



Proceedings of the Third Annual Student Research Festival



Edited by Alicja Bemben and Agnieszka Podruczna



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Alicja Bembien and Agnieszka Podruczna

Proceedings of the Third Annual Student Research Festival,
Reviewer: Marzena Kubisz, University of Silesia, Poland

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THE EDITORS' PREFACE

The important thing is to not stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existence. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery each day.¹

The third annual Student Research Festival, which took place on the 22nd of April 2015, was an occasion to celebrate students' creative and scholarly interests and to offer them the possibility to share those interests with a receptive academic and non-academic audience. The event gathered speakers from different levels of studies – ranging from the first year undergraduate students to postgraduate students at the verge of completing their MAs – and an audience that comprised of the invited guests as well as of the students and the staff from various institutes of the Department of Philology.

The presentations delivered by the speakers not only managed to attract the attention of the Festival's guests, but, more importantly, also incited a fruitful intellectual debate. A debate which, hopefully, enriched the Festival's participants – be it by shedding a new light on the well-known works or by deepening one's understanding of newly-encountered problems – and which resulted in the present volume.

The selection opens with **Michał Kisiel's** text on William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* which shows how the poet conceptualized temporality. The subsequent essay by **Ewa Drapa** uses botanical metaphors to explain three different narrative structures in contemporary cinematography, while, in the third chapter, **Anna Maraś** presents her interpretation of the figure of the absent mother in *Maus*, a graphic novel by Art Spiegelman, adopting psychoanalysis as her theoretical framework. In the following essay, **Emilia Tolkaczew** develops an inspiring and convincing line of arguments supporting the

¹ Albert Einstein qtd. in: William Miller, „Death of a Genius,” *Life* (02 May 1955), p. 64, <https://books.google.pl/books?id=dIYEAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=pl#v=onepage&q&f=false> (21 February 2016).

stand for autism as a case of neurodiversity rather than disability. Finally, in the concluding chapter of this volume, **Kamil Krakowiecki** follows suit with a detailed discussion of the difficulties in translating *Apollo et Hyacinthus*, which focuses not only on the meaning of the poem, but also brings to light the craft of a Latin translator.

Alicja Bemben and Agnieszka Podruczna

CHAPTER ONE

BEYOND CLOCKS

TIME AND THEATRICALITY IN WILLIAM BLAKE'S

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL

MICHAŁ KISIEL

Re-thinking the Concept of Linear Time

Regardless of the fact that 1773, the exact year of publication of William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, remains unmentioned in its first editions, the location of this work within a greater historical process ought not to be underestimated. As Northrop Frye argues, this prose poem is founded on "the unrest which has produced the French and American revolutions [and which] indicates that the end of the world might come at any time."¹ Neither the eighteenth-century capitalism, progressing due to the colonial politics and the industrialisation of production, nor the widely affirmed supremacy of reason preserved the fixed unity of the world and the belief of reaching the climax of its development. Both revolutions brutally reminded their contemporaries that there were events whose intensity not only transcended the governing logics and orders of things, but also prohibited a simple return to the previous state. The clashes of the unleashed events with the workings of the Age of Reason, gradually exposing the false utopia of the latter and its predestination to fail, offered Blake a tempting perspective. Undoubtedly, these confrontations find a degree of resemblance in the obsessive motif within Blakean mythology – a struggle between Urizen (reason) and Los (imagination).

¹ Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry. A Study of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 194.

In this paper I will endeavour to interpret the composition of chosen passages from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in the light of the aforementioned possibility of change.² Treating it not as a Faustian yearn for gaining control over such a transition, but rather as a duty calling one to revise his or her perception of time, I will confront Blake's work with Samuel Weber's notion of theatricality and Giorgio Agamben's messianic time. This framework will allow me to read temporariness and time as a powerful means of critique of reason compatible with Blakean theory of contraries.

Theatricality of the Illuminated Books

Aside from straightforward allusions to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the composition of the infernal journey described in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* may intrigue one with its theatricality. This, in turn, as I wish to demonstrate, is threefold. On the first and most superficial level, the subsequent sections of the poem, known as "Memorable Fancies," connote the schemas of scenes in a play. The brief delineation of the setting is followed by the dispute with particular actors, be it prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel, angels, or devils. Thereafter, the scene ends with either an aphorism, for instance "Opposition is true friendship,"³ or a more complex reflection, like the one concerning the Devourer/Prolifer binary. It may be claimed that, according to this reading, the text tempts us to write regularly "Exeunt" and "Aside" on its margins; especially, if one considers Blake's artistic tendency to embody voices in his visions in particular allegorical figures.⁴

The second aspect of theatricality reveals itself after taking a more general look at the poem's composition. Apparently, the whole prose poem is placed within the greater framework founded on the seeming songs of the chorus: the opening

² Obviously, this trope is a recurring motif within Blake's *oeuvre*. For the sake of conciseness, I decided to focus in my paper solely on *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. However, it should be emphasised that every mentioning of Orc – who serves as an incarnation of revolution in Blakean mythology – implies a necessity for a revision of Blake's attitude towards the radical change. This reiterating topic remains a central one in Blake's works such as: *The Four Zoas*, *The French Revolution*, *Europe: A Prophecy*, or *America: A Prophecy*.

³ William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in: *The Selected Poems of William Blake*, ed. Bruce Woodcock (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2000), p. 205.

⁴ Such a reading raises two important questions requiring further analyses. Firstly, it should be investigated whether the eponymous voice of the devil and Blake's one constitute the same voice or not. Secondly, the status of "Proverbs of Hell" should be considered. Undoubtedly, on the layer of illuminated illustrations these are written down on the parchment. However, on the level of the "plot" of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, it can be assumed that they are read, either silently or aloud, by the protagonist. Ultimately, these two indeterminacies do not undermine the hypothesis of theatricality.

“Argument” and concluding “A Song of Liberty.”⁵ In fact, these two pieces differ from the central part not only in terms of their autonomous structure, connoting rather the works gathered in *Songs of Experience* or *Songs of Innocence*, but also in the rhetoric applied. It is common knowledge that the chorus provides a spectator with that which remains undisclosed for the rest of personae. If one bears that in mind, the autonomy of the aforementioned passages does not surprise. Undoubtedly, they both establish the background for the core text with regard to its events and assumptions. However, simultaneously, “Argument” and “A Song of Liberty” distance themselves from it, as they place *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in the context of Blake’s pantheon, whose leading figures of Urizen, Enitharmon, Orc, and Rintrah are not to be mentioned in the rest of the poem, but are perceptible due to their metonymic props.

In his deconstructive reading of theatricality, Samuel Weber argues that it should not necessarily be identified exclusively with drama or theatre, since it rather underlies a broader spectrum of phenomena. Weber elucidates:

When an event or series of events *takes place* without reducing the place it “takes” to a purely neutral site, then that place reveals itself to be a “stage,” and those events become theatrical happenings. As the gerund here suggests [...] such happenings never take place once and for all but are on-going. This in turn suggests that they can be neither contained within the place where they unfold nor entirely separated from it. They can be said, then, in a quite literal sense, to *come to pass*. They take place, which means in a particular place, and yet simultaneously also pass away—not simply disappear but happen somewhere else. Out of the dislocations of its repetitions emerges nothing more or less than *the singularity of the theatrical event*.⁶

Ultimately, theatricality emerges within the process of constant (be)coming. Neither entirely finished nor present, it transforms its setting into a stage mediating among and succumbing to flows and fluctuations of events, which Weber (after

⁵ See: Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 195; William Blake, “A Song of Liberty,” in: *The Selected Poems of William Blake*, ed. Bruce Woodcock (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2000), pp. 225-226. Despite the fact that in Wordsworth edition “A Song of Liberty” is separated from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in the original publication it serves as its closing plate, and it is commonly considered as such.

⁶ Samuel Weber, “Introduction: Theatricality as Medium,” in: *Theatricality as Medium* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), p. 7. Emphasis in the original.

Hélène Cixous) calls the *arrivants*.⁷ In Weberian reading, “coming to pass,” or “*arrivant*,” is deeply indebted to Jacques Derrida’s concept of *iterability* – a non-textual matrix that is capable of inducing an infinite number of repetitions⁸ that turn out to be alterations. What is proposed then is an immanent and mechanic quasi-messianism that encompasses the possibility of coming of the Other and its surprising intrusions, both of which resist any fixed and closed conceptual space.

Interestingly enough, the famous Blakean technique of the “illuminated writing” seems to collide with this theory. His works were not written, but *imprinted* on plates instead.⁹ Therefore, no features of the linear process of writing can be traced, be it corrections, paraphrases and supplementations, or the very moment of putting the last dot on the paper. Furthermore – and this is equally important – the illustrations in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* also disrupt the linear process of reading. Anthony Blunt suggests that they violently represent the liberating, though destructive, potentiality of the energy¹⁰ – the contingent, revolting and physical (since it comes from Body) force which serves as the contrary of reason in Blake’s poem.¹¹ Perversely, Blunt’s observation, aside of emphasising the distractive yet enriching aspect of the illustrations in Blakean vision, may serve as an argument against this collision. Firstly, even though each plate of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is printed at once, and even though it makes all of the preceding artistic practices and procedures untraceable, this fact by no means erases them; nobody claims that the imprint has arrived from out of nowhere. Secondly, Blake’s individual style and the convention of his paintings implement *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* with a certain “intertextuality” with his other works that paradoxically eludes the text itself. Thus, the energy is not repeated, but rather staged (and continuously re-staged), since the employed technique breaches the unity of the work. Precisely, this technique touches upon the undecidable kernel, whose presence prohibits us from reducing Blake’s act to one universal event. What is manifested here is an iterating machine constantly puncturing the poem, making it shake, and suspending it in its everlasting

⁷ Weber, “Introduction: Theatricality as Medium,” p. 29. See also: Samuel Weber, “Falling Out of One’s Role with Art: Samuel Weber on *Benjamin’s-abilities*,” *Parrhesia: A Journal of Critical Philosophy*, No. 2 (2008), p. 12, <http://www.parrhesiajournal.org> (22 January 2015).

⁸ The principle of *iterability* (together with Walter Benjamin’s *interruption*) is the founding concept of Samuel Weber’s theory of theatricality, not only frequently articulated throughout his essays, but also implied in his interpretative strategies.

⁹ For a detailed description of Blake’s process of creating his illuminated texts see: Anthony Blunt, “The First Illuminated Books,” in: *Blake. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Northrop Frye (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), pp. 128-130.

¹⁰ Blunt, “The First Illuminated Books,” p. 133.

¹¹ Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 196. On the very same plate Blake writes: “Energy is Eternal Delight.”

fluctuations. All of the aforementioned aspects, as exposed to this mechanical work, demand to be treated as equally meaningful parts of the poem that constantly challenge the surrounding text with their independent time of reading, drawing, revising and contextualising.

Contraries and the Messianic

Blunt's praise of the essentiality of the energy¹² derives from Blake's important aphorism given in "The Voice of the Devil": "Without contraries there is no progression."¹³ Hence, just as love coexists with hate, and good with evil, so the energy exists side-by-side with reason.¹⁴ By no means, however, do contraries reject or negate basic phenomena. Moreover, there is no place for a symmetrical relation. As Tadeusz Sławek suggests, the contrary may be read as a prefiguration of Derridean "differance."¹⁵ Following this reading, what is at stake, therefore, is the radical opening of the given element, its disjuncture and dislocation. On the one hand, reason constitutes the energy, since contraries are presupposed by pure "difference." Nothing can be said about the energy except for the fact that it is and that it "partakes" in the relation. On the other hand, elusiveness of the energy constantly "defers" the recognition of the prevailing authority of reason. Ultimately, if reason guarantees following our customary codes, logical patterns, practices and preconceptions, then the genuine affirmation of either contraries or energy demands an invention of an adequate reaction. In other words, the "illuminated writing," as well as the dislocating effect it has upon a recipient and a poet, posits itself against reason, acknowledging traditionally understood reading and writing.

Similarly, deferring, which is the inseparable aspect of "differance," is shared by Blake in his suspicious approach towards time. It can be assumed that, for Blake, time belongs to the realm of reason. In the first of the "Proverbs of Hell," contraries dissolve the fixity of chronological time. We read: "In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy."¹⁶ In another proverb, this reversal is even further augmented: "The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock; but of wisdom, no clock can measure."¹⁷ What is vital to remember is the fact that in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* wisdom never amounts to *ratio*, but it is a path of excess and

¹² Blunt, "The First Illuminated Books," p. 132.

¹³ Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 196.

¹⁴ Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 196.

¹⁵ Tadeusz Sławek, *U-bywać. Człowiek, świat, przyjaźń w twórczości Williama Blake'a* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2001), pp. 274-282.

¹⁶ Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 198. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁷ Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 198. Emphasis in the original.

transgression instead.¹⁸ Eventually, wisdom mobilises energy and illumination to revolt against the Newtonian clock time: time understood as a fixed unit within a system, a finite period, or a restriction imposed on the infinite energy. In that sense, time appears to be yet another lock on the closed “doors of perception.”¹⁹

Despite the undisputable prophetic narration employed in Blake’s poem, his perception of time seems to be rather messianic when confronted with the contemporary philosophy. In his significant book, entitled *The Time that Remains*, Giorgio Agamben argues that these two views should not be mistaken. For him, the apocalyptic time is, in fact, the “end of time,” the Last Judgement, or the revelation given to prophets; hence, it can be represented as a point in the future.²⁰ The messianic time, on the contrary, is the “time of end” which assumes a certain duration and which takes place in the evanescent “now.”²¹ In Christianity, it is a period beginning with the resurrection of Jesus Christ and ending with his upcoming parousia. Agamben skilfully translates this notion into a more secular example of Gustave Guillaume’s triadic model of time. Therein, the first two times encompass the separation between what actually happens and the image of this happening in one’s mind. The latter is the time that the mind requires in order to translate events into thoughts, and which is in fact the counterpart of the aforementioned messianic time.²² For Agamben, this time is the time of pure potentiality, or an exception. It is galloping towards its inevitable end, and yet, at the same time, its very duration cannot be governed by any form of regulation or law.²³

¹⁸ This path is realised by a seemingly temper enumeration of the infernal proverbs up to the moment of refusal, whose excess manifests itself through either repetition or rephrase (“*Enough! or Too much!*”). See: Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 200. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁹ See: Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 201.

²⁰ Giorgio Agamben, *The Time that Remains. A Commentary to the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 62-63.

²¹ Agamben, *The Time that Remains*, pp. 63-64, 68-69.

²² Agamben, *The Time that Remains*, pp. 65-66

²³ Agamben, *The Time that Remains*, pp. 95-97. In Agamben’s writings, the messianic is closely related to Carl Schmitt’s state of exception. For Schmitt, such a temporary injunction of a sovereign creates a space for either a radical change or a novelty, unthinkable from the perspective of the governing legal order. Exception avoids regulations and, consequently, suspends the law instead of destroying it. After all, since it is induced by a sovereign’s decision, it is also a juridical means. Eventually, indeterminism of Agamben’s certain notions does not negate their probability or potentiality. The theological aspect of correlating the messianic with the state of exception can easily be spotted in St. Paul’s famous declaration from the part of his *oeuvre* that is not covered in *The Time that Remains*. We read in KJV, Galatians 3:28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” Herein, the sovereign’s

In Blake's universe, therefore, the Urizenic time can encounter its contrary in the messianic time – that is, the unleashed and irreducible time. One may collate this with Blake's hostility for Swedenborg's writings. Novelty is indeed new insofar as it stems from exception – something that remains unpredictable up to its very advent. Since Swedenborg's teachings belong to the order of angels, *ratio* and law, they seem to be necessarily presupposed and limited. Consequently, Swedenborg is only capable of holding "a candle in sunshine"²⁴ and of rephrasing. The true novelty originates in the infernal reading, or the logic of contraries which posits impossibility and excess as the achievable means. Time (or times) is constantly evoked against the recurring danger of its confinement by reason. In fact, the illuminated writing and reading is consistent with the Weberian logic of theatricality. Emphasis on mediation dismantles one's safe position and unified time, and thus gives in to the activity of the stage. Ultimately, such a focus on the time gap, energy or potentiality provides one with an apparatus of a constant critique of reason, with its subjugating demands regarding the unity of time.

Roar of Rintrah, Whimper of Orc

One should note that the affirmation of the break within the linearity of time is supported by Blake's illustrations. On the second page of "Argument," a naked human shrouded in flames is depicted. We read in the poem: "Rintrah roars, and shakes his fires in the burden'd air;/Hungry clouds swag on the deep."²⁵ In Blakean mythology, Rintrah is the embodiment of the "just wrath."²⁶ As the emissary of transition, he observes and threatens the idyllic image of the first page. In "A Song of Liberty," two other significant fiery figures are introduced. At the very end of the core text, prophet Elijah rises from the flames "consuming" an angel. As Damon notes, Elijah is a prophet with a direct connection to God, yet concurrently, in the Blakean universe, he is identified as Los, the poetic imagination. The second figure is "the son of fire" born by "[t]he Eternal Female" (Enitharmon).²⁷ Therefore, he is Orc, an incarnation of the revolutionary change, who defeats the King (Urizen) and "stamps [his] [...] stony law."²⁸ As the text clarifies the very event, distanced Rintrah is replaced firstly with Los and later with Orc. On the one

arbitrary decision suspends the validity of identities and statuses recognised by the state and the law in favour of the unity in Christ.

²⁴ Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 205.

²⁵ Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, p. 195.

²⁶ Samuel Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary. The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake*, ed. Morris Eaves (Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press, 2013), section "R," kindle file.

²⁷ Blake, "A Song of Liberty," p. 225.

²⁸ Blake, "A Song of Liberty," p. 226.

hand, the upcoming passage can be sensed from the very beginning of the prose poem. On the other, the precise moment of a shift from one figure to another – from the anticipation to the promise of Blakean aesthetics and to the realisation of the break – lacks any semantic determination. All in all, the mediation understood as an event stages the proper movement, pronouncing the commencement of the revolution. Poetic imagination, present in technique, logic of the contraries, proverbs of hell, and so forth, prepares a ground for the actual break to occur: the break implied by “A Song of Liberty,” but one which the sole text hesitates to name directly. Such a break manifests itself as a literal rupture separating the textual and visual content, but simultaneously it prevents the poem from gaining its reasonable unity in favour of the energetic fluctuations and *iterable* stagings.

In the introduction to *Theatricality as Medium*, Samuel Weber defines the eponymous relation through the metaphor of “irreducible opacity.”²⁹ In his brief reading of Plato’s allegory of the cave, he demonstrates how Plato frequently condemns the spectacle and at the same time raises various questions concerning its status. For Weber, theatricality is inscribed in Plato’s allegory on the level of the medium, because it “marks the spot where the spot reveals itself to be an ineradicable macula, stigma, or stain that cannot be cleansed or otherwise rendered transparent, diaphanous.”³⁰ Plato’s narrative strategies are inevitably to confront with this “spot,” which they unwillingly produce. As I tried to show, Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* operates on a similar, yet inversed, basis. Firstly, Blake identifies and describes the principles of reason, its oppressive strategies and dependence on the law, and thereafter proposes its revolting contraries. Secondly, he infects the former Urizenic plane with the latter domain of either Los or Orc in a manner that transcends the rules of narration and the genre; through the diverse voices summoned, encounters staged and confrontation with the illuminated illustrations, Blake stains his own work with the aforementioned opaque maculae which are to prohibit law from gaining its legitimate transparency.

Theatrical reading of William Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* allows one to dissolve its structure into several parallel strata of timelines and temporalities. Weber’s and Agamben’s theories supplement Blake’s resistance to the rational limitations with the elusive space of mediation, which he touches upon through his complex aesthetics and printing technique. In such a reading, Blake appears to be a pre-deconstructionist, revolting against the “oppressive law” by means of a re-definition of time and duration. These, in turn, after cleansing, proclaim that “everything that lives is Holy,”³¹ since the limiting and totalising aspirations of the law have been suspended. Going beyond clocks allows one to

²⁹ Weber, “Introduction: Theatricality as Medium,” pp 6-7.

³⁰ Weber, “Introduction: Theatricality as Medium,” p. 7.

³¹ Blake, “A Song of Liberty,” p. 226.

enter the space of the radical break, or change, in which Rintrah's every apocalyptic roar accompanies the upcoming whimper of Orc.

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Summary:

The purpose of this paper is to analyse and interpret the tropes of time and temporality in William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* with regard to its theatrical dimension. Following the theories proposed by Samuel Weber and

Giorgio Agamben, I argue that Blake not only openly rebels against the “clock time,” which may be understood as yet another manifestation of Urizen, but also strives for producing its contraries, transcending the textual aspect of his poem. Blake’s illuminated writings therefore withdraw from mere representation and become a powerful medium of theatrical staging. Bearing in mind that demonic Urizen is challenged by the revolutionary potential of Orc and the unlimited artistic creation represented by Los, setting the medium of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* against the linear perception of time may induce refreshing means capable of threatening the supremacy of reason. This reading, employing such notions as differance, the messianic time and theatricality understood as a medium, endeavours to assess the potential of the aforementioned means and to propose their possible interpretation.

Streszczenie:

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest analiza i interpretacja tropów czasowości w *Zaślubinach Nieba i Piekła* Williama Blake’a ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem teatralnej warstwy tego poematu. Podążając śladami Samuela Webera oraz Giorgio Agambena, autor stara się udowodnić, że Blake nie tylko otwarcie buntuje się przeciwko czasowi zegarowemu, który może być rozumiany jako jedna z wielu domen Urizena, ale także dąży do wytworzenia jego przeciwieństwa, przekraczając tekstualną warstwę swojego utworu. Iluminacje Blake’a odstępują zatem od bycia narzędziem reprezentacji na rzecz stania się medium teatralnego odgrywania wydarzeń na deskach swoich własnych scen. Mając na uwadze, że demonicznemu Urizenowi pisane jest mierzyć się z rewolucyjnym potencjałem symbolizowanym przez Orka oraz reprezentowaną przez Losa nieograniczoną artystyczną kreatywnością, przeciwstawienie medium *Zaślubin Nieba i Piekła* linearnej percepcji czasu może owocować odświeżającymi metodami zdolnymi zagrozić uprzywilejowanej pozycji rozumu. W swoim czytaniu, poprzez odwoływanie się do takich pojęć jak *różnia*, czas mesjański czy teatralność rozumiana, jako medium, autor stara się zbadać potencjał wyżej wspomnianych metod oraz zaproponować ich możliwą interpretację.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FILM AND BOTANICAL STRUCTURES

THE CINEMATOGRAPHY IN THE LIGHT OF

RHIZOMATICS

EWA DRAPA

In the collaboration *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari introduced three concepts to describe reality and its cultural representations across ages. Drawing inspiration from the natural world, they named the proposed notions: a tree-root, a fascicular root (also referred to as a radicle-system) and, lastly, a rhizome. While the three theorems were ascribed to classical, modernist, and post-modernist culture, accordingly,¹ it should be emphasized that by no means do the scholars claim that tree-root and fascicular root structures have disappeared from contemporary conventions. On the contrary, the tree-root structure is believed to be characteristic to the wholesome Western culture. In this paper, I intend to demonstrate that not only the tree-root, but all three botany-inspired theorems find their representation in the contemporary Western popular culture, namely in cinematography. In the course of my analysis I shall determine the tree-root features of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy,² the fascicular elements of *The Hobbit* trilogy,³ and finally address a disparate

¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 5.

² *The Lord of the Rings*, dir. Peter Jackson. New Line, 2001-2003. Film.

³ *The Hobbit*, dir. Peter Jackson. New Line, 2012-2014. Film.

cinematic genre – the polychronic film⁴ – and outline the rhizomaticity of *Cloud Atlas*.⁵

The Lord of the Rings: a pivotal tree-root

The Deleuzian concept of the tree-root is considered a singular, highly hierarchical system. Its existence rests upon the taproot, whose destruction leads to the collapse of the whole formation. At the foundation of the structure lies a single seed, which is sown in order to become the taproot and serve as the unifying pivot around which the organism expands. The expansion occurs by means of filiation, as the consecutive branches are always subordinate to the root they stem from. The growth, however elaborate, is reducible and the process itself is subjected to the “binary logic of dichotomy.”⁶ A tree-root structure can only expand by division into two, and only two, opposing elements.⁷ In this way, each newly created branch exists in opposition to the other one created in the same process. Thus, the dichotomized pair is reducible back to the initial unity it stems from, and, due to this, cannot be viewed as a genuine multiplicity but should be regarded merely as “arborescent pseudomultiplicity,”⁸ comparable to Lyotard’s “totalizing narrative.”⁹

Peter Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy poses itself as an example of a tree-root production: centralized around a singular pivot, and based on a series of dichotomies which are ultimately reduced. The plot stems from and rests upon Frodo’s quest to destroy the ill-fated ring and if this taproot were removed, the story would immediately collapse. Furthermore, all of the subplots are conditioned by the pivot of the ring, concerned either with the participants of Frodo’s quest, the encounters made on the road, or the villain whose main motivation is the retrieval of the artefact. The act of the forging of the ring is a seed which evolves into a complex, yet reducible structure. From the very beginning, the plot is goal-oriented and as soon as the goal (i.e. the destruction of the ring) is reached, the apparent complexity of the story disappears.

⁴ Term adapted from: Allan Cameron, *Modular Narratives in Contemporary Cinema* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 1.

⁵ *Cloud Atlas*, dir. Tom Tykwer, Andy Wachowski, Lana Wachowski. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2012. Film.

⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 5.

⁷ The researchers do note that in this respect the proposed model differs from the actual tree or root which can, after all, ramify directly into three or more stems, indicating that, ironically, Classical Western culture, oriented at the imitation of nature is not, in fact, its accurate reproduction.

⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 8.

⁹ Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 24.

Additionally, the constituents of the narrative are placed in oppositions. Dyrk Ashton proposes to perceive Sméagol as the opposing figure for the story's protagonist, Frodo.¹⁰ This trend can be extended, as both Sméagol and Frodo possess their alter-egos: presented, respectively, by the means of Sméagol's split personality, and Frodo's breakdown above the lava pool inside Mount Doom. A similar dichotomy can be found in the two leading wizards, i.e. Gandalf being negated by Saruman, whereas the fellowship of the ring finds its opposition in the company of the Nazgûl. Finally, seemingly disparate fractions dwelling in the Middle Earth are united (or, should we say, unified) in the final battle against the army of Mordor (in which moment one is inclined to view Aragorn as the opposition for Sauron). Thus, the previously indicated dichotomies are reduced to a singular opposition of good and evil, which rests upon the aforementioned pivotal ring of power, collapsing upon its destruction.

The Hobbit – fascicular topography

The main distinguishable feature of the second model proposed by Deleuze and Guattari – the radicle-system – is the disappearance of the taproot. The act of elimination of the unifying, overriding pivot is believed to liberate the structure's secondary roots, stimulating their limitless expansion. As a result, the structure of secondary roots is circular, rather than linear, yet, always pointing towards the aborted pivot. Hence, the liberation is not complete and it is possible to indicate the taproot's past or future existence and reconstruct the centralizing element. Simultaneously, the individual radicles are believed to forge a system of fluid transitions, resulting in the emergence of an additional, totalizing dimension.

The described features can be found in *The Hobbit* trilogy, as, contrary to John R. R. Tolkien's novel, the film adaptation is composed out of several plotlines which, rather than stemming from one another, seem to override their predecessors. Although the quest to retrieve the Lonely Mountain initially appears central, its completion does not result in the denouement of the narrative; neither does the demise of the initial villain, Smaug, signify the culmination of the trilogy.¹¹ Instead of resting on a singular goal, indicated by a taproot, consecutive elements substitute the preceding ones: the retrieval of the Lonely Mountain is replaced with the defence of the Lonely Mountain, the search for the Arkenstone with the curse of the Arkenstone, the struggle against Smaug with the battle against humans, and, subsequently, with the battle of the five armies. Yet, the pivot of the narrative seems to be obstructed rather than non-existent. The dwarves are preoccupied with the lost kingdom built inside the Lonely Mountain, where both the villainous

¹⁰ Dyrk Ashton, "Feeling Time: Deleuze's Time Image and Aesthetic Effect," in: *Rhizomes* Vol. 16 (2008), <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue16/ashton/> (29 Sep. 2015).

¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 6.

dragon and the mystical jewel can be found. The skirmish between the dwarves and humans is concerned with the treasure stored in the dwarves' hall. Similarly, the five armies, although motivated by distinguished agendas, are all centred around the Lonely Mountain, which can thus be reconstructed as the topographical and narrative centre of the film.¹²

***Cloud Atlas* – a rhizome of transgressions**

The most elaborate construct presented by Deleuze and Guattari is the rhizome, which botany defines as a “horizontal underground plant stem capable of producing the shoot and root systems of a new plant.”¹³ From this definition, we can derive two main characteristics of the rhizome: one being the lack of any centralizing element (as any given fragment of the organism possesses an identical reproductive potential), and the other – its irreducible multiplicity (as new offshoots are not governed by filiation and cannot be reduced to a singular pivot). The formation is claimed to be akin to a map:¹⁴ spatial rather than linear, and incorporating a multitude of interconnected, internally complex elements for which the two scholars employ the term “plateau.”¹⁵ The borders of the plateaus are constantly trespassed by their constituents, marking “lines of flight,”¹⁶ which can be seen as bridges between the plateaus. Meanwhile, any element can undergo a “rupture”¹⁷ without damaging the overall integrity of the structure (as opposed to the previous formations, where eradicating the taproot – the ring or the Lonely Mountain in our examples – would render the narratives nonexistent). The processes of spontaneous, unpredictable expansions and ruptures account for the dynamic character of the rhizome, which is claimed to be always under development, always “becoming,”¹⁸ but never reaching a final form, its signification deferred *ad infinitum*.

¹² An element which seemingly disproves the presented reading is the plotline related to the necromancer (i.e. Sauron). Yet, as indicated in *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies*, the Lonely Mountain is desired by Sauron for its strategic position. What is more, the connection of Sauron to the ring found by Bilbo forms a connection between the fascicular *Hobbit* trilogy and the tree-root *Lord of the Rings*. Considering the ring appearing in *The Hobbit* as the seed from which *The Lord of the Rings* grows (as was actually the case in Tolkien's original novels) may prove worthy of a further analysis.

¹³ “Rhizome,” *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/501483/rhizome> (10 January 2015).

¹⁴ Deleuze, Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 12.

¹⁵ Deleuze, Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 21.

¹⁶ Deleuze, Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 9.

¹⁷ Deleuze, Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 16.

¹⁸ Deleuze, Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 10.

The described features of the rhizome can be observed in the final object of our analysis: the polychronic film *Cloud Atlas*. The film consists of six mostly autonomous plotlines, each of them set in a different time and space. None of them can be argued as central, since removing a single plateau would not eradicate the other five,¹⁹ nor can they be considered reproductions as each plotline tells a distinctive story and belongs to a disparate genre, including a travel journal, a sentimental epistolary tale, a mystery, a pastiche, an anti-utopia and, finally, a post apocalypse. The six plateaus are also internally complex and include a multitude of voices and several subplots (e.g. the sentimental tale of the English composer Robert Frobisher introduces a Jewish character to indicate anti-Semitism in the pre-World War II Germany). Moreover, by means of distorted chronology within the plotlines as well as their intertwining in the overall structure, the narrative retains manifold entries, observable already in the film's introductory sequence, which presents the prologue to "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing,"²⁰ the middle of "Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery" and "An Orison of Sonmi~451," the ending of "Letters from Zedelghem," and the epilogue for "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish" and "Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After." The overall result produces a complex map-like construct with several autonomous realms, a multitude of entries and endless potentiality for extensions in any given direction.

Nevertheless, the autonomy of the plateaus is violated by easily retraceable connections. Not only do actors reappear in different roles across the plotlines, but in one case an actual character – Sixsmith – crosses the boundaries of the tale he belongs to and becomes the initiator of the plot of another story. Even more noticeably, main characters of consecutive stories are influenced by their predecessors by the means of literature – be it a published book, personal letters, or a cinematic production which a preceding character created or was included in. Meanwhile, "Letters from Zedelghem," present a particular example of achronological connection: in the year 1936, Vyvyan, an aged composer, describes a vision he had, which the viewer immediately recognizes as the reality of

¹⁹ That being said, doing so would possibly lead to distortions, due to the fact that the plateaus are interconnected, as will be shown in the course of this analysis. In some cases, removing a tale may erase another, e.g. removing "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish" could prevent Sonmi's orison, which would, in turn, eradicate the reality of "Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After." Yet, never will removing a single plateau lead to the collapse of the entire rhizome (e.g. "Letters from Zedelghem" do not condition "An Orison of Sonmi~451," even though the stories do share a connection).

²⁰ Titles of the narratives constituting the film *Cloud Atlas* were adapted from David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas* (London: Sceptre, 2004), kindle file.

“An Orison of Sonmi~451” – a story taking place in the year 2144.²¹ Similarly, numerous cases of overlying narration also elude chronology, e.g. as Sonmi comments on the death of her beloved, Hae-Joo:

SONMI: I believe this is only a door. When it closes, another opens.
If I cared to imagine heaven, I would imagine it through hope. And
behind it, I will find him there, waiting for me.

the viewer is presented with the reunion of Adam Ewing with his wife (incidentally, portrayed by the same pair of actors as Sonmi and Hae-Joo), taking place in the year 1849. Simultaneously, the connections are balanced with ruptures, observable whenever a scene switches to another without a fluid transition, or a connection is interrupted (as is the case with the missing half of the copy of “The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing” Frobisher is reading, or when similar actions performed on different plateaus in intertwined scenes produce disparaging results).

The constantly forming connections and discontinuations facilitate the dynamicity of *Cloud Atlas*. As Robert Frobisher reads “The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing,” he relates to the book’s protagonist, and therefore the fact that he is unable to complete the reading adds to his depressive mood – he considers his own situation as hopeless as Ewing’s (unaware of the journal’s happy ending) and, ultimately, commits suicide. Even more prominent is the influence of “The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish” onto Sonmi, who, due to a brief reference made by Cavendish, researches the works of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn,²² which, to a large extent, inspire her own manifesto. What is more, Sonmi’s orison, written down by the Archivist working for the establishment, lies at the foundations of the religious beliefs of Zachry’s tribe in “Sloosha’s Crossin’ an’ Ev’rythin’ After.” The fact that what was initially an act of rebellion (Sonmi’s manifesto) turned into the basis of a tradition, whereas a representative of the established order (the Archivist) became a propagator of rebellion, allows us to observe a transformation of a “line of flight” (here seen as the transgression of a fixed order) into a “segmentary line”²³ (demarcation of the order) and vice versa. As a result, both “segmentary lines” and “lines of flight” transform themselves and each other, and, because of that, they

²¹ Similarly, the comet birthmark shared by the six protagonists is received by Sonmi as a scar. The theme of reincarnation requires an in-depth analysis, but were we to assume that the protagonists do, in fact, share the same soul, the appearance of the comet birthmark/scar should be considered a distortion in chronology.

²² It may be found interesting how this reference allows the rhizome of *Cloud Atlas* to grow beyond the scope of the film, and form connections to the actual literary and cultural legacy of mankind.

²³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 9.

cannot be perceived in terms of reducible dichotomy, but rather as a dynamic process of endless development within the rhizome.

In all three cases, structure projects itself upon the content of the film. The binary oppositions stemming from the taproot in *The Lord of the Rings* tell the story of a battle between good and evil. The Lonely Mountain, as a place of strategic importance, is targeted by different fractions for different purposes, which allows us to consider it a polyphony in terms of motivations, but subordinate to a single theme. Finally, the dynamically transforming network of co-influence in *Cloud Atlas* translates itself into a tale of infinite transgressions of the pre-established boundaries and unceasing transformations of the world order.

As all three films are products of contemporary culture, it must be admitted that postmodernism embraces the divergence of structures, which, while possibly representing tree-roots and radicle-systems (just as individual tales of *Cloud Atlas* include local pivots, dichotomies and circularities), together form a rhizomatic reality. While Deleuze and Guattari claim the rhizome to be “asignifying,”²⁴ I propose to consider it to be the signifier of the dynamical, ever-developing, “becoming” reality of the postmodern world.

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²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 11.

Tykwer, Tom, Andy Wachowski and Lana Wachowski, dir. *Cloud Atlas*. Warner Bros. Pictures, 2012.

Summary:

The paper constitutes narratological film analysis, juxtaposing chosen examples of contemporary cinematic narration with three concepts proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. The tree-root structure is exemplified with Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, as rests upon a singular pivot and abounding in dichotomies. Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit* trilogy, on the other hand, is viewed as the fascicular root with its circular structure and the substitution of consecutive elements. The Wachowskis and Tykwen's polichronic film *Cloud Atlas* is presented as a rhizome, considering its six constituent narratives as "plateaus," which engage in dynamic relations of constant reshaping and co-influence. Finally, a correlation is drawn between the narrative structures of the three films and their content, while also emphasizing the simultaneous presence of the three Deleuzian theorems in contemporary film narration.

Streszczenie:

Artykuł stanowi analizę narratologiczną filmu, która ma na celu zestawienie współczesnej narracji filmowej z trzema koncepcjami zaproponowanymi przez Gillesa Deleuze'a i Félix'a Guattariego w książce *Tysiąc plateau*. Struktura drzewa została zobrazowana przy użyciu trylogii *Władca pierścieni* Petera Jacksona, jako że opiera się ona na pojedynczej osi oraz obfituje w dychotomie. Z kolei trylogia *Hobbit* Petera Jacksona jest rozpatrywana w charakterze korzenia wiązkowego, charakteryzującego się strukturą kolistą i substytucją kolejnych elementów. Film polichroniczny Wachowskich i Tykwena *Atlas chmur* zaprezentowano jako kłącze, postrzegając sześć składających się nań opowieści jako „plateau”, które wchodzą ze sobą w dynamiczne relacje ciągłych przekształceń i współoddziaływań. W podsumowaniu wskazano na korelację między strukturami narracji trzech filmów a ich treścią, a jednocześnie podkreślono obecność wszystkich trzech konceptów Deleuze'a we współczesnej narracji filmowej.

