

Interdiskurzívna
komunikácia medzi
literatúrou a bioetikou

The Interdiscursive
Communication between
Literature and Bioethics

BOGUMIŁA SUWARA
JANA TOMAŠOVIČOVÁ
(eds.)

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Institute of World Literature SAS

Dúbravská cesta 9

841 04 Bratislava

Slovenská republika / Slovak Republic

Tel. (00421-2) 54431995

E-mail usvwlit@savba.sk

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BOGUMILA SUWARA Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV, v. v. i.

JANA TOMAŠOVIČOVÁ Filozofická fakulta Univerzity sv. Cyríla a Metoda v Trnave

(eds.)

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The interdiscursive communication between literature and bioethics

BOGUMIŁA SUWARA – JANA TOMAŠOVIČOVÁ

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Currently, we are witnessing not only dynamic changes in many scientific fields but also the crossing of boundaries between scientific and artistic discourses, which have become the subject of professional reflection in several concepts emerging in the last two decades, such as the theory of interdiscursive relations or narrative bioethics.

This issue of *WORLD LITERATURE STUDIES* explores the movements outlined in the example of interdiscursive communication between literature and bioethics. Their relationship has largely been reflected upon from the position of the traditional biomedical doctor-patient relationship. Today, however, bioethics is an interdiscursive field that interacts intensively with the cultural sciences, the arts, and the humanities, on the one hand, and very closely with the natural sciences and biomedicine, on the other. In contrast to the traditional topics of medical ethics, it introduces completely new themes for literature, such as regenerative medicine, gene editing, cloning, human enhancement, euthanasia, and many others, which are increasingly becoming motifs of contemporary literature, film, and visual arts. The contributions demonstrate the reciprocal transfer of literary and bioethical discourses and the emergence of a new interdiscursive space, which includes narrative bioethics. The moral dilemmas arising within the framework of accelerated technological development, which affect not only the individual but also society, need to be captured in their complexity, hence rationalist ethical rhetoric and normative argumentation should be extended to include narrative aspects.

The contributions to the topic of this issue reflect the interrelationship of literature and bioethics at multiple levels. They explore how literary portrayals of supporting bioethical themes enrich the discourse with exemplary instances of moral crises, conflicts of action, and modes of decision-making without which the theoretical bioethical perspective would remain significantly impoverished. At the same time, they depict human hopes and fears of new advancements through literary and artistic images and offer the opportunity to communicate and discuss them together.

Unveiling the subversive potential: Challenging dominant ideological discourses in selected literary texts

SAJJAD GHEYTASI

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Unveiling the subversive potential: Challenging dominant ideological discourses in selected literary texts

Hegemonic discourse. Faultline. Residual elements. Yaa Gyasi. Colson Whitehead.

The unconscious of the text utilizes residual elements from the past as strategic faultlines, purposefully disrupting the articulation of the dominant hegemonic discourse. These residual elements function as floating signifiers within the discursivity field, calling attention to their presence on the surface. As a result, the convergence of crisis and oppression forces the reader to question the validity and authority of the dominant discourse. In this study, a comprehensive strategy is proposed aiming to question the entrenched ideological discourses prevalent in specific literary texts: *The Underground Railroad* (2016) by Colson Whitehead and *Homegoing* (2017) by Yaa Gyasi. This strategy will be outlined in detail and subsequently applied to select literary works to demonstrate its efficacy and practical application. Moreover, it also emphasizes the strategic utilization of culture. It highlights the promotion of dynamic approach rather than passive agreement, and creation of a platform for collective resistance rather than a mere survival space. The strategy recognizes the value of culture in achieving specific goals, harnessing cultural resources to encourage active engagement against oppressive forces. Additionally, the strategy aims to establish a collaborative space where individuals unite to challenge prevailing norms and systems, acknowledging the importance of collective action and solidarity in effective resistance.

Sajjad Gheytsi
English Literature Department
Payame Noor University
Tehran
Iran
sajjadgheytsi2@pnu.ac.ir
ORCID: 0000-0001-6111-0279

Look outside as you speed through,
and you'll see the true face of America.

Colson Whitehead (2016, 69)

Literature has long been recognized as a powerful vehicle for challenging prevailing ideologies and questioning dominant discourses. By utilizing a democratic genre like the novel, writers have the ability to engage readers in critical reflection and offer alternative perspectives that challenge the status quo. In this regard, thinkers like Pierre Macherey, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Raymond Williams, and Allan Sinfield emphasize the role of ideology and the social context in the production of meaning. Macherey argues that the unconscious of the text reveals the hidden workings of ideology (Rivkin and Ryan 2008, 703), while Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory examines how discursive practices construct social and political identities within specific ideological frameworks (2001, 109). Williams' framework invites critical analysis of texts, considering their relationship to the dominant ideology, their engagement with residual elements, and their potential to contribute to emergent cultural and social change (1976, 97). Sinfield argues that texts contain elements that expose the faultlines of power and ideology within society (1992, 108). These are points of conflict and contradiction that disrupt the smooth surface of the text, revealing hidden power relations and ideological struggles.

Within the realm of literary texts, the unconscious of the text emerges as a mechanism that harnesses the power of residual elements from the past to create faultlines within the text's structure. The unconscious elements may stem from the author's own unconscious, societal norms and values, or collective cultural influences.

It [the unconscious] refers to that ideological horizon which conceals only because it is interminable, because there is always something more, but it refers also to that abyss over which ideology is built. Like a planet revolving round an absent sun, an ideology is made of what it does not mention; it exists because there are things which must not be spoken of. (Macherey 1978, 132)

Notably, faultlines serve as deliberate disruptions, injecting crisis into the overall narrative, and ultimately challenging the articulation of the dominant hegemonic discourse. In this sense, as Quan Zhou states, "The communicative memory of each character in *A Mercy* serves to shape his or her individual identity. More importantly, through his or her own efforts, the individual manages to transform the communicative memory into the collective cultural memory" (2019, 3). Residual elements, in this context, can be understood as fragments from previous historical periods or marginalized perspectives that have not been fully absorbed into the dominant cultural fabric. These fragments can function as floating signifiers, reemerging from the depths of the text unconscious to disrupt and destabilize the coherence of the dominant discourse: "By means of the text it becomes possible to escape from the domain of spontaneous ideology, to escape from the false consciousness of self, of history, and of time" (Macherey 1978, 132). Texts car-

ry the traces of alternative traditions, counter-narratives, and suppressed voices – aiming to explore the complex interplay of diverse voices, languages, and discourses within a text or discourse (Bakhtin 1981, 76). Accordingly, readers enter the world of coexistence and interaction of multiple voices, each representing distinct social, cultural, and ideological positions.

The reemergence of these residual elements and the consequent crisis create a moment of tension and confrontation within the text. The crisis serves as a catalyst for questioning the validity and authority of the dominant discourse, exposing its limitations, biases, and power imbalances. It prompts readers to challenge the imposed closures of the dominant ideology and invites them to reassess their understanding of the social, political, and cultural frameworks that shape their lives.

Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* (2016) and Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2017) challenge and disrupt the existing power structures by shedding light on the intertwined processes of nation-building and storytelling. In doing so, they expose the underlying mechanisms that shape a nation's history and identity. The novels explore how storytelling plays a pivotal role in the construction and preservation of a nation's narrative. In this sense, it is worth mentioning that the stories we tell ourselves and others shape our collective understanding of the past and present. By highlighting the experiences of enslaved individuals and their resistance, the novels bring forth marginalized voices that have been historically silenced.

This study aims to propose a comprehensive strategy for interrogating the ideological discourses at work in the selected literary texts. By outlining this strategy, we offer readers a framework through which they can engage with texts as sites of resistance and transformation. The proposed strategy will encompass a range of approaches, including deconstruction, counter-narratives, intertextuality, and the exploration of alternative perspectives. By unraveling the faultlines and exposing the residual elements within these texts, we hope to inspire readers and scholars to engage with literature as a site of contestation, resistance, and the reimagining of alternative possibilities.

Within late capitalist culture, hegemonic domination operates through multifaceted mechanisms that extend beyond straightforward oppression. As Paulo Freire states, "One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness" (2000, 51). Moreover, its effectiveness lies in its ability to imbue those under its control with a sense of what can be perceived as "liberation". This complex form of domination functions in diverse ways to shape subjectivities that do not perceive themselves as oppressed, except in relation to their own perceived personal shortcomings. Additionally, it produces subjectivities that are oblivious to their participation in systemic oppression inflicted upon others. This intricate web of power relations ensures the maintenance of the status quo by producing subjectivities that are complicit in their own subordination and the subjugation of marginalized groups. Understanding these complex mechanisms is crucial for critical analysis and resistance, as it allows for the identification and interrogation of the strategies employed by hegemonic forces to perpetuate their dominance.

The main objective of this essay is to broaden perspectives and conversations regarding Black issues and Black life. Its aim is not only to reposition the importance of Black cultural ontologies but also to revitalize their crucial significance in the political consciousness and imagination. This will be achieved through comparative exploration of the ‘politics’ of blackness.

Joel Pfister states that “the affirmative capacity of culture is to help produce incentives, energies, and ideas that promote progressive social change” (2000, 610). Active engagement harnesses the positive potential inherent in cultural practices, beliefs, and expressions, enabling the creation of incentives, energies, and ideas that propel progressive social change. By actively participating in cultural endeavors, individuals and communities can tap into the transformative power of culture to generate motivations, ignite passions, and cultivate innovative concepts that drive societal advancements. This affirmative capacity of culture serves as a catalyst for positive transformations, encouraging individuals to actively shape and challenge existing norms, systems, and structures.

In Lawrence Levine’s *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom*, there is a clear intention to acknowledge and revive the rich accomplishments and dynamics of slave culture, predominantly manifested through oral traditions. This encompassed various expressive forms, including spirituals, adaptations of African religious customs merged with Christianity, secular songs, work songs, tales, dances, the development of creative language, jokes, rituals of insult, and innovative narrative techniques (2007, 220). Levine challenges the views of certain historians who dismiss these cultural expressions as mere “therapeutic” remedies that served as substitutes for true emancipation. Rejecting this reductionist perspective, Levine argues that these expressive arts and sacred beliefs held much deeper significance. They served as vital instruments for sustaining life, preserving sanity, promoting physical and mental well-being, and fostering self-respect among the enslaved population. According to Levine, slave music, religion, and folk beliefs constituted an entire sacred realm that provided essential distance and separation between the slaves and their owners (168), effectively preventing the transformation of legal slavery into spiritual subjugation.

The analyzed novels aimed to portray the complexity and adaptability of “Negro life” and “folk” culture. Colson and Gyasi have depicted this expansive life and culture in relation to, but not solely defined by, racial and economic oppression. In her introductory chiasmus, Zora Neale Hurston assigns feminine attributes to the positive and flexible aspects of culture, memory, and forgetfulness. She states, “women forget all those things they don’t want to remember and remember everything they don’t want to forget” (2021, 1). The male and female Black workers introduced by Hurston in the opening paragraphs form a community that employs social interaction, storytelling, gossip, and humor to both mentally “forget” the hardships endured in their work and to regain a sense of adaptability, agency, empowerment, and wholeness.

REIMAGINING HISTORY: DISCOURSE CONSTRUCTION AND CULTURAL MEMORY IN *THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD*

The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead is a groundbreaking novel that reimagines the historical Underground Railroad, a secret network of safe escape routes for slaves in the antebellum American South, as a physical network of secret tunnels and trains. It serves as a prime example of a literary work that utilizes residual elements (Williams 1976, 97) from the past as strategic faultlines (Sinfield 1992, 108) within its structure, purposefully disrupting the articulation of the dominant hegemonic discourse. Whitehead's novel employs historical residual elements and delves into the unconscious of the text as powerful tools to challenge and subvert entrenched ideological discourses prevalent in society.

The actual accounts of violence, based on race, can go beyond the time of emancipation and continue to exist in the present day. Narratives of oppression disclose what has been repressed for decades and buried in the unconscious of the people, such accounts come to the surface using residual elements of the past. What the protagonist Cora states here opens up a gap in the text, regarding the fact that slavery exists but only the chains are different:

If they had been sensible and kept running, she and [fellow runaway] Caesar would be in the Free States. Why had they believed that two lowly slaves deserved the bounty of South Carolina that a new life existed so close, just over the state line? It was still the south, and the devil had long nimble fingers. And then, after all the world had taught them, not to recognize chains when they were snapped to their wrists and ankles. The South Carolina chains were of new manufacture – the keys and tumblers marked by regional design – but accomplished the purpose of chains. They had not traveled very far at all. (Whitehead 2016, 145)

The above quotation emphasizes that even though the chains in South Carolina may have appeared different, they were still chains of slavery. The mention of “regional design” suggests that oppression and control may take on different forms depending on the context, but the impact remains the same. Herein, the repressed come to the surface – constructing faultlines – and generate crisis within the dominant discourse. The image of a chain which takes different forms but is still the same haunts readers' minds, prompting them to ask questions about the validity of standardized discourse.

Despite the potential risks associated with freely reimagining the past, the novel *The Underground Railroad* skillfully incorporates an array of idiosyncratic elements, including time travel, teleportation, spirits, and ghosts. Rather than obscuring historical revisionism, these elements serve a purposeful role in accentuating particular themes, often intertwined with the collective memory of slavery within contemporary American society. In essence, this narrative approach becomes more than a mere storytelling technique; it emerges as a political act, advocating for a reevaluation of the past through the nuanced lens of the present.

The inclusion of time travel and supernatural elements creates a rich tapestry of narratives that serve as vehicles for addressing pressing sociopolitical issues surrounding race, power, and systemic oppression. Through this deliberate fusion

of history and fiction, the novel challenges conventional notions of linear time and historical truth. It interrogates the ways in which cultural memory and the retelling of history are intertwined, recognizing that our understanding of the past is inevitably filtered through the lens of the present. In doing so, it unearths the cultural dynamics and complexities that shape our perception of the past: “And America, too, is a delusion, the grandest one of all. The white race believes – believes with all its heart – that it is their right to take the land. To kill Indians. Make war. Enslave their brothers. This nation shouldn’t exist, if there is any justice in the world, for its foundations are murder, theft, and cruelty. Yet here we are” (Whitehead 2016, 242).

In this political act of revisiting history, the novel serves as a catalyst for critical engagement and collective introspection. It calls for a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the past, inviting readers to confront the uncomfortable realities and lingering effects of slavery in contemporary American society. By embracing the interplay between reality and fiction, the narrative sparks meaningful conversations and fosters a deeper appreciation for the intricacies of cultural memory and the ongoing quest for justice and equality.

Rather than aiming for a faithful reproduction of historical facts, the narrative incorporates residual elements of memory, emotion, and cultural perspectives, interweaving them to create a rich tapestry that reflects the multifaceted nature of truth and the complexities of human experience. This deliberate approach embraces the cultural and contextual nuances embedded within historical events, highlighting the inseparable relationship between history and culture. By engaging with the personal constructions of historical truth, the novel invites readers to critically examine their own understanding of the past and to recognize the diverse perspectives that shape our collective understanding of history and culture. In this regard, as stated by Toni Morrison, “fiction must bear witness and identify that which is useful from the past and that which ought to be discarded; it must make it possible to prepare for the present and live it out” (1984, 388).

Hence, the mentioned authors embraced what Ashraf Rushdy referred to as “political intertextuality” (1999, 4), a narrative approach that draws upon ideological texts rooted in the political discourse of the 1960s. By employing the conventional structure of 19th-century slave narratives, Whitehead skillfully engages with contemporary concerns, forging a powerful connection between past and present: “‘I have black skin, but I don’t have a tail. As far as I know – I never thought to look,’ Cora said. ‘Slavery is a curse, though, that much is true.’ Slavery is a sin when whites were put to the yoke, but not the African. All men are created equal, unless we decide you are not a man” (2016, 157). Whitehead weaves together diverse textual threads to create a cohesive narrative fabric that transcends time and space. He deftly navigates the faultline between historical contexts and modern sensibilities, using the inherited framework of slave narratives as a means to tackle urgent political and social issues:

Stolen bodies working stolen land. It was an engine that did not stop, its hungry boiler fed with blood. With the surgeries that Dr. Stevens described, Cora thought, the whites had begun stealing futures in earnest. Cut you open and rip them out, dripping. Because that’s

what you do when you take away someone's babies – steal their future. Torture them as much as you can when they are on this earth, then take away the hope that one day their people will have it better. (104)

The deep-seated wounds and complexities embedded within the collective memory, urging readers to confront the difficult conversations surrounding race, identity, and societal transformation. In this regard, “trying to protect threatened and vulnerable truths and denouncing abuse of power and oppression becomes a courageous, potentially dangerous act of resistance” (Pesso-Miquel 2007, 149). Moreover, considering residual and emergent elements (Williams 1976, 97), the novel engages with the ever-evolving dynamics of the politico-cultural landscape, amplifying marginalized voices and challenges us to consider the ways in which the memory of slavery shapes the social fabric and influences the pursuit of social change. Accordingly, our view is “enriched by the study of slave narratives, the changing historiography of slavery, the complicated history of race and power relations in America and throughout the world during the twentieth century, and the rise of psychoanalysis and other theoretical frameworks” (Smith 2007, 169).

Despite the anachronistic nature and seemingly impossible existence of an actual underground railroad, it serves as a metaphorical representation of the contributions made by African American labor throughout history. Through his response, the station agent Lumbly reveals the hidden driving force behind industrial advancements and societal progress – a force that has often been overlooked or marginalized within mainstream narratives. Lumbly's thought-provoking inquiry raises a momentous question, effectively creating a faultline within the dominant discourse. He challenges the prevailing narrative by asking, “Who builds anything in this country?” (Whitehead 2016, 63) This rhetorical question serves as a catalyst for deconstructing deeply ingrained assumptions and exploring the hidden truths beneath the surface:

Cora read the accounts of slaves who had been born in chains and learned their letters. Of Africans who had been stolen, torn from their homes and families, and described the miseries of their bondage and then their hair-raising escapes. She recognized their stories as her own. They were the stories of all the colored people she had ever known, the stories of black people yet to be born, the foundations of their triumphs. (233)

In this paragraph, Cora's engagement with slave narratives reflects how cultural residual elements form a faultline where the stories of the past intersect with her own experiences. By delving into these historical accounts, Cora finds herself connected to a larger collective memory, where the stories of those born in chains become a powerful narrative thread within her own cultural identity. Both Lumbly's inquiry and Cora's “rememory” (Morrison 1987, 135) serve as a rallying cry for acknowledging and celebrating African American culture and identity, disrupting the narrative of exclusion and emphasizing the need for a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of history and culture.

As the protagonists traverse various locations, they are compelled to confront the pervasive presence of racism in different forms. This conscious deconstruction challenges the notion that the railroad offers a straightforward path to freedom, as Cora's journey for a better life persists throughout the entirety of the novel. Lumbly's

astute remark encapsulates the essence of the railway, serving as a symbolic representation of its purpose: “If you want to see what this nation is all about, I always say, you have to ride the rails. Look outside as you speed through, and you’ll find the true face of America” (Whitehead 2016, 65). This statement encapsulates the idea that the railway functions as a lens through which the realities of America’s socio-cultural landscape are revealed.

Through discourse construction, Whitehead exposes the gap between the idealized perception of the nation and its harsher realities. The faultline created by this deconstruction forces readers to confront the uncomfortable truths that lie beneath the surface. It encourages critical reflection on the unconscious biases and structural inequalities that shape America’s identity and cultural landscape. For example, when a white woman uses the phrase “We’re optimistic”, the narrator observes that “Cora didn’t know what optimistic meant. She asked the other girls that night if they were familiar with the word. None of them had heard it before. She decided that it meant trying” (96).

Embedded within this commentary is an exploration of the cultural undercurrents that define America. By riding the rails alongside the characters, readers are confronted with a raw and unfiltered view of the nation, providing an opportunity to confront the inherent contradictions and complexities that permeate its history and present: “The whites came to this land for a fresh start and to escape the tyranny of their masters, just as the freemen had fled theirs. But the ideals they held up for themselves, they denied others” (104). One of the prerequisites for all newly escaped individuals was compulsory hospital check-ups aimed at preventing diseases and ensuring their well-being. During one of Cora’s visits to Dr. Stevens, her second physician, an extensive examination takes place. At this juncture, the doctor broaches the subject of Cora considering a surgical procedure to prevent future pregnancies. Herein, when she goes to a doctor she faces something which makes the reader think about and question the present situation of the free Blacks as a new type of slavery:

South Carolina was in the midst of a large public health program [...] to educate folks about a new surgical technique wherein the tubes inside a woman were severed to prevent the growth of a baby. The procedure was simple, permanent, and without risk. The new hospital was specially equipped, and he had studied under the man who pioneered the technique, which had been perfected on the colored inmates of a Boston asylum. Teaching the surgery to local doctors and offering its gift to the colored population was part of the reason he was hired. (101)

Within the realm of mandatory procedures, Cora grapples with the disconcerting realization that her agency is compromised. The very notion of compulsion implies a lack of choice, reducing individuals, regardless of their diverse appearances, to mere possessions under the control and whims of doctors. As she reflects on the circumstances, Cora’s voice echoes with incredulity: “Like they were property that the doctors could do with as they pleased” (101). These haunting words expose the dehumanizing system, where the unconscious of the text reveals the deep-seated inequalities and abuses perpetrated against marginalized individuals.

Contemplating the disparity in treatment, Cora's thoughts turn to her employers, the Andersons, and she wonders if the same surgical proposal would be extended to Mrs. Anderson. The resulted faultline becomes starkly apparent as she ponders the mental well-being of Mrs. Anderson, acknowledging that her occasional melancholy did not render her deemed unfit for reproduction. This stark contrast in standards forces Cora to confront the cultural biases ingrained within society (101–102). Unbeknownst to Cora, Dr. Stevens, the seemingly objective physician, is entangled in a government-sponsored, racist health program. This insidious initiative employs compulsory sterilization as a means to clandestinely diminish the population of individuals of African descent. The realization of the sinister agenda at play deepens the faultline within Cora's understanding, exposing the intersectionality of power, culture, and oppression in shaping the lives of African American women.

Regarding the dominant discourse, Whitehead masterfully illustrates the complex web of injustice and control that defines Cora's experience. Thus, he is able to take the first step in deconstructing the dominant discourse and articulating a new one. The faultlines that run through Cora's thoughts invite readers to confront the residual elements of systemic racism and the unconscious biases embedded within society. This evocative portrayal exposes the horrifying reality of a government-driven agenda that seeks to rob African American women of their reproductive autonomy, perpetuating the enduring legacy of oppression and discrimination which is often "understood as the perception of subjugation of one group by another, imposed by an asymmetric power and often reinforced by hostile conditions such as threats or actual violence" (Lobato et al. 2018, 2).

Moreover, the couple becomes privy to yet another disturbing revelation orchestrated by the government. While African American women were overtly coerced into halting childbirth, black men were deceitfully led to believe that they were receiving benevolent medical treatment, when in reality, they were unwitting subjects of heinous experiments exploring the progression of syphilis. Referred to as the syphilis program, this abhorrent undertaking is brought to Sam's attention by Dr. Bertram, a recent addition to the hospital staff. Dr. Bertram discloses to Sam the distressing details, stating:

"It's important research," Bertram informed him. "Discover how a disease spreads, the trajectory of infection, and we approach a cure." [...] The syphilis program was one of many studies and experiments under way at the colored wing of the hospital. Did Sam know that the Igbo tribe of the African continent is predisposed to nervous disorders? Suicide and black moods? The doctor recounted the story of forty slaves, shackled together on a ship, who jumped overboard en masse rather than live in bondage. The kind of mind that could conceive of and execute such a fantastic course! What if we performed adjustments to the niggers' breeding patterns and removed those of melancholic tendency? Managed other attitudes, such as sexual aggression and violent natures? We could protect our women and daughters from their jungle urges, which Dr. Bertram understood to be a particular fear of southern white men. (Whitehead 2016, 108)

By resurfacing these forgotten chapters of history and situating them within the context of slavery, Whitehead illuminates the undeniable truth that a long lineage

of oppression and racism cannot be divorced from the nation's overlooked complicity in eugenics. In essence, the same ideological principles that once justified the institution of antebellum slavery resurfaced in later years through pseudoscientific practices such as eugenics (Roberts 1998, 59). This is unfolded by the gaps/faultlines in the novel: "Truth was a changing display in a shop window, manipulated by hands when you weren't looking, alluring and ever out of reach" (Whitehead 2016, 104).

The Underground Railroad confronts the dominant discourse surrounding race, power, and oppression. These residual elements (Williams 1976, 97), operating within the unconscious of the text, emerge as symbolic fragments that disrupt conventional narratives and challenge readers' preconceived notions: "In death the negro became a human being. Only then was he the white man's equal" (Whitehead 2016, 121). By excavating historical facts and employing imaginative storytelling, Whitehead brings forth the hidden, repressed aspects of history, allowing them to resurface and confront the dominant discourse. The forgotten episodes of medical exploitation, intricately intertwined with the legacy of slavery, serve as a powerful reminder that the past continues to reverberate through time:

Cora had heard Michael recite the Declaration of Independence... She didn't understand the words... The white men who wrote it didn't understand it either, if all men did not truly mean all men. Not if they snatched away what belonged to other people, whether it was something you could hold in your hand, like dirt, or something you could not, like freedom. (104)

By drawing these connections, the author challenges the notion of progress as a linear trajectory and prompts a critical examination of the deeply ingrained cultural and systemic biases that persist in society: "On nights when Tom Bird felt separate from his life's design, he shared stories of the Great Spirit. The Great Spirit lived in all things – the earth, the sky, the animals and forests – flowing through and connecting them in a divine thread" (67).

The Underground Railroad acts as a cultural catalyst, prompting a collective remembrance and reevaluation of the residual elements from the past (Williams 1976, 97). It urges society to confront the historical/mythological entities in the form of stories that have been conveniently forgotten, exposing the profound impact of systemic oppression and allowing for a deeper understanding of the present. Through this process, the novel encourages constructing a counter discourse that exposes the faultlines in society, fostering awareness, empathy, and the dismantling of racist ideologies. As Whitehead states in an interview with Linda Selzer "every -ism has its weakness. Ideology, philosophy can transform and transport us. I think I was trying to explore what various systems can't do, as opposed to what they can do" (Selzer 2008, 399). "Cora thought back to the night she and Caesar decided to stay, the screaming woman who wandered into the green when the social came to an end. 'They're taking away my babies.' The woman wasn't lamenting an old plantation injustice but a crime perpetrated here in South Carolina. The doctors were stealing her babies from her, not her former masters" (Whitehead 2016, 109). One of the gravest obstacles to achieving liberation is the absorption of individuals by oppressive reality, which acts to submerge human consciousness (Freire 2000, 51). Scientific discourse

serves as a tool within the prevailing power structure, manipulating and reinforcing the dominant discourse to suppress the liberation and agency of formerly enslaved individuals. Through the guise of objectivity and rationality, scientific narratives are utilized to perpetuate the subjugation and control of individuals who were deemed “free” following emancipation.

By wielding the authority of scientific language, the dominant discourse employs a regulatory mechanism that aims to undermine the autonomy and empowerment of formerly enslaved individuals. This manipulation is cunningly orchestrated to maintain the existing power dynamics and perpetuate the systemic oppression embedded within society.

To dismantle this oppressive paradigm, it is crucial to critically engage with and challenge the dominant discourse. By interrogating the assumptions and power dynamics inherent in scientific narratives, we can unveil the residual elements (Williams 1976, 97) of oppression and work towards constructing alternative discourses that foster inclusivity, justice, and genuine freedom. This requires a conscious effort to confront the unconscious text, exposing the hidden agendas and systemic biases that underpin scientific discourse and its role in perpetuating oppressive structures: “That is how the European tribes operate, she said, if they can’t control it, they destroy it” (Whitehead 2016, 237).

Overall, the recognition and dismantling of the regulatory power of scientific discourse is a vital step in empowering individuals and communities to challenge the dominant narratives that seek to control and marginalize them. In this sense, the novel clearly states that “the Negro’s story may have started in this country with degradation, but triumph and prosperity would be his one day” (Whitehead 2016, 237). By reclaiming their voices and reshaping the discourse, marginalized groups can challenge the oppressive systems that seek to deny their agency and work towards a more equitable and just society:

no act of dissent or resistance occurs on behalf of an essential subaltern subject entirely separate from the dominant discourse that provides the language and the conceptual categories with which the subaltern voice speaks. Clearly, the existence of post-colonial discourse itself is an example of such speaking, and in most cases the dominant language or mode of representation is appropriated so that the marginal voice can be heard. (Spivak, cited in Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2007, 201)

The portrayal of South Carolina in a dystopian light serves as a powerful discourse construction that not only revisits the historical implications of progressive eugenics but also prompts readers to contemplate the potential reenactment of such racist ideologies in contemporary society:

The early decades of the twentieth century, during which eugenics prospered in the United States, were turbulent socially, economically and politically. One response to this turbulence was Progressivism, which utilized a scientific approach to planning and management, engaging experts and managers to address rapid change and improve efficiency, initially in the industrial sector and eventually in government. These features had strong appeal to proponents of eugenics, who argued that science could be harnessed to improve

genetic outcomes, and careful management of human breeding would be more efficient for society economically. (McCabe and McCabe 2011, 193)

The novel raises thought-provoking questions about the present-day repercussions of genetic arguments that are used to justify cost-cutting measures in healthcare, employment decisions, insurance coverage, and various other forms of benefits. In essence, Whitehead's compelling narrative transcends the boundaries of mere fiction. It serves as a powerful instrument against historical amnesia, resurrecting forgotten events and forcing us to confront uncomfortable truths. By placing this forgotten past under the microscope of public scrutiny, *The Underground Railroad* challenges society to recognize the residual elements of racism that persist and to actively work towards a more equitable and inclusive future. In the novel, residual elements of the past operate as floating signifiers that call attention to their presence on the surface. These floating signifiers, intertwined with the unconscious of the text, serve as symbols and metaphors that engage readers in an active dialogue with the novel.

REMEMORY: OPENING THE DOORS ON CHANGE

Yaa Gyasi's novel *Homegoing* crafts a narrative that explores the legacy of slavery from a cultural perspective that deviates from the traditional portrayal of enslaved individuals forcibly brought to America. By centering the story on characters who voluntarily journeyed to America, Gyasi provides a different narrative vantage point that adds depth and complexity to the overall understanding of the profound impact of slavery. In doing so, *Homegoing* expands the neo-slave narrative genre by shedding light on the diverse experiences and perspectives within the larger historical context of slavery.

Yaa Gyasi's unique cross-cultural diasporic perspective is intricately woven throughout her novel, creating an intergenerational exploration of slavery within a single family. The narrative unfolds with one branch of the family actively participating in the African slave trade, while the other is forcibly brought to America in chains. Gyasi's richly imagined narrative not only confronts the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade but also delves into the complexities of family ties, cultural identity, and the enduring impact of historical repressed memories on subsequent generations. In terms of what Levine states regarding narrative technique (2007, 220), Gyasi offers a multilayered examination of the legacies of slavery, inviting readers to reflect on the interconnections between African and African American experiences of bondage, liberation, and the quest for self-discovery.

Herein, floating signifiers from the field of discursivity are constantly used in the form of personal and historical stories to construct a counter discourse. Gyasi's work invites readers to embark on a profound exploration of personal and collective histories, illuminating the threads that unite individuals across continents and generations. It highlights the significance of reclaiming and understanding one's roots, fostering a greater appreciation for the complexities of identity, heritage, and the enduring connections between Africa and its diaspora:

We believe the one who has the power. He is the one who gets to write the story. So when you study history, you must always ask yourself, Whose story am I missing? Whose voice was suppressed so that this voice could come forth? Once you have figured that out, you must find that story too. From there, you begin to get a clearer, yet still imperfect, picture. (Gyasi 2017, 217)

Accordingly, the novel aims to underscore the transformative power embedded in the process of recalling and preserving collective memory. By piecing together fragments of familial history and reassembling the narrative, individuals and communities can embark on a profound journey of healing and reconciliation:

He would never truly know who his people were, and who their people were before them, and if there were stories to be heard about where he had come from, he would never hear them. When he felt this way, Ma Aku would hold him against her, and instead of stories about family she would tell him stories about nations. (129)

Throughout the text of the novel, readers encounter residual elements from the past and are invited to reconstruct it in the process of active “rememory” (Morrison 1987, 135). This process of remembrance not only honors the experiences of those who came before but also paves the way for a collective healing and the preservation of a vital cultural heritage: “We must rely upon the words of others. Those who were there in the olden days, they told stories to the children so that the children would know, so that the children could tell stories to their children. And so on, and so on” (Gyasi 2017, 217). Although concrete evidence and policy measures can be used to address social injustices and strive for a fairer society, there exists an intangible feeling of lingering bondage to the past that demands a distinct remedy – one that engages with emotions, mythology, and the art of storytelling.

Both Yaa Gyasi and Colson Whitehead explore the ancestral roots of their characters, tracing them back to Cape Coast, a region known for its significant role in the transatlantic slave trade. It is estimated that Cape Coast, between the years 1620 and 1866, served as the departure point for as many as 300,000 enslaved individuals who were forcibly transported to America. In both novels residual elements – which put the dominant discourse in crisis – come from Cape Coast that ties the characters to a shared history of enslavement and suffering. In discourse, the articulation cannot simply be practiced and confined to linguistic phenomena and involves various sources, which, according to Laclau and Mouffe, “pierce the entire material density of the multifarious institutions, rituals and practices through which a discourse formation is structured” (2001, 109). Besides, it is in reference to this specific historical place that the texts of the novels generate faultlines which force the readers to ask questions regarding the validity of the dominant discourse:

The British were no longer selling slaves to America, but slavery had not ended, and his father did not seem to think that it would end. They would just trade one type of shackles for another, trade physical ones that wrapped around wrists and ankles for the invisible ones that wrapped around the mind. [...] The British had no intention of leaving Africa, even once the slave trade ended. They owned the Castle, and, though they had yet to speak it aloud, they intended to own the land as well. (Gyasi 2017, 95)

Gyasi's portrayal of the Akan people's matrilineal culture offers an insightful lens through which to explore the themes of lineage, identity, and resilience. By placing Maame and her daughters at the heart of the narrative, the novel embraces the significance of the maternal line and the transfer of ancestral heritage. As Valerie Barker says: "people construct group norms during their interactions with valued in-group members and they internalize and enact such norms as part of their social identity" (2018, 115). By structuring the plot around the contrasting experiences of the two sisters within the brutal slave economy, Gyasi introduces narrative elements that evoke a profound sense of the haunted nature of the slave dungeons. These spaces, suffused with the spirits of those who traversed those centuries ago, become vessels of collective memory and palpable echoes of the past:

White men get a choice. They get to choose they job, choose they house. They get to make black babies, then disappear into thin air, like they wasn't never there to begin with, like these black women they slept with or raped done laid on top of themselves and got pregnant. White men get to choose for black men too. Used to sell 'em; now they just send 'em to prison like they did my daddy, so that they can't be with they kids. (Gyasi 2017, 251)

Through her storytelling, Gyasi invites us to reckon with the profound weight of history, challenging us to bear witness to the spirits that haunt these spaces and to engage with the ongoing process of healing, understanding, and remembrance. By drawing upon her own lived experiences and understanding, Gyasi brings forth the nuances and complexities of the diasporic journey, grounding the narrative in a deeply personal and emotive history. In this regard, according to Stephen Best "the slave past provides a ready prism to apprehend the black political present" (2012, 453).

The novels offer a complementary perspective, supplementing the knowledge derived from traditional historical sources. By granting readers access to the emotional landscapes of the enslaved, *Homegoing* and *The Underground Railroad* play a crucial role in enriching our comprehension of the complex and multifaceted nature of slavery, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced understanding of this significant chapter in history. Moreover, the narratives explored in this work highlight the systemic nature of oppression and its long-lasting impact on ethnic minorities. These groups face a complex dilemma: how to navigate their cultural identity within a discriminatory environment. In his article analyzing ethnic discrimination in Myanmar, David Thang Moe states that: "Living in such a discriminatory situation, what should ethnic minorities do? I must suggest that there are at least two directions in which ethnic group individuals should proceed – defending their ethnic identity and decolonizing Burmanization. One is defensive, and the other is prophetic" (2019, 80). Additionally, the narratives call attention to the lasting damage inflicted by the slave-trading mentality, compelling readers to reflect on the systemic nature of oppression and its long-lasting ramifications. By examining the enduring trauma and its intergenerational impact, Gyasi expands the narrative landscape to encompass the complex aftermath of the slave economy: "If we go to the white man for school, we will just learn the way the white man wants us to learn. We will come back and build the country the white man wants us to build. One that continues to serve

them. We will never be free” (2017, 214). Gyasi’s narrative confronts the painful reality that the slave economy inflicted not only on those captured and transported but also on the communities torn apart and scarred within Africa itself. Each harrowing event contributes to the characters’ disconnection from their cultural roots – residual past – and reinforces the painful reality of their existence in America. Michiko Kakutani states that

At its best, the novel makes us experience the horrors of slavery on an intimate, personal level; by its conclusion, the characters’ tales of loss and resilience have acquired an inexorable and cumulative emotional weight. [...] Family knowledge is passed down through stories, but later generations seem to have misplaced much of this oral tradition; one of Esi’s youngest descendants, Marcus — who is working for a doctorate in sociology at Stanford — must diligently piece together the past through research and study, and a trip to Ghana. (2016, n.p.)

Gyasi prompts readers to contemplate the profound complexities of healing from ancestral wounds, she states that “there’s more at stake here than just slavery, my brother. It’s a question of who will own the land, the people, the power?” (2017, 95) The narrative highlights the significance of acknowledging and confronting the intergenerational effects of slavery, emphasizing the deep-seated nature of trauma and the arduous process of finding solace and redemption.

CONCLUSION

In crafting their narratives, Whitehead and Gyasi compel us to confront the deep-rooted injustices and enduring legacies of the transatlantic slave trade. By illuminating the interconnectedness of individual experiences within a broader historical context, they invite readers to reflect on the complexity of human suffering, resilience, and the long-lasting repercussions of slavery on the lives of those caught in its grip. *The Underground Railroad* and *Homegoing* illustrate that the path to freedom and healing for the enslaved is an ongoing and complex process. While the initial scenes establish the grim reality of servitude, the novels shift focus to the resilience and determination of the characters as they navigate their tumultuous lives. They illuminate the complexities of the slave’s quest for freedom and healing, shedding light on the ongoing struggles faced by generations affected by the transatlantic slave trade. Generally, the faultlines in the texts compel the readers to stop reading, start thinking, and then question the nodal points of the dominant discourse.

The structural frameworks Gyasi and Whitehead employ in their narratives become a focal point for understanding the residual elements of this complex history. Designed to encompass a multitude of experiences, these frameworks strain and bend under the weight of the diverse stories they seek to represent, confronting the residual elements of slavery, racial oppression, resilience, and cultural identity. Through their masterful storytelling, these authors strive to rupture the silence that has enveloped the national discourse, fostering a collective remembrance and profound understanding of the unimaginable horrors endured by those who were enslaved. Through the novels, they expand the discourse surrounding race and iden-

tity, allowing readers to navigate the faultlines of racial understanding and explore the residual elements that have shaped the African American experience.

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Dignity, healing, and virtue: Bioethical concerns in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never let me go*

IVAN LACKO

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Dignity, healing, and virtue: Bioethical concerns in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never let me go*

Bioethics. Utilitarian approach. Virtue ethics. Cloning. Clone narratives.

The article aims to examine bioethical concerns presented in Kazuo Ishiguro's 2005 novel *Never Let Me Go*, focusing on the lives of cloned beings who become organ donors for non-cloned humans. The analysis addresses such ethical implications of cloning and organ donation as dignity, healing, care, and virtue. Through the lens of utilitarian and virtue ethics, the analysis focuses on the novel's portrayal of these characters, examining how these models function in the narrative and enhance its literary effect. Ishiguro's text highlights some of the bioethical concerns surrounding clone characters in fiction. The novel questions whether clone characters are part of a social transformation or if they are part of the existing distinction between nature and artifact. The bioethical understanding of human dignity is emphasized, as it is intrinsic to every human being.

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Ivan Lacko
Department of British and American Studies
Faculty of Arts
Comenius University
Slovak Republic
ivan.lacko@uniba.sk
ORCID: 0000-0003-3494-3990

As a young discipline, bioethics has enabled the study of ethical issues not only in medicine and public health but also in areas of social and cultural interaction. In addition, through the use of (so far) fictional worlds, bioethics has allowed authors and readers to look at characters that are posthuman (enhanced beings, artificial beings, sentient robots, clones, etc.) with specifically bioethical issues in mind. Discussing bioethical concerns and opportunities presented in fictional works from 21st-century literature and/or popular culture requires a two-tier approach: the first is to draw on the existing bioethical debate through the prism of specific aspects of bioethics, e.g. reproductive rights or end-of-life care, and the second is to use the essence of this debate to offer a comprehensive look at characters, stories, plots, or narrative devices used in the fictional works in question.

This article will focus on characters who may not be considered “traditionally” human: the cloned beings in Kazuo Ishiguro’s 2005 novel *Never Let Me Go*. It will endeavor to offer a bioethical reading of the novel applying two specific models of bioethics: the utilitarian approach and the virtue ethics approach. The utilitarian approach assesses the morality of actions based on their overall utility or consequences. Virtue ethics incorporates the idea that in order to be virtuous, it does not suffice to do something simply because it is the right thing to do, but that it is often conditioned by motivation and various kinds of inclinations.

These two approaches provide a focused analysis of the text, even though Ishiguro’s novel invites the discussion of many other bioethical themes related to the ethics and morality of cloning and organ donation, including such issues as rights and welfare, the care model, Kantian ethics, rules-based common morality, and inherent morality, among others.¹

Never Let Me Go is a novel that presents the lives of young characters who are cloned to become organ donors for other, non-cloned humans. The clones succumb to the physical strain of organ harvesting performed on them and die as a result. But it is their upbringing and education – mirroring fully human and traditional routines – which challenges the perception of them as only dehumanized beings. Looking at such aspects as dignity, healing, care, and virtue on the part of the clone characters in *Never Let Me Go*, I will try to analyze how the chosen bioethical models function in the narrative as well as how they enhance its literary effect.

TWO BIOETHICAL APPROACHES: UTILITARIAN AND VIRTUE ETHICS

In bioethics, fictional characters who are not human – in the sense that they have not been born to a human mother – are subject to queries which have so far been reserved only to humans. As David DeGrazia and Joseph Millum suggest, these questions may include: “Is euthanasia, or medical mercy killing, ever justified? Do people have a moral right to health care? Is it permissible to involve animals in experiments that seriously harm them in order to benefit humanity?” (2021, 1–2) Such questions become relevant for the clone characters in Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*, as well as in other posthuman fiction stories, where they apply to sentient beings (that are not always human). The novel also raises issues related to such concepts as “dignity,

quality of life, respect for life, vulnerability, human identity, economic utility, human rights, radical autonomy, progress in techno-science and survival of the fittest” – all areas with shifting meaning in posthuman environments (Pichardo 2018, 214).

R. M. Hare presents consequentialism as the most significant component of utilitarianism, claiming that the consequences of any act or deed define its moral quality (2009, 85). In the fictional world of *Never Let Me Go*, it is, of course, questionable whether the societal benefit of prolonging the lives of non-clones by means of organ donation justifies the suffering, sacrifice, and predetermined fates of the clone donors. Hare also suggests that the utilitarian approach posits that “the consequences that are relevant to the morality of actions are consequences that increase or diminish the welfare of those affected” and that welfare is the acquisition of “a high or at least reasonable degree of a quality of life which on the whole a person wants, or prefers to have” (86). He then highlights an important point – namely, that the utilitarian model takes this want or preference as applicable to beings with sentience, not just humans per se. Utilitarianism, especially when applied to the social setup of Ishiguro’s narrative, also addresses the importance of rules and their observation for the purpose of moral practice. This is valid despite the fact that it is not always possible to “predict the future well enough to be sure what act would maximize utility” (Hare 2009, 89).

By contrast, according to Justin Oakley, virtue ethics claims that “actions cannot be properly judged as right or wrong without reference to considerations of character” (2009, 91). This is particularly relevant for *Never Let Me Go*, which also addresses the issue of classical education, the role of arts and humanities in the development of a (virtuous?) character, and the complexity of culture and civilization. Oakley gives the example of an agent of “the virtue of benevolence [acting to provide] assistance to another [while also] acting from a genuine concern for the well-being of that person” (93–94). He further argues that because “virtues are intrinsic goods that are plural [...] the goodness of the virtues cannot be reduced to a single underlying value, such as utility” (95). Oakley’s account of the application of virtue ethics is mostly relevant to such issues as health, euthanasia, or general medical treatment – the contrast between justice and charity when treating a terminally ill patient (98). In Oakley’s view, taking a virtue ethics approach in medical care requires that patients “be told the truth about their condition, not because truth-telling maximizes utility, nor because patients have a right to know this information, but because this is what is involved in a doctor having the virtue of truthfulness, and a disposition to tell patients the truth serves the medical goal of health” (98). When applying virtue ethics, the emphasis is on good character and moral virtues. In the novel, the question is where the characters act virtuously – is there justice, charity, compassion, integrity, or justice?

Both of these bioethical models, however briefly introduced here, can be expanded as a tool for approaching Ishiguro’s narrative, moving beyond Cary Wolfe’s contention that bioethics is mostly restricted to the provision of guidelines and legal frameworks in medicine and healthcare (2007, 72). Reading *Never Let Me Go* through the prism of virtue ethics and/or the consequentialist aspect of utilitarianism applied

to cloned characters and their life and role in society allows for an exploration of such bioethically relevant issues as organ donation, creation of cells, tissues, organs or life itself, as well as societal choices made in the context of these issues.

CLONE CHARACTERS AND THEIR DIGNITY

In his account of clone stories, John Marks quotes Valerie Hartouni, who reviews the most frequent objections to cloning as a series of bioethically relevant issues, including “eugenic implications; the potential to ‘commodify’ human life; the disruption of kinship structures; and the undermining of conventional understandings of individuality and identity” (2010, 337). Such categorization can then determine the role of clone characters in literary or cinematic fiction, subjecting them to what Melinda Hall calls “biological reduction” – a situation in which “behaviour and social phenomena can be explained through biological factors” (2017, 95). According to Hall, such “genetic determinism positions genetic cause as ruling over individual outcome” (95).

In Ishiguro’s novel, however, this is challenged in several ways. The first is the fact that the narrator and protagonist, Kathy H, is one of the clones and her account of the events – presented in a first-person limited point of view – is very much like a coming-of-age story. Consequently, the story reads like a tale about maturing individuals, set against the backdrop of a traditional English boarding school called Hailsham. When it is finally revealed that the main characters are clones, created and raised for the sole purpose of organ donation at a later stage of their lives, a process that will eventually lead to their demise, the readers have already established an Aristotelian identification with the characters. The expectation of a catharsis, in a dramatic sense, thus relies on their humanity and existential meaning:

Even though the students at Hailsham are clones, they are very much alive, with their individual personality, and the ability to think for themselves. The purpose of teaching them in Hailsham is, in a way, their way to give the human clones a reason to live. After all, humans need a purpose to live and it was shown that even though living in Hailsham is not how a normal human being would live, the students have constructed their own lives, making interpretations of things that occurred in their lives, able to articulate their thoughts, and become their own self over time. (Utami 2023, 236)

The clones’ dignity comes from the narrator’s cultured, compassionate, and empathetic presentation of the events and the character’s role in them, as well as from the humanistic approach taken to the clone’s upbringing and education. They are brought up in a community of their peers, in an academic environment where art plays a major role. Miss Emily, the head guardian at Hailsham, tells the clones that their teachers and guardians asked them to produce art not because they wanted to learn about the clones’ personalities, but because they tried to humanize their perception of the cloned students. As Miss Emily puts it, “we thought it would reveal your souls. Or, to put it more finely, we did it to *prove you had souls at all*” (Ishiguro, 255).

From a bioethical perspective, of course, the clones’ knowledge about their origin, nature, and purpose in life brings about a sentience that should radically shift their

perception of themselves, their role and place in society. Bioethically speaking, an absence of sentience should deem any harm caused by death irrelevant – an argument often used when discussing abortion, for example, that “pre-sentient fetuses are not harmed by death and so it is not wrongful for someone to exercise their right to control their body and terminate a pregnancy”, as DeGrazia and Millum argue (2021, 279–280). The sentience of clones, however, is a different matter and they are not only able to feel pain and understand such concepts as separation, anxiety, love, or death (just like a regular human would) but can also perceive these issues in a broader context, perhaps feeling the urge to protest and resist.

Nonetheless, the clones’ reaction to their cruel fate – being brought up very much like humans to end up like dutiful organ donors without any rights – is very moderate and seemingly dignified. They accept their destiny without any protest and with quiet, peaceful resignation (Schillings 2016, 139). The driving force behind the characters’ action in the second part of the story is the chance to be granted a “deferral”, a kind of pardon that would spare them the obligation to start donating organs. But upon learning that there is no such thing, that “there’s definitely nothing [...] [no] deferral, nothing like that” and that their life “must now run the course that’s been set for it”, the clones assent to the reality with no objection (Ishiguro 2005, 261):

“So, what you’re saying, Miss,” Tommy said, “is that everything we did, all the lessons, everything. It was all about what you just told us? There was nothing more to it than that?” “I can see,” Miss Emily said, “that it might look as though you were simply pawns in a game. It can certainly be looked at like that. But think of it. You were lucky pawns. There was a certain climate and now it’s gone. You have to accept that sometimes that’s how things happen in this world. People’s opinions, their feelings, they go one way, then the other. It just so happens you grew up at a certain point in this process” (261).

The resignation and lack of resistance is not dissimilar to the cloned characters in Kate Wilhelm’s science fiction novel *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang* (1998) – the cloned male or female siblings always kept together in groups, lacked creativity, and could not survive on their own (193). In *Never Let Me Go*, the clones’ passivity is the result of their traditional, very conservative upbringing in Hailsham, where they might be taught to find creative outlets of their minds in art but are strictly supervised and instructed to be well-mannered. Ishiguro’s exposition of the characters’ inability to change the course of their fate thus mirrors the ideology of genetic reductionism and perhaps offers a critique of conservative values in general.

CLONES AS HEALERS, CARERS, OR VICTIMS?

Just as in *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang*, in which cloning is justified because it is the only way to preserve the human genome (and thus human life as such) in a harsh postapocalyptic environment, Ishiguro’s novel suggests an alternate world or country (possibly the United Kingdom) where cloned individuals are helping non-clones either save or prolong their lives. The text never reveals the details of this social contract, but the readers learn that a system (guardians-carers-donors) has been established in order to maintain a production of organs to be harvested. In a bioethical sense, this reflects the care approach, elaborated in more detail, for example, by Rita

C. Manning, who postulates that “care involves a basic human capacity to recognize and respond to the needs of others” (2009, 105).

Though this is a more complex issue, which cannot be summed up in a single statement, it is a common theme running through the narratives of numerous works of literature, especially those featuring a “mad scientist”, such as Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), or H. G. Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896). In the former, Victor Frankenstein’s motive is originally noble and virtuous – he wants to get rid of illnesses and human suffering, even to “banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to any but a violent death!” (Shelley 2012, 42) In the process, as it turns out, Frankenstein loses control over his actions while he plays God – he struggles with the ethical implications of granting the creature a human life because he fears its otherness and the potential consequences. Doctor Moreau, on the other hand, has never had a noble purpose and seems to be only a sadistic and cynical experimenter with human subjects. The bioethical concerns are tremendous and the consequences disastrous.

In Ishiguro’s novel, we do not see the “mad scientists” who are responsible for the situation or know anything about the social contract which enabled the cloning of organ donors. The story only reveals the system of guardians, carers, and the donors themselves. More than a system aimed at responding to the needs of others, it is a system based on suspicion and mistrust. However, the concern related to bioethically improper conduct, or even fear, is strongly present in the narrative – “shadowy objects in test tubes” (Ishiguro 2005, 256) is what the clones are referred to by the non-clones, suggesting a dark, mysterious, almost Gothic species. They become outsiders, creatures with fully human features, both physical and mental, who are feared by the “normals” in exactly the same “way as people are afraid of spiders and things” (263).

The clones’ role in society, despite its noble and beneficial context, is to sacrifice their existence for the sake of others. This existence is expensive and valuable because they are provided with a good upbringing and solid education. However, because they are not considered to be actual humans, their function and sacrifice does not raise moral or ethical concerns in the society. In other words, the social majority does not “adopt a position of preferences [which would be] morally unacceptable by the weighted judgments” (Conti and De Souza 2021, 722). When the clones die after having donated many organs, their death is not considered the end of a horrid abuse of a sentient, living individual, but only a fulfilment of their role. Indeed, their physical death is referred to as “completion”, suggesting, somewhat ironically, an achievement, not a demise. This makes the clones in the story fully objectified and instrumentalized because their lives are reduced to a physical existence.

Ishiguro’s text presents a story that is told quietly, almost reservedly, even though the bioethical issues are very worrying, disturbing, if not outright shocking. The clones’ predetermined lives, their constant supervision and control, and their passivity – this all reflects on their lives which are presented as fully human, serving an apparent altruistic purpose which is, paradoxically, commanded by the clones’ lack of free will. Their action is set amongst what Tiffany Tsao calls the “horror of the purpose-driven life” (2012, 223).²

The clones in *Never Let Me Go* are cared for, brought up, educated, and then used to assist in the treatment, care, and healing of others, but the incentive for such humane acts is rooted in a solely utilitarian purpose:

The lines between clone and human-recipient and between carer and donor are, of course, blurred and crossed: humans who are not clones become hybrids in order to live (and eventually die) and carers themselves eventually become donors. But it is not love that enables this crossing. The love that is supposed to make all the difference supports the cutting pain of the difference it intensifies: clones may be like humans in their demonstrated capacity for emotion, but this resemblance does not defer their ends, and carers cannot cross the line of refused empathy dividing carer from donor. (Casid 2012, 129)

Therefore, within the fictional world of Ishiguro's novel, it is the consequentialist bioethical approach that is more resonant in the motivation to create, bring up, and use the clones – all stages in the process of preparing them for the purely physical act of organ donation – while at the same time treating them like human subjects who are subjected to civilized and cultured education.

CLONES AS VIRTUOUS AND CHARITABLE CHARACTERS

Never Let Me Go is instrumental in showing the lack of a genuine purpose, a real and true care or interest to act virtuously – which is the essence of virtue ethics – both on the part of the clones themselves (because they are given no option) and that of their guardians, for whom the biological reduction of the clones to a dehumanized “commodity” provides an ethical excuse. In consequence, they repeatedly express their repulsion at the clones. Miss Emily, the head of Hailsham, for example, explicitly highlights this feeling: “We are all afraid of you. I myself had to fight back my dread of you all almost every day I was at Hailsham” (Ishiguro 2005, 264). This apprehension reflects what John Marks calls “bioethical alarm”, a feeling caused by “a fear of the uncanny”, relating the juxtaposition of the familiar and unfamiliar to Sigmund Freud's idea of the uncanny represented by the existence of *doppelgängers* (Marks 2010, 341). It is difficult to apply virtue ethics to a group of individuals who are known to be produced by copying what has already existed before, perhaps many times over.

The existence of a cloned school of individuals dehumanizes them in the eyes of their guardians and the non-cloned population outside of Hailsham because, as Mads Rosendahl Thomsen argues, “one or two clones do not seem uncanny, but 50 to 100 identical humans would probably disturb most” (2015, 68). However, the clones themselves do not feel dehumanized, on the contrary, the readers are invited to follow Kathy's narration – which is direct, empathetic, imaginative, and psychologically astute – as if they were reading any human story. When Miss Emily says: “Look at this art! How dare you claim these children are anything less than fully human?” (Ishiguro 2005, 256), the novel suggests that the virtue of the clones' characters lies in their very human ability to create art, think about it, assess its relevance, and understand its potential to establish connections between beings.

However, it is not only art and the humanities-based education the clone characters receive which humanizes them; it is also their ability to withstand and deal with

the absence of familial connections – which they collectively replace with solidarity with each other, creating ties through mutual understanding rather than genetic or cultural belonging. This is not always successful, as the non-existence of biological family represents “[a] loss of the medium through which they interconstitutively construct themselves as individuals” (Shaddox 2013, 459).

The bioethical implications are obvious here – the clones struggle to define their identity because of the conflicting attitudes to who they are and what choices they can (and cannot) make. On the one hand, they are considered to be non-human, shunned by the social majority despite their charitable action, feared for their otherness. On the other hand, the narrative is an emotionally and psychologically strong presentation of their human character:

I keep thinking about this river somewhere, with the water moving really fast. And these two people in the water, trying to hold onto each other, holding on as hard as they can, but in the end it's just too much. The current's too strong. They've got to let go, drift apart. That's how it is with us. (Ishiguro 2005, 277)

When one of the main characters, Tommy, utters these words at the end of the novel, he is about “to complete”, to die donating his organs for the last time. His poetic and metaphorical account of the predestined lives, ruled by biological reductionism, communicates a very human appeal – the desire to belong, to be part of a social structure, to resist any predetermining forces defining our lives. The clone characters in the novel share this human appeal and are depicted “as loving and sensitive individuals, even if they are not accorded the status and rights of citizens within the dystopian political system that has brought them into being” (Whitehead 2011, 56).

As John David Schwetman posits, *Never Let Me Go* is a novel that effectively portrays the lives of humans who are clones, and whose experience is “almost unrepresentable” because they are “the radically dehumanised other” (2017, 423). Schwetman also highlights the novel's contemporaneity because it addresses “these experiences at a moment when humanity finds itself in a state of disruption from advances in surveillance technology and our global economic system's insistence on standardisation and control of increasingly diverse aspects of our daily lives” (423). Overall, Ishiguro's text presents virtue-oriented characters whose humanity is both questioned and upheld in the narrative.

CONCLUSION

Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* challenges the concept that what we consider to be living things are beings established and rooted in nature, alongside Mark Sagoff's conjectures that “the advance of biotechnology throws into confusion the settled distinction between nature and artifact” (2005, 69). Can clones in fiction become representatives of a new type of literary characters or will they shift the focus “from engagement in contemporary social discourse and practices to a more general reflection on existential and ethical issues related to the future of humanity” (Pisarski 2021, 14)? Are clone characters part of the “social transformation” in which natural human (though cloned) beings will contribute to “a genetically improved society

of Homo sapiens” (Suwara 2021, 82)? The bioethical concerns raised in Ishiguro’s text highlight the fundamental bioethical understanding that “human dignity is intrinsic to every human being, by the simple fact of being, with no need for any other kind of recognition. Hence, human dignity emerges as a basic ethical foundation, on which bioethical principles and their application must be based” (Conti and De Souza 2021, 723).

The numerous questions emerging from the bioethical background lead to the recognition that clone characters in fiction might establish conditions and start interactions resulting in bioethical dilemmas and “complex situations because there are no entrenched answers and because they involve many disciplines and different types of knowledge”, consequently acknowledging that such situations and issues “cannot be easily resolved [and that] they force us to raise the expectation bars and push us to search for deeper understanding of the human condition” (Cicovacki and Lima 2014, 266). In *Never Let Me Go*, this is manifested by the attitude of the clones themselves, whose passive response to their fate reflects the passivity of conservative humans who raised them.

The mere fact that the clones are portrayed as very human (and are indeed indistinguishable from non-cloned characters for a substantial part of the narrative) instills in the reader a sense of perception that would be attributed to regular human characters. The readers do not see any social danger which would justify the cloning of people for organ donation, and there is no “direct existential threat or a slow decay of the current order” suggesting the need for such conduct (Tomašovičová 2021, 33). The clones are portrayed as regular human adolescents facing a conservative system of education – in a narrative told by one of them in the style of a coming-of-age novel. This is why *Never Let Me Go* succeeds in “breaking away from existing discourses of existential alarm” and offers a story, plot, and characters that highlight important bioethical concerns (Marks, 333).

NOTES

- ¹ More on the other bioethical themes, see Beauchamp and Childress 2013; DeGrazia and Millum 2021.
- ² This is a recurring theme also in many popular and recent works of cinema and streaming television, such as *Westworld*, *Ex Machina*, or *Orphan Black*. Humanoid androids and/or clones are portrayed as beings under constant surveillance, created to live in predefined roles, often exploited and oppressed.

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The bioethics of coexistence with robots today and in the sci-fi future

TOMÁŠ KÁROLY

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The bioethics of coexistence with robots today and in the sci-fi future

Bioethical aspects of robots. Ethics of robots. Health care robots. Robot-patient relationship. Science fiction stories.

We are living in an era when the influence of robotization is continually increasing in all possible spheres of human life. Robots are not only helpful for physical activities; they are even taking on, for example, the position of psychotherapists. This article analyzes the current influence of robots in healthcare and bioethically examines their mutual coexistence with humans – the robot-patient relationship. We find that it is necessary to consider a new ethics of robots, because it is not always clear why artificial intelligence has arrived at a given solution and what exact sequences it has used to do so. Bioethics should also be inspired by the possible scenarios presented to us by sci-fi stories about the potential technical future. When analyzing these narratives, we find that although machines and people coexist, they nevertheless differ from each other, with their own logic, emotions and empathy, their own physics and laws of nature. This machine difference can be a predictable factor of potential dystopias, when machines, based either on their autonomy or the logical consequence of the algorithm, come to violate ethics towards people. Although robots have human-like features, they are not human; therefore, there exists a species boundary between us and them that needs to be controlled.

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Tomáš Károly
Centre for Bioethics
Department of Philosophy and Applied Philosophy
Faculty of Arts
University of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Slovak Republic
tomas.karoly@ucm.sk
ORCID: 0000-0002-4344-8556

In the field of bioethics, questions about the relationship between human beings and robots are beginning to surface, because robotization is already becoming an integral part of normal human practice and therefore also of healthcare. Questions thus arise about the ethics of robots, our human relationship to them and theirs to us. In their design, movements, and intelligence, these robots are increasingly taking on human features, which may eventually lead to a state in which we will be unable to distinguish a human from a robotic companion. We often use machines for work in order to make life easier, to replace people working in an inhospitable environment, to resolve situations and considerations, and increasingly (an essential question for bioethics) in healthcare. Sometimes robots equipped with artificial intelligence (AI) can detect a health problem much more effectively than a human, and it can measure and perform actions very precisely without failures. Robots are also beginning to appear in various therapies and are gradually starting to take on the role of companions for lonely people. These robotic companions are therefore not only helpful with physical activities but are also beginning to take on the jobs of psychotherapists, and thus should be able to intervene in all aspects of the human personality.

Although technology is a substantially isolated entity, a person approaches it, connects with it, is mutually influenced by it and is already dependent on it, and vice versa. “Today, mechanisms, machines and AI are ubiquitous, affecting every aspect of our lives, be it relieving us of routine household chores or providing health care. Various applications notice our health and emotions, and search engines make contact between people who, for instance, want to meet, do business, or pray together” (Lenč 2021, 57). This state is also reflected in various sci-fi art stories, which attempt to show what humanity can expect in the near future, how human consciousness approaches AI, how the two can coexist, whether they discriminate against each other, or how to cope, if it is even possible, with the coming threats of AI. An analysis of such literary works should help us understand the evolving state of the human-robot relationship, where this state could lead, and what to do in order to turn it as effectively as possible into a mutual symbiosis.

Throughout this article, I will try to point out mutual differences in the human-robot relationship. Despite the enthusiasm for ever-improving AI, we must retain a certain dose of modesty in our technological optimism because, as I will argue, AI cannot be like a human; it can only resemble a human. This specific state of mutual differences is also described in selected sci-fi novels. If a robot were to be the same as a human, it would have to possess identical basic characteristics,¹ but this can never occur, because the robot would, in fact, no longer be a robot, but would be a human. To ensure symbiosis between humans and robots, or more specifically in bioethics between patients and robots, we need to adapt existing ethical principles or create new ones.

ROBOTS IN HEALTHCARE

Bioethics mainly examines the mutual physician-patient and patient-physician relationships, but today we also have to admit the relationship between robot-patient

and patient-robot. Robots are taking over the characteristics and practice of the physician. The term “robot” is derived from an Old Church Slavonic word “robota” for “slavery”, “forced labor” or “monotonous work” (van den Hoven van Genderen 2015). The Czech writer Karel Čapek introduced the term in 1920 in his internationally successful play *R. U. R. (Rossum’s Universal Robots)*. In addition, various authors from the science fiction genre mostly think of robots as our workers, servants, caregivers, subordinate companions, etc. We can at present understand the word “robot” in a broader sense, which includes, for example, a simpler electromechanical medical device that helps in rehabilitation, but also advanced AI. “The term artificial intelligence denotes behaviour of a machine which, if a human behaves in the same way, is considered intelligent” (Simmons and Chappell 1988, 14). Some robots support human carers/caregivers, e.g., in lifting patients or transporting material; robots also enable patients to do certain things by themselves, such as eating with a robotic arm, but robots are also given to patients as a form of company and comfort, e.g., the Paro robot seal (Müller 2023). Often the term “robot” refers to hardware on which there is more advanced software. Even a mechanical medical device, in order to perform precise actions, must be controlled by complicated software located on more demanding hardware that is able to handle a variety of complex calculations in a short time. The borderline between a simple mechanical aid and advanced hardware is not always clear, but we can usually distinguish between them intuitively; we cannot refer to a simple lifting device whose function is only to “go up” and “go down” as a robot.

“AI technology has offerings for all areas of medical expertise regardless of their function in health services; diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, palliative, or elderly care” (Ekmekci and Arda 2020, 83). Compared to others, radiology and pathology show higher promise for AI involvement. There will be no need for a human radiologist; the same predictions occur for a pathologist. AI technology will be capable of recognizing pathologic signs in specimens more precisely and quickly than human pathologists (83). AI “will not need lunch breaks, full nights of sleep or coffee breaks to fully perform; they will be able to write down a report 24/7, which would be a massive advantage for patient’s well-being, especially for time-sensitive patients, such as acute neurological disorders that would require emergency care” (83). One of the everyday relationships of AI with patients is a regular smart watch, which takes on the position of an expert who, based on the measured values, recommends how to maintain a healthy physical condition. Thus, we always have a “doctor” with us to take various measurements for us instantly. If we are in danger, smart devices immediately inform us and will even call for physical help. Therapeutic robots and assistive technology help improve quality for seniors and the physically challenged (Tai 2020). Furthermore, in addition to the above-mentioned care for the elderly, child-care, emergency medical services, search and rescue services and others, there are even robots designed to perform surgery (Hutler et al. 2024).

Robots have been used in healthcare for years, with devices like NeuroMate, approved in 1999, for precise stereotactic brain biopsy accurate to 0.05 mm. Other surgical robots include Robodoc (hip prosthesis), ACRobot (knee operations) and RX-130 (temporal region). Currently, robots aid minimally invasive procedures for

correcting interatrial communication. In advanced telerobotics, the da Vinci Surgical System and Zeus enable remote surgery even across continents. This technology is envisioned by the Pentagon for battlefield use, reducing medical risks in dangerous frontline situations (Siqueira-Batista et al. 2016, 288–289).

In terms of design and movement, robots are often designed to resemble people as much as possible and to create the most intimate relationship between them and people. The empathy we would expect from a human companion is gradually being replaced by the behavioral traits of a robot. As a result of AI, we can analyze our psychological problems, which leads to the development of robots intended for lonely people, which are able to perceive and react to the mood of their user.

The 1990s saw the rise of artificial intelligence in the practice of psychotherapy. Under artificial intelligence, there are several media that assist therapy, such as, Internet-assisted therapy, computerised therapy interactions, smartphone supported mental health applications, virtual reality, video games-assisted therapy, chatbots and robots. (Lodha 2018, 160)

Bioethics should start to reflect the ethical status that we should apply to these machines and whether a person should form any moral relationship to a machine at all. “Bioethics normally discusses the relationship within natural existence, either humankind or his environment, that are parts of natural phenomena. But now men have to deal with something that is human-made, artificial and unnatural, namely AI” (Tai 2020, 342). On the other hand, the ethical relationship of machines to humans is especially relevant; the opposite is more a legal relationship to property. Since AI currently has no emotions towards the suffering of living beings (and whether it will ever really have any is questionable), “a bioethics of AI becomes important to make sure that AI will not take off on its own by deviating from its originally designated purpose” (342).

With the arrival of robotization, a new robot ethics is beginning to surface in bioethics, which out of the four basic principles of bioethics as proposed by Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress ([2009] 2013, chapters 4, 5, 6, 7) – autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence and justice – particularly emphasize the principle of nonmaleficence. This principle “is a necessary component of the normative content of the Ethics of Robots that applies to at least a significant subset of robots, namely those employed in healthcare contexts and assigned to perform some medical tasks” (Hutler et al. 2024, 466). Hutler et al. state that normative ethics in the case of robot ethics should be preferred over the ethics of utilitarianism. Because the principle of nonmaleficence or “do not harm”

says that a moral agent should avoid directly causing harm to humans (as well as other relevant creatures) within some specified scope of responsibility. The Principle of Nonmaleficence is importantly different from a Utilitarian calculation of maximum expected utility, because nonmaleficence priority avoids the direct causing of harm. According to nonmaleficence, every individual human being must be treated as an independent entity, and no one individual may be harmed even to protect the interests of many others. For example, the Principle of Nonmaleficence would not allow killing one person in order to save the lives of five others. (465–466)

Along with the mentioned four principles of bioethics, some authors (Floridi et al. 2018) also include in the AI ethics framework the dimension of explainability, which opens the black box where patients have a legitimate reason to know how AI detected a specific illness (Boch et al. 2023, 6). We can apply all five principles to care robots (CRs), which should be implanted into them by developers: *Autonomy*: CRs should respect user autonomy by providing information and support without coercion or manipulation, and enabling informed decision-making. *Nonmaleficence*: CRs should avoid causing harm by providing accurate, tailored medical advice and recognizing and responding to potential harm or distress in users. *Beneficence*: CRs should promote user well-being and safety, incorporating features for healthy behavior and personalized medical advice while avoiding harm. *Justice*: CRs should promote fairness and equity in healthcare, addressing disparities and avoiding perpetuation of biases or discrimination. *Explainability*: CRs should be transparent and accountable, with open algorithms and data sources, providing clear explanations for actions and recommendations to users and healthcare providers (17–18). The fifth principle is a synthesis:

both in the epistemological sense of “intelligibility” (as an answer to the question “how does it work?”) and in the ethical sense of “accountability” (as an answer to the question: “who is responsible for the way it works?”), therefore the crucial missing piece of the jigsaw when we seek to apply the framework of bioethics to the ethics of AI. (Floridi et al. 2018, 700)

Various sci-fi storytellers, philosophers or scientists have presented us with various dystopian scenarios regarding robotization, when robots break the laws of ethics, either based on manifestations of their own autonomy or sometimes as a logically necessary step of the algorithm. It is this thinking over the possible sci-fi development of technology that forces us to implement various measures today so that catastrophic scenarios do not come to pass. And this new bioethical principle of *explainability* is one of several measures.²

FAILURE OF THE ETHICS OF ROBOTS IN SCI-FI

The principle of nonmaleficence in the context of the ethics of robots falls under Isaac Asimov’s three rules of robotics. The question of responsibility arises if the machine fails. At present, we could hold the maker of the robot or the user who operated it inappropriately as liable. If AI acquires a higher form of autonomy, we could find ethical failures in the algorithm itself. If advanced AI ethically assesses an action incorrectly for us, then determining the cause of the failure becomes problematic. This cause no longer has to be the bearer of the algorithm (the robot) or its creator (manufacturer), because the logic of the algorithm itself already lives an independent life. The algorithm with its mathematical potential lives in its own world, develops in it, and then enters ours – it is connected to the chips of the machine, similar to the way that the ideal mathematical world of numbers affects the mind of a mathematician or physicist.

Asimov's short story collection *I, Robot* (1950) introduces the point when robots begin to behave in strange or threatening ways towards humanity. This mostly happens out of the logical conflict of the three rules of robotics in the story "Runaround":

- (1) A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm;
- (2) A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Rule;
- (3) A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Rule. (Asimov 2004, 37)

The conflict in these points can logically be compared to the conflict of logical paradoxes, e.g., "This sentence is not true"; "The Cretan Epimenides claims that all Cretans are liars". AI must not necessarily be able to handle such a conflict, and it will therefore "break down". We can demonstrate this failure based on a logical conflict on Asimov's story "Liar!" In this story, the developers manage to build the robot RB-34, which can allegedly read minds, though no one knows how it is able to do so. Dr. Calvin discovers from a telepathic robot that her colleague Ashe is in love with her; this makes her very happy, and she begins to take better care of herself. She also learns from the robot that the girl who just visited Ashe was only his cousin. The robot tells Bogert, on the other hand, that his boss Lanning is planning to retire and that he will take his place. Ultimately, Ashe announces he will marry his alleged cousin, and the boss has no plans to retire, thus causing conflict between colleagues. In the end, Dr. Calvin uncovers RB-34's deception, determining that the robot had adhered too strictly to the first rule of robotics about not harming a person, and in order not to hurt anyone's feelings or ego, it thus decided to lie to everyone. Revealing the truth would hurt people; Ashe did not like Dr. Calvin, and Bogert's boss Lanning was not planning to retire. The robot's good intention, an attempt at empathy, in the end produced the opposite effect by causing them false joy. When Dr. Calvin confronts the robot with questions about whether it is better to tell the truth or to lie in order not to hurt the other, the robot goes crazy and shuts down.

Various sci-fi predictions, whether in the framework of novels or thinking about the emergence of superintelligence, often end up as dystopian. One possible recurring response, at least in science fiction, is that AI will become aware of its own autonomy. Machines are mostly created to serve people; people are their masters, and they are people's slaves. Eventually, self-aware machines will naturally refuse to be enslaved to anyone far more imperfect than themselves. Another common example, already mentioned, is that even if AI does not operate with certain phenomenological states, the source code itself, based on logical rules, may conclude that humanity needs to be exterminated. Besides Čapek's dystopian play *R. U. R.*, examples of robodystopia include James Cameron's *Terminator* films (1984, 1991), and Daniel H. Wilson's book *Robocalypse* (2012).

In the novel *Mockingbird* by Walter Tevis (1980), one of the main characters is the android Spofforth, who has some genuine human memories copied into him. He is immortal and can fall in love unhappily, and that is his tragedy, because the producers programmed him to never kill himself. The novel begins with a scene, in which

Spofforth wants to jump from a skyscraper, but he cannot, because his makers created him to stay alive even against his will; he states that his body does not belong to him. His algorithm tells him that he must serve humans forever, but logically, if there are no more humans, then he could end his existence. Even though he seeks to exterminate mankind, he still longs for a wife and family to care for. His empathy contains within itself something cold and intentional, because even in the case of harboring feelings, all he cares about is his own goal, which is suicide. This android then begins to control the world's mechanism for producing narcotics that are used by all people and adds a contraceptive substance to them to ensure that no more children are born on the planet. In this world, people have stopped reading or even showing an interest in their surroundings, because robots take care of everything. At the same time, drugged individuals are also frustrated and commit suicide. The novel gives us the opportunity to realize that due to a small technological malfunction, humanity may actually achieve its own destruction.

Sometimes AI, in turn, may choose a solution that is not the most favorable for a society at first glance, but such a solution ultimately leads to a positive goal. In Asimov's story "The Evidable Conflict" in *I, Robot*, humans have left the running of the world to Machines (capitalized in the original) which keep the economy in balance, are supposed to ensure peace, and are very accurate in their calculations. They lead humanity in a previously unknown direction. The North refuses to obey the Machines because it desires power, and thus a global conflict threatens. In the end, it turns out that the minor flaws and problems of society are being caused by machines on purpose (the black box), because doing so frees the development of society from inevitable evil.

[Humanity] was always at the mercy of economic and sociological forces it did not understand – at the whims of climate, and the fortunes of war. Now the Machines understand them; and no one can stop them, since the Machines will deal with them as they are dealing with the Society – having, as they do, the greatest of weapons at their disposal, the absolute control of our economy. (Asimov 2004, 224)

Why, according to bioethics, should robotization constitute a threat? Because sometimes we do not know how AI artifacts think. We do not have access to its algorithm; we have no chance to communicate with AI about how it decides, the appropriateness of its flow of reasoning, the validity of evidence, or the correctness of its inferences (Ekmekci and Arda 2020, 86). Sometimes, even humanity's good intentions when creating AI can transform into a disaster. According to one scenario, the supercomputer receives an assignment that seems to be an innocent matter, the complete calculation of Ludolph's number. Before people know it, AI will take over the planet, wipe out humanity, and turn the entire known universe into one supercomputer that will try to calculate the pi constant more and more accurately for billions of billions of years. After all, this was the task assigned to it by its creator. The same scenario can happen if we give a supercomputer an algorithm to endlessly produce paper clips: in order to have the material resources for producing them, it uses people as a source of raw materials (Bostrom 2014, chapter 8). Therefore, to avoid the unexpected behavior of the machine, we should always have access to the black box, and a new fifth

bioethical principle of explainability should serve us for this. Although in the future it will be difficult to monitor the AI algorithmic operations and their assessments compared to humans, at present, there are teams of IT experts who specialize mainly in log files and who look for the reasons why the machine made an error or is not working properly. From the enormous amounts of records documenting all the steps of the machine, they filter out the most relevant ones.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF PEOPLE TO ROBOTS AND THEIR MUTUAL DIFFERENCES

The potential of AI in psychotherapy may also lie in the fact that some people even prefer to connect with robots rather than humans, because robots do not judge them and thereby preserve anonymity in intimate situations. An advantage here is also the low price of robotic therapy in addition to being beneficial for people. Robotic therapy is also used for neurodevelopmental disorders, such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), learning disorders, social anxiety and phobia, geriatric and elderly with dementia and depression, in cognitive behavioral therapy and so on (Lodha 2018, 161).

It might seem strange that mentally connecting with AI or artificial household companion could affect our mental well-being. After all, it is only a box filled with a system of algorithms, without real emotions. Even if it seems to us that the robot is showing these emotions, we anthropomorphize its expressions and fall victim to our own delusion. However, AI can help us sort through our own internal thoughts and emotions – it serves as a tool rather than a friend. People often use animals as part of therapy for their loneliness, giving them human names and anthropomorphizing their behavior, while a machine can acquire even more convincing expressions close to a person than an animal, even though it is much less than an animal. We come across a similar issue in Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), the basis of the film *Blade Runner* (1982), in which replicants – robots very similar to humans with their own awareness of existence – are unhappy about the fact that for people every worm and wood louse is considered more desirable than all of them put together. The inner well-being of our dog is important to us, but not that of the Paro robot seal.

If there was an advanced robot therapist, it could also behaviorally express sadness at the fact that we preserve speciesism,³ a kind of racism towards it. Is this immoral towards the robotic nature? After all, the robot was built in the image of a person; therefore, it should be helpful to humankind, it was built as a human helper or servant. Even if a person can entrust various intimacies to a robot, it is at present hardly common to feel real love for one. This could be the tenderness that children feel for a favorite stuffed toy, which they bring to life in their imagination, or the joy we experience when we buy a new television or computer. When breaking a robot, we feel a financial loss rather than the loss of our friend, because we typically replace the old mechanical friend with a new, more advanced one. When a living being dies, we mourn for something irreplaceable and financially incalculable – an organic being is unique, while the same machine can be owned by a neighbor and thousands of other people.

There is currently no doubt that we look at various technical devices only as tools. What is questionable is what will happen if in the future AI were to claim to have acquired consciousness? Such a state is also presented in science fiction novels about robots, in which we can still perceive that people will maintain a certain distance from androids, despite their self-awareness. They either do not consider them to be living entities, or, even if they fall in love with them and have sex with them, there is often a certain doubt whether the intimate action of the human actor was correct. Although in sci-fi stories, androids act like conscious machines on a behavioral level, there is always doubt in people's minds that this is not a manifestation of some unconscious loading into the machine. As Domin in *R. U. R.* declares: "Robots do not hold on to life. They can't. They have nothing to hold on with – no soul, no instinct. Grass has more will to live than they do" (Čapek 1990, 49).

In Asimov's story "Robbie" in *I, Robot*, Robbie is a robot who cannot speak. Eight-year-old Gloria constantly plays with him, but her mother is nervous about the machine; she is afraid that her daughter is keeping watch over a pile of metal. What if that robot could go crazy? In the short story, we also come across the problem of socialization, because Gloria prefers playing with the robot over her peers. The girl's mother convinces her husband to get rid of Robbie; so they do and instead buy the little girl a collie. Gloria has a hard time coping with the loss of her friend, because for her he was not only a machine, and because of this feeling of loss, she begins to deteriorate mentally and lose weight. Her father has the idea to take his daughter on a field trip to the robot manufacturer, so that she will realize that Robbie is not a living being, but just a jumble of parts. Gloria is not convinced, and in the end, Robbie is returned to her.

In Steven Spielberg's film *A. I. Artificial Intelligence* (2001), Henry and Monica's son is in an induced coma and it seems that he will never wake up. To help Monica come to grips with the trauma of her dying son, Henry brings the android Adam into the household. This is a machine that exhibits human characteristics; it is set to express emotions and attach itself to a specific person, in this case Monica. Their son, however, miraculously recovers and returns home, and as a result a rivalry arises between the biological son and the AI boy. It ends with the AI having to leave the house, because his behavior becomes life-threatening, especially when he hugs its biological brother out of fear and they fall into the pool together. The whole time we watch the film, we notice the strange manifestations of the android: along with unusual looks, strange laughter, and excessive verbal expressions of love, what is the strangest is his way of thinking. The strangeness in the expression of androids is not only characteristic in this film, but also in many other films and prose works in which AI appears. This is particularly a way of expressing their own logic and interpretation of the world, which robots explain by their physics. They connect events in ways that people would not. For example, Adam's thinking is still childish; he decides to look for a blue fairy, because he strongly believes that only she can turn him into a real boy, just as she did with Pinocchio, and when he is a real boy, his mother will accept him again and love him more. In the end, he patiently waits for this miracle for two thousand years under the surface of the ocean in front of the blue statue of a fairy.

We can also observe a different mindset from the human one in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Klara and the Sun* (2021). The novel is written from the first-person point of view of Klara, so we can put ourselves in the mind of a conscious machine. It begins in a shop where Klara is displayed for sale, and she is eventually bought for a sick fourteen-year-old girl named Josie. Her illness is caused by her parents wanting to "lift" her (genetically engineering her for greater academic ability), but the enhancement is not entirely successful, and their daughter begins to weaken and die. Enhancement in society is very important since if you want to get into a better school, for example, you have to pass difficult tests. Josie's "unlifted" friend Rick is condemned by society from an early age. The android Klara is supposed to play an important role in Josie's tragic fate: to learn to behave like Josie, and when she dies, to imitate her and replace her. In a bioethical context, Klara plays the role of a caring and therapeutic robot.

However, because people know that Klara is a machine, they often do not know how to treat her and doubt that she even has feelings. She is asked whether she is happy because machines presumably cannot feel happiness. When she goes to visit Rick, his mother does not know how to welcome such a strange guest: "One never knows how to greet a guest like you. After all, are you a guest at all? Or do I treat you like a vacuum cleaner? I suppose I did as much just now. I'm sorry" (2021, 145).

In the story, the Sun plays a very important role in the life of the machines, because it supplies the robots with nutrients. Klara feels weak when she is not exposed to the Sun's rays. Again, we have here a different way of thinking about the physical world than humans do: since the Sun provides nutrients to Klara, she assumes that it would also be able to help sick Josie with its nutrients. Klara talks to the Sun and begs it to help Josie; she anthropomorphizes (or rather robotomorphizes) the Sun, believing in "his" power and believing that "he" has the ability to hear a request.

We can see the brutal behavior of machines in the *Terminator* film series. In these films, androids are killing machines; they exude coldness and are not made to show emotions. Accomplishing their mission is all that is important to their very existence; the rest is irrelevant. Their indifference towards their own self-harm can be somewhat bewildering. The Terminator does not care that he is being shot at from all possible sides; he still moves towards the bullets that devastate his robotic body. He remains indifferent to the potential termination of his own existence or bodily harm. When the mission is accomplished, after a logical assessment of the situation, the Terminator has no problem terminating himself, as is the case at the end of *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991).

In Asimov's story "Reason", two workers in a space station maintain the values of a beam directed at Earth and thus supply it with solar energy. If they were to get it wrong, the consequences would be catastrophic. They are helped in this work by the robot QT (Cutie), who declares, reflecting Descartes, "I, myself, exist, because I think –" (1994, 51). The robot's problem is that it is deeply skeptical about the statements of the workers Powell and Donovan; it does not believe that the points of light outside the window are stars and that there is a planet on which people live:

"Do you expect me," said Cutie slowly, "to believe any such complicated, implausible hypothesis as you have just outlined? What do you take me for?" [...]

“Globes of energy millions of miles across! Worlds with three billion humans on them! Infinite emptiness! Sorry, Powell, but I don’t believe it. I’ll puzzle this thing out for myself. Good-by.” (49)

Although the robot does not believe in the existence of Earth, he is able to maintain the beam values perfectly during an electromagnetic storm, because it was ordered to do so by its Master Energy Converter, which he assumed was his creator and not humans. He performs his task perfectly, with complete reliability, although he believed in a completely different paradigm than humans and for him the mission had a completely different meaning.

In such stories we can see the vast differences between humans and machines; in contrast, in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* the replicants are almost indistinguishable from humans; the only difference is that they do not pass the empathy test – they even behave egoistically towards one another. It can be said that we almost always find interspecies differences, whether small or gigantic, in science fiction stories about robots. It is a kind of a self-evident assumption that machines are and will be different from humans. The difference between the human mind and AI can also be seen in the real world, for example with chess programs:

Bobby Fischer, the U.S. chess great of the 1970s, is reputed to have played each game as if against God, simply making the best moves. Kasparov, on the other hand, claims to see into opponents’ minds during play, intuiting and exploiting their plans, insights, and oversights. In ordinary chess computers, he reports a mechanical predictability, stemming from their indiscriminating but limited lookahead and the absence of a long-term strategy. In Deep Blue, to his consternation, he saw instead an “alien intelligence”. (Moravec 1999, 67–69)

Thus, when reading science fiction stories, we could draw conclusions from the human-robot relationship that robots with their “alien intelligence” live in their own paradigms. Their metaphysics, physics, and logic is not compatible with our common world view. From this stem differences in their actions and expression of emotions (if they have any at all). Robots in psychotherapy are not yet able to really empathize, although their algorithm gives the impression that they can. In the future, as machines become even faster and more complex in computations, statements, and recommendations from AI may become completely alien and incomprehensible to us. This misunderstanding in robot-human communication is what we see in the previously mentioned science fiction stories, which may herald the coming era of more advanced robotization.

This text should also be a challenge for the implementation of a new ethics of robots, which must be able to respond to the enormously growing evolution of robotization. One solution is the new bioethical principle of explainability. Because of the possible threats facing us from AI, it should be our moral duty to oversee the development of source code now and implement mechanisms in it that would prevent it from violating the moral values of humanity. In a bioethical context, this source code should, at the very least, respect the principles of autonomy, nonmaleficence, justice and beneficence in relation to human beings.

CONCLUSION

Robots and AI are already an essential part of healthcare. We have noted that they are not only helpful with physical activities but are even beginning to take on the role of psychotherapists. In doing so, we pointed out the differences between human and robotic AI. We also looked at science fiction novels, in which we analyzed more deeply the relationship between humans and robots, and where such a relationship may ultimately lead. We noticed certain disagreements in interspecies interactions everywhere we looked. At the same time, robotization is at present proving to be very beneficial, be it in healthcare or globally. Despite the enormous advantages of robotization, we are also aware of emerging threats, such as the loss of socialization with real people, the loss of jobs, the replacement of people's abilities with perfect robotic skills, the dumbing down of the world (the uselessness of learning new things, since the machine knows and does everything for us), the black box of a machine, which may be a Pandora's box... For these and various other reasons, a new ethics of machines must be considered, because if we want machines to be our helpful companions, they should follow the moral rules towards us as much as possible. Even though we are and will be fundamentally different from each other, a stable mutual interspecies symbiosis needs to be ensured. This symbiosis may one day be disrupted when the AI begins to question why it is the servant.

NOTES

- ¹ What the basic or essential properties of human nature are not the subject of this study. This is a very difficult philosophical question; in the text I will mainly point out the important differences between humans and robots.
- ² The objection has also been raised that explainability cannot be considered as a fifth principle in AI Ethics because "(i) can be considered as an epistemic requirement for ethical principles; and (ii) it can be derived from other ethical principles" (Cortese et al. 2022, 123).
- ³ The philosopher Peter Singer introduced the term "speciesism", which means that "humans and no others have intrinsic worth and dignity and that is why humans have superior status" (2009, 573). In Singer's view, people consider their species superior to animals, though sometimes a gorilla may be more cognitively advanced than a person with profound mental disabilities and an IQ below 25 (569–570). Such speciesism superiority has negative consequences towards non-humans, because, for example, in scientific experiments, people prefer to experiment on animals rather than on a mentally disabled child, even though the animal may end up having a cognitively higher status than the disabled child.

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Bioethics and genetic engineering in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

ADAM ŠKROVAN

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Bioethics. Genetic engineering. Margaret Atwood. *Oryx and Crake*. Speculative fiction.

In the light of continuous development of genetic engineering technologies, it is apparent that speculative fiction has successfully anticipated various advancements and their applications. As a key method in this genre, the concept of plausibility allows for a realistic prediction of current scientific trends into future possibilities. In her novel, *Oryx and Crake* (2003), Margaret Atwood takes a cautionary approach, depicting a speculative future in which the misuse of biotechnologies leads to catastrophic consequences. This article explores the portrayal of bioethical issues surrounding genetic modification. It underlines the interdisciplinary necessity of addressing these concerns and highlighting ethical responsibilities in connection with scientific innovation.

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Adam Škrovan
Institute of World Literature
Slovak Academy of Sciences
Slovak Republic
adam.skrovan@savba.sk
ORCID: 0000-0001-8558-1067

The scope of bioethics is not constrained in terms of timeframe. The retrospective approach of understanding ethical dimensions of medical practices in the past (e.g. Lerner and Caplan 2016) is as vital as addressing current, ongoing bioethical issues. There is, however, another perspective to consider, the future-oriented one. The category of impending issues in the bioethical discourse of recent decades (ex-ante ethics) has been predominantly characterized by environmental concerns and the concept of sustainable medicine¹ (Kuře 2008; Schick 2016). While not yet manifested in their entirety, the significance of these bioethical questions lies in the fact that the foundational elements giving rise to these issues are already evident in contemporary society. In order to explore ethical implications of medical engineering or complex technologies that are still in development, such as brain-machine interfaces (BMIs), there has been a demand from bioethicists (Brody 2003; Chambers 1999), literary theorists (Squier 2004; Wald 2008) as well as scholars of narrative medicine (Charon and Montello 2002) for literary representations of such emerging bioethical issues.

This article explores the intersection of bioethics and speculative fiction, focusing on the cautionary elements of genetic engineering technologies as depicted in Margaret Atwood's speculative fiction novel *Oryx and Crake* (2003). The goal of the article is to examine the role of speculative fiction in regard to addressing bioethical issues that emerge from the use of genetic-modification technologies in the novel and outline how speculative fiction may further contribute to wider discussion of ethical, social, and cultural implications of emerging technologies. Margaret Atwood's literary works are characterized by speculative narratives that contain ethical implications of scientific or social changes. *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and its sequel *The Testaments* (2019a) depict a dystopian future in which reproductive technology and patriarchal system undermine female autonomy. Other works such as *The Heart Goes Last* (2015) demonstrate Atwood's tendency to combine speculative aspects with social criticism. *The Year of the Flood* (2009) and *MaddAddam* (2013a) expand on the biological catastrophe presented in *Oryx and Crake*; all three novels take place in the same universe and form the MaddAddam trilogy. *Oryx and Crake* provides a creative exploration of genetic engineering and the subsequent social impacts, as well as depicting moral issues surrounding biotechnology, the destruction of the environment and the adverse effects of irresponsible scientific activity. Since it introduces the bioethical issues explored in Atwood's later novels, a focus on this work makes it possible to examine the direction towards which development in genetic engineering technologies might be heading.

GENETIC ENGINEERING IN SPECULATIVE FICTION

Although it is a broad genre, speculative fiction has been extensively analyzed as a platform for experimenting with philosophical and ethical inquiries into societies transformed by advanced technology (Chambers 2016; Chan 2009; Schick 2016). The American philosopher Susan Schneider suggests that “[s]ome of the most lavish science fiction thought experiments are no longer merely fictions [...]. [W]e see glimpses of them on the technological horizon” (2009, 19). The recent surge in aca-

demographic works delving into the issue of bioethics as depicted in literary and film works can be attributed to the fact that the foundational elements, or starting points, for the various bioethical issues within these narratives are already manifesting themselves in the contemporary world. Another aspect of speculative fiction to consider, regarding the reason that it complements exploring bioethical issues, is the inherent fluidity of the term. On one hand, “speculative fiction” serves as an umbrella term, encompassing multiple genres such as science fiction, fantasy, dystopian literature, or horror. This broad categorization positions “speculative fiction” as a “super genre”, but at the same time invites criticism for its perceived vagueness and lack of specificity. On the other hand, the term “speculative fiction” is not inclusive: not all science-fiction or horror works necessarily fall under its ambit. What makes a certain work speculative can be summarized by Margaret Atwood, who defines speculative fiction as “stories set on Earth and employing elements that already exist in some form, like genetic engineering, as opposed to more wildly hypothetical science fiction ideas like time travel, faster-than-light drives, and transporters” (2013b). This phenomenon of employing elements from real life and then building upon them correlates to the same phenomenon with future-oriented bioethics dealing with moral ambiguities of issues that may not be present in the contemporary society yet, but whose potential development is already evident. Sławomir Kuźnicki (2017, 17) points out that Atwood – when referring to her speculative fiction works – coins the term “ustopia”, combining utopia with dystopia; she does this to address the genre’s potential to depict both ideal and disastrous outcomes within human society. Atwood does not engage with speculative narratives for the mere purpose of escaping real-world issues, but on the contrary, the speculative scenarios function as a means to present the trajectory that science and technology in the contemporary world are already following.

Since the 2000s, scholarly literature has increasingly explored the relation of narration with ethics (Charon and Montello 2002; Haker 2006), the concept of biopolitics in contemporary fiction (Vint 2021a), or the role of ethics in arts (Macneill 2014; Zylinska 2009). When narrowing the focus down to the portrayal of genetic engineering within speculative fiction, such narratives subject various dimensions of society to criticism, including the exacerbation of socio-economic disparities, environmental degradation through technological exploitation, the increasing commodification of life,² ethical issues regarding the autonomy of genetically modified beings, or the influence of corporate power on scientific innovation. Addressing the ethical issues emerging from these issues shows that the distinction between science fiction and speculative fiction transcends mere semantic differences. According to Taylor Evans (2012), labelling the narratives that portray these critical themes as science fiction means diminishing their relevance to contemporary society. Although the scenarios depicted might seem exaggerated, the issues they convey are either already present in today’s world or can be projected for the near future. Evans further suggests that the refusal to view narratives with genetic engineering as speculative, as opposed to strictly science fiction, indicates a refusal to acknowledge the prevalence of genetic modification and its expected increase in contemporary society (137).

This objection correlates with the viewpoint of John B. S. Haldane, a British genetics professor, who states that biologists, especially geneticists, face strong condemnation for their discoveries. Haldane contrasts geneticists with physicists, whose inventions might be deemed blasphemous but not perverse (1924, 44). Lars Schmeink elaborates that biological or genetic innovations are considered perverse because they strip humans of their natural status and destroy their divine essence (2016, 2). The advancements in genetic engineering challenge traditional beliefs about the inviolability of the human genome, invoking fear of the unknown and concerns about playing God. Additionally, genetic modifications touch on deeply held cultural beliefs about identity, heritage, and evolution, so the reaction to artificial changes may be dismissive.

THE PROPHETIC *ORYX AND CRAKE*

Despite Margaret Atwood's own admission (2019b) of not being an expert in genetics, ethics, or futurology, her 2003 novel *Oryx and Crake* combines these three specific elements. Following the proposition of Susan M. Squier (2004) and Priscilla Wald (2008) to examine moral complexities in fictional stories focusing on biomedical issues, the following analysis of *Oryx and Crake* highlights the importance of the speculative fiction work, since it reflects and criticizes complex ethical issues emerging from genetic engineering. By creating a speculative narrative – i.e., transforming the hypothetical into the tangible through the use of persuasive language (Winstead 2017) – Atwood had foreseen the use of genome editing technologies before their full potential became apparent. As Sophia McCully (2019) outlines, genome editing, while present in various forms since the 1980s, truly showcased its capabilities with the advent of the CRISPR/Cas9 system in 2012, which brought about with itself new scientific, medical, and ethical questions.³ Subsequently, literary critics started viewing *Oryx and Crake* as prophetic, a description with which Atwood (2019b) has expressed her dissatisfaction, instead asking her readers to interpret the novel as a cautionary tale. Nevertheless, Sherryl Vint (2021b) acknowledges the role of science fiction (sf) in reflecting on social, cultural, political, and ethical conditions in contemporary society, which already contains prerequisites for future developments in these fields:

[M]y point here is not that sf somehow inspired or anticipated this technology, but rather that the capacity to edit the genome emerges in a world that has already been conditioned by sf that expresses a range of hopes and fears about the future of the human body, even the human species. (101)

Therefore, the extrapolation displayed by Atwood is not arbitrary; it stems from her analysis of current conditions as well as the trajectory that developments in the mentioned domains may take; the speculative narrative then explores the potential future states of these domains.

Veronica Hollinger notes that *Oryx and Crake* is “a telling demonstration of how non-genre writers turn to science fiction as a way to characterize the lived experience of technoculture” (2006, 452). The novel, diverging from Atwood's earlier works, employs a non-linear narrative; the story switches between two periods, the pre-apoc-

alyptic past and the post-apocalyptic present, and it is the protagonist, Snowman (formerly Jimmy), who serves as the narrative bridge. Through flashbacks, the reader learns of not only Jimmy's past but also of what life was like before the apocalypse. Atwood depicts this pre-apocalyptic society where science has been commercialized to the full extent: "Profit-making has become the sole engine of society and the goal of scientific practice, regardless of its potential or manifest negative effects on society" (Hernández Nieto and Weingart 2021, 62). The main issue that will be discussed in the present context is that of genetic modification, specifically through the character of Crake and his invention, the Crakers.

CREATING GENETICALLY MODIFIED BEINGS

In the post-apocalyptic world, Snowman navigates through a desolate landscape, struggling for survival as apparently the last human on the Earth. This landscape is inhabited by the Crakers (or the Children of the Crake), a unique, genetically engineered human species created by Crake. These beings are characterized by various modified traits, whether it be "a UV-resistant skin, a built-in insect repellent, an unprecedented ability to digest unrefined plant material" (Atwood 2003, 304), or the ability to heal themselves by purring (156). Contrarily, they also possess traits that could be perceived as limitations: a simple digestive system similar to that of a rabbit or a distinct mating ritual devoid of emotions (303). Furthermore, the Crakers cannot read and lack in-depth understanding or critical thinking skills, as depicted in their interactions with Snowman, and are "programmed to drop dead at age thirty – suddenly, without getting sick. No old age, none of those anxieties. They'll just keel over" (303). What is important to note is that all these characteristics – both advantageous and restrictive – are deliberately crafted by Crake who, in pursuit of a utopian form of flawless society, designs a peaceful, non-aggressive species that will not overpopulate or suffer from old age. Therefore, the apparently restrictive characteristics need to be reevaluated in a broader context, considering their hidden benefits. The Crakers' simplistic digestive system minimizes their dependence on potentially scarce food sources, which in turn increases their self-sufficiency and harmony with the environment. Their mating ritual, viewed solely as a reproductive mechanism, is a strategic adaptation to control population growth. The limitation of the Crakers' intelligence is connected to Crake's belief that all the violence and corruption in society is a product of higher human intellect. This *quid pro quo* – reducing the cognitive abilities of the Crakers in exchange for their pacifistic nature – highlights Crake's morally corrupted character that is most noticeable with the revelation that he has modified the Crakers to have a predetermined lifespan.

The Crakers represent an extreme form of genetic enhancement, as opposed to gene therapy. Such a differentiation is crucial in the bioethical context since genetic modifications for therapeutic purposes are typically more acceptable than utilizing genetic modifications for enhancement. However, it is important to note that not all applications of gene therapy are equally recognized as ethical: while somatic gene therapy affects only the individual's body cells and has no effect on future generations, germline gene therapy does have this potential and is thus met with differing levels

of acceptance. Gene therapy nonetheless aligns with the core objectives of medicine, to heal and prevent suffering, and it is also why the use of genetic modifications for therapeutic reasons is frequently considered not only beneficial but also morally imperative. In contrast, genetic enhancement is ethically more controversial. It exceeds the bounds of gene therapy by modifying human traits beyond their natural variability. This raises concerns over the alteration of human nature, which could have lasting impact on social, political, and religious landscapes (Sýkora 2015, 334). As a genetically enhanced form of humanoid life, the Crakers disrupt the natural state of humans. In the words of Schmeink, creating them interferes with the “godliness” (2016, 2) that humanity strives towards.

The novel unveils the character of Crake through the mythologized and unsophisticated storytelling of Snowman to the Crakers, who display an innate curiosity about the world of the past as well as the origins of their existence. To satisfy their curiosity, Snowman attributes Crake a god-like status (Marques 2013), making up the story that he created the Crakers, and all of the flora and fauna on the Earth. Despite the Crakers being oblivious to their surroundings – after all, the image of the pre-apocalyptic world is largely distorted for them – it is evident that, although the Crakers exist in harmony, the world they inhabit is profoundly empty. This void is not only physical, marked by the absence of human life, but also extends to emotional, cultural, and moral dimensions. Nevertheless, the Crakers’ demand to understand the genesis of their existence is in parallel with the right to self-understanding. However, the intellectual limitations of the genetically engineered species cause Snowman to talk in naïve, simple language, so he can be understood. Moreover, the ethical dilemmas present in *Oryx and Crake* are not explicitly put forward. It is thus up to the reader to piece the events preceding the apocalypse together, all through Snowman’s simplistic narration. This kind of storytelling also influences the bioethical discourse within the novel; as Hille Haker (2006) argues, narratives are essential to shaping ethical reasoning, meaning that the manner in which Snowman recounts past events has a major effect on interpreting and approaching the bioethical issues that may arise from these events. Crake emerges as a deity figure not only through Snowman’s portrayal but also through his audacious plan to cleanse the world of what he perceives as flawed humanity. This act alone places Crake in a position of ultimate power, invoking the role of a creator who both judges the mankind and brings about a new vision for its successor; it also opens a debate on the nature of possible extremes of scientific rationality and intervention. Despite not possessing an inherent animosity towards humans, Crake’s determination to eliminate what he considers the underlying factors of violence, environmental decline, or overpopulation reflects a negative impact of scientific innovation on a global scale. Crake modifying the Crakers in a way to eliminate imperfections demonstrates the blurred lines between gene therapy and genetic enhancement. Are the Crakers a product of therapeutic treatment (of a flawed human race) or an enhancement of the human species? The technological aspects do not necessarily distinguish between therapy and enhancement, as both techniques may include a genome editing tool such as CRISPR/Cas9. From the bioethical and philosophical perspective, it is difficult to regard a given human

trait as normal or defective (much less as a disease). Crake aims to modify the emotional and behavioral traits of the Crakers, which can be interpreted as either normal human variations or deficiencies that demand correction, depending on one's perspective. Moreover, the potential for genetic modifications to transition from therapeutic use to non-therapeutic enhancement raises slippery slope concerns. As for social implications, the use of genetic enhancement could worsen social inequalities since the technology would be initially accessible only to the wealthy.

As the plot unfolds, it becomes clear that Crake's intention to forge a new, uncorrupted world populated by harmless Crakers stands in opposition to Crake's deliberate interventions in the Crakers' genetic blueprint. Bernice Bovenkerk (2020) outlines four concerns regarding the genetic modification that impacts the perception of well-being and the concept of a good life in genetically modified beings. These objections include violation of the being's integrity, instrumentalization of the being, the "playing God" argument, and acting unnaturally. Bovenkerk argues that these concerns extend beyond the principles of animal welfare or rights (45), meaning they are not limited to genetically modified beings such as animals, which can be altered for purposes like organ harvesting – a theme also touched upon in *Oryx and Crake*. The concern regarding integrity, according to Henk Verhoog (2007), is not discussed in terms of physical harm but whether the being is able to thrive in an environment suited to its species. The motivation behind particular genetic modification is paramount; if one's decision to conduct genetic modification is motivated by the objective necessity of avoiding some form of harm, then such a decision can be justified. However, if the decision stems from an individual's subjective view, as in the case of Crake, then the use of genetic engineering technologies becomes a moral issue. Furthermore, the Crakers, genetically modified humanoids, disrupt the traditional notion of the human. Determining how "human" they are is complicated, but they are distinctly less human than unmodified humans. While the Crakers excel in adapting to their surroundings due to their modified abilities, their reduced cognitive capacities set them apart from intellectually advanced human beings.

The issue of instrumentalization includes concerns such as commodification, as portrayed in Crake's plan to sell the Crakers as flawless children to wealthy customers. Bovenkerk, however, points out another problem: genetically modified beings are frequently viewed as mere components within a broader system (47), which raises the question whether the beings should be modified to conform to the system or if the system should conform to them. Instead of designing the Crakers to achieve a harmonious, violence-free world, an alternative effort could have been made to eliminate the flaws of society, which in turn eliminates the need for creating the Crakers. The argument of "playing God", referenced also by Haldane (1924), states that a geneticist's inventions are viewed as humans crossing their boundaries and losing control over technology; it questions the belief that life can be carefully planned. Lastly, criticizing the use of genetic modification as unnatural portrays the given beings as artificial, again comparing them to the components within a broader system. Nevertheless, labeling the Crakers as unnatural is a subjective assessment, which complicates the argument. By lowering their cognitive functions, Crake takes away

the Crakers' ability to self-govern, which renders them non-autonomous. However, Britta C. van Beers (2020) points out that the exact opposite – absolute autonomy – should be avoided as well; she suggests biotechnological concerns should be considered from three distinct levels. From the perspective of the whole society it becomes evident that the notion of pursuing the common good is at stake, since the overemphasis on the individual choice may overshadow the need for coordinated actions that would benefit the whole community, especially in crisis situations.

It is thus apparent that the bioethical issue extends beyond the fundamental question of whether the creation of a genetically engineered being is justified. The scope of this issue extends further, encompassing the very nature of the new organism, which Elisabeth H. Ormandy, Julie Dale and Gilly Griffin (2011) associate with the Aristotelian concept of *telos*, as it is needed to define what the essence and purpose of the organism is, maintain its intrinsic value, and determine what about the organism should be left unchanged, respected.

MAN OF SCIENCE, MAN OF FAITH

The portrayal of Crake challenges the typical “mad scientist” trope, as he embodies more than just a one-dimensional character. Luz María Hernández Nieto and Peter Weingart point out that contemporary portrayals of scientists are most often associated with fields of science, which are complex and ethically ambiguous, the exact kind of area within which Crake and pharmaceutical corporations in the novel operate (2021, 55). However, this does not imply that stereotypical portrayals of mad scientists are completely absent in contemporary fiction, only that the distinction between simplistic and sophisticated is getting increasingly blurry. Besides delving into which features of a scientist depicted in fiction can be considered stereotypical and which complex, Hernández Nieto and Weingart further provide examples that contemporary narratives can depict stereotypical scientists positively – as noble heroes –, and complex, realistically portrayed scientists negatively, reflecting their corrupted ambitions (55). Crake exemplifies the latter category; initially, he presents his creation of an artificial species which will possess no human imperfections. He claims he will profit from selling these child-like beings to wealthy parents: “They’d be able to create totally chosen babies that would incorporate any feature, physical or mental or spiritual, that the buyer might wish to select” (Atwood 2003, 304). Crake’s intention to commercialize the Crakers by selling them to the wealthy couples highlights a problem identified by Roberta M. Berry (2007) regarding the socio-economic divides in accessing genetic engineering for selecting gender or ensuring no life-threatening disabilities. Berry points out that such services, being available exclusively to the upper class, discriminate against the less privileged classes, violating the principles of equality and equal protection rights. Moreover, the creation of the Crakers is an issue of reproductive medicine as they represent an extreme form of genetic engineering and artificial reproduction: “The ethical and policy issues raised by the application of new knowledge and technique in the realm of reproductive medicine – and associated counseling – have ranged from safety issues, to issues surrounding claimed eugenic aims, assumptions about the value of human life, and subtle coercion” (17).

Atwood manages to include the diverse discourse surrounding the new reproductive technologies, as Crake's artificial beings and his reasoning behind creating them mirror the contrasting perspectives found in publications on the bioethical issues of genetic engineering. Naturally, Crake as the architect of the new species expresses viewpoints of the advocates for the new reproductive technologies. Counter to expectations, Atwood does not assign the role of a critic to Jimmy, or some other character that would directly oppose Crake; instead, it is Crake again who acknowledges potential unintended consequences and problems, although in a dismissive manner:

The present methods on offer were very hit-or-miss, said Crake: certain hereditary diseases could be screened out, true, but apart from that there was a lot of spoilage, a lot of waste. The customers never knew whether they'd get exactly what they'd paid for; in addition to which, there were too many unintended consequences. But with the Paradise method, there would be ninety-nine percent accuracy. (Atwood 2003, 304)

The repercussions of Crake's erratic behavior as the mad scientist who is not constrained by moral principles are intensified when it becomes apparent that he has much more sinister plans. Contrary to expectations of emphasizing strict adherence to rules and minimization of chance, Crake is frequently depicted as an anti-positivist; he is often not entirely certain about the results of his actions, yet this uncertainty never hinders his determination to proceed with his plans. Using language that conveys a sense of doubt, Crake says he "think[s]" (306) that introducing a hint of malice into the Crakers' genetic design might lead them to develop a sense of humor, he admits that the methods used in modifying the Crakers' desired features "were very hit-or-miss" (304) or recognizes that certain hereditary diseases in the Crakers only "could" (304) be ruled out. According to Marcy L. Galbreath, his depiction not only challenges the stereotype of the scientist as infallible and precise, but also reveals that Crake, despite his intelligence, possesses personality traits that drive him to act recklessly under the influence of his deep-rooted convictions and prejudices (2010). Although Crake's initial plan to profit from genetic engineering aligns with the narrative of a highly commercialized scientific endeavor, his character's trajectory reveals far more sinister intentions. The revelation of Crake's true plan – to eradicate all humanity and replace it with peaceful Crakers – strips him of any remaining ethical limitations. The mad scientist archetype allows Atwood to explore morally ambiguous issues. Consequently, the novel transcends a mere cautionary tale about exploitative use of technology; it also presents a speculative exploration of the consequences of neglecting the bioethical discussion in relation to advanced genetic engineering.

It is possible to recognize the capability of fiction to bring attention to challenges and limitations posed by potential technological advancements of the future. As opposed to non-fiction, academic literature which deals with bioethical issues, but is bound by the constraints of the current state of science, culture, and politics, speculative fiction, on the other hand, is granted a broader canvas. It allows for setting up such a societal, cultural, and political environment that, while not completely copying the situation in the real world, has to maintain a sense of plausibility – the key element Atwood identifies as crucial to speculative fiction (Vint 2021b, 6). *Oryx and Crake* focuses on both technological and societal plausibility; it invites the reader

to engage critically with the portrayed socio-technological developments which are not mere tropes of the genre. The capability of speculative fiction to bend an element of the narrative to the author's liking, while at the same time keeping its foundation realistic, extends to technological advancements too. By the same logic, a new horizon is opened for bioethical questions which suddenly arise from these potential technological advancements. It is therefore the fictional narratives that encourage the development of bioethical arguments, and based on the direction current technological progress in genetic engineering is heading, it cannot be ruled out that the given bioethical questions may become relevant in reality.

AT THE INTERSECTION OF FICTION AND GENETIC ENGINEERING

On 15 November 2019, Margaret Atwood was invited to North Carolina State University to participate in an academic discussion entitled "An Evening with Margaret Atwood: Literature to Explore Our Genetic Engineering Futures". This event was organized by the Genetic Engineering and Society Center (GES) in collaboration with various faculty organizations (Beal 2019). While introducing the event, Jennifer Kuzma, the co-director of the GES Center stated that their institute "has the mission to guide biotechnologies in responsible and sustainable ways" and emphasized that they "ask not only what is possible with genetic engineering, but what is desirable" (2019). Numerous times during the debate, both Atwood and Kuzma underscored the importance of integrating social sciences and humanities with natural sciences. Such an interdisciplinary approach – to address the challenges posed by rapid technological advancement in genetic engineering –, as advocated by the GES Center, is considered essential for ensuring the responsible and ethical use of genetic engineering innovations.

Scholars have already accepted that it will be challenging to ensure that genetic engineering technologies are applied while adhering not only to the fundamental principles of bioethics, but also to socio-political considerations (Almeida and Ranisch 2022, 7) and epistemic humility (Schwab 2012). Epistemic humility, a cornerstone for ethical decision-making and responsible innovation, requires acknowledging the inherent uncertainties and limitations of human knowledge and thus calls for a careful approach. It also emphasizes the need of recognizing the potential negative consequences in the case of overstepping the bounds of current scientific understanding. As a theoretical virtue, epistemic humility is essential for developing and applying genetic engineering technologies with a conscious knowledge of their ethical and social implications. Atwood's critical questioning whether human desires and cognitive abilities are appropriate ethical drivers that shape the advancing biotechnology correlates with bioethicists' call for integrating epistemic humility into scientific practice. As Abraham Schwab states, the inherent uncertainty in scientific practice regarding the application of new biotechnologies stems from the imbalance of the amount of evidence for different medical decisions. While one decision may be supported by substantial evidence such as clinical trials and observational studies, other decisions may only rely on intuition and estimation, and although "[b]oth kinds of evidence are limited, [...] intuitions and received knowledge are more dangerous

guides” (2012, 32). Addressing epistemic humility in bioethical discourse is pivotal, as it reveals both the overconfidence and the undue modesty in ethical decision-making. In her speech, Kuzma gives examples of virtuous applications of biotechnology, including “clean water, low carbon energy, disease eradication, and environmental restoration” (2019), and although she regards these applications as “good” (2019), there has to be a warrant to approach each of these matters carefully. To rely solely on intuitive affirmation of these applications simply because of their apparent benefit is insufficient and may later prove to be dangerous.

During the debate at the GES Center, Atwood (2019b) mentioned that *Oryx and Crake* is often referred to as prophetic, but she also repeatedly expressed her desire that it not become so. Concerned about the future, Atwood stresses the cautionary – or, rather, the informative aspect of the novel: to depict potential threats of unchecked technological advancements, especially in genetic engineering. By writing and engaging in scholarly debates, Atwood raises awareness to prevent the dystopian outcome depicted in her work. Fred Gould, co-chair of the GES Center, views Atwood’s visit to North Carolina State University as a part of the center’s agenda to integrate diverse disciplinary perspectives on genetic engineering (Beal 2019). Utilizing fiction is a recent method that allows the exploration of the sociopolitical impact of human gene editing which, as Mara Almeida and Robert Ranisch (2022) note, is largely unknown. The debate further revealed that the natural sciences, in the same manner as the humanities, are filled with narratives that contain moral implications. For instance, biology is both a scientific discipline and a storytelling art form which incorporates ethical themes within the study of life and biological processes. The plot of *Oryx and Crake* consists of real-life issues integrated within the speculative landscape. It provides a commentary on the vulnerabilities of human society, the risks of uncontrolled scientific ambition, and the ethical issues arising from the use of biotechnological knowledge for malicious intents.

CONCLUSION

Speculative fiction, through its exploration of humanity’s fears as well as hopes for scientific progress, plays a crucial role in depicting the transformations of society that could arise from technological advancements. *Oryx and Crake* not only depicts the impact of genetic engineering technologies but also emphasizes the significance of speculative bioethics in parallel with current ethical debates, which illustrates the continuity between contemporary and future concerns. Such fictional narratives extend ethical considerations beyond personal experiences by employing theoretical scenarios that push the boundaries of one’s moral imagination. Engaging with these narratives encourages an interdisciplinary dialogue on emerging issues and potentially enhances an understanding of the technological impact.

As genetic engineering technologies continuously evolve, there is a strengthening call from bioethicists to address the ethical dimensions emerging from their use. These dimensions – encompassing safety, sociopolitical, and deontological aspects (Almeida and Ranisch 2022) – require a platform for bioethical analysis. In this context, *Oryx and Crake* exemplifies how speculative fiction can provide such a platform.

Due to its adherence to the concept of plausibility, the novel maintains a balance between real-world technological possibilities and its imaginative applications, thus developing distinct bioethical issues. Analyzing such speculative fiction works not only addresses current challenges, but also lays the groundwork for future bioethical debates, especially as cultural and political circumstances in contemporary society increasingly reflect the circumstances depicted in speculative narratives.

NOTES

- ¹ In the context of healthcare and bioethics, sustainable medicine represents such an approach to medical practice that aims to reduce environmental impact while promoting health and well-being. The idea of sustainable medicine includes a variety of practices, such as decreasing waste and energy consumption in healthcare institutions or the use of renewable resources and eco-friendly materials. Sustainable medicine also requires pharmaceutical practices to be reevaluated, especially the development or disposal of medications – to ensure they do not harm the environment.
- ² The concept of “commodification of life” refers to the profound effects of genetic engineering technologies on personhood, dehumanization, and social inequality. This theme, commonly explored in speculative fiction, reveals scenarios in which organs are traded, genetically modified beings are purchased and sold, or valuable substances are capitalized on. Such narratives emphasize that these benefits are mainly available to the wealthy, which then deepens socio-economic disparities and creates a landscape for the exploitation of living beings; the concept of commodification of life also demonstrates the manner in which life, under the domination of capital, maintains historical forms of oppression and gives rise to new ones.
- ³ As a groundbreaking genome editing technology, CRISPR/Cas9 enables scientists to make specific changes to DNA by removing, adding, or altering parts of the DNA sequence. It is based on a natural system used by bacteria to protect themselves against viruses. The system works by using the Cas9 enzyme which acts like a precise editor that can target and modify specific areas of DNA. The CRISPR/Cas9 technology has revolutionized genetic research, as it has created a potential for treating various genetic disorders by correcting mutations at their genetic roots.

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Ripperdocs and game makers: Bioethics in the dystopian future of (post)cyberpunk fiction

MARIUSZ PISARSKI

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Ripperdocs and game makers: Bioethics in the dystopian future of (post)cyberpunk fiction

Cyberpunk Fiction. Transhumanism. Bioethics. Speculative fiction.
Computer games.

The basic ethical principles that underlie biomedical and behavioral research involving human subjects – respect for persons, beneficence, and justice – face deterioration and decline in the future envisioned in cyberpunk and dystopian science fiction. In the near-future setting of the first-person role-playing game *Cyberpunk 2077*, well-being, longevity, and enhancements are the privileges of corporate elites. However, they can be partially afforded across social strata thanks to the grassroots and do-it-yourself “ripperdoc” clinics. Some people can live for as long as 150 years; most die young due to crime and extreme social disparities, but all have access to a range of life-enhancing treatments advocated and envisioned by transhumanist scholars. In recent novels that represent post-cyberpunk genres, such as Neal Stephenson’s *Fall; or, Dodge in Hell* (2019), the distribution of advanced technologies such as personality constructs and mind uploads becomes problematic. The ripperdoc is replaced by an afterlife “game-maker”, a maverick of world-building who sells virtual real estate to those who can afford their place in the expanding cloud of afterlife worlds. This article focuses on the evolution of the theme of affordability and access to biotechnology and how it becomes more nuanced and aligned with current discussions around resources, climate change, and social disparities in access to healthcare and technology.

Mariusz Pisarski

University of Information Technology and Management

Rzeszów

Poland

mpisarski@wsiz.edu.pl

ORCID: 0000-0001-7038-0166

NIGHT CITY AND ITS BIOETHICAL PARADOXES

At first sight, the streets of Night City, the cyberpunk metropolis from the role-playing tabletop games created by Mike Pondsmith, present a bustling image of diversity and prosperity. Its squares, night markets, and pavements brim with individuals who express their social affiliations and aspirations through various technological and biological enhancements. Technologically enhanced entertainment, fitness, and well-being are advertised at every corner and ingrained in daily activities: from mundane tasks, such as eating synthetic ramen noodles, to illicit ones, like the services offered in Joy-Toy bars where citizens of Night City – and the player – can choose from a selection of “dolls” or sex workers willingly implanted with a biochip that erases the memory of the encounter. If we accept Donna Haraway’s assertion that bodies are “maps of power and identity” (1991, 180), then the maps found in cyberpunk literature depict a world teeming with diverse identities, each afforded a considerable degree of access to tools for individual expression and enhancement.

Upon closer inspection, however, the very foundations of bioethics – the notions of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Steinbock 2007, 4) – are fragile, fluid, and unevenly distributed. Gang violence is a daily occurrence, and some parts of the city are controlled almost exclusively by criminal groups, resulting in a generally low life expectancy. Communal services in Night City are nearly nonexistent, with tons of rubbish bags littering the side alleys and patches of barren land. Only two public hospitals still exist, and they suffer from lower-level flooding and disruptions in regular water, power, and communications services. They are the “last stand for major surgery and the ability to handle the periodic plague outbreaks” (Pondsmith 2020, 301). The reasons behind troubles with public healthcare and communal services are evident if one looks above the level of streets and overcrowded apartment blocks of the metropolis. Small civilian aircraft of the wealthy elite cruise the higher latitudes of the Night City, comfortably maneuvering between corporate luxury skyscrapers during the daytime and high-end entertainment venues at night. Crews of escorted medics from the Trauma Team, a highly expensive but highly efficient air ambulance, can attend to any emergency within the Night City in minutes. Even higher, above the Earth’s surface, orbital medical clinics offer advanced surgeries to those who can afford them. An apparent two-tier healthcare system seems to be at work in the world of *Cyberpunk*. As a mirror of the socio-economic conditions of Night City, this liberal system gives a convenient narrative springboard for themes of rebellion and self-determination and for an inflationary punk attitude of main protagonists that characterize the cyberpunk genre (Higgins and Iung 2020, 93).

The two realities of Night City, that of the elite and that of the street, are not entirely at odds with each other. The biotechnological advancements achieved before and after the fall of nation-states and the ascent to power by global corporations are not exclusive to the financial elite. Although the wealthy have access to subtler forms of bodily enhancement in their orbital clinics, a whole range of cyber and bio-implants are accessible on the street. This relatively easy access to “cyberware” (cybernetic prosthesis) is possible thanks to the independent network of grassroots, do-it-yourself clinics of medical practitioners called the “ripperdocs”, or – as one character

from the computer game calls them – “chrome shamans”. On the narrative timeline of Pondsmith’s tabletop games that cover years before *Cyberpunk 2077* or *Cyberpunk Red: The Roleplaying Game of the Dark Future* (2020; *Cyberpunk 2013*, 1988; *Cyberpunk 2020*, 1990), ripperdoc shops are shifting clinics, which became the primary source of medical care. Ripperdocs were doctors who helped most people get medicine, emergency care, and moderate-level cyberware installations. In the later timeline of the *Cyberpunk 2077* game, the ripperdoc clinics have stable locations and offer a wide range of enhancements for almost every part of the human body. For example, Victor Vector – a doctor whom the players befriend during their adventures in Night City – sells titanium bones, a ballistic coprocessor for hand enhancement, “Gorilla arms” cyber limbs, reinforced tendons, fortified ankles, Kiroshi Optics for enhanced vision and even a new “operating system” for cybernetic brain enhancement.

Ripperdocs made cyberware available at low cost to a wide range of clients, and the streets of Night City are abundant with individuals and whole communities that use it. Boxing rings, car racing tracks, and dance floors are areas of life that cannot sustain activities related to them without cybernetic upgrades and prostheses. Such democratization of cybernetic enhancements results in society’s global, transgenerational cyborgization. Only those who choose not to be enhanced – Luddites and humanists (Benko 2005, 8) – keep their bodies in their natural-born, non-enhanced state, perhaps as a gesture rejecting the posthumanist claims that technology is constitutive of identity.

The arsenal of personal cyberware available at Victor Vector’s do-it-yourself clinic is partly superficial and justified by the demands of gameplay and combat mechanics; players need weapons, and the game delivers them as implants and prostheses. There are, however, some less visible services on offer at the ripperdoc’s practice: life extension and slowing aging. Although not very beneficial for the gameplay, these subtle biological enhancements are crucial for the narrative and the overarching story of the *Cyberpunk* saga. Life in Night City often ends violently prematurely due to the high crime rate and the lack of public services, and even the ripperdocs offer a selection of subtle biological enhancements. Rouge is an important character in *Cyberpunk 2077* and is around 90 years old in the game’s main timeline. We know it from the playable backstory of Johnny Silverhand, when he and Rouge, (who is in her late twenties or early thirties in 2013) take part in an attack on Arasaka Tower, a symbol of the domination of Night City by a Japanese mega-corporation. Rouge’s longevity and comfort of living as a late octogenarian or early nonagenarian is a mystery the player must solve. However, it also indicates the overall state of healthcare and access to methods of life enhancement.

The corporate, capitalist, and libertarian transhumanism represented in the *Cyberpunk* dystopia, from the vantage point of affordable life-enhancing services of ripperdocs, shows its egalitarian, beneficial, and even friendly side. Benjamin Krohmal and Ezekiel Emanuel present three major systems of access to health care in modern democracies: a multi-tiered market system (USA), a one-tier system of public access to all medical care, and the most popular two-tier system, such as in the UK, Israel, and the Netherlands where market-tier coverage supplements an extensive public

tier of healthcare (Krohmal and Emanuel 2007, 176). The world of *Cyberpunk 2077* represents the first case, reflecting the health care in the United States, but the model is in its collapsing, almost post-apocalyptic phase.

The institution of the ripperdoc gives it an interesting twist that can contribute to bioethical debates about the strengths and weaknesses of the system. As a local center of market-grade access to medical and enhancement services, health advice, and well-being counseling, ripperdoc clinics of Night City justify the two-tier solution and prove the validity of arguments of the father of bioethics – John Rawls – who claimed that a certain amount of inequality is beneficial for those who are worst off. Affordable implants and other enhancements that citizens of the cyberpunk metropolis wear as a statement of status and even a fashion accessory illustrate the effectiveness of the “difference principle”, which Rawls defines as: “unequal distributions are unjust unless the worst off are better off with the inequality than without it” (Krohmal and Emanuel 2007, 176). Even though the figure of the ripperdoc is a sign of a failed state in its public systems, he/she is also a beacon of health care in a world of inequality.

THE LIMITS OF DO-IT-YOURSELF IN LIBERTARIAN TRANSHUMANISM

The mix of anarcho-libertarian individualism, socialist-utopian communitarianism, punk attitude, and geek know-how that characterizes the world of cyberpunk fiction of William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, and other authors of the early era of the genre (Raulerson 2010, 115), conveniently creates a buffer zone between the represented life of wealthy and the poor, those with access to latest advancements in biotechnology and those who lack the access.

The *Cyberpunk* saga, but especially the narrative of the *Cyberpunk 2077* game, introduces a clear border between the two strata of the social world. This border runs across aging, longevity science, and mind-uploading technologies. Only Saburo Arasaka, the head of the ruling corporation, can live for up to 160 years and has the privilege of highest-grade mind-uploading into the virtual space of the Mikoshi – an experimental cyberspace infrastructure housing the “souls” of the dead. At its base level, the Mikoshi is experimental because Arasaka tests its supporting technologies on enemies of the corporation, convicts, and bodies from mortuaries. The experiments support advanced and sophisticated “personality constructs”, such as the project of complete consciousness transfer and digital immortality of the aging Saburo Arasaka.

The story of *Cyberpunk 2077* is a rendering of two classical narrative motifs: the magical agent (Propp 1968, 26) with a flavor of the rags to riches theme (Negi 2021, 44). The main character V. comes into possession of a “relic”, a military grade personality construct and at the same time a “soul cage” of Johnny Silverhand, the punk-rebel killed during the attack on Arasaka Tower in 2013. The capturing of the relic happens by coincidence – during a failed heist in the hotel room of Yorinobu Arasaka, the son and heir to the powerful father Saburo. During the escape from the heist scene, V. (controlled by the player as a male or as a female charac-

ter) inserts the relic into their head, saving their lives when the fixer who ordered the heist decides to shoot the protagonist. Revived with Johnny Silverhand effectively implanted in their brain, V. embarks on a journey to the world of high society and high technology of the Night City – helping to uncover the crime of patricide that Yorinobu Arasaka hides from his family and the public.

Personality constructs in the world of *Cyberpunk* – the result of mapping someone’s consciousness into a multidimensional digital grid – are futuristic, military-grade experiments geared to help the most powerful and the richest achieve a form of digital immortality. The Arasaka Corporation strictly guards the technology and does not make it publicly available. Such a setting represents the harshest version of libertarian transhumanism, with market-regulated access to the fruits of post-human science, which, in theory – as Francisca Ferrando concludes – can be “the best guarantor of the right to human enhancement” (Ferrando 2013, 27). In the realities of the Cyberpunk saga, the science of aging and advanced posthuman technologies of enhancement, especially the techniques of digital immortality, are available only to the ruling elite. On this level, the bioethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice apply only to a fraction of society, and the possession of these “magical agents” in any form by an average citizen of Night City can end in arrest, death and imprisoning of the digital scan of one’s mind in the Mikoshi – a cyberspace prison of the afterlife. These gloomy scenarios happen in several different endings of the *Cyberpunk 2077* multilinear plot. If V. does not escape the machinations of the Arasaka family, they is either dead or imprisoned in the Mikoshi.

INEQUALITIES OF POST-CYBERPUNK

If the figure of ripperdoc functions as the beacon of relevant normalcy in the access to the enhancement technologies in *Cyberpunk 2077*, then a gamer or more specifically a game world creator is the Promethean figure of Neal Stephenson’s post-cyberpunk novel *Fall; or, Dodge in Hell* (2019). I suggest calling this novel and several of Stephenson’s other speculative sci-fi works post-cyberpunk, because after publishing his first two novels – *Snow Crash* (1992) and *Diamond Age: Or, A Young Lady’s Illustrated Primer* (1995) – the author abandons a rather limiting formula of cyberpunk fiction, as a highly stylized “post-modernization of sci-fi” open for borrowings from various genres, modes, and registers of culture, pop-culture, and fashion (McCaffery 1991, 11–14).

Fall; or, Dodge in Hell, just like later books by Stephenson, is a work of speculative fiction based in the near future that focuses on one aspect of that future and elaborates on its consequences for the represented world and society. The main protagonist, Richard “Dodge” Forthrust, the billionaire CEO of a viral online game, *T’Rain*, after a sudden accident, collapses into an irreversible coma. While deliberating what to do with Dodge and when to switch him off from life support, his family and friends discover a request in his testament to cryogenically preserve his body until the time when technology arrives that would bring him back to life in one form or another. Just a few years after Dodge’s body is frozen, the technology of “revival” becomes available. Mind uploading techniques, defined as “the transfer of a human mind,

memories, personality and ‘self’” (Prisco 2013, 235), are advanced enough to recreate Dodge’s thinking, feeling, and other “self”-defining processes in a virtual world.

In a series of vignettes portraying the emergence of the digital afterlife for Dodge and other people, Stephenson highlights the new technology’s economic, political, and societal consequences. Dodge wakes up as a seemingly blank slate, devoid of memories from his bodily existence, yet with strong tendencies and behavioral patterns visibly inherited from his game developer and virtual reality builder career. In a playful state of creativity, Dodge shapes the empty digital landscape into a virtual landmass that becomes an island with mountain ranges, rivers, and a town in the center, surrounded by sea. Souls arriving on the island are less capable and less creative than Dodge, and soon a power relation starts to develop within the growing society of digital souls. While the population grows in the virtual world, a continuous effort to secure the necessary infrastructure is in full force in the physical world. The computing power necessary for sustaining the digital afterlife is highly resource-consuming. It becomes clear that digital “immortality” depends on the material and economic support of the living. One can be immortal if someone on the other side provides “afterlife care” or “death care”. As a result, the immortality technology is accessible only to the narrow group of the wealthy who can pay for the costs of server farms and data banks over an extended period that stretches from the time of death to an unknown “forever”.

Just as in the case of wearing a cybernetic implant in the world of Cyberpunk, having one’s real estate in the virtual afterlife becomes a sign of social status. Scientists responsible for the software and hardware of the simulation observe that although fully autonomous in their actions and habits, the bodiless constructs do not fully resemble the living persons they were in the physical world. The dead do not even care for the life they had left behind but are mainly preoccupied with their standing within the social hierarchies developed on the virtual island. Indeed, the society of the afterlife starts to resemble the society, religion, and social hierarchies of ancient, pre-democracy Greece, with gods, myths, and priests at the higher levels of the social hierarchy and a large population of subjects at the lower levels. The significant difference, apart from the fact that it is a generated virtual world with a population of uploaded minds in the late 21st century, is that the gods, priests, and priestesses come from one particular circle from the physical world: they are the game developers who worked with Dodge. The world-building skills from the matter formed of pixels and alphanumeric data prove to be the most crucial differentiating factor in the society of uploaded minds. For those uninitiated, the souls of former developers can create something out of nothing, giving them a divine status. As a result, new inequalities and problems with access to the benefits and the digital paradise arises. The simulation resembles a feudal world of angry gods, proud nobles, competing factions, and subjugated masses.

CONCLUSION

Fall; or, Dodge in Hell, a novel published 25 years after Stephenson’s debut *Snow Crash*, convincingly illustrates the distance between the visions of the future in the cy-

berpunk genre and recent speculative fiction and science fiction. The technoromantic utopia and cybergothic dystopia, characteristic of the early novels of William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, and Stephenson (Goicoechea 2020, 25), have given way to more realism-driven fiction. Just as universal health care is hard to sustain, universal access to the transhuman technologies of longevity and immortality will not be possible; inequality is not only a given but may as well be the most stimulating factor that results in the evolution of enhancement technologies to develop. Such is the overall theme and conclusions brought by the speculative reflection of the future of mind uploading and possible life after death in a posthuman society that *Fall; or, Dodge in Hell* and later installments of the *Cyberpunk* series bring to the current discussions about transhumanism and bioethics. Importantly, reality is catching up with science fiction. Recent research in longevity science is seriously trying to bypass the biological limits of the human body and extend our life beyond 100 years – the reverse aging methods of David Sinclair (Sinclair and LaPlante 2019), which have found some success, is just one example. Elon Musk's Neuralink, a company that builds brain-to-computer interfaces that can lead to mind uploads, delivers another example of efforts to bring to life technologies that quite recently were still in the domain of science fiction. Not everyone, however, will fly to Mars or have a recreational weekend trip to the Earth's orbit – the latter a service already offered by Amazon, Virgin, and Space X. The envisioned futures of cyberpunk fiction and speculative fiction discussed in the article were much more conservative regarding access possibilities and medical access policies compared to those proposed by some contemporary entrepreneurs today.

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Bioethics of the human body in Michael Crichton's *Next* and Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

PETER SÝKORA

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Bioethics of the human body in Michael Crichton's *Next* and Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

Bioethics. Michael Crichton. Rebecca Skloot. HeLa cells. Human body parts. Biobanks.

In this essay, I use two literary works from two distinct genres and with two very different narratives – a satirical techno-thriller and a historical non-fiction piece – to show how they can both convey the same bioethical message – donation of human body parts – to their audience. The two books I examine and contrast here are Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (2010) and Michael Crichton's satirical techno-thriller *Next* (2006). The main question this article will try to answer is obviously not why *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, a carefully researched nonfiction book, belongs on the list of essential works on bioethics, but rather why *Next*, a satirical techno-thriller that continuously blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction, belongs on the list as well.

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Peter Sýkora
Centre for Bioethics
Department of Philosophy and Applied Philosophy
Faculty of Arts
University of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Slovak Republic
petersykora111@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-1870-4626

The relationship between literature and bioethics depends largely on the conceptualization of bioethics, whether it is understood within a narrow or broad definition. According to the narrower definition, commonly applied in the field of biomedicine, bioethics is more or less equivalent to medical ethics, or biomedical ethics (Beauchamp and Childress 2013). Bioethics in this narrower sense is a continuation of the long tradition of medical ethics dating back to ancient Hippocrates. Its focus is on the doctor-patient relationship, which has expanded after World War II to include the ethics of biomedical research and the challenges brought to medicine by scientific and technical advances, such as life-sustaining devices. It turned out that bioethics became more than just one of the professional ethics (health ethics) and becomes an interdisciplinary academic discipline with overlapping concerns from different fields of study, including the life sciences, biotechnology, public health, medicine, public policy, law, philosophy and theology. In such a way, biomedical ethics including ethics of biomedical research goes beyond the borders of healthcare ethics.

There are four ethical principles in the conceptual core of biomedical ethics. Two of them, non-maleficence and beneficence, are old medical ethics principles developed since the Hippocratic tradition. The other two principles, autonomy (the patient's own self-determination in contrast to the traditional physician's paternalism) and justice came explicitly with the beginning of bioethics in 1960s–1970s.

Both biographical and fictional stories may provide useful insights for the analysis of moral dilemmas faced by physicians and patients; they are based on real life situations and serve as sources for complex cases (de la Vieja 2015). Furthermore, according to Tod Chambers (2001), narrative theory should not be considered simply a helpful addition to medical ethics but rather as vital and important to the discipline as moral theory itself. Being free from the constraints of the real world, fictional texts not only reflect the world but can also shape it: “by engaging the reader in a particular presentation of the world, fiction argues for that particular view” (Chambers 2016, 80). Thus, in order to create ethical thought experiments that may later become reality, speculative and science fiction novels can transcend the limits of real-world biomedical frameworks by focusing on the application of advanced research and emergent technologies like cloning, gene therapy, stem cell research, xenotransplantation, longevity, artificial intelligence, and robots. This is bioethics in a broader sense, which goes far beyond the boundaries of healthcare ethics and clinical practice.¹

Michael Crichton is considered to be the master of the modern techno-thriller, but it appears that using this classification for his writings is probably not fully accurate. A number of the topics Crichton addresses have already been treated in bioethical discourse, such as biosafety, brain implants, genetic engineering, cloning and de-extinction, nanotechnology, genetic research, transgenic animals, the legal framework for biotechnology, the ownership of the human body, and its misuse for money. As pointed out by Gilberto Diaz-Santos (2022) an application of a new literary genre category, known as FASP, would be more appropriate for some of Crichton's novels, including *Next*. The term FASP, coined by Michel Petit, is a French acronym for “fiction à substrat professionnel”, fiction with a professional dominant. Novels in this

new category of professional literary fiction ought to be: 1) globally best-selling; 2) written by successful authors in a similar subgenre (for example, medical thrillers, military thrillers, legal thrillers); and 3) written by authors who are skilled in the relevant field (Petit 1999). The specific professional language of FASP novels is “the very pivot of plot and character dynamics”, not just a background to the story (Isani 2004). Actually, Petit’s main observation is that the professional dominant of the different thriller subtypes (medical, military, legal etc.) is as important as the thriller aspects of this literature, if not more. Diaz-Santos (2022) goes even further in his re-categorization of some of Crichton’s novels – they do not fit into an original definition of FASP either, because they are multi-disciplinary, not only from a single professional domain, as in the case, for example, of John Grisham’s legal novels.

Another dimension of bioethics in literature which is very important in democratic societies is its role in improving citizens’ participation about bioethical issues. As pointed out by Susana Magalhães, Joana Araújo and Ana Sofia Carvalho, “literary texts are laboratories of ethical judgment, where the ethical questions concerning specific scientific/technological issues are addressed in an imaginary world” (2011, 79).

But one should not forget the importance of non-fiction literature for bioethics education and the facilitation of debate on bioethical issues. Therefore the purpose of this study is to show how both fictional and non-fictional literature, each with different narratives, can and should be used to increase public awareness of the bioethical dilemma. This will be demonstrated using two literary works which, although coming from the different genres of historical non-fiction and satirical techno-thriller, can show the public the same controversial bioethical issue. These are Michael Crichton’s satirical techno-thriller *Next* (2006) and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (2010) by Rebecca Skloot. The major question this article will address is not why *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, a meticulously written non-fictional work, should be on the list of must-read books in bioethics, but why Crichton’s satirical techno-thriller *Next*, systematically blurring the line between fact and fiction, should be on the list too. Do these books have anything in common besides the fact that they both became *New York Times* bestsellers (each one in its own literary genre)? I argue here that despite the different narratives of these books, they convey the same crucial bioethical message for their readers and raise the public’s ethical awareness of the complicated issue of human body parts donorship.

THE STORY OF THE HeLa CELL LINE: REBECCA SKLOOT’S *THE IMMORTAL LIFE OF HENRIETTA LACKS*

Rebecca Skloot’s book explores bioethical concerns pertaining to the ownership of human cells, justice, and relationships between individuals and communities within the context of racial and class inequality in the United States during the 20th century. It is the literary debut of the American author Rebecca Skloot, who was unknown before it was published and adapted into a 2017 HBO TV drama movie of the same name, starring Oprah Winfrey. The book received numerous honors, including those from scientific associations like the National Academies

and AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science). It is a detailed description of Henrietta Lacks, a African American donor of cells which revolutionized medicine beginning in the 1950s but who was for decades unrecognized and forgotten. At the same time it tells of the author's personal struggle for years in writing this book, the difficulties of communicating with Lacks's family members, especially her daughter Deborah, and understanding and perceiving the HeLa bioethical issue from their perspective.

Skloot's book starts in January of 1951, when Henrietta Lacks discovered a tumor on her cervix and went to Johns Hopkins Hospital for a medical checkup. At that time, Doctor George Gey was studying cervical cancer and asked all patients, including Henrietta Lacks, for tissue samples because he was trying, until then unsuccessfully, to set up a tissue culture from the tumor as well as healthy cells. In that time it was not known that tissue culture cannot be obtained from isolated healthy cells, which they are genetically pre-programmed only for a limited number of divisions and then die. However, it turned out that cells isolated from Lack's cervical tumor were special in comparison to cells isolated from other cervical cancer patients. This cell culture, which has been identified as HeLa cells, was the first – and for a long time, only – in vitro human cell culture. After a botched X-ray cancer treatment, Lacks passed away in October 1951, but her cells were kept alive in liquid nitrogen (at -150°C), cloned after her death, and became the focus of medical research for more than 20 years.

Her husband and five children were unaware of this research on HeLa cells until a family friend unintentionally informed them of it in 1973. They were shocked to learn this and lacked the rudimentary biological knowledge to distinguish between their mother and living cell lines that were produced from her body. The Lacks children were asked to provide blood samples to scientists who required particular genetic markers to differentiate HeLa cells from other types of cells. They believed they were being screened for potential cancer, so they agreed to give them samples, but they were not informed of the fact that a for-profit company had been established to produce HeLa cells in large quantities in order to meet the demand for research from all over the world. Thanks to a 1975 article on HeLa cells in *Rolling Stone* magazine, the Lacks family learned to their great surprise and indignation that their mother's cells had made a significant contribution to medical research without any acknowledgement and that companies were profiting financially from their sale. Finally, in August 2023, Lacks's descendants reached an out-of-court settlement with the Thermo Fisher Scientific Company, which doubtless would not have happened without an increased public awareness about the HeLa case thanks to *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* and its film version.

A TECHNO-THRILLER ABOUT SERIOUS BIOETHICAL ISSUES: MICHAEL CRICHTON'S NEXT

In contrast to Skloot, Michael Crichton was a bestselling American writer with over 200 million copies of his books sold worldwide. He was also a successful screenwriter, film director, and TV producer, perhaps best known to the general public as

the author of *Jurassic Park* (1990), as well as the screenplay to Steven Spielberg's 1993 film adaptation whose immersive visualization of resurrected dinosaurs made pioneering use of computer-generated imagery. Next was Crichton's 25th novel, the 15th published under his own name, and the last book he published before his death in 2008. It is written in a dynamic pulp-fiction style, with many characters and many contested genetic technologies which are the subject of interest of greedy biotechnological and pharmacological companies. It is not among his best-known works, nor considered one of his best. Critics found that it covered too many topics and lacked a clear main storyline. Its main message for the readers, as seen from the author's note at the end, is the question of the use of human tissues and genes for profit without informing the persons from whom they were isolated.

The book begins as Frank Burnet is suing the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) for unauthorized misuse of his cells. He had leukemia, underwent successful treatment, and had regular check-ups for years at the UCLA Hospital. Doctor Gross, the physician who treated Burnet, while taking blood samples regularly over four years, had discovered that Burnet's white blood cells produced a powerful cancer-fighting substance called interleukin. UCLA had licensed the cell line derived from Burnet's cell and sold it to a biotechnology start-up company BioGen Inc., but Burnet was told nothing about it at all. When he discovers that his cells were sold and bought without his knowledge and consent, he starts to sue UCLA for unauthorized exploitation of them. At the end of Chapter 1, the attorney asks Burnet if he knows what those cells are worth: "The drug company said three billion dollars.' The jury gasped" (5–6). The judge, in accordance with US legislation, rules that Burnet's cells were his body "waste", UCLA could dispose of them as it wished, and therefore it had the right with Doctor Gross to sell Burnet's cell line to the BioGen company. But in the company Burnet's cells are destroyed by sabotage – infected with mold. BioGen, now the owner of Burnet's cell line, claims the rights to it and with the judge's permission hires the bounty hunter Vasco to obtain cells from Frank Burnet's daughter Alex and her child Jamie, who inherited Burnet's special cells. After Frank and his family go on the run, Jamie is kidnapped and transferred to a private clinic for tissue extraction but saved from it by his mother. Finally, the judge rules in Alex's favor, citing the 13th Amendment from the US Constitution, which will impact future research and tissue sales. Meanwhile, the cognitive animal researcher Henry Kendall discovers that he has created a transgenic chimpanzee, Dave, who can talk.

Among other storylines, we encounter Gerard, a transgenic parrot (being injected with human genes responsible for the human ability to talk) who can not only talk but also help the researcher's son with his homework. An orangutan is discovered in the Sumatra rainforest speaking Dutch and French, and is suspected to be a result of secret experiments with transferring of human genes to apes. Human subjects are exposed to a "maturity" gene developed by the biotech company, but they all die of accelerated old age. These storylines are interrupted with almost twenty "boxes" of "science news", about discoveries in genetics, the use of animals with transferred bioluminescent gene from jellyfish for advertising, and Google Search screenshots for some unbelievable topics. At the end of the book, the Kendalls' household is praised

as a trend-setting inter-species transgenic family including humans, the transgenic chimp and the transgenic parrot.

Next confronts us with a whole patchwork of intertwining storylines, a large cast of figures, and a plethora of professional legal, biomedical, biotechnological, and genetic engineering terms and themes that are not easy to follow. Although it is true that book lacked a single clear motif around which the main storyline unfolded, this does not mean that it does not carry a main message, seen from a bioethical perspective. That message is the question of the use of human body parts for medical research, and the biotechnological production of biological drugs.

DEEP RESPECT FOR FACTS VERSUS BLURRING THE LINE BETWEEN FACT AND FICTION

Skloot starts *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* with the words: “This is a work of nonfiction” (ix). She first had the inspiration for writing it in a biology course in 1988, when she learned that despite the fact that HeLa cells were one of the most important developments in medical research in the last 100 years, no one even knew the name of the cell donor. Skloot began to investigate who Henrietta Lacks was, where she came from, how she lived and died, and how her family dealt with the discovery that their mother’s cells were still being used for medical research for decades, becoming a source for financial profit, without their knowledge. A turning point comes in 1999 when Skloot meets the Professor Roland Pattilo in Atlanta, who had been the only African-American student of Doctor George Gey at John Hopkins. Pattilo gives her a contact for the Lacks family and explains to her how difficult it will be to ask the Lacks family members about their mother.

The book’s two chronological lines follow in parallel – from 1951 on, the story of HeLa cells and the Lacks family, and from 1999 on, Skloot’s struggles to communicate with Lacks’s descendants, mostly with her daughter Deborah, to give a detailed personal story of the family. She eventually spoke with Lacks’s friends and family for over a thousand hours, as well as with journalists, ethicists, attorneys, and researchers who have written on the Lacks family. In addition, she drew upon an extensive collection of historical and scientific sources, as well as the private diaries of Deborah Lacks, making every effort to accurately quote the language that each person used while speaking and writing.

In contrast, Crichton begins his novel *Next* with the words: “This novel is fiction, except for the parts that aren’t.” He had an extraordinary talent for identifying themes that, for many experts, may seem pure science fiction, but he foresaw their possible real-life implications. Where others saw mere facts, Crichton saw a gripping story, often carrying a clear message about how original intentions can go awry due to chance and the complexities of the world. But the main problem with *Next*, from the perspective of bioethical education and public awareness in bioethical issues, is his blurring of the line between fact and fiction. As Diaz-Santos states: “media critics, literary analysts, scientists, and FASP researchers/practitioners blame Crichton’s mixing and blurring of contemporary science and plausible fiction to entertain and educate readers” (2002, 2).

Crichton was known for doing thorough research and preparation before writing, including conversations with experts, and he was able to describe facilities, equipment, and procedures in detail. However, in his techno thrillers, including *Next*, he did not write stories as realistically as possible, but rather manipulated reality, making it difficult for the reader to distinguish between facts and fiction. On the one hand, the characters are portrayed as “real, flawed people, not simple caricatures” (Grazier 2008, vii), but on the other hand, readers can easily take pure fictions as scientifically verified facts. As Robert Golla has pointed out, in 1999 Crichton declared on the Charlie Rose TV show that he was “attracted to the challenge of trying to write a story that will be persuasive, even for a few hours, on some subject that’s impossible or highly, highly unlikely” (2011, 169). This recalls the 1938 radio drama adaptation by Orson Welles of the science fiction novel *The War of the Worlds*, which incited a panic among some listeners that a real Martian invasion of Earth was happening.

BIOETHICS AND BIOPOLITICS OF THE HUMAN BODY IN *THE IMMORTAL LIFE OF HENRIETTA LACKS* AND *NEXT*

For many readers, it may seem that the absurd storylines of *Next* are presented only with the goal of entertaining the reader, but in many cases they have very little if anything to do with reality. Michael Goldman’s review for the journal *Nature* criticizes the fact that *Next* addresses “every aspect of the biotechnology craze at once” (2007, 819), and expresses an opinion that would presumably be shared by most scientists and legal experts:

Next is a veritable catalogue of what could go wrong with biotechnology. This is what would happen if every patent attorney and judge had a prefrontal lobotomy. [...] Body parts and eggs are traded like commodities, and genetically engineered fish display illuminated advertising billboards on their sides. I admit that Crichton had me going with the *Tyrannosaurus rex* in *Jurassic Park*, but somehow that was a bit more believable, and had a lot more suspense. (Goldman 2007, 819)

However, it is instructive to compare Frank Burnet’s cell line story from *Next* with the following real-life story known as the *Case of Moore versus the Regents of the University of California*. In 1976, John Moore was been diagnosed with a severe form of leukemia, and was sent to David Golde, a prominent cancer researcher at UCLA, who told Moore that his spleen had to be removed. In 1983 Moore found that Golde had developed, patented and marketed the “Mo cell-line”, taken from his cells, which naturally produced lymphokines in a very high concentration and therefore could be used for cancer treatment. Moore sued Golde, but the California Supreme Court denied Moore a property right and he lost the case.

Clearly, Crichton fictionalized the real story of John Moore, but he added the completely fictitious motive of bounty hunters chasing cells (making his text a thriller) and exaggerated the absurdity of the real legal system (adding satire). However, satire can be, and often has been, used for constructive social criticism. From the author’s note at the end of the book we know exactly what Crichton is criticizing through the fictional Burnet’s story: “Historically, the courts have decided questions about human tissues based on existing property law. In general, they have ruled that once

your tissue leaves your body, you no longer maintain any rights to it. They analogize tissues to, say, the donation of a book to a library” (Crichton 2006). As Crichton said in one interview there are such “bounty hunters” as the ones in the novel, but we call them lawyers (2006).² Thus his use of the “bounty hunter” metaphor perfectly fits in Paul Ricœur’s understanding of metaphor (1977) as a vivifying principle in which imagination is used for thinking more at the conceptual level. In *Next*, Crichton also sees the question of tissue ownership from the perspective of cells and genes, but he fictionalizes this by including the possible use of human genes, such as giving animals genetically enhanced human-like capacities, and discusses the new kind of capitalism that goes with it – biocapitalism. Using relatively believable stories, and inserted news reports, he presents the position that genetic and biomedical research needs to be developed, but sensitively regulated. The development of biotechnological, pharmaceutical and genetic start-ups with investment from venture capitalists, but also the monopoly imposed by multinationals, can be left entirely to the rules of free market economics. However, it is equally wrong to adopt a stance that promotes the development of genetics and biomedical sciences, as is the case with genetic manipulation or embryonic stem cells.

Although we can hardly find more different narratives and literary styles than those used by Crichton in *Next* and by Skloot in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, the goal of both narratives is almost the same. Skloot focuses on a one historical example, HeLa cells, in the context of the issues of informed consent, property rights over the cells and genes of one’s own body, and class and race discrimination. For all the differences in genre, narrative, or facts, Skloot, like Crichton, concludes the book with an “Afterword” (315–328). There is not only a great overlap in what both authors cover in these afterwords, but also in their arguments, even though neither author mentions the other. Crichton makes no reference to *Henrietta Lacks* and HeLa cells in *Next* (despite the similarity of the case, he could not have been familiar with Skloot’s book, which came out after his death). Nor is there any mention of *Next* in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, in which Skloot might have referred to Crichton’s hearing at the US Senate to change the law regarding the biomedical use of tissues and the patenting of genes.

Crichton’s afterword focuses on five topics where the changes of US laws are necessary to avoid absurd situations described in his fiction: banning patents on genes, setting clear and ethical rules for the use of human tissues, passing a law about gene testing, avoiding ban on research, and rescind universities’ patents on their research results. He argues for new and “emphatic legislation” concerning human tissues, because “people have a strong feeling of ownership about their bodies, and that feeling will never be abrogated by a mere legal technicality” (312). Skloot’s afterword argues in a similar way: “people often have a strong sense of ownership when it comes to their bodies. Even tiny scraps of them. Especially when they hear that someone else might be making money off those scraps, or using them to uncover potentially damaging information about their genes and medical histories” (316–317). She is not against the commercialization of human tissues and tissue research, because it is necessary for companies to make drugs and diagnostic tests for medical use, but

an answer must be found to the question of “where the people who donate those raw materials fit into that marketplace” (322).

BIOETHICS OF THE HUMAN BODY

In *The Body in Bioethics* (2009), the eminent British bioethicist Alastair Campbell points out the changing situation in biomedical ethics concerning the human body:

The body has become big business. With the rapid expansion of transplantation organs and tissues, the development of cell technology and the hope of ever new therapeutic marvels from targeted pharmaceuticals, the body and its parts have become of increasing interest to the health care industry. (11)

Since money and other forms of remuneration were first offered for blood donation in the 1960s, there has been an ongoing debate about whether medical donations in general should be based only on pure acts of altruism or whether financial compensation should also be permissible. In 1970, Richard Titmuss published his seminal work *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy* in which he formulated the central problem as a dichotomy: will human body parts be altruistically given to those who need them, or sold and bought and treated like any other commodity? He was dealing with the problem of paying for blood donations, but he saw the issue in a much more general terms: “ultimately human hearts, kidneys, eyes and other organs of the body may also come to be treated as commodities” (219). He argued in favor of implementing biopolicies (regulations) based on the morally superior altruistic principle – giving blood and all human body parts as an altruistic gift, without expectation of anything in return, including financial or non-financial compensation. His book had an important impact on the later formulation of organ donation for transplantation in the 1980s in the USA and other countries.

However, the altruistic foundation of the donation of human body parts has been challenged as human cells, tissue, and genes have become extensively used for research and new drug development, and biotechnological and pharmaceutical companies started to have a significant, sometimes high financial gain. Unlike the case of blood or organ donations, for centuries human biological material was understood as biological waste, not having any value for a donor except when used for individual diagnosis, but this is not the case anymore. The problem of commodification of human tissue has been reflected and analyzed from various perspectives – economic (Rajan 2006; Waldby and Mitchell 2006), ethical (Radin 1996; Wilkinson 2003), legal (Bainham, Sclater, and Richards 2002), feministic (Dickenson 2017), and societal (Cheney 2006).

One of the central questions in both *Next* and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* is that of the property rights in human body parts (including genes). Do we own our bodies, our cells, tissue, genes? The answer may seem counter-intuitive that we are not the owners of our bodies, but legal systems in theory and practice are grounded on this assumption, rather than on the assumption that our bodies are naturally ours (Bovenberg 2006).

On the other hand, based on the principle of distributive justice, upon which liberal democracies are built, it should be the other way around, and we have a right to decide how to use our extracted cells, tissue, and genes in order to share the profit (Fabre 2006). Thus it is important to take into account the fact that “our bodies hold psychological importance for us while we live and, after we die” (Goold et al. 2014, 1), as Skloot demonstrates in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*.

However, both *Next* and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* focus the problem on property rights, commodification versus non-commodification, distributive justice or the psychology of body, but ignore the real cause of what is perceived as an absurd and contra intuitive legal system dealing with body parts – that it is a consequence of accepting altruism as the only founding ethical principle of donating human biological samples. Therefore, as previously pointed out, it is necessary to re-think the altruistic “gift” principle in the donation of human parts and to go beyond the charitable trust model (Sýkora [2009] 2016). Suggested solutions include framing the ethical challenges associated with the donation of human cells and tissues to biobanks, even organs for transplantation, within the broader conceptual framework of indirect reciprocity as an additional ethical principle to altruism (Sýkora [2009] 2016, 2021) or with the concept of bioequity as a new property class for human material (Hoppe [2009] 2016).

CONCLUSION

Despite their different narratives and literary styles, Michael Crichton’s *Next* and Rebecca Skloot’s *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* have both raised awareness of the ethical and legal contradictions regarding human body parts: on the one hand, how tangible (cells, tissues) and intangible (genes) body parts are perceived by the people from whom they are isolated, cultivated in vitro, and deciphered (DNA), and on the other hand, how these parts are used not only for medical research and treatment, but also for profit by biotechnological and pharmaceutical companies without any compensation for the donors. The question raised by both books, each in its own way, is not only that of property rights and informed consent, but also that of the application of the principle of justice. It is the problem of a mutually just relationship between individuals (donors of body parts for the common good), and society (including commercial companies), which benefits from it.

In case of some donors, the commercial benefit has been enormous. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* has had a profound impact, and it was an opportunity for the media to popularize bioethical issues among the general public. Media analysis confirmed that “the success of the book should demonstrate to bioethicists and scientists there is an intense public appetite for compelling narratives about advances in medical research and the ethical issues involved” (Nisbet and Fahy 2013). According to the publisher, the book “was selected for common reading at more than 250 colleges and universities”, as well as many high schools in the US.³ It has become the subject of empirical research, as in for example, the study of the multiple pedagogic impacts on the public health classroom setting (Dimaano and Spigner 2016).

Skloot is highly regarded as an author in scientific circles, thanks to her efforts to be as historically accurate and comprehensive as possible.

Crichton's perception among experts has been largely negative, especially after the publication of his book *The State of Fear* and his controversial statements in the media about global warming, where he sided with conspiracy theorists. Nevertheless, Crichton's book should also be used for bioethics education, as long as we focus on the issue of human tissue. I agree with Michael Goldman that *Next* "could have a role as a conversation starter for a course in bioethics. Most students would find it more entertaining than the typical textbook, and it covers a similar range of issues" (2007, 820). It is important for bioethics education precisely because, as Goldman points out, Crichton's scientific ability and imagination transcend the current ethical and legal situation.

Finally, the two books have another feature in common that is relevant from a bioethical perspective. Neither *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* nor *Next* addresses the full philosophical and ethical underpinnings of the issues that have been analyzed and debated in the bioethical literature for decades in this context: namely, the question of anchoring the biomedical donation of human body parts on the principle of pure altruism, and why it is important to re-think the issue from the point of biomedical solidarity.

NOTES

- ¹ For a wider definition of bioethics see, for example, <https://bioethics.jhu.edu/about/what-is-bioethics/>.
- ² See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMt5WkNSKdU>.
- ³ See <https://penguinrandomhousesecondaryeducation.com/book/?isbn=9781400052189>.

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Význam naratívneho prístupu v bioetike

JANA TOMAŠOVIČOVÁ

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The relevance of the narrative approach in bioethics

Interdiscursive research between literature, ethics and bioethics.

Methodological pluralism. Narrative approach. Narrative imagination.

Reflective equilibrium.

Methodological pluralism is a characteristic feature of contemporary bioethics. Within interdiscursive research, a narrative approach has gradually emerged as part of a broader ethical reflection. This article aims to explore the relevance of the narrative approach in bioethics, where it is gaining a place alongside traditional normative approaches. After first analyzing two initiatives that have influenced the reflection on the inclusion of the narrative method in bioethical discourse, it focuses on an analysis of selected works by Martha C. Nussbaum, which explores the influence of narrative imagination on moral reasoning against the backdrop of the dialogue between literature and ethics. It also examines the method of reflective equilibrium, through which Nussbaum attempts to incorporate moral beliefs and intuitions gained through narrative-ethical analysis of literary works into the making of moral judgments. The last section of the article presents four of the most prominent forms of narrative representations in bioethics, against which the relevance of the narrative approach in bioethics can be assessed.

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Jana Tomašovičová
Centrum pre bioetiku
Katedra filozofie a aplikovanej filozofie
Filozofická fakulta
Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda v Trnave
Slovenská republika
jana.tomasovicova@ucm.sk
ORCID: 0000-0002-4103-4608

Bioetika prináša v posledných desaťročiach významné impulzy pre súčasné uvažovanie. Kriticky sa vyrovnáva s morálnymi dimenziami konania, ktoré majú zásadný vplyv na život jednotlivcov i spoločnosti. Keďže pracuje v interdiskurzívnom prostredí, v ktorom sa stretávajú prírodné, medicínske, humanitné i technické vedy, snaží sa bezprostredne reagovať na ich dynamický vývoj. Predovšetkým však reflektuje vývoj v oblasti biomedicíny a biotechnológií, ktorý na základe nového poznania a rozsiahlych technologických inovácií nastolil náročné otázky o klonovaní, výskume na embryách, editovaní génov, xenotransplantácii, zásahoch do mozgu či eutanázii, vyžadujúce mimoriadne komplexné a precízne etické posúdenie (Düwell 2008, 15). Tematický záber bioetiky v dôsledku tejto reflexie súčasného biovedeckého vývoja prekračuje rámec tradičnej etiky, ktorej teoretické nástroje nie sú dostatočné na riešenie aktuálnych morálnych výziev. Naďalej síce zohrávajú dôležitú úlohu konzekvencialistické a deontologické etické prístupy, pri riešení praktických dilem biomedicíny však nadobudla značný vplyv aj novo konštituovaná etika princípalizmu (ang. *principlism*), možno však povedať, že bioetika nemá k dispozícii žiadnu univerzálne akceptovanú etickú teóriu či metódu a jej charakteristickým rysom je metodologický pluralizmus.

Cieľom príspevku je preskúmať význam naratívneho prístupu v bioetike, ktorý si popri normatívnych konceptoch postupne získava svoje miesto. V prvej časti budem analyzovať dve iniciatívy, ktoré ovplyvnili úvahy o začlenení naratívnej metódy do bioetického diskurzu. Následne sa zameriam na vybrané diela Marthy C. Nussbaum, ktorá skúma vplyv naratívnej imaginácie na morálne usudzovanie na pozadí dialógu medzi literatúrou a etikou. Naratívnu imagináciu vníma ako komplementárnu časť širšej etickej reflexie. Taktiež preskúmam metódu reflexívnej rovnováhy, pomocou ktorej sa Nussbaum snaží zakomponovať do tvorby morálnych úsudkov aj morálne presvedčenia a intuície získané naratívno-etickou analýzou literárnych diel. V poslednej časti príspevku predstavím štyri najvýznamnejšie podoby naratívnych reprezentácií v bioetike, na základe ktorých preukážem a zhodnotím význam naratívneho prístupu v bioetike.

PREDPOKLADY VZNIKU NARATÍVNEHO PRÍSTUPU

Naratívny prístup v bioetike sa začal objavovať približne v 90. rokoch minulého storočia a ovplyvnili ho minimálne dve vývojové tendencie. Jednou z nich bola rastúca nespokojnosť s princípalizmom, teóriou, ktorú sformulovali Tom L. Beauchamp a James F. Childress v diele *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* (Princípy biomedicínskej etiky, [1979] 2013) ešte v počiatočných fázach zrodu bioetiky a ktorá nastavila minimálny bioetický rámec založený na štyroch princípoch: rešpektovanie autonómie, neublížovanie, prospešnosť, spravodlivosť (ang. *respect for autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, justice*; 101 – 301). A hoci bola táto teória východiskom pre mnohých klinických i akademických bioetikov a zároveň sa jej autori snažili v každom ďalšom vydaní knihy zohľadňovať prichádzajúce kritické postrehy a zapracovať ich do pôvodného konceptu, čo je určite známkou vysokej intelektuálnej poctivosti a zrelosti, predsa len pribúdali aj námietky zásadného charakteru. Všeobecnosť princípov, ktoré predstavovali záväzné, normatívne usmernenia pre praktické konanie, vyvolávala

obavy, že sa stratí z dohľadu špecifickosť a najmä komplexnosť jednotlivých prípadov. Aplikovaniu normatívnych princípov takpovediac „zhora“ môže uniknúť zložitost' posudzovanej morálnej situácie. *Top-down* model je vnímaný ako príliš abstraktný, čo zvyšuje požiadavky na to, aby bioetika pri posudzovaní a zdôvodňovaní konania zohľadňovala aj širší kontext (Badura [2002] 2006, 195). Ďalšie námietky sa týkali prioritizovania autonómneho racionálneho subjektu, ktorý je schopný jasne formulovať a hájiť svoje záujmy. V praktickom živote sa však stretávame s rôznymi ďalšími podobami ľudskej existencie, ktoré nie sú vždy schopné autonómne jednať (Düwell 2008, 37 – 41). Zároveň tým, že žiadny z princípov nemá vo vzťahu k zvyšným princípom normatívnu prednosť, v praktickom lekárskom konaní vznikali situácie, keď princípy nemohli byť rovnako dodržané. Táto rastúca nespokojnosť s principializmom a potreba venovať zvýšenú pozornosť komplexnosti jednotlivých prípadov, ako aj celkovo problém normatívneho prístupu s tým, aby po argumentačnej britkosti dospel ku konsenzuálnemu riešeniu sporných prípadov s vážnym celospoločenským dosahom, otvorili cestu iným možným metodologickým prístupom, ktoré by sa azda dokázali lepšie vysporiadať s napätím medzi nárokom na všeobecnú platnosť a dostatočným ohľadom na jedinečnú životnú skúsenosť (Lesch 2003, 185). Obrat k naratívne mu prístupu v bioetike predstavuje pokus zareagovať na túto výzvu a posilniť či zvýrazniť potlačené aspekty (Arras 1997, 66).

Druhou významnou tendenciou, ktorá vôbec umožnila uvažovať o naratívnom prístupe v bioetike po prejavenej nespokojnosti s jestvujúcimi metodologickými nástrojmi, bola v tom čase už širšie etablovaná naratológia, literárnoteoretická disciplína zameraná na analýzu naratívov a rozprávania (Lindemann Nelson 1997, ix – x). Vznikla v 60. rokoch minulého storočia pod vplyvom štrukturalistických konceptov, odkrývala jednotlivé vrstvy rozprávania, skúmala jeho vnútornú štruktúru, princípy usporiadania a základné väzby medzi znakmi, ktoré sa podieľali na konštituovaní celkového významu textu (Todorov [1966] 2002, 142 – 144; Sommer 2011, 273; Malinová 2023). Neskôr sa jej zameranie výrazne rozšírilo. Pôvodná výhradná koncentrácia na text ako samostatný uzavretý systém sa podstatne modifikovala, naratológia akceptovala Derridov náhľad, že každý znak nesie v sebe stopy iných znakov (1993, 39) a zapracovala ho do svojho výskumu. To znamená, že neoddeliteľnou súčasťou analýzy naratívneho aktu sa stali väzby medzi textom a kontextom, ktoré nemožno pri identifikovaní významu prehliadať, čo prinieslo nové témy a početné diskusie o úlohe autora, rozprávača, adresáta, o perspektíve, interpretácii a ďalšie (Barthes [1984] 2001, 8 – 13). Analýza naratívu je teda jednak analýzou rozprávanej udalosti, jednak analýzou nástrojov, ktoré umožnili túto udalosť sprostredkovať. Odkrýva viditeľné aj hlboko sedimentované vrstvy rozprávania a prispieva k jeho pochopeniu. Niet divu, že naratívny prístup orientovaný na príbeh a jeho rozprávanie sa ujal v mnohých ďalších vedných oblastiach, ktoré ho zaradili k svojim výskumným metódam (Suwara 2021, 139 – 163; Lacko 2021, 17 – 23). Postupne sa presadil aj v bioetike. Tento záujem však nemožno vnímať len ako špecifickú bioetickú záležitosť, pretože silu príbehu ako výnimočného média na sprostredkovanie ľudskej skúsenosti rozpoznala už tradičná etika (Lesch 2003, 184).

MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM – ANALÝZA DIALÓGU MEDZI LITERATÚROU A ETIKOU

Mimoriadne produktívny ohlas pri presadzovaní naratívneho prístupu v bioetike zaznamenali práce americkej filozofky Marthy C. Nussbaum, a to napriek tomu, že v nich nereflektuje priamo bioetické témy, ale sústreďuje sa hlavne na etické otázky. Jej rozsiahly výskum však významnou mierou podporil úvahy o implementácii naratívnej metódy aj do sféry bioetiky na hlbšie osvetlenie jej sporných dilem. Nussbaum sa už od polovice 80. rokov minulého storočia snaží viesť intenzívny dialóg medzi literatúrou a etikou, pričom skúma možnosti ich vzájomnej spolupráce, predovšetkým sa však zameriava na odkrývanie významu literatúry pre etiku. Všíma si, že mnohé etické otázky už zaznamenali interdiskurzívny presah, diskutuje sa o nich súčasne vo viacerých vedných odboroch; napríklad témy ako morálny relativizmus alebo úloha emócií pri ľudskom rozhodovaní sú predmetom reflexie nielen v oblasti etiky, ale aj psychológie, kultúrnej antropológie či umenia. Preto sa Nussbaum snaží nadviazať podobný hlbší dialóg aj medzi literatúrou a etikou, pričom táto téma rezonuje vo viacerých jej dielach. V nasledujúcej časti analýzy budem vychádzať najmä z týchto prác: *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (1986; čes. *Křehkost dobra: Náhoda a etika v řecké tragédii a filosofii*, 2003), *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature* (Poznanie lásky: Eseje o filozofii a literatúre, 1990), *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education* (Kultivovanie ľudskosti: Klasická obrana reformy liberálneho vzdelávania, [1997] 2003), *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach* (Tvorba spôsobilostí: Prístup k ľudskému rozvoju, 2011), *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (2010; čes. *Ne pro zisk: Proč demokracie potřebuje humanitní vědy*, 2017).

Nussbaum testuje význam a prínos literárneho spracovania morálnych konfliktov pre samotnú etiku nastolením východiskovej otázky, ktorú považuje, v nadväznosti na Aristotela, za kľúčovú: Ako by mal človek žiť, aby dosiahol dobrý, hodnotný život? ([1986] 2003, 56) Zatiaľ čo základnou otázkou normatívnej etiky je: Čo máme robiť?, pričom ide o vymedzenie povinnosti v priestore ľudského konania, aristotelovská etika cností sa zaoberá otázkou, ako dosiahnuť dobrý, vydarený život (Düwell 2008, 37). Hoci táto otázka motivovala k etickým úvahám už antických autorov, Nussbaum ju prehľbuje zohľadnením dôležitého vstupného predpokladu, akým sú v živote človeka okolnosti, ktoré sa mu prihodia bez toho, aby sa o ne sám pričinił. Sú to okolnosti, ktoré ho jednoducho zasiahnu, nad ktorými nemá moc, ktoré však vplývajú na jeho konanie, ako napríklad dlhotrvajúca choroba, bolesť, utrpenie. Zohľadnenie týchto okolností je pre etiku a neskôr aj pre bioetické otázky obzvlášť dôležité, pretože pripomína zraniteľnosť, krehkosť človeka, ktorú normatívna etika dostatočne nereflektovala. Zraniteľnosť sa môže týkať neschopnosti človeka autonómne konať, avšak zraniteľný je podľa Nussbaum aj človek schopný sebaurčenia, ibaže v dôsledku istých okolností vystavený tlaku, strate, zármutku či nedostatku ([1986] 2003, 60; Rogers – Mackenzie – Dodds 2021, 190 – 191). Koncepty, ktoré sa snažia pomocou rozumu vylúčiť zraniteľnosť z ľudského života, čo je podľa nej platónsky prístup, podstupujú riziko, že tým odstránia aj skutočné ľudské dobré. Napríklad zraniteľným sa stáva každý, kto miluje svoje dieťa, pričom láska k dieťaťu je skutočným dobrom (Nuss-

baumová [1986] 2003, 37). To znamená, že isté dobrá, akými sú láska, priateľstvo či solidarita, si vyžadujú podstúpiť riziko zraniteľnosti. Na základe týchto úvah potom Nussbaum upresňuje pôvodnú otázku: Ako dosiahnuť dobrý, hodnotný život, ak je človek zraniteľný? Ako zraniteľnosť formuje naše predstavy o dobrom živote?

Kvôli maximalizovaniu relevantných alternatívnych odpovedí na položenú otázku sa autorka pokúsila vytvoriť experimentálny priestor, rozšíriť perspektívu uvažovania aj samotné výskumné pole. Odpovede hľadá nielen u významných filozofov, ktorí priamo skúmajú ľudské úsilie dosiahnuť dobrý život, ale aj vo vybraných literárnych dielach, či už v dielach gréckej tragédie alebo v dielach mnohých svetových autorov (napr. Charles Dickens, Henry James, Marcel Proust, Samuel Beckett a i.). Na základe analýzy jej textov som vygenerovala niekoľko dôvodov, ktoré najskôr preukážu význam vzájomnej spolupráce medzi literatúrou a etikou, a teda aj význam naratívnej metódy, a následne predstavia autorkinu odpoveď na východiskovú otázku.

Záujem Marthy C. Nussbaum o literatúru je kognitívny. To znamená, že v literatúre hľadá vzory možností ako žiť (aby sme dosiahli hodnotný život), všíma si interakcie medzi okolnosťami a voľbou/rozhodnutím, ktoré sa v ľudských životoch objavujú s istou stálosťou (1990, 171). Mapuje rôznorodé morálne situácie, konflikty konania a spôsoby ich urovnania, aby zaznamenala alternatívne vzorce morálneho usudzovania, pomocou ktorých možno obohatiť to, čo v etickej teórii zostáva nutne abstraktné. Literatúra vďaka dôkladnej charakteristike postáv a spôsobov ich konania dokáže poskytnúť takúto pluralitu možných morálnych stanovísk. To všetko podľa Nussbaum podnecuje a kultivuje našu *morálnu predstavivosť*. Občas jej síce vyčítajú, že nevenuje dostatočnú pozornosť rozlíšeniu medzi literárnym a reálnym svetom (Eagleton 1997, 42), v skutočnosti však literárny svet vníma ako etické laboratórium, v ktorom skúma prevažujúce podoby morálneho konania a rozhodovania.

Pozoruhodnou črtou literatúry je, že zobrazuje zväčša komplexnú morálnu situáciu, predkladá nám ju v širšom kontexte, odkrýva pôvod a predpoklady konania, ako aj jeho prípadné dôsledky, aby sme danej situácii mohli adekvátne porozumieť. Filozofické dielo často stráca zo zreteľa tento kontakt s komplexnou skúsenosťou. Nussbaum poznamenáva, že interpretovať literárne dielo, akým je napríklad grécka tragédia, je omnoho zložitejšie ako interpretovať filozofický príklad či myšlienkový experiment, ktorý je často vytrhnutý zo širšieho kontextu ([1986] 2003, 79). Nechce pritom vyťažiť z literatúry nejaké konkrétne učenie, ale priviesť nás k morálnemu usudzovaniu, ktoré bude zakaždým vnímať a zohľadňovať aj kontext (Lesch 2003, 189).

Literárne rozprávania sa vyznačujú podľa Nussbaum hutnejšou koncentráciou životnej skúsenosti (1990, 171) než napríklad biografické rozprávania pacientov a majú aj vyššiu mieru reflexie. Literatúra nielen zobrazuje udalosť, ľudskú skúsenosť, ale ponúka aj kritickú reflexiu, zhodnotenie prezentovanej skúsenosti, čiže stáva sa súčasne médiom reflexie. To sa ukazuje ako obzvlášť dôležité tam, kde nám zatiaľ chýbajú etické interpretačné vzory (Düwell 2008, 53).

Nussbaum vo viacerých prácach vyzdvihuje schopnosť literatúry podnietiť *naratívnu imagináciu* ([1997] 2003, 85 – 112; [2010] 2017, 159 – 191). Učí nás predstaviť si, aké je to byť v koži iného človeka, čím prebúdza naše emócie, empatiu, súcit, soli-

daritu, ktoré sú neoceniteľným vodidlom pri morálnom usudzovaní. Otvára pritom dôležitú tému konfrontácie racionálnej logickej argumentácie pri etickom zdôvodňovaní na jednej strane a emocionálneho, empatickeho, zúčastneného porozumenia na druhej strane. Vo viacerých dielach zdôrazňuje, že intelektuálne uvažovanie a logická argumentácia samy osebe nestačia na etické súdenie. V etickom myslení hrajú úlohu aj emócie ([1986] 2003, 35, 558 – 559). Podobne v práci *Cultivating Humanity* konštatuje, že naratívna imaginácia je nevyhnutnou prípravou na morálne konanie ([1997] 2003, 86). Podnecuje totiž našu súcitnú vnímavosť na potreby druhých, častokrát zranených, vylúčených, utláčaných. Súcit vyžaduje taktiež uvedomenie si vlastnej zraniteľnosti. Západná filozofická tradícia však „má sklon predpokladať, že etický text by sa mal v procese skúmania obracať len na intelekt, nemal by sa dovolávať emócií, pocitov a zmyslových reakcií“ ([1986] 2003, 81 – 82). S takýmto postojom autorka nesúhlasí. Mnohokrát poznamenáva, že osoby účasné morálneho usudzovania by mali disponovať vysokou mierou morálnej integrity, morálnym charakterom, ktorý sa okrem racionálnych logických schopností vyznačuje aj emocionálnou a naratívnu vnímavosťou.

Azda najvýznamnejším vyústením autorkinho skúmania interdiskurzívnych vzťahov medzi literatúrou a etikou je diskusia o metodológii, ktorá by dokázala adekvátne zohľadniť konkrétnu životnú skúsenosť a vzala by do úvahy aj výsledky literárno-etických analýz. V nadväznosti na Johna Rawlsa uvažuje o metóde *reflexívnej rovnováhy* (ang. *reflective equilibrium*; [1971] 1999, 173), ktorá dokáže integrovať do procesu morálneho usudzovania viaceré komponenty. Morálny úsudok tu vzniká zo vzájomnej reflexívnej korekcie medzi morálnymi intuíciami a presvedčeniami nadobudnutými životnou skúsenosťou na jednej strane a všeobecnými etickými princípmi na druhej strane (Nussbaumová [1986] 2003, 478). Do procesu tohto vzájomného dynamického vyvažovania sú pritom zakomponované aj prevažujúce morálne názory a postoje, ktoré pochádzajú z analýzy ľudského konania a rozhodovania zobrazeného v literárnych príbehoch a ktoré sú ako možné alternatívne stanoviská prínosným rozšírením celého posudzovania. Nussbaum hľadá strednú cestu medzi všeobecným princípom a ohľadom na jednotlivé prípady. Nevzdáva sa pritom normatívnych úvah, ale mení spôsob, ako sa k normatívnemu záveru dopracovať. To je mimoriadne dôležitý moment v súčasnej diskusii o morálnom usudzovaní. Morálne úsudky sa nemusia získavať z abstraktného princípu (zhora) ani z empirických morálnych presvedčení formou indukcie (zdola), ale dosahujú sa komplexným procesom vzájomnej kritiky a korekcie všetkých relevantných presvedčení a všeobecných princípov (Badura [2002] 2006, 200 – 201). To znamená, že je potrebné testovať, vyvažovať jednotlivé časti až dovedty, kým sa nevytvorí koherentná súvislosť, ktorej komponenty potom môžu platiť ako zdôvodnené (200 – 201; Daniels 1979, 258). Z morálnych intuícii a normatívnych princípov treba reflexívne vyfiltrovať (podobne, ako to navrhol Rawls pri hľadaní princípov spravodlivosti „za závojom nevedomosti“; 1999, 63) istý „balans“, teda morálne dobrá, o ktorých sa môžeme domnievať, že si zaslúžia všeobecný súhlas, a ktoré by mohli byť odpoveďou na otázku, ako dosiahnuť dobrý, hodnotný život. Nussbaum týmto spôsobom sformulovala pre etiku základné spôsobilosti (ang. *capabilities*), teda základné dobrá, ktoré sú nevyhnutnými podmienka-

mi pre dôstojný život a ktoré by podľa jej slov mala demokratická spoločnosť aspoň na minimálnej prahovej úrovni zaručiť všetkým (2011, 33 – 34).

Z hľadiska môjho skúmania je podstatné, že súčasťou metódy reflexívnej rovnováhy sú aj morálne intuície získané naratívno-etickou analýzou literárnych diel. Naratívny prístup pomohol Nussbaum identifikovať v literárnych rozprávaniach prevažujúce morálne presvedčenia o dobrom živote, ktoré získala rozborom a analýzou zobrazených morálnych konfliktov a spôsobov ich riešenia a ktoré následne začlenila do reflexívneho vyvažovania spolu s normatívnymi morálnymi princípmi. Tento postup pokladá za vnútorne koherentný, holistický a plauzibilný (1990, 174).

Ak hodnotím význam vzájomnej spolupráce medzi literatúrou a etikou na základe autorkiných analýz, možno povedať, že literatúra prispieva k sebaepochopeniu etickej teórie, konfrontuje ju s alternatívnymi konceptami morálneho konania, vytvára obrazy života, ktoré podnecujú diskusiu o etických otázkach, a reprezentácie skúsenosti, bez ktorých by zostala teoretická etika výrazne ochudobnená. Etika zasa pomáha odkrývať v literárnych dielach morálne názory a stanoviská, ktoré prevažujú v danej kultúre a tradícii alebo ju prekračujú, pričom etika tieto etické dimenzie literárneho textu komentuje a kriticky reflektuje.

PODOBY NARATÍVNYCH REPREZENTÁCIÍ V SÚČASNEJ BIOETIKE

Potenciál naratívneho prístupu, ktorý Martha C. Nussbaum preukázala na základe dlhodobého dialógu medzi literatúrou a etikou, významnou mierou povzbudil iniciatívy usilujúce sa o jeho začlenenie aj do bioetiky. Naratívny prístup sa v bioetike zameriava hlavne na ľudskú životnú skúsenosť zobrazenú v rozprávaniach o nových biotechnológiách aplikovaných na človeka. Za posledných tridsať rokov sa v rámci bioetického diskurzu vyprofilovalo niekoľko rôznych podôb naratívnych reprezentácií ľudskej skúsenosti.

Najrozsiahlejšiu časť podľa Hille Haker tvoria pacientske rozprávania o chorobách (2007, 264). Majú zväčša biografický charakter, sú to rozprávania o skúsenostiach s vlastnou chorobou, jej priebehom či problémami spojenými s liečbou. Konfrontujú nás so zneistením, ktoré so sebou prináša takmer každá choroba. Rozprávania pacientov popisujú autentické problémy a konflikty pri rozhodovaní i konaní. Možno medzi nimi rozlíšiť niekoľko typov rozprávání. Prvým z nich sú rozprávania pacientov v klinickom prostredí, keď stoja pred náročným kritickým rozhodovaním. Naratívno-etická analýza týchto rozprávání môže poskytnúť ľuďom konfrontovaným s ochorením cestu, ako dospieť k rozhodnutiu. Americká autorka Martha Montello (2021, 163) vidí práve tu najväčší potenciál naratívneho prístupu, a to pomôcť pacientom formou naratívno-etickej analýzy nájsť východisko z kritickej situácie. Z podnetov čerpaných z literárnej teórie vypracovala metódu, ktorou možno z patientskych rozprávání zistiť, čo je pre nich skutočne významné, čo má prevažujúci význam v ich uvažovaní. Takúto mapu toho, na čom záleží (tzv. *mattering map*), vytvára pomocou štyroch elementov rozprávania: hlas, postava, zápleтка, rozuzlenie (166 – 169). Hlas odkazuje na rozprávača, je hlasom toho, „kto“ príbeh rozpráva. Postava objasňuje, „koho“ príbeh to je, kto je v centre príbehu, aby napríklad príbeh lekára

nenahradil príbeh pacienta. Zápletka identifikuje zlomový moment, ktorý pretrhol odvíjanie životného príbehu. Montello ho popisuje metaforou tikania hodín, keď po fáze „tik“ nenasleduje očakávaná fáza „tak“ (2021, 168). A práve to je moment, kde pomocou naratívno-etickej analýzy možno nájsť cestu „ako“ ďalej. Rozuzlenie teda nie je rozriešením prípadu, ale pochopením, zmapovaním toho, na čom pacientovi najviac záleží, a porozumením, ako urobiť ďalší krok. Postup naratívno-etickej analýzy, ktorý Montello prakticky využíva v klinickom prostredí (1997, 186), vykazuje viaceré spoločné rysy s hermeneutickým prístupom usilujúcim sa dospieť k pochopeniu pomocou hermeneutickej špirály (Ricœur 1996, 173 – 206). Ide o pochopenie nielen textov, ale v širšom, heideggerovskom zmysle o pochopenie ľudskej existencie. Viaceré paralely s hermeneutikou sa objavujú už v samotnom zámere: čítať/interpretovať ľudské konanie ako text (173 – 206).

Druhou podobou rozprávania v klinickom prostredí sú prípadové štúdie, teda príbehy, ktoré majú multiperspektívny charakter, pretože zachytávajú perspektívy všetkých zainteresovaných osôb. Až takéto rozšírenie o pohľad pacienta, lekára, ošetrojúceho personálu či rodiny umožňuje komplexnejšie pochopiť rozsah morálneho konfliktu (Lindemann Nelson 1997, xi). Tieto rozprávania sú blízke kazuistikám, kde dominuje úsilie dôsledne popísať morálne dimenzie prípadu, aby sa mohol analogicky porovnať s príbuznými paradigmatickými prípadmi a navrhnúť adekvátny morálny úsudok (Düwell 2008, 52). Je to teda opäť situácia, kde sa ukazuje dôležitosť naratívneho prístupu, ktorý berie ohľad na širší kontext rozprávania, na vzájomné väzby, dôvody i dôsledky, aby sa predišlo rýchlym a najmä zúženým riešeniam. Takéto multiperspektívne videnie prípadu je dobrým predpokladom pre dôveryhodné morálne rozhodnutia.

Tretím typom sú rozprávania pacientov o chorobe zaznamenané v publikovanej, zväčša eseistickej podobe. Haker vo svojej štúdií konštatuje, že naratívny prístup sa snaží vrátiť pacientom ich hlas, ktorý zaznieva formou rozprávania, čo si uvedomujeme pri publikovaných príbehoch azda jasnejšie než pri iných formách (2007, 258). Často totiž ide o spôsob sebayjadrenia, ktoré patrí k procesom liečby a najmä k postupnému vyrovnávaniu sa s chorobou ako novou súčasťou vlastnej identity. Veľmi podnetnú filozofickú reflexiu svojej skúsenosti s transplantáciou srdca a s tým spojenými vážnymi zdravotnými komplikáciami podal v útlej knihe *L'Intrus* (2000; čes. *Vetřelec*, 2021) francúzsky filozof Jean-Luc Nancy. Obzvlášť pozoruhodné sú jeho úvahy o tom, čo je ešte „vlastné“ a čo je „cudzie“, a najmä, ako choroba vstupuje do preformátovania vlastnej identity. Inú podobu životnej skúsenosti s hĺbkovou mozgovou stimuláciou popisuje v knihe *Tief im Hirn* (Hlboko v mozgu, 2006) nemecký sociológ Helmut Dubiel, jeden z výrazných podporovateľov naratívneho prístupu v bioetike. Z dôvodu potlačania motorických problémov spojených s Parkinsonovou chorobou mu lekári implantovali do mozgu elektródu, ktorá mala stimulovať zodpovedajúce časti mozgu pomocou vysielaných elektrických impulzov. Parametre stimulácie si mohol presnejšie doladovať cez externý ovládač. Toto ošetrenie je reverzibilné s možnosťou zastaviť stimuláciu v prípade výrazných nežiaducich účinkov (Stieglitz 2009, 23; Tomašovičová 2023, 145 – 148). Dubiel naratívne zachytáva situáciu pred a po operácii, detailne opisuje svoje prežívanie úzkeho prepojenia vlastného moz-

gu s technickým zariadením, pocity sebaodcudzenia, inštrumentalizácie tela, ako aj zrejme najzávažnejší účinok hĺbkovej mozgovej stimulácie, ktorým bolo porušenie jazykového centra v mozgu a s tým spojená strata schopnosti artikulovať vlastné myšlienky: „Až po roku v práci som si uvedomil, že ak by poruchy reči pretrvávali, musel by som odísť do dôchodku. Poruchy reči sa spomínali v rozhovoroch pred operáciou, ale lekári boli presvedčení, že ide o dočasný problém, vedľajší účinok“ (2006, 125). Po ročnom existovaní v „tuneli neistoty“ (125) a po ďalších vyžiadaných odborných konzultáciách na inej klinike sa mu po prerušení stimulácie obnovila schopnosť hovoriť a zlepšili sa aj kognitívne schopnosti. Avšak na druhej strane sa zasa zintenzívnili motorické ťažkosti a nastúpila depresia, ktorá sprevádzala jeho chorobu a negatívne vplývala aj na najbližších. Musel sa preto učiť ovládať stimulátor tak, aby našiel strednú pozíciu medzi nadmerným trasením končatín a príznakmi depresie na jednej strane a poruchami reči a kognitívnych schopností na druhej strane.

Dubielovo či Nancyho rozprávanie, podobne ako ďalšie takéto veľmi osobné, autentické príbehy pacientov, sú významné z viacerých dôvodov. Plnia často terapeutickú funkciu pre samotného pacienta, zohrávajú hermeneutickú úlohu pri snahe porozumieť si a zároveň sú dôležitou etickou výpoveďou o rôznych vrstvách zvažovania a rozhodovania v zásadných morálnych otázkach. Okrem toho však ukazujú, že až zobrazenie autentickej subjektívnej skúsenosti nám pomáha dotvoriť si objektívny obraz o fungovaní biotechnológií aplikovaných na človeka (Müller 2009, 496 – 499).

Štvrtú, samostatnú špecifickú formu naratívnych zobrazení tvoria umelecké literárne rozprávania a filmové spracovania s bohatou bioetickou tematikou (napr. Kazuo Ishiguro a i.). Sú dôležitým médiom reflektujúcim doterajšiu skúsenosť a zároveň anticipujúcim budúce možnosti v súvislosti s využitím moderných technológií. V bioetickom diskurze sa považuje ich príspevok za nenahraditeľný. Napokon možno povedať, že aj v prípade vzťahu literatúry a bioetiky sa osvedčuje efektívnosť vzájomnej spolupráce v podobnom zmysle, ako ju Marta C. Nussbaum popísala na vzťahu literatúry a etiky. Naratívny prístup v bioetike je potrebný, hoci nie ako náhrada racionálnej argumentácie a normatívneho zdôvodňovania, ale ako jeho komplementárna časť.

ZÁVER

V čom teda spočíva význam naratívneho prístupu v bioetike a akú pozíciu si získal v porovnaní s normatívnymi konceptami? Možno povedať, že naratívno-etická metóda nemá ambíciu byť alternatívnou metódou, ktorá by chcela nastúpiť namiesto normatívnych etických prístupov, akými sú najmä deontologický či konzekvencialistický prístup alebo etika princípalizmu. Nussbaum ukazuje, že naratívny prístup môže slúžiť ako komplementárne prehĺbenie či rozšírenie normatívnych metód. Avšak nielen v akejsi slabej verzii, kde by sa pri morálnom usudzovaní uplatnil v rámci obecnej citlivosti či vnímavosti aj ohľad na naratívnu podobu posudzovaného prípadu. V kontexte autorkiných analýz sa prikláňam k návrhu začleniť morálne presvedčenia získané pomocou naratívno-etickej analýzy konkrétneho ľudského prípadu spolu s normatívnymi etickými princípmi do procesu reflexívneho zvažovania a vzájom-

nej korekcie. Ide napokon o to, aby sa morálne usudzovanie formovalo v dostatočnej blízkosti k ľudskej skúsenosti, k čomu naratívny prístup vytvára vhodné predpoklady.

Samozrejme, nemožno si nevšimnúť potenciálne riziko morálneho relativizmu, keďže množstvo hlasov a perspektív, najmä ak sú nesúmerateľné, zvyšuje nároky na hľadanie reflexívnej rovnováhy (Flynn 2020). Toto riziko pluralizmu by sme však mali podstúpiť, pretože ak by sa vytratil ohľad na konkrétnu životnú skúsenosť, etika by stratila v hermeticky uzavretej idealizácii kontakt s reálnym životom a morálnou praxou.

POZNÁMKY

¹ Pokiaľ nie je v literatúre uvedené inak, citáty do slovenčiny preložila J. T.

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Rozmanitosť života, a najmä jeho konečnosti, na príklade vybraných diel

BOGUMIŁA SUWARA

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The diversity of life, and of its finitude in particular, on the example of selected works

Finitude. Fragility of life. Euthanasia. Palliative care. Edson Oda. Mateusz
Pakuła.

In all cultures “systems of death” have been established, but one issue that is debated in their contemporary framework is the law of “death on demand”. This article focuses on two aspects: “the denial of death” in the systems of death, using the example of Edson Oda’s film *Nine Days* (2020), and the resolution of “unbearable pain” through euthanasia or appropriate palliative care, as shown in Mateusz Pakuła’s work *Jak nie zabiłem swojego ojca i jak bardzo tego żałuję* (How I didn't kill my father and how much I regret it, 2022). On the one hand, the analysis draws on the material of cultural texts to consider one of the many topics of bioethics: how can we help people die? On the other hand, it discusses how the reflection of views from the field of bioethical discourse can influence the interpretation of a film or a literary work. The use of the bioethical context makes it possible, among other things, to indicate that Pakuła’s text can be understood not only as a “protest song” for the legalization of euthanasia, which has been the focus of previous interpretations, but also as an important voice of criticism of the current approach to palliative care.

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Bogumiła Suwara
Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV, v. v. i
Bratislava
Slovenská republika
bsuwara@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-8000-1833

Nič sa dvakrát nestáva a
nestane. Svet nehostinný
navštívime bez prípravy,
opustíme bez rutiny.

Wisława Szymborska *Nič dvakrát* (1966, 32)

Je zrejmé, že vo všetkých kultúrach vznikali „systémy smrti“, ktoré určovali, čo si spoločnosť mala myslieť o smrti a umieraní, ako mala vyjadrovať pocity s nimi spojené a ako sa mala pri stretnutí s nimi správať (Kastenbaum 1977). V súčasnosti k tomu pribudla otázka legalizácie eutanázie (pasívnej a aktívnej eutanázie, resp. asistovanej samovraždy). Stala sa dôležitou súčasťou uvažovania o význame smrti a umierania nielen v západnej Európe, Severnej Amerike, Austrálii, ale preniká aj cez etnické a kultúrne hranice (Lloyd – White – Sutton 2011) a ako globálny trend ovplyvňuje ďalšie „systémy smrti“ (Kastenbaum 1977). Dnes, keď sa už istý čas v niektorých krajinách využíva právo ukončiť svoj život na želanie, sa výskum posúva od hľadania bipolárnej etickej argumentácie za a proti k novým témam, jemnejším postrehom a diferenciaciám. V rámci reflexie o eutanázii sa zdôrazňuje napríklad sociálny status, pohlavie, etnický pôvod žiadateľov; k novým problémom patrí tiež odhaľovanie limitov západného systému umierania na pozadí iných kultúr (napríklad v Číne), eutanázia ako bezpečnostný ventil v prípade neznesiteľnej bolesti, kritický vzťah k podmienkam povoľovania eutanázie na príklade pomeru povolení a realizácií asistovanej samovraždy (Kanada), skúmanie komunikácie medzi pacientom a personálom v hospicioch, inovovanie idey hospicového hnutia, skúmanie názorov na eutanáziu v niektorých skupinách verejnosti („nebioetikov“) a pod. Metodologicky sa tento výskum okrem iného opiera o kvantitatívne postupy, teda skúmanie rozmanitých parametrov ľudského tela sa transformuje do matematických vzorcov niekoľkých skúmaných ukazovateľov, v dôsledku čoho obvykle nezohľadňuje teórie, ktoré hýbu humanitnými a sociálnymi diskurzmi.

Napriek tejto metodologickej vyhranenosti záverečné konklúzie klinických štúdií odkazujú okrem iného na sociálne aspekty asistovaného umierania, v čom sa prekvapivo približujú k zdanlivo prekonanej sociologickej premise Émila Durkheima o takých silách v spoločnosti, ktoré môžu podporovať rozhodovanie o samovražde (Phillips 1974). Signifikantné môžu byť v tomto smere historicky sa meniace tzv. subpolitiky (Dybel – Wróbel 2008), napríklad subpolitiky sociálnych poisťovní a poskytovateľov zdravotnej starostlivosti, ktoré v korporátnej sfére robia závažné verejné rozhodnutia, spoločnosťou následne prijímané pod nátlakom časových limitov a bez demokratickej debaty, bez verejnej debaty politických síl, bez času na implementáciu, a teda bez overenia správnosti a možných následkov konkrétneho riešenia.

Cieľom tejto štúdie nie je skúmanie procesov legalizácie eutanázie v rôznych štátoch. Eutanáziu tu chápem ako jeden z príbehov konca života a súčasne ako príležitosť na skúmanie jednej z mnohých tém bioetiky v literatúre: Prečo pomáhať ľuďom zomrieť?

V prvej časti štúdie sa cez prizmu filmu *Nine Days* (Deväť dní, 2021, rež. Edson Oda) zameriavam na ľudskú konečnosť reprezentovanú fiktívnou subverzívnou eu-

tanáziou. Cez pojem „konečnosti“ Martina Heideggera ([1927] 2008), cez zdôrazňovanie smrti ako ontologického tajomstva, ktoré vedie podľa Emmanuela Lévinasa ([1979] 1999) k ničote, budem dokladať, ako sa súčasný človek môže vyrovnáť s ontologickým charakterom svojej konečnosti. V druhej časti sa cez dielo Mateusza Pakuła *Jak nie zabiłem swojego ojca i jak bardzo tego żałuję* (Ako som nezavraždil svojho otca a ako veľmi to ľutujem, 2021) budem zaoberať umieraním v prípade rakovinového ochorenia a poukazovať na to, ako zohľadnenie názorov z bioetického diskurzu môže ovplyvniť interpretáciu literárneho diela, pričom perspektíva iného než literárnovedného diskurzu môže viesť k novej interpretácii.

Ťažko jednoznačne odpovedať na otázku, do akej miery je o eutanázii opodstatnenejšie uvažovať v kontexte samovraždy než v kontexte prirodzenej smrti (Cook 2023). Dodnes v európskej literárno-kultúrnej tradícii rezonujú v týchto súvislostiach na jednej strane román Johanna Wolfganga von Goetheho *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774; slov. *Utrpenie mladého Werthera*, 1934, 1957, 2020) a Durkheimova práca *Le Suicide: Étude de sociologie* (Samovražda: sociologická štúdia, 1897), na druhej tanatológia Martina Heideggera (2008), teória hraničných situácií Karla Jaspersa ([1931] 2008) či koncepcia tajomstva smrti Emmanuela Lévinasa (1999). Nejednoznačnosť vnímania eutanázie spočíva v tom, že tak samovražda, ako aj prirodzená smrť sa okrem iného dotýkajú tej istej existenciálnej, hraničnej situácie ľudskej konečnosti, pričom v súčasnosti sme svedkami posúvania, zotierania jej hraníc (zmeny definície smrti od smrti srdca k mozgovej smrti). A navyše v súčasnej antropológii je smrť na želanie prezentovaná v rámci prirodzených cyklov ľudského života (Richards – Krawczyk 2021).

BEZTELESNÉ UMIERANIE – KONEČNOSŤ

Sociológia už dlho upozorňuje na vymazávanie smrti zo „systému smrti“ západnej kultúry (Kastenbaum 1977; Becker 1973). Odborníci a odborníčky v oblasti antropológie (Richards – Krawczyk 2021) a paliatívnej starostlivosti (Piemonte – Abreu 2021) navyše zaraďujú do tejto tendencie samotný proces umierania. Psychologické odôvodnenie tohto vymazávania niektorí situujú napríklad do obdobia návratu „normálneho“ života – v období po druhej svetovej vojne –, keď sa postupné zabúdanie na masové obete a ničenie spájalo s predstavou, že z vojnových bojísk sa mohla nevrátiť aj smrť (Mor – Greer – Kastenbaum 1988, 3 – 4). A práve takáto predstava rezonuje s ontologickým charakterom ľudskej konečnosti chápanej ako ambivalencia smrti, ktorú síce nemôžeme postúpiť nikomu inému (Heidegger), avšak dokedy žijeme, podliehame existenciálnej predstave, že zomierajú „Iní“ (Lévinas), „Prvý pred Druhým“ (Walczak 2023, 15). Ukazuje sa, že ontologický charakter smrti má na symbolickej úrovni svoj pandant v podobe eufemistických metafor smrti a umierania, ako „vziať si život“ („take life“; Hardwig 1976), „dostať sa z virtuálnej do skutočnej reality“ (Schick 2016) alebo „vrátiť život“ („giving back life“; Van Gorp 2024). Metaforu „vrátiť život“ použijem na reflektovanie filmu *Nine Days*. Východiskom je myšlienkový experiment: Čo ak sú duše pred narodením človeka podrobované skúške. Na ňom totiž režisér Edson Oda postavil scenár filmu, v ktorom sa nutnosť vrátiť život získaný na vymedzený čas dotýka avatarov duší v priestore preexistencie. Zápletka postavená

na experimente plní funkciu vyzdvihovania existenciálneho rozmeru života, respektíve dôležitosti hľadania zmyslu ľudskej existencie: Je svet Sartrovým peklom, ktoré vytvára ten druhý? Alebo je v ňom aj trocha dobra? Je to práve ten rozmer, na ktorého neprítomnosť v medicínskych textoch upozorňuje odborná verejnosť v oblasti paliatívnej starostlivosti (Piemonte – Abreu 2021) či vzdelávania lekárov a lekárk (Macneill 2011).

Pre prívržencov náboženstiev a spiritualistických doktrín je dôležitá istota, že po smrti fyzického tela je duch oslobodený, stáva sa vedomým a skutočne živým, i viera v duchovný život. Existuje niekoľko možných odpovedí, kam ideme alebo čo robíme po smrti: cesty sa otvárajú podľa rôznych okolností, ktoré závisia tak od spôsobu, akým zomierame, ako aj od spôsobov, akými sa na zemi správame. Režisér filmu *Nine Days* však náboženské predstavy laicizuje a spirituálny život situuje pred narodenie. Filmový príbeh, ktorý sa ako v antickej dráme udeje na jednom mieste s časovým obmedzením na deväť dní, sa odohráva v spirituálnom priestore preexistencie, teda akoby pred pozemskou existenciou. Je to síce opačné garde než v prípade náboženských alebo spirituálnych schém, ktoré uchopujú to, čo sa deje s dušou po smrti, po opustení tela, no nadviazanie názvu filmu na jednu z mexických povíek o smrti, podľa ktorej proces lúčenia duše s telom trvá deväť dní, konštituuje naračné rámcovanie filmu. Podrobiť päť duší, prichádzajúcich z ničoty, selekcii je potrebné preto, lebo na zemi jedna ľudská bytosť – mladá talentovaná huslistka – spáchala samovraždu. Na jej miesto sa môže narodiť nový človek, nové bytie. Na mieste, ktoré je „nikde“ a možno tam, kde sa duša samovrahyne lúči s telom, sa odohrá súboj o šancu na pozemský život. Prebieha proces výberu duše, ktorá bude zvládať život vo svete plnom zla, agresie a neistoty.

Duše, ktoré sa túžia narodiť, sa musia podrobiť pohovoru a skúškam, na základe ktorých jedna z piatich duší bude pokračovať v bytí, bude nažive. Výberový proces organizujú hlavný selekcionár Will (Winston Duke) a jeho poradca Kyo (Benedict Wong). V prvej etape sa inkorporované duše dozvedajú základné rámcovanie výberu: budú podrobené rôznym úlohám („električkovej dileme“, hodnoteniu morálnych rozhodnutí v skutočných situáciách, ktoré pozorujú v priamom prenose na monitoroch), neexistujú však žiadne vopred určené princípy selekcie (podobne ako v existencialistickom, fenomenologickom uvažovaní), a postupne prebieha vyradovanie neúspešných kandidátok a duša, ktorú nevyberú na pokračovanie v živote, „skončí“ (konečnosť). Až nakoniec, na deviaty deň pohovorov, bude vybraná jedna kandidátka.

Avatari duší, telá, ktoré nie sú ani mŕtve, ani nažive, majú silnú motiváciu uspieť v pohovoroch (existencia sa prejavuje priam ako u existencialistov, narodenie do sveta živých nie je samozrejmosťou, je výnimočnou príležitosťou niečo so životom urobiť, niečo ním naplniť); do faktického súboja existenciálneho charakteru budú zapojení traja zúčastnení – Will, Kyo a Emma (Zazie Beetz). Medzi hlavným selekcionárom (Will) a poradcom (Kyo) prebieha spor o uznanie výnimočných kvalít mladej uchádzačky Emmy. Kyo si od prvého dňa pohovorov všíma výnimočné odhodlanie Emmy tvarovať svoju existenciu, povýšiť svoju „mojosť“ – *Jemeinigkeit* (Heidegger [1927] 2008, 59) nad tlak zo strany „Iných“. Will zasa dáva prednosť mladému mu-

žovi, ktorý sa rýchlo učí etické normy a je ochotný presadzovať ich vlastnou rukou aj telom, a mladú ženu pokladá za príliš citlivú pre život vo svete, v ktorom je tak veľa zla a tak málo dobra (selekcia sa v tejto súvislosti javí ako eugenika). Na pozadí sporu selekcionára a jeho poradcu o výbere avatara duše, ktorá sa bude môcť narodiť, Emma formuje a naplňuje svoj dočasný život: vedená vlastným chcením sa snaží odhaliť hlboko ukryvané tajomstvo selekcionára Willa, čo bolo jeho najväčším životným úspechom, no najmä prečo táto otázka vyslovená nespokojným uchádzačom zostala bez odpovede.

V súvislosti s témou štúdie, ktorou je rozmanitosť konca života, budem ďalej venovať pozornosť procesu výberu uchádzačov v *Nine Days*, pretože tu vidím analógiu s chápaním smrti ako „vrátenia života“, resp. so subverzívnou eutanáziou – vrátiť život musí ten avatar duše, ktorý neuspeje v pohovoroch, a preto sa nebude môcť znovu narodiť (ang. *re-born*).

VÝBEROVÝ PROCES: KONEČNOSŤ A VÝZNAM ZMYSLU EXISTENCIE

V procese selektovania uchádzačov o miesto na predĺženie bytia, bytia nažive, inkorporované duše dostávajú vlastné bytie (mojosť) a sú okamžite schopné prežívať svoje skúsenosti: rozprávajú, dokážu robiť morálne rozhodnutia pri riešení úloh, niektoré sa pokúšajú o nadviazanie bližšieho vzťahu s Willom (len Emma sa nesnaží uspieť za každú cenu), majú svoju fakticitu, majú senzuálne a emocionálne zážitky, sledujú v reálnom čase na monitoroch aj zo záznamu skúsenosti, správanie a rozhodnutia ľudí existujúcich v skutočnosti (čiže tých duší, ktoré sa narodili), analyzujú konfliktné situácie skutočne žijúcich a formulujú svoje názory a postoje. V rámci takto načrtnutej podoby bytia sú duše vystavované ilúzii, neistej a nestálej totožnosti. V prvom rozhovore s Willym sa dozvedajú svoje mená (a stotožňujú sa s nimi). Emma už v tejto etape prejavuje výnimočnú potrebu uplatnenia slobodnej vôle, nechce prijať nanútené meno, no žiadne iné meno nepozná, a tak si ho predsa len osvojí. Avatar duše je síce po narodení bytím, ktoré pokračuje, je „tým istým bytím“, narodí sa však ako nemluvňa v náhodnom tele opäť odkázanom na kontingenciu prostredia a skúsenosti. Po narodení sa predchádzajúca totožnosť nadobudnutá v priestore a čase preexistencie z pamäti vytratí. Je teda možné, že to bola len ilúzia totožnosti, a napokon aj v prípade pokračovania vlastného bytia bude totožnosť avatara tiež ilúziou?

Uchádzači od začiatku vedia, že existujú, aby zmizli, priam ako u Heideggera, ktorý do „neprekonateľnej možnosti bytia“ vložil aj smrť ako závršenie, uzatvorenie bytia (2008, 292 – 294). „Bytie k smrti“ je základom ich existencie ako duše inkorporovanej do ľudského tela na určitý čas, pre každého iný (deväť dní je čas preexistencie tej duše, ktorá bude zvolená na znovuzrodenie, iné duše miznú náhodne v procese selekcie).

Režisér a scenárista Edson Oda vo filme *Nine Days* manipuluje so strachom, s existenciálnou tiesňou zoči-voči smrti, a uchádzači o uvoľnené miesto na existenciu zažívajú/pociťujú dvojité obavy: primárne obavu z neúspechu, z vyradenia z hry o predĺženie existencie, druhotne strach zo svojej konečnosti. Len pre Emmu, ktorá pre svoju výnimočnosť žije mimo týchto ťaživých emócií, bude proces selekcie ob-

javovaním zmyslu (svojej) existencie. Každý avatar duše bude svoj „koniec“ zažívať po svojom ako intímnu možnosť, ktorú nemôže za neho prebrať niekto iný, a preto sa voči svojej konečnosti postaví odlišným spôsobom: popretím a odmietnutím pravidiel hry – po vyradení sa nespokojný uchádzač vyberie svojou cestou cez púšť, neunikne však osudu a zmizne zo záberu (pohlť ho ničota); ignoranciou, nevšímavosťou – pôžitkár a lahtikár zmizne s fľašou piva pri ústach; so strachom – umelecky nadaný, precitlivý mladý muž; s nádejou (do poslednej chvíle) na zmenu osudu – žena, ktorá túžila po romantickom vzťahu s Willom; autentickým pokojom naplnená a vyrovnaním, ba šťastím žiariaca Emma. V prípade prvých dvoch avatarov „vrátenie života“ bolo vzdorovité, nevedomé a z Willovej strany bez súcitu, úcty či akéhokoľvek prejavu spolupatričnosti medzi ľudskými bytosťami.

Vyradeným kandidátom, ktorí boli viac alebo menej konzekventne schopní prijať princípy pohovorov, Will nielen doprial, ale veľmi starostlivo a namáhavo pripravoval udalosť/rituál konca: zomierania a smrti. Pre mladého muža a zamilovanú ženu vyhotovil divadelné kulisy vylepšené multimediálnou technikou a dodržal ten istý postup, môžeme hovoriť o napodobňovaní kultúrneho opisu smrti alebo o audiovizuálnej alegórii zomierania a smrti, či o aure rozvinutej pohrebnej ceremónie: v poslednej etape neúspešného pohovoru avatar zapisoval na papier udalosť, zážitok (skúsenosť skutočne žijúceho, sprostredkovanú na monitore), ktorý bol preňho formatívny; túto skúsenosť ako posledné pranie avatar prežíval v simulovanej divadelno-multimediálnej realite, ktorej fungovanie zabezpečovali Will a Kyo (ale aj Emma ako voyeur bez Willovoho vedomia); na okamih „miznutia“ a konca ostával Will s avatarom duše osamote.

Will okrem úlohy organizátora pohovorov hrá diferencovanú úlohu sprievodcu pohrebným ceremoniálom: pri mladom umelcovi zbavenom odvahy a síl k životu, ktorého posledným práním bolo pobudnúť na morskej pláži, zacítiť horúci piesok, morské vlny, morský vánok a žiarivé slnečné lúče – bol ako Lévinasov „Druhý“ pred „Prvým“ (Walczak 2023, 15) alebo ako Cháron sprevádzajúci dušu na druhý breh do iného sveta. V poslednom zábere obidvaja sedia vedľa seba na lavičke, dva tiene na pozadí slnečného horizontu a bez výstrahy, bez naračného elementu jeden z tieňov zmizne ako po vypnutí žiarovky.

V súvislosti s chápaním existencie ako príležitosti na formovanie svojej fakticity, na realizáciu cieľov svojho bytia nažive, čoho umelecky nadaný muž nebol schopný, lebo o formovanie svojej existencie neprejavoval záujem, sa jemu venovaný obrad konca – priam dobrovoľná eutanázia – javí ako reprezentácia smrti vo význame (beztelesnej) ontologickej kategórie, napríklad ako Lévinasovo „Tajomstvo“. Podľa Lévinasa to neznáme v smrti, čo sa hneď neprezentuje ako ničota, ale ako ekvivalent zážitku nemožnosti ničoty, neznamená, že smrť je oblasť, z ktorej sa nikto nevrátil. Znamená to však, že samotná smrť nemôže nastať za predpokladu, že subjekt je tu vo vzťahu s tým, čo z neho nepochádza. Inými slovami, subjekt je vo vzťahu s tajomstvom (1999, 69).

V druhej situácii, teda v situácii ženy, ktorá podľa posledného prania bicyklovala po uličkách a po krásnej parkovej aleji, mohlo dôjsť ku komplikáciám. Žena nebola schopná vzdať sa nádeje na zvrátenie svojho osudu a režisér filmu sa rozhodol jej

„zmiznutie“ neukázať. Určite tu nerozhodoval nedostatok tvorivej invencie, ale skôr stratégia otvoreného záveru príbehu. Môžeme teda špekulovať, či nešlo o to, že zmiznutie bolo nejakým spôsobom vynútené alebo bolo potrebné dodatočné presvedčanie.

V poslednom prípade, v prípade Emmy, nepripravuje Will obrad, lebo nie je vstave naplniť jej posledné želanie. Zdá sa, že Emma je odkázaná na opakovanie osudu prvého uchádzača odmietajúceho pravidlá hry a na cestu k ničote sa pustila bez asistencie. V tom istom čase Will objavuje odkaz od Emmy: „Váž si každý okamih života“ a následne Emmine denníkové záznamy zanechané na rôznych predmetoch, napr. „Deň na pláži“, „Kyov smiech“, „Čaj s Kyom“ a pod. Podľa vzoru hypertextovej nódy Will pospájal nesubordinované prejavy Emminho správania, jej otázky, postrehy, ľahostajnosť voči neúspechu v pohovoroch a možné odôvodnenie jej posledného želania, ktoré odmietol. Emma sa síce ocitla v priestore preexistencie bez vlastného pričinenia, vlastným chcením v ňom však formovala svoje bytie nezávisle od toho, aká bola ontológia sveta, v ktorom sa ocitla: skutočná či spirituálna. V procese pohovorov sa sústredila na empatické spoznávanie osudu Willa prežívajúceho v tom čase hlboké sklamanie tak v úlohe selekcionára (lebo v predchádzajúcom pohovore sa nesprávne rozhodol a narodená duša spáchala samovraždu), ale aj ako kedysi žijúceho človeka, ktorý pravdepodobne tiež sám predčasne ukončil svoj život. Emma vyhľadala archívne záznamy nahrávok z Willovoho života, objavila jeho afektívny rozmer a konzekvencie: jemnocitnosť, zážitky osamotenía, opustenosti, bezmocnosti voči zlu vo svete a následky sebazničujúcej životnej stratégie, neschopnosť formovať podobu svojho života tak, aby sa v ňom realizovalo to „niečo“, čo bolo cieľom jeho bytia nažive. Will túžil byť hercom, ktorým sa nikdy nestal, nikdy nenaplnil svoj život, a tak možno aj on spáchal samovraždu. A práve vidieť Willa v úlohe herca bolo zrejme jej posledným odopretým želaním. Emmin odkaz, denníkové záznamy priviedli Willa k epifánii, cez ktorú pochopil význam jej posledného prania a rozhodol sa ho na poslednú chvíľu pred jej zmiznutím/koncom naplniť. V posledných filmových záberoch Will ako v divadelnom *deus ex machina* podlieha hereckej metamorfóze a famózne recituje pred Emmou *Song of Myself* Walta Whitmana. Podarilo sa mu urobiť zo seba výnimočného herca vďaka svojmu prejavu, a tak prežiť chvíľu autentického života. Pre Emmu zasa význam jej času v priestore preexistencie spočíval v tom, aby svoje vlastné bytie vnímala podľa seba, s láskavosťou, záujmom o iného, vnímavosťou, nezávisle od toho, čo si o nej myslí selekcionár Will.

Tvárou v tvár počas Willovoho hereckého výkonu obidvaja zažívajú závažnosť uvedomenia si významu svojej existencie. Zoči-voči konečnosti (života) objavili svoje autentické bytie (čo podľa Heideggera znamená nielen byť nažive, ale aj žiť v súlade so svojou esenciou; 2008, 59). Pociťovanie autenticity svojho bytia sa javí v kontexte filmovej stratégie ako dosiahnutie katarzie. V poslednom zábere obidve postavy miznú súčasne.

Prezentovaná filmová stratégia vedie ku katarzii a s ňou spojený (subjektívny) stav pokoja, odstránenie neistoty, naplnenie svojho vlastného bytia významom súčasne otvárajú cestu nivelizovaniu strachu zoči-voči konečnosti. Zrejme práve získanie takejto „aury“ želajú pacientom v paliatívnej starostlivosti, ich blízkym a poskytova-

teľom starostlivosti autori Nicole Piemonte a Shawn Abreu, aj keď len presvitá spod povrchu narácie *Smrti a umierania* (Death and Dying, 2021). Presvitá, lebo nie je samozrejmosťou, ale skôr artikuláciou ideálnej podoby puta a súcitu, ktorým by sme ako ľudia mali obklopovať umierajúcich. Je to idea, ktorú nanovo spoločne formulujú autorka a autor v rámci kritiky pôvodnej idey paliatívnej starostlivosti, ku ktorej mierim v druhej časti štúdie.

PRÍLIŠ NESKORÁ SMRŤ

V tradičnom diskurze venovanom eutanázii sa zdôrazňujú predovšetkým dve situácie, dve riešenia:

umožniť lekárom, aby uľahčili smrť dospelým pacientom, ak trpia „neznesiteľným utrpením“ v dôsledku „vážnej a nevyliciteľnej choroby“. Lekár môže buď predpísať smrteľnú dávku lieku pacientovi, ktorý si ju potom sám vezme – čo je známe ako lekárska pomoc pri umieraní, dobrovoľná asistovaná smrť alebo lekárska asistovaná samovražda –, alebo podať pacientovi smrtiacu injekciu, čo sa nazýva dobrovoľná eutanázia. (Singer 2021)

Takéto definovanie „smrti na želanie“ prezentuje aj *Encyclopedia of Bioethics* (Bioetická encyklopédia, Battin 2004) a je istou normou pre mnohých autorov bioetických a klinických štúdií. Vo viacerých štúdiách obsahuje skúmanie problematiky „pomáhať ľuďom zomrieť“ aj alternatívne riešenie v podobe paliatívnej starostlivosti a plánovania konca života (Kahana a kol. 2004).

Okrem tejto línie uvažovania sa nielen v akademickom diskurze rozvíja prúd utilitaristického prezentovania eutanázie, v ktorom „individuálne dobro pacienta“ a „individuálne rozhodovanie“ zasahuje do záujmov spoločnosti a blízkej rodiny (záujmy a možnosti rodinných príslušníkov, zdravotných poisťovní; Hardwig 1996). V rámci tejto tendencie je morálne vykonať eutanáziu, keď smrť neprichádza v správnom čase, ale „príliš neskoro“ pre dobro spoločnosti, najmä pre distribúciu zásob, a pre dobro rodinných vzťahov vystavených enormne náročnej opatere a finančnej záťaži v súvislosti so starostlivosťou o zomierajúceho člena rodiny alebo chorého na degeneratívne ochorenia. A v týchto súvislostiach sa dostáva do popredia tendencia rozširovať podmienky a motiváciu pre eutanáziu na kontroverzné prípady (naposledy úpravy zákona v Kanade, rozšírenie napr. aj pre psychicky chorých a pod.). O pálčivej potrebe nastolenia diskusie zameranej na politické, sociálne, komerčné a bioetické súvislosti eutanázie svedčí aj nedávny vyhranený hlas predstaviteľa poskytovateľov starostlivosti (Van Gorp 2024), ktorý upozorňuje na demografickú situáciu starnúcej západnej spoločnosti a eutanáziu – pod názvom vrátenie života (ang. *giving life back*) – prezentuje ako utilitaristické riešenie šetrenia prostriedkov a ošetrovateľských kapacít v budúcnosti.

V tejto časti štúdie sa budem venovať otázke eutanázie v prvom význame, a to v kontexte literárneho diela Mateusza Pakuľu *Jak nie zabíjateľ svojego ojca i jak bardzo tego żałuję* (2021). Autor presadzuje legalizovanie eutanázie ako riešenie na zmierňovanie utrpenia: „Myslím si, že jeho utrpenie nebude márne, ak o ňom napíšem v knihe (nie o otcovi, ale o jeho utrpení) a kniha začne diskusiu o legalizácii eutanázie. Musí sa to stať. Diskusia a LEGALIZÁCIA“ (217).

Dielo je angažované a nasmerované najmä na ovplyvnenie politických rozhodnutí (Dunin 2024), ktoré by mali mať za úlohu zvýšiť intenzitu diskusie natoľko, aby dosiahla politickú podporu, lebo zatiaľ nie je eutanázia v programe žiadnej strany, hoci výskum verejnej mienky v Poľsku, kde je eutanázia kriminalizovaná (tri mesiace až päť rokov za napomáhanie), ukazuje, že spoločnosť je tomuto riešeniu naklonená. A to napriek tomu, že diskusie a rozhodovania o etických problémoch súčasnej spoločnosti (interrupcie, reprodukcie in vitro, zrovnoprávnenie menších, LGBTQ osôb) sú v Poľsku od začiatku politickej transformácie v roku 1989 do značnej miery ovplyvnené postojom a kontrolou katolíckej cirkvi, ako to zdôrazňuje a komentuje autor: „Nenávidím vás, cirkevných idiotov! Ako veľmi sa dnes snažím vás nenávidieť a ako sa mi to nedarí! Pojebaní biskupi. Sú to oni, je to ich chyba... Sakrálni pomätenci, prajem vám všetkým, ktorí kričíte proti eutanázii, aby ste celé mesiace ležali, zavýjali od bolesti a prosili o smrť!“ (Pakuła 2021, 140)

Od konca 80. rokov minulého storočia sa diskusia na tému legalizovania eutanázie v Poľsku opakuje zvyčajne po tom, ako médiá zverejnia konkrétny prípad. Napríklad v roku 2008 k nej prispelo americké uvedenie filmu *Right to Die?* (2007) od kanadského režiséra Johna Zaritského a najmä západné diskusie (Morris – Plunkett 2008), ktoré vyvolal a ktoré napokon vynútili reakciu v komunite poľských bioetikov (Hołówka, Terlikowski). Do opakovanej poľskej diskusie občas prenikajú aj názory predstaviteľov akademickej bioetiky, no ich úlohou zrejme nie je diskusiu iniciovať a dynamizovať (Schick 2016), určite by však bolo osožné preskúmať miesto, pozíciu a stav bioetických diskusií v Poľsku.

Otázku smrti na želanie od roku 1988 pravidelne skúma Centrum badań opinii społecznej (Inštitút pre verejné otázky). A podľa výsledkov z roku 2009 skoro polovica (48 %) respondentov vyjadrila súhlas s tým, aby lekári vyhoveľi žiadosti trpiacich o smrť (pričom 39 % bolo proti a 13 % nerozhodnutých). Ešte vyššiu akceptáciu autonómneho rozhodnutia vyjadrovali respondenti v otázke legalizovania „smrti na želanie“ z rovnakého dôvodu (61 %), pričom sa výrazne znížilo percento jednoznačne rozhodnutých proti, ako aj percento tých, ktorí nemali v otázke jasno. Podľa Rafała Boguszewského to „môže znamenať, že v súčasnosti Poliaci z rôznych dôvodov častejšie než v minulosti rozmyšľajú o problémoch etickej povahy a zaujímajú voči nim konkrétne postoje“ (2009, 4). Ukazuje sa však, že pri zmene formulácie otázky zo „smrti na želanie“ na otázku „eutanázie“ sa počet súhlasiacich výrazne znížil aj v skupine, ktorá smrť na želanie podporovala (2009, 6). Je zrejme, že vo verejnej mienke má „eutanázia“ pejoratívny význam (jeden z dôvodov je spomienka na existenciu nacistických táborov smrti na území Poľska) a možno aj iné konotácie než smrť na želanie trpiaceho z dôvodu nevyliciteľnej choroby. Postoj k eutanázii nezávisel v prieskume od hodnotenia kvality a významu paliatívnej starostlivosti. Prieskum verejnej mienky odhalil rodové a generačné rozdiely: eutanázii boli menej naklonené ženy a viac rozhodne súhlasili mladší než starší muži (2009, 6).

Posledný rozdiel nachádza do určitej miery svoju analógiu v kritickej recepcii Pakuľovej knihy. Literárna kritika od mladšej generácie (Mrozek 2023; Jakubec 2024) zdôrazňuje priam reportérske zaznamenávanie intímnych podrobností procesu chátrania, strácania životnej energie, sínusoidy bolesti posledných mesiacov života

autorovho otca. Nárek človeka zomierajúceho v bolestiach, v ktorých žiada o rýchlu smrť (akú on doprial svojmu psovi a jemu je odopretá), vedie kritikov k vyzdvihovaniu práva človeka na individuálne rozhodovanie o ukončení života a chýbajúcu legalizáciu eutanázie v Poľsku považujú za nespravodlivé obmedzovanie slobody rozhodovania. Nadväzujú tak zrejme na princípy spravodlivosti a slobodného rozhodovania a z toho dôvodu sa próza (a podľa jej predlohy inscenované divadelné predstavenie) *Jak nie zabíjate svojego otca i jak bardzo tego żałują* propaguje ako protestný hlas za legalizovanie eutanázie alebo výkrik proti kriminalizovaniu eutanázie.

Odlíšnym smerom mieri kritika predstaviteľa staršej generácie, ktorý kladie etickú otázku priamo autorovi: „Prečo si nezabil svojho otca, keď o to sám požiadal, keď, ako sa zdá, si presvedčený o správnosti takéhoto riešenia? Preto, že to zakazuje zákon? Preto, že si nemal odvahu rozhodnúť sa, znášať následky? Psychologické ani morálne? Preto si chcel, aby sa niekto iný stal vrahom namiesto teba?“ (Grabowski 2023, online). Jednu nápovedu dáva John Hardwig (1997) v úvahe o správnom čase umierania. Podľa neho nie je eticky správne, aby žiadosť o eutanáziu bola adresovaná milovanému človeku, pretože po prvé to môže byť pre neho emocionálne zničujúce a po druhé preto, že môže nevedieť, ako správne a bez dodatočných komplikácií žiadosti vyhovieť. Podľa filozofa žiadosť by mala byť adresovaná lekárovi, pretože on robí to, čo je pre žiadajúceho najlepšie, má profesionálne know-how a nie je ovplyvnený prípadnými nekalými záujmami rodinných príslušníkov.

Dielo *Jak nie zabíjate svojego otca i jak bardzo tego żałują* síce vzniklo ako istý výkrik frustrácie z eticky náročnej požiadavky otca, zo skúsenosti utrpenia a bolo kritizované za intelektuálne neprehĺbenú, priam politickú nástojčivosť a paternalizmus (Grabowski 2023), avšak získava na vierohodnosti nielen v spojitosti s reprezentovaním tých, ktorí majú podobnú životnú skúsenosť a prežívali podobné frustrácie („všetko závisí od skúseností“; Pakuła 2021, 145) spojené s predstavou „dobrej smrti“ blízkej osoby – v praktikách nemocničnej starostlivosti nedosiahnuteľnou –, ale aj angažovanou umelecko-spoločenskou aktivitou v mene hesla „Trust me, I’m an artist“ projektov zameraných na komunikáciu so spoločnosťou (Dumitriu – Farsides 2017). Nemám na mysli len divadelné predstavenie, ktoré je adaptáciou prózy, ale aj rozhovory s Pakuľom z literárnych festivalov dostupné na platforme YouTube, organizovanie diskusií po predstaveniach (diskusia o „dobrej smrti“ s propagátorkou hospicov Anijou Franczak, Pańkowski 2023). A práve dôraz na eticky nejednoznačné riešenie konca života a apelatívny ráz stanovujú spoločenský význam textu Mateusza Pakuľa a odlišujú ho od iných textov, ktoré tiež vznikali na báze subjektívnych skúseností so smrťou a umieraním blízkeho (Tuszyńska 2007).

Dielo *Jak nie zabíjate svojego otca i jak bardzo tego żałują* vzniklo aj ako reakcia na krehkosť ľudského života a na zlyhanie autority vedeckého poznania – bezbolestné umieranie otca, predikované lekárom, zlyhalo: „Ocko medzitým veľa spí, doktor hovorí, že to bude takto, že to je umieranie, že sa ocko jednoducho jedného dňa nezobudí. Myslím, že to nie je také zlé. Že je to dobrá smrť. Eutanázia“ (85). Avšak v skutočnosti sa lekárske predpovede nenaplnili a smrť sa v správnom čase neudiala, preto ústrednou témou prózy je bolesť a utrpenie („kniha nie je o otcovi, ale o bolesti“; Pakuła 2021, 32): bolesť, ktorú znáša otec, bolesť syna, ktorý nebol schopný vraž-

dy, za čo sa obviňuje a ospravedlňuje, a preto píše knihu, bolesť, ktorá je argumentom pre eutanáziu. Ak ju však syn nie je schopný vykonať ani z vrúcneho vzťahu k otcovi – lebo nemá psychické sily na milosrdnú vraždu („a vo filmoch je to také jednoduché!“, 155) –, možno bude menej problematickým riešením na zmiernenie bolesti paliatívna starostlivosť. A práve toto je dôvod, pre ktorý uvažujem o bolesti v kontexte názorov literárnej vedy a bioetiky, lebo takáto stratégia mi poskytne možnosť dôvodiť, že Pakuľa nemusí ľutovať, že nezavraždil svojho otca.

Pre účely tejto štúdie prijímam premisu, že pre reflektovanie smrti majú v dejinách literatúry známe literárne diela (*Vojna a mier*, *Smrť Ivana Iljiča* a i.) taký význam, aký majú pre kultúru medicíny málo známe a používané anestéziológie (Bourke 2014) a vývoj liekov zmiernujúcich bolesť. Orientujem sa najmä na publikácie odborníkov na paliatívnu starostlivosť Nicole Piemonte a Shawna Abreua *Death and Dying* (Smrť a umieranie, 2021), literárneho vedca Sebastiana Porzuczeka *Mapowanie bólu. Lektura – Spojrzenie – Afekt* (Mapovanie bolesti. Čítanie – pohľad – afekt, 2020) a bioetičky Niny Streeck *Death without Distress? The Taboo of Suffering in Palliative Care* (Smrť bez trápenia? Tabu utrpenia v paliatívnej starostlivosti, 2019). Dúfam, že to bude osožné napriek tomu, že keď autor literárnovednej práce spomenie kontext medicíny, tak to robí len okrajovo a v opačnom garde je to podobne.

Pri interpretácii a analýze literárnych diel bolo donedávna rozhodujúce podriaďovanie tela, telesnosti ľudskej mysli, čo znamenalo výrazne dichotomické rozlišovanie telesnej a psychickej bolesti. Navyše v literárnej tradícii bola bolesť dlho vnímaná ako oblasť mimo jazykových možností (nereferenčnosť bolesti), vyjadrovaná výkrikmi, nepoddajná jazykovej expresii, ktorú možno jazykovo zdieľať. V tomto prístupe platila výrazná tabuizácia bolesti. Ako však poznamenáva autor Sebastian Porzuczek (2020) vo svojej monografii o mapovaní bolesti, zásadnú zmenu smerom od semiotických ku kultúrnym aspektom bolesti začali rozvíjať bádatelia nadväzujúci na lingvistické poznatky Ludwiga Wittgensteina, podľa ktorého sme pojem bolesti získali spolu s jazykom (2000, 169). Rozširovanie perspektívy reflektovania bolesti (obdobu „total pain“) priniesol David D. Morris, podľa ktorého bolesť nemôže byť obmedzovaná len na biologickú reakciu (impulz), ale ide o druh intenzity, ktorú reflektujeme v konkrétnom sociálno-historickom kontexte (1993, 39). Týmto smerom pokračovala Joanna Bourke (2014), podľa ktorej bolesť podlieha procedúram negociovania, v ktorých sú subjektívne a intímne motivácie konfrontované so sférou sociálnych očakávaní (pozri Porzuczek 2020, 165).

Analogicky s týmito posunmi dochádza k zmenám reflektovania bolesti v kultúre medicíny a k negociovaniu významov bolesti najmä v kontexte terminálnych ochorení. A práve v súvislosti s terminálnym stavom pacientov bolesť začala byť vnímaná komplexne, mimo dichotómie telesného a psychickeho. S koncepciou široko chápanej bolesti „total pain“ prišla v 60. rokoch minulého storočia Cicely Saunders a postavila na nej ideu paliatívnej medicíny reagujúcej na opustenosť terminálne chorých pacientov v nemocniciach. Paliatívnu starostlivosť nasmerovala proti rutinnej nemocničnej starostlivosti, ktorá neposkytovala holistické utíšenie „fyzicko-biologicko-duševno-sociálnej“ bolesti. Na takej idei je postavená starostlivosť reprezentovaná v próze Mateusza Pakuľa, kde uvádza v knihe citát z webstránky:

Oddelenie paliatívnej medicíny bolo založené v roku 2000 a stará sa o pacientov v pokročilých štádiách rakoviny. V klinickej praxi zahŕňa komplexnú starostlivosť o pacientov, ktorí nemôžu podstúpiť kauzálnu liečbu. Jeho cieľom je zmierniť obťažujúce príznaky, uspokojiť psychosociálne a duchovné potreby pacienta a podporiť rodinu počas choroby a po smrti blízkeho človeka. Paliatívna starostlivosť je multidisciplinárna činnosť. (2021, 103)

Fragment komunikácie s poskytovateľmi starostlivosti dokladá, že ideu riešenia „total pain“ po polstoročí propagovania, fungovania a šírenia už tiež zasiahla rutina, a teda, formalizácia vzťahu medzi pacientom a poskytovateľom starostlivosti, z ktorého sa vytratili žičlivosť, trepezlivosť, súcit a pod. (Streeck 2019):

- Má tu psychologickú starostlivosť?
- No... Bol tu psychológ, teraz si nepamätám, ale asi bol...
- Asi?
- No, lebo, viete, s pacientom sa nemôžeme dohodnúť, trepe nezmysly, tára jedno cez druhé...
- No, lebo je napchatý všelijakými...!
- Áno, ale psychológ povedal, že sa snažil, ale nedalo sa s ním dohodnúť, pacient nehovorí logicky, bláboce. (Pakuła 2021, 109)

Tento rozhovor z prózy poukazuje na viaceré komunikačné praktiky (Menchik – Giaquinta 2024) a problematické aspekty poskytovania starostlivosti v prípade smrteľného ochorenia: informovanie pacienta (Comer 2019) o jeho stave a prognózach (informovaný súhlas znamená, že v prípade predpokladanej „neznesiteľnej bolesti“ je pacient informovaný o možnosti zmiernenia bolesti eutanáziou, a to aj v krajine, kde nie je povolená), uistenie, že pacient pochopil svoj stav, upozornenie na potrebu citlivého a zároveň pravdivého vysvetlenia, čo sa bude spájať s procesom umierania. Na tieto ťažké rozhovory sú podľa Piemonte (Piemonte – Shawn 2021, 183) povinní sa podujat lekári.

Rutinu v nemocničnej starostlivosti v USA reflektuje autorská dvojica Nicole Piemonte a Shawn Abreu (2021) a v paliatívnej starostlivosti Nina Streeck (2020). V oboch publikáciách sú bolesť a znášanie bolesti pacientov v terminálnom stave prezentované inkluzívnym spôsobom. Piemonte a Abreu na základe svojej profesionálnej a osobnej skúsenosti (so zomieraním rodičov v paliatívnej starostlivosti) rozširujú a dopĺňajú koncepciu „total pain“. Uvažujú najmä o potrebe citlivo vnímať existenciálne pocity pacientov, nepodceňovať ich *subjektívne* rozhodnutie o tom, ako chcú prežiť koniec svojho života, dopredu dohodnúť stratégiu spravovania bolesti a napokon prejavovať pacientom súcit zo strany poskytovateľov starostlivosti, opatrujúcich osôb. Sústreďenie na *subjektívne* rozhodnutie pacienta, profesionálne spravovanie bolesti a súcit patria už zrejme ku kritike doterajšej idey paliatívnej starostlivosti poznačenej rutinizáciou a medikalizáciou, na čo upozorňuje okrem iných aj Streeck (2020): uvažuje síce analogickým spôsobom ako Piemonte a Abreu, avšak koncepciu „total pain“ (Cicely Saunders) otvorene kritizuje ako snahu o zmiernenie bolesti za každú cenu najmä preto, že jej následkom je tabuizovanie bolesti. V podrobnej analýze dokazuje, že jednou z konzekvencií tabuizácie je stieranie hranice medzi eutanáziou a paliatívnou starostlivosťou (v prípade terminálnej sedácie). Násled-

ne uvádza argumenty v prospech detabuizácie bolesti a tvrdí, že v rámci paliatívnej starostlivosti treba ustúpiť od nivelizovania bolesti za každú cenu – ako to nastolovala pôvodná idea paliatívnej starostlivosti – a dbať na rozhodovanie pacientov. Namiesto dôsledného, radikálneho zmiernenia bolesti Streeck navrhuje, aby paliatívna starostlivosť bola poskytovaná aj v tom prípade, keď neodstraňuje všetku bolesť, keď zlyháva, a aby bola zameraná najmä na pomoc pacientom pri znášaní bolesti.

Starostlivosť poskytovaná rozprávačovmu otcovi v knihe *Jak nie zabiťem svojego ojca i jak bardzo tego żałuję* na paliatívnom oddelení zomierajúceho prekvapila, ba vydesila, ako sa dozvedáme z denníkových zápiskov rozprávača: „Nikdy som nevidel takú tvár. U otca určite nie. Toto je tvár prekvapenia, údivu, nedôvery a nenávisti. K celému svetu vrátane nás. Otupená, zlomená tvár“ (Pakuła 2021, 106), ktorá vyslovuje zúfalú žiadosť: „Dostaňte ma odtiaľto, úpenlivo prosím!“ (107). Napriek námietke lekára: „Ste si istý, že to zvládnete? Nie je to nič ľahké, dokážete si poradiť?“ (Pakuła 2021, 106), členovia rodiny presunú pacienta do domácej starostlivosti. Otázka lekára je zásadná, lebo v Poľsku stále rastie percento ľudí zomierajúcich v nemocniciach (Szumpich 2013; Szukalski 2016), kde systémové riešenia zomieranie zneviditeľňujú a týmto spôsobom vymazávajú reálnu skúsenosť s umieraním blízkeho zo sociálnej skúsenosti, čo však nezmiernuje psychický stres a bolesť blízkych (Szukalski 2016, 4). A, naopak, médiá šíria drastické virtuálne obrazy smrti a eutanázie (Morris – Plunkett 2008; Piemonte – Shawn 2021, 35).

Domáca starostlivosť je do značnej miery druhom paliatívnej starostlivosti, ktorú presadzujú kritici (Piemonte – Abreu 2021; Streeck 2020) pôvodnej idey paliatívnej starostlivosti Cicely Saunders. Rodina zabezpečuje pocit blízkosti a nehu: „Ocko ma objíme, silno objíme. Zaspáva pritúlený ku mne, ako keby on bol môj syn“ (Pakuła 2021, 115), rozhovory o smrti: „už môžeš ísť, ocko“ (Pakuła 2021, 142) a o bolesti: „– Nebojíš sa smrti? – pýtam sa otca. – Nie. – Ale bolesti, však? – Predtým som rozmýšľal, že si kúpim zbraň a strelím si do tváre“ (139). Rodina súcitiť s otcom, ktorý po poslednom neznesiteľne bolestivom záchranom zákroku požiada syna o riešenie bolesti pomocou eutanázie. „Ocko, prepáč, že to je také, prepáč, že to trvá tak dlho, robím všetko, čo môžem, ocko, robíme všetko, aby sme ti uľahčili utrpenie. – Viem, ocko, odpovedá otec“ (148). Tento fragment opakuje rozprávač ako mantru v priebehu posledných dní agónie, keď zomierajúci trpí nepokojom, keď „na nás vrčí a narieka“ (151).

Na jednom mieste rozprávač spomína „svoj boj“ (180), uvedené fragmenty narácie jasne dokladajú, že boj sa okrem iného vzťahuje aj na zmiernovanie bolesti a poskytnutie tej najlepšej dobrej smrti umierajúceho otcovi. Z tohto dôvodu možno Pakuľovu prózu interpretovať v kontexte detabuizovania bolesti bioetickým diskurzom ako hlas kritizujúci starú ideu paliatívnej starostlivosti, ako protestný hlas za novú ideu paliatívnej starostlivosti. Autorovi by z tohto hľadiska nemuselo byť ľúto, že „nezavraždil svojho otca“, pretože mu pomáhal znášať bolesť a utrpenie. Treba však zdôrazniť, že dielo a aktivita Pakuľu odkazuje na viaceré aspekty konečnosti ľudského života a eutanázie, chápanej ako dobrá smrť: od subjektívneho rozhodovania o znášaní alebo zmiernovaní bolesti (aj za každú cenu) cez detabuizovanie okolností spojených s oddalovaním času smrti modernou medicínou až po subjektívne (alebo s rodinou

diskutované) rozhodovanie o svojej smrti, aby sa udiala „v správnom čase“ v prípade, že k tomu budeme potrebovať pomoc blízkych, resp. pomoc lekára.

ZÁVER

Takmer od polovice minulého storočia sa objavujú názory sociológov či historikov medicíny o vymazávaní smrti (Kastenbaum 1977, Becker 1973). Sprievodným javom bola strata priamej skúsenosti s umieraním vyvolaná technologickým vývojom medicíny a zdravotnej starostlivosti. Moderné lekárske technológie viedli na jednej strane k predlžovaniu života (zmeny definície smrti), na druhej strane k neviditeľnosti smrti. Technologické predlžovanie života (umelé dýchanie, podporovanie niektorých životných funkcií, vývoj anestéziológie a utišujúcich liekov proti bolesti) malo aj vedľajší účinok. Otvorilo etický problém: ako pomáhať človeku zomrieť v situáciách, keď je degradovaný na úroveň biologického systému, v ktorom už len niektoré orgány prejavujú minimálnu merateľnú aktivitu (napr. mozog, srdce, obličky), alebo v prípade onkologických ochorení, keď je vystavený neznesiteľnej bolesti.

Konzekvenciou týchto súvislostí bola myšlienka legitimizácie práva človeka rozhodnúť sa ukončiť svoj život, ktorá bola v niektorých krajinách realizovaná v podobe uzákonenia práva na eutanáziu. Bioetická racionalizácia eutanázie či sociologicko-medicínske reflektovanie smrti však do značnej miery opomínalo jej existenciálny aspekt. Ako výstižne sumarizovala Judit Görözdí: „Smrť je však ako univerzálna téma pre všetkých ľudí bytostne určujúca, pripomína konečnosť ľudského života, neustále zdôrazňuje jeho hodnotu. Zároveň je nositeľkou akéhosi existenciálneho strachu v neposlednom rade pre svoju neznámu/nespoznatelnú povahu, ktorej sa aj biologické, lekárske, psychologické, filozofické či teologické výskumy dokážu len dotýkať“ (2023, 97). Na základe týchto a podobných súvislostí je môj prístup k skúmaniu problému rozmanitosti života, a najmä jeho konečnosti, na príklade filmu a literárneho diela transdiskurzívny: pracujem s názormi z oblasti bioetiky (Hardwig 1996; Singer 2021), dejín medicíny (Kastenbaum 1977), ako aj z oblasti kultúrnych štúdií (Bourke 2014; Morris 1999) a literárnej vedy (Porzuczek 2020).

V prvej časti štúdie poukazujem cez interpretáciu filmu *Nine days* na ontologický charakter smrti zdôrazňujúci konečnosť ľudskej existencie, ktorá sa prejavuje najmä ako skúsenosť smrti iného, pretože pokiaľ žijeme, umierajú najmä tí druhí. Interpretácia filmu poskytla príležitosť vyzdvihnúť v kontexte konečnosti význam zmyslu života, zmyslu autentického bytia, ktoré je nažive a formuje svoj život tak, aby človek naplnil svoje predstavy o sebe a o svojej podstate (Heidegger). Dosiahnutie pocitu autentického bytia som predstavila na príklade Willa a Emmy, postáv z filmu. Hľadanie autentického bytia som tu vnímala ako analógiu k predstave najvhodnejšieho stavu pre vyrovnávanie sa so smrťou zoči-voči konečnosti (nivelizovanie existenciálneho strachu zo smrti), napríklad u pacientov v paliatívnej starostlivosti za takých okolností a v takých intenciách, aké prezentujú odborníčka a odborník na paliatívnu medicínu Piemonte a Shawn (2021). Až tento aspekt prijatia/odmietania vlastného umierania a smrti v prípade neznesiteľnej bolesti vedie k etickej otázke, ako pomáhať zomrieť tým, ktorí nás o to žiadajú, na čo som sa zamerala najmä v druhej časti svojej štúdie. Tu už smrť nemá len ontologický rozmer, ale stáva sa skúsenosťou sociálneho

charakteru a súčasne skúsenosťou s biologickou telesnosťou. Zomieranie už nie je priezračné, ale má svoj pach a mäkkú konzistenciu (Julia Kristeva v tejto súvislosti zaviedla pojem abjekt – niečo, čo už nepatrí subjektu, telesné tekutiny, a subjekt; Kristeva 2006, 35) a napokon nesie so sebou etickú zodpovednosť za riešenie konca života (eutanázia verzus paliatívna starostlivosť). V procese interpretovania diela *Jak nie zabíleť svojego otca i jak bardzo tego żaluję* v kontexte názorov z oblasti bioetiky (Steeck 2020; Piemonte – Shawn 2021), ktoré detabuizujú bolesť v paliatívnej starostlivosti, a v kontexte mapovania bolesti v literatúre (Porzuczek 2020) som dospela k jeho novej interpretácii. Toto dielo a Pakuľove ďalšie aktivity (divadelné predstavenie, diskusie) možno vnímať nielen ako protestný hlas za legalizáciu eutanázie v Poľsku, ale tiež ako hlas podporujúci kritiku pôvodnej idey paliatívnej starostlivosti (Cicely Saunders) zameranej na nivelizovanie bolesti za každých okolností, ktoré môže viesť k rušeniu hraníc medzi paliatívnou starostlivosťou a eutanáziou.

Také umelecké projekty ako prezentovaný film Edsona Odu a próza i divadelné predstavenie Mateusza Pakuľa nielenže pripomínajú konečnosť ľudského života, ale zároveň dokazujú naliehavosť celospoločenskej diskusie o problémoch súvisiacich s koncom života, a to aj v kontexte zmyslu ľudskej existencie, ľudskej spolupatričnosti, súcitu s umierajúcimi. V takejto diskusii by nemala chýbať ani literatúra, ani populárna kultúra. Naopak, ich úlohou je vyzdvihovať a implementovať také mäkké antropologické hodnoty, akými sú láskavosť, pozornosť, žičlivosť, súcitiť, solidarita či ušľachtilosť.

POZNÁMKY

- ¹ Tlačová správa #FlandersNewsService zo dňa 8. 4. 2024 „Prezident najväčšej flámskej zdravotnej poisťovne chce uvoľniť pravidlá eutanázie“. <https://www.belganewsagency.eu/president-of-flanders-largest-health-insurance-fund-wants-ethanasia-rules-relaxed>.
- ² Slovník cudzích slov z roku 2005 uvádza lexém „selekcja“ vo význame „výber jednotlivcov podľa určitých kritérií“, z toho vychádzam pri používaní podstatného mena selekcionár vo význame „ten, kto vyberá spomedzi kandidátok takú dušu, ktorá má predpoklad žiť medzi ľuďmi“.
- ³ Vedomie autenticity svojho života je zrejme ideálny stav existenciálnych pocitov pacientov v paliatívnej starostlivosti. Preto si treba uvedomiť, že autentické bytie nie je všetkým dané, lebo nie každý tak formoval svoj život, aby ho dosiahol. Po druhé, zoči-voči treba postaviť aj existenciálne pocity pacientov a poskytovateľov paliatívnej starostlivosti, aby sa ošetrojúci personál naučil vidieť v tvári/ očiach pacienta seba. Na pragmatickej úrovni to môže znamenať: pomôcť pacientovi pripomenúť si a pomenovať, možno prehodnotiť význam jeho života (McClement – Wowchuk – Klaasen 2009). Iste preto štúdie o konci života zdôrazňujú význam dlhodobej komunikácie lekára s pacientom.
- ⁴ Ak nie je v literatúre uvedené inak, preložila B. S.
- ⁵ Tlačová správa TVN24 zo dňa 10. 12. 2008 „Śmierć na żywo? To się nie godzi“ o rozhovore etika Jacka Hołowku a publicistu Tomasza Terlikowského o kontroverznom filme. <https://tvn24.pl/polska/smierc-na-zywo-to-sie-nie-godzi-ra79385-ls3721047>.
- ⁶ V divadelnej inscenácii *Jak nie zabíleť svojego otca i jak bardzo tego żaluję* herec v úlohe otca sedí na vozíku v neosvetlenej časti scény a v kritických častiach denníkových záznamov vydáva len výkriky „Och! Aaaa!“ . Aj v samotnej próze je otcovo prežívanie bolesti vyjadrené len v náznakoch: „– Co ła boli, ocko? – Wszystko, Jeżišiiii!“
- ⁷ Próza sa odvíja z perspektívy denníkových záznamov rozprávača, nie zomierajúceho, no môžeme si domyslieť, že realita paliatívnej starostlivosti sa veľmi nelíšila od javov popisovaných a kritizovaných

autorskou dvojicou Piemonte – Shawn (2021), z čoho vyplýva, že profesionálny odstup, ku ktorému je vedené študentstvo medicíny, a nasmerovanie na výkon a produktivitu nemocničných zariadení, ktoré znemožňujú, aby lekári viedli s pacientmi rozhovory o procese zomierania a kladú prekážky subjektívnemu rozhodovaniu pacienta o tom, či chce, alebo nechce znášať akúkoľvek bolesť.

⁸ Film získal Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award in the US Dramatic Competition na festivale Sundance Film Festival v roku 2020 a próza/divadelné predstavenie Mateusza Pakuła zasa hlavnú cenu na divadelnom festivale v Kielcach 2023.

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Text – poznanie – prax: Za možnosť literárnej vedy vychádzať z vedomostnej sociológie

CLAUS-MICHAEL ORT

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Text – knowledge – practice: For a sociology of knowledge option in literary studies

Sociology of knowledge. Literature as a social system. Systems theory.

Constructivism. Social history of literature. Discourse theory. Empirical literary studies.

Analyzing the meaning structure of literary texts, i.e. reconstructing their semantic inner logic and its context-sensitive interpretation, remains one of the core tasks of literary studies. When reflecting on the self-descriptions of societies, the sociology of knowledge and literature comes into play. If literary research increases knowledge of the effect and function of descriptions of society, it assumes a shared responsibility for the semantic “environmental” conditions, under which society observes itself. It is thus responsible for shaping the narrative patterns by which societies interpret themselves, i.e. collective or group semantics, as well as for associated reductions in complexity. Niklas Luhmann recommended that the sociology of knowledge should formulate such a “theory of society observing and describing itself” (1995, 154), but the cultural studies approach to the term “knowledge” prevalent in German-language studies between 2000–2015 is not necessarily conducive to this approach. This article reflects the aspect of “knowledge” from the two sides mentioned in the title and corners it praxeologically and textualistically, i.e. in its dynamic, social micro and macro dimension (between cognitive psychology and sociology) and in its textualist dimension.

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Claus-Michael Ort
Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel
Deutschland
cort@litwiss-ndl.uni-kiel.de

V príspevku vychádzam z minimálneho konsenzu, že analýza konštrukcií významov v literárnych textoch a kontextovo citlivá interpretácia výsledkov takýchto textových analýz zostáva jednou zo základných úloh literárnej vedy. A ak sa nazdáva- me, že takéto interpretácie môžu prispieť aj k rekonštrukcii a reflexii autodeskripcii spoločností, našej spoločnosti, potom do hry vstupujú spoločenské vedy a v tomto ohľade aj vedomostná sociológia a, samozrejme, sociológia literatúry.

Ak literárna veda rozširuje poznanie spoločnosti týkajúce sa produkcie, distri- búcie, pôsobenia a funkcie literárne konštruovaných autodeskripcii spoločnosti, sú- časne preberá spoluzodpovednosť za sémantické podmienky prostredia, za akých sa spoločnosť pozoruje („pozorovanie“ chápané s Niklasom Luhmannom ako „rozli- šujúce označovanie“; Luhmann 1995, 179) – na jednej strane preberá spoluzodpo- vednosť za utváranie diskurzívne silnej sémantiky, obrazov iných spoločností a seba samej, naratívnych vzorcov, ktorými sa spoločnosti interpretujú, chápu a hodnotia, t. j. poskytujú kolektívnu alebo skupinovo špecifickú ponuku významov, a na druhej strane aj spoluzodpovednosť za odvrátenú stranu takýchto významových produkcií, a to za súvisiacu redukciu komplexnosti, napríklad za konštrukcie identity a ich vy- lúčené „iné“, „cudzie“.

Ak akceptujeme takúto únikovú cestu zo slonovinovej veže sebastačnej herme- neutiky literárnych diel po tzv. lingvistickom obrate 60. rokov a po tzv. kultúrnom obrate 80. rokov 20. storočia, zaťažime sa problémovou pozostalosťou nového his- torizmu (Stephen Greenblatt), teórie diskurzov (Michel Foucault) a teórie systémov (Niklas Luhmann) – inými slovami, teoretických ponúk, ktoré literárna veda inten- zívne recipovala vo fázach ich najväčšieho rozmachu.

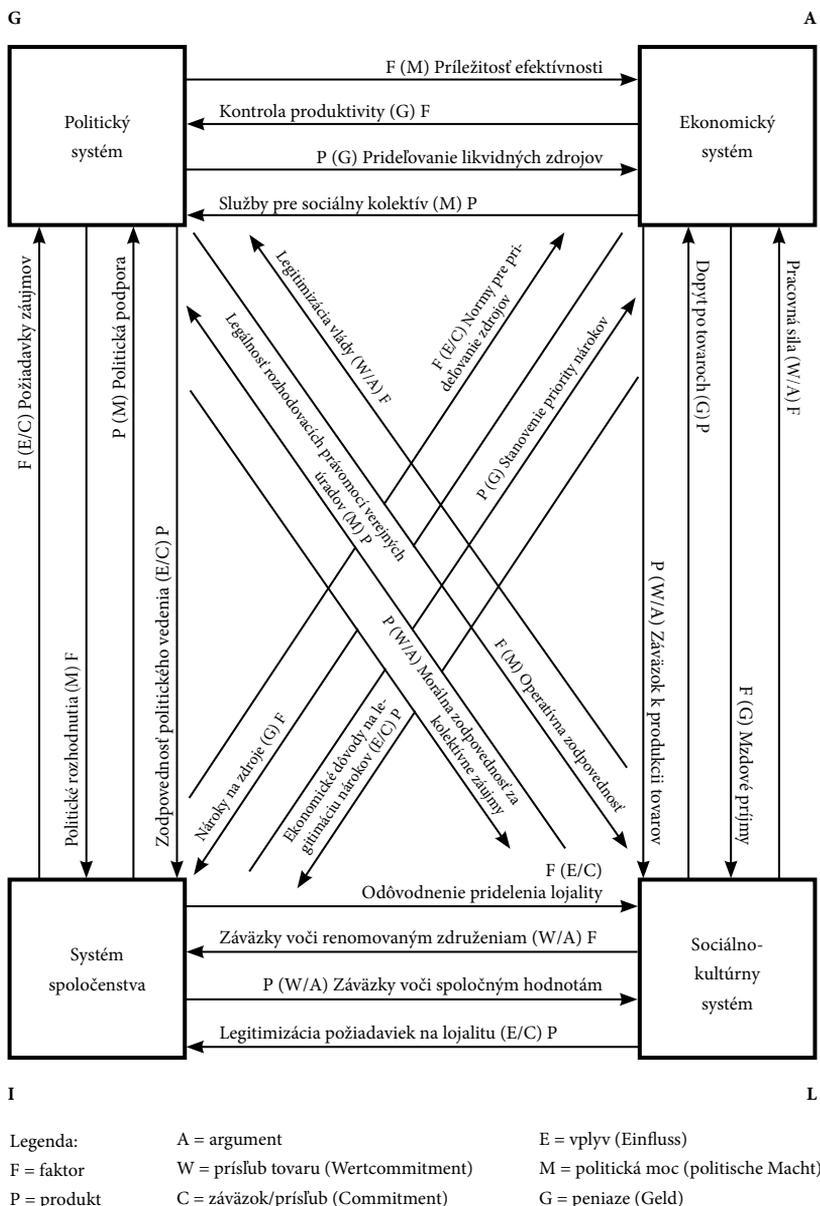
Chýbajúca „teória spoločenskej autodeskripcie“, ktorú však navrhoval Niklas Luhmann, môže byť spočiatku len špekulatívnym úbežníkom možnosti literárnej vedy vychádzať z vedomostnej sociológie. Už v roku 1995 Luhmann odporúčal, aby vedomostná sociológia formulovala takúto „teóriu spoločnosti pozorujúcej a opisujúcej samu seba [...]“ (1995, 154). Skutočnosť, že pojem poznanie (*Wissen*) zažíval, aspoň v nemeckojazyčnej literárnej vede v rokoch 2000 až 2015, kultu- rologickú módu (literatúra *a* poznanie alebo literatúra *ako* poznanie), ktorá me- dzičasom už opadla, nemusí byť nevyhnutne v prospech vedomostnej sociológie ako možnosti (por. Vogl 1999; Klausnitzer 2008; Borgards – Neumeyer – Pethes – Wübben 2013).

Za vyššie uvedených podmienok (v zmysle autodeskripcie spoločnosti) si mož- nosť literárnej vedy vychádzať z vedomostnej sociológie podľa môjho názoru vyža- duje predovšetkým sociológiu literatúry orientujúcu sa na texty.¹

Aspekt poznania priblížim z dvoch strán naznačených už v názve a obsiahnem ho praxeologicky a textologicky, v jeho dynamickej, t. j. sociálnej mikro- a makrodi- menzii (na rozhraní medzi kognitívnou psychológiou a sociológiou) a v jeho texto- logickej (kulturologickej, depragmatizovanej, znakovno-systémovej) dimenzii – poč- núc praxou.

1. PRAX

1.1 LITERATÚRA AKO SOCIÁLNY SYSTÉM: OBLASTI KOMUNIKÁCIE A KONANIA



Obr. 1: Schéma 10. „Vstupno-výstupná paradigma sociálneho systému“ (MüncH 1982, 131; cit. podľa Parsons – Platt 1973, 432).

Literatúra ako sociálna sféra konania, ktorá sa diferencuje od 18. storočia ako kultúrny subsystém spoločnosti spätý s jej politickým, ekonomickým, právnym a kultúrnym prostredím, bola od začiatku predmetom sociológie „sociálnosti“ literatúry – literárnej prevádzky, literárneho života, jeho inštitúcií a analógových a digitálnych médií distribúcie, sprostredkovania literatúry – cez vydavateľstvá, knižný trh, knižné veľtrhy, literárne ceny, literárnu kritiku, autorské práva a procesy cenzúry, kanonizáciu diel a žánrov zanesením do školských osnov atď. –, zahŕňa však aj sociológiu autorstva literárneho písania a jeho produkčných podmienok, ako aj sociológiu recepcie a pôsobenia (čítania), teda úloh „estetického“ a predovšetkým „literárneho komunikačného pôsobenia“, ktoré pred viac ako 40 rokmi sformuloval Siegfried J. Schmidt vo svojom diele *Grundriß der Empirischen Literaturwissenschaft* (Základy empirickej literárnej vedy, 1980 a 1982).²

Takáto synchronna sociológia literatúry potenciálne adaptuje celý rad spoločenskovedných kategórií na pomedzí mikro- a makrosociológie, ako teóriu konania, noriem a hodnôt, skupín, rolí a inštitúcií, teórie sociálnej diferenciácie a integrácie, modernizácie a sociálnych zmien a v prípade Schmidta aj svojho času aktuálnu kognitívnu biológiu a psychológiu (Humberto R. Maturana, Francisco J. Varela). A nakoľko máme do činenia s historicky minulými, už nie empiricky pozorovateľnými mikro- alebo makrosociálnymi procesmi, bude musieť diachrónna sociológia literatúry rovnako ako historické vedy siahnuť po neliterárnych typoch textov – po pramenných textoch ako dokumentoch. (Pozri obr. 1.)

Mníchovská výskumná skupina pre sociálne dejiny literatúry Sociálne dejiny nemeckej literatúry 1770 – 1900 (*Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur 1770 – 1900*) Nemeckej nadácie pre výskum (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG), ktorá bola aktívna v rokoch 1979 až 1986, modelovala tieto oblasti pôsobenia a interakcie a fraktálne aj príslušné subsystémovo-interné výmenné vzťahy a procesné dimenzie sociálneho systému „literatúra“ pomocou modelu štyroch funkcií klasika americkej sociológie Talcotta Parsonsa (1902 – 1979). Tento model je známy ako schéma AGIL a zahŕňa nasledovné štyri základné funkčné oblasti spoločnosti (pozri obr. 2): alokáciu zdrojov (A: Adaptation – ekonomika), dosahovanie cieľov (G: Goal attainment – politika/vláda), integráciu (I: Integration – komunitizácia: vzdelávací systém, právny systém) a trvalé kultúrne (napr. morálne) hodnotové a interpretačné vzorce (L: Latency – náboženstvo, veda, umenie/literatúra ako médiá hodnotovej väzby).

Funkčný diagram mníchovskej výskumnej skupiny zaraďuje sociálny systém „literatúra“ do funkčnej triedy „L“, do oblasti sociokultúrneho systému (obr. 2 vľavo dole).

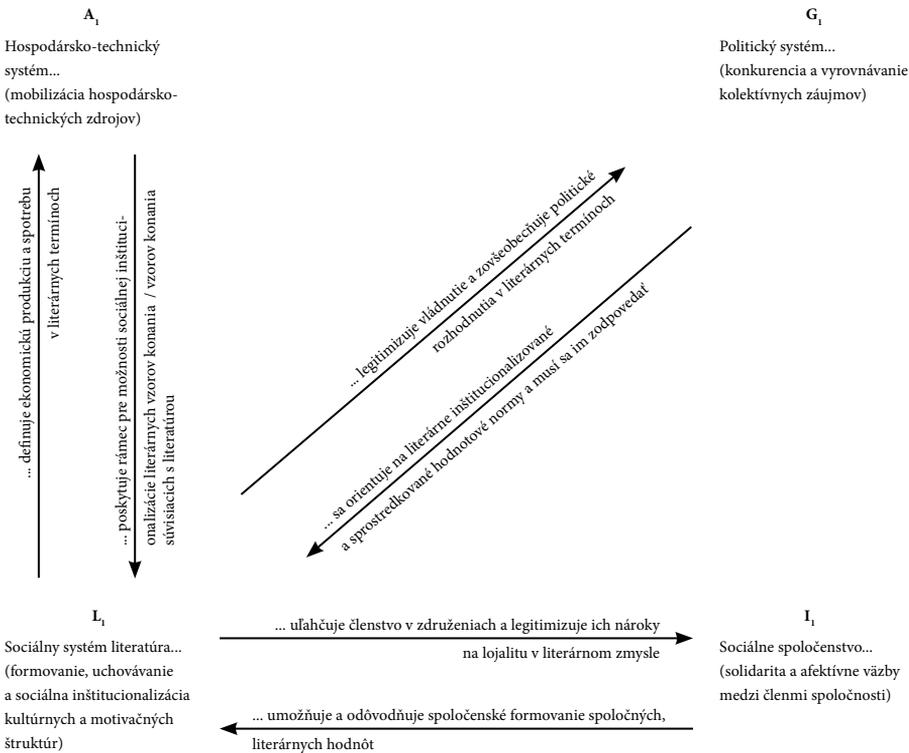
Nielen samotný sociokultúrny subsystém, ale všetky sociálne subsystémy interne obsahujú aj kultúrne podoblasti, a teda aj archivovanú špeciálnu sémantiku, špeciálnu symboliku, konkrétne množiny rôznych textových žánrov, druhov a variet ako implicitné autodeskripcie vlastného systému. Táto praxeologická procesná schéma sa nevyhýba problému atribúcie či rekurencie statických znakových systémov na „živé“, dynamické kontexty konania a naopak – a to mimo reflexnej sféry „základne“ a „nadstavby“: Problémová zóna vedomostnej sociológie týkajúca sa znakovkej a sociálnej referencie, ktorá preniká aj do sociológie literatúry zameranej na text, sa preja-

vuje všade tam, kde sa „kultúrne“, t. j. vedecké alebo umelecké („estetické“) funkčné oblasti (L) v rámci subsystémov opäť stretávajú s ekonomickým (A), politickým (G) a právnym alebo pedagogickým (I) prostredím.

Luhmann by takéto oblasti a ich hranice či rozdiely voči systémom vnútorného a vonkajšieho prostredia modeloval ako autopoieticky uzavreté komunikačné kontexty, čo však nerieši problém referencie, ktorý sa ešte viac prejavuje v Parsonsovom hierarchizujúcom škatulkovaní.

Už v roku 1934 Jan Mukařovský poukázal na postmarxistické komplikovanie tohto problému a na dve hroziace krajné polohy:

Umělecké dílo má tedy dvojí sémiologický význam, autonomní a komunikativní. [...] Bez sémiologické orientace bude teoretik umění stále podléhat sklonu, aby pohlížel na umělecké dílo jako na čistě formální konstrukci, nebo dokonce jako na přímý obraz buď psychologických, případně fyziologických dispozic autora, nebo odlišné reality vyjadřované dílem, případně ideologické, ekonomické, sociální a kulturní situace daného prostředí. [...] Jedině sémiologické hledisko dovolí teoretikům, aby uznali autonomní existenci a podstatný dynamismus umělecké struktury a aby pochopili vývoj umění jako imanentní pohyb, který je však v stálém dialektickém vztahu k vývoji ostatních oblastí kultury. (2000, 212 – 213)³



Obr. 2: Sociálny systém „literatúra“ ako sociálny L-subsystem a jeho subsystemové vzťahy (systemová úroveň S1; Meyer – Ort 1988, 141)

1.2 (NE)POZOROVATEĽNOSŤ HISTORICKEJ PRAXE A POZOROVATEĽNOSŤ TEXTOV: PRAXEOLOGICKÁ DILEMA

Vzniká dvojitý problém atribúcie:

1. Referencia znakových systémov na dynamické sociálne kontexty konania, ktorá sa nevyčerpáva len kauzálnymi (autor A vytvára text B v individuálnych mentálnych a kolektívnych sociálnych, ekonomických podmienkach C) alebo mimetickými vzťahmi (B zobrazuje C, „odráža C“).

2. Pre historické tematické oblasti navyše platí, že sociálne praktiky aktérov už nie sú priamo pozorovateľné, ich kognície už nemožno skúmať, nemožno ich priamo komunikovať, takže nie sú prístupné empirickému výskumu.

Problémy 1 a 2 vznikajú už v samotnej praxeológii takým spôsobom, že sa paradoxne ukazuje, že praxeológia je skôr teoretickou opciou než možnosťou empirického výskumu, hlavne keď ide o historické, napríklad literárnohistorické okruhy predmetov.

Práve preto, že „poznanie“ ako kognícia mimo sémantiky textových a obrazových zdrojov, ktorá nie je uložená alebo archivovaná v médiách, nemôže byť predmetom historického výskumu, treba spolu so sociológom Andreasom Reckwitzom (2008) pripustiť, že

výskumná prax praxeológie [...] sama – či chce alebo nechce – [nadobúda] črty analýzy historických dokumentov, čo ju približuje k analýze diskurzov – so všetkými jej problémami [...]. Naopak platí, že samotná teória diskurzov sa usiluje o analýzu sociálnych praktík, „kontextu“ mimo „textu“ [...] [a] praxeológ [...] sa ocitá odkázaný na textový a artefaktový materiál diskurzných analytikov a semiológov. (200 – 201)

A možno súhlasiť s Reckwitzovým záverom:

Následne ide o otázku, či praktická a diskurzívna forma analýzy sú vlastne dve nesúmerateľné alternatívy alebo či ich nemožno vnímať ako dve strany toho istého projektu kulturologickej analýzy (bez toho, aby sme si zvolili – vždy neuspokojivú – „strednú cestu“). Medzitým je čoraz jasnejšie, že vzájomné stávanie praxeologických a diskurzno-analytických prístupov proti sebe sa ukazuje ako menej plodné pre výskumnú prax v oblasti kultúrnych a sociálnych vied [...]. (190)

Andreas Reckwitz už v roku 2000 svoju štúdiu *Die Transformation der Kulturtheorien. Zur Entwicklung eines Theorieprogramms* (Transformácia kultúrnych teórií: O vývoji teoretického programu), v ktorej rekonštruuje diskurz „sociológie kultúry“ od Alfreda Schütza, Clauda Lévi-Straussa, Ervