quote here. The Polish original is still at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw (I wish to thank Professor T. Szarota for the information). T. Szarota was the first one to use the official press in the General Government on such a scale: T. Szarota, "Jawne wydawnictwa i prasa w okupowanej Warszawie," in *Warszawa lat wojny i okupacji 1939–1945*, notebook 2 (1972) (*Studia Warszawskie* vol. X), and then in his book *Okupowanej Warszawy dzień powszedni* (Warsaw, 1973) (in the chapter "Książka i prasa"). See also S. Lewandowska, *Prasa okupowanej Warszawy* (Warsaw, 1992) and W. Wójcik *Prasa gadzinowa Generalnego Gubernatorstwa (1939–1945)* (Cracow, 1988). Also noteworthy is the sketch by M. Komar about *Nowy Kurier Warszawski* – "N.K.W. i okolice," *Res Publika* 2 (1988). It should be emphasised that there was an analogous phenomenon under the Soviet occupation. *Czerwony Sztandar. Gazeta Codzienna Zarządu Politycznego Frontu Ukraińskiego* [The red banner. The daily of the Political Directorate of the Ukrainian Front] was issued in Lvov from 5 October 1939 to the end of the Soviet occupation after the German invasion of the USSR on 22 June 1941. The authors of the texts published there included: Wanda Wasilewska, Julian

Kurier Warszawski (since 11 October 1939), *Goniec Krakowski* (since 27 October 1939), *Dziennik Radomski* (independent since 2 December 1941), and *Kurier Częstochowski* (since 4 November 1939). The Reich's organisational model of the functioning of the propaganda and the supervision of the press and publishing houses was transplanted in the General Government. The director of the Department of Propaganda for the Warsaw District, and then the director of the Main Propaganda Division in the government of the General Government was Wilhelm Ohlenbusch. In *Warsaw Ghetto. A Guide to the Perished City*,[27] Barbara Engelking and I of-

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Stryjkowski, Władysław Broniewski, Stanisław Jerzy Lec, Lucjan Szenwald, and Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński. See Grzegorz Hryciuk, "Polskojęzyczna prasa „gadzinowa" wydawana we Lwowie pod okupacją radziecką w latach 1939–1941," *Wrocławskie Studia Wschodnie* vol. 4 (2000). Such prominent authors did not write to the reptile press issued under the German occupation. *Gazeta Codzienna* was issued in Vilna from 25 November 1939 (after the Soviet occupier transferred the city to the Lithuanians) to 20 August 1940 (that is, two months after the Red Army re-entered the city). Its editor-in-chief was Józef Mackiewicz, who was deprived of the publication rights by the Lithuanian government several weeks before the Soviets seized Vilna for the second time. In the case of *Gazeta Codzienna* it was difficult to speak of collaboration, as it was a result of its editors' and co-workers' ideological choices. Consequently, there was a fundamental difference between *Gazeta Codzienna* and the undoubtedly reptile periodical *Goniec Codzienny*, issued under the German occupation from 26 July 1941 until the second arrival of the Red Army in July 1944. Mackiewicz rejected the position of the editor-in-chief of *Goniec Codzienny*, but he published several anti-communist articles there, the most important of which was the report on the discovery of the graves at Katyń. See Jerzy Malewski (Włodzimierz Bolecki), *Wyrok na Józefa Mackiewicza* (London: Puls Publication, 1991); Zdzisław A. Siemaszko, "Wileński „Goniec Codzienny"," *Zeszyty Historyczne* 106 (1993) (Paris).

[27] Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, *Getto warszawskie. Przewodnik po nieistniejącym mieście*, second edition, revised, updated, and extended (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagłada Żydów, 2013).

ten refer to the reptile press (particularly to *Gazeta Żydowska*[28] and *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*), which, skilfully read, becomes a source of priceless information about the everyday life in the ghetto.

Four days after the opening of the bridge, the Friday issue of *Gazeta Żydowska* of 30 January 1942, took notice of that fact in a note about "the transport issues in the Jewish quarter," pairing it with information about new omnibus routes. "The pedestrian traffic on the pavement joining both sides of Chłodna Street has been shut and a bridge over Chłodna Street has been opened to channel the foot traffic between the southern and northern part of the quarter." The text of this press announcement is maximally concise, linguistically neutral, and it performs an informative function. It belongs to the field of press genres of an informative character and it meets the criteria of a press note.[29] The issue of the footbridge recurred in *Gazeta Żydowska* after less than two months but in a totally different character – in the form of a humorous column entitled "Stary kawał – na nowy most" [an old scheme for the new bridge].

> One morning last week, numerous pedestrians crossing the bridge spanning Chłodna Street witnessed a simply sensational and tragicomic scene, which took place at the foot of this high bridge. It was eight o'clock in the morning. The same as every day, the people were hurrying to work.

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[28] *Gazeta Żydowska* – the only Polish-language Jewish periodical in the General Government licensed by the occupier, published in Cracow from 23 July 1940 to 30 August 1942, initially twice, and from July 1941 thrice a week.

[29] A press note is a record of a single fact, usually in an overview of other events. By contrast, a newsflash is the shortest informative text published in a press agency immediately after the given fact is made public. The quoted note does not meet the criterion of 'immediateness', as this fact was not announced in the first issue of *Gazeta Żydowska* after that event, that is, on Wednesday, 28 January.

How surprised they were when a tall Jew with a receipt book stopped them at the foot of the bridge demanding that each one of them paid a fee to cross the bridge. That 'clerk' was standing on the even side of Chłodna Street, while on the odd side was an elderly Jewish woman with an identical receipt book and demand, stopping people from walking across the bridge. The fee charged was ten groszes, for which one received a sheet from the receipt book. Our couple of 'clerks' answered all questions saying that that fee was charged for the benefit of the Jewish Council in our quarter and that they were just 'controllers' sent by the Community. The people snorted and paid the fee, surprised by such a strange contribution to the Community.

That lasted until one of the Jewish Council members approached the bridge. "Hey, where are you going, mister? You have to pay ten groszes to the Community!" The member was surprised: "What is this?" But he soon realised that he had never heard about such a fee at the Community, nor was it discussed during any of the Council's meetings. One more moment of reflection and the Council member became certain that it was just a swindle.

Upon his request, one of the Order Service functionaries who were called over checked the 'controller's ID. It occurred that the man was in possession of a scrap of paper where it was 'clearly' written that Kiwa P. from Pawia Street and his wife were authorised to collect a fee in the amount of ten groszes for crossing the bridge over Chłodna Street, payable to the Jewish Council in Warsaw. The 'document' was typewritten and had a stamp: "Footbridge – ten groszes."

Kiwa P. was furious with those who were checking his ID. He said that he would file a complaint about them with the Community because they were disturbing him at 'work' while the pedestrians were crossing the bridge for free.

All suspicions that he was some insolent swindler were dispelled when Kiwa P. and his wife, called over from the

> other end of the bridge, told with perfect naiveté about how they received those 'fantastic' positions of bridge controllers. It occurred that they were perfectly innocent and that they had fallen prey to ingenious swindlers who charged them a certain sum and fed them a cock-and-bull story about a charge for walking across the bridge. According to the swindled couple's tale, the swindle, which cost the swindled several thousand zlotys, involved several people, a smartly-dressed man who posed as a high-ranking official of the Community and several other individuals. The naive couple was led up and down the stairs of some office buildings, ordered to sign certain documents, and in the end, after being charged, it was assigned its 'posts' by the bridge the next day... The victim of its naiveté was released, swearing that [he?] would not rest until somebody from that band was captured. The search for the swindlers continues.[30]

I quote the entire column in order to fully present the rules of the genre and how the topic of the bridge was weaved into the formula of this genre. The story unfolds as in a crime novel: there are the alleged frauds, a police intervention, an interrogation, and a peripety – the swindler proves the victim of the swindle. One finds here the classic literary theme of 'the swindled swindler' or 'the swindler unmasked' reduced to the form of a newspaper column.[31]

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30 *Gazeta Żydowska,* 15 March 1942.

31 Let me list just a few: *The Farce of Master Pathelin* – an anonymous Medieval farce, written in approx. 1460, attributed to Guillaume d'Alecis (a false attorney pretends to be on his deathbed to trick a merchant and avoid paying for a piece of cloth. In court, the attorney tells his client who has been charged with stealing a sheep, to pretend to be dumb and say only "baa" like a sheep. The ploy proves successful as the attorney wins the trial, but his client does not step out of his role and when the attorney asks for remuneration for defence the man answers: "Baa."), *Volpone* by English Elizabethan playwright Ben Jonson, staged in the 1605–160

The text ends with a humorous punch line, and the whole is neatly and skilfully tailored to follow the model of a sensational fictional story presented in the convention of a humorous tale. The bridge seems the main character of the story, with the people revolving around it, attracted by that wooden construction's 'gravitational pull'. On the one hand, the existence of the bridge stimulates the imagination of various 'smart Alexs' and frauds, while on the other hand it leads the naïve and gullible astray. The idea of collecting fees fits the reality of the ghetto perfectly as there were plenty of various taxes, tributes, and contributions. One could easily fall prey to a swindle.[32]

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season (the title character [Sly Fox] tricks his friends with a mirage of an inheritance, seduces the wife of one of them, and in the end falls prey to his servant who is a swindler), or Molière's *Tartuffe*. Mikhail Bakhtin writes about the figure of the rouge in the Medieval European literature and culture in chapter six "The Functions of the Rouge, Clown and Fool in the Novel" of his study *Form of Time and Chronotope in the Novel*. Emphasising the anachronism of these themes, Bakhtin uses a beautiful metaphor: "The historical probe does not reach bottom in any of these images, so archaic are they." Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problemy literatury i estetyki*, trans. Wincenty Grajewski (Warsaw, 1982), p. 366.

[32] Jerzy Jurandot's comedy *Miłość szuka mieszkania* [love looking for a flat], staged at the 'Femina' Theatre at Leszno Street 35 and extremely popular in the ghetto, includes a satirical song where the characters promise to pay all the required contributions: "For the ŻTOS [Jewish Social Welfare Association] and the Community, / for the hospital, and the tribute, / for the child and the mother, / and the committee membership fee, / for a health promotion campaign, / for the emergency service fund, / for the TOZ [Society for the Protection of the Health] and the laundry, / for the CENTOS [Central Organisation for Orphan Care] and the delousing facility, / for the midwives' union, / for the holiday celebrations for the poor, / for the help to artists campaign, / for the poor on the list, / for the anti-typhus campaign, / for the Hazenfus family, / for the soup kitchen, / for the winter aid campaign, / for this and for that, / and for the Order Service too!" The text of the play survived in the Ringelblum

The most striking aspect of this column is its light-hearted, cheerful, and humorous tone, which is in sharp contrast with the horrible reality of the ghetto. That measure was typical of *Gazeta Żydowska*, whose texts, firmly rooted in their descriptive aspect in the reality of that period, at the same time created a world detached from that reality, evading the fundamental parameters, not only the historical ones, but predominantly the axiological and ethical ones. Therefore, that world was, so to speak, 'a world non-depicted'.[33]

The *Nowy Kurier Warszawski* reptile daily published two longer texts about the bridge. Both these texts have a character of a press note, that is, a concise informative note about an important event, but enriched with additional facts and contexts to clarify the main topic.[34] Their tone is relatively neutral and informative for *Nowy*

Archive (AŻIH 1221. Ring I, 519). As cited in Jerzy Jurandot, *Miasto skazanych. 2 lata w warszawskim getcie*, Stefania Grodzieńska, *Dzieci getta* (Warsaw: Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich, 2014), pp. 337–338. It is noteworthy that Jurandot's comedy premiered on 16 January 1942 – ten days before the opening of the bridge over Chłodna Street.

[33] One of many examples is the long report, which took up almost an entire column in the issue of 27 May 1942, entitled "Smocza 35. Tam, gdzie tętni rytm pracy Dzielnicy" [Smocza Street 35 pulsating with the rhythm of labour in the Quarter]. That tenement held tailoring, electroplating, weaving, electro-mechanical, and straw footwear manufacturing workshops (*szopy*) managed by 'Todos', that is, the Society for Jewish Industry Deliveries Ltd. in Warsaw (*Towarzystwo Dostaw Wyrobów Przemysłu Żydowskiego spółka z o. o.*). A truly surrealist atmosphere is introduced as early as in the first sentence: "A broad avenue. Flower beds on one side, a garden on the other, and in it, amidst the trees, in the grass, slumbering, lies the spread-out, deep silence." Smocza Street, a ghetto street of the second or even third category, was always crowded and noisy, with a bustling market place at Smocza Street 29. It was almost completely devoid of any greenery, as was practically the entire ghetto. Consequently, it would have never recognised itself in this description.

[34] See Anna Komendzińska, *Jak napisać notatkę prasową?* http://not-

Kurier Warszawski's standards. A fragment of the text of 6 February 1942 entitled: "Drewniany most nad ulicą Chłodną łączy obie części dzielnicy żydowskiej" [wooden bridge over Chłodna Street joins both parts of the Jewish quarter].

> After the shift of the border of the Jewish quarter at the end of last year, the transport in that spot has been somewhat improved as half of Żelazna Street's roadway between Leszno and Grzybowska Streets has been opened to road traffic.
>
> There was only an opening in the wall on the corner of Chłodna and Żelazna Streets, which channelled the pedestrian and vehicular traffic between the 'small' and the 'large' Jewish quarters. Even though the police ensured that the traffic flowed smoothly and they prevented any disturbances to the normal traffic, the trams, cars, and the foot traffic could not move freely in that section of the street, because that traffic was stopped once in a while to let the Jewish population through.
>
> Now the works on the construction of the wooden bridge joining both parts of the Jewish quarter in that spot have been completed and the openings in the wall have been replaced with tall gates, opened several times a day to let Jewish carts and hansom cabs through. Jewish pedestrian traffic now moves across the bridge, no longer disrupting normal traffic."

Nowy Kurier Warszawski returns to the topic after a week, again putting it in the broader context of the transport problems in this part of Warsaw. It also announces plans to build two more footbridges, which were never executed though. One may remember that more than five months later began the great deportation campaign, during which 300,000 Jews were deported to the death camp in Treblinka. Consequently, there was nobody left to cross

kaprasowa.pl/poradnik.html [access 30.06.2017].

the bridges. The said note printed on 12 February 1942 reads: "A number of gates through which trams drove in and out of the Jewish quarter have also been liquidated. Aside from the bridge on the corner of Chłodna and Żelazna Streets two more are to be built: one from Wielopole Street over Żelaznej Bramy Square to as far as Elektoralna Street and the other one over Okopowa Street to the Jewish cemetery in Powązki."

Warschauer Zeitung, a newspaper issued in German in the occupied capital, adopts a markedly different tone. Its issue of 17 February 1942 employs a whole arsenal of anti-Jewish propaganda clichés, justifying the construction of the bridge with the necessity to strengthen the sanitary cordon isolating the Jews:

> It is no news that the Warsaw Jews [sic! – JL] used every occasion to do their geshefts outside the ghetto. That was why there was a need to separate the Jews from the quarters inhabited by the Germans and Poles. This border protects predominantly the Poles from the unhealthy influence of the Jewish plague. This separation is continued with the next step – the construction of a bridge for the Jews. Though wooden, it is three metres tall. The Jews can freely walk across it to the other part of their ghetto without disturbing the non-Jewish population, without contacting the Germans or representatives of the Polish population. The junction street under the bridge is still used by the million-inhabitant city for transport.

We are concerned here with a model use of the 'sanitarian-epidemiological' discourse typical of the Nazi anti-Semitism,[35] which may be summarised with the slogan "Jews – lice – typhus and ty

[35] More about this topic in my article "Retoryka nienawiści a Zagłada" in *Zagłada chorych psychicznie. Pamięć i historia*, ed. Tadeusz Nasierowski, Grażyna Herczyńska, Dariusz Maciej Myszka (Warsaw: Eneteia 2012).

phoid fever" written on the famous occupation-period poster. Suffice it to say that in his report of 20 January 1941 Walter Schön, the chief of the Department of Deportations (*Umsiedlungstelle*, established on 23 January 1940 in the Office of the Warsaw District Head for the organisation and supervision of the works connected with the establishment of the ghetto), used, for instance, the following argument to justify the necessity to close the ghetto: "The German army and the German nation should be protected, just in case, from the Jew – the immune carrier of the germs of the epidemic."[36] One should also remember that the pre-war image of Jews in Polish National-Democratic newspapers had a clearly 'parasitological' component. The Jews were referred to as 'insects', 'rodents', 'lice', 'fleas', 'roaches', 'locust', 'drones', 'rats', 'spiders' and 'bugs with sidelocks'.[37]

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In the texts from the field of personal document literature (diaries, memoirs, recollections, and other autobiographical forms), the topic of the bridge is discussed mostly in report categories. The authors discuss the bridge both in terms of its construction and functioning, paying attention to its special importance in the ghetto's transport network and its extraordinary appearance. Already quoted in the subchapter about the historical background, the fragments of testimonies of this type are precisely of a reporting character. Of the authors who wrote *hic et nunc* Henryk Makower was

[36] *Eksterminacja Żydów na ziemiach polskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej. Zbiór dokumentów*, comp. and ed. Tatiana Berenstein, Artur Eisenbach, Adam Rutkowski (Warsaw, 1957), p. 106.

[37] See Olaf Bergman, *Narodowa Demokracja wobec problematyki żydowskiej w latach 1918–1929* (Poznań, 1998); Anna Lnadau-Czajka, *W jednym stali domu... Koncepcja rozwiązania kwestii żydowskiej w publicystyce polskiej lat 1933–1939* (Warsaw, 1998).

the one who devoted the most space to the bridge over Chłodna Street. Written in hiding in Miłosna near Warsaw, his memoir includes a separate chapter about it. The tale about the bridge begins with its prehistory – Makower sketches the complicated transport situation at the intersection of Chłodna and Żelazna Streets, which justifies the necessity to erect a construction to improve traffic in that area. Makower presents himself as the bridge's chronicler: he describes the individual stages of the period before its construction, then its construction and use, and he ends with an epilogue, that is, the final stage of the footbridge's existence during the liquidation campaign. Another author, Tadeusz Obremski, focuses in his diary on the appearance and functioning of the bridge. His factual account is slightly metaphorised in some places, which emphasises the author's emotional attitude to the reality described.

> Another equally interesting sight was that of the Jews walking across the bridge in both directions. A real migration of nations. All day long the silhouettes marched to and fro like ants. Many were unable to walk all the way up the bridge stairs, so when the roadway was not blocked they used the services of the rickshaws, which transported them across the 'bridge' for 50 groszes. The Jewish police attempted to stop those modern 'gondoliers' but without success.[38]

Mary Berg, who moved from Sienna Street to Chłodna Street 10, watched from her window the construction of the bridge and then its functioning. For she lived by the St Charles Borromeo church, less than three hundred metres from the intersection of Chłodna and Żelazna Streets. The note in her diary does not divert from a factual description, with the diarist giving a slight indication of her emotional attitude only once when she points out the 'strangeness' of the whole situation.

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38 YVA, 033/6509, Tadeusz Obremski.

> With its complicated geography, Chłodna Street is a strange sight. The pedestrian traffic is not ordinary here either. One can see crowds of people walking from the corner of Żelazna Street. They head for the two-storey wooden bridge that spans the pavements on both sides of the street. The people fill the bridge, from it is a view of the whole length of the street. Walls separate the pavements from the roadway, with the Aryan population and trams moving in the 'corridor' between the walls. Halfway down the street, between the two walls, is the St Borromeo church, surrounded by old branching lindens.[39]

Helena Szereszewska, the wife of a *Judenrat* member executed on the *Umschlagplatz* during the uprising in the ghetto, recorded her memories after the war, in the 1950s in Israel. As for the bridge, she remembers mostly the press in the crowd crossing Chłodna Street. Her factual description gravitates towards a metaphor, in which way the author conveys the experiences of losing one's identity in the mass of the ghetto residents.

> We walked from Waliców Street along Leszno Street to Karmelicka Street. It was a long walk, including crossing the bridge on the corner of Chłodna and Żelazna Streets. An enormous crowd of people, most of them poorly-attired, streamed up and down those streets. It was the main and only artery leading from the 'small' ghetto into the large one. Absorbed by that human stream, we immediately became something like drops in its water, immediately losing our individuality; we turned grey, blending in with the surrounding crowd.[40]

There are two dominant discourses in the testimonies regarding the wooden bridge over Chłodna Street: reporting and meta-

[39] M. Berg, *Dziennik z getta warszawskiego*, p. 138.

[40] Helena Szereszewska, *Krzyż i mezuzah* (Warsaw, 1993), p. 74.

phorised. The reporting discourse is dominant but it sometimes diverts from pure description towards more or less metaphorised descriptions. At some point the report might attain a metaphorical or symbolic dimension.

SYMBOLISM: TRANSFORMATIONS AND INVERSIONS

In the everyday experience of space, the bridge is something that joins. It makes it possible to cross a precipice or the unbridled element of water, thus broadening the sphere of the expansion of man, who overcomes the natural barriers he encounters on his path. The bridge is a symbol of overcoming adversities: it spans two banks of a river, two edges of an abyss, two slopes of a precipice, creating common space – a meeting space. Suspended 'in between', the bridge is where one crosses to the other side, with the act of crossing understood both in the physical and topographic categories as well as in the metaphysical, spiritual, and eschatological ones. A bridge builder enables people to cross over water or an abyss. Moreover, the Latin word for priest is *pontifex* (in Latin, *pons* means 'bridge' and *facere* 'to make'), that is, the priest is someone who overcomes the differences between the world of the living and the dead, the world of people and God, worldliness and eternity. The bridge joins heaven and earth, as does a rainbow. It enables crossing from one to the other.[41] A bridge suspended between this world and the

[41] I use the concept of 'passage' in the common meaning of this word rather than in the strictly terminological one, which refers to Arnold van Gennep's concept presented in his classic book *The Rites of Passage* (1909). I am inspired by what van Gennep calls a 'physical passage', that is, the crossing of the borders separating certain territories. See Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom, Gabrielle L. Caffee, introduction Solon T. Kimball (London: Routledge, 1960), p.

other appears in various religions and mythologies. The dead cross such a bridge to 'the other side'. It is usually narrow and shaky, suspended over the hellish abyss, which claims the sinners.[42] Consequently, the bridge gives hope that it is possible to join something that is divided, that by crossing a bridge one can safely reach one's destination. It is a passage that opens up the horizon of hope. In the context of these reflections, this symbolic dimension of the bridge seems the most important.

The intersection of Chłodna and Żelazna Streets, where the bridge was later erected, was one of the most dangerous spots in the ghetto. No hope, only fear. That crossing place was given names, which in the historical or mythological order meant extreme danger, great risk, and overwhelming dread. Ringelblum wrote that "the Jews called the intersection of Chłodna and Żelazna Streets the Dardanelles."[43] Located between the Balkan Peninsula and Asia Minor, that strait has had a strategic importance since Troy. It was the site of the Dardanelles Campaign and the slaughter of the Allies at Gallipoli during World War I. Stanisław Adler describes the intersection of Chłodna and Żelazna Street borrowing Homer's scenery of Odysseus's passing through a narrow strait between two monsters: Scylla and Charybdis. Chłodna Street is the only way. There is no other route, but whoever decides to go that way faces the impossible. One has no other choice. The same as Odysseus had. But one does cross despite the dangers, as did Odysseus.

> The elderly could not even dream of passing by Scylla and Charybdis on Chłodna Street. One had to have the qualifications of a short distance runner in order to succeed. The Jewish pedestrians began to run as soon as the Polish policeman gave a signal allowing traffic along Żelazna

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[42] Cf. the entry "Bridge," in Hans Biederman, *Dictionary of Symbolism*, trans. James Hulbert (Plume, 1994).

[43] Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego*, p. 207.

> Street. Those who were too slow or fell down were taken to the guards' post for a 'gym class'. On dry days it was fifteen minutes of squats with bricks and on rainy days – crawling in the gutter.[44]

For the ghetto residents the bridge became a proof of their living in some absurd spatial arrangement. The bridge ceased to symbolise hope. It was a dead end that changed nothing, gave nothing, and did not help in anything. All it did was hurt[45] and remind of a loss. The traditional symbolism had been reversed, distorted, turned into its own opposite. The bridge in the ghetto made the Jews aware of their humiliating and degrading situation of enclosure and separation. It proved that any connection between the ghetto and the rest of the world was to be severed. Therefore, the bridge in the ghetto symbolised division and bondage.

THE VIEW

For the symbolism of the bridge over Chłodna Street, its transport function is important: the paradox that it literally joined two sides of the street, two parts of the ghetto, and at the same time was a metaphor for separation, isolation, and exclusion. The inversion of the symbolic meanings of the bridge in the ghetto is based on this very paradox. But the bridge was also an extremely important element of the visual experience of the ghetto. It was a construction that spectacularly disrupted the culturally familiar image of the city street. It was a manifestation of an architectural aberration, with the image of the bridge openly challenging common perceptions.

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[44] Stanislaw Adler, *In the Warsaw Ghetto 1940–1943. An Account of a Witness* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1982), p. 115.

[45] Henryk Makower calls the bridge "an architectural scar on the face of Warsaw," *Pamiętnik z getta warszawskiego*, p. 176.

In the categories of the poetics of visuality[46] the phenomenon of the ghetto bridge may be analysed from two perspectives: firstly as an object that one looks at, which appears in one's sight, manifesting its appearance and location in space; secondly as a place, which one looks out from. I shall focus on this second aspect: the view from the bridge.

That two-storey bridge had a view of Warsaw. In the foreground one could see the characteristic towers of the nearby St Charles Borromeo church and the statue of the Virgin Mary on the nearby square. Further, beyond the trees of the Saxon Garden, was the city centre's skyline with the towering silhouette of the first Warsaw skyscraper erected in the early 20th century for the Cedergren telephone company, taken over in 1922 by the Polish Telephone Joint Stock Company (*Polska Akcyjna Spółka Telefoniczna*, PAST), known as the PAST building (*budynek Pasty*). The residents of the walled in, small and crowded closed quarter feasted their eyes on the view of the open space stretching before them – the sight of the world so close, at their fingertips, yet inaccessible. The Jews crossing the bridge looked out to the world, which seemed free and normal to them, unlike the one they had been forcibly crammed into. In June 1941, on the occasion of recording the end of the construction of a bridge in the north-eastern part of the ghetto over Przebieg Street, Ringelblum wrote in his *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto* about looking at the 'free world': "From there one can see the River Vistula and [the] Żoliborz [quarter]. Numerous Jews stand there all day long looking at that other, free world."[47]

The eyes see what they wish to see. The gaze falls on real objects

[46] I refer here to a certain methodological perspective of cultural research that can be called 'visuality poetics'. See an overview of this topic – Roma Sendyka, "Poetyka wizualności," in *Kulturowa teoria literatury 2. Poetyki, problematyka, interpretacje*, ed. Teresa Walas, Ryszard Nycz (Cracow, 2012).

[47] Ibid., p. 293.

but it is subject to an illusion. Rarely does the Polish set phrase *błądzić wzrokiem* (one's gaze wanders) so painfully reveal its second bottom, as *błądzić* also means to lose one's way, to be wrong. The illusion of seeing consists here in seeing something, which only seems normal, something that appears as the territory of freedom only at first sight. An Aryan street, Chłodna Street was a part of occupied Warsaw, which was also subjected to terror. Visible from the bridge, the PASTA building shall have its heroic moment during the Warsaw Uprising when after fierce attacks it shall be finally seized by the insurgents – a moment of triumph before Warsaw is turned into ruin and rubble. This perceptive illusion occurs in two dimensions: visual and existential. The confrontation of these two perspectives, two points of view, two occupation-period narrations reveals the dynamic dimension of the Holocaust experience, the sphere of tensions between the two poles of the human lot: the Jewish one and the Polish one.

The Jews cannot even feed on that illusion as much as they would please. Stopping on the bridge is forbidden. One must cross it quickly. "And from the bridge one can see the Aryan Warsaw, which seems so free to us. But even such a simple pleasure is forbidden. The policemen on the bridge demand politely yet firmly that one does not stare and move on," emphasises Henryk Makower.[48] The no stopping rule was also emphasised by Tadeusz Obremski: "The view was incredible when you looked down from the bridge. Stopping was forbidden."[49]

Nevertheless, it was possible to catch a glimpse of the yearned for sights or 'steal the sight' that made one dream but was also painful. In his autobiographic novel *Chleb rzucony umarłym*, Bogdan Wojdowski escorts little Dawid, his *porte parole*, to the bridge.

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48 Makower, *Pamiętnik z getta warszawskiego*, p. 176.

49 AYV, 033.6509, Tadeusz Obremski, *Dziennik* [diary].

> With its tumult, chaos, disorganised traffic flowing down the winding and narrow alleys [...], the ghetto had an overwhelming influence on Dawid. Later, one day, having summoned his courage, he stopped on the wooden bridge. He saw an omnibus,[50] a yellow-and-blue box on wheels, which looked like a circus vehicle, a new means of transport in this part of the city, and a beggar, who down there on the street, always in the same spot, threw himself under rickshaws, lamenting and forcibly extorting alms from the passenger sitting back in it. Looking from up above, Dawid suffered, his heart grieving with surprise and bitterness. From there he could freely follow the routes of the Aryan trams moving down Chłodna and Wolska Streets outside the ghetto."[51]

Another time, Dawid is standing on the bridge with his friend Eliahu. The boys can see both the mirage of the distant free Warsaw and the closeness of the ghetto. After-images of a dream and a trivial reality.

> They finally sighed on the wooden bridge, which was just a few steps from home, in the crowd of pedestrians fearfully rushing past with their heads sunken in their collars. The rickety planks were giving way, creaking. The gendarme was slowly walking to and fro on his post under the bridge. From the bridge, from that place elevated above the street, they could see the winding and crowded alleys of the ghetto, the extensive depths of the Mirów Market halls [Hale Mirowskie] all the way to the Żelazna Brama Square, and closer, on the square, the large white St Charles

[50] On 18 May 1941, Ringelblum wrote: "Kohn obtains a license for a horse-drawn tram" ([1983], p. 287). In mid-June 1941 in the ghetto there were 25 such vehicles (*kohnhelerki*).

[51] Bogdan Wojdowski, *Chleb rzucony umarłym* (Warsaw, 1981), pp. 56–58.

> Church, and beyond it, in the distance, the tips of the old trees in the Saxon Garden.
>
> "There!" pointed Eliahu. They were looking ahead with sadness and longing, wishing to see the bank of the River Vistula.
>
> Behind them, at the depot in [the] Wola [quarter] rang the tram bells. Eliahu squinted, quickly bent over the banister of the bridge, and spat on top of the red-black-and-white shelter of the gendarme who was turned back, busy checking documents.[52]

There is one more interesting record that shows the paradox of looking, but this time of looking from the Aryan side at the bridge. This is a childish and naïve gaze, but this is precisely why it perfectly captures the extraordinariness of that experience, its paradox. For the children looking up from the street the Jews walking across the bridge seemed unearthly creatures suspended somewhere in space. Another example of the incomparability and untranslatability of the Polish and Jewish wartime lot. Another example of the drama of closeness and remoteness. Rudnicki writes: "The wooden bridge suspended over Chłodna Street joined the small ghetto with the large one. Chłodna Street's roadway was Aryan, but the pavements were not. The pedestrian traffic between the two ghettoes moved across the bridge. The children from the Aryan side looked with envy at the creatures fated to rise every day so high up into the air."[53]

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[52] Ibid., pp. 148–149.

[53] Adolf Rudnicki, "Wielki Stefan Konecki". In this context, I should mention another scene with participation of children, or actually youngsters, which took place by the bridge. It was recorded in Adam Czerniaków's diary on 9 July 1942 (two weeks before the deportation to Treblinka: "After dinner, the Polish street urchins throw stones over the walls to Chłodna Street. After we have removed the bricks and rocks from the middle of the street, they have little ammunition. I often asked myself whether Poland was Mickiewicz and Słowacki, or that street urchin. The

Those sentenced to death take one last look at the free world. The thus shaped situation has its literary roots in the Romantic vision of one of the most famous bridges – the Venetian *Ponte dei Sospiri* – the Bridge of Sighs. Completed in 1614, the bridge, suspended over the Palace Channel, joins the Doge's Palace, the seat of the Criminal Tribunal, with the building of the new prison. The tall walls of the building stand on both banks of the narrow channel, creating something like a ravine with the bridge suspended above the water.[54] Byron gave that bridge its name, known to every 19th, 20th, and 21st century tourist. It is a closed structure with two separate corridors. Walking along them from the Tribunal to prison, the convicts could look out at Venice through the holes in the atypical square rosette that covers the bridge's two windows. For many of them it was their final look at the free world, which allegedly made them sigh.

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs,
A palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Looked to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned
on her hundred isles!
Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

truth lies in the middle." Czerniaków, *Adama Czerniakowa dziennik getta warszawskiego*, p. 298

[54] The positioning of Ponte dei Sospiri might indeed bring to mind the topography of the Chłodna Street in the ghetto, with the wall between the roadway and the pavement turning the former into something like a ravine, over which suspended was the wooden bridge.

Stanisław Gombiński seems to be looking at the wooden bridge over Chłodna Street with Byron's eyes:

> The two-storey stairs lead to the footbridge over the Aryan roadway. Thousands of feet thread there every day, every hour in their hurried march to the other side of the street. Thousands of hung heads look up for a moment and with a passing glance salute the panorama of Chłodna and Wolska Streets, the Halls and the Saxon Garden, the skyscraper on Napoleona Square, the Cedergren tower on Zielna Street, the crosses of churches and the ribbon of the distant River Vistula. They cast a glance and hung their head, sighing. This is the ghetto bridge – Ponte dei Sospiri, the Bridge of Sighs.[55]

BIBLICAL METAPHORS

After the shifting of the ghetto borders in the late autumn of 1941, Miron Białoszewski moved into the tenement at Chłodna Street 40, which had been emptied of Jews. The distance from his new home to the intersection of Chłodna and Żelazna Streets was only two hundred metres. In his poem *Jerozolima* [Jerusalem], published in the *Akademik* periodical in 1946, the iron gates at the crossroads transform into a Biblical gate separating the chosen people, which awaits a crossing, from the rest of the world.

> Closed shut opposite each other,
> swaying in an iron lament,
> the gate to the Small Ghetto
> the gate to the Large Ghetto...

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[55] Stanisław Gombiński (Jan Mawult), *Wspomnienia policjanta z warszawskiego getta* (Warsaw, 2010), pp. 54–55

Following the vehicles, by the wall,
moves a caravan of Christians.
They look into the Small one – and the Large one too –
where the nation of Melchizedek
awaits a crossing.

Through the black galleries of bars
glances are hurriedly cast
until the two gates
flutter their wings at each other
and block the roadway,
as if it were the Red Sea.

Białoszewski saw all that from close by: the revolving iron gates, the crowd of Jews streaming crossing the street, the closed gate blocking the traffic and then releasing the stream of people who quickly walked between its open wings, as in between the water walls of the parting sea. The Exodus – the Departure. The vision of the Jews' crossing of the Red Sea brings one to the very centre of Judaism. It is the fundamental motif deeply rooted in the Jewish religious identity. This story is the basis of the Passover, the most important Jewish festival. Moses leads the Jews out of Egypt – the house of bondage. With God's help, he takes them across the Red Sea and the desert all the way to the Promised Land, which he does not enter though. The Passover is known as *Zman Herutenu* – the Season of our Freedom or Hag HaCherut – the Holiday of Freedom.[56]

The poem combines worldliness and eternity. The history happening here and now belongs to the universal order. A specific

[56] See Alan Unterman, *Żydzi. Wiara i życie,* trans. Jerzy Zabierowski (Łódź, 1989), pp. 228–234 [English edition: *The Jews: Their Religious Beliefs & Practices*]. The entry "Passover," in *The Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe,* http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Passover (accessed 4 February 2016).

event becomes inscribed in memory and lives on there, breaking the confines of time, preserved in the rhythm of the yearly ritual of festivals. Memory is one of the foundations of Judaism, writes Rabbi Byron Sherwin,[57] as the Jewish faith is based not on theological dogmas but on the memory of events. History becomes the arena of the story of the covenant with God. Medieval poet and philosopher Judah Halevi stresses that the Decalogue begins not with a statement of a dogma but with a reminder: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2).

In the ghetto, the Exodus is not a type or guarantee of total liberation. Quite the opposite. The Jews' crossing of the Red Sea of Chłodna Street, in between the bars of the revolving gate, becomes a manifestation of bondage. There is no way out of the House of Bondage. Walking across the cobblestones of Chłodna Street and then across the wooden bridge, one only passes from one ghetto to the other. From one House of Bondage to another. There is no Moses to part the sea waves. There shall be no leading out of bondage. Across this intersection, across this bridge the Jews shall be led to destruction, to death.

Chaim Kapłan, one of the great diarists of the ghetto, a teacher and writer, the founder of the Hebrew primary school in Warsaw, the author of Hebrew course books as well as articles and essays about Hebrew education, was most deeply immersed in the Jewish tradition. For him, Judaism was more of an expression of cherishing tradition and the nation than a matter of observing religious law. But the Biblical language and imagery were close to him.[58] He

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[57] Rabin Byron L. Sherwin *Duchowe dziedzictwo Żydów polskich*, trans. Waldemar Chrostowski (Warsaw, 1995), pp. 104–106 [English edition: *Sparks Amidst the Ashes: The Spiritual Legacy of Polish Jewry* (New York. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1997)].

[58] See Israel Gutman, "Foreword," in: Chaim Kapłan, *Scroll of Agony*, pp. 12–13.

perceived the traffic on the bridge in Biblical categories: "Nowadays, thousands of people walk up and down the stairs, like angels ascending and descending Jacob's ladder. The stairs at both ends of the bridge have 50 steps."[59] On the same day, Kapłan mentions the symptoms of the catastrophic and constantly worsening situation in the ghetto, which he has often discussed: "The horrors persist and worsen daily. They are accepted as matter-of-fact, everyday occurrences and make very little impression on anybody. In the frightfully cold days during the first half of February we became inured to the sight of corpses on the ghetto streets every morning. [...] These are the conditions that exist and we pray that they do not change for the worst."[60]

In the thus sketched scenery appears the motif of Jacob's dream. Fleeing his brother Esau's revenge for deceiving him and tricking their father Isaac into giving Jacob a blessing, Jacob spends a night by the gate of the town of Bethel. Resting his head on a stone, Jacob dreams about a ladder standing on the ground and reaching heaven, with angels ascending and descending it. Jacob hears a voice: "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants; and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and by you and your descendants shall all the families of the earth bless themselves. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go [...]."[61] In the later iconographic representations the ladder was substituted with stairs.

Angels with armbands with the Star of David ascend and descend the stairs of the wooden bridge. This is how the Biblical story

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[59] Chaim Kapłan, *Scroll of Agony*, pp. 297–298 (the entry of 22 February 1942).

[60] Ibid., p. 297.

[61] Robert Graves, Raphael Pati, "Jacob at Bethel", in *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis* (Random House Value Publishing, 1986).

becomes transformed in the ghetto into its own opposite. Here, Jacob's ladder has a derisive overtone. God does not speak to anybody, does not give any blessings, does not announce a covenant, does not promise the propagation of the children of Israel (Jacob changes his name to Israel), who would be like the dust of the earth. Is the covenant forgotten? Broken? Rejected? The children of Israel are branded with the armbands, made a mockery of, and doomed to death.

*

A bridge that is a mockery, its own negation, a bridge that negates the elementary meanings associated with it, one that reverses them and switches their places – such a bridge should collapse. This is what Josef Kirman, a Jewish poet deported from the ghetto in April 1943 and killed several months later in the SS camp in Poniatowa, tells his son about the bridge:

> You wanted me and only me to take you to that wooden bridge. You pestered me with questions. How many stories does the bridge have? How close is it from the bridge to heaven? Can one look down from it? [...] When you asked me whether I feared its collapse, I clung to that like a drowning man to a razor. Yes, my child, may it happen as soon as possible. It might collapse. It should... [...] Whenever I ascend and descend it, I always ask God for this wooden bridge to break into pieces. Perhaps because soldiers in helmets stand underneath it, smiling and watching those walking across it as if they were apes. Or perhaps because it is extremely dirty, as the mud on it sticks up to one's ankles. Perhaps, also because only Jews cross the bridge, which teems with the shroud-like armbands of shame.[62]

62 As cited in *Fołks Sztime* 11 (1978).

The ghetto world is a world reversed, it is a world of uneveryday everydayness, of life eaten through by the rust of death, which claims a steadily increasing number of victims, spreading onto an increasing area of the ghetto reality. Nothing is how it used to be. Homes have ceased to be homes – they have become dying places.[63] Unimaginably crowded, filled with the wailing of the beggars and the dying, strewn with corpses and 'post-Jewish' objects scattered around, streets have ceased to be streets. The bridge is no longer a bridge.

Let the following scene recorded by Janusz Korczak in his *Ghetto Diary* serve as a conclusion and at the same time a comment on that inversion of meanings. An example of a ghetto noise, 'clingons', stretches:

> The trader to whom the buyer complained said: "Miss, this is not merchandise, and nor is this a shop, you a customer, nor I a trader. I do not sell to you, nor do you pay me, because these papers are not money. You do not lose anything, nor do I make a profit."[64]

[63] The refugees and the resettled were sent to refugee centres (*punkty*), which were extemporised shelters in empty workshops, schools, synagogues, and tenements. "The centres are simply dying places of unprecedented [?] whose horrendousness," wrote Rachela Auerbach in her diary entry of 13 February 1942. Rachela Auerbach, *Pisma z getta warszawskiego*, ed. Karolina Szymaniak (Warsaw, 2015), p. 114.

[64] Janusz Korczak, *Pamiętnik i inne pisma z getta* (Warsaw, 2012), p. 72.

РЕЗЮМЕ

ПСЕВДОМОСТ НАД ПСЕВДОУЛИЦЕЙ. О ДЕРЕВЯННОМ ПЕШЕХОДНОМ МОСТЕ В ВАРШАВСКОМ ГЕТТО: ОТ ТЕКСТУАЛИЗАЦИИ ДО МИФОЛОГИЗАЦИИ ВЕЩЕЙ

Рассуждения автора посвящены деревянному пешеходному мосту в варшавском гетто, переброшенному над улицей Хлодной, который существовал с января до августа 1942 года.

Анализируемые в статье вопросы истории и топографии варшавского гетто, а также пространственного измерения Холокоста вписываются в методологические рамки «топографического поворота» в современных гуманитарных науках. Этот поворот открывает широкую междисциплинарную перспективу исследований Холокоста.

В центре внимания этих разнонаправленных размышлений находятся, в частности, такие фундаментальные для данного анализа вопросы, как различия между *местом* и *пространством*, пространственная топика и весь пространственный понятийный аппарат (имеются в виду: территория, граница, пограничье, *itinerarium*, то есть путь, маршрут, сеть дорог), топографическое воображение, а также то, что я хотел бы назвать, с одной стороны, *топографией опыта*, а с другой – *опытом топографии*.

В статье представлена история моста над улицей Хлодной, приводятся разные виды его текстуализации в свидетельствах очевидцев из гетто и в послевоенных воспоминаниях. Отмечаются также разные аспекты символики моста, ее преобразования и инверсии.

IV.

IDEOLOGICAL PROGRAMS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

ANDRAŽ JEŽ

REFLECTIONS OF GEORG LUKÁCS'S CONCEPT OF REIFICATION IN THE WORKS OF WALTER BENJAMIN

1. "GHOSTLY OBJECTIVITY" OF ALIENATION, REIFICATION, AND COMMODITY FETISHISM

Marxist theory has provided social and humanist studies with three important concepts about how social relations, in the capitalist mode of production, take form of relations between things. These concepts are alienation, reification, and commodity fetishism. Though all three roughly denote the disadvantages of capitalist development and they also share a particular theoretical concern for complex relations between praxes and consciousness (as well as a sharp theoretical insight into it), the concepts are not to be used interchangeably. It is not too hard to distinguish between them, especially alienation and the other two. *Alienation* for Marx deals with the general estrangement as a side effect of the development of capitalist relations of production. While labourer produces a commodity, he does not own it, as it is taken by capitalist, and is thus alienated from the fruits of his own labour. But at the same time, it is also estranged from the capitalist who has to sell it in order to earn profit to perpetuate his business. According to Marx, these

are the only two aspects of a general estrangement of humans from their labour and from other humans.[1]

If alienation deals with losing somebody's reflection over his/her conditions of production and activities, then *reification* covers automatization and pragmatisation of relations between people that acquire a form of relations between things. This can only be possible because of a form of consciousness, specifically overdetermined by the capitalist dynamics. This form of consciousness, the so-called *commodity fetishism*, is a general "perverted appearance" of a social relation of production, "characteristic of all social forms of labour positing exchange-value," rather than subjective "imaginary ... mystification."[2] (The quote is from Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* in which it was not yet called "commodity fetishism," respectively.)

A slightly more difficult task would be to distinguish the provi-

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1 ... And even from human essence, originally *Gattungswesen*; what exactly the latter young Marx's term contains, has been an ongoing debate. The only thing that is sure is that Marx slightly updated his reflection of the "essence" through mid-1840s – namely, it became more unambiguously socially determined and less inviting for the 20th century mystical speculations about "human nature" in his texts – before he thankfully abandoned it (thus already in *The German Ideology* from 1846, Marx and Engels rather wrote of more historically determined *Verkehr* [*sverhältnisse*] or 'interaction'). When reappearing more than a decade later in seminal manuscripts on the critique of political economy, released in 20th century as *Grundrisse*, *Gattungswesen* signified an early historical phase of individualisation of human beings, when a human "appears originally as a species-being [*Gattungswesen*], clan being, herd animal – although in no way whatever as a ζῶον πολιτικόν in the political sense." (Karl Marx, *Grundrisse. Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York-Toronto: Random House, 1973), p. 496.)

2 Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, ed. Maurice Dobb, trans. Salo W. Ryazanskaya (New York: International Publishers, 1970), p. 49.

sionally described terms with more rigorous demarcations. Firstly, it is important to note that whatever the relation is between them, they do not belong to the same theoretical structure; alienation is derived chiefly from Marx's pre-1848 early scripts that show his theoretical criticism in its foetal form. In contrast, reification, at first glance similar to alienation, is, together with fetishism, an integral part of the well-accomplished Marx's thought that was manifested especially impressively in his critical analyses of bourgeois political economy, such as *Capital* (1867). Likewise, the reification as one of the aspects of commodity fetishism (or as its general manifestation) has only been marginally (if not exceptionally) employed by Marx – and has been canonised as a philosophical term on its own only later by Georg Lukács.

Due to a format of this short presentational article, I will have to utterly ignore some reliable criticisms of alienation and reification by some modern authors. Nevertheless, I will briefly bring to light a relatively famous critique, for which I will have to take a digression to French theory. But even so, I will not address it because of its criticism towards the subject, but rather for its contribution to one possible solution of the demarcation between the three concepts – or rather, of their potentially embarrassing *liaison*. The French structural philosopher Louis Althusser did not hesitate to completely disregard early Lukács's (and his followers') attempt to theorise reification. Indirectly put without mentioning the philosopher's name, it was, according to Althusser in his seminal *For Marx* (1965), nothing more than "a projection of the theory of alienation found in the [Karl Marx's] early texts, particularly the *1844 Manuscripts*, on to the [mature Marx's] theory of '[commodity] fetishism' in *Capital*."[3]

In Althusserian terms, reification "that sees 'things' everywhere in human relations" belongs philosophically to the *young* Marx, the

3 Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, Trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Vintage, 1970), p. 230.

philosopher tainted with Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's idealist heritage (Althusser is especially suspicious of the young Marx's "humanism"), and is supposed to be of minor importance to the *mature* Marx, the theoretician of *Capital*. Namely, Althusser's typology of Marx's opus strictly follows his notion of the so-called epistemological break – the latter supposedly dividing Marx's works between the early (idealist, Hegelian, essentialist or simply *philosophic*) and the mature, proto-structuralist, or *theoretic*. Marx's work after the alleged epistemological break is considered by Althusser to be the only relevant and theoretically cohesive. Therefore, reification is, in Althusser's view, supposed to owe its main characteristics to the essentialist romantic notion of alienation, but even then Marx rather spoke of "unhumanity," while the notion of "the thing" is, apart from the mature Marx analysis of money form, a category in comparison to which "more foreign to Marx cannot be imagined."[4]

Before we return to the reification, it is worth acknowledging a detail often overlooked by philosophers and historians – and Althusser is not an exception here. Whilst it is often claimed that reification (that came to philosophical prominence with early Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness*) is in this or that way connected to the young Marx's alienation,[5] we should bear

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[4] Ibid.

[5] For example, Gajo Petrović's entry in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* explains reification as "a 'special' [sic] form of alienation, its most radical and widespread form characteristic of modern capitalist society." ("Reification," in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, ed. Tom Bottomore, Laurence Harris, Victor G. Kiernan, Ralph Miliband (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 411.) Similarly, Risto Tubić, in another dictionary, designates reification of human relations as "very contiguous to alienation" – it "in fact, only presents one aspect of human alienation ..." ("Reifikacija ljudskih odnosa," in *Enciklopedijski rječnik marksističnih pojmova* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1974), p. 465.) On the other hand, certain authors mention them as two phenomena in the

in mind that Lukács's collection of essays dates to 1923, when two key works by the young Marx (and Engels) that dealt with the topic of alienation, were not yet known to the public. While Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844 (that Althusser explicitly mentions) have only been released in 1927, his first major early collaboration with Engels, *The German Ideology*, was released by David Ryazanov's Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow even later, in 1932.

Furthermore, the original German word for *reification* in Lukács's 1923's essay "Reification and the consciousness of the proletariat" (including its title) was *Verdinglichung*, which dislocates reification even further from the domain of the young Marx – with *Verdinglichung*, Lukács explicitly referred to (the mature) Marx's term from *Capital*. This puts in question Althusser's clear stance that a *thing* (*das Ding*) is a category "foreign to Marx" and that in *Capital* "the only social relation that is presented in the form of a *thing*" is money, instead of, as the term reification tends to suggest, "every social relation."[6] Namely, it was in *Capital* – in a section of its first part, entitled "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof" – that Marx famously wrote:

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same theoretical system; Stephen Eric Bronner (somewhat superficially) comments on the two "unfreedoms of bourgeois practice": "Alienation was not the only product of the commodity form [sic]: there was also reification ..." ("Lukács and the dialectic: contributions to a theory of practice," in *Lukács Reconsidered*, ed. Michael J. Thompson (London-New York: Continuum, 2011), p. 14, 18.) However, his distinction between alienation with its "elusive existential as well as anthropological quality" and reification that "has something more contextually concrete about it" (Bronner, "Lukács and the dialectic," p. 29–30) is, even despite its rather poetical language, fairly pertinent, especially translated in more definite terms: while alienation could (inherently) manifest in any class society, reification is unambiguously linked to a capitalist mode of production.

6 Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 230.

"There is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things."

The continuation of a passage also helps us to denote the relationship between objectification as seen by (the mature) Marx and his concept of commodity fetishism[7] that – through Lukács – influenced all further development of the theory of reification.

> In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relations both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.[8]

Hence, to understand Lukács's influential use of the concept of reification (which is, warns Michael J. Thompson, not a cultural, but an epistemological category[9]), we must trace its direct lineage to the mature Marx of *Grundrisse* and, especially,

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[7] The latter, though being the strongest theoretical concept of all three, will have to be ignored in the continuation of the article. Not only due to space limitations, but also because its further developments in philosophy have not shallowed it to an extent of reification and alienation when these were discovered by behaviourism and popular psychology.

[8] Karl Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy. Volume I*, in Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works. Volume 35*, ed. Frederick Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (London-New York-Moscow: Lawrence & Wishart-International Publishers-Progress Publishing Group, 1996), p. 83.

[9] Michael J. Thompson, "Introduction," *Lukács Reconsidered*, ed. Michael J. Thompson (London-New York: Continuum, 2011), p. 6.

Capital, the latter also being by far the most quoted Marx's title in Lukács's mentioned essay[10] to which I will dedicate the next lines.

This humble, factual update, however, does not rebut Althusser's argumentation in its entirety. Namely, though sparsely using the word 'alienation' in the essay, Lukács *did* reference directly to the young Marx and his less remarkable passages about alienation, and – what is more – he relied heavily on Hegel's earlier reflections of alienation from *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. The latter were often recruited in Lukács's essay merely to be refuted by Marx's materialist update, but in a way that constantly (at least in retrospect) self-critical Lukács much later mocked as "an attempt to out-Hegel Hegel,"[11] meaning simply that by his tentative disposition of the working class as "the identical subject-object of the real history of mankind" early Lukács did not successfully overcome idealist limitations in his Marxist interpretation of Hegel's philosophy, but rather provided the latter with a fairly Hegelian solution that Hegel himself had avoided.[12] From Lukács's essay on reification, however, this point is far less palpable to a non-philosopher than

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[10] Also a title of the present chapter begins with a phrase from *Capital* (Marx, *Capital*, p. 48; orig. *gespenstige Gegenständlichkeit*; in the translation I used for this article, *unsubstantial reality*; other translations include *spectral* and *phantom*[*-like*, *-atic*] *objectivity*) that, in passing, Lukács adopted in his essay "Reification and the consciousness of the proletariat," and Benjamin in *Arcades Project*.

[11] Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness. Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge (MA): Merlin Press, 1971), p. xxiii.

[12] Moreover (or rather on the contrary) Slavoj Žižek in defence of Hegel from common and persisting idealist (mis)readings accuses early Lukács – due to his proposal of "simply replacing Hegelian Spirit with the proletariat as the Subject-Object of History" – of being "not really Hegelian, but a pre-Hegelian Marxist." (*Living in the End Times* (London-Brooklin: Verso, 2011), p. 226.)

Lukács's favourable attitude towards Marx's update of Hegel in his early works.

Looking at the essay "Reification and the consciousness of the proletariat" more closely, Lukács does not point out any particular ruptures in Marx's opus; notions from *Capital* are supported by several lines from Marx's early writings, and vice versa. Thus, Althusser was not wrong in pointing out that in general, Lukács did not distinguish strictly between the young and the mature Marx's conceptions. (The dilemma, to what extent Marx's earliest works are compatible with his seminal works such as *Capital*, is still being seriously discussed.) And, to confirm the French philosopher's mid-1960s perspective even more, even Lukács himself – though philosophically very distant from Althusser – charged his own early investigations of reification in 1967 of being "based on the supposed equation of objectification [i.e., reification] and alienation."[13] Moreover, he admitted that "the phenomenon of reification is closely related to that of alienation but is neither socially nor conceptually identical with it; here the two words were used synonymously."[14] This retrospectively conceived strong ties between the young Marx's alienation and his mature work helped popularise early Lukács's own concept of reification with time – but before I briefly sketch how, let me explain what is reification to early Georg Lukács.

2. "A RELATION BETWEEN PEOPLE TAKES ON THE CHARACTER OF A THING:" REIFICATION VIA LUKÁCS

Lukács wrote "Reification and the consciousness of the proletariat" in 1923. It is necessary to underline that the essay, a pioneering critique of the capitalist systematic and determining formation of an individual's consciousness, had appeared even

13 Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. xxxv.

14 Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. xxiv–xxv.

before Edward L. Bernays' books on propaganda techniques that were successfully used by emerging advertising industries and by Joseph Goebbels (not to mention Peter F. Drucker's and similar ideologues' deliberate applications of the capitalist market laws to the last consciously critical group that henceforth became recognised as "knowledge workers"). Originally, Lukács's account on "the power of consumer society to vitiate and even displace revolutionary politics"[15] was written primarily to explain why large sections of the proletariat in the most industrially advanced societies, suffering an enormous exploitation, "were 'seduced' or overcome by the prevailing system even as they fought, through their unions, for higher wages and improved working conditions."[16] His stark formulations were, however, accurate and advanced enough in analysing the main tendencies of capitalist society to gain relevance with time – and with development of the capitalist mode of production.

At the beginning of his famous essay, Lukács explained "the problem of commodity" as "the central, structural problem of capitalist society in all its aspects," and not only its economics.[17] Proceeding from Marx's critical analysis of the bourgeois economy, Lukács switched "to a discussion of the problems growing out of the fetish character of commodities, both as an objective form and also as a subjective stance corresponding to it."[18] According to him, even the duality between the objective development and its subjective answer is merely one of the numerous dualities in which the commodity exchange manifested socially. Regularly referring to Marx, he emphasised that the reification of society did not appear

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15 Stanley Aronowitz, "Georg Lukács' Destruction of Reason," *Lukács Reconsidered*, ed. Michael J. Thompson (London-New York: Continuum, 2011), p. 52.

16 Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 52.

17 Ibid., p. 83.

18 Ibid., p. 84.

immediately with the historical occurrence of a (specifically capitalist) commodity exchange, but only with the advent of *modern*, universalised capitalism. Or:

> The commodity can only be understood in its undistorted essence when it becomes the universal category of society as a whole. Only in this context does the reification produced by commodity relations assume decisive importance both for the objective evolution of society and for the [subjective] stance adopted by men towards it ... Reification requires that a society should learn to satisfy all its needs in terms of commodity exchange.[19]

Even more precisely – reification only appeared at a point in the historical development of the process of labour, where the latter was established systematically as "abstract, equal, comparable labour, measurable with increasing precision according to the time socially necessary for its accomplishment."[20] The philosopher noted that the development from the handicraft to machine industry showed "a continuous trend towards greater rationalisation, the progressive elimination of the qualitative, human and individual attributes of the worker," while the process of labour was, through the same development, gradually "broken down into abstract, rational, specialised operations so that the worker loses contact with the finished product and his work is reduced to the mechanical repetition of a specialised set of actions." The decisive factor of such mechanisation of work was the time necessary for the work to be accomplished[21] – from "a merely empirical average

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19 Ibid., p. 86–91.

20 Ibid., p. 88.

21 "Above all, as far as labour-time is concerned, it becomes abundantly clear that quantification is a reified and reifying cloak spread over the true essence of the objects and can only be regarded as an objective form of reality inasmuch as the subject is uninterested in the essence of the object

figure" of the early capitalist formation to "an objectively calculable work-stint that confronts the worker as a fixed and established reality."[22] Each part of a working process for which the capitalist rationalisation found a way to *be calculated*, was one step further from previously "irrational and qualitatively determined unity of the product."[23]

> Rationalisation in the sense of being able to predict with ever greater precision all the results to be achieved is only to be acquired by the exact breakdown of every complex into its elements and by the study of the special laws governing production. Accordingly it must declare war on the organic manufacture of whole products based on the *traditional amalgam of empirical experiences of work*: rationalisation is unthinkable without specialisation.[24]

This is extremely important for the topic of the present article as, henceforth, the acquired object was ceasing to be "the object of the work-process," but was instead gradually turned into "the objective synthesis" of rationalised processes of the division of labour, of which unity as a commodity could less and less coincide with the unity as use-value – moreover, the former unity would become "determined by a pure calculation."[25]

Such rational segmentation of the production of use-value in time and space – and here we move from conditions of reification to the reification itself – "necessarily entails the fragmentation of its subject."[26] Lukács's description of processes of the objectification of

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to which it stands in a contemplative or (seemingly) practical relationship." (Ibid., p. 166–167.)

22 Ibid., p. 88.

23 Ibid., p. 89.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p. 89–90.

26 Ibid., p. 89.

human consciousness and their relations from the early 1920s appears strikingly valid today – even the most superficial repercussions of the extreme liberalisation of the world economy after 1989 make Lukács's reflection sound like a prediction, and not solely a description of a diachronic capitalist trend: "In consequence of the rationalisation of the work-process the human qualities and idiosyncrasies of the worker appear increasingly as *mere sources of error* when contrasted with these abstract special laws functioning according to rational predictions."[27] Neither objectively nor subjectively does the worker now act as a master of the process – instead,

> he is a mechanical part incorporated into a mechanical system. He finds it already pre-existing and self-sufficient, it functions independently of him and he has to conform to its laws whether he likes it or not. As labour is progressively rationalised and mechanised his lack of will is reinforced by the way in which his activity becomes less and less active and more and more *contemplative*. The contemplative stance adopted towards a process mechanically conforming to fixed laws and enacted independently of man's consciousness and impervious to human intervention ... must likewise transform the basic categories of man's immediate attitude to the world: it reduces space and time to a common denominator and degrades time to the dimension of space ... In this environment where time is transformed into abstract, exactly measurable, physical space, an environment at once the cause and effect of the scientifically and mechanically fragmented and specialised production of the object of labour, the subjects of labour must likewise be rationally fragmented.[28]

Henceforth, since the systematisation of the capitalist mode of production was total, "the personality" could not but "look on

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., p. 89–90.

helplessly" while its existence was no more than an anonymous particle of an alien and inconceivable system. This was especially salient since the historical disintegration of a previously organic process of production into its components tore apart bonds of the medieval community fundamentally. Mechanisation minimised the social aspect of work for the community. "The internal organisation of a factory could not possibly have such an effect – even within the factory itself – were it not for the fact that it contained in concentrated form the whole structure of capitalist society." Lukács juxtaposed the capitalist society to Ancient Rome and its slaves – oppression and exploitation had been present since long ago, he wrote, but "mass projects of this type could never be rationally mechanised; they remained isolated phenomena within a community that organised its production on a different ... basis and which therefore lived a different life."[29] This changed radically and qualitatively with the universalisation of commodity exchange: "The fate of the worker becomes the fate of society as a whole; indeed, this fate must become universal as otherwise industrialisation could not develop in this direction. For it depends on the emergence of the 'free' worker who is freely able to take his labour-power to market and offer it for sale as a commodity 'belonging' to him ..."[30]

This obviously implied a universal application of rational mechanisation and calculability to all aspects of life. Consumer articles ceased to appear as products of processes in a community, but increasingly occurred as "abstract members of species," whose (non-)possession depended on rational calculations. Only in the aftermath of society's total fragmentation into isolated acts of commodity exchange could the "free" worker as an isolated atom appear, and simultaneously "his fate becomes the typical fate of the

29 Ibid., p. 90.
30 Ibid., p. 91.

whole society."[31] But Lukács audaciously dug even deeper; namely, as he pointed out, the isolation and fragmentation of the society is only apparent when:

> The movement of commodities on the market, the birth of their value, in a word, the real framework of every rational calculation is not merely subject to strict laws but also presupposes the strict ordering of all that happens. The atomisation of the individual is, then, only the reflex in consciousness of the fact that the 'natural laws' of capitalist production have been extended to cover every manifestation of life in society; that for the first time in history the whole of society is subjected, or tends to be subjected, to a unified economic process, and that the fate of every member of society is determined by unified laws. (By contrast, the organic unities of pre-capitalist societies organised their metabolism largely in independence of each other).[32]

But even if the atomisation is just an illusion, it is for Lukács a necessary one for the reproduction of (relations of production of) a capitalist formation; universalised market with its "obedience to 'natural laws' ... in a [seemingly] finished form, as something immutably given" can *only* reproduce itself "in the form of rational and isolated acts of exchange between isolated commodity owners," whose faith is typical for society as a whole.[33] But apart from this general capitalist characteristic, the modern age intensified commodification beyond the previously imagined borders: "It also integrates into its own system those forms of primitive capitalism that led an isolated existence in pre-capitalist times, divorced from production."[34] However subordinated in their en-

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31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., p. 91–92.

33 Ibid., p. 92.

34 Ibid., p. 93.

tirety to actual capitalist's extraction of surplus value via production, these forms are generally perceived in the bourgeois society as "the true representatives of [somebody's] societal existence." The reified mind necessarily accepts the "commodity character of commodity" as "the form in which its own authentic immediacy becomes manifest and – as reified consciousness – does not even attempt to transcend it ... Just as the capitalist system continuously produces and reproduces itself economically on higher and higher levels, the structure of reification progressively sinks more deeply, more fatefully and more definitively into the consciousness of man."[35]

Lukács's theoretical suspicion towards the immediate perception as a methodological tool, especially in the wake of the rationalised and reified society, remains as another strong point contributing to the essay's eminent relevance for a critical revision of today's social processes. Against a major stream in today's popular (as well as academic) disputes of transgressing impoverished human relations through immediate, authentic, or direct experiences (that is supposed to de-reify them), Lukács insisted on surpassing the "immediate" by converting its logic with the Hegelian notion of "second nature,"[36] the latter evolving in a reified bourgeois society "with exactly the same inexorable necessity as was the case earlier on with irrational forces of nature (more exactly: the social relations which appear in this form)."[37] To a reified consciousness, perceived as the immediate experience of

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[35] Ibid.

[36] When use-values historically appeared universally as commodities, they gained "a new objectivity" which they could not yet have attained in centuries of sporadic exchange. (Ibid., p. 92.) This "self-created immediacy" then affected not only the self-complacent capitalist economy, but also bourgeois philosophers that correctly sensed the reifying process of the modern age, but ascribed it to ahistorical factors. (Ibid., p. 95.)

[37] Ibid., p. 128.

a commodified world can in fact merely reproduce the reified structural forms of the contemporary society.

The structural forms of the society are visible directly neither to people who experience them nor to a historian[38] – instead, they have to be searched for using the materialist analysis. In subsequent chapters of the essay, Lukács meticulously investigated how the reified second nature functioned, especially in the interaction with a theoretically consistent idea "of a total social situation caught up in the process of historical change."[39] Some formulations are thrilling, especially if we bear in mind that they were written in the early 1920s:

> At first sight – and anyone who insists upon immediacy may never go beyond this 'first sight' his whole life long – it may look as if the next stages implied a purely intellectual exercise, a mere process of abstraction. But this is an illusion which is itself the product of the habits of thought and feeling of mere immediacy where the immediately given form of the objects, the fact of their existing here and now and in this particular way appears to be primary, real and objective, whereas their 'relations' seem to be secondary and subjective. For anyone who sees things in such immediacy every true change must seem incomprehensible. The undeniable fact of change must then appear to be a catastrophe, a sudden, unexpected turn of events that comes from outside and eliminates all mediations.[40]

The change, with which the ossified relations of exploitation should be surpassed, must be thought of in terms as far from the immediate experience as possible.

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38 Ibid., p. 153.

39 Ibid., p. 162.

40 Ibid., p. 153–154.

> If change is to be understood at all it is necessary to abandon the view that objects are rigidly opposed to each other, it is necessary to elevate their interrelatedness and the interaction between these 'relations' and the 'objects' to the same plane of reality. The greater the distance from pure immediacy the larger the net encompassing the 'relations', and the more complete the integration of the 'objects' within the system of relations, the sooner change will cease to be impenetrable and catastrophic, the sooner it will become comprehensible.[41]

This change was for Lukács, following the young Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* (and tracing the idea in its rudimentary form back to Johann Gottlieb Fichte[42]), only realisable through praxis, but due to its complex stratification a larger and larger part of human activity had become instrumentalised by a commodity fetishism. An individual in a capitalist society confronts reality, itself constructed via class relations, as "a natural phenomenon alien to himself," and thus all his activity (especially if leaning on the immediacy) is limited "to the exploitation of the inexorable fulfilment of certain individual laws for his own (egoistic) interests."[43]

Even in such an "activity," the individual remains an object – and not a subject – of his actions which smoothly contribute to the reproduction of capitalism. In his investigation on how to overcome this chain of circumstances, Lukács moved from the reified individual action to a class action of the whole proletariat, or from the virtual subject of modern history (i.e. an *individual*) to the actual one (i.e. the oppressed *class*).[44] It is only through the *conscious* action of the proletariat – the action of which underlying materialist and historically aware conceptualisation will be able to encom-

41 Ibid., p. 154.
42 Ibid., p. 39, 123–124.
43 Ibid., p. 135.
44 Ibid., p. 165.

pass all concrete manifestations of the dialectical totality and recognise them as reified – that the reification can be dissolved. This is in Lukács's view a decisive step to the dissolution of subject-object duality that Fichte as well as Hegel sought to postulate, albeit in an idealistic manner. However, "this will only be true if the road beyond immediacy leads in the direction of a greater concreteness, if the system of mediating concepts so constructed represents the 'totality of the empirical' – to employ Lassalle's felicitous description of the philosophy of Hegel."[45]

It was precisely Lukács's deep and permanent appreciation of Hegel throughout various and often contradictory periods of his philosophical development, as well as his pioneering analyses of the early, "Hegelian" Marx in mid-1930s, that guaranteed him a special place in a specific stream emerging in the western academic sphere between late 1920s and 50s that focused mostly on – if we use Althusser's distinction – *humanist* aspects of Marx's philosophy. The trend of the research on the young Marx and topics such as alienation, triggered by Lukács in 1930s, had a greater or lesser impact on – for instance – the Frankfurt School, Sartrian existentialism (especially Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty until the latter's political conversion), or on the philosophy of such independent thinkers as Henri Lefebvre, Alexandre Kojève, or Walter Benjamin – the latter's adoption of the term will be discussed in the next chapter – , to mention only those that remained inside a frame of a Marxist thought. Namely, if Lucien Goldmann and Pierre Bourdieu were correct, Martin Heidegger's *Time and Being* (1929) had not only been strongly influenced by Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness*, especially in the German philosopher's reflections of alienation,[46] but had, in many senses, been a direct

[45] Ibid., p. 154.

[46] The thesis is provocative, but let me quote next Heidegger's lines: "The 'who' is not this one, not that one, not oneself [*man selbst*], not some people [*einige*], and not the sum of them all. The 'who' is the

polemic[47] against it/him despite his name never being mentioned. Thus, even though Lukács as reification's main theoretical proponent essentially relied on the Marx's mature work in his referential essay, the concept of reification would perhaps gradually come to

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neuter, the 'they' [*das Man*]. We have shown earlier how in the environment which lies closest to us, the public 'environment' already is ready-to-hand and is also a matter of concern [*mitbesorgt*]. In utilizing public means of transport and in making use of information services such as the newspaper, every Other is like the next. ... [T]he Others, as distinguishable and explicit, vanish more and more. In this inconspicuousness and unascertainability, the real dictatorship of the 'they' is unfolded. We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as they [*man*] take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as they see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as they shrink back; we find 'shocking' what they find shocking. The 'they', which is nothing definite, and which all are, though not as the sum, prescribes the kind of Being of everydayness." (Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford-Cambridge: Blackwell, 2001), p. 164, orig. pag. 126–127.)

47 For instance: "If world-time thus belongs to the temporalizing of temporality, then it can neither be volatilized 'subjectivistically' nor 'reified' by a vicious 'Objectification'. These two possibilities can be avoided with a clear insight ..." (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 472, orig. pag. 420.) In fact, on the last page in the German original of Heidegger's seminal work, at its endmost conclusion, lies the clearest reference of all; however, nor Lukács nor the title of his essay are mentioned – instead, the problematic is effectively ahistoricised: "It has long been known that ancient ontology works with 'Thing-concepts' and that there is a danger of 'reifying consciousness'. But what does this 'reifying' signify? ... Why does this reifying always keep coming back to exercise its dominion? What positive structure does the Being of 'consciousness' have, if reification remains inappropriate to it? Is the 'distinction' between 'consciousness' and 'Thing' sufficient for tackling the ontological problematic in a primordial manner? Do the answers to these questions lie along our way?" (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 487, orig. pag. 437.)

(somewhat self-evident) proximity to the young Marx's alienation even if Lukács himself would never have implied their reciprocity.

3. "SELF-ESTRANGED HUMAN BEING ... WITH ARMOR AGAINST THE REIFIED WORLD:"[48] WALTER BENJAMIN'S REIFICATION BETWEEN *ERLEBNIS* AND *ERFAHRUNG*

To young Walter Benjamin, Lukács's concept of reification provided the "first Marxist theoretical tool"[49] with which he could conceptualise his notions of an empty and apathetic society, especially in his reflection of cultural forms as its products, as well as of a phenomenon of melancholy.[50] Before that time, he had shown neo-Kantian affinities, sporadically tempted by his keenness towards romantic aesthetics of Schlegel and Novalis, while his general philosophical-theological frame had been (and remained) the traditional Jewish mysticism. In contrast to many other leftist Jewish thinkers of – more or less – his generation who had previously embraced mysticism but abandoned it until the end of World War I through their philosophical development (including Lukács!), Benjamin remained faithful to his theological roots for his whole

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[48] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge (MA)/London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 322. The quotation depicts Charles Baudelaire.

[49] Esther Leslie, *Walter Benjamin. Overpowering Conformism* (London-Sterling: Pluto Press, 2000), p. 9. See also Margaret Cohen, "Benjamin's phantasmagoria: the Arcades Project," in *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, ed. David S. Ferris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 201.

[50] Susan Sontag, "Introduction," in *Walter Benjamin. One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: NLB, 1979), p. 15–16, 20, 22–23.

life. Although his materialism was gradually becoming more coherent throughout 1920s and 30s, his later texts often referred to his own material from the idealistic period without the slightest revision.[51]

Benjamin as a prolific and well-informed thinker was familiar with Lukács even before the period of *History and Class Consciousness*, as reveal Benjamin's letters to his close friend and lifelong correspondent, mystical philosopher Gershom Scholem.[52] Due to his ambivalent philosophical insights,[53] Benjamin's path to Lukács's theses was not straight; it is perfectly safe to assume that numerous ambiguities, occurring as he was trying to incorporate Lukács's theses into his own romantic and mystical, philosophical framework, helped to articulate his specific view on reification. In June 1924 he wrote to the abovementioned correspondent about

[51] NLB, "Publisher's note," in Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: NLB, 1979), p. 29–31. See also Beatrice Hanssen, "Language and mimesis in Walter Benjamin's work," in *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, ed. David S. Ferris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 64; Cohen, "Benjamin's phantasmagoria," p. 210.

[52] Walter Benjamin, *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin 1910–1940*, ed. Gershom Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno, trans. Manfred R. Jacobson and Evelyn M. Jacobson (Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 180, 204.

[53] The list of his closest friends and associates in 1920s and 30s, all of whom made a strong and lasting remark on Benjamin's thought and most of whom despised or at least refused each other ideologically, is very telling. Apart from the solemn Scholem, who was close to Jewish spirituality and feared Benjamin's Marxist excursions, also philosopher Theodor W. Adorno and Bertolt Brecht, an eccentric communist poet and playwright, who was particularly misprized by the other two. (Rainer Nägele, "Body politics: Benjamin's dialectical materialism between Brecht and the Frankfurt School," *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, ed. David S. Ferris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 153, 166.)

Ernst Bloch's review of *History and Class Consciousness*, obviously already aware of a certain affiliation between his and Lukács's central topics: "The review seems to be by far the best thing [Bloch] has done in a long time and [Lukács's] book itself is very important, *especially for me* ... I am unable to read it now."[54]

It is no surprise that Benjamin became ambivalent towards some of the author's theses very early – in fact even before actually reading the book. In September of the same year, he wrote:

> While proceeding from political considerations, Lukács arrives at principles that are, at least in part, epistemological and perhaps not entirely as far-reaching as I first assumed. The book astonished me because these principles resonate for me or validate my own thinking ... I want to study Lukács's book as soon as possible and I would be surprised if the foundations of my nihilism were not to manifest themselves against communism [to which Benjamin at the time had reservations while Lukács defended it] in an antagonistic confrontation with the concepts and assertions of Hegelian dialectics."[55]

Benjamin, however, was well acquainted with Lukács's book by 1925. He read the seminal chapter on reification together with Bloch and Asja Lācis,[56] a Lithuanian communist and Benjamin's fatal lover at the time, during holiday on Capri in 1924.[57] Next year, while writing about "the jubilee anniversary number of one

[54] Benjamin, *The Correspondence*, p. 244. See also Nägele, "Body politics," p. 154.

[55] Benjamin, *The Correspondence*, p. 248.

[56] Very possibly it was exactly Lācis' influence that motivated thoroughly fascinated Benjamin enough to read Lukács. (NLB, "Publisher's note," p. 32–33.)

[57] Cohen, "Benjamin's phantasmagoria," p. 201. This was also the year when Benjamin met Adorno, another lifelong friend and associate. (Nägele, "Body politics," p. 154.)

thousand" books that he had read,[58] he mentioned among the last entries "*History and Class Consciousness*, an extraordinary collection of Lukács's political writings."[59] A little later, he was also interested in Soviet philosopher Abram Deborin's relentless critique of Lukács's book.[60] But how was Benjamin's thinking of things affected by Lukács's?

To answer adequately, it is worth noting that Benjamin's philosophical development was not smooth, and even the philosopher's texts from the same period were often mutually ambiguous if not controversial – which is already a key difference to Lukács's concise and systematic conceptualisation of reification. But there is another notable difference that should be clear at the beginning of the present examination; if Lukács was fundamentally *concerned* with the objectified relations and consciousness, Benjamin was also avidly interested in objects themselves, in (an indeed very broad span of) *things* that he also collected throughout his lifetime.[61] In a sense just like Lukács, Benjamin sought to take the concrete world of things as a possible starting point of reflection that would fath-

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58 Nevertheless, interestingly a Marxist thinker "who read virtually everything and had spent fifteen years sympathizing with revolutionary communism, had barely looked into Marx until the late 1930s." (Sontag, "Introduction," p. 18.) ... And even then possibly only due to Adorno's direct appeal: "[T]his is where I speak so brutally because of the enormous seriousness of the matter. As was probably your intention, the fetish conception of the commodity must be documented with the appropriate passages from the man who discovered it." (Theodor W. Adorno, "Letters to Walter Benjamin," in Ernst Bloch et al., *Aesthetics and Politics*, ed. Ronald Taylor (London: Verso, 1980), p. 117.)

59 Benjamin, *The Correspondence*, p. 268.

60 Ibid., 279.

61 Less known is that Benjamin in his love for used things followed his close friend Brecht. (Peter Buse, Ken Hirschkop, Scott McCracken and Bertrand Taithe, *Benjamin's* Arcades: *An UnGuided Tour* (Manchester-New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 50.)

om and surmount mystifications of a commodifying process. But while Lukács's analysis produced a theory, of which an integral part was a prediction of a system that could methodologically grasp *any* particular thing, Benjamin usually introduced his aspects of reification via concrete topics, and only subsequently developed them into more abstract argumentations.

Besides – and in connection to the concreteness of his analyses – , Benjamin, compared to Lukács and most other materialist philosophers, did not systematically refute the "experience" of the immediate in a (reified) society as necessarily futile; and things appeared to him as traces, as well as tools, of human experiences. He embraced them as not just unavoidable manifestations of a reified society (or rather, "its rejects"[62]) but as theoretically productive due to their inherent ontological ambiguity. The double essence of "things" as a consequence to capitalist reification and, at the same time, an irreducible residue of what is reified and thus a key to overcome it, could have been derived from Benjamin's mystical notions or, on the other hand, from his earliest attempts at dialectical philosophical streams. I will return to this specific duality later when I touch on Benjamin's problematic of *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, but first I must introduce a broader perspective on Benjamin's specific view of reified relations of production.

In the most developed (and yet protean) form, Benjamin's notions of reification (and of "things" in general) are scattered over his vast and asymmetrical *opus magnum*, the so called *Arcades Project* that was only released in full (and yet incomplete) form in 1983, containing more than one thousand pages. *Arcades* began their life in mid-1920s as an accompanying essay to his travel diary enriched by his reflective observations entitled "One-Way Street"[63] from

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62 NLB, "Publisher's note," p. 35.

63 Describing his current "One-Way Street," Benjamin wrote: "For the rest of the book owes much to Paris, and represents my first confrontation with it. I continue it in a second work, entitled 'Parisian Arcades'..."

1928,[64] but developed into an ambitious life project. Benjamin's thoughts were constantly being reworked correspondingly to "objective" political and economic tensions that first brought a financial crisis of the capitalist world in 1929 and later culminated in the rise of the European fascism and a world war. Benjamin's constant reminiscences and reflections as well as discussions with his closest friends all affected his subtle and elusive work.

Lukács's views on reification encouraged Benjamin to bear some provocative conceptual consequences of Marx's critique of political economy over the late 1920s. Namely, the semi-metaphorical explanation of commodity fetishism in the first book of *Capital*, that he found elaborated in Lukács's text, implied to Benjamin a fundamental irrationality of the capitalist society that the Enlightenment did not surmount – and that he, due to his mystical inclinations and, moreover, his strong influence by (post)romantic irrationalists such as Kierkegaard or Nietzsche, was ready to adopt even in his Marxist vision. Benjamin stressed the irrational or "transcendental"[65] foundations of capitalism to focus on the general mystifying process of modernity.

With somewhat expected reservations towards Hegelian (and thus, indirectly, also Lukács's) totality as being too abstract,[66] he was prepared to find a way for conjoining, as he put it, "a heightened perceptibility [or *graphicness*; orig. *Anschaulichkeit*] to the realiza-

(Ibid.)

[64] Ibid.

[65] Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 2*, p. 290.

[66] For better orientation about the approximate sequence of his main influences throughout 1920s: "When Benjamin works his way from a radical dualism, doubly affirmed by his immersion in Kantian philosophy and by what he considers the center of his Jewish experience (*Erfahrung*, in contrast to *Erlebnis* ...), toward his *Dialektik im Stillstand* (dialectic at a standstill) and the dialectical image, it is more through Hölderlin's concept of the caesura than through Hegel's dialectic." (Nägele, "Body politics," p. 156.)

tion of the Marxist method" by posing a semi-rhetorical question of whether Marxist understanding of history must "necessarily be acquired at the expense of the perceptibility of history."[67] As I will try to show later on, Marxist insight prevented Benjamin's theory to fall under the influence of contemporary phenomenology[68] that as well tended to displace things from their context – but with different motivations and, particularly, different consequences. Rather, his method anticipated Foucauldian discourse analysis, as its first presumed stage was "to carry over the principle of montage into history. That is, to assemble large-scale constructions out of the smallest and most precisely cut components. Indeed, to discover in the analysis of the small individual moment the crystal of the total event."[69]

By merging Freud's account of dreams, as used by the Surrealists with his own reflections on Marx's somewhat oneiric rhetoric about commodity fetishism, he came to a provocative, yet undialectical and socially naïve hypothesis. Benjamin claimed that the irrational dimensions of modern life could be merely manifestations of a big collective sleep that covered Europe with the rise of capitalism; if so, the philosophy should awaken Europeans from the dreams of the previous century.[70] By intertwining his own Marxist account of superstructure being an "expression" of base[71] with psychoanalytical notion of dreaming as an expression of unconscious

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67 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 461. See also Cohen, "Benjamin's phantasmagoria," p. 202.

68 Benjamin admitted that he felt more in common with "crude and rudimentary analyses of Franz Mehring than with the most profound periphrases from the ambit of the ideas produced by school of Heidegger today." (NLB, "Publisher's note," p. 38.) I will focus on his nevertheless complex philosophical relation to the contemporary philosophical currents in the next chapter.

69 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 461.

70 Cohen, "Benjamin's phantasmagoria," p. 205.

71 Cohen, "Benjamin's phantasmagoria," p. 205–206.

(in an "optimist" Surrealist rendition rather than Sigmund Freud's original concept), his specific vision of analysing totality via reflection of montaged reified particularities would finally become clearer. When rethinking his idea of perceptibility that a presentation of history should possess, he concluded that it should be "neither the cheap and easy perceptibility of bourgeois history books nor the insufficient perceptibility of Marxist histories. What it has to fix perceptually are the [dialectical] images deriving from the collective unconscious."[72] Though taking as a basis two complex theoretical conceptions, namely Marxist and Freudian, Benjamin's specific tendency toward perceptibility also owes a lot to other philosophical and theological streams that he was concerned with and that also distinctively shaped eclectic passages of which *Arcades Project* consists – sometimes not too productively.

Namely, on certain points, Benjamin came close to bourgeois vitalist philosophers who at the beginning of the century, in contrast to Lukács's contemporary essay, fetishized experience and were in great majority far from the progressive in the political sense. One such case is a (proto-)fascist philosopher Ernst Jünger with whom Benjamin shared, as Esther Leslie puts it, the idea of an "expanded experience."[73] Throughout *Arcades*, there are several passages that show his contempt for systematic and rational approach of a theory in favour of experience.[74] In a certain formative period, Benjamin started to distance himself from a theoretical justification in general, simply because he saw the theories as too dependent upon the intentions of theorists. He enthusiastically believed that the "historical truth" of his authentic fragments of the 19th century was manifested objectively, while any theoretical superstructure would

[72] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 911. See also Cohen, "Benjamin's phantasmagoria," p. 206.

[73] Leslie, *Walter Benjamin*, p. 26.

[74] This is, again, rather unusual for a major name of the interwar critical theory.

contaminate this authentic objectivity. He went even further (most certainly away from Lukács's positions, as well as those of his colleagues of the Frankfurt School) in claiming that historical truth is not available to a theory at any possible time; instead, it becomes "legible" or "recognisable" only at specific moments[75] which he likened to a "prophetic gaze that catches fire from the summits of the past."[76] In resemblance to the weaker moments of the contemporary *Lebensphilosophie*, he wrote: "The dialectical image is an image that emerges suddenly, in a flash."[77]

4. "THE COMMODITY IS ... AN ALIEN SURVIVOR THAT OUTLIVES ITS OWN IMMEDIACY:"[78] ADORNO'S CRITIQUE OF BENJAMIN

These are but a few examples of Benjamin's general inclinations towards mysticism on the one hand and his sporadic adoption of the contemporary (crypto-)irrationalist aversion towards theory on the other that were – perhaps rightfully – attacked by Adorno[79] in a famous letter written in August 1935 known as the Hornberg letter, that Benjamin described as "great and memorable" –, as well as in forthcoming correspondence.[80] Adorno considered the entire first draft of *Arcades* to be highly pre-theoretical or, with his words from November 1938, "a wide-eyed presentation of mere facts ...

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75 Max Pensky, "Method and time: Benjamin's dialectical images," *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, ed. David S. Ferris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 180.

76 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 473.

77 Ibid.

78 "Letters to Walter Benjamin," p. 113. The quotation is taken from Adorno's famous August 1935 letter.

79 See also Cohen, "Benjamin's phantasmagoria," p. 207.

80 David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity (Routledge Revivals): Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 204–205.

at the crossroads of magic and positivism."[81] Adorno's critique that Benjamin took very seriously and that influenced his concept of *Arcades* during the last years before his death, was a request for Benjamin to use more concise, theoretical language instead of ahistorical terms and reflections that "overvalue the archaic" and mystify the specificity of the modern capitalist alienation that arose with the "industrial production of commodities."[82] In other words, Adorno suggested him engaging more critical and politically conscious aspects.

Probably – but not necessarily – it was due to Adorno's critique that Benjamin's specific notion of experience, at least in its later, developed form, the inventive updates of Lukács's materialist concept of the reification could be observed. Let us take his special distinction between two fundamental types of experience, namely a distinction between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* (translated respectively as "isolated" or "immediate experience" and "long experience") explained in his 1940's essay "On some motifs in Baudelaire," well after Adorno's most distinctive criticism. Like many of Benjamin's concepts, the distinction verges on poetical metaphor – yet, it remains productive in a theoretical sense. I hope it is not too farfetched for me to claim that even Benjamin's principal division between the two types of experiences could – but could as well not – be traced back to Lukács's conceptualisation of praxis (and, indeed, further to the problematics connected to the German idealism), particularly in connection to numerous dualities

[81] Adorno, "Letters to Walter Benjamin," p. 129. "That spot [i.e. intersection between magic and positivism] is bewitched. Only theory could break the spell – your own resolute, salutary speculative theory. It is the claim of this theory alone that I am bringing against you." (Ibid., p. 129–130.)

[82] Adorno, "Letters to Walter Benjamin," p. 114. See also Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, "Chronology, 1935–1938," in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Volume 3. 1935–1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge (MA)/London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 423.

that, according to Lukács, capitalism generates in a social totality. Videlicet, these experiences represent two opposite, or rather complementary, ways of dealing with the reified world; whilst *Erlebnis* – a concept that Benjamin could have found in social as well as aesthetic theory[83] – is merely an expression of the reification, the other type of experience, *Erfahrung*, deals with a necessarily reflected praxis with which the *Erlebnis* should be surpassed.

A more nuanced look on the opposition between reified *Erlebnis* and reflected and subversive *Erfahrung* draws argumentation even closer to Lukács's "Reification" essay. Let us remember the latter's words about a potential change that must necessarily appear alien and incomprehensible to a reified consciousness that "sees things in ... immediacy:" Lukács, as mentioned, wrote that "[t]he greater the distance from pure immediacy ... the sooner change will cease to be impenetrable and catastrophic, the sooner it will become comprehensible."[84] Benjamin's notes on function of shock in Baudelaire's poetry as if would take these words as their starting point; there, it is stated: "The greater the shock factor in particular impressions, the more vigilant consciousness has to be in screening against stimuli; the more efficiently it does so, the less these impressions enter long experience [*Erfahrung*] and the more they correspond to the concept of isolated experience [*Erlebnis*]."[85]

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83 Buse et al., *Benjamin's* Arcades, p. 51.

84 Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 154.

85 Walter Benjamin, "On some motifs in Baudelaire," in *Selected Writings, Volume 4. 1938–40*, ed. Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge (MA)/ London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 319. See also Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: a Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Verso, 1997), p. 117. Authors of a newer book about Benjamin's crucial work locate his notions of long and isolated experience directly into *Arcades'* earliest genesis, when he was stunned by Louis Aragon's *La Paysan de Paris*. Shocked by the text's recapitulation of modernity (reportedly Benjamin could only read a few pages before his heartbeat was too intense to continue) he needed

Benjamin wrote these words in the context of a modern urban *Erfahrung* in which he put much aspiration: spontaneously, life in the city tends towards a more general modern alienated experience, or *Erlebnis*. But also the reflection, accordingly to Benjamin needed to transcend the reified immediacy, could more easily emerge in quickly developing cities as their inhabitants were increasingly exposed to the shocking aspects of modernity which diminished their inherent shock and provided a tool for a vigilant "screening against stimuli."

A critical addition is required when Benjamin's reflection is put in a historiographical perspective – constant shocks aside, urban environment was, historically speaking, only likely to transform *Erlebnis* into *Erfahrung* after the pre-established division of labour that had, because of its gradual specification, also given rise to schools of different kinds, and finally, the public school system. Before that important fact, i.e. in the times of burgeoning *urbanisation* itself, Benjamin's theses would have proven far less fitting. We only need to take a look at the primitive accumulation of capital in England with its villages liberalised, i.e. brutally turning into privatised areas of a mass exploitation via enclosure of the commons, manufactures etc. especially after the European "discovery" of Americas, and its consequent development until (and including) the first Industrial Revolution in the 18th century. Apart from those murdered, a large number of dispelled peasants of all ages was forced to leave their farms and settle in urban(ised) areas where they had to work under murderous conditions or perish – while begging was severely punished, even a harmless theft induced a capital punishment up to 1832. While (the surviving) subjects to these activities were exposed to permanent shock to which today's

years to "reconfigure the shock of the text as *Erfahrung*. Only through relating the shock defence – the conditioned and habitual response to modernity – to reflective experience can the experience of modernity be properly understood." (Buse et al., *Benjamin's* Arcades 52.)

bourgeois city life is barely comparable (and which bears more similarities to slums and sweatshops in the most exploited countries of today), there was hardly any sign of a distant reflection or "screening against stimuli" which Benjamin idealistically attributed to urban experience, until lonely critical voices appeared in mid-18th century. The criticism grew constantly with the development of the public school system before it could arguably be understood as a general urban reaction to constant dramatic circumstances. Thus, Benjamin was partly correct to locate this phenomenon in a modern city experience, but was not accurate enough in determining its material causes.

If this only owed to an inconsistency, then clear traces of anti-theoretical sentiment can also be seen in mature Benjamin's essay on Baudelaire, sometimes outweighing the essay's theoretical conceptions. For instance, a dialectical *Erfahrung* must, after Benjamin in the abovementioned essay, include "memory [*Gedächtnis*] with material from the collective past."[86] A wish "in the strict sense of the word" likewise, Benjamin loosely stated, "appertains to an order of experience." Furthermore: "[A] wish fulfilled is the crowning of experience."[87] If such formulations, as well as the sole fact that Benjamin insisted on a pre-theoretical notion of experience for his critical philosophical achievements, still contained an uncanny echo of the abovementioned Jünger and similar authors, the most concise points of his essay on Baudelaire – in a Lukácsian manner – displayed the immediate experience of shock as essentially unproductive until actively reflected: "Without reflection, there would be nothing but the sudden start, occasionally pleasant but usually distasteful ..."[88]

Finally, to understand Benjamin's seemingly intuitive approach to reification, it should nevertheless be stressed that his ideas such

86 Walter Benjamin, "On some motifs in Baudelaire," p. 316.
87 Ibid., 331.
88 Ibid., p. 319.

as "collective consciousness,"[89] "myth"[90] or "experience"[91] – even in spite of his curiosity for the spiritual and supernatural – never or very seldom reached an unambiguous proximity to socially conservative thinkers such as Carl Gustav Jung, Ludwig Klages, Oswald Spengler, the above noted Ernst Jünger or, for that matter, Alfred Rosenberg. Adorno's demanding critique aside, it seems that this is predominantly true even if Benjamin's earlier phases, i.e. his writings prior to Adorno's dramatic intervention, are in question. But then, how to distinguish between the young Benjamin and the abovementioned philosophers? Were they *actually* that different? Certainly Benjamin and Jünger converged philosophically from the viewpoint of present-day cultural studies that often neglect the social and political dimensions of their content. Benjamin of the 1920s bestowed the militant essayist's notions about an atrophy of the ability to experience in a world dominated by technocratic rationality and mass media projections. Consequently, they both saw modern society as a disenchanted realm of automatized actions that should essentially be revived by a – to the present moment

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[89] From Adorno's famous letter: "The notion of collective consciousness was invented [by Jung] only to divert attention from true objectivity and its correlate, alienated subjectivity. It is up to us to polarize and dissolve this 'consciousness' dialectically, and not to galvanize it as an imagistic correlate of the commodity character." ("Letters to Walter Benjamin," p. 113.)

[90] From Adorno's Hornberg letter: "Lastly, moreover, the mythic-archaic category of the 'Golden Age' – and this is what seems socially decisive to me – has had fateful consequences for the commodity category itself ... Thus disenchantment of the dialectical image leads directly to purely mythical thinking, and here Klages appears as danger, as Jung did earlier." Exactly in this context Adorno explicitly speaks about (Lukácsian) class-consciousness. ("Letters to Walter Benjamin," p. 113.)

[91] Again from Adorno: "The term *Lebensgefühl* (attitude to life), used in cultural and intellectual history, is highly objectionable." ("Letters to Walter Benjamin," p. 116.)

– suppressed experience.[92] Paradoxically, apart from the consistency-lacking cultural studies of today, there is a certain justification with which even a theoretically concise critique could dismiss Benjamin's idea of "expanded experience" and his temporary aversion towards theory as naïve, uncritical, and grounded in the apologetic bourgeois ideology of the imperialist era – which would, again, put Benjamin in an uncanny proximity of an inciting anti-theoretical reactionary Jünger. In fact, it was only due to their different broader philosophical frameworks that the two authors' intentions functioned noticeably differently – but this is enough to radically switch the perspective of their relation.

Accordingly, both thinkers' (interpretations of their own) notions of "experience" that modern society had suppressed could hardly have been more dissimilar, even despite a notion that both originally proposed an "aesthetic" solution to it. Benjamin coherently articulated a reflexive aesthetic experience of the reified society that could, in connection to Marxist political praxis, de-reify it (through renewed consideration of things). Conversely, anti-Marxist Jünger, volunteer in the World War I, throughout his life praised the military – particularly battlefield – experience and amazing new technologies[93] as the ultimate tools to overcome the mechanical rationality of the modern decadent society. Namely, the intensification of experience as the "aesthetic consciousness," proposed by Jünger and similar philosophers,[94] involves a viewpoint of *désin-*

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92 Leslie, *Walter Benjamin*, p. 26.

93 "An over-valuation of machine technology and machines as such has always been peculiar to bourgeois theories in retrospection ..." (Adorno, "Letters to Walter Benjamin," p. 116.)

94 Jünger was a self-understood heroic veteran that sold his unrecovered experiences from the WW I battlefields over and over again and thus vocally promoted war. From the wider historical perspective, he undoubtedly belonged to what Eric Hobsbawm called "a relatively small, but absolutely numerous, minority for whom the experience of fighting, even under the conditions of 1914–1918, was central and inspirational;

volture; aesthetic consciousness thus provides armour of apathy of the killing machines, or as Leslie states: "[Jünger's so called 'soldier-critic'] is anaesthetized, as he aestheticizes."[95]

Hence, in terms of the present article, it is obvious that in such ideologies there is no place whatsoever for the analytical concept of reification, especially in connection to class dynamics. The seemingly critical notions of banal modernity by Ernst Jünger and numerous other bourgeois philosophers were in fact deeply conformist and perfectly attuned to the political-economic interests of the European ruling classes that during 1920s and 30s perpetually *provoked* banalisation and automatization. Hence, such philosophers – as a matter of reified and commodified social relations, could be added – *criticised* the banalization and automatization from exactly the same, i.e. elitist, conservative and militant, positions that caused it, and therefore they constantly helped intensifying it without proper reflection. Such an irresolvable loop of argumentation (and consequent actions) of the interwar bourgeoisie could only culminate in crises of capitalist economy and resulting imperialist wars – no wonder that most of the conservative thinkers relying on "experience" greeted the war gladly.[96] Benjamin severely criticised these positions from the beginning, immediately recognizing a "class

for whom uniform and discipline, sacrifice – of self and others – and blood, arms and power were what made masculine life worth living ... These Rambos of their time were natural recruits for the radical Right." (*Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991* (London: Abacus, 1994), p. 125.)

[95] Leslie, *Walter Benjamin*, p. 27.

[96] It should also not surprise us that Jünger, who never refused his extreme positions, and Heidegger (of whom could be said the same: see his unconvincing minimisation of his Nazi past, as well as his elitist mythologizing about the supposed inner kinship between German and Greek language and thought against other world languages, in famous *Der Spiegel* interview from September 1966) mutually respected each other's work and became regular correspondents after WW II.

myopia" (to use Leslie's term) of such writing. His harsh critique of Jünger from 1926 – almost ten years before Adorno's famous letter – presents one of the earliest occasions for him to implement his tentative Marxist analysis.[97] As illustrated above, Benjamin nonetheless never abandoned the notion of "experience,"[98] so frequently used by the abovementioned philosophers of the extreme Right. Why did he insist, with such persuasion, on using a philosophical notion that most other materialist philosophers largely avoided?

The paper at its conclusion does not intend to provide a perfect answer, but rather hints to a peculiar historical coincidence that might be in favour for the theoretical aspect of Benjamin's writings; whilst his bourgeois and theologically founded upbringing somewhat obviously allowed him to quickly embrace the anti-theoretical and (at least usually) socially conservative ideology of the "experience" (but, importantly, also theologian's discipline of thought that prevented him from adopting the contemporary *Lebensphilosophie*),[99] his own subsequent "experiences" developed in a specific direction (very different from the likes of Jünger) due to numerous convoluted and hardly surprising factors. As a Jewish Marxist intellectual trying hard to make ends meet and relying existentially on his entrepreneur father until the latter's death in 1926, he struggled with loathsome economic circumstances and political persecution especially in the 1930s, while letters and polemics with his critical associates also shaped his abstract notion of the "experience" that he then did not attribute to its usual, socially conserva-

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97 Leslie, *Walter Benjamin*, p. 27–28.

98 Rather, he accused Jünger's tendency to technologisation of everyday life of "banalizing of experience." (Leslie, *Walter Benjamin*, p. 27.)

99 In his Hornberg letter to Benjamin, Adorno explicitly – and favourably – juxtaposes Benjamin's rather rational or consistent theological kernel against his more intuitivist moments that brought him too close to the contemporary militant bourgeois milieu. (Nägele, "Body politics," p. 163; Adorno, "Letters to Walter Benjamin," p. 114.)

tive philosophical consequences.

It is hardly surprising that, according to the socially conservative hegemonic streams that relied on an unreflected experience of the most conservative stratum of a German society, he was an obvious outcast – Marxist Jewish intellectual with unsecure employment status (but seemingly competing with German white-collars) provided not a natural protagonist of the burgeoning extreme Right, but rather its to-be-expelled antipode. Thus, Benjamin could easily reject the crypto-fascist philosophical leanings of his less critical contemporaries (such as Jünger) already *in statu nascendi*. His link to mysticism, however, diverted him from abandoning the reflection of experience as such that was already becoming an insignia of the conservative thinkers. Thus, Benjamin was (and remained) – just like the conservative bourgeois philosophers – keen on the philosophical tradition of experience, but – just like his critical associates of the Frankfurt School – he resisted any conservative conclusions inherent to the majority of the contemporaneous philosophy that fetishized it.

It is far from surprising then that not only did he observe the category of experience in a perfectly unique way, hardly comparable to any of his socially conservative compatriots, but also his experiences alone were rather complementary to theirs. Or, with Benjamin: "Well. Experience has taught me that the shallowest of communist platitudes contains more of a [theological] hierarchy of meaning than contemporary bourgeois profundity, which is always no more than apologetic."[100] In other words, Benjamin's personal experience (as well as its theoretical consequences) was a far cry from the usual socially conservative determinations of the immediacy, the latter becoming constitutive for a huge majority of German bourgeois thinkers gradually leaning closer and closer to fascism in their fetishization of experience during the 1920s and 1930s. Only via this theoretically lucky historical chance it is possible to

100 NLB, "Publisher's note," p. 38.

explain the soundest, unparalleled correspondence between Benjamin's most spiritual meditations and most theoretical insights that were finally, as I have tried to show, synchronised in his notion of experience. This unique correspondence did not exclude his mystical aspects either; again with Benjamin: "It is absolutely necessary ... to be clear that the [Communist] movement has its own mystical elements, even if they are of a quite different type. Of course, it is even more important not to confuse these mystical elements, which belong to corporeality, with religious ones."[101]

From this necessary digression that led us to explain Benjamin's unique materialist notion of experience with selected emphases from his biography, I will return to the integral theoretical problematic that the paper is trying to illustrate. In a nutshell, Lukács's important upgrade of Marx's concept of the commodity fetishism in his own analysis of consciousness in the globalised capitalism triggered various theoretical and philosophical reflections that reached the zenith in the 1940s and 50s. Among the first and arguably the most innovative responses to Lukács's theory of how relations between humans take the shape of relations between things – or how they reify – due to the universalised commodity fetishism, was Walter Benjamin's multifaceted thought. The latter, whilst leaning on Lukács's conceptions, was notwithstanding rooted in an (albeit materialistically reconditioned) orthodox Jewish mysticism, and occasionally enticed by contemporary bourgeois thought. Therefore, Benjamin developed a specific theoretical frame centred on the individual experience that led him cogitate the corporeal and the concrete with distinct conclusions, different from the contemporaneous bourgeois philosophers (praising experience of the corporeal and concrete, but lacking a critical distance from its ideologically overdetermined immediacy), as well as from his fellow materialist acquaintances (who developed a

[101] Leslie, *Walter Benjamin*, p. 23.

strong critical apparatus, but – in Benjamin's view – majorly ignored experience and perceptibility).

His peculiar notion of things as not sole remnants of reification of human relations but also the potential inception to de-reify them via reflection, perhaps also helped to shape his style of writing; while most materialist philosophers – including Lukács and Adorno – developed wider theoretical frameworks, and only subsequently applied it to actual examples, Benjamin usually displayed his theoretical conceptions only after certain particular detail from the "perceptible" world – from arcades via work of art in the age of reproduction to Baudelaire's urban attitude – had been introduced. Though initially influenced by Brecht, Benjamin's lifelong avid collecting and meditating objects manifested his peculiar distinct meticulous endeavour to save things from their immediacy, namely their service to commodity exchange as their ultimate scope, and to use them as aims to cultivate a richer consciousness, aware of the broader conditions needed to be surpassed. Or, as Lukács put it at the end of his brief praising text about Benjamin: "Where the world of objects is no longer taken seriously, the seriousness of the world of subject must vanish with it."[102]

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[102] Georg Lukács, "On Walter Benjamin," in *Walter Benjamin: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory Vol. III. Appropriations*, ed. Peter Osborne (London-New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 6.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

ОТРАЖЕНИЯ ПОНЯТИЯ ОВЕЩЕСТВЛЕНИЯ ГЕОРГА ЛУКАЧА В РАБОТАХ ВАЛЬТЕРА БЕНЬЯМИНА

На первом месте в статье вкратце анализируются три понятия, касающиеся «объектификации» капиталистических производственных отношений – *овеществление или реификация*, *отчуждение* и *товарный фетишизм*. Хотя у них есть некоторые одинаковые функции, эти понятия не являются взаимозаменяемыми, а и в теоретическом плане они не обязательно совместимы: даже если за всеми тремя проследить с позиции одного и того же мыслителя – Карла Маркса. Далее, статья сосредоточивается на особо важной теории реификации Джорджа Лукаса и, наконец, она посвящена его решающему значению для новых размышлений о реификации в исследованиях теоретика культуры Вальтера Беньямина.

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IMAGES AND OBJECTS IN WALTER BENJAMIN'S *DAS PASSAGEN-WERK*[1]

During the XIX century the city becomes an important subject in various arts. During the XX century, through the texts of Simmel, Kracauer, Hessel and Benjamin, it also becomes an object of serious academic research. Urbanization and increased industrialization bring about a specific culture, a life experience and an ideology, forming a specific type of consciousness. The new pace of mobility, as well as the inexplorable labyrinth of buildings, alter significantly the perception of space and time. It was Benjamin's deep-seated conviction that literature and the arts forebode and foretell many of the phenomena which later on come to be objects of philosophic and scientific interest. In this respect, Poe's stories, Baudelaire's poems, Balzak's novels and Aragon's texts will serve as rich sources of inspiration, as well as of empirical data for the research of the urban imaginary. However, it will prove to be strongly related to various economic and technical phenomena, as well as to particular manifestations of commodity fetishism. Such a research, steering along the line of distinction between different paradigms

[1] The present text combines two of the chapters of my Bachelor thesis of the same title.

and research possibilities, is *Das Passagen-Werk.*[2] Written between 1927 and 1940, it remains Benjamin's unfinished *opus magnum.* In this work of his he puts to the test various heuristic research methods, nevertheless remains loyal to his critical pathos directed against the mass culture, sweeping over the arts, whose fundamental principle will be the alienated and objectified consciousness - the purpose of Benjamin's oeuvre is to expose its manifestations in Paris of the XIX century.

The arcades, 'recent inventions of industrial luxury', present a suitable optics for researching the collective imaginary, produced by alienation and commodity fetishism. Their appearance in the beginning of the XIX century reflects a strong upsurge in the economy and the arts. They represent long galleries between city blocks, housing stores, cafés, exhibition halls, antique shops, *maisons de passe* and all sorts of urban enterprises. In the beginning they were considered a revolutionary invention of iron architecture which, along with railways and world exhibition platfroms, made its first steps at the time. In this way, the arcades quickly become a bustling urban place not only for shopping but also strolling (in Paris the arcades preceed sidewalks), meetings, entertainment, literary centers etc. They become an inseparable part of the urban landscape by way of city habitation, harbouring a multitude of mythologies and powerful collective fantasies. In this sense, the arcades, particularly at the time of their demise, could be viewed as treasuries for the dreams and the collective imagination where commodity fetishism reigns in all its brilliance. In such a way, they become an appropriate tool for exposing the factors of alienation and its sublimation into a particular type of visual culture. From this we could infer the

[2] *The Arcades Project* (Harvard University Press, 2002), a translation of the original German edition of Rolf Tiedemann. All citations from this source will be marked in accordance with the original citation nomenclature of *Das Passagen-Werk,* where capital letters mark the chapters and small case letters or digits – the cited fragments.

importance of the image as a methodological tool for developing an urban sociology, aimed at researching repressed knowledge and sublimated alienation.

In the very beginning Benjamin planned to work out a 'surrealist sociology', strongly inspired by his work on the arcades in Louis Aragon's book *Paris Peasant.* It shows life in the arcadeas as a dream and a type of modern mythology, as a free play of images and stories which could take place in these labyrinths. In reference to them Aragon will write about the inexplicable sensation which befell him at the place where 'the modern light of the unwonted' reigns over everything and about the strange secrecy of these places where one 'can probe one's own abysses'. Aragon, however, will remain under the powerful spell of modern myths and will follow their paths in order to rejoice in their fascinating allure. This modern mythology breaks with Enlightenment's reason, as well with ancient myths. It is to be born out of sensual extasy and immediate communication with things. It is termed 'modern' for a reason: its temples are not the ancient monumental edifices but the ephemeral and short-lasting constructions of contemporary life – the arcades and all similar places of everyday routine, haunted by the immanent alterity of dream and intoxication.

A matter of great importance for Benjamin is to find 'the constellation of awakening', 'the dissolution of 'mythology' into the space of history'.[3] This becomes possible by showing how the reification of consciousness becomes an *Ur*-phenomenon of the XIX century culture, and conversely, how this very same culture functions as an expression of this phenomenon. A leading study in this anlaysis is György Lukács' book *History and Class Consciousness* in which the Marxist idea of alienation is developed into the concept of reification of consciousness, which clarifies the reification of human relations and their reduction to object relations, not only in regard to relations of production, but to the whole spectrum of so-

3 *The Arcades Project,* 458 [N 1, 9].

cial relations. In relation to this Lukács will state that alienation pursues the entire rationalized Western culture, manifesting itself in all forms of social and political life, generally and in accordance to relations of production. Commodity fetishism becomes a prototype of 'all the objective forms of bourgeois society together with all the subjective forms corresponding to them.'[4] Thus, the subject is found to be coordinated with the object and dominated by it. Alienation is no longer an economic category, as is the case with Marx, it turns out to be the very principle of social functioning and subjectivity formation. In relation to consciousness, alienation produces an effect of natural order. Ideology conceals alienation by making commodity relations and object dependencies among people natural in the form of seductive false consciousness.

Lukács' book exerts considerable influence on the authors of the Frankfurt School with its focus on reification and its formulation as a fundamental structural principle of society. The analysis of this phenomenon extends over society in total. Not only is alienation produced by the distribution of labor and the substitution of human labor by machines, power slips away from humans and they become enslaved by their own economic, juridical mechanisms and institutions, over which they have no longer any power. Individual consciousness has become an object, a commodity. Commodity fetishism enslaves everyday practices, and authors like Adorno, Brecht and Benjamin will illustrate how the arts also fall under its sway.

This intuition will be of great importance for Walter Benjamin. B *Das Passagen-Werk* he views reification as a perceptible '*Ur*-phenomenon, from out of which proceed all manifestations of life in the arcades (and, accordingly, in the nineteenth century).'[5] The commodity becomes a central issue of the sociological analy-

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[4] Lukács, G., *History and Class Consciousness.* Trans. by Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1971, 83.

[5] *The Arcades Project*, 460 [N, 1a, 6].

sis, the study of which allows us to understand objectified human consciousness and its forms of subjectivity in that particular period of history. The history of the arcades offers a means of going deeper into the alienation phenomena, it functions as a crystal prism wherein the specific commodity culture and rituals become visible. This culture of commodity consumption brings about a dialectics of images where the repressed and latent desire manifests itself and the traumas of the social situation are sublimated in various industrial products.

On dialectical images in *Das Passagen-Werk*

The realization of an ambitious project such as *Das Passagen-Werk* requires not only collecting vast quantities of empirical data but also their processing for the purpose of constructing a theory of knowledge which would satisfy the critical pathos of historical research and accomplish the theological mission of preserving past phenomena. It may only come about through rethinking of basic historical and epistemological concepts, leading to a radical break-up with current historiography and a working out of a type of language and a writing method that would be adequate to the historical situation. The explicit renouncement of the idea of progress, the overcoming of the distinction between subject and object by way of constructing the object of research through an image theory, as well as the introduction of a dialectics of time which would cause ambivalence in the category of subject, are amongst the basic methodological merits of chapter N of *Das Passagen-Werk*. The image allows for the possibility of analysing alienation phenomena in the XIX century and the relations between economic substructure and ideological superstructure in a way fit to achieve the theological requirements posed by history. This analysis is always carried out at the line of distinction between different disciplines and historical layers.

Thus, historical data can be as diverse, as it can be subjected to the norms of the unconscious to which the dialectical method is applied, owing to which it becomes possible to extract and recollect moments from the revolutionary past which have been repressed by dominant interpretations. It is where psychonalysis is introduced into the work of the hisotrian – capturing the past and recollecting of repressed moments is a principle task of his. It presupposes a search for the historical object, its constant construction and preservation. Allusions to memory are not just metaphoric, they describe the essence of the historical image – always on the brink of dispersing and disappearing. In this sense, the historian becomes a stalker of image and citations, forming the core of the collective unconscious and, through which we could discern the repressed memory. Encountering them is always unintentional but requires patient and profound attention: 'Necessity of paying heed over many years to every casual citation, every fleeting mention of a book.'[6] The work of the historian consists of a diligent research and collection of relevant citations. They are governed not by the logic of curiosity but by the requirements of history and the situation of writing down history. Actuality can manifest itself at the boundary of conscious life: 'Say something about the method of composition itself: how everything one is thinking at a specific moment in time must at all costs be incorporated into the project then at hand. Assume that the intensity of the project is thereby attested, or that one's thoughts, from the very beginning, bear this project within them as their telos.'[7] In this way, thinking assumes the freedom to articulate everything that is fleeting and unstable which could manifest itself in the mind of the historian and serve as a means of capturing memories.

6 Ibid., 470 [N 7, 4].
7 Ibid., 456 [N 1, 3].

Discovering a suitable research method is certainly one of Benjamin's crusical tasks – a method, however, not applicable to any type of reality, but conversely, one that is specially worked out to be adequate to the object it is applied to. This also allows the overcoming the arbitrary nature of knowledge which would constitute the other extreme of the project – a danger that Benjamin perceives in Aragon's surrealism, a starting point of his 'Dialectical Fairyland', but which he quickly abandones for lack of sufficiently solid methodological and critical basis. 'The dialectical method is thus distinguished by the fact that, in leading to new objects, it develops new methods'[8]. Through the dialectics of object and method it becomes possible to overcome the simple factuality of historical material and the causal piling up of brute facts. In this respect, a specific type of dialectics is formed, one that would not allow the object to be sacrificed by an all-encompassing method which does not account for its uniqueness. It forms an organization of knowledge which allows the performance of its critical function, not just the immersion in subjective experience.

Visiblity and uniqueness of the historical phenomenon must be guaranteed, not sacrificed in favor of the concept. In this respect, Benjamin's anti-Kantian position is stated in the preference of dialectics to purely rational concepts that are fixed in thought-limiting frameworks. In this way, methodology becomes a prescription for capturing, 'salvaging' of citations and extracting the latent contents of the image, which has its own destructive and revolutionary impulse. This project becomes 'comparable, in method, to the process of splitting the atom – [it] liberates the enormous energies of history that are bound up in the "once upon a time" of classical historiography. The history that showed things "as they really were" was the strongest narcotic of the century [the XIX century, D. B.].'[9]

8 Ibid., 474 [N 10, 1].

9 Ibid., 463 [N 3, 4].

Such a splitting of the atom becomes possible only through the image, capable of furnishing thought with the necessary visibility of the historical object. In this respect, Jean-Michel Palmier clarifies the advantages of the image for Benjamin's historical analysis, namely: it will not allow the reduction of the object to a mere concept and truth gains visibility through an idea, a mental construction, borne out of immediate communication with things, of the shock, ensuing the encounter with history.[10] The critique of rational concepts, which is also a critique of Kantian epistemology, dates back to *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, where the idea and the constellation are being favored as more adequate mental constructs. In this way, it becomes possible to evade getting stuck into brute facticity which is the real danger for the historian. Thus, through historical construction of images and constellations it becomes possible to construct the historical object and evade the dangers of reconstruction of and identification with the past of the victors and, at the same time, overcome the subjective arbitrariness of interpretations. 'I needn't *say* anything. Merely show.'[11]

In this way, the traditional epistemologic subject-object relation is sublated, the dialectical method of recollection allows the historian to be a medium and translator of historical knowledge. As much as this occultist and spellbinding vocabulary may be alien to scientific study, in the case of Benjamin it represents his typical manner of using notions of sacredness when describing prophane experience phenomena. This means allows the theological importance of this experience to manifest itself, the moments where the rhythm of the messianic can be felt. The messianic intensity of experience is captured in the expression of visibility of the historical phenomenon, which crystallizes in the image. A poetics of fragments, monads, citations, constellations and montages is formed,

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10 Palmier, J.M., *Walter Benjamin, le Chiffonnier, l'Ange et le Petit Bossu*, Paris: Klincksieck, 2006, 452.

11 *The Arcades Project*, 460 [N 1a, 8].

signifying this particular manifestation of the historical phenomenon as an overcoming of conscious rational knowledge and immersion in facticity. This poetics follows Proust's principle of 'mémoire involontaire', evoking in the mind past memories in accordance with the requirements and provocations of the present situation.

History is not a reconstruction that presupposes 'feeling into' historical phenomena (Dilthey, Fustel de Coulanges, Worringer), but an actualization of past moments, assuming the form of these images and monadic structures which, having been captured into the fragment and interpreted dialectically, allow the manifestation of contradictions and tensions in the past. Thus, the fragment never remains isolated for its own sake but always reflects the totality of the historical process. 'That is, to assemble large-scale constructions out of the smallest and most precisely cut components. Indeed, to discover in the analysis of the small individual moment the crystal of the total event.'[12] The fragment thus gains significant importance and the detail proves capable of referring to the total event of the socio-historical process. With Benjamin the whole-part relationship is always in favor of the part, of singular experience, which alone can provide the so necessary visibility of the historical imagee. This is the basic problem of historical materialism that is yet to be solved, i.e. how to apply the Marxist method so as to ensure the visibility of history and its processes.[13]

Employing the resources of the fragment, the image and the montage will bring about a better understanding of the relation between the emblematic Marxist concepts of substructure and superstructure which will prove crucial for the progress of thought in *Das Passagen-Werk*. Overcoming the current causal explanation will allow for reaching the necessary visibility and expressivity of economic phenomena in the cultural sphere: 'Marx lays bare the

12 Ibid., 461 [N 2, 6].

13 Ibid.

causal connection between economy and culture. For us, what matters is the thread of expression. It is not the economic origins of culture that will be presented, but the expression of the economy in its culture. At issue, in other words, is the attempt to grasp an economic process as perceptible *Ur*-phenomenon, from out of which proceed all manifestations of life in the arcades (and, accordingly, in the nineteenth century).[14] The *Ur*-phenomenon in question is reification, viewed by Lukács as fundamental, invariably pursuing the process of rationalization in Western society and transforming individual consciousness into and object or a commodity.

In this way, the analysis of images and commodities comes to be the guideline for exposing reification phenomena. It is the image that provides the possibility of forming an expressive relationship between economics and culture. It makes visible the alienation in the cultural sphere and everyday life and forms a 'constellation saturated with tensions'[15]. In order to preserve its intensity, this constellation always needs to be based on the montage and the fragment, to be concentrated on the singular small detail wherein the forces of the repressed past are to be unleashed. The image allows apprehension of the expressive nature of the substructure-superstructure relationship within a closed but sufficiently lucid, visisble and tense construction. Thus, within the confines of the fragment glitters the structure of the whole.

It is due to Benjamin's fragmentary thought which brings about his essential disagreement with Adorno, perhaps most explicitly expressed in Adorno's letter to Benjamin from November 10, 1938, where he is criticized for unsufficient dialectism and lack of a mediating element in establishing the connections between substructure and superstructure. In Adorno's view, this mediating element is the total social process, through which all separate moments are mediated. According to him, the immediate connection

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14 Ibid., 460 [N 1a, 6].

15 Ibid., 475 [N 10a, 3].

of elements from the substructure with those of the superstructure, without the mediation of the social process as a whole, locates his study on 'crossroads of magic and positivism.'[16] With such a move, however, Benjamin oversome both 'vulgar materialism' directed at causal relationships, and historical materialism of Lukács and Adorno, favoring the total social process as a mediating element between economic and cultural phenomena. For Benjamin the whole can only be studied through the small fragment – within the fragment the whole can actualize itself without the assistance of a mediating element. In this way, his analysis proves not so much connected to Hegelian-Marxist dialectics, as to a constant effort for a dialectical construction of its object.[17] This so constructed, as a fragmented image, object becomes the meeting ground of substructure and superstructure in their real unity. In his essay, defending Benjamin against Adorno's critique, Agamben reminds us that even for Marx the relationship between substructure and superstructure in real practice is neither based on causal principles, nor on dialectical mediation, but represents an immediate correspondence, a unity in practice.

In this way, the immediate connection or correspondence between Baudelaire's poem and the tax on wine is not only possible, but necessary, namely because it is based on immediate correspondence.[18] We find within the fragmented dialectical image the unity of substructure and superstructure, the moment of shared com-

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16 This refers specifically to the immeadiate connection in Benjamin's essay 'The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire' established between Baudelaire's poem 'The Ragpickers' Wine' ('Le vin des chiffonniers') and the disagreement related to the wine tax at the time, but is also an overall critique of the method employed in '*Das Passagen-Werk*. See *The Complete Correspondence, Walter Benjamin, Theodor W. Adorno*, 1928–1940. Henry Lonitz (ed.), HUP, 2001, 280–287.

17 Palmier, *Walter Benjamin, le Chiffonnier, l'Ange et le Petit Bossu*, 448.

18 Agamben, G., *Infancy and History – The Destruction of the Experience*, London: Verso, 1993, 120.

monness between them, just as the totality of the social is manifested within the singular fragment.[19] The dialectical interpretation abstracts the substructure and superstructure from the unity and indefiniteness of practice and views them as two separate elements, which the dialectical image is comprised of. This is the moment of exposure of alienation phenomena and the utopian visions for its overcoming, which are nothing more than diguises and sublimations of this very same alienation, as well as its preservation in other forms.

From what has been already stated it becomes clear what the purpose of the image is, regarding the study of the substructure-superstructure relationship and the exposure of alienation phenomena. The most difficult task, however, is yet to be completed, namely tracing the stages and mechanisms of its construction, as well as determining the nature of empirical data, organized by it. It turns out that philology and theology are the sciences, which could allow for such a dialectical and figurative construc-

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19 In *History and Class Consciousness* Lukács explains how to study society in its totality and how the singular, as a moment of totality, must be dialectically mediated. This intuition will be very important for Adorno who will insist every singular phenomenon to be medited through the totality of the social process, an idea which will become the essence of his dialectics. According to him, this mediationwill guarantee enough dialecticity of the relations between the substructure and the superstructure. His critique of Benjamin will consist in that he encounters them in one and the same image. For Benjamin the social totality is also very important but in his view it can only be manifested in the singular fragmented image. Thus the smalles is able to grant us the totality. Later on, Adorno will state that the power of his thought consists namely in the self-evidence of his ideas. Agamben assumes a position against Adorno's critical stance, stating that only in the unity of practice is this totality most visible, something that Benjamin achieves with his concept of dialectical images and the expressive character of economics. This idea he calls Copernican revolution in the Marxist understanding of history.

tion. The one will provide the means of reading and citing, while the other will introduce the messianic dimension of time into the materiality of the historian's present situation, i.e. it will transform the past moment into a 'quote of the day'. In this way, theology provides thought with the so necessary actuality, which alone can redeem the historian and lend significance to his writings: 'My thinking is related to theology as blotting pad is related to ink. It is saturated with it. Were one to go by the blotter, however, nothing of what is written would remain.'[20] In the present case, theology, by way of the concept of time it provides, can facilitate salvaging and preserving past phenomena. It constitutes the contents of history in the mind of the historian, just as ink constitutes the contents of the ink-pot. This comparison very much resembles the allegory of the hunchbacked dwarf who represents theology and the puppet which stands for historical materialism in 'On the Concept of History'. Through the puppet's invisible strings, thinking is guided by theology to history's salvation, just as the vision of the materliast historian always has to be guided by theology so as not to be lost among the dangers, lurking at every step, namely finding himself in the service of dominant narratives and bringing himself to ruin in the alienation he analyzes.

Theology allows the interruption of historical continuity and the substitution of a singular significant event for the series of facts. By so doing it interrupts and disrupts the homogeneous, empty time of epic historical narrative, as well as the uneventful reading and skimming through philological writings: 'Bear in mind that commentary on a reality (for it is a question here of commentary, of interpretation in detail) calls for a method completely different from that required by commentary on a text. In the one case, the scientific mainstay is theology; in the other

[20] *The Arcades Project*, 471 [N 7a, 7].

case, philology.'[21] In any case, commentary on a reality requires this double interruption of the historical continuity of homogeneous, empty time by the messianic moment of illumination, of the properly discovered and mondacially constructed citation. The messianic moment of salvation in the work of the historian is connected to Jewish religious tradition and its radical understanding of messianic time. Benjamin lends this tradition a specific tone and actuality.

The real is a text which is to be read through and commented: 'The expression "the book of nature" indicates that one can read the real like a text. And that is how the reality of the nineteenth century will be treated here. We open the book of what happened.'[22] Philology makes history readable, theology helps it meet the requirements of the time and the singular significant event.[23] The significance of the language of history consists in constructing narratives of past times, in discovering the right citation which describes the event. In this way, language becomes a treasury for the one who seeks to awaken the collective unconscious: 'This work has to develop to the highest degree the art of citing without quotation marks. Its theory is intimately related to that of montage.'[24] Extracting the citation of its immediate context interrupts the continuity of the homogeneous historical narrative. Its introduction into the operations of montage allows the construction of the dialectical image and the emergence of unconscious phenomena in the immediate sensual experience of the historian. By means of the montage technique the historian organizes the empirical data by configuring it among the different elements

21 Ibid., 460 [N 2,1].

22 Ibid., 464 [N 4, 2].

23 More on the relation between theology and philology, see Jeanne-Marie Gagnebin, "Philologie et actualité", *Topographie du souvenir*, ed. Bernd Witte, Paris: PSN, 2007.

24 *The Arcades Project*, 458 [N 1, 10].

of the image in accordance to the requirements of the present situation. Once altered, the collage is furnished with a different type of structure. As with the monads, the different montage takes become different points of view of a given phenomenon. This conditions the ever elusive nature of the past in the tension of sensual experience.

An avid collector, a tireless flâneur and a careful reader, Benjamin collects his empirical data with profound attention and patiently constructs the past in accordance with the technique of montage. They allow us 'to read what has never been written', and to bring into the light of day of repressed meanings which disrupt the steady pace of reading and become visible by means of the dialectical construction. These are the neglectable small moments which in the same time overturn the course of grand narratives and disrupt the temporal continuity. In this way, reading and finding the right citations becomes an important part of the historian's task. By means of montage constructions they assume a figurative nature and present themselves to the historian to the extent of achieveing communication with his immediate sensual experience: 'And, later, the glassed-in spot facing my seat at the Staatsbibliothek. Charmed circle inviolate, virgin terrain for the soles of images I conjured.'[25] Magical experience marks the decisive breaking up with classical subject-object division. The library is the place where the historian stalks citations and where practicing history becomes possible. The history of Paris offers this unique opportunity for reading through the images of alienation. It represents an infinite stream of dreaming consciousness: 'Among all the cities there is none that is intimately more connected to the book than Paris [...] For over the bare quays of the Seine the ivy of learned books has lain centuries long: Paris is a vast library hall, through which flows the Seine.'[26] There, under the 'dreamy, unlit

[25] Ibid., 458 [N 1, 7].

[26] See Benjamin, W., 'Paris, the City in the Mirror: Declarations of Love by Poets and Artists to the "Capital of the World" (1929)'. In: *On Photography*. Ed. and trans. by Esther Leslie, London: Reaktion Books, 2015.

ceiling' and the 'painted sky of summer that looks down from the arcades' of the reading room in the Billiothèque Nationale in Paris, Benjamin sreaches for these fragments 'covered with the dust of centuries', through which it becomes possible the reading the traces of XIX century myth and their construction into constellation with the present moment. In order to evade the dangers of vain curiosity or of an allegorical reconstruction of reality through the text, since '[Baroque's] meditations are devoted to books'[27], he introduces the theological dimension of the destructive messianic moment, the moment of danger, in which memory takes hold of oneself. What better place for stalking and searching for memories than the library, where the resources of collective memory are hoarded in the texts covered by dust and repression.

Constructing the text into an image becomes possible through the theory of dialectical images, while the connection between past, present and future is achieved by its temporal intentionality and destructive impulse. The image provides a particular density and intensity of meaning, thus defying the epic narrative of history. It emerges out of the dust of libraries to awaken the historian, to conjure the memory of what has been suppressed and repressed and express the whole of history in a contradictory fragment. The image is the alternative of tradition, which for Benjamin is equal to a catastrophe because it stands for the inadequate and alienated manner of transmission of history and forming of epic narratives of past times that repress revolutionary moments and obscure the inconsistency of cultural values: 'The danger threatens both the content of the tradition and those who inherit it. For both, it is one and the same thing: the danger of becoming a tool of the ruling classes.'[28]

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27 Benjamin, W., *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Trans. by John Osborne, Verso, 1998, 140.

28 Benjamin, W., 'On the Concept of History', In: *Walter Benjamin. Selected Writings*. Eds. Howard Eiland, Michael W. Jennings, HUP, 2006, Vol. 4, 391.

The shock and the abrupt interruption are the only means of overcoming the tradition and constructing the object of history beyond the bounds of of dominant narratives. By way of constructing this object into a monad a new paradigm for transmission of knowledge is formed. The monad logic defies the logic of subsuming the particular under the general norm, it is through the monad's singularity that the general glitters and is made visible. In this way, it becomes possible to theoretically base the construction of a singular object of history via a given image. The image is the new historical paradigm, through which it will be possible to give evidence of the 'tradition of the oppressed' and expose the objectification phenomena in the XIX century. Transmission of knowledge will assume a more adequate form which would help to capture elusive phenomena and disperse the phantoms of the past, haunting the present. Memory, rememberance of repressed imagess of the past, their actualization and the uncovering of their historicity will replace the homogeneous narrative of tradition. Heterogenizing the narrative requires heterogenization of time. Since the image, as citation and monad, plays the principle role in the process of constructing a new understating of history, it harbours the underlying stakes for understanding and undoing of time.

Thus, images aquire historicity, carrying the traces of a past long forgotten, which, however, is actualized in the ghostly nature of the memory and the remnant of ancient times. The image makes possible to trace withing a given culture the remains of a past, whose signifiers change in accordance to particular situations and requirements over time. An important achievement of such a method is the mutation of time, its accumulation into those images, which disrupts the linear course of history and the normative transmission of cultural values through the medium of institutionalized tradition. This represents a game of unconscious memory where the images are repressed and actualized, change their signifiers, survive or revive for a new beginning, and violate the order of temporal

continuity. After a given image has been produced in a given period of time, so is the reading of it is dependedant on the corresponding age, in which it is conjured. The anachronism of images constitutes the heterogeneous nature of time and history.

By means of such a methodology of the image Benjamin will study the myths of Modernity. The main objective of his work is to show the extent of actuality of these myths and the degree of contemporary immerssion into those myths. These are namely the myths of alienated and objectified consciousness that believes to have dissociated itself from its mythological past, whicle still producing new images of mythology. Their presence at the heart of Modernity is an anachronism, the exposure of which activates various temporal intentionalities. Such an exposure is the primary taks of the historian but also a theological requirement to history. The theory of the dialectical images makes such a task possible but in order to fulfil this salvational requirement, one has to discover the connection with the historian's particular present, a connection, however, not founded on transmission of knowledge through temporal continuity and tradition, but a destructive one, namely a connection which produces a moment of illumination and interruption, bringing time to a standstill: 'In order for a part of the past to be touched by the present instant [*Aktualität*], there must be no continuity between them.'[29] It is in such a way that the heuristic connection with the present is formed – it is intended to preserve the glittering memory of the past but also allows the overcoming of this very present in the utopian vision of a possible future.

The image has its own time structure, different from that of epic narrative time. It is essentially anachronic, capable of introducing into the 'now' of the moment of knowledge several temporal dimensions that deconstruct, heterogenize and fill up the emptiness of homogeneous, empty time. It represents an abrupt break where a tense flash moment condenses within itself different forces (or

[29] *The Arcades Project*, 470 [N 7, 7].

maybe elements of various ideologies that have remained unidentified until the moment of illumination), each of which has its own temporal intentionality. It so becomes possible to expose the teaces of ideologies and the fake consciousness by means of thir particular usage of the concept of time. Their exposure though the destructive moment is 'a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past.'[30] Only through exposing alienation within the structures of time does hope of liberation from time becomes possible, the situation where the historian introduces the moment of utopian vision and hope, the only means, according to Ernst Bloch, by which man is liberated from alienation and where his essence coincides with his existence. This introduction, liberating man from the imperfections of the situation that gave rise to it, at the same time clarifies them, illustrates how the utopian and liberating element has been repressed by the ruling classes.

Thus, the historical object is constituted on the crossroads of different periods of time, which, as already stated, have a political configuration. Within the object are manifested and unleashed the hitherto repressed forces, put to sleep by 'once upon a time' of classical historiography. Once, manifested, the tension within the image and its history gain revolutionary-messianic relevance. The ork of the historian entails discovering this positive and 'pregnant with future'. *Das Passagen-Werk* could be vieed as a history of images of the collective unconscious, whose primary task is theor awakening - awakening of past utopian moments, that is uncovering of messianic intesisty of time at the heart of the polarized image.

This type of intensity emerges out of the utopian element, within which is manifested the overcoming of the imperfection of social relations that produced a particular object. This process triggers the awakening of critical thinking in relation to the present, its destruction in the doom of happiness. It demands a constant

[30] Benjamin, W., 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', In: *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt (ed.), New York: Schoken Books, 1968, 263.

polarization of the image – on the one hand, its positive, utopian aspects, where the imperfections of the social situation are overcome, and on the other, its negative side, where lies the horror that the very same imperfections are preserved even in these utopian moments. The image is split into two different types of temporal organization, the one 'pregnant with future', while the other 'dead and useless', referring back to the prehistory of alienation, to non-synchronicity and retardation of social relations in regard to the present. 'The very contours of the positive element will appear distinctly only insofar as this element is set off against the negative. On the other hand, every negation has its value solely as background for the delineation of the lively, the positive. It is therefore of decisive importance that a new partition be applied to this initially excluded, negative component so that, by a displacement of the angle of vision (but not of the criteria!), a positive element emerges anew in it too – something different from that previously signified. And so on, ad infinitum, until the entire past is brought into the present in a historical apocatastasis.'[31] The present becomes a 'force field', on which the battle for the past is waged and where different temporal intentionalities intermingle in regard to different political interpretations.

The phantasmagoria is not just a disguise for a missing present by being transposed into a mythic and finctionalized past where it becomes synonymous of artificiality, illusuion, magic and archaism, as in the case of Adorno, it also testifies of a new time which is yet to come, according to Bloch's understanding.[32] Thus, the dialectical image not only refers to a past, but also contains the utopian moment of the future, of overcoming of alienation and objectification. We could read through it the sublimation of the traumatic fact, constantly seeking to disguise itself, that the development of technology does not correspond to the respective development of

31 *The Arcades Project*, 459 [N 1a, 3].

32 Palmier, *Walter Benjamin, le Chiffonnier, l'Ange et le Petit Bossu*, 461.

social relations. It is precisely this aspect of history which has been disguised by the dominant interpretations of the past, this is the missed opportunity, which ahs to be reactualized.

The awakening, the moment of visibility of social phenomena and missed opportunities is capable of activating revolutionary and destructive forces. The image is thus furnished with a complex history, never ceasing to overturn the normative linear course of time and reactivate the constant play of reactualization, of the rhythm of memory and forgetfulness, of the polarized past and future: 'The fore- and after-history of a historical phenomenon show up in the phenomenon itself on the strength of its dialectical presentation. What is more: every dialectically presented historical circumstance polarizes itself and becomes a force field in which the confrontation between its fore-history and after-history is played out. It becomes such a field insofar as the present instant interpenetrates it. And thus the historical evidence polarizes into fore- and after-history always anew, never in the same way. And it does so at a distance from its own existence, in the present instant itself – like a line which, divided according to the Apollonian section, experiences its partition from outside itself.'[33]

According to this monadic logic, facts are always reflected in a different way and from different perspectives. Actuality is the moment of recognizability that disrupts temporal continuity, it is the monad, reflecting the totality of history. In Benjamin's epistemology, the actuality of the present flash-moment, in which history is constructed, is of significant importance. This concept of 'present time' is an adequate means of criticizing all notions of eternal truths or truths dissociated from the concept of time. In this way, tradition proves to be inadequate for it turns facts into finite essences, forever fixed and completed in the past moment. Disruption and destruction of this fixity and finiteness constitutes the task of the historian.

[33] *The Arcades Project*, 470 [N 7a, 1].

Facts need always be infinite, incomplete, ready to be conjured and polarized anew, depending on the requirements of actuality. We no longer discuss the homogeneous, empty time of tradition, nor the eternal return of anachronism, i.e. the old opposition between linear time (modern, technically reproducible and alieanating) and cyclical time (mythological, reversible and remediable, an apology of one-and-the-same). In the foreground emerges messianic time of change, destruction and realizable utopia. Truth becomes a truly temporal category of knowledge (i.e. having relation to salvational and revolutionary time), it only glitters within the image which is impregnation and collision of different times. Through the image the past penetrates into the present in order to form a 'constellation of dangers'. The dialectics of the image is realized in the present time of recognizability, it represents the terrain where the struggle between different temporal intentionalities is waged. Thus, the historical image becomes a montage of not just different figural elements and fragments but of different temporalities, shredding the present, as well. This present time proves to be crucial for conjuring and reading through the image: 'For the historical index of the images not only says that they belong to a particular time; it says, above all, that they attain to legibility only at a particular time.'[34] Becoming legible mostly means removing the dangerous, destructive impulse inherent in them. A simultaneity of different times is realized, a 'constellation saturated with tensions', in which crystalize all possible contradictions and which is the only condition for making possible a utopian future.

In the image the past encounters the present, attempting to bring time to a standstill in the repose of knowledge. It is the repose of negation where historical opposites are caught in the greatest of tension and where Hegelian synthesis does not take place. This repose is an attempt of retaining the picture of the past in all its

[34] Ibid., 462 [N 3, 1].

contradictoriness. This is possible only at aparticular moment, irrespective of the historian's will, the moment when the image crystalizes into memory – the 'moment of danger'. The critique of the present, which 'threatens to immortalize itself', is made possible by disrupting the course of homogeneous, empty time and imbuing the present with intensity and tension.

History also assumes a psychoanalytical aspect, as the present is that very moment of attempting to assume control over time and the collective unconscious. The present involves the struggle between the different layers of time and consciousness that constructs the historical object through remembrance. One of the most significant categories in *Das Passagen-Werk* is the awakening that establishes an authentic relationship between past and present, actualizes memory, carrying within itself destructive forces, intentionally directed towards the future. The XIX century is viewed as a dream, from which to waken the forces of the past to reform the present – the awakening reactualizes the forces of the past. It represents a specific manner of thinking which allows for constructing a theory of knowledge based on the image. Thinking which is awoken, yet still not awake, possesses the specific feature of seeing things dynamically, through interconnections and memory plays, not typical for waking consciousness: 'Is awakening perhaps the synthesis of dream consciousness (as thesis) and waking consciousness (as antithesis)? Then the moment of awakening would be identical with the "now of recognizability" in which things put on their true – surrealist – face.'[35] Unconscious memory functions better precisely at this liminal moment of vagueness and elusiveness. It for ms a basis for the historical experience which is deeply connected to the psychoanalytical one. In this way, every finiteness of the image is called into question and it becomes a terrain for the actualization of repressed and sublimated tensions and instincts.

[35] Ibid., 463–464 [N 3a, 3].

The images, produced by this century are dream images which represent sublimations of the deficiencies and insufficiencies of the dreaming collective body, of the frustrating desires of the newly formed masses, assuming their place in history. Taking control over these images represents an awakening and salvation at the heart of actuality. But just as the stream of memory is fluid and elusive, so is the image unstable, ever incomplete in its singularity, constantly polarizing its prior and posterior history in regard to the ever changing present: 'The dialectical image is an image that emerges suddenly, in a flash. What has been is to be held fast – as an image flashing up in the now of its recognizability. The rescue that is carried out by these means – and only by these – can operate solely for the sake of what in the next moment is already irretrievably lost.'[36] Every step made by the historian is besieged by dangers and forgetfulness is the greatest of them all – it always serves those who hold power. The concept of awakening is closely connected to the concept of the present time of recognizability. It makes possible the empistemology based on memory and disentaglement of time differentials. In order to be something more than just an archaism, i.e. conjuring the past as a substitute of the present, the dialectical image has to function as aproduct of a critical reading of history: 'The events surrounding the historian, and in which he himself takes part, will underlie his presentation in the form of a text written in invisible ink.'[37] The dialectical image must above all actualize a possible future. History is thus perceived as a revolutionary practice; furthermore, narrative time is lent the dynamics of simultaneity of different temporal intentionalities.

Only this type of dialectially conceived history allows the overcoming of classical concepts of progress, decadence, tradition. Moreover, it is the only chance of an authentic connection between

[36] Ibid., 473 [N 9, 7].

[37] Ibid., 476 [N 11, 3].

past and future. The narrative about the repressed ancestors can actualize the one about the liberated inheritors. This is the primary lesson of 'On the Concept of History'. The objective fact from the pastbecomes a fact of memory and a 'constellation of dangers', which needs to carry within itself a liberating impulse. It is involved in a movement of time, which conjures itas a multitude of images in the memory, liberated from the alienated completion of the positive historical fact. Memory thus becomes a basic component of historical epistemology.

In order to develop his concept of memory, Benjamin draws on Freud and Bergson, as well as on Proust and the surrealists. Memory can achieve an authentic connection between past and present, but for it to be applied to history we necessitate the image that alone can conceptualize the historical contents by ensuring the necessary incompletion of facts, cut them loose from alientation and make them visible, i.e. recognizable. The synthesis of memory is achieved via the image, not via the rational concept. But facts become reginizable only inasmuch they carry the mark of history and immediate actuality, their ghostly essence of survivors in time and covert wanderers in the present. Ensuring the possibility for their manifestation is a task of the historian, who rummages through the 'garbage of history' and unconscious life. In this sense, he is a 'junk-dealer', constructing a new world and a new history, based on fragments of the past, neither privileging, nor discarding any of them. The dialectival image lends those fragmenta dynamics, making visible the results of this material and psychic archeology and relating them to a specific concept of present time.

Within the dialectical image the tension of times is most acute, hence the intensity of the explosion, ensuing from it, as the most powerful means of overcoming alienation. It represents a temporary coming back from the past, a liberation of the present but also an opportunity for a possible future. This liberation , however, re-

mains incomplete and partial – the final and ultimate collection of remnants from the past and completion of history can only be achieved by the Messiah. Therefore, the dialectical image is not a total actualization of the future, but only a means for opening up the possibility of one.

Phantasmagoria and desire

Das Passagen-Werk carries out a research of certain paradigmatic urban images as products of a collective reverie and oniric knowledge, but also as peculiar forms of alienation and commodity fetishism. The flâneur, the vogue, the collection, the interior, the iron constructions, the gambling, the prostitution etc, allow us to take peek behind the screen of conscious cultural activity and mass practices of everyday life, where objectification of consciousness takes place and the power of the commodity is actualized. Benjamin examines the reituals pertaining to commodity consumption, its powerful attraction and the type of consciousness, produced by it. His research goes far beyond the mere substructure and so commodity fetishism is virtually interpreted from the viewpoint of a religion of consumption. The power of the commodity is matched to the one of ancient totems, the 'fake consciousess', produced by it, creats the new necessities of mass culture. Not only does it controls all froms of life, but emerges as the primary source of reverie and dream, i.e. it settles permanently in the collective unconsciouss.

Commodities represent images of the material world, having an aura of their own, a 'supernatural' element which conditions and produces the phenomenon of commodity fetishism. In the shadow of commodity luxurires lingers a whole ghostly universe of deisres, utopias, repressed and regressive illusions. The may take part in the configuration of dialectical images since they can very well repre-

sent a dialectics in repose and the brimming with tensions constellation, as ell as clarify the covert and repressed contents in the culture of the XIX century. Lurking behind them, is the universe of dreams and phantoms, wadering beyond the flashy shop-windows. In this way, objects are furnished in the eye of the explorer with an aura of attraction of their own, and a signifier, capable divulging the secret of social relations and of their, in Marx's expression, 'theological niceties'.

Even though *Das Passagen-Werk* does not specifically utilize the concept of aura, apart from a couple of exceptions, it nevertheless reamins an important concept, describing a particular subject/object relationship. This concept is under the sign of contraction in all of Benjamin's work – at one moment it appears in a certain from, at another it disappears. The analysis of the commodity seeks to capture and reveal its charms, as well as the phantasmagoria, creating the delusion of the dreaming collective body, whose consciousness is entagled into the cobwebs of reifications, different media, anachronisms and playfulness of time. In this sense, objects are phantasmagoricand represent the images of desire – sublimations, pertaining to a 'dreamworld'.

This is where one of the connections between Marxism and psychoanalysis is forged , namely the effort to interpret dreams during awakening. The objects are products of the collective unconscious during the XIX century. Benjamin's profound conviction is that the progress of technology does not correspond to the progress of the social relations, which in turn produces phantasmagorias, sublimating this discrepancy and replacing the missing object of desire with images of desire. Thus, a given image features the dialectical encounter of the imperfect social situation that gave rise to this object, and the promise for its overcoming, the utopic moment that serves as a critique of the present. More precisely, the dialectics of desire replaces the missing state of affairs with images, in which we can sense the utopic vision of a classless society, a vision, how-

ever, bound to the old relations of production.[38] The future open up possibilities for resolving social contradictions but this can take place only through salvaging the past and uncovering the possibilities, stirring impatiently beneath the dust of books. The images of this past can be impregnated with future in the dialectics of time.

These images bear the mark of modern mythologies and can only be interpreted as collective dreams of a 'dreaming collective'. They can be encountered in all products of the time, in all traces of everyday life, exhibiting a pathology of its own. The abovementioned passage is of particular importance for interpreting *Das Passagen-Werk* and for Benjamin's grasp of reification and the products of the collective unconscious – architecture and the various objects, carrying within themselves the expressive character of the time that witnessed their appearance. The phantasmagoria can be broadly defined as a collective illusion which, through its glamour and novelty, produces the illusory sensation of security and breaking up with the past, i.e. the scarcely bygone, but also transforms the present an authentic transmitter of this past, en-

38 'Corresponding to the form of the new means of production, which in the beginning is still ruled by the form of the old (Marx), are images in the collective consciousness in which the new is permeated with the old. These images are wish images; in them the collective seeks both to overcome and to transfigure the immaturity of the social product and the inadequacies in the social organization of production. At the same time, what emerges in these wish images is the resolute effort to distance oneself from all that is antiquated – which includes, however, the recent past. These tendencies deflect the imagination (which is given impetus by the new) back upon the prinlal past. In the dream in which each epoch entertains images of its successor, the latter appears wedded to elements of primal history – that is, to elements of a classless society. And the experiences of such a society – as stored in the unconscious of the collective – engender, through interpenetration with what is new, the utopia that has left its trace in a thousand configurations of life, from enduring edifices to passing fashions.', Ibid., 4–5.

suring continuity of tradition and linear time within the track of progress.

The phantasmagoria testifies of certain deficiencies and traumas that society produces and disguises and also of certain relations of power. For example, the decoration of a machine, the iron constructions, the train stations oe the exhibition halls, ornamented in previous styles, all clearly show the desire to sustain a connection with the past, with the anachronism in social relations that created those products. More specifically, technics has surpassed the organization of social relations and they testify for themselves in the details, in the different designs and decorations which remain attached to the past and to the power of those who own the means of production and who maintain the difference between consumer and market value of a given object.

Since these images function as a crystal prism of the time, we could also detect within them the utopic desire for overcoming the immaturity of these relations, for a possible future, which, however, dsiplays prehistoric elements. The very same discrepancy between old and new can be observed in the expressive nature of the first industrial buildings and objects, in the appearance of something new combined with elements of something old. This is also the manifestation of a particular temporal dimension of the image, wherein it embodies the discrepancy between old and new. As examples we could take all monuments of early industrialization, as well as every novelty in everyday life: the first factories still resemble apartment buildings, just as the first automobiles resemble carriages, or we could view the cyclist's outfit as a predecessor of the sportswear, while still exhibiting elements of traditional formal garb.

This untimeliness of new contents and old forms is at the root of phantasmagoria. It is one of Benjamin's ways of grasping a particular historicity of the image. The arcades will prove to be the predecessors of the department store, carrying the traces of the domestic interior and the duplicity of the social relations that produced

it. Baudelaire is part of the same temporal scheme – his pwn past is the allegory, his future is the Secession art movement. So will *Das Passagen-Werk* explore the works of the 'dreaming collective' where for the first time appears something new beneath the decoration of something old, and in this sense, under the sign of its ideology. This will be one of the principle intuitions of this unfinished work where this vacillation will be profoundly and thoroughly examined in its various manifestations. It is this of all of Benjamin's works that highlights the moment when 'each epoch dreams the one to follow'.[39]

As Jean-Michel Palmier very well observes, Benjamin outlines a phenomenology of the complex relations between the fetish object and the flâneur spectator.[40] The phantasmagoria, like the aura, is involved in a particular subject/object relationship, at the heart of immediate sensual experience, by ushering the consciousness into the realm of what lies beyond its control – in one case, it is the divine manifestation, in another, the laws of the market. They represent the conditions for making possible a particular type of experience, along with its spatio-temporal characteristics, requiring specific conceptions of time and space. The aura and the phantasmagoria are basic concepts of a phenomenology of perception, attempting to overcome the limits of experience, imposed by Kant's transcendental aesthetics – one of Benjamin's projects developed in the greater part of his works, which has always occupied his interests.

Both types of images, auretic and phantasmagoric, are equally distanced and uncontrolled by the individual – in both cases he finds himself within the grasp of a specific fascination with the presence or the appearance of a certain object, which gradually engulfs him. The appearance displays a specific force which attracts

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39 *The Arcades Project*, 4. [Citation source: Jules Michelet, «Avenir! Avenir!», Europe, 19, no. 73 (January 15, 1929): 6].

40 Palmier, *Walter Benjamin, le Chiffonnier, l'Ange et le Petit Bossu*, 458.

the gaze, with which it overturns and destroys traditional subject/object relationship connected to the construction of the object as a substitute for a real deficiency or unsufficiency. Ultimately, the object prevails and it is the subject that proves to be constructed. The enchantment, produced by the commodity, is compared by Benjamin to the lunacy, caused by hashish – its 'illusory objectivity' (Lukács) is actually nothing more than a remnant from the world of dreams, the mythologies of the newly sprung masses, subjects of commodity exchange. The phantasmagoria creats the multitudinous mediations of objects and desire, leading to their interpellation and fusion.

Repressed into the depths of the collective unconscious, objectification stimulates imagination, which in turn produces phatasmagorias. Objectification of consciousness is viewed as an '*Ur*-phenomenon, from out of which proceed all manifestations of life [...]in the nineteenth century'[41], including all of the subjects' most intimate experiences, in which objectification can be detected in the forms of various phantasmagorias. The collective unconscious produces different images and collective illusions through which it sublimates the insufficiencies of real life and through these images it sees a utopic realization and liberation from alienation. Since, however, they are controlled by previous froms of production and by present social relations, this utopian vision remains betrayed and always at the service of the 'ruling classes'. Not only is alienation disguised in the glamour and the promise of the commodity, the very human subject 'surrenders to its manipulations while enjoying his alienation from himself and others.'[42] This enjoyment receives its impulse from identification with the commodity. Inasmuch as it is an object of desire, the subject is identified with it and constructs himself in accordance with the commodity. In culturological terms, he himself thus confirms his alienation and the

41 *The Arcades Project*, 460 [N 1a, 6].

42 Ibid., 7.

fact that he owns no other property but his labor force. Encountering the commodity, 'the man of the crowd' encounters himself, not as a free consumer but as a commodity or labor force, displayed on the marketplace and awaiting its possible buyer.[43]

Each image is a non-now at the heart of the present, an interruption if the spatio-temporal continuity, a manifestation of something new and mostly a temporal dimension. In this sense, the phantasmagorias have a temporal intentionality of their own, which determines the phenomenology of their recognition. Thus are elements of prehistory manifested, carrying the memory of the classless society, preservedin the 'unconscious of the collective.' At the same time they refer to the future and the new from of social relations. In Michelet's words: 'Each epoch dreams the one to follow.' Temporal intentionality of the image refers both to prehistoric and utopian past, while carrying a specific political pathos. This political interpretation of time issues from Benjamin's profound convitction that in order for change to take place and a revolution to be achieved, we necessitate a radical change in the perception of time, an idea which he best develops in 'On the Concept of History' and puts to practice in *The Arcades Project*. The images where 'each epoch dreams the one to follow' include regressive elements, actualizing a past which is disguised by the fake sensations of breaking up with the 'scarcely bygone', as well as elements, referring to an inaccessible past, where we could sense the hope and the utopian visions of the future. Briefly, this crystal prism of time which is the phantasmagoria, as in any of |Benjamin's image, we can trace all these temporal intentionalities, which are not only political but

[43] So does Benjamin define the relations between the market and the intellectual who is also affected by alienation: 'In the person of the flâneur, the intelligentsia becomes acquainted with the marketplace. It surrenders itself to the market, thinking merely to look around; but in fact it is already seeking a buyer.' Ibid., 21.

also translating an unconscious dreaming experience in cultural terms, foreverhaunting and calling the legitimacy of the present into question. Because 'every epoch, in fact, not only dreams the one to follow but, in dreanling, precipitates its awakening. It bears its end within itself and unfolds it – as Hegel already noticed – by cunning. With the destabilizing of the market economy, we begin to recognize the monuments of the bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled.'[44]

The arcades give us a new way of looking at cultural phenomena in the situation of commodity exchange and market relations. They monadically reflect all forms of life in the XIX century and makes possible to examine society in total (a primary requirement for Lukács). Thus, a monadic and dialectical logic is constructed among the different categories in Benjamin's projectthat are mutually reflecting each other and making visible the relatedness of different social phenomena, produced by commodity fetishism and the desire for its overcoming. This project testifies of all of the flâneur's phantasmagoras, as well as those of the the interiors, the prostitute, the iron constructions, the streets, the vogue, the the museum and the collection, along with the pathos of revolutionary struggle, the street barricades, the Parisian catacombs, the rebellious and cosmic vision of Blanqui and Fourier's utopias. Each of those categories is bound in a complex relationship with the rest and forms a web of different dialectical mediations, which, as was stated, are immediate and based on their obviousness and their embeddedness in an image fraught with tensions. Everything in the image has a positive and a negative aspect, one referring to the future, the other – regressively holding the present back into the past.

The phantasmagoria represents the objects' aura in regime of their mechanical reproduction. It is the enchantment of the collective, which is unaware of its deusions and the commodity

[44] Ibid., 13.

is the material evidence of such delusions. The dialectical image makes possible the arrangement and encompassing of all these phanomena when they are manifested as contradictions. In this way, every separate phenomenon contains within itself two contradictory ones. For example: 'the arcades are [...] house no less than street.'[45] This is the method by virtue of which every reality manifests its positive and negative aspects which form a positive or a negative element 'and so on, ad infinitum, until the entire past is brought into the present in a historical apocatastasis.'[46] This is how the arcades are divided between the interior and the street, which in turn are divided into two elements – the collector and the art of Secsssion, further divided in a dialectical manner and so on. The dialectics of interior and street is very clearly visible by the flâneur and the prostitute, by everyone that form the street as a living space.[47]

Just as the time of the image is not homogeneous and linear, neither is the urban space of Paris. In it are present all the phantasmagorias, all images of the dreaming community, enjoying its own alienation and immersed into the delusion, produced by the fetish objects. This space is full of imges and the traces of commodity fetishism and utopia are everywhere visible. It is therefore punctuated by abrupt time interruptions, with the fusion between reality and imagination. In this sense, this space, in Michel Foucault's terms, is heterotopic – it accumulates different temporal dimensions and represents a large network of relations. It is capable of referring to the past: То е способно да отпраща към миналото: 'The street

45 Ibid., 10.

46 Ibid., 459 [N 1a, 3].

47 'Streets are the dwelling place of the collective. The collective is an eternally unquiet, eternally agitated being that – in the space between the building fronts – experiences, learns, understands, and invents as much as individuals do within the privacy of their own four walls.' Ibid., [M 3a 4].

conducts the flâneur into a vanished time. For him, every street is precipitous. It leads downward – if not to the mythical Mothers, then into a past that can be all the more spellbinding because it is not his own, not private. Nevertheless, it always remains the time of a childhood.'[48]

The space is in this way full of 'tresholds', opening up different worlds. Benjamin shares Bergson's idea that any sensual experience a particular means for experiencing time. The heterotopy of space conists precisely in the different experience of time in different spaces. This is why the 'tresholds', leading to them are of such importance. They constitute this experience of transition, in which the sensation is most intense with the experience of what is alien and radically other – the lost aura. Such transitions exist in urban space and the most important thing is for one to detect and experience them.

CONCLUSION

The dialectics of the gaze creates such spaces of history where the imagecan function in various ways and in which every movement of the optical prism allows penetration into new layers of history. Thus, an immediate experience is formed which is recognized as important not only by the historian but also by the metropolian flâneur. A significant trait of Benjamin's project is the research of of this type of experience through its respective political and economical tendencies and practices. These practices are deeply rooted the most intimate experiences of the individual and even take over his unconscious desires. Their sublimation forms a particular culture of the image, the research of which can for Benjamin serve for assuming a critical stance towards the present and even awakening of revolutionary forces, lying dormant within this very same present.

[48] Ibid., 416 [M 1, 2].

In this way the occupation with history facilitates the realization of its eschatological and messianic mission, the ultimate goal of which is overcoming the power of violence and politics.

РЕЗЮМЕ

ОБРАЗЫ И ПРЕДМЕТЫ В *DAS PASSAGEN-WERK* ВАЛЬТЕРА БЕНЬЯМИНА

Текст исследует оставшуюся незавершенной книгу Вальтера Беньямина о парижских пассажах. Его основным фокусом являются предметы и культура товара в XIX в., в которой они приобретают новые значения. В целях настоящего исследования делается попытка реконструкции оригинальной методологии, которую Беньямин использует в связи с его понятием «диалектический образ».

RAYA KUNCHEVA

MARCHANDISE, ALLÉGORIE, COLLECTEUR. L'OBJET DANS LA PENSÉE DE BENJAMIN[1]

Les objets jouent un rôle particulier pour Walter Benjamin. Etant bibliophile et collectionneur dans la vie, la pensée de Benjamin touche les objets, d'après Adorno, comme s'il était en train de penser tout en tenant entre ses mains l'objet de réflexion.

> Sujet et objet n'étant pas en fin de compte identiques, comme chez Hegel, l'intention subjective disparaissant plutôt pour Benjamin dans l'objet, sa pensée ne se contentait pas d'intentions. Elle serrait son objet de près, comme si elle voulait devenir toucher, odorat ou goût. Grâce à une sensation ainsi redoublée, il espérait découvrir les mines d'or qui échappent à toute démarche classificatrice, sans pour autant s'en remettre à la contingence de l'intuition aveugle. La réduction de la distance par rapport à l'objet rend possible une praxis qui sera déterminante pour la pensée ultérieure de Benjamin. (Adorno 2007 : 21)

La manière selon laquelle Benjamin développe des notions comme allégorie, dialectique dans la paix, crépuscule de l'aura, s'ap-

[1] Ce texte fait partie d'une étude plus large

puie sur l'expérience du temps et du temporel que nous recevons des objets. Dans son travail sur le projet des Passages, Benjamin considère l'intention surréaliste comme non moins importante que l'intention allégorique. D'après lui ce sont les surréalistes qui ont vu l'univers usé et fané des objets comme un univers contenant dans son essence la capacité de l'illumination profane. Des textes comme „Je déballe ma bibliothèque", ou bien celui sur le fait de collectionner des timbres dans *Rue à sens unique*, sont des textes de prose poétique dans laquelle le regard des objets répond à celui de l'homme. Toujours dans ce même livre il formule le constat: l'univers des objets ressemble de plus en plus à de la marchandise. L'enfant, les jouets d'enfant et l'univers enfantin comme univers dans l'univers des adultes attirent assez tôt son attention, et la collection d'anciens livres d'enfant illustrés, qu'il complète avec son épouse Dora, est une source d'excitation et de joie alimentée sans cesse par chaque nouvelle trouvaille. Le projet des Passages, sur lequel il travaille jusqu'à la fin de sa vie, est en réalité une énorme collection de fiches. La couleur du papier des fiches et sa qualité sont très importantes pour lui, il ne se contente pas de l'article de masse. Dans son travail sur les fiches, il est souvent comparé à un collectionneur, omnibulé par sa collection.

> Par conséquent, alors que la tradition introduit des discriminations, le collectionneur nivelle toutes les différences ; et ce nivellement – à savoir que «le positif et le négatif (...) la prédilection et le rejet sont ici étroitement voisins» (Schriften, II, 313), dans leur antagonisme – se produit même si le collectionneur a fait de la tradition elle-même sa spécialité et soigneusement éliminé tout ce que la tradition ne reconnaît pas. Contre la tradition, le collectionneur pose le critère de la spécificité ; contre la norme, le signe de l'origine. (Arend 2011: 93)

Mais les objets jouent un rôle particulier également dans son existence « post mortelle ». Les écrits sont également des objets. Ils peuvent être préservés ou détruits, perdus, éparpillés ou retrouvés et assemblés. Environ quatre décennies après sa mort des manuscrits oubliés, semblables aux objets éparpillés et abandonnés sur les rayons poussiéreux des antiquaires des passages, qui occupent une place centrale dans son grand projet sur la préhistoire du XIX siècle, seront sauvés de l'oubli.

En 1981 Giorgio Agamben découvre dans la Bibliothèque nationale de Paris des écrits de Walter Benjamin. Parmi eux se trouvent des dossiers qui contiennent des textes en rapport avec son travail sur le livre de Baudelaire. Ils permettent de mieux comprendre le concept initial du livre entier, et de retracer (suivre) les changements que subissent certaines de ses parties fondamentales. L'importance de cette découverte est énorme. Connus dans la littérature critique sous le nom de « Les manuscrits parisiens » , ils motivent l'élaboration de nouveaux thèses et la reconsidération de certains des thèses anciennes. Mais il fallait attendre plus de trois décennies pour qu'ils soient intégralement publiés dans un livre – Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire. Un poeta lirico nell'età del capitalismo avanzato*, a cura di Giorgio Agamben, Barbara Chitussi, Clemens-Carl Härle, Vicenza, Neri Pozza Editore, 1912. L'édition en italien fut suivi l'année d'après par celle en français, Walter Benjamin, *Baudelaire*. Edition établie par Giorgio Agamben, Barbara Chitussi, Clemens-Carl Härle, La fabrique, 2013, qui est traduit par Patrick Charbonneau, dans un volume de 1029 pages, désormais *Benjamin, Baudelaire*. Dans l'introduction du livre Giorgio Agamben indique le but de l'édition en utilisant le terme *work in progress*. Ce dernier répond au mieux au principe de l'inachevé qui définit les textes de Benjamin en sachant qu'ici il ne s'agit nullement du caractère inachevé de tout projet créatif, mais d'une réflexion dans le modèle de la configuration. La forme de montage que Benjamin édifie en tant que méthode de travail, comporte en soi le mo-

ment de manipulation d'objets, mais il devrait être compris plutôt comme une création de configurations que comme un étalage d'objets juxtaposés visant une opposition de choque. Dans chaque nouvelle étape de son travail il réorganise les fiches de citations, notes, notices et références rangées dans les dossiers du projet des Passages. Les écrits découverts permettent de voir ces nouvelles réorganisations. On retrouve également les textes publiés dans le premier volume des œuvres complètes allemandes et dans les Benjamin-Archiv, aussi les texte ici publiés pour la première fois. L'un d'eux est le manuscrit « Table des thèmes et des concepts » qui est un des sujet développé dans cette analyse. D'un point de vue de la chronologie il se rapporte à la période de préparation de « Sur quelques thèmes baudelairiens », c'est-à-dire après le refus que « Le Paris du second Empire chez Baudelaire » essuie de la part de la rédaction du magasine de l'Institut des études sociales.

Une nouvelle version de la partie « Le Flâneur » de « Le Paris du second Empire chez Badelaire » est demandée. Au lieu de cela, Benjamin écrit un texte complètement différent et nouveau – « Sur quelques thèmes baudelairiens » qui satisfait enfin Adorno. Nous sommes en 1939. En effet l'édition même du texte a lieu en 1940.

Michel Espagne et Michael Werner sont les premiers qui démontrent dans une étude approfondie, l'importance des « Les manuscrits parisiens » pour l'éclairage de la conception du livre sur Baudelaire. Cette espèce de reconstitution virtuelle ne pouvait être réalisée qu'après la découverte des écrits. Chaque catégorie comprend une liste des numéros des fiches préparée par Benjamin, qui représentent la base documentaire et conceptuelle de son développement et ces mêmes listes ont été découvertes.

Michel Espagne et Michael Werner élèvent la thèse de « virage » du matérialisme vers la théologie par analyse des catégories que Benjamin avait prévu de développer dans le Premier et le Troisième chapitre du livre. Leur étude « Les manuscrits parisiens de Walter Benjamin et le Passagenwerk », est publiée dans le vo-

lume *Walter Benjamin et Paris* (1986), dans laquelle sont réunis les textes de la conférence ayant eu lieu à Paris en 1983 à l'occasion de l'édition du cinquième volume des œuvres complètes allemandes de Benjamin, volume qui comprend des textes, des manuscrits et des matériaux du projet des Passages.

Paradoxalement, la thèse de Michel Espagne et Michael Werner de « l'effondrement » du projet sur les Passages et de son « absorption » par le projet sur Baudelaire a été énoncée justement à cette conférence. Car le lien entre les deux projets est indubitable. La discussion débute lorsque la recherche de définition de ce lien commence. Bien évidemment, le débat va bien plus loin que les problèmes de genèse ou les questions de nature textuelle.

Ces deux projets restent inachevés, mais le livre sur Baudelaire, conçu comme un modèle miniature du projet sur les Passages, et qui concentre les efforts de Benjamin en 1938 et 1939 atteint un niveau supérieur de réalisation. Pour cette raison la découverte d'Agamben éclaire également les Passages.

Après avoir rendu « Eduard Fuchs, collectionneur et historien » en 1937, Benjamin propose trois thèmes dans une lettre à Horkheimer desquels la rédaction doit en choisir un pour un futur développement. Le choix de Horkheimer se porte sur le thème de Baudelaire plutôt que sur les thèmes de l'historiographie bourgeoise et les images archaïques de Klages et Jung. Peu de temps après naît l'idée que Benjamin écrive un essai dont le point de départ va s'appuyer sur le chapitre « Baudelaire et les rues de Paris » dans le projet sur les Passages. Mais durant le processus de travail sur cet essai émerge la décision de l'écriture d'un livre, qui donnera méthodiquement un élan au travail sur le projet des Passages qui se définira en plus d'une problématique qui lui sera propre. Ainsi, lorsque le 28 septembre 1938 il envoie à Horkheimer « Le Paris du Second Empire chez Baudelaire » il présente dans la lettre qui accompagne le texte la problématiques des deux autres chapitres.

> «Il faut cependant souligner qu'il est impossible de saisir, à partir de cette seconde partie, les bases philosophiques du livre dans sa totalité et il devait en être ainsi. La synthèse, dans la troisième partie – elle s'appellera la marchandise comme objet poétique -, est ainsi disposée qu'on ne peut l'apercevoir ni de la première, ni de la seconde partie. Cela n'était pas seulement une condition d'autonomie de la dernière; mais la construction l'imposait. Du point de vue de la construction, la première partie – Baudelaire, poète allégorique – pose le problème; la troisième livre la solution. La seconde rassemble les données nécessaires à cette solution » (Baudelaire 2013: 708)

Agamben se porte solidaire dans son introduction du livre des manuscrits à la thèse de Michel Espagne et Michael Werner lorsqu'il commente un extrait important d'une lettre de Benjamin adressée à Horkheimer et datant du 16 avril 1938. Dans cette lettre Benjamin souligne qu'il envisage la conception du livre sur Baudelaire comme un modèle méthodologique du projet sur les Passages. Cette relation entre les deux projets est perçue par Agamben dans le sens de l'effondrement du projet sur les Passages.

Il faut souligner le statut particulier que l'expression employée par Benjamin (le «modèle en miniature») confère à la partie sur Baudelaire. De fait, elle institue entre la partie et le tout une relation paradoxale au sein de laquelle, si le tout se contient pour ainsi dire lui-même en abîme, la partie tend en revanche à englober le tout, jouant par là même comme un facteur d'érosion et d'évidement progressif de l'ensemble de l'œuvre. (Baudelaire 2013: 8)

Mais la notion de « modèle en miniature » pourrait être perçue non seulement comme un facteur d'érosion, mais également comme une périphrase de la notion de monade qui détient une importance cruciale pour Benjamin déjà à l'époque du Origine du drame baroque allemand. Dans l'introduction du *Benjamin, Bau-*

Baudelaire Agamben écrit sur la notion de « monade » mais dans l'aspect du débat sur la philologie entre Adorno et Benjamin comme un contre-argument envers la critique de d'Adorno sur l'absence de la médiation. La monade réunit en un les trois parties de la structure dialectique. Elle ne suppose pas de médiation. La réponse de Benjamin à la critique de d'Adorno va également dans ce sens, mais le plus important est qu'il introduit l'aspect de l'expérience, de leur expérience commune dans une situation historique donnée comme condition pour la construction de l'objet d'étude en tant que monade.

> L'apparence de factualité close qui est attachée à l'analyse philologique et qui fascine le chercheur disparaît à mesure que l'objet se construit dans la perspective historique. Les lignes de fuite de cette construction convergent dans notre propre expérience historique. Ainsi l'objet se constitue en monade. Dans la monade, tout ce qui sous forme d'occurrence était figé dans une rigidité mythique devient vivant. C'est pourquoi il me semble que vous méconnaissez la situation quand vous voyez dans le texte une « connexion directe entre l'impôt sur le vin et «L'âme du vin». Le lien était au contraire légitimement établi en contexte philologique – tout comme cela se ferait dans l'interprétation d'un écrivain antique. Cela donne au poème le poids spécifique qu'il revêt dans sa véritable lecture, une lecture qui jusqu'ici n'a pas été beaucoup pratiquée pour Baudelaire. C'est seulement lorsqu'il a été fait état de ce poids spécifique que l'œuvre peut être saisie, pour ne pas dire ébranlée, par l'interprétation. Dans le cas du poème en question, le lien s'établit non pas avec la question de la taxation, mais avec la signification de l'ivresse pour Baudelaire. ; (Baudelaire 2013: 838)

La notion leibnizien de monade, en ce qui concerne la méthode de la philologie, peut être interprétée selon Agamben dans

le sens que „la documentation se présente dans la construction comme monade, cela signifie donc qu'elle n'a pas besoin, pour être interprétée, de l'intervention médiatrice de la théorie". (Baudelaire 2013: 17–18) Agamben défend la perception de Benjamin de théorie contenu dans l'objet réel, dans l'objet-même sans éprouver la nécessité de la médiation par la théorie. Agamben renvoie vers la doctrine médiévale selon laquelle la matière contient déjà en elle toutes ses formes et se trouve déjà pleine de formes à l'état «inchoatif» et potentiel: la connaissance revient alors à faire advenir à la lumière *(eductio)* ces formes cachées *(inditae)* dans la matière. (Baudelaire 2013: 18) Mais probablement avec encore plus de raison la pensée de Benjamin pourrait être mise en relation avec Goethe qui cherche Ur-phenomenon dans les objets mêmes. C'est exactement ce point de vue qui assure également le pont vers la problématique du Origine du drame baroque allemande et plus exactement vers son Prologue.

La notion de monade est conçue de Benjamin d'une telle sorte qu'elle puisse permettre une concrétisation maximale de l'étude philosophique. Comme si l'objet participe directement à travers cette notion dans le processus de la connaissance. Mais dans l'introduction de *Benjamin, Baudelaire* Agamben se concentre avant tout sur la contestation de la logique dialectique et hégélianique. Il considère avec raison que qu'Adorno l'exige injustement de Benjamin.

Agamben, qui se solidarise avec Espagne et Werner, considère que la manière de conceptualisation de Benjamin est « totalement imprégnée par l'encre théologique ». (Baudelaire 2013: 18) Si nous retournons à l'essai d'Espagne et de Warner nous verrons qu'ils confirment la structure de l'allégorie au sein-même de sa base.

D'après eux, derrière la structure explicite du livre, suivant le schéma thèse, antithèse, synthèse, en réalité transpire conceptuellement une structure bipartite. Ils comparent les catégories que Ben-

jamin projette de développer dans le Premier et dans le Troisième chapitre du livre exactement selon le modèle bipartite de l'allégorie. Ainsi, leur analyse n'accorde pas d'attention au Deuxième chapitre, qui en réalité reçoit la réalisation textuelle comme « Le Paris du second Empire chez Baudelaire ». Puisque leur analyse est seulement au niveau des catégories, ils ne considèrent pas les preuves sociologiques comme essentielles.

> Cette seconde partie est presque un moment de repos dans le travail d'élaboration théorique, puisqu'elle a pour modeste fonction de donner les faits bruts nécessaires aux développements prétendument marxistes de la dernière partie. Elle néglige désormais la théorie de l'art mais ne traite pas encore de l'histoire (lettre à Horkheimer du 28 sept. 1938). Elle n'est plus l'expérience immédiate, mais elle n'est pas encore l'éternel retour. (Espagne et Werner 1986: 870)

Espagne et Werner élaborent leur thèse en réduisant considérablement l'importance du Deuxième chapitre. Leur analyse a pour point de départ le plan du livre sur Baudelaire que Benjamin prépare avant la rédaction de « Le Paris du second Empire chez Baudelaire ». Après la découverte des manuscrits par Agamben le plan de chaque chapitre reçoit une concrétisation qui présente les catégories. Le contenu du Deuxième chapitre démontre que Benjamin suivait à la lettre ce plan au moment d'écrire de « Le Paris du second Empire chez Baudelaire » dans le contexte du livre prévu. Dans la première chapitre se développe la catégorie « allégorie », dans la troisième – la catégorie « marchandise ». Dans leur argumentation Espagne et Werner s'appuient sur la note suivante des « Les manuscrits parisiens » :

> Les schémas de coordonnées ont dans le cas optimal 11 termes: 4 pour les points d'arrivée des axes, quatre pour

> les champs, deux pour les axes, un pour le point d'intersection.
>
> Les trois parties du travail devront représenter la thèse, l'antithèse et la synthèse.
>
> L'homme qui a été jusqu'au bout du chemin de croix de la sexualité masculine devient poète en raison de sa dignité sacrée. Le poète qui ne peut être investi d'une mission par la société fait du marché et de la marchandise ses objets.
>
> Les thèmes les plus importants sont à déterminer en fonction de leur émergence thé tique, antithétique et synthétique ou tout au moins thétique et synthétique.
>
> La mort ou le cadavre constitueront le centre du système d'axes pour les schématismes de la première partie. À l'endroit correspondant se trouvera dans la troisième partie la marchandise, comme la réalité sociale, qui dans cette poésie est le fondement de la domination du principe de mort. (Baudelaire 2013: 626)

Le modèle utilisé par Benjamin pour édifier les configurations de concepts est le système de coordonnées. Il est remarquable qu'il ne considère pas une notion aussi centrale pour le Deuxième chapitre du livre. Elle échappe à ce modèle. La question est si ce modèle reste valable également lors de l'écriture des « Sur quelques thèmes baudelairiens ». Le manuscrit que je vais aborder ici, « Table des thèmes et des concepts » n'attire pas l'attention de leur étude. Il marque le début d'une nouvelle réorganisation des fiches selon quatre thèmes: passages, foule, trace, type. Ici il va se limiter au thème de la trace. Cette nouvelle réorganisation lors de la préparation du texte « Sur quelques thèmes baudelairiens » ne peut plus avoir un seul centre. Même s'il est planifié pour s'organiser autour de trois parties, le livre s'appuie sur le schéma bipartite ; entre la première qui pose la question et la troisième qui donne la réponse existe la relation de l'analogie et de la projection de la conception du premier chapitre (la mort)

sur le troisième chapitre (la marchandise). La thèse des auteurs est que Walter Benjamin lit Marx à travers le prisme de l'allégorie baroque.

> La projection de l'expérience de l'érotisme et de la mort sur la théorie de la marchandise et de l'histoire n'est pas seulement réalisée par la répartition des images dialectiques. Plus généralement le plan de Benjamin tend à mettre en évidence une équivalence des deux concepts centraux de la thèse et de la synthèse, à savoir la mort et la marchandise. Les membra disjecta de la destruction que reflète l'allégorie baroque étendue au satanisme romantique trahissent un singulier parallélisme structurel avec la production en masse des marchandises indifferentes les unes par rapport aux autres parce que réduites à leur valeur d'échange. (Espagne et Werner 1986: 875)

Puisque seul le Deuxième chapitre traite de Baudelaire et les catégories du Premier et du Troisième occupent la place centrale du projet des Passages, d'après Espagne et Werner c'est justement dans le processus du travail que le concept du projet des Passages se transforme. Composé de conflits internes, il est absorbé au moment de son effondrement par le livre sur Baudelaire, dans lequel on trouve une solution à la tension entre, pour ainsi dire, le marxisme et la théologie, même s'il s'agit d'un marxisme idiosyncratique. Cette structure bipartite n'est-elle pas représentée dans la fameuse image de la poupée des « Sur le concept d'histoire » qui est sur la table des échecs et qui gagne toujours si le nain, caché des regards des spectateurs, tire les ficelles, là où la poupée est du matérialisme historique et le nain – de la théologie. Mais c'est le moment de rappeler une autre image : l'image de l'encre, du buvard et de l'écrit, où l'encre est la théologie et le buvard – sa pensée. Si le buvard est entièrement imprégné d'encre l'écrit disparaitra.

Nombreuses sont les indications du changement et de la réorganisation du projet des Passages. Ce changement devient probablement le plus visible en comparant l'exposé du projet que Benjamin prépare en 1939 et le premier exposé de 1935. Sans entrer dans une clarification détaillée des différences entre les deux textes, je ferai juste un commentaire sur le raisonnement de Bernd Witte dans sa biographie de Benjamin:

> Le désespoir politique de Benjamin apparaît de la façon la plus manifeste lorsqu'on compare à l'« Exposé » du travail sur les Passages de 1935 le second « Exposé » qu'il rédigea en français, à la demande de Horkheimer, à l'intention d'un mécène américain susceptible de financer le projet. ... l'optimisme historique du premier jet a laissé la place à une profonde résignation. A la place de la récapitulation méthodique, Benjamin cite en conclusion L'Éternité par les astres de Blanqui, dernière fantasmagorie, cosmique, du *XIXe* siècle. L'éternel retour du même selon Blanqui dément l'espérance d'une apocatastase, présente dans le premier « Exposé », d'une manière d'autant plus cinglante qu'il est le dernier mot du plus grand précurseur révolutionnaire de l'époque. ...Dans une Europe mortellement menacée par le fascisme, dans une France où s'annonce la défaite du Front populaire, il est devenu évident pour Benjamin qu'il n'existe plus aucune classe révolutionnaire sur l'action de laquelle pourrait s'orienter l'analyse matérialiste du *XIXe* siècle. ...
>
> De même que la discordance entre la partie documentée et la conclusion désespérée dans l'« Exposé » de 1939, la construction manquante du Passagenwerk tout entier désigne le sujet collectif absent qui, s'il s'éveillait du rêve historique dans le présent de l'auteur, pourrait seul lui permettre de classer son matériau dans l'ordre pertinent. (Witte 1988 : 241–2)

D'après moi une telle réduction de la conception du projet est contestable. L'absence du sujet collectif révolutionnaire est évidente pour Benjamin bien avant la fin des années trente. Il est très peu probable qu'il ait nourri une illusion quelconque à l'égard du Front Populaire. Ce n'est pas un hasard qu'il s'attaque à la mélancolie gauche et au collaborationnisme social-démocrate. L'interprétation faite par Witte de la notion le maintenant de la connaissabilité (Jetzt der Erkennbarkeit) est douteuse.

> Un tel « maintenant » existait peut-être encore en 1935–1936, dans les avancées du gouvernement de Front populaire ; mais en 1939 ce « maintenant » n'existait plus. Le sujet collectif appelé à s'éveiller avait sombré plus profondément que jamais dans le sommeil maléfique et les rêves spectraux du fascisme. Benjamin, l'historien matérialiste, se cantonne alors dans le rôle du collectionneur, qui arrache les choses à leur contexte sans pouvoir leur en donner d'autre que contingent. (Witte 1988 : 241–2)

L'exposé de 1939 reflète les nouveaux points de vue que Benjamin a développés en écrivant divers textes pendant ces quatre dernières années. Cela est inévitable pour tout processus créatif. Les changements concernent pas uniquement la thématique – le chapitre sur Daguerre est abandonné, mais concernent également la position méthodologique de Benjamin. La situation politique ne peut pas ne pas l'atteindre, mais en aucun cas elle ne doit pas être abordée comme directement prédéterminée. En 1935 le concept de la préhistoire du *XIXe* siècle, de la fantasmagorie née des nouvelles prouesses technologiques et la foi dans le progrès, ce rêve qui porte en soi l'attente du réveil va en parallèle avec le texte le plus « optimiste » de Benjamin – L'Œuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproductibilité technique. Mais ce texte aussi, comme dit Benjamin lui-même a pour objectif de créer des notions qui ne peuvent pas être utilisées par le fascisme. C'est le pari, et non

pas la présence ou l'absence du sujet révolutionnaire collectif. Le crépuscule des mythes, le réveil de l'ivresse continue à occuper la pensée de Benjamin durant la fin des années trente, mais lui offre une autre expression conceptuelle – dans le champ de la théorie de la connaissance. En effet, tout le passage sur les images des rêves de l'exposé 1935 est écarté. Mais est-ce pour autant que la conception du projet des Passages est déstabilisée au plus profond de son être ? La thèse de Espagne et Werner, partagée aussi par d'autres, a ses connotations politiques. Bien évidement elles sont clairement déchiffrées et reçoivent une réponse. Dans ce sens le livre de Susan Buck-Morss *The Dialectics of Seeing* est un bon exemple.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

ТОВАР, АЛЛЕГОРИЯ, КОЛЛЕКЦИОНЕР. ПРЕДМЕТ В МЫШЛЕНИИ ВАЛЬТЕРА БЕНЬЯМИНА

Предметы играют особую роль для Вальтера Беньямина. Библиофил и коллекционер в жизни, его мысли, по словам Адорно, касаются объектов, как будто он думает, удерживая объект в руке. Способ Беньямина построить такие понятия как аллегория, диалектика в покое, аура, опирается на опыт времени и пространства, который дают нам объекты. В настоящей статье прокомментированы постановки Агамбена, Эспана и Вернера, оспаривающие трёхчастную диалектическую модель как адекватный подход к мышлению Беньямина. Понятие монады рассматривается как мост между «Происхождением траурершпиля» и поздним Беньямином. Таким образом ставится вопрос насколько понятие «товар» можно рассматривать как диалектический образ (С. Бак-Морс). Указывается на методологическую роль понятия «след».

ALEXANDER PANOV

THE MAN – SUBJECT TO HIS DESTINY OR A THING TO BE USED?

The time is out of joint. O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!
Shakespeare. Hamlet.
Act 1, Scene 5.[1]

A volte un uomo è da solo perché ha in testa strani tarli
perché ha paura del sesso o per la smania di successo
per scrivere il romanzo che ha di dentro
perché la vita l'ha già messo al muro
o perché in un mondo falso è un uomo vero.
Dio delle città e dell'immensità
se è vero che ci sei e hai viaggiato più di noi
vediamo se si può imparare questa vita
e magari un po' cambiarla

[1] This is one of the key moments in "Hamlet" that carries a significant portion of this tragedy's message. Key in this quote is the motif of destiny. Destiny does not depend on human will. It is gifted at birth by the Fates. In this analysis we will elaborate further upon the meaning of this motif and its relation to the other two motifs in these two verses – one concerning the "ruptured" time, symbolizing Chaos, the other dealing with the need to restore the cosmic order.

prima che ci cambi lei.
Vediamo se si può
farci amare come siamo
senza violentarci più
con nevrosi e gelosie
perché questa vita stende
e chi è steso dorme o muore
oppure fa l'amore.
[...]
Ma Dio delle città e dell'immensità
magari tu ci sei e problemi non ne hai
ma quaggiù non siamo in cielo
e se un uomo perde il filo
è soltanto un uomo solo.

I Pooh, „Uomini soli"[2]

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[2] Lyrics by Valerio Negrini – founder and main lyricist of *I Pooh*. In 1971 he leaves the band but continues writing the texts for its songs. Together with composer Roby Facchinetti he formed a steady authors' duo. The cited verses can be literally translated as follows: *Sometimes a man is alone //Because there are strange thoughts in his mind //Because he is afraid of sex //Or because he craves for success //Because he wants to write the novel he keeps inside //Because life has him over a barrel //Or because in a false world //He is a true man //O God of cities and of immensity //If it is true that you exist and travelled more than we did //Let's see if one can learn this life //And change it a bit, perhaps, before it changes us //Let's see if it's possible that we love ourselves as we are //Not raping ourselves with obsessions and resentments //Because this life is developing and who has been knocked //Sleeps or dies, or makes love [...]*

But, o God of cities and of immensity //Perhaps you exist and have no problems //But down here we are not in heaven and if a man //Loses the thread, he is only a lonely man.

This song won first prize at the 1990 San Remo Festival. It remains one of the most popular hits of the Italian Estrada. Its lyrics have been subject to many interpretations and discussions, as people attempted to understand both their overall meaning and the significance of some particular words and phrases. Here I will cite one interpretation, offered by

Usually, a work of fiction can be read in two ways: either as a self-sufficient work of art and the methods in which it was constructed, its motifs, plots, its aesthetical and artistic value, or as a

a fan of the band. His theory was rated the highest by visitors of the blog where it was published:

Secondo me, il vero significato di questa canzone è quello che nessuno vuole vedere, quello intrinseco della vita, specialmente quello della vita da uomo adulto. Dal momento che sei svezzato devi vivere da solo in un mondo vuoto di amore umano, dove il vero motivo di averti vicino è solo quello di sfruttarti fino all'osso per le tue buone capacità e poi tenerti chiuso in un cantuccio buio per usarti alla prossima occasione. Ricordati uomo, che dopo della mamma che ti ha messo al mondo, sarai soltanto un oggetto che deve sempre pronto all'uso e che solo per tale motivo sarai considerato.

(translation)

In my opinion, the true meaning of this song is one that no one wants to see – the essence of life, in particular the life of a mature man. From the moment your mother stops nursing you, you must live in a world devoid of human affection – a world where the only reason people have to keep you close is to use you utterly, and when they're done with you they stick you in a dark corner where they can reach you when they need you again. Remember, oh man: after your mother gives birth to you, you become an object which always has to be ready to be used and this is the only reason your existence is acceptable to everyone else.

The influence popular songs have over the formation of perceptions, worldviews and beliefs in our society is immense. This is confirmed by the incessant interest directed especially towards the social and humanitarian messages in the lyrics of Italian songs, particularly those by so-called *cantautori* such as Fabrizio de André, Luigi Tenco, Lucio Dalla, Franco Califano, Franco Battiato, Francesco de Gregori, etc. We could add to this list the two most popular Italian bands, Matia Bazar and Pooh. By the way, the protagonist in "Chamkoria" also often alludes to songs which were popular at his time.

The reason I chose *"The Lonely Men"* as an epigraph to my text and the reason I quoted the post of the unnamed fan is in the obvious connection between their messages and the worldview expressed by the novel's protagonist.

social mediator by means of which social attitudes and behaviours are formed.[3] My goal as a researcher is to connect these two approaches with the simple question ***how?*** In other words, how does the ***construction*** of the text as a work of fiction allow us to ***develop worldviews, beliefs, concepts and behavioural models.*** In actual fact this is, I believe, the only correct way to determine the artistic and aesthetical value of a text. I will try to apply this approach to the newly published novel by Milen Ruskov "Chamkoria".[4] As we deal with a prosaic text, which is normally used for the construction of narratives, and as the author defines its genre as *novel*, the book must be placed and analyzed from the point of view of the natural paradigm of narratology, i.e. the science that deals with the construction of narrative texts.

In the introductory lecture of my narratology course at the Sofia University (part of the "Artistic Writing" program), I discuss the following question: which works should be called narrative and thus be subjected to narratological analysis? The consensus among leading European researchers of the XX century, when narratology developed as a discrete branch of literary science, is that the narrative text must always contain an *event*.[5] Furthermore, Y. M. Lotman

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[3] Compare with Angelov, Angel, „Pre/Modern Lifestyles in Washington Irving's *"The Italian Banditi"*. *Literaturna Misal* Magazine, 3/2015, pp. 68–95.

[4] The old name of popular Bulgarian ski resort Borovetz.

[5] Compare with „The second concept of narrativity is formed in the framework of structuralist narratology. According to this concept, the decisive point which defines the presence of a narrative is not so much the indication of communicative structure, but the indication related to the structure of the very thing that is being narrated. The term "narrative" is opposed to the term "descriptive" and does not define the presence of a mediating instance in the communication. It defines a particular structure of the material which is being expounded. The texts we call "narrative" in the structuralist sense of the word tell a *story*, as they possess a temporal structure at the level of the world that is being depicted. In its

defines the event as the main axis of the narrative text as follows: *"a transition of the character through the boundaries of the semantic field or a crossing of the forbidden frontier."* This frontier may be spatial, pragmatic, ethical, psychological or cognitive. Thus the event is formed by some form of deviation from the norm in this world, by a violation of one of the rules which preserve the order and structure of this world.[6] Simply put, the fixed structure of every narrative text must include: *A point of departure* where life goes by as defined by some established rules; *the violation* of these rules (inception of the action); *development* of the plot; *culmination*; finding a *way out* of the conflict that has violated the established order (denouement); *establishing* a new fixed order (epilogue).

As "Chamkoria" is a narrative text, we must analyze it through this lens. By doing this we will discover how the structuring of this text makes possible the influencing of the reader in such a way that he would find ***on his own*** the answer to the question I posed at the title of this article – is Man a subject to his own life or merely a thing, a toy in the hands of some metaphysical forces we could call in many different ways – destiny, social conditions, necessity, etc., but at the end of the day they always lead to the same result: no matter how hard he tries to achieve happiness and freedom, eve-

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turn, the idea of a story presumes the concept of an *event*. An event is a change in the status quo – a permutation of the *outer* situation which is presented by the depicted world (a *natural, actional* and *interactive* event) or of the *inner* situation of a character (*mental* events). Thus we call narrative, in the structuralist sense, works that tell stories depicting events. Understood this way, narrativity is close to what Boris Tomashevsky calls "fabula". But where Tomashevsky attributes to fabula not only a temporal attribute, but also an attribute of reason, the nature of events presupposes as its minimum condition the presence of a change in a previous situation, regardless of the fact whether the text expresses the causal connections between this change and other thematic elements, or not." **Shmid**, Wolf, "Narratology". Moscow, *Yazyki Slavyanskoy Kultury*, 2008.

[6] Lotman, Yuri M., *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, Moscow, 1970.

ryone ends up a victim of some preordainment which makes an object out of him – a thing to be used.

One of art's most characteristic traits is that it tries to make the perceiver go through all possible obstacles and collisions of the plot by himself, so as to be able to feel the work's message from within. There is nothing easier than verbalizing the idea you want to suggest. The question is, will the reader accept it as his own? This is why the narrative needs to guide him through the labyrinth of many assessments and doubts until at last it makes him reach the revelation. This was demonstrated to be the only true path to catharsis as early as the Greek tragedies.

But Ruskov's novel does not aim to bring its reader to catharsis because one is possible only when the perceiver needs to be persuaded that the world is, after all, built the right way, and if miseries rain on our heads, the fault is ours and ours alone. And in order to avoid further mishaps, we must be careful not to disturb the ***correct*** world order. Nowadays, though, hardly anyone can be persuaded that the world is built the right way and that, in order to be happy, one need only obey the will of the gods. Especially after the dubious joy to be handed the opportunity to build, for the best part of a century, a life where "eternal love, eternal justice" rule the world. Anyone who has been through this mill would be hard to be persuaded that this is a feasible goal. This is why we need to seek other paths. What paths though? Where is the key that will let us be the masters of our own lives, if nothing more, and not things kept handy in a dark corner – just in case? What behaviour would give meaning to our lives?

These are the questions that Ruskov's novel aims to provoke in its readers and push them to find the answers ***by themselves***. If not, they risk clutching at one of the ready answers offered by the numerous messiahs grappling for more followers. In order for this to happen, though, the narrative must be constructed so as to guide the reader through the labyrinth of ideas offered by our times.

The point of departure needed for such an influence to be successful is the same used by ancient playwrights: the wrong opinion - the paradox. In some of the interviews he gave on "Chamkoria" Milen Ruskov warned the readers not to trust the narrator too much, because they might be left unpleasantly surprised. The narrator resides within the situation and assesses it from his own point of view. But is it the right one? May the protagonist be wrong not only concerning the others, but also more generally – in his whole life strategy? In other words, could his consciousness be ruled by some wrongful opinion that may lead him to existential doom? And if the reader invests his trust in the protagonist and adopts his viewpoint, may he not be led to a situation where he is turned into a toy?[7] Actually, this reading strategy is very popular. The readers are used to being guided by the narrator through the labyrinth of the story and shown what should be believed and how life must be lived. History even remembers a paradox – Gustave Flaubert was prosecuted for refusing his readers this privilege in his novel "Madame Bovary", forcing them instead to think independently. Milen Ruskov is chasing the same goal, but in his own way, with his personal narrative strategy.

The plot in his novel unravels through a period of ten years - from 1918, when World War One ends, to 1928 – the date is marked by an earthquake in the city of Chirpan which plays an important role in the development of the plot. During this decade the protagonist – a humble chauffeur named Slave – tries to find the key to his own life and fulfill his ultimate dream – not to depend on

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[7] Here it would be appropriate to go back to the epigraph at the beginning of this article and recall the scene where Hamlet warns Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he is not a pipe to be played upon. *"You can fret me"*, he says, *"yet you cannot play upon me."* In five centuries we have not made a significant step forward from this point, except that, unlike Hamlet, nowadays people rarely even notice that someone plays them like instruments.

anybody. He is tired of being a toy in the hands of Others – his own wife and children to begin with, whom he perceives as a burden to be carried around, then banks and creditors, apologists of various ideologies and political parties, and finally the heavy machinery of the state which insists on keeping him handy to be used when need be. At the end of the book the protagonist verbalizes this goal quite clearly:

> *Almost everything is nearly always in your own hands, after all. If you fail at something, you can give something else a try. Destiny may stop you from doing one thing but it can't obstruct you in everything. That is, it can, but it won't, as long as you don't pull its tail. That's why, at the end of the day, everything is in your hands. But you need will, strength of character, patience. To do something. To achieve something worthy. To move your ass and do something worthy, something extra and out of the goodness of your heart.*

The protagonist utters these words only when he believes he has achieved his goal though. He perishes from the hand of the very man he thinks has freed him from the fate to be but a toy in Destiny's hands. Thus he proves once and for all that throughout the narrative he was only a thing to be used. The narrative does not announce this conclusion directly. It leaves the motives for this denouement unclear. In order to reach an acceptable answer, the reader must solve a puzzle. And it is a puzzle without a ready solution. But it has a key. In order to find it though, the reader must go through the entire complex narrative structure. This is so because the novel is comprised by three whole stories, stacked like nesting dolls.

One of these stories serves as the narrative framework and focuses on the relatively short period of half a day (almost as in a Greek tragedy). The chauffeur Slave – the proud owner of an omnibus bought on an installment plan – is doing his next run to Cham-

koria. This is his last drive for the season and after it ends, a long vacation awaits. Something more – his final liberation from debt is near, because in his car sits the man who must pay him for services Slave has done for him. These are significant services, as the plot will eventually reveal. Accordingly, the payment should be large. So there is a reason for his good mood. During the few hours of his trip, Slave keeps casting his thoughts back to various moments of his life. This serves as the main story which sets forth the most important events that happened during this decade. Coincidentally (provisionally, of course) Slave has been both a witness and an actor in all of them – World War One, the shock that followed the devastation caused by the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine[8], the mutiny of 1923, the unsuccessful assassination of Tsar Boris III at the Arabakonak Pass, the bomb assault in the Saint Nedelya church in Sofia, the following terror regime when many people disappeared, the execution of the assailants, the Chirpan earthquake. Once he even took in his car the mother of Bulgarian writer and communist Geo Milev, who had disappeared in the dungeons of the Committee for State Security. The mother was wandering from prison to prison in the vague hope that she might find her son. As all these event are not directly depicted though, and are only shown through the lens of the protagonist-narrator's memories, they are accompanied by a multitude of meditations and comments which pop up in his mind at any occasion – be it in the "past" or in the "present". One more narrative pervades this big story of the past – one related to the man who, in the end, will seal Slave's fate – the anarchist known by the exotic nickname of Dzhina (the Genie). This is the story arc where the main plot event happens: the meeting, the development of the relationship between the two main characters, and finally – the tragic end. As a hint that this story line is more special, all

[8] This treaty required Bulgaria to cede various territories, after the country had been one of the Central Powers defeated in World War I. The treaty was signed on 27 November 1919.

episodes featuring Dzhina are printed in italics. Besides, unlike the narration of other events, not everything that happens to Dzhina is shown through Slave's eyes – there are events in this plot line that are told by the anarchist himself. By necessity, this splits the viewpoint in two and this is an important thing to note in the development of the narrative structure. But more on this later.

Y. M. Lotman believes that the event at the heart of every narrative text is a deviation of the norm, a breaking of one of the rules that preserve the order and the structure of this world.

If we refer this definition to the world depicted in the novel "Chamkoria" – the 1920s in Bulgaria – we would be very hard pressed to give a definition to the order ruling this world. This is literally the "time out of joint" that Hamlet talks about. The chaos resulted not only from Bulgaria's defeat in WWI and the national catastrophe that followed. It stemmed mainly from the desire of various social groups to impose ***their*** order on ***everyone***. And they believed that, if their order was established, there would be "eternal love, eternal justice" in the world.

Like Hamlet, the protagonist of "Chamkoria" feels trapped by his ill destiny which, running against his will, has sucked him into the whirlpool of many tragic collisions. Unlike the Prince of Denmark though, Slave never entertains the thought that the burden of putting the world to rights should fall on his shoulders. All he wants is to keep himself safe and to get out of the situation which turns him into a thing to be used. And in the story that the novel tells, he turns out to be extremely used indeed. Whatever happens in these turbulent times, our Slave is always there – be it war, terrorist acts, assassination, execution, ideologically motivated robberies of rich people by anarchists... And he is always there to serve as a useful fire-iron with which others pick hot chestnuts out of the fire. He perceives even his own family as an unbearably heavy debt that was imposed on him by his natural instincts and the social conditions. When he talks

about it, Slave always calls it *"my so-called family"* and devotes a large chunk of his musings to self-pity, asking himself repeatedly how he could fall into this trap. As is his habit, he blames an external force – the natural instinct, pushing him to fleeting carnal pleasures which he later has to pay with years of slavery. This shows that the protagonist firmly supports the idea that everything that happens to him happens not by his choice but by a cruel play of Fate which sucks him into a whirlpool of political and worldly conflicts that do not concern him at all.[9] The question here is: how to get out of this situation?

The first possible solution is the heroic one. *"At times when, according to ordinary people, the situation allows for no choice and one must merely succumb to the circumstances, the protagonist rebels against this possibility and, through action which transcends the ordinary, manages to change the course of destiny."*[10] This attitude is characteristic of the time – the communists, the anarchists, the farm unionists and the "protectors of the Motherland" all act on this logic. One of the characters in the book even has the moniker Geroya (the Hero).[11] The results are well known – the Saint Nedelya terrorist act, the anarchistic hits and robberies, the terror in the dungeons of the Military Counterespionage and the Committee for State Security, the gallows at the city square. The protagonist Slave never even considers taking this path though, even when he is unwillingly dragged into its aftermath. When he muses about his destiny, he utters an entire inner soliloquy in which he rejects the

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[9] Actually the novel's author, Milen Ruskov, expressly points out this aspect of the problem: *"I tell the story about the way these dramatic years suck in a completely innocent man who never had any intention to partake."* Biograf Magazine, 04/2014.

[10] Todorov, Tsvetan. *Face A L'Extrême.* Editions du Seuil, 1991, p. 13.

[11] This is a historical personage – Vassil "Geroya" Popov, who was a noted anarchist and one of the organizers of the attempted assassination of Tsar Boris III at the Arabakonak Pass.

obligation to be heroic with words that sound like a direct quotation of Tsvetan Todorov.

His choice is different – he chooses to find his inner freedom by being cunning and dodgy, and by applying serial opportunism. One of the reviews of the novel notes that this is a popular choice – we have such heroes all around us. *"We know this type of person. We know him not so much from our literature, which doesn't like him all that much – this person who is neither Andreshko*[12] *nor Ganyo*[13] *– we know him from our environment. Not any other but the one here and now. We have met this personage at the queues, he has driven our taxi or bus, he has cheated us at the market, we have sat at the same table, we live with him, we live within him."*[14]

The weakness of this type of behaviour is that the freedom the opportunist craves proves to be fleeting. Earlier we noted that at the very moment our protagonist believed he finally had his destiny in his own hands, he perished by the same hand that gave him the money he needed to break out of his existential prison. Therefore, there needs to be another way out.

This way has been pointed out by Tsvetan Todorov, who opposes heroic virtues to everyday virtues: *"Death is a higher value to heroism than life. Only death – both one's own and the death of another – allows the hero to reach the absolute: as the victim of his own life, man proves that the ideal is more precious than him."*[15] Todorov proposes something to oppose this extreme viewpoint, another kind of virtues – ***dignity, care and spiritual activity.***

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12 A character from Elin Pelin's eponymous short story and a synonym of a cunning, opportunistic man who tricks the system.

13 Bai Ganyo – a character from a series of works by Aleko Konstantinov, synonymous with a typical, vulgar Bulgarian man. Both of these characters are not so much a social type, but show the main conflicts during the introduction of early modernity.

14 Gochev, Gueorgi. *The Opportunistic Rebel.* Kultura Weekly, May 23, 2017.

15 Todorov, Tsvetan. *Ibid.*, p.19.

Only they could preserve what is human within us and allow us to remain the subjects of our own destiny even at the hardest times. Said like this, everything seems clear. But Slave, the protagonist of "Chamkoria", refutes the fanaticism of heroes and never reaches the everyday virtues. Here reviewer Gotchev sees the main shortcoming of this novel – the lack of acceptable alternatives: *"The opportunistic rebel's ideology never clashes with another persuasive opportunity for well-being and success. It is as if in this Bulgaria we see depicted by Ruskov there are only petty schemers such as Slave or radicalized fanatics such as the communist organizers of the Saint Nedelya terrorist act. When offered this choice – between the petty swindler and the fanatic, between the trickster and the radical communist – naturally, we pick the trickster. Naturally – but because that is the choice we're offered and not because it is like this in life."* In other words, the reviewer expects that the novel should have offered him the personage of a "positive hero" who should have proposed a "correct" model of behaviour, a "real" example to follow. Would such an artistic strategy be successful among readers who have had enough of positive role models? Evidently, another type of identification between the author, the character and the reader is needed – one that would both guide the reader through the mechanism of wrong opinions and *not* lead him to catharsis, as one is possible only when there is a truly correct divine order of things. This mechanism must push the reader, rather than seek role models and faith in a stable world, look for a ***value*** to follow like Ariadne's thread in the labyrinth of life. Let me remind you – *"If a man loses the thread, he is but a lonely man."* Ruskov picks an approach more adequate to the contemporary reality – he plays with the points of view.

There are two possible viewpoints when a narrative discourse is constructed – a ***narrative*** viewpoint, which lies outside the character and the plot, thus allowing us to apply our critical judgment; and the ***personal*** viewpoint belonging to the narrating protagonist.

The latter is by definition inner and biased and may, at some moment or other, be proven wrong. Of course, there are stories where both types appear simultaneously and then we have a mixed or double point of view.

At first glance, the novel "Chamkoria" only uses the personal viewpoint of protagonist Slave. Earlier though we mentioned that the natural limitations of this viewpoint – namely, the character can only tell us about what he has seen and felt – required some of the plot elements to be introduced as Dzhina's memories and stories and Slave can only learn about them from him. This at first glance innocent splitting of the viewpoint opens the door to the splitting of the reader's own point of view.

As we know, reading stories that are told from the personal point of view makes us instinctively begin to see the world through the protagonist's eyes and, by sympathizing with him, to adopt his assessments. In several consecutive interviews Ruskov notes this particularity of his narration – evidently, to shield the readers from automated reading and to push them towards critical thinking and assessments. If we do not do so, we would not understand how the story reaches its tragic denouement and thus its main message. In order to read this way, though, we must take our point of view out of the protagonist's and thus turn the novel from unipolar to bipolar. This principle has been applied on all narrative levels with commendable consistency.

The narrative model of the viewpoint has five planes - ***spatial, ideological, temporal, linguistic*** and ***perceptive***. Let us review them one by one.

The spatial plane shows us where the narrator is throughout the plot. This is the literal meaning of the term "point of view". If it belongs to the narrator and especially to a so-called all-seeing narrator, this restriction is cancelled, as this type of narrator is omnipresent and able to watch everything up close, no matter where it happens. There is a restriction for the personal narrator

though – he can only speak about what he saw with his own eyes, or cite someone else's words. Which type do we find in "Chamkoria"? The author constructed a protagonist who, because of his profession – a chauffeur – moves from place to place all the time. Thus Slave becomes the direct witness and sometimes the participant in all notable events that define this period in history. World War One is on – Slave is there. Anarchists set up an ambush at Arabakonak Pass to capture the tsar – Slave is there. Communists, and main assailant Kosta Yankov in particular, blow Saint Nedelya up – Slave is there. Military men organize mass terror by killing political opponents of the regime – Slave is there, even transporting the dead bodies. He meets Kosta Yankov in person and asks him for a letter of recommendation in order to get a job in the police force (!). He communicates closely with the agents of the Military Counterespionage and the Committee for State Security. He drives Mrs. Kassabova – the mother of writer Geo Milev, who had disappeared and even tries to console her when she tells him her story. He watches closely the execution of Marco Friedman and the other conspirators. Thus, little by little, his personal viewpoint becomes omnipresent and all-knowing. This does not prevent it from being biased though, and possibly wrong. This duplicity should prompt the reader to consider carefully what Slave says and to assess it critically.

The ideological plane of the viewpoint can be defined as the circle of knowledge, the ways of thinking, the general mindset and the values that form the narrator's world perception. In Milen Ruskov's book this plane is almost merged with the ***perceptive*** one, i.e. the lens one perceives the events through. One of Ruskov's most characteristic distinguishing writing features is that he always shows the events through the lens of the character's consciousness and comments. They are the means that give his story its meaning. But if one delves into the manner in which Slave perceives and interprets the events and the role he is forced to play in them, one

can easily understand that this point of perception is completely inaccessible to a barely educated chauffeur from the early XX century. The careful reader will recognize some viewpoints and entire theories about mankind and society that have been presented as the protagonist's own views. In other words, here one can detect an outer point of view that should prompt the reader to overcome their receptive automatism and to start perceiving the events from the side. It should prompt us to try and decide whether, for instance, the views expressed in the narrator's comments are in concurrence with his actions. Whether, by refuting heroic values, Slave adopts their counterpoint – everyday values. In Tsvetan Todorov's theory these two are opposed and their separate existence is ***impossible***. We will return to this shortly.

The temporal plane of the viewpoint is also of great importance. In it, we can perceive the time that has passed from the event to the moment it is presented to the reader. By constructing his story as a reminiscence, the author keeps pushing his reader to keep two time planes in mind – the time of narration (the several hours that the trip to Chamkoria lasts) and the time that is being narrated – the decade of events that the protagonist shares and comments upon. This distinction allows the narrator to perceive the events more calmly, to reflect on them and assess them. The reader is supposed to do the same. In his turn, though, he must assess one additional point – the way in which the protagonist perceives and assesses the events and the part he himself plays in them. Here one should by all means split the viewpoints of the narrator and the reader.

Finally, we get to the ***linguistic plane***. This is another one of Ruskov's trademarks that helped him catch the attention of the public with his novel "Vazvishenie" ("Spiritual Elevation"). Under the pretext of trying to present as correctly as possible the lingo of the time period he describes, Ruskov attempts a major linguistic stylization that combines the narrative and the personal

viewpoints. In the usual narrative style they are differentiated by means of the language used. The narrator expresses himself in a high literary style, while the character speaks in a characteristic colloquial manner. Here, though, both functions are carried by the narrating protagonist. This does not mean that the two opposing planes have been deleted – quite to the contrary, their presence is commented upon. When speaking, the protagonist expresses himself in the dialect characteristic of Western Bulgaria, but he consciously tries to speak in a more "cultured" manner, thus pointing out his desire to adhere to modern urban culture. This bifurcation should hint to the reader that he is to pay attention to the tension between the outer (assessing) and the inner (perceiving) points of view.

And so, by constructing his novel in a way that combines the narrative and the personal points of view in all of their planes – temporal, spatial, ideological, perceptive and linguistic – the author actually obliges the reader to constantly keep track of his ability to perceive the narrator as trustworthy. In actual fact, the entire structure of the novel is a form of puzzle. Only by solving it, the reader may understand what really happened – why the protagonist perished at the moment when he seemingly had achieved his goal, and why he died by the hand of the man who had granted him the desired liberation.

The solution of this puzzle is possible only if we analyze critically the relationship between the two main characters – Slave and Dzhina. Actually, if there is one main event in this novel, it is precisely what happens between them. Everything else is merely a backdrop that introduces the social context. The author hints at this by graphically separating the episodes featuring Dzhina. Let us take a closer look at this stratum of the plot and its two protagonists.

Slave was dragged into this relationship in the same way he had been sucked into all other events – without his consent and

desire. Actually, the first meeting of the two comes as a result of his main life strategy – to grab at every opportunity to earn an extra something, this time by helping the anarchists to exchange stolen money in several cities. His fateful meeting with Dzhina happens a bit later, when the anarchist is trying to escape after a failed attempt to rob the Bank of Troyan. He waits on the road to Sofia for the chauffeur, who is returning under the cover of the night from his trip, and gets into his car. This is how their fateful relationship begins. Unexpected even to himself, the opportunist, who up to this moment has flatly refused to take care of another human being but himself, suddenly feels the need to help the fugitive. In the months after this meeting the two men become closer and form a deep human connection, sharing with one another their most intimate secrets.

This is how we come to understand that, in a way, they are mirror images of each other. They have one thing in common – their unwillingness to obey the rules imposed by others. In other words, their attitude towards the powers-that-be, because in modern societies the imposition of order always goes through the structures of power. This shared revulsion to power is expressed in two completely different ways though. One of the men tries to maneuver and cheat, exposing himself to manipulation. This strategy could have worked, allowing him to spend his life without a hint of spiritual remorse – the example set by thousands of people proves this. This could have only happened if he had not met Dzhina though – the man who had converted opposition to power into an ***idea*** and who had placed this idea ***before*** life – both his own and everybody else's. The lonely man who had let the thread slip from his fingers is placed into a situation that is fatefully connected to the anarchist's struggle. There is no way out. The symbolic meaning of his death is hidden in the impossible choice between the heroic and the everyday values. It is not possible to refute one half of this equation and just choose the other. Slave refutes the heroic model but never

adopts the model of everyday values. Or, more precisely, he adopts it only once, but towards the wrong guy. This is so because, by turning his struggle against power into an idea, Dzhina by necessity places this idea before life.

In one of the many interviews on "Chamkoria" Milen Ruskov said that he had left the end of the novel deliberately ambiguous. On the one hand, the death of Slave can be understood as a tragic mistake, one that looked like so many others happening in those turbulent times. It may have been, conversely, the result of a carefully concocted plan to get rid of the unwanted witness. Actually, it does not matter which reading of the finale is more plausible, as there is a third possibility – a combination of the two. The important thing is that, when someone puts ideas before life, the other who, having lost the thread, stumbles upon the wrong situation, will inevitably end as the victim. This is precisely what should be left in the mind of the reader who manages to take a look at the protagonist and his viewpoints from the side and to assess the situation critically. In other words, it is only up to each and every one of us to assure that we are masters of our destiny or just things to be used. This is true, but not in the meaning Slave sees in this idea. It is true in the sense that whatever life strategy one may adopt, life must be placed before any idea. One should believe that a real human existence is only possible when one abides by the rule that Slave himself understands right before the end:

> *"But I can't just lay low all my life and survive, I'll achieve nothing that way. I'll stop being a person and I'll become something else."*

What, then, can help us out of this impossible situation? The key to the puzzle is hinted at in the note, written by Dzhina:

> *"I was sick. I was saved by madness and love. Let's tear power down. It is the sickness."*

Love, which brings about dignity, care and spirituality, is what gives the much needed Ariadne's thread to us – the thread that will guide us through the labyrinth of life. It is the only thing that can save us from the many attempts to turn us into things to be used. If we let this thread slip, we will inevitably become a "lonely man", a "wind-blown leaf" dragged by the torrents of life here, there and anywhere.

РЕЗЮМЕ

ЧЕЛОВЕК – СУБЪЕКТ СВОЕЙ СОБСТВЕННОЙ СУДЬБЫ ИЛИ ПРЕДМЕТ ПОТРЕБЛЕНИЯ?

Статья ставит своей целью проследить как одна из ведущих проблем современного общества – превращение человека в предмет потребления, разработана повествовательным текстом с тем, чтобы спровоцировать читателя самому дойти до ответа на вопрос, поставленный в заглавии. А заодно и спровоцировать углубленное раздумье относительно причин, которые привели к обезличению человека. В основе анализа роман болгарского писателя Милена Рускова «Чамкория», который вызвал как сильный читательский интерес, так и разгоряченную дискуссию среди специалистов.

Принцип воздействия посредством провоцирования читательской реакции был использован еще авторами древнегреческих трагедий. Только Русков отнюдь не хочет довести своего читателя до катарсиса. Потому что катарсис возможен только в условиях устойчивого космического и общественного порядка. В то время как описанная романом историческая реальность является чем-то прямо противоположным – она символ «разобранного времени». Герой романа по художественной логике рассказа принимает непосредственное участие во всех основных событиях общественного хаоса, охватившего болгарское общество того времени – столкно-

вения между коммунистами, анархистами и традиционалистами, и обернувшегося самым кровавым атентатом в болгарской истории – взрывом собора Святой Недели. Он стремится достичь мечты своей жизни – взять собственную судьбу в свои же руки. Но возможно ли это тем способом, который он выбрал для себя? И не является ли его трагическая судьба результатом собственной оплошной стратегии?