CHAPTER THREE

REVERBERATING SILENCE

THE MOTHER'S HAUNTING PRESENCE IN *MAUS*

ANNA MARAŚ

Reverberating Silence

Maus is a graphic novel by Art Spiegelman depicting the story and war experiences of his father, Vladek – a Holocaust survivor. In the book, the Germans are portrayed as cats, the Jews as mice and the Poles as pigs. The piece is based on talks between the son and his father, and may be perceived as a form of testimony. Yet we ought to note that it is one-sided. Spiegelman's mother, Anja, committed suicide in 1968, so we are somewhat deprived of her perspective. Still, she appears to be a frame and a recurring motif of *Maus*. This uncanny figure reappears throughout the text, provoking numerous questions, yet without giving any answer. As James E. Young notes,

Spiegelman does not attempt to retell Anja's story at all, but leaves it known only by its absence; he is an accomplice to the usurpation of his dead mother's voice [...]. As a void at the heart of *Maus*, the mother's lost story may be *Maus*'s negative center of gravity, the invisible planet around which both the father's telling and Spiegelman's recovery of it revolve.¹

Indeed, by no means is Anja's narrative possible to be retrieved and thus it becomes appropriated by her husband, Vladek, and the author himself, who undertakes the challenge of writing it down. The woman's voice remains unheard,

¹ James E. Young, "The Holocaust as Vicarious Past: Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and the Afterimages of History," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1998), p. 686.

even though it obviously “haunts the story,”² as Marianne Hirsch suggests. Hence, it is not without reason that Anja is perceived as a curious trope worth academic exploration.³ This phantom, usually seen through the prism of absence,⁴ will be the main focus of this paper.

My aim is to demonstrate that the representation of Art Spiegelman’s mother in *Maus*⁵ shares certain attributes of trauma, as conceptualised in the psychoanalytical discourse, and thus she becomes a *sui generis* embodiment of trauma; subsequently, I will endeavour to show that even though this figure is a profoundly disquieting one for the artist, their convoluted relationship should by no means be perceived only in negative terms, since it also conveys certain potentially enhancing traces. In order to prove my point, I will begin with an examination of chosen constituents of trauma in the theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, with regard to *Maus*. Then, I will proceed to the implications and potentialities of such a wounding event, or encounter, to be found in Marianne Hirsch’s notion of *postmemory*. It is worth stressing that Hirsch analyses *Maus* in relation to that concept, yet she focuses on different aspects of this work, for example on the motif of photography, which, as she claims, has laid the foundations for her

² Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 1997), p. 34.

³ See, for instance, Andrea Lieber, “Mother of all Memory: The Loss of Mother and the Search for Self in Writing by American Children of Holocaust Survivors,” *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2005), pp. 142-151, wherein the author undertakes issues such as the absence of the mother, her problem with nurturing and the insuperable distance she creates, among others, with regard to Anja Spiegelman’s figure. Another interesting issue is presented in: Michael E. Staub, “The Shoah Goes on and on: Remembrance and Representation in Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*,” *MELUS*, Vol. 20, No. 3, (1995), pp. 33-46, where the author explores the complicated relationship of both the son and the father with Anja, touching upon the questions of, *inter alia*, responsibility and guilt.

⁴ Such an approach can be spotted in the above quote from James E. Young. Another example is Elise Polkinghorne, who writes: “*Maus* is the narrative of the presence of Anja’s absence.” Elise Polkinghorne, “(Re)Building, (Re)Creating and (Re)Imagining: Postmemory Representations of Family Through the Eyes of Rafael Goldchain and Art Spiegelman,” *The Arbutus Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2013), p. 136. However, in this place let us refer to Dominick LaCapra’s conceptualisation of *loss* and *absence*. He emphasises that these two – seemingly similar – notions ought not to be treated and used recklessly, since loss is connected to individual, historical experience, while absence is rather a universal condition escaping temporality. He links these two notions to historical and structural trauma, respectively. See: Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 46-51, 78-82.

⁵ I shall refer to both volumes of *Maus*, to be found in: Art Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

considerations.⁶ The aspiration of this paper is to provide a complementary perspective on the issue.

Incomprehensible Phantom

Firstly, I shall enquire how the notion of trauma is constructed in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud conceptualises such a psychic wound as an abrupt stimulus, whose origin lies outside the subject and which causes a rupture, hence destabilising the subject entirely.⁷ Since “the pleasure principle is for the moment put out of action,” overcoming the pressure becomes an unachievable goal; one is “flooded with large amounts of stimulus,” which cannot be released later.⁸ As a result, trauma can by no means be fully comprehended or symbolised. This issue is further developed by Jacques Lacan, who recognises the disruptive quality of the order of the real: a notion closely linked to Freudian concept of psychic reality.⁹ The real is defined by Sean Homer as “indivisible brute materiality that exists prior to symbolization”¹⁰ and evades the orders of the symbolic and the imaginary; due to that, the real becomes fundamentally traumatic. Indeed, Lacan goes as far as to argue that this concept is trauma *per se*,¹¹ impossible to be represented and, consequently, cognised.¹² Thus, since the encounter with the real cannot be symbolised, it also cannot be shared. Even though it re-emerges as a repetition, it remains a deeply subjective, individual event; in Lacan’s *Weltanschauung*, trauma is conceptualised as unavailable to others, as well as to the subject affected by it. In the light of these remarks, we may come to a conclusion that the most prominent attributes ascribed to trauma are its irrepresentability, incomprehensibility and internality. Now, let us enquire how it corresponds to the portrayal of the mother of Art Spiegelman in *Maus*.

One of the most noticeable things that grasp the reader’s attention throughout the book, when the figure of Anja Spiegelman is concerned, is the fact that she is deprived of her own voice. To be more precise, since she cannot speak for herself,

⁶ Marianne Hirsch, “Introduction,” in: *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 13.

⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (Seattle: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2010), p. 46.

⁸ Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, p. 46.

⁹ Samuel Weber, *Return to Freud: Jacques Lacan’s Dislocation of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Michael Levine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 106.

¹⁰ Sean Homer, *Jacques Lacan* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 82.

¹¹ See: Jacques Lacan, “Tuché and Automaton,” in: *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), pp. 53-64.

¹² Weber, *Return to Freud*, p. 106.

Vladek assumes her role. Yet, he does not restrict himself to a mere reconstruction of their dialogues and life events they shared. While Artie desires to retrieve her perspective on their history, Vladek appropriates her experiences entirely, claiming: “I can tell you... She went through the same what me: *terrible!*”¹³ Moreover, during the conversation, and under pressure from the son, he reluctantly admits that he burned her diaries, despite Anja’s hope that they would be given to Artie one day.¹⁴ As we can see, Anja Spiegelman is unspeakable in an extremely literal sense of the word – she is unable to speak, that is, to articulate her experiences. Even though she is not completely irrepresentable, her representation appears to be empty; due to her husband’s actions, she cannot enter the realm of the symbolic and, therefore, to a certain degree her testimony remains not so much inauthentic as unreachable.

As a result of her silence, she cannot be properly understood by her son, despite all his efforts and wishes to change it. However, the origin of this lack of communication is by no means her suicide; evidently, the issue reaches the times before this dramatic event. It is especially visible in “Prisoner on the Hell Planet: A Case History,” a work from 1972 included in *Maus, Volume I*. Therein, we witness Art Spiegelman in an Auschwitz prisoner uniform, trying to deal with his mother’s suicide, feeling of being overwhelmed and sense of guilt mixed with anger over what happened to Anja. He reminds himself of their last meeting; he writes, “I turned away, resentful of the way she tightened the umbilical cord.”¹⁵ Therefore, he puts the blame for his personal failures on her attitude. After her death, however, he starts feeling the burden of responsibility, which is devastating for him. Consequently, throughout this work the reader can sense a deeply-grounded lack of understanding, which has its beginning before Anja’s decease, yet continues after it; we may say that it even gains on strength. It is because of the belief that he may find answers in his mother’s diaries that he reacts emotionally when his father admits he destroyed them. She – and the reason behind her suicide – is to remain inconceivable for Artie.

The unspeakability and unintelligibility of Anja Spiegelman are linked to the question of mediation. In fact, she is mediated by both her husband and her son. Since she is somewhat appropriated by them, she becomes a profoundly subjective and individual experience. She becomes an internal event for Art Spiegelman,

¹³ Spiegelman, *Maus, Volume I*, p. 160. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁴ Spiegelman, *Maus, Volume I*, p. 161. Michael E. Staub provides us with an insightful interpretation of the possible motives behind Vladek’s act of destroying Anja’s testimony. He writes as follows: “Perhaps Vladek burns Anja’s diaries after her suicide to *prevent* being freed from this responsibility [...]. However, burning the diaries also permits him to replace the closed record left by his wife with his own subjectivity.” Staub, “The Shoah Goes on and on,” p. 37. Emphasis in the original.

¹⁵ Spiegelman, *Maus, Volume I*, p. 105.

which remains inaccessible, puzzling and disturbing, even when it resurfaces. This element, as well as the previously interpreted ones, can be viewed as interlacing with the psychoanalytical understanding of trauma, provided at the beginning of this section. We can see that the mother figure in *Maus* – mediated, impenetrable, unutterable – becomes an incarnation of trauma in itself.

Wounding Proximity

Undoubtedly, what we can witness in *Maus* is Spiegelman's struggle to come to terms with his loss. It may be recognised as a form of *the work of mourning* – a strategy described by Eric Santner, premised upon Freudian *Trauerarbeit*.¹⁶ It is a mechanism of managing trauma, based on its symbolic repetition in a form that can be handled by the subject.¹⁷ An example of it is the *fort/da* game: the recurring gesture of performing departure of the mother, interpreted by Freud as an endeavour to accept the lack.¹⁸ Santner claims that such a repetitive act “serves as the *poison that cures*.”¹⁹ We can therefore conclude that even though this ritual is painful and hazardous, at the same time it has a therapeutic aspect. Thus, the son's engagement into the *fort/da* game may be potentially enhancing. We shall see now what happens when we collate it with Marianne Hirsch's concept of *postmemory*.

Hirsch, like Art Spiegelman, is a second generation Holocaust survivor; such an affiliation largely affects her psychoanalytically-grounded theory, whose main contributions to the classical approaches are the elements of proximity and transmission. She argues that even though the children of survivors of the *Shoah* did not witness it directly, the event has a powerful influence on them. Due to that, she conceptualises the notion of *postmemory*, which:

describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they “remember” only by

¹⁶ The notion of *Trauerarbeit* is firstly elaborated on in “Mourning and Melancholia.” See: Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” in: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Volume XIV*, ed. and trans. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1957), pp. 243-258.

¹⁷ Eric L. Santner, “History Beyond the Pleasure Principle: Some Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma,” in: *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the Final Solution*, ed. Saul Friedländer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 144.

¹⁸ Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, p. 17.

¹⁹ Santner, “History Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” p. 146. Emphasis mine.

means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up.²⁰

Thus, postmemory ought not to be understood as memory in its classical connotation, but rather as a framework of transmission and connection. Constant closeness to the suffering of others leads to the situation in which the subjects produce “memories in their own right,” grounded upon “imaginative investment, projection, and creation.”²¹ Therefore, postmemory is perceived both as a structure of communication between the generations and as the aftermath of such a transmission.

As we can see, in Hirsch’s theory implications of the traumatic encounter are not entirely negative, for it is related to such issues as proximity and involvement; moreover, it can seek its release in creative activities, for instance creating pieces of art or writing, which may become means of working through trauma.²² Yet, it is worth emphasizing that the objective of the repetitive staging of a traumatic event is not merely the potential healing, which allows Santner to assume that the *fort/da* is “a homeopathic procedure.”²³ Hirsch maintains that “repetition connects the second generation to the first, in its capacity to produce rather than screen the effect of trauma.”²⁴ Hence, what is at stake is rather to reach a level of empathy close to identification, yet not equal to it, since the experience of the *Shoah* survivors is inaccessible to their children. We may claim that Art Spiegelman’s *fort/da* game witnessed in *Maus* aims at not only handling the trauma of his lost mother, but also facing it. Even though such an attempt seems doomed from the very beginning, it simultaneously becomes enhancing, as he ceaselessly strives to enter a *sui generis* relationship with the inconceivable phantom of Anja Spiegelman.

Umbilical (Dis)cord

In this paper I attempted to prove that the figure of Anja Spiegelman portrayed in *Maus* incarnates several attributes of trauma coined by psychoanalysis. As we can observe, the mother of Art Spiegelman is dispossessed of an opportunity to articulate herself and her experiences; due to her decease and Vladek’s impulsive reaction, her testimony is never to be heard. Since she is inexpressible, she also remains inconceivable and obscure to her son, who unsuccessfully searches for the

²⁰ Marianne Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” *Poetics Today*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2008), p. 106.

²¹ Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory,” p. 107.

²² Marianne Hirsch, “Surviving Images,” in: *The Generation of Postmemory*, p. 120.

²³ Santner, “History Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” p. 146.

²⁴ Hirsch, “Surviving Images,” p. 108.

means to understand her. One of the reasons behind the hopelessness of such a pursuit is the fact that Anja Spiegelman is subject to irredeemable mediation by both her son and Vladek, who tries to appropriate her voice completely. These three elements of the depiction of Anja happen to resemble the distinguishing features of a psychic wound in Freudian and Lacanian systems, which enables us to draw a conclusion that in this work the mother is a *sui generis* representation of the irrepresentable; she indeed is trauma *per se*. Furthermore, when we look at Art Spiegelman's struggle to reach his mother through the prisms of the *fort/da* game and postmemory, we may go as far as to claim that his endeavours open a space for affinity. By facing the traumatising spectre of his late mother, he once more becomes entangled in the umbilical cord, despite the precariousness of this act.

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Summary:

Maus – a graphic novel by Art Spiegelman depicting the story of his father, a Holocaust survivor, and based on their conversations – may be perceived as a one-sided form of testimony. Spiegelman's mother, Anja, committed suicide in 1968, so we are somewhat deprived of her perspective. Still, she appears to be a frame and a recurring motif of the novel. This uncanny phantom-like figure, provoking numerous questions, yet without giving any answer, is the main focus of my paper. My aim is to demonstrate that the representation of the mother in *Maus* shares certain attributes of trauma, as conceptualised in the psychoanalytical discourse, and thus she becomes a *sui generis* embodiment of trauma; simultaneously, I endeavour to show that even though this figure is profoundly disquieting for the artist, their convoluted relationship also conveys certain potentially enhancing traces. In order to prove my point, I explore chosen constituents of trauma in the theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan with regard to *Maus*; then, I proceed to the implications and potentialities of such a wounding event, or encounter, to be found in Marianne Hirsch's notion of postmemory.

Streszczenie:

Maus – powieść graficzna Arta Spiegelmana przedstawiająca historię jego ocalałego z Holocaustu ojca, oparta na rozmowach między nimi – może być uznana za jednostronną formę świadectwa. Matka Spiegelmana, Anja, popełniła samobójstwo w 1968 roku, jesteśmy więc niejako pozbawieni jej perspektywy. Mimo to wydaje się ona być ramą i powracającym motywem powieści. To na tej

niepokojącej widmowej postaci, prowokującej liczne pytania pozbawione odpowiedzi, skupia się mój artykuł. Moim celem jest wykazanie, że reprezentacja matki w *Mausie* przejawia pewne cechy traumy konceptualizowanej w dyskursie psychoanalitycznym, stając się swoistym ucieleśnieniem traumy; równocześnie staram się pokazać, że choć ta figura silnie wstrząsa artystą, ich skomplikowana relacja zawiera również pewne potencjalnie wzbogacające elementy. By tego dowieść, badam wybrane atrybuty traumy w teoriach Zygmunta Freuda i Jacques'a Lacana w odniesieniu do *Mausa*; następnie przechodzę do implikacji i możliwości tego raniącego zdarzenia, czy też spotkania, obecnych w pojęciu postpamięci proponowanym przez Marianne Hirsch.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE A BAT,
OR THINGS YOU DID NOT KNOW ABOUT AUTISM

EMILIA TOLKACZEW

By way of introduction, I would like to specify that no actual bats will be featured in this work. It will, however, touch upon matters of consciousness and perception, much like Thomas Nagel's famous essay – which the bats are, in fact, a reference to. In general terms, Nagel argues that consciousness is entirely subjective because it is entirely built on subjective experience.¹ He uses an example of a bat to illustrate his point. Since a bat perceives the world via echolocation – a sense that humans do not possess – it is impossible for a human being to ever imagine what it would be like to be a bat. Our consciousness is irreversibly bound to our body since it is ultimately our brain that regulates our perception.²

When I first read Nagel's essay, I immediately thought how applicable his idea was to autism spectrum phenomena. After all, autistic cognition and perception is fundamentally different than that in non-autistic people. Yet, it is quite rare for autistic people to speak publicly about autism, especially in Poland. Being a high-functioning autistic individual myself, I find it very unsettling that all information about this phenomenon is being distributed by people who (following Nagel's thesis) could not possibly grasp what being autistic is truly like. I finally decided to act against this by sharing my own experience. In April 2015, I presented my case at the Third Annual Student Research Festival. In this work, my intention is to tell you what it is like to be a bat – from the perspective of an actual bat.

However, before we move on to describing the experience of being autistic, we should at least try to explain what “being autistic” actually means. Autism is an

¹ Thomas Nagel, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?,” *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 83, No. 4 (1974), p. 436.

² Nagel, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?,” p. 436.

extremely complex phenomenon, and although we do know that it is hereditary, and thus genetic in nature, its exact causes remain unknown. We also know that it affects brain development and causes changes in brain structure and connectivity, the scope and intensity of which can vary greatly from person to person.³ It is this variability that makes the autistic community so diverse, and the experience of being autistic different for every autistic individual.

Although autism is fundamentally a neurological phenomenon, it is usually diagnosed on the basis of its external, behavioural symptoms. Due to this discrepancy, it is viewed and researched from two different perspectives, which the autistic community refers to as the pathology and the neurodiversity paradigm. The pathology paradigm follows the “traditional” understanding of autism, and focuses on its low-functioning forms. It defines autism as a neurodevelopmental disorder and strives to cure it.⁴ The main flaw of this approach lies in its persistence in diagnosing autism on the basis of its external symptoms – the so-called “autistic traits.” While it is true that it is impossible to diagnose autism with detailed brain scans just yet, we should always remember that autistic traits are merely an individual’s way of adapting to the internal workings of her or his brain. A high-functioning individual can adapt so well to living in a neurotypical society that they will display virtually no autistic traits, yet still remain autistic. I cannot stress this enough: autism is not a difference in behaviour, it is a difference in cognition and as such it can never be eliminated.

Of course, the pathology paradigm has many merits. Its existence has led to the discovery of various tools and methods that help low-functioning autistic people attain a higher level of functionality or greatly improve the quality of their life. Low-functioning autism is a terrible burden, and we should do anything in our power to help those who are forced to carry it. In this context, the pathology paradigm is extremely important.

In turn, the neurodiversity paradigm embraces autism as a natural neurological variant of the human race and fights for social accommodation of autistic people.⁵ While it acknowledges that low-functioning people need our help and support, it does not condemn autism in itself and fights to eradicate the social stigma connected with it. It argues that autistic people should not be forced to meet neurotypical people’s standards of “normativity.” Instead, the neurotypical society should make an effort to understand autism and to accept its existence.⁶ Naturally,

³ Temple Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures: and Other Reports from My Life with Autism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), pp. 26-27.

⁴ Nick Walker, “Throw Away the Master’s Tools: Liberating Ourselves From the Pathology Paradigm,” *Neurocosmopolitanism*, <http://neurocosmopolitanism.com/throw-away-the-masters-tools-liberating-ourselves-from-the-pathology-paradigm/> (20 August 2015).

⁵ Walker, “Throw Away the Master’s Tools.”

⁶ Walker, “Throw Away the Master’s Tools.”

this approach also has its flaws. Caught up with celebration of diversity, it sometimes underestimates the difficulties that low-functioning people face in their everyday lives.

Neither of the two paradigms addresses all the needs of autistic people, and thus neither can provide us with a universal, all-encompassing definition of autism. Since the pathology paradigm is much older, it is much more well-known, and rooted deeply in social consciousness, which makes it very difficult for the neurodiversity paradigm and its findings to be accepted by the general public. However, many autism foundations have begun to speak about autism as a neurodiversity rather than a disorder (for instance *Autism Speaks* or *The National Autistic Society*), which shows that the influence of the neurodiversity paradigm is spreading.

Since we have established what the existing views on autism are, let us move on to another issue. In order to describe the subjective experience of autism, we still have to explain how it differs from neurotypical experience. I myself did not truly understand what being autistic meant until I started studying neurotypical psychology and cognition. In the case of autism the biggest difference lies in the brain. It has been discovered that the only parts of an autistic brain that resemble a non-autistic one are the areas responsible for storing memories and the visual cortex, which processes visual information.⁷ All the remaining areas differ in size, structure or activity. The white matter in the frontal cortex is usually bigger than that in the non-autistic brain, which results in a subsequent reduction of the cerebellar vermis. This explains autistic individuals' disrupted motor skills.⁸ However, Eric Courchesne, from the University of California, hypothesises that the overgrown white matter in the frontal lobe may also cause sensory data, received by the autistic brain, to become jumbled and incomprehensible. The white matter is generally responsible for transferring data and for connecting different parts of the information processing circuits. In the autistic brain's overgrown frontal lobe, these connections are often strung haphazardly and lack a visible pattern.⁹

Imagine a brain as a network of computers linked together with wires. Every computer performs its own task, but they also constantly exchange information and, as a network, work towards a common goal. In order for them to work effectively, each has to be connected to the other with a more or less equal amount of wires. In an autistic brain, those wires are distributed unevenly. Some computers are linked to fifteen cables and exchange data extremely quickly, some are linked to a hundred and flood each other with an incomprehensible jumble of information, some only have one single cable strung between them, and some are not connected at all. This constellation of connections is different for every autistic individual,

⁷ Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, pp. 26-27.

⁸ Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, p. 27.

⁹ Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, p. 27.

which is why the spectrum of autism is so wide and diversified.¹⁰ This is also why we often seem to have a narrow set of skills we truly excel at, and, at the same time, fail at tasks that a non-autistic person would consider basic. Moreover, we have certain difficulties with switching rapidly from one set of cables to another, which makes the majority of us terrible at multitasking.

This underconnectivity in our brains significantly affects our perception. We tend to perceive the world in details and are hypersensitive to certain stimuli – most often lights and sounds.¹¹ Many autistic people are so sensitive to touch that they cannot stand the feeling of their clothes rubbing against their skin.¹² Combined with our natural attention to detail, this hypersensitivity makes us easily distracted: it is as if our mind was constantly jumping between sights and smells and sounds and sensations, trying to focus on all those tiny occurrences at once. In very low-functioning autism, this hypersensitivity is so strong that it makes an individual feel as if the world was actively assaulting them. Naoki Higashida described it in his book *The Reason I Jump*:

Now imagine that after you lose your ability to communicate, the editor-in-residence who orders your thoughts walks out without notice. [...] A dam-burst of ideas, memories, impulses and thoughts is cascading over you, unstopably. Your editor controlled this flow, diverting the vast majority away, and recommending just a tiny number for your conscious consideration. But now you're on your own.

Now your mind is a room where twenty radios, all tuned to different stations, are blaring out voices and music. The radios have no off switches or volume controls, the room you're in has no door or window, and relief will come only when you're too exhausted to stay awake. To make matters worse, another hitherto unrecognized editor has just quit without notice – your editor of the senses. Suddenly sensory input from your environment is flooding in too, unfiltered in quality and overwhelming in quantity. Colours and patterns swim and clamour for your attention. The fabric conditioner in your sweater smells as strong as air-freshener fired up your nostrils. Your comfy jeans are now as scratchy as steel wool. Your vestibular and proprioceptive senses are also out of kilter, so the floor keeps tilting like a ferry in heavy seas, and you're no longer sure where your hands and feet are in relation to the rest of you. You can feel the plates of your skull, plus your facial muscles and your jaw: your head feels trapped inside a motorbike helmet three sizes too small which may or may not explain why the air-conditioner is

¹⁰ Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, pp. 27-28.

¹¹ Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, p. 63.

¹² Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, p. 62.

as deafening as an electric drill, but your father – who’s right here in front of you – sounds as if he’s speaking to you from a cellphone, on a train going through lots of short tunnels, in fluent Cantonese.¹³

If I was to describe it from the high-functioning perspective, I would say that my world is made of pixels. Everything is separate: a face is a set of its individual parts, a building is a set of walls and windows, a song is a set of sounds. In order to see the world as it is, I always have to put those elements together, force them to form a whole and keep them tightly pressed against each other so that they will not fall apart. If one of the details stands out, it immediately attracts my attention and I have to be careful not to loosen my grip on the world. Usually, this is not difficult; then again, sometimes it is. When I am too tired to focus on keeping the pixels together, they slip away one by one until the world explodes into a chaotic flurry of sensations. This, at least, is an experience that is universal to all autistic people. Sometimes we simply become overloaded with stimuli and our minds launch into a panic attack, or we simply shut down for a while.

Naturally, these descriptions must sound like a horrible nightmare to you. However, do remember that we have been experiencing the world in this fashion ever since we were born. The human mind has an amazing ability to adapt. I remember the world being extremely confusing when I was a child, but now, I do not really need to make a conscious effort to keep my pixels together. I am aware of this process occurring at the back of my head, and a certain amount of my attention is always dedicated to it, but it has become easier with practice and I do not experience as many meltdowns as I used to. The majority of high-functioning autistic people can naturally learn to adapt to their condition over the course of their lives. Of course, this is more difficult for the low-functioning individuals, who usually need professional help to overcome their limitations.

There is an interesting side effect to the way we perceive the world: under the right circumstances, we can focus our attention on a single detail, object or action until we become functionally blind and deaf to everything else. At the same time, our thoughts wander freely, thus giving us a feeling of intense relaxation and serenity. We call this hyperfocus. To a certain extent it seems to resemble meditation, but we can switch into it very suddenly and without any preparation. Quite often, we end up hyperfocusing on something by accident. As silly as it may sound, during one of my oral exams I accidentally hyperfocused on the professor’s eyebrows – I did not hear a single question he asked and was barely able to earn a passing grade.

Hyperfocus is what might have earned us reputation of geniuses and savants. When something interests us, we hyperfocus on it without the slightest effort and

¹³ Naoki Higashida. *The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year-Old Boy with Autism* (New York: Random House, 2013), p. 1.

are able to remember an incredible amount of details on the subject. Paradoxically, it is also what makes neurotypical people think that we “live in our own world.” Once we hyperfocus on something, everything else disappears, and it becomes very difficult to attract our attention again.

Perception, however, is not the only thing that makes us different. Another fundamental difference between neurotypical and autistic people is that most of us are not verbal thinkers, and it is difficult for us to understand that others might.¹⁴ I only realised how important language is for neurotypical people when I started studying philology; before that I saw language purely as a tool of communication. I am sure that many autistic people see it this way, which is probably why we use language in a rather direct, literal manner. We waste no energy on coming up with euphemisms and empty compliments. If somebody asks us a question, we simply answer it. And the purpose of small talk is completely lost to us because we do not speak if we have nothing to communicate.

Speaking is always tiring for us, even if we do not consciously realise this. It requires translating our thoughts into a language first, slowing them down and rearranging them into tight constraints of words, syntax and grammar. In a sense, every language is foreign to us.¹⁵

Many autistic people cannot speak, even though they can often write and understand what others say. Even high-functioning people can suddenly become mute when they are tired or overloaded. Speaking demands focus and effort, which we sometimes simply cannot afford. Naoki Higashida, whom I have already quoted on the subject of perception, explains his own inability to speak as being unable to remember words in social situations. He states that face-to-face contact with another person is much too distracting. There are simply too many signals to process, and it becomes impossible for him to focus on finding the right words and stringing them into a syntactically and grammatically correct sentence.¹⁶ My personal experience is very similar.

It is a common misconception that autistic people do not feel the need to interact with others. I daresay we are simply tired of trying to communicate with neurotypical people and failing. Another popular rumour is that we do not experience empathy. That is not true at all. While many of us are incapable of the so called “emotional empathy,” in which mirror neurons literally reflect the feelings of others, we are usually very skilled at “sensory empathy,” i.e. imagining how we would feel if we were in somebody else’s skin.¹⁷ It is perfectly possible for us to sympathise with others and to connect with them on an emotional level. Truth be told, it seems that autistic people are more often able to understand neurotypical

¹⁴ Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, p. 11.

¹⁵ Higashida, *The Reason I Jump*, p. 2.

¹⁶ Higashida, *The Reason I Jump*, p. 14.

¹⁷ Grandin, *Thinking in Pictures*, pp. 94-95.

people than vice versa. Perhaps this is because we never allow ourselves to forget that they are neurotypical. In every interaction, we remain aware of the fact that our interlocutor is fundamentally different than us, and that this difference might lead to some misunderstandings. I cannot say the same about neurotypical people – experience has taught me that they forget I am autistic the very moment I stop acting this way.

But not all of us have given up trying to reach mutual understanding. Many still try, and will continue to do so until we overcome our differences and learn to interact. I do believe this is possible; all that is needed is a little bit of good will and effort on both sides, and time. Autistic self-advocacy is a relatively new movement, so new that, in fact, many neurotypical people do not even know that high-functioning autism exists. It will take time for the awareness to spread.

There are many more aspects of autism that should be discussed: the importance of rules and the overwhelming power of categories, and how our thoughts run in sounds in dozens of different directions, and how the world can be breathtakingly beautiful to us with its details and lights and sensations. Naturally, it is impossible to describe the experience of being autistic in its entirety, or, at the very least, it is impossible to do so in a single essay. Certainly, a single voice is not enough to convey it, as this experience is unique for every autistic individual. What I was trying to do on these pages was more akin to scraping the surface and uncovering the most basic aspects of this experience, without truly digging deeper. When I spoke about autism at the Third Annual Student Research Festival, I did it to open up a conversation; this conversation did not end in April 2015, and it does not end with this paper. It is being continued by many voices in many different places. Our purpose is not a global revolution – we only speak up for you to realize that we are here, right next to you. You might think you have never met any of us, but that is not true. We have always been here. The neurotypical society likes to see us all as if we were “rain men,” tragically crippled savants and eccentric scientists, and while some of us fit into these criteria, it is not how we should be defined. The distinction between autistic and neurotypical people runs much deeper than that. The world perceived with echolocation is different in ways you have never imagined, but I hope this little glimpse is enough for you to realize that.

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Summary:

The purpose of this paper is to raise awareness of some crucial aspects of autism spectrum phenomena that are often omitted by mass media, and thus are less known to the general public. It combines scientific data with personal experiences of living with the autism spectrum in order to create an account that would be both reliable and approachable for the readers. Beginning with the most basic information on the autism spectrum phenomena, it touches briefly upon two dominant paradigms from the perspective of which autism is viewed and researched. It then moves on to describe the structure of an autistic brain and its influence on perception. Focusing on the subjective experience of "being autistic," it aims to bring the readers' attention to the challenges autistic people – both high and low functioning – face in their everyday life. It also describes difficulties connected with verbal communication, attempting to point out their possible causes. The last few paragraphs deal with the matter of socializing and empathy, closing the paper with an open invitation to a dialogue, which the author believes is necessary for the autistic and neurotypical people to reach mutual understanding.

Streszczenie:

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest zapoznanie czytelników z istotnymi aspektami zjawisk ze spektrum autyzmu, które często bywają pomijane przez media i, w konsekwencji, są mniej znane ogółowi społeczeństwa. Łączy on dane naukowe z osobistymi doświadczeniami z życia na spektrum autyzmu, starając się stworzyć wiarygodny, ale też przystępny obraz tego zjawiska. Poczynając od najbardziej podstawowych informacji dotyczących autyzmu, artykuł porusza temat dwóch paradygmatów, z perspektywy których autyzm jest badany i rozumiany. Następnie opisuje on budowę mózgu osoby autystycznej i jej wpływ na postrzeganie. Skupiając się na subiektywnym doświadczeniu „bycia autystykiem,” stara się zwrócić uwagę czytelników na trudności, z którymi osoby autystyczne – zarówno

te wysoko, jak i te nisko funkcjonujące – borykają się w codziennym życiu. Opisuje też trudności związane z komunikacją werbalną i podejmuje próbę wskazania ich przyczyn. Ostatnie kilka akapitów omawia kwestie socjalizacji i empatii. Artykuł kończy otwarte zaproszenie do dialogu, który autorka uważa za niezbędny dla osiągnięcia wzajemnego zrozumienia między osobami autystycznymi i neurotypowymi.

CHAPTER FIVE

LATIN DESTABILIZED: SELECTED PROBLEMS
IN TRANSLATING *APOLLO ET HYACINTHUS*¹

KAMIL KRAKOWIECKI

Introduction

The main aim of the paper is twofold. Its first goal consists in demonstrating one of the widely accepted periodizations of Latin and the surprising inequality in the amount of research into its particular periods. This, as one should hope, contributes to the ongoing debate in the field; the debate which – while not constituting the subject matter of the present article and, in fact, rarely commented upon in writing – concerns rather the field itself than the issues studied by it. However, without such a background, the general reader would not be able to recognize the peculiarity of the situation that arose among classicists and respond to the content that follows. That, in turn, constitutes the second aim of the paper, i.e. an analysis of selected problems that occurred to the author while translating *Apollo et Hyacinthus*. Its crux, importantly, does not lie in this particular text itself, which is, as it is said later on, of rather doubtful artistic value. Quite the contrary: it is the adopted approach that is of particular importance. However, implementing this kind of methodology in the case of Latin draws one's attention to another problem, namely that of classicists' inclination towards traditional methods. It is certainly easier to experiment with frameworks in the case of linguistics of modern

¹ The paper was presented at the Third Annual Student Research Festival that was held on 22.04.2015 at the University of Silesia. I owe special thanks to Dr. Aleksandra Golik-Prus, who is the co-author of the translation that is not only used, but also discussed in the present paper. Of course, it is the author himself who holds the responsibility for any potential shortcomings.

languages than in the case of Latin, but precisely for that reason, one should take the risk, as this guarantees further progress. Recently, a great deal of effort has been put into keeping pace with developments in theoretical linguistics, as evidenced e.g. by the four-volume *New Perspectives on Historical Latin Syntax*,² which constitutes an ambitious attempt at synthesis of changes within the syntactic system of Latin since the Archaic period up to Gregory of Tours. The scope reaches far beyond what has been heretofore created in the field, mainly due to “implementing novel methodology” (at least novel in the case of Latin). But that is not to say that only Latin linguistics becomes enriched as a result; in fact, the theoretical validity of the methods themselves is also proven against the peculiar Latin grammatical system, which, despite having given rise to a number of widely spoken Romance languages comprising the core of what has been named Standard Average European, should not be considered to have lent Standard Average European its own features.³

Dynamism of Latin

Latin, though occasionally (especially in the educational context) conceived of as a stable, even stagnant language, in fact displays not less a rate of change than any other language. First, let us illustrate the above point with a survey of messages used throughout the history of Latin. Please note that, with the exception of the first, the sentences were produced by the author following the grammatical rules operating in respective periods:

- (1) Manios me fhefhaked Numasioi.
- (2) Manios med fefeced Numasio.
- (3) Manius me Numerio fecit.
- (4) Fecit me Manius Numerio. /fɛkit/
- (5) Fecit me Manius Numerio. /fɛtsit/, /fɛtʃit/ etc.⁴

Sentence (1) comes from the so-called Praeneste fibula (a piece of jewellery) and has been famous as the oldest surviving sentence in (Old) Latin. Despite its debated authenticity, one can treat it as a departure point for Latin writing and draw some conclusions based on its content. First of all, the initial word, *Manios*, is the earlier form of the name Manius, and the second declension ending *-os*

² *New Perspectives on Historical Latin Syntax*, ed. Philip Baldi and Pierluigi Cuzzolin (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009-2011).

³ Andrea Sansò and Anna Giacalone Ramat, “The indefinite usage of uomo (‘man’) in early Italo-Romance. Grammaticalization and areality,” <http://www.academia.edu/> (20 July 2015).

⁴ Manius made me for Numerius. Unless specified otherwise, all translations are by the author.

corresponds to the classical *-us*. A word whose graphic representation and, at the same time, phonetic form has changed the most since the period when the fibula was created (VII century BC) until the classical period is *fhefhaked*. One can analyse it as consisting of three morphemes: *fhefhak-ed*. The first one results from the reduplication of the stem consonant and its function is to mark perfect preterite (in fact, reduplication as a perfect-creating mechanism has remained in use and appears in such forms as *cecini* from *cano* “I sing” or *peperci* from *parco* “I save”). Then, there follows the stem and, finally, the third person suffix *-ed*. As far as the phonetics of this form is concerned, several aspirations are to be observed, marked with the *h* character.

Sentence (2) was created according to the Old Latin grammatical rules, albeit the rules from a time later than that of the Praeneste fibula. What is to be noticed is the final *-d* in personal pronouns in accusative (but also ablative). Additionally, aspirations were dropped and the stem vowel in the verb was weakened and closed, which suggests strong stress on the initial syllable; in Perlin’s terms:

The only phonetic circumstance that would account for this state of affairs is the assumption that this variance was absent from Archaic Latin (another term for Old Latin – KK) and, moreover, that there was strong dynamic stress on the first syllable. Adding the prefix made the stem vowel unstressed, which explains its closing as a result of phonetic evolution.⁵

Apart from that, one should note the monophthongization of the dative ending *-oi* > *-o*, evident in the form *Numasio*.

In the case of sentence (3), what comes to the fore is a change not only morphological or phonetic in character, but a combinational drift towards the unmarked SOV word order. Of course, that is not to say that in Classical Latin, for this is the period in question, it was the only way of combining sentence constituents; on the contrary, one finds plenty of examples whereby this order gets altered, as in examples (6-7):

(6) His rebus adducti et auctoritate Orgetorigis permoti constituerunt ea quae ad proficiscendum pertinerent comparare...⁶

(7) Illud quoque nobis accedit incommodum...⁷

⁵ Jacek Perlin, *Metodologia językoznawstwa diachronicznego* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Dialog,” 2004), p. 81. My own translation.

⁶ “Led by these things and encouraged by Orgetorix’s prompting, they constituted what touched the preparation to depart...” See: Caesar, *De bello Gallico* (Oxonii: e Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1914), 1:3

⁷ “And also there comes inconvenience to us...” See: Cicero, *Pro Quinctio* (Oxonii: e Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1909), I.

In fact, the function of word order in Latin (as in many other fusional languages) was not syntactic, but pragmatic, emphasizing particular information structure, topicalizing or focalizing any given constituents. In (6), the relative clause signals by itself that there is an important piece of information to be focalized, so the verb must eventually give in to the more salient element. This went even further in (7), where the subject is discontinued by the adverbial *quoque*, the pronominal indirect object and the verb.

All that having been said, it remains true that the SOV order was the unmarked one in Classical Latin. Additionally, there took place a couple of phonetic changes, some of them influencing inflection (*-os* > *-us* in Nom. sg of the second declension, dropping final *-d* in Acc. and Abl. of personal pronouns, haplogies in perfect verbal forms), whereas others without apparent effects at the higher level (qualitative changes of vowels, intervocalic rhotacism).

The next stage, i.e. Late Latin, brought mainly syntactic and pragmatic changes, the only one evident in example (4) being the loosening of word order. It is chiefly pronunciation that distinguishes Late Latin from New Latin. In the latter period the so-called regional pronunciation dominated. The sounds are presented in Table 1.⁸

Character	Classical	Slavic	German	English
a	/a/	/a/	/a(:)/	/ɑ(:)/ or /eɪ/
ā	/a:/			
ae	/ai, ae/, later /ɛ:/	/ɛ/	/ɛ:/ or /ɛ:/	/eɪ/ or /i:/
c before e,i,ae,oe	/k/	/ts/	/ts/	/s/
ch	/k ^h /	/x/	/x/ or /ç/	/k/
e	/ɛ/	/ɛ/	/ɛ/ or /e:/	/ɛ/, /eɪ/ or /i:/
ē	/e:/	/ɛ/	/e:/	/i:/
g before e,i,ae,oe	/g/	/g/	/g/	/dʒ/
gn	/ŋn/	/gn/	/gn/ or /ŋn/	/gn/
h	/h, -/	/x/, /h/ or /ɣ/	/h/	/h/ or /-/
i	/i/	/i/ (Russian also /i/ after "c")	/i/	/i/ or /aɪ/
ī	/i:/		/i:/	
j	/j/	/j/	/j/	/dʒ/
o	/ɔ/	/ɔ/, /o/ or / ^w o/	/ɔ/	/ɒ/ or /əʊ/
ō	/o:/		/o:/	
oe	/ɔɪ, oe/, later /e:/	/ɛ/ or /iɔ/	/ø:/	/i:/
qu	/k ^w /	/kv/	/kv/	/kw/
sc before e,i,ae,oe	/sk/	/sts/	/sts/	/s/
ti before a vowel	/ti/	/tsi/, /tsi/ or /ti/	/tsɪ/	/fi/
u	/u/	/u/	/u/	/ʌ/ or /ju:/

⁸ Main differences between different regions with the International Phonetic Alphabet, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_regional_pronunciation (21 February 2016).

ū	/u:/		/u:/	
um	/ũ/	/um/ or /om/	/om/	/əm/
v	/w/, later /v/	/v/	/v/	/v/
xc before e,i,ae,oe	/ksk/	/ksts/	/ksts/	/ks/

Particular phonetic differences stem from the differences of phonological systems of modern languages, which either lack certain sounds or their tradition of borrowings from Latin is so long that the phonetic substance of the borrowings in question was subject to internal changes operating mainly on native lexical items. Note, for instance, that /kv/, identified in the above table as the Slavic rendition of qu, is no longer valid for Polish, as clusters [- voice][+ voice] were levelled with respect to their voicing by the regressive assimilation – devoicing – of the second element. Thus, the proper indication for Polish pronunciation would rather be /kf/.

Periodization of Latin

Following Cuzzolin and Haverling (2009), the history of Latin can be roughly divided into several periods:

- Archaic Latin: 7th-3rd c. BCE
- Early Latin: ca. 240-90 BCE
- Classical Latin: ca. 90 BCE-14 CE (“Golden Latin”)
- Postclassical Latin (“Silver Latin”)
- Late Latin

Traditionally, there are also distinguished the following later periods of Latin as a non-native language:

- Medieval Latin: 900-1300
- Renaissance Latin: 1300-1500
- New Latin: since 1500

Pulju⁹ identifies particular events as characteristic of subsequent periods or, more specifically, their time limits. Thus, what marks the advent of the Early Latin period is the origin of Latin literature – under the profound influence of Greek texts, manifest on the lexical (borrowings) and textual (genres) level. The Classical Period brings first indications of fixation affecting the language of the upper classes, especially visible in written register. The divergence between that

⁹ Timothy J. Pulju, *History of Latin*, <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~kemmer/Words04/structure/latin.html> (21 February 2016).

conservative variety and the colloquial, “vulgar” one deepened substantially in the Late Latin Period; it is then that the first cases of transfer began to appear.¹⁰

Is Classical Latin Really Perfect?

In this section, several arguments of the followers of the belief that Classical Latin is the most “perfect” of all the Latins are examined. By way of introduction, the author does not consider evaluation of any kind as suitable for academic debates; however, since the evaluation carried out by Latinists has a direct, grossly disproportional effect on their research interests, the author feels justified in outlining certain popular opinions and, hopefully, revising them.

To begin, let us consider some generally accepted facts. Classical Latin was a highly synthetic language, considering that the abundance of inflectional morphemes it used made for any deficiencies in adverbial or prepositional constructions. Postclassical Latin tends, by analogy to modern languages, to employ prepositions rather than particular cases to convey syntactic functions. In order to impart the archaic overtone to their texts, Medieval scribes attempted to counteract the spreading trend, and that was the time when constructions such as *ablativus absolutus* or, generally, cases used for their semantic functions, rather than combining with prepositions, came into favour. That counter-measure survived, notwithstanding the competition from analytic forms, until this day; cf. the title page of *Nova Vulgata*, the revised translation of the Bible into Latin:

(8) SACROSANCTI OECUMENICI CONCILII VATICANI II
RATIONE HABITA
IUSSU PAULI PP. VI RECOGNITA
AUCTORITATE IOANNIS PAULI PP. II PROMULGATA¹¹

Another important aspect of social functioning of Latin, and at the same time a powerful argument of some “classicocentric” Latinists, concentrates on the nature of its acquisition. Generally, inasmuch as in the Roman times Latin was the native language of the inhabitants of the Empire,¹² later there developed the paradoxical situation of European *lingua franca* being taught as L2. This remark requires further clarification. Firstly, only in the case of the “Golden Latin” period

¹⁰ Cf. St Jerome deliberately translating the Bible into the language of the lower classes. The following stages display the determining factor of cultural context in shaping language, with internal changes reduced to a minimum.

¹¹ *Nova Vulgata – Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio*, <http://www.vatican.va/> (20 July 2015).

¹² Latin was spread through the combined military and cultural invasion: the defeated peoples had virtually no choice but to adopt the Roman models, which resulted in their rapid acquisition of Latin, excluding the speakers of Basque, who enjoyed a special status. However, even they borrowed a whole range of Latin vocabulary.

can one speak of the equivalence of spoken and written Latin; at least in the upper class, as the lower classes used Vulgar Latin throughout the history of Rome. Seen this way, there was virtually only a limited group of people for a limited period of time that “spoke” Classical Latin. Any attempts at proving its naturalness or conformity to the everyday speech seem thus ill-founded. Secondly, even Latin taught as a foreign language was efficiently used to produce and perceive utterances; in other words, it served as a fully-fledged communication system, and thus, its importance cannot be diminished. From the Middle Ages on, it fulfilled the same functions as vernaculars and, to emphasize once more, did it successfully, even if acquired later in life.

Furthermore, pro-classical Latinists point out that the reason why one should perceive Classical Latin as superior is that it was used by numerous authors of exquisite literary craftsmanship, including Caesar, Cicero, Sallust, Ovid, Virgil, etc. However, every period of Latin history was represented by outstanding personalities: Late Latin by Augustine of Hippo, St. Gildas, Tertullian, Cyprian or Constantine the Great; Medieval Latin by Thietmar of Merseburg, Pierre Abélard, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Archpoet or Saxo Grammaticus; Renaissance Latin by Dante, Petrarch, Giovanni Boccaccio, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola or Pope Pius II; New Latin by Linnaeus, Erasmus, Thomas More, John Milton or Johannes Kepler.

Finally, Postclassical Latin is sometimes seen as a corrupted version of Classical Latin. Postclassical authors incorporated “barbarisms” into their works and, by doing that, went away from the classical ideal. This leads to the conclusion that, while teaching Latin nowadays, it is advisable to use as a basis *De bello gallico* rather than *Carmina Burana*. However, let us change the perspective and compare Classical Latin with Old Latin: it appears that the former can be equally well considered a corrupted version of the latter. The creating in the Golden Age started from a certain point and moved onwards, leaving behind archaic models. Therefore, one arrives at the proportion:

$$\frac{\text{Classical Latin}}{\text{Old Latin}} = \frac{\text{Postclassical Latin}}{\text{Classical Latin}}$$

Obviously, the above graphic representation makes no claims to mathematical strictness; it demonstrates that Classical Latin was not as unique as it is sometimes maintained, because it was merely one of the numerous parts of a cycle; however, the word “cycle” can be misleading, as particular stages do not recur. All in all, it is reasonable to quote Perlin’s words that are particularly relevant:

This approach [i.e. Neogrammarian – KK] is generally still adopted by scientists and in all research fields, excluding ethics, it is a rule

that facts are dealt with in a way that does not allow them to be evaluated.¹³

If one examines the arguments that are put forward in the debate, it will become apparent that, essentially, they concern external language properties, like the authors, type of acquisition, social classes speaking it, etc., while leaving aside its internal properties, i.e. phonology, morphology, syntax, etc. This is an important point to make: the arguments are based on additional cultural and social context that has developed throughout the years around Latin, not on the language itself. That should eventually dispel any doubts that might have arisen.

Optimality Theory: Introduction

The approach that is adopted in the present paper incorporates principal ideas of Optimality Theory, and therefore it is reasonable to introduce some of its crucial concepts and assumptions. Matthews defines the theory as “a system in which constraints are ranked in an ordered series, in a way that determines an ‘optimal’ realization of any unit.”¹⁴ Let this definition be the point of departure for further reflections. The systemic features of Optimality Theory are precisely adjusted to language, which, after all, is a system itself. That makes it a suitable kind of modelling, in which the tools reflect the nature of the subject in a similar way, although of course on a much smaller scale. The next crucial term is that of a constraint, which itself deserves a separate definition. Matthews defines it as “a specific restriction on the form of representation.”¹⁵ In other words, constraints serve to give a message a form that not only would be possible to be conveyed using lexical elements of a given language, which is the prerequisite, but also, or even primarily for Optimality Theory, a form that would restrict the lexical items in terms of their interrelations, realizing what is traditionally called grammar. The constraints are ranked, that is to say, they are not all equally salient. They form a series, but the series displays the central feature of formalistic approaches: it is ordered to determine an optimal realization of any unit. Let us consider the following sentence:

- (9) You have seen it.

¹³ Perlin, *Metodologia*, p. 23. My own translation.

¹⁴ Peter H. Matthews, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Linguistics* (Oxford: OUP 2007), p. 279.

¹⁵ Matthews, *Oxford Concise Dictionary*, p. 75.

Now, suppose that one wants to ask a question concerning the element *it*. The mental lexicon indicates that they should use the *wh*-interrogative *what*. There are several options; let us select some of them:

- (10) What have you seen?
- (11) *Have what you seen?
- (12) *Have you what seen?
- (13) *Have you seen what?

Examples (11)-(13) satisfy the basic constraints on constituent placement in questions: the subject is preceded by the auxiliary and followed by the main verb in its non-finite form. The only apparent difference between those examples and example (10) resides in the placement of the interrogative pronoun.¹⁶ Thus, the constraint that only (10) satisfies is the location of the *wh*-word at the beginning. One may gain the impression that it is the sole number of constraints a form satisfies that decides whether it is grammatical or not; however, that is not the case, as the next paragraph demonstrates.

Consider the case of phrases of the “adjective + noun” type in Polish. Let us assume that masculine is the unmarked gender and the remaining (i.e. feminine and neuter) are marked. Thus, we are to decide between the forms *duży drzewo* [big tree] and *duże drzewo* [big-neut tree]. The noun is neuter. The constraints are represented by means of a special table, the so-called *tableau*:

Input: Gender (<i>duży</i>)	A	B
1. <i>duży drzewo</i>	*!	
2. duży <i>duże drzewo</i>		*

The forms are checked against two constraints: A and B. Constraint A says that nouns are modified by adjectives that agree in gender with their head nouns, whereas constraint B – that adjectives can occur only in the default gender. Of course, the constraints are opposite in this particular case, but this does not need to be so. They agree e.g. with Polish masculine NPs, not to mention English, where they are never opposite, as adjectives occur in one gender only. In any case, the reason why it is possible to select only one form is that the constraints are of different rank. In Polish, constraint A is ranked higher, so form 1. that violates it is discarded, even if it satisfies constraint B.

¹⁶ One may be tempted to interpret “placement” as a kind of process, whereas it is exactly what Optimality Theory is not about. It opposes the rules of derivation as employed by Generative Grammar, but accepts the assumption that there is innate linguistic knowledge. The difference is that here it is a set of constraints, not rules.

Another example, with the constraints named, comes from Kiparsky¹⁷:

Input: Max (good)	FAITHFULNESS	MARKEDNESS
1. good	*	
2. est best		
3. good-est		*
4. most good		**

The sought form is the superlative of *good*. First, all the options are listed in the first column. Note that creating the list is quite a complex activity in itself, as one needs to solve the dilemma which alternatives to include and which to exclude. Once the options have been decided upon, their examination against the satisfaction of the constraints takes place. The first form, *good*, happens to violate the constraint of faithfulness, as it does not convey the concept of superlativeness well enough. This is the reason why it becomes rejected in spite of satisfying the constraint of markedness, because the latter is classified lower. Let us skip the second form and go on to the third one, *good-est*. Here, as a consequence of its relative length, one witnesses the violation of the constraint of markedness, which is even more severe (as indicated by two asterisks) in the case of the last form, *most good*, comprising as many as two separate words. Eventually, the preferred option is *best*, satisfying both constraints.

Optimality Theory in Translating *Apollo et Hyacinthus*

So far, we have exemplified the applications of Optimality Theory with syntactic and morphological cases. Now, let us turn towards the proper subject to be handled using that approach: the process of translating *Apollo et Hyacinthus*. The text was written by a syntax professor at the University of Salzburg, Rufin(us) Widl, and became the libretto of the first opera by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The translators were faced with numerous places where only one of two or more suitable options could be used in the Polish rendition. Making choices was governed by what could be compared to constraints determining the optimal alternative in Optimality Theory. Thus, it would be beneficial to make use of the theory in the field of translation, which will be done with regard to particular examples.

The very name featured in the title of the text, *Hyacinthus*, can serve as an introductory model of implementing the approach, as it is not too complex. Essentially, there exist two Polish counterparts of Latin *Hyacinthus*: *Hiacynth*, used

¹⁷ Paul Kiparsky, “Grammaticalization as Optimization,” <http://web.stanford.edu/> (20 July 2015).

usually in mythological contexts, and *Jacek*, typical of ecclesiastical uses and tightly connected with the person of Saint Hyacinth (Latin *Sanctus Hyacinthus*, Polish *święty Jacek*).¹⁸ The tableau presents itself as follows:

Input: <i>Hyacinthus</i>	FAITHFULNESS	MARKEDNESS
1. [☞] Hiacynt		*
4. Jacek	*	

Apparently, the form *Hiacynt* violates the constraint of markedness, as it is more frequent for Polish speakers to use the form *Jacek*. The latter, however, lacks in faithfulness, considering the above-mentioned distinction of contexts. Since faithfulness is ranked higher, the option *Jacek* is discarded.

Is it possible, however, to change the hierarchy and make markedness dominate over faithfulness? It is, indeed, possible, as evidenced by the next example:

Input: <i>Pater</i>	FAITHFULNESS	MARKEDNESS
1. [☞] ojciec	*	
4. Ojciec		*

Here, the input is Latin *Pater* “Father.” This time, the Polish alternatives differ in terms of capitalization, both *ojciec* and *Ojciec* having the meaning of “father.” *Ojciec* violates the markedness constraint, as it is no match for *ojciec* as far as its frequency and naturalness of use is concerned. However, *ojciec* does not reflect the way the original Latin item is capitalized, and this is why it is considered unfaithful. As has been signalled, in this particular case markedness is ranked higher than faithfulness, so it is the former that ultimately determines the choice of an option.

Similar is the case of Latin *Deus* “God”:

Input: <i>Deus</i>	FAITHFULNESS	MARKEDNESS
1. [☞] bóg	*	
4. Bóg		*

What differs is the reason why *Bóg* is considered marked: it stems from the kind of contexts this item is used in, namely, principally monotheistic ones, with emphasis on Catholic connotations, which is completely inadequate to the mythological content of the work. All in all, the result is the same as previously: it is markedness that decides in favour of *bóg*, not faithfulness.

¹⁸ *Mały słownik polsko-laciński*, ed. Lidia Winniczuk (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Szkolne PWN, 2011), p. 668.

Elsewhere, the inventory of options can be enlarged in order to include as many as four of them:

Input: <i>Supernus</i>	FAITHFULNESS	MARKEDNESS
1. najwyższy	*	**
2. Najwyższy		***
1. ☞ bóg	***	
4. Bóg	**	*

Different degrees of compliance with the constraints are here represented by different numbers of asterisks (0-3). What should be noted here is that the total number of asterisks for each form amounts to three. That means that the only way to determine the optimal one is through the hierarchy of constraints. In order to attribute a certain number of asterisks, two assumptions have been made. Firstly, the less literal a translation is, the greater violation of the constraint of faithfulness it constitutes; secondly, the forms with the capitalization identical to the original are deemed more faithful than those with the opposite one. In those two assumptions, a kind of ranking is also necessary, because now there exist two possibilities: 1. *Najwyższy*, *najwyższy* more faithful than *Bóg*, *bóg*, and 2. *Najwyższy*, *Bóg* more faithful than *najwyższy*, *bóg*. Thus, by choosing the first one, four different levels of faithfulness are obtained. For markedness, the conduct is similar, with the two decisive features being again: general morphological shape followed by capitalization. Curiously enough, they render completely opposite outcome.

There are instances of optimizations manifesting substantial sensitivity to context. This is the case of Latin *Numen*, whose diversity of functions is conditioned by its semantic and syntactic surroundings. Let us consider the sentence:

(14) *Numen hac sub veste pastoris latens in nostra praesens regna suscipi cupit?*¹⁹

For the sake of clarity, the relevant issue of syntactic ambiguity is left to be discussed in the next section. Now, it is advisable to preoccupy ourselves with *Numen*. Its basic sense of “deity, divine power” does not seem to conform to the features required by the above sentence, i.e. being capable of dressing up, performing the cognitive process of desiring something and, passively, being able

¹⁹ “Does god hiding in shepherd’s clothing in our present kingdom desire to be received?” See: Rufin Widl, *Apollo et Hyacinthus. Neue Mozart Ausgabe II/5/1*, ed. Alfred Orel (Kassel, Basel, London, New York: Bärenreiter 1959), p. 26.

to be received somewhere by someone. The inventory of possible translations as displayed by Polish is as follows:

Input: <i>Numen</i>	FAITHFULNESS	MARKEDNESS
1. ☞ bóg	**	
2. Bóg	*	*
3. bóstwo		**

One should point out that, as suggested before, the constraints are not equal as far as their dependence on context is concerned: whereas faithfulness seems to consist merely in very specific, even literal, correspondences of particular items, markedness, on the other hand, seeks to take a broader view on the situation in which they are used, on the author of the text, but above all on the target reader. This is what makes it so often dominate over faithfulness: texts, understood as messages of some kind, require taking into account all those communicative aspects that markedness indeed *does* take into account. Or as seen from another perspective: markedness is not constant, it is not to be taken for granted, because it changes its motivation: it could be the general frequency of use (as in case of *Jacek* and *Hiacynt*), the location of the text in a religious context (as with *Bóg*, *bóg*), etc. The latter parameter is also featured in the case of the Latin *Numen*, combined with some semantically-driven limitations. Here, the question of faithfulness is pretty straightforward, as it resides in formal properties; on the other hand, to determine what is marked and what is not, one has to resort to the knowledge of properties of nouns that can appear as arguments of particular verbs. What becomes activated is the distinction between animate and inanimate entities, deciding against the option *bóstwo* due to its lack of animacy required by the verbs. One could argue, in fact, that combining this particular noun with these particular verbs fulfils nothing but a figurative function; and, indeed, this would be a plausible assumption, had it not been for the background: the text being a play, not a poem, and the referent of the noun being one of the characters.

In line with the presented cases of lexical ambiguity, or rather cross-linguistic ambiguity, is the interpretation of the noun *puer* “boy, servant” in the sentence:

(15) Heu! nunc amatum Apollo mihi puerum rapit!²⁰

The notion of *puer* can be rendered in Polish by the nouns: *chłopiec* “boy,” its diminutive *chłopczyk* and *sluga* “servant,” among others. Unlike the previous examples of selecting the optimal option, this one is not capable of being solved so

²⁰ “Woe! Now Apollo seizes from me my beloved boy!” See: Rufin Widl, *Apollo et Hyacinthus. Neue Mozart Ausgabe* II/5/1, ed. Alfred Orel (Kassel, Basel, London, New York: Bärenreiter 1959), p. 28.

easily: *chłopiec* is inadequate to a man (one should keep in mind that the original version of the myth employs a homosexual innuendo), *chłopczyk* is still less suited to this purpose. On the other hand, *sluga* does not convey the sort of meaning that is intended. One is thus faced with a situation where no usual lexical counterpart seems to fulfil the requirements, and therefore it is necessary to add to the set of options (as represented e.g. in a tableau) another one, with extremely low faithfulness. In this case, the preferred option was *młodzieniec* “young man.”

Optimality Theory in Syntax

Among other uses, Optimality Theory can also serve as a means of removing syntactic ambiguity. Needless to say, at this level it presents much graver difficulties resulting from the fact that it is not one item to be related to many items, as it was with morphology, but rather the correspondence is of the type of “many to many.”²¹

An unquestionable advantage is being able to draw some correspondences that do not allow ambiguity to arise. One of such observations is the fact that vocatives in Widl’s Latin are always directly followed by question marks. But sometimes polysemy is inevitable, and the available options can be numerous, as in (16).

(16) *Filia! dolore motus est Zephyri dolus delusus, id iussisse me memini.*²²

Ignoring temporarily the clause *id iussisse me memini*, we have a couple of items that could fulfil the role of subject, as they appear in nominative: *motus*, *dolus* and *delusus*, of which *motus* can equally well be a noun (movement) and a participle (moved), *dolus* is a noun (trick) and *delusus* is a participle (cheated). Moreover, if we decide upon a possible subject, it is still not certain whether the remaining ones will be modifiers, or rather parts of the nominal predicate with the copula *est* “is.” Then, *motus* exemplifies the syncretism of Latin fourth declension paradigm in that it could be also interpreted as e.g. genitive in agreement with the genitive *Zephyri* “Zephyr’s.” The nominal predicate presents some difficulties as well, because it is not the only possible reading of the predication. Instead of being a copula, *est* can combine with any of the participles to create perfective passive constructions, i.e. *motus est* “has been moved” or *est delusus* “has been cheated.” In each of the cases, there remains the problem of assigning the rest of the constituents to their syntactic and semantic functions.

²¹ The present contribution does not intend to respond to that challenge, offering instead a sample of problems, finding answer to a question which lies at the heart of the translator’s (but also the linguist’s) work.

²² Rufin Widl, *Apollo et Hyacinthus. Neue Mozart Ausgabe II/5/1*, ed. Alfred Orel (Kassel, Basel, London, New York: Bärenreiter 1959), p. 81.

Conclusions and Future Prospects

As the author hopes to have successfully presented, Modern Latin, and Postclassical Latin in general, constitutes a fertile research field, whose exploration by means of linguistic analysis still poses a challenge for the present-day Latinists. There are still some irrational prejudices held as far as the history of Latin is concerned, stemming from the fact that its dynamism, although in theory acknowledged from as early as the XIX century, continues to be repressed and thought of in different categories than e.g. the dynamism of English, German or any other modern language.

Optimality Theory can be successfully applied to translator's activities, not only because it models them in a faithful way, but chiefly because of its explanatory value while determining future choices. Obviously, this point should be considered neither novel, nor recapitulating past discoveries, as its only aim is to encourage further, more systematic interest in those matters. By analogy, the translation accompanied by the research cannot be deemed ground-breaking in any way but one, being, to the best of my knowledge, the first Polish critical translation of *Apollo et Hyacinthus*. What it does, in fact, is make an attempt at promoting better understanding and academic interest in the diverse and still understudied field of Modern Latin language and literature.

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Summary:

The paper discusses problems that have arisen in the process of translating Latin intermezzo *Apollo et Hyacinthus* into Polish. The author starts with outlining the background covering research into Mediaeval and Modern Latin, with the periods turning out to be surprisingly poorly studied. Then, the author proceeds to demonstrate the specificity of Modern Latin, and discusses its features diverging from Classical Latin, on the phonological, morphological and syntactic level. Eventually, certain problems that have occurred during translation are presented. By way of solution, Optimality Theory is implemented.

Streszczenie:

Artykuł omawia problemy pojawiające się podczas tłumaczenia libretta łacińskiego intermezza *Apollo et Hyacinthus* na język polski. Początkowo zostaje nakreślone tło badań nad łaciną średniowieczną i nowożytną, które to okresy, jak się okazuje, pozostają zaskakująco słabo poznanym obszarem. Następnie autor ukazuje specyfikę łaciny nowożytnej i omawia cechy, które różnią ją od łaciny klasycznej na różnych poziomach (fonologia, morfologia, składnia). Wreszcie przedstawione zostają konkretne problemy, jakie wyniknęły podczas przekładu wspomnianego dzieła. Do ich rozwiązania może posłużyć Teoria Optymalności zaadaptowana na potrzeby tłumaczenia.

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