

Perception, Experiencibility, and Modal Semiotics¹

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I

We have recently witnessed a scientific rehabilitation of perception, especially in neurobiology and neuropsychology. The aesthetics of perception has reinstated the term *aisthesis*.² However, it is noteworthy that the term *experience* has not been re-evaluated in spite of its close link with perception.³ Only Georges Didi-Huberman has rehabilitated Aby Warburg's term *survival* (Nachleben) from the cultural history point of view. However, for Didi-Huberman Warburg's notion denotes not direct experience but what used to be a current experience and survives from the past to the present: "... the entrails of Hell survive within the entrails of the metro, the ancient beggar survives within the roamer from the street corner..." (Didi-Huberman, 2006),⁴ "...the survival of those paradoxical objects of times, hardly existing, yet indestructible, which come to us from a great distance and are not able to die fully and completely" (Didi-Huberman, 2009).⁵ Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht revived the notion *lived experience* (Erleben): "I understand this in a strictly phenomenological tradition, i.e. in the sense of focused observation or thematisation of certain subjects of lived experience (...) lived experience assumes, on the one hand, that what has occurred is a purely physical perception, and, on the other, that it will result in an experience consisting of the acts of the interpretation of the world."⁶ Within the current context of the aesthetics of perception, we can also return to the notions of *experience* (Erlebnis) and *experiencibility* (Erlebnishaftigkeit), which form part of this cluster of notions, while *experiencibility* is a basic term in the communicative-semiotic stylistics of František Miko.⁷

¹ This study is based on and expands my two reflections: *Zážitkovosť a modálna semiotika*, in: *O interpretácii umeleckého textu 24. Autentické a univerzálne v tvorbe a interpretácii umenia*. Nitra : University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Faculty of Arts, 2009, pp. 13 – 21, and *Zážitkovosť – brikolážový príbeh jedného pojmu*, in: *Slovenská literatúra*, LVII, 2010, No. 6*, pp. 14 – 18.

² BARCK, Karlheinz – GENTE, Peter – PARIS, Heidi – RICHTER, Stefan (Hg.): *Aisthesis*. Leipzig : Reclam-Verlag, 1990; BÖHME, Gernot: *Asthetik. Vorlesungen über Ästhetik als allgemeine Wahrnehmungslehre*. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2001. Seel follows a similar direction within a different conceptual tradition of interference aesthetics, in: SEEL, Martin: *Eine Ästhetik der Natur*. Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp Verlag, 1991, and *Ästhetik des Erscheinens*. Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003. Mersch operates with the term performative aesthetics, in: MERSCH, Dieter: *Ästhetik des Performativen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2002, and Gumbrecht bases his reflections on the relationship between presentation and representation, in: GUMBRECHT, Hans Ulrich: *Diesseits der Hermeneutik. Die Produktion von Präsenz*. Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004.

³ BÜHLER, Karl: *Sprachtheorie*. Stuttgart : Gustav Fischer Verlag, 1965 (1st edition: 1934).

⁴ DIDI-HUBERMAN, Georges: *Pred časom*. Bratislava : Kalligram, 2006, p. 99 et seqq.

⁵ DIDI-HUBERMAN, Georges: *Ninfa moderna*. Praha : Agite/Fra, 2009, p. 13. Slovak and Czech translations employ the term *prežívanie*, but *prežitie* is more accurate.

⁶ Gumbrecht, loc. cit., 120 – 121.

⁷ In my study *Štylistika, poetika, rétorika* (Stylistics, Poetics, Rhetoric), I tried to incorporate Miko's academic work into the current communicative-semiotic tradition, and in my reflection *Zážitkovosť a modál-*

II

František Miko's thinking is based on the term "style". Miko originally defined style as the *nuancing of expression*.⁸ In his work *Estetika výrazu/The Aesthetics of Expression* he refers to expressive values, stylistic nuances, stylistic shades of linguistic means, or simply about the modal nature of style⁹. This is something of a key point, in that it reflects the basic problem of structuralism without naming it explicitly. The *ultima ratio* of structuralism consists of distrust in the reliability of *perception*. Claude Lévi-Strauss put it uncompromisingly: "... Thinkers like Locke and Descartes recognised that the actual and the perceived are illusory. That the world of colours, smells and sounds is deceptive, because these delude our senses."¹⁰ Thus, structuralism in its radical form excluded the whole sphere of emotionality and modal semiotics from scientific knowledge,¹¹ and found itself opposed to the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and the expression of the notions *experience* and *perception*. Applying a stylistic expression framework Miko tried to form a bridge between factuality and nuances in expression, a dichotomic view of stylistic phenomena responding to the question of denomination with an *either-or* response in a modal way, focusing on differentiation, finer distinctions and scaling of nuances and shades on the *both-and* axis, or more or less the same.¹²

It is from this angle that we should also understand Miko's stylistic framework, which has become the cornerstone of his theory. One of its coordinate axes consists of the categories of operativeness and iconicity, and the other one of experientiality and conceptuality. The modal aspect in Miko's expression system is then represented by the category of experientiality. From the point of view of literary theory, it is experientiality that is Miko's core category.

František Miko published several variants of his expression system, which he constantly modified, augmented and extended.¹³ It would be interesting to investigate

na semiotika (Experientiality and Modal Semiotics) I examined its innovative character in the current context of the aesthetics of perception. ZAJAC, Peter: Štylistika, poetika, rétorika. In: MATEJOV, Fedor – ZAJAC, Peter (eds.): *Od iniciatívy k tradícii. Štrukturalizmus v slovenskej literárnej vede od 30. rokov po súčasnosť*. Brno : Host, 2005, pp. 323 – 337, and ZAJAC, Peter: *Zážitkovosť a modálna semiotika*, in: *O interpretácii umeleckého textu 24. Autentické a univerzálne v tvorbe a interpretácii umenia*. Nitra : University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Faculty of Arts, pp. 13 – 21.

⁸ MIKO, František: Štylistická kategória neurčitosti v spisovnej slovenčine, in: *Jazykovedné štúdie I. Spisovný jazyk*. Bratislava, 1956, pp. 277 – 305.

⁹ MIKO, František: *Estetika výrazu*. Bratislava : SPN, 1969, p. 12 and p. 21.

¹⁰ LÉVI-STRAUSS, Claude: Der Mensch ist eine optische Täuschung. In: *FAZ*, 5 November 2009, Nr. 257, p. 32, originally broadcast as a radio interview with Jürg Altweg in 1989.

¹¹ In this regard, post-structuralism has meant subversion and questioning, but not negation of structuralism.

¹² The modal area has recently started to work with Heidegger's notion of *state of mind* (Befindlichkeit) and with the specific notions of modal semiotics, such as *atmosphere*, in: BÖHME, Gernot: *Aisthetik*. München, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2001; BÖHME, Gernot: *Architektur und Atmosphäre*. München : Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2006, as well as with the term *attunement* (impressiveness, impression, effectiveness), in: GUMBRECHT, Hans Ulrich: *Stimmungen lesen*. München : Carl Hanser Verlag, 2011 and GUMBRECHT, Hans Ulrich – KLINGER, Florian (Hg.): *Latenz*. Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011.

¹³ VALENTOVÁ, Mária: Cesta k sústave výrazových kategórii. In: VISKUPOVÁ, Etela – VALENTOVÁ, Mária: *Cesta k sústave výrazových kategórii. Bibliografia prác Františka Miko*. Nitra : University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Faculty of Arts, 2008, p. 8.

these changes, but as regards our topic what is essential is the fact that since its first version of 1964,¹⁴ experientiality together with conceptuality have constantly remained his key concepts, though Miko has modified the other basic concepts, of iconicity (originally pictoriality) and operativeness (originally pro-activeness), between his first and the second version.¹⁵ Equally interesting would be to pursue the changes in the context supporting Miko. He based his first version of the expression system on the Slovak and Czech stylistic tradition of E. Pauliny, M. Horecký, B. Havránek, J. V. Bečka, K. Horálek, K. Hausenblas, F. Trávníček, L. Doležel, Daniš. In his works *Estetika výrazu/The Aesthetics of Expression* (1969) and *Text a štýl/Text and Style* (1970) he also integrated the work of K. Bühler and M. Riffaterre, as well as the communicative-semiotic tradition and the current structuralist context. In the subsequent versions from the 1970s and 1980s, for historic reasons, Miko returned less and less to the original context of his reflections, which gradually gave the impression that the nature of his reflections was acontextual and this, together with his barely accessible conceptual neologisms, considerably complicated the application of his theory in the international academic context during the period of academic freedom.

III

Experientiality is one of the key categories of the standardised vocabulary work *Tezaurus estetických výrazových kvalít/The Thesaurus of Aesthetic Expression Qualities*¹⁶ dealing with the concepts of Miko's expression system. Ľubomír Plesník describes the experientiality of an expression as the "ability of a statement to affect the perceiver in his/her entirety, to mediate to him/her the sense of such statement in the form of experiencing".¹⁷ Plesník notes the close relationship between Miko's and John Dewey's thinking, particularly in the ethos of the latter's *Art as an Experience*¹⁸, pointing out the "resistance to academically 'antiquated' concepts which place hermetic barriers between art and life experience".¹⁹ In his monograph *Pragmatická estetika textu/The Pragmatic Aesthetics of a Text*²⁰ Plesník extends his reflections to the differences in the structural and existential lines of thinking²¹ through the work of Vladimír Svatoň and notes that "the categorical imperative of the 'existential' line was 'not to betray' the totality of work or the authenticity

¹⁴ MIKO, František: Aktuálnosť výrazu v próze literárneho realizmu (Príspevok k problematike jazykovej štylistiky). In: *Z historickej poetiky I. Litterária – štúdie a dokumenty VII*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej akadémie vied/Publishing House of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 1964, pp. 81 – 115 (94).

¹⁵ MIKO, František: *Estetika výrazu*. Bratislava : SPN, 1969, p. 25.

¹⁶ PLESNÍK, Ľubomír et al.: *Tezaurus estetických výrazových kvalít*. Nitra : University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Faculty of Arts, Institute of Literary and Artistic Communication, 2008, p. 152 – 163.

¹⁷ Id., p. 152.

¹⁸ Id., p. 163.

¹⁹ Id., p. 101.

²⁰ PLESNÍK, Ľubomír: *Pragmatická estetika textu*. Nitra : University of Pedagogy in Nitra, Faculty of Arts, Institute of Literary and Artistic Communication, 1995, p. 30 et seq.

²¹ Id., p. 31. Plesník refers to the study by SVATOŇ, Vladimír: Dvojaké chápanie textu v literárnej vede. In: *O interpretácii umeleckého textu 7. Zborník štúdií VPLKEM PF in Nitra*. Nitra : Pedagogical Faculty, 1982, pp. 71 – 85.

of its experiential presentation (cult of object), even at the cost of a failure of observation or programmatic rejection of the principles of strict scientism...²² Plesník thus opens the way to reflections on the existential dimension of Miko's style concept.

IV

To understand the basic fact that Miko's theoretical thinking is not alone in the history of aesthetic thought but constitutes part of a significant European tradition of the 19th and 20th century, we can cite Hans-Georg Gadamer's essential work, *Truth and Method*,²³ in which he examines the history of the word *experience* (Erlebnis) and points out that it was wholly missing in the 18th century, first appearing in Hegel and Dilthey, and it is no accident that it is in connection with Goethe's use of the term lyrical experience.²⁴

Gadamer follows the entire modern line of reflections on aesthetic experience from Friedrich Schleiermacher through Friedrich Nietzsche and Henri Bergson up to George Simmel and Edmund Husserl.²⁵ Unlike in structuralism, Gadamer stresses that "experiencing features stressed proximity, which is absent from all reflections about its meaning. Everything lived (experienced) is lived personally, while the meaning of the lived comprises the fact that it pertains to the unity of that person, of that "I", and thus involves an immutable and irreplaceable relation to the whole unity of this life."²⁶

Władysław Tatarkiewicz points to an even more profound tradition of the notion of aesthetic experience leading up to the ancient term *aisthesis* and to the aesthetics of perception.²⁷ He distinguishes between the history based on names and history based on concepts, and shows how, from Aristotle through Plato, Scottus Eriugena and Thomas Aquinas, "mental conditions, experiences, and feelings began to be perceived and called aesthetic under the influence of beauty and art, until then being unnamed."²⁸

V

The notion of experience has a further – historic – dimension which was mentioned at the beginning of our reflections in connection with the historical concept of the notion

²² Id., p. 32.

²³ GADAMER, Hans-Georg: *Pravda a metoda I. Nárys filosofické hermeneutiky*. Praha : Triáda, 2010, pp. 68 – 77 (73). The original German edition was published as *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen : J. C. B. Mohr, 1960, pp. 66 – 76 (p. 72)): „Das Erlebnis hat eine betonte Unmittelbarkeit, die sich allem Meinen seiner Bedeutung entzieht. Alles Erlebte ist Selbsterlebtes, und das macht seine Bedeutung mit aus, daß es der Einheit dieses Selbst angehört und somit einen unverwechselbaren und unersetzlichen Bezug auf das Ganze dieses einen Lebens enthält“.

²⁴ DILTHEY, Wilhelm: *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*. Leipzig – Berlin : G. B. Teubner, 1912. René Wellek deals extensively with the term *lyrical experience* in his study "Gattungstheorie, das Lyrische und 'Erlebnis'", in: *Grenzziehungen. Beiträge zur Literaturkritik*. Stuttgart : Kohlhammer, 1972, pp. 106 – 124.

²⁵ Id., p. 70 et seq.

²⁶ Id., pp. 73 – 74.

²⁷ TATARKIEWICZ, Władysław: *Geschichte der sechs Begriffe*. Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003: Chapter XI. Das ästhetische Erlebnis: Geschichte des Begriffs, pp. 448 – 485.

²⁸ Id, p. 450: "Man begann, die psychischen Zustände, die Erlebnisse, die Gefühle, die unter der Einwirkung des Schönen und der Kunst empfunden wurden und bis dahin namenlos waren, »ästhetisch« zu nennen."

survival (Nachleben) by Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin. Georges Didi-Huberman develops Warburg's theory of the history of art as the *history of prophecies* taking the form of a bricolage from the debris of history and Benjamin's *history against the grain*: "Aby Warburg has understood once and for all that the history of images lives in the past and in the present according to the rhythm of displacement and of the return of what has been displaced. It is the *unconsciousness of time* that sets the pace under the surface and from above. It is a way of denoting geological opaqueness – the flows of magma in motion, the tectonics of the Earth's plates, slow sedimentations, shaking or volcanic eruptions – which fray genealogies, buries affiliations, and simply said, leaves our discipline to the unverifiable."²⁹

Didi-Huberman's formulation conspicuously resembles the archaeological concept of cultural memory by Oskár Čepan, who formulated this as early as the beginning of the 1970s.³⁰ It is a kind of bricolage phenomenology of history which represents the counterpart of the teleological concept of history as progress and growth. And through phenomenology, the thinking of Oskár Čepan, Didi-Huberman and – surprisingly, within the tradition of Slovak literary scholarship – František Miko are interlinked in a clear way.

VI

Karl Bühler is undoubtedly the intermediary element between the communicative-semiotic conception of style and the phenomenology of perception. In his fundamental work *The Theory of Language*³¹ he develops Hermann Ebbinghaus's experiential psychology, as a result of which he comes very close to Worringer's aesthetics of *Abstraction and Empathy*.³² Worringer perceived this as a contribution to the psychology of style, which resembles again Miko's concept of experientiality as bricolage. Though Bühler does not use the term experientiality, he links the problem of experience with the notion of perception, and employs a set of terms, such as *Wahrnehmungsordnung* (order of perception) – *Wahrnehmungsraum* (space of perception) – *Wahrnehmungstisch* (establishing perception).³³

²⁹ DIDI-HUBERMAN, Georges: *Ninfa moderna*. Praha : Agite/Fra, 2009, p. 141.

³⁰ ČEPAN, Oskár: Ešte jeden antidiológ. In: *Literárne bagately*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1971, pp. 127 – 132 (129): "It would probably be more appropriate to talk not only about horizontal, but also about vertical disruptions and shifts of the 'geological' layers of literature. Older stages can thus get over newer ones, intermix with them, get 'updated', and the youngest layers can at once—temporarily or permanently—sink into the immense chasms of the Archaean, and can 'archaize'." Čepan's *Literárne bagately* were not distributed, and were not published until 1992 by Archa; however, Čepan used an analogical formulation in 1979 in his study *Vzťahy v literárnom vývine*. In: *Slavica Slovaca*, vol. 14, 1979, no. 4, pp. 364 – 365.

³¹ BÜHLER, Karl: *Sprachtheorie*. Stuttgart : Gustav Fischer Verlag, 1965 (1st edition: 1934).

³² WORRINGER Wilhelm: Abstrakce a vciťování. Příspěvek k psychologii stylu. In: ZUSKA, Vlastimil (ed.): *Umění, krása a šeredno*. Praha : Karolinum, 2003, pp. 159 – 173. Worringer's book dates from 1908, and Worringer alternates in it, in a very specific way, the terms *pleasure (pôžitok)* and *lived experience (prežitok)*. There is a Czech translation of Worringer's book, but the version in Zuska (ed.) seems to me superior.

³³ František Miko returned to the original Husserlian roots of his thinking through which he opened the way to the current problems of the aesthetics of perception in his later reflection „Význam ako intuitívny

On the other hand, Bühler's terminology links Miko's concept to the modern phenomenology of perception of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, known from Czech translations and from the Czech and Slovak philosophical and aesthetic thinking of the 1960s.³⁴ From here it is but two steps from here – forgetting and rediscovering – to the current aesthetics of perception by Gernot Böhme,³⁵ and to the *atmospheres* (Atmosphären) and *attunements* (Stimmungen) of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht.³⁶

VII

Miko's notion of experientiality involves not only the topography of his theoretical thinking. Experientiality is the key concept of František Miko. It is the core and basic element of Miko's expression system which formalises his functional, communicative-semiotic theory of style. Conceptuality is its counterpart within the iconic and operational part of the expression system.

Miko's experientiality has an ontological nature, and is the direct outcome of the mental processing of perception. Within the system of mental value centres and activities, Miko differentiates between the sensorial, imaginative, cognitive, vocal, action and value centres whose focal point is the emotional centre: "Emotiveness is closer to the value centre because it is, apart from the so-called action feelings whose *energy* ensures the action sphere (anger – fear; joy – frustration, sorrow), the first concrete yardstick by

fenomén" (Meaning as an Intuitive Phenomenon), in: *Význam, jazyk, semióza*. Nitra : University of Pedagogy, 1994, pp. 63 – 77 (66 – 67): "Meaning is then fundamentally a fact and only a fact of consciousness. It is the tool for 'our' contact with the object in the absence of the object, and this contact occurs in our consciousness. The task of the consciousness in awaking the latent meaning in the code is that on the basis of a 'connection' with other meanings it updated the phenomenon of the object in order to – in conjunction with other words – imagine the phenomenon of the given fact. Not in a figurative form (though it is not excluded), but in the form of a phenomenon 'I know what it is about', 'I know that...'. The expression 'phenomenon' should be essentially re-evaluated as a specific feature of consciousness that was introduced by phenomenology as the basic act of consciousness in a philosophically pregnant and programmatic way (E. Husserl)."

³⁴ In our context, Iva Mojžišová apparently benefited most from the phenomenology of perception. I was reminded by Fedor Matejov about the connection to Čepan's reading of Merleau-Ponty's work in Polish translation and to Milan Hamada's personal reflections on this topic from the 1970s. Dana Kubalová-Paraličová also notes the link between František Miko's thinking to phenomenology on the basis of her personal experience: „In his focus on the perception process, professor Miko was truly modern (almost prophetic). Similar voices calling for the rediscovery of perception can be found, for example, in the lectures of the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2008, p. 12): ‚Modern thinking and art rehabilitate perception and the perceived world‘“ (KUBALOVÁ-PARALIČOVÁ, Dana: *Interpretačné dialógy s profesorom Mikom*. In: KAPSOVÁ, Eva – REŽNÁ, Miroslava (Eds.): *O interpretácii umeleckého textu*, 25. Nitra : University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Faculty of Arts, 2011, pp. 163 – 175 (170)). The author cites the Czech translation MERLEAU-PONTY'S *Svět vnímání*. Praha : Oikoymenth, 2008. Merleau-Ponty's work, epochal for the aesthetics of perception, originally appeared in 1945, and the sequentiality between his and Miko's reflections should be seen as Miko's later appropriation of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

³⁵ BÖHME, Gernot: *Asthetik. Vorlesungen über Ästhetik als allgemeine Wahrnehmungslehre*. München : Fink, 2001.

³⁶ GUMBRECHT, Hans Ulrich: *Stimmungen lesen*. Berlin : Carl Hanser Verlag, 2011.

which value is assessed: this is where the fact of need (the lack of something) and the satisfaction of this need register in the feelings of inconvenience and pleasure). The value yardstick is in fact the generalisation of these emotional experiences. Emotiveness can, of course, also work vice versa as emotional appreciation of the value as such...³⁷

VIII

In the 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s, when Miko presented a comprehensive theory of style,³⁸ psychology did not dispose of reliable instruments to grasp experientiality in a cognitive way. Its ontological background remained diffuse.

Neurobiological research in the 1990s brought a breakthrough. In a formulation of this period: "The body (body *as such*) and the brain create a single organism, they intensively and mutually interact along chemical and neural pathways."³⁹ On the basis of neurophysiological research Antonio R. Damasio showed that Descartes' *cogito, ergo sum*, the separation of the body and the soul, and, speaking today's language, of *emotions, feelings and the mind*, is not true, because these are interactive perceptions that fit together. According to this theory, emotions are perceptions, and the necessary basis for such perceptions is created by the *mapping of the body in the brain*. Damasio created an interference triad of emotions as corporeal interactions with the external environment, feelings processed by the body, and thinking as body mapping in the brain.⁴⁰ He defined an entire system of markers to denote different emotions and feelings. By interconnecting emotions, feelings and the mind, neurobiological research not only rehabilitated the body and sensorial perception and hence experience and experientiality, but also found the tools for their identification and recording. He showed that they do not have the form of binary oppositions, but that of model differences.

Traditionally, we distinguish between five senses: sight (*visus*), hearing (*auditus*), smell (*odoratus*), taste (*gustus*) and touch (*tactus*), of which the first four of them can be easily identified with an organ of the body and object. The distinction between the senses has been taken a step further: "Better knowledge of the nervous system has led us to understand that the other three senses became distinct from touch or pressure: temperature, balance and pain."⁴¹ Sight is considered the leading sense; it is the *lord and master of the others* (Leonardo da Vinci). Six basic feelings derive from these senses: fear, anger,

³⁷ MIKO, František: Štýl, informácia, hodnota. In: *Hodnoty a literárny proces*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1982, p. 66.

³⁸ The fundamental features of Miko's theory of style originated in the 1940s. From the outset, Miko based his theory on Bühler's *psychological* model of language as an organon and on his theory of three language functions (BÜHLER, Karl: *Sprachtheorie*. Stuttgart : Fischer Verlag, 1934). Bühler's model of language was followed by all later communication-semiotic concepts (Mukařovský, Jakobson, Riffaterre). In the 1960s, Miko arrived at the expressional theory of style, methodologically formulated in his publication *Text a štýl/Text and Style* (Bratislava: Smena, 1970).

³⁹ DAMASIO, Antonio: *Der Spinoza-Effekt. Wie Gefühle unser Leben bestimmen*. Berlin : List Taschenbuch, 2005, p. 226.

⁴⁰ DAMASIO, Antonio: *Descartesův omyl. Emoce, rozum a lidský mozek*. Praha : Mladá fronta 2000.

⁴¹ REINHARD, Wolfgang: *Lebensformen Europas. Eine historische Kulturanthropologie*. München : C. H. Beck 2004, p. 92.

sorrow, joy, disgust, curiosity; and the complex feeling of melancholy deriving from fear and curiosity.⁴²

A special direction in the aesthetics of perception has been taken by Gernot Böhme.⁴³ Böhme derives touch from feeling (Fühlen) and sensation (Spüren), considering the feeling of his own body presence as the basic one: "Perception is, through sensation, an experience that I am, and in what humour I am at the place where I find myself", whereas, he continues, "what I feel is linked to a certain atmosphere which can be scary, cheering, burdensome, enticing, etc."⁴⁴ Böhme then distinguishes between *ingression* as an atmosphere transmitted to the entity from the environment, and *discrepancy* which reflects the difference in the attunement of the entity and the environment. His basic notions include Heidegger's phenomenological *state of mind*, which expresses interference, inosculation and mutual intersection of the subject and object poles of perception. The essential element of Böhme's theory is the finding that the atmosphere is created *synaesthetically*, as a mutual intersection of all senses and substitution of one sense for another.⁴⁵

Research in synaesthesia deals with the phenomenon denoted as substitution of one sense for another, or the merger of several senses within a literary figure.⁴⁶ Richard Cytowic offered two categories of synaesthesia: spontaneous phenomena of perception, and metaphoric synaesthesia.⁴⁷ Inherent synaesthesias discussed by Cytowic have a spatial dimension: they are enduring, discrete units, they are easy to remember, emotional, and are known for certain shape constants and space projections.⁴⁸

Sabine Gross has considered metaphoric synaesthesias and adopted a division into synaesthetic perceptions (inherent synaesthesia) and intermodal analogies. She considers them as two types of synaesthetic perception, and promotes a link between the research into metaphoric synaesthesias in literary theory and linguistics, and psychological knowledge about synaesthesia as a biological-mental phenomenon: "It is not only about an insight into the specific linguistic process, but also about a human use of the language in the form of understanding the world, modelling, susceptibility as overcoming the capacity to perceive, and about an aesthetic outline."⁴⁹

⁴² Reinhard, op. cit., pp. 103 and 107.

⁴³ BÖHME, Gernot: *Asthetik. Vorlesungen über Ästhetik als allgemeine Wahrnehmungslehre*. München : Wilhelm Fink Verlag 2001, p. 39.

⁴⁴ Böhme, op. cit., p. 42.

⁴⁵ Böhme, op. cit., p. 87.

⁴⁶ CYTOWIC, Richard, E.: *Wahrnehmungs-Synästhesie*. In: ADLER, Hans – ZEUCH, Ulrike: *Synästhesie: Interferenz – Transfer – Synthese der Sinne*. Würzburg : Königshausen & Neumann 2002, p. 7.

⁴⁷ Marino and Marks distinguish between the *strong* and *weak* form of synaesthesia, which evokes certain scepticism in Cytowic, because, according to him, it implies that synaesthesias are not a single phenomenon and are differentiated on the basis of the fact that strong synaesthesia is manifested in the actual experience of perception, and weak synaesthesia is best manifested in the intermodal metaphoric language and the intermodal attunement of the acts of selective attention (MARTINO, G. – MARKS, L. E.: *Synaesthesia: strong and weak. Current directions in psychological science*. In: Cytowic, op. cit., p. 7).

⁴⁸ Cytowic, op. cit. 13 – 23.

⁴⁹ GROSS, Sabine: *Literatur und Synästhesie: Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Wahrnehmung, Sprache und Poetizität*. In ADLER, Hans – ZEUCH, Ulrike: *Synästhesie: Interferenz – Transfer – Synthese der Sinne*. Würzburg : Königshausen & Neumann, 2002, pp. 57 – 95.

Hendrik M. Emrich has gone a step further and determined the ontological status of synaesthesias by claiming them as a life condition, and stressed their productivity: “Synaesthesia as a life form means that we attribute to items (and to ourselves) a new multi-layer character, ambiguity, complexity and meaning.”⁵⁰

From our perspective, it is essential that synaesthesia has a neurophysiological basis and originates from the interaction of the *sensory perception of things*. Synaesthesias confirm from another angle the importance of the body as a source of emotions, feelings and reason, while having another important property. They lead to “cross-modal perception”,⁵¹ to a mutual inosculation and intersection of various modal forms of sensory perception.

In the field of genuine and metaphoric synaesthesias, synaesthetic processes are linked to the synonymic terms of cooperation, collision, interference, mutual support, or parallel actions of sensory perceptions. They are based on intermodal analogies, parallels, correspondence and coincidences in time and space. In this regard, they are synoptic⁵² and interferential, because they involve the interaction of two or more processes, their inosculation and intersection. The interference processes are not organised in a dichotomic, binary way, but in a modal way. They are strongly differentiated and are characterised by many fleeting changes featuring a wide variety of subtle differences.⁵³

IX

What is essential to our reflection is the question of whether it is possible to identify what is present in a physical, performative form and if so, how. Or to put it differently: whether physicality and performativeness have a semiotic nature. Erika Fischer-Lichte stresses the non-semiotic nature of corporality and performativeness as mimetic performance. She states that, in a theatrical performance, “its character is not created by the work but is the result of the event within which it is realised”.⁵⁴ This formulation suggests the rejection of Lotman’s structuralist notion of *culture as a text* and his post-structuralist deconstruction. The *performative turn* is based on the departure from the semiotics of a text and on the tendency to the mediality of the body and the transition from a work to an event. With regard to performance, she bases her assumptions on the fact that “...two new relations are newly determined in it, forming the basis of hermeneutic and semiotic aesthetics: firstly, a relation between the subject and the object, the observer

⁵⁰ EMRICH, Hinderk, M. – SCHNEIDER, Udo – ZEDLER, Monika (Hg.): *Welche Farbe hat der Montag? Synästhesie: Das Leben mit verknüpften Sinnen*. Stuttgart – Leipzig : S. Hirzel Verlag, 2002, p. 62.

⁵¹ MARKS, Lawrence: On colored-hearing synaesthesia: implications for the processing of speech and faces. In: BARON-COHEN, Simon – HARRISON, John, E. (Eds.): *Synaesthesia. Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Oxford : Blackwell, 1997, pp. 49 – 98.

⁵² MATEJOVIČ, Pavel: *Synoptici*. Bratislava : Kalligram, 2000, pp. 35, 39, 50, 130.

⁵³ ZAJAC, Peter: Interferenzialität als mitteleuropäisches Raumparadigma. In: CSÁKY, Moritz – LEITGEB, Christoph (Hg.): *Kommunikation – Gedächtnis – Raum*. Bielefeld : Transcript Verlag 2009, pp. 135 – 149.

⁵⁴ FISCHER-LICHTE, Erika: *Ästhetik des Performativen*. Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp Verlag, 2004, p. 53.

and the observed, the spectator and the actor; and secondly, a relation between physicality-corporality and the sign character of elements, between the signifier and the signified".⁵⁵ Erika Fischer-Lichte formulated the relation between the work and the event, between corporality and the sign character in a dichotomic, bipolar way, which is noteworthy, as she otherwise speaks of oscillations and fleeting processes in the case of performance.

This is apparently the core of the inherent tension between the terms ostension and performativeness, which have a joint basis in showing, presenting, demonstrating, introducing, exhibiting. The main difference is that ostension, as understood by Ivo Osolsobě, focuses more on communication and the issue of *diegetic showing*, and situationally points out *this* or *that*, while performance in the sense of the reflections of Fischer-Lichte rather refers to an event and the problem of *mimetic demonstration*.⁵⁶ This difference leads Osolsobě to the oscillation between the semiotic and anti-semiotic nature of ostension, and Fischer-Lichte to the presentation of performativeness as a non-semiotic phenomenon. The recent neurobiological advances and their cultural implications suggest that the body itself shows in its performativeness and ostensivity modal semiotic markers, which has certain consequences for understanding theatre: theatre shows a semiotic nature also at points where it is connected not with verbal signs but with corporality, although these are not binarily structured signs, but modally structured indications. What remains open is the question of where in corporality can be situated the transitions between non-semioticism and semioticism, and between presentation and re-presentation.⁵⁷

Corporality has a semiotic nature, though it does not have the character of oppositions *either – or*, or modal transitions between *both – and*. The fact that we *cannot see* something means only that we cannot see the sign nature of corporal emotions, though we see the body and can describe with words our bodily emotions, such as bashfulness, guilt, pride, jealousy, envy, thankfulness, admiration, outrage, disdain, and our feelings of joy and grief. In the complicated language of neurophysiology this reads as follows: "The body ('the body as such') and the brain create a single organism and intensively interact along the chemical and neural pathways."⁵⁸ For our present purposes it is enough to conclude that the body not only creates signs, but has, as such, a sign form.

X

At this point, we should go back to the problem of perception and semiotic research into senses, which has so far dealt especially with sight, hearing and touch. Sybille Krämer pointed this out in connection with the semiotic nature of the voice that "it seems that whatever we request from binarily organised conceptual classifications, in cases

⁵⁵ Fischer-Lichte, c. d., p. 19.

⁵⁶ OSOLSOBĚ, Ivo: *Principa parodica. Posbírané papíry převážně o divadle [Principa parodica. Versammelte Zettel vornehmlich über das Theater]*. Praha, 2007, pp. 34 – 39 (34), OSOLSOBĚ, Ivo: *OstENZE, hra, jazyk. Semiotické studie*. Brno : Host, 2002

⁵⁷ These issues are discussed by Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht in his reflections; their problem lies in the fact that their mere presence (presentation) can be verified only as re-presentation.

⁵⁸ DAMASIO, Antonio: *Der Spinoza-Effekt. Wie Gefühle unser Leben bestimmen*. Berlin : List Taschenbuch, 2005, p. 226.

where this two-sided scheme of notions is 'applied' to the voice, we come to the conclusion that voice is always both: the body and the spirit, nature and culture, feeling and intellect."⁵⁹ The same direction is followed by the research on *traces* as indexical signs based on the interferences of material traces (fingerprints, DNA), face (photograph), personal data (ID card) and signature.⁶⁰ This interferentiality is the symptom of the synaesthetic mixing of senses. Charles S. Peirce uses the term *mixed signs*⁶¹ in general semiotics, and Uwe Wirth notes in this connection that "instead of iconic, indexical and symbolic signs it would be more appropriate to talk about interfering sign aspects".⁶² For Peirce, presentation and representation in photography is a classic example of the *interference of aspects*, qualifying it as primarily indexical. Geoffrey Batchen notes in this connection that, in photography, "reality and representation according to Peirce's argumentation must always mutually inosculate".⁶³

Traces as material indices create semiotic situations at the threshold between the material and non-material nature of signs. Lubomír Plesník identifies them in a rock song as an evocative ability to *utter the unutterable*: "... What I mean is the depiction of different verbal 'subliminal' qualities that we feel from various impressive snapshots, in ephemeral mood constellations, in specific states of mind (reality) at the *confines of vigilance and dreaming* (emphasis mine, P. Z.), of the proven and guessed, factual and apparent, evident and unexplainable, and behind that all those actions that make themselves allusively felt only under extraordinary circumstances and which we, in relation to verbal consciousness based on 'daily' operation, situate below as something 'darker', or above as something 'clearer'".⁶⁴

XI

The current research on modal, interference semiotic situations rehabilitates the category of experientiality, even though it has been superimposed on a wider ontological

⁵⁹ KRÄMER, Sybille: Die 'Rehabilitierung der Stimme'. Über die Oralität hinaus. In: KOLESCH, Doris und KRÄMER, Sybille (Hg.): *Stimme*. Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 2006, pp. 269 – 295 (290). The same point of view is used by KOLESCH, Doris: Die Spur der Stimme. Überlegungen zu einer performativen Ästhetik. In: EPPING-JÄGER, Cornelia – LINZ, Erika: *Medien/ Stimmen*. Köln, 2003, p. 275.

⁶⁰ KRÄMER, Sybille: Was also ist eine Spur? Und worin besteht ihre epistemologische Rolle? Eine Bestandaufnahme. In: KRÄMER, Sybille – KOGGE, Werner – GRUBE, Gernot (Hg.): *Spur. Spurenlesen als Orientierungstechnik und Wissenskunst*. Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp, 2007, pp. 11 – 33 (19).

⁶¹ PEIRCE, Charles Sanders: *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Vol. I – VI (Eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss), volumes VII and VIII (Ed. Arthur W. Burks). Cambridge/Mass., 1931 – 1958, II., pp. 285, 302.

⁶² WIRTH, Uwe: Zwischen genuiner und degenerierender Indexikalität: Eine Peircesche Perspektive auf Derridas und Freuds Spurbegriff, in: In: KRÄMER Sybille – KOGGE, Werner – GRUBE, Gernot (Hg.): *Spur. Spurenlesen als Orientierungstechnik und Wissenskunst*. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 2007, pp. 55 – 81 (58)

⁶³ BATCHEN, Geoffrey: Ektoplasma. In: CÍSAŘ, Karel (ed): *Co je to fotografie? Z anglických, francouzských a německých originálů přeložili Eva Klimentová et al.* Praha : Herrmann & Synové, 2004, p. 352.

⁶⁴ PLESNÍK, Lubomír: Lucia na oblohe s diamantmi (Lucy in the sky with diamonds). In: PLESNÍK, Lubomír (compiler): *Výrazové osobitosti teenagerskej kultúry. O interpretácii umeleckého textu 17*. Nitra : University of Pedagogy, 1996 pp. 105 – 166 (139).

concept of perception. With regard to the new media, Marshall McLuhan was apparently the first to point out that none of them „has extended the function of a single sense, as did the old media -- for example a wheel as an extension of the leg, clothes as an extension of skin, the phonetic alphabet as an extension of the eye – rather, they affect our entire central nervous system, thus transforming all aspects of our social and psychic existence.”⁶⁵

McLuhan drew attention to the synaesthetic nature of the current perception in the new media. Their scope has extended not only from the telegraph, radio, film, telephone and television to various forms of computers and mobile phones, but also their combinations came to the fore, and their complexity also increased. McLuhan thought only in one direction – from perception to media fixation. Today, however, we are witnesses to a reverse process. With some exaggeration we could say that the direction goes from the wheel to the leg, from clothes to skin, from the phonetic alphabet to the eye, from signs to the body and object.

It is interesting from this point of view that modal nature is typical not only of transitional situations between the corporal and non-corporal character of signs, but on the other side of the media spectrum there are situations between the conceptual and the corporal, experience-driven sign character.

This can be illustrated with some examples. Johannes Itten's classic *The Art of Colour* offers the first.⁶⁶ Itten deals with various types of colour contrast. He identifies a scale of seven colours, the contrast of colour as such, the contrast of light and dark colours, the contrast of warm and cold colours, the complementary contrast, the simultaneous contrast, and the contrast of qualities and quantities.

Although Itten uses the notion of contrast, in fact it is a modal scope of sliding and smooth transitions from one colour to another, or transitions within one colour: “Velvet black is apparently the blackest shade, and barytic sulphate is the purest white shade. There is just one maximally black colour and maximally white colour, and between them there is an unusually wide scale of light and dark shades of grey, between black and white.”⁶⁷ This is essentially the original modal semiotic answer to the later provocative question of whether “a stain is semiotic”.

A second example is provided by the reflection by Yuri Lotman with roots in the complex cultural and historical situation in mannerism where the sign character shifted largely away from sensory perception and then returned, taking the long way around in an exclusive form of a modal description of colours, based on visual and touch perception: “... with a one-sided description using the left hemisphere, the respondents show exceptional inventiveness in the classification of shades of colour, among them flesh-coloured, terracotta, sky-blue plum colour, the colour of sea waves, moon colour... there used to be fashionable colours that I've never heard of -- E. P. Jankovová recalls – such as hanneton as dark brown, literally ‘cockchafer (colour)’; grenouille évanouie as frog green, literally ‘fainted frog (colour)’; gorge-de-pigeon, tourterelle as the colour of

⁶⁵ MCLUHAN, Marshall: *Člověk, média a elektronická kultura*. Praha: Lidové noviny, 2007, p. 225.

⁶⁶ ITTEN, Johannes: *Kunst der Farbe. Subjektives Erleben und objektives Erkennen als Wege zur Kunst*. Leipzig : Seemann Verlag, 2001, first edition 1961.

⁶⁷ Itten, op. cit., p. 46.

a pigeon's chest, colour of the struma. Language freed of the binding control of objectivity (...) opens up a semiotic game of consciousness, and stimulates the shaping of refined, self-contained models. If the signs of a single semiotic range in the first case are widely interpreted not only by reality, but also mutual relations with other types of semiosis, then the second case is dominated by the tendency to withdraw into a certain isolated simple semiotic world providing space for the game of models and classifications. Meanwhile, the constructions occurring in the process of such semiotic creation find themselves among semantic mechanisms through the mechanisms of cultural memory, and are the means for a more delicate analysis of the extra-semiotic reality.⁶⁸

Though a stain⁶⁹ is semiotically diffusive, this does not mean that it is asemiotic. The mannerist game of colours is seemingly completely isolated from corporality, but in fact it is the manifestation of the corporal mood and refined perception of the atmosphere in which a person is found.

Our third example comes from cave art. When Ruben de la Vialle discovered wall paintings in the Niaux caves in 1660, he was not aware that he had discovered primeval art; at that time no one knew that modern man was over 30,000 years old. The anthropologist David Lewis-Williams noted that shamans needed something more than just the projection which they achieved during altered states of consciousness; they needed to "fix" them: "They resorted to visions full of emotions and tried to touch them, fix them at a certain place, maybe to a soft surface with their fingers. They were not inventing images. They were just touching what was already there."⁷⁰ Their images and visions, associated with the touch of fingertips, were haptic, corporeal.

The experience of the physicality of images is also present among South African and North American shamans and in the current psychological experiments with perception in darkness where the "extended spectrum of consciousness" starts to work, triggered by the elimination of visual perception. It is interesting that this environment gives rise to a combination of figurative shapes and abstract patterns as a link between haptism and visual memory, which confirms that representation is closely linked to a wide variety of consciousness, from perception through reflection, thinking, feelings and emotions, imagination, desire, memory, assumptions, wishes and intentions up to a distinct internal structure of consciousness.

In this regard, there is one more important factor: the role of corporeality and of the sign character. This poetic example shows again that signs are not created only on the body or by the body, but that they have a corporeal nature, and in that case they are literally a body.

⁶⁸ LOTMAN, Jurij: *Asymetria a dialog*. In: *Text a kultúra*. Bratislava : Archa, 1994, pp. 31 – 47 (31 and 33 – 34).

⁶⁹ MCGOWAN, Todd: *Looking for the Gaze: Lacanian Theory and Its Vicissitudes*. In: *Cinema Journal*, 42, No. 3, Spring 2003, pp. 27 – 47, in: INGERLE, Petr: *Příběh perspektivy*. Brno : Barrister and Principal, 2010, p. 120. According to Lacan, blind spots occur where the observer loses his distance and becomes part of what he/she sees. This is a little more precise than Welsch's pure imagination of the "blind spot". He states that when we are in something, we cannot see it at the same time (and he goes further: when we are something, for example, when our face is a blind spot for us...we can feel it as our state of mind (Befindlichkeit)).

⁷⁰ LEWIS-WILLIAMS, David: *Mysl v jeskyni*. Praha, Academia, 2007, p. 235.

XII

We can conclude our reflection on perception and experientiality with two hypotheses which were implicit at its beginning: the body is semiotic and semiotics is corporeal. The semiotics of corporeality can be marked by emotions and feelings reflected through the mind, and mapped with highly differentiated expressions, while the attributes of experientiality have a modal, indexical nature in terms of *indications*.⁷¹ It is in this area of indications that a vast field of modally distinguishable representations and the related space of modal semiotics opens up.

Translated by Judita Takáčová

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⁷¹ The terms *latency* and *ephemerality* have begun to be used in this context. See GUMBRECHT, Hans Ulrich – KLINGER, Florian (Hg.): *Latenz. Blinde Passagiere in den Geisteswissenschaften*. Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011. The term *nuances* as fine tones (shades) (as František Miko would say in the language of stylistics), used by Marília Librandi-Rocha in her reflection *Unsichtbare Wolken* (pp. 135 – 147) corresponds to the modal scaling along the axis of the *more-or-less* the same.

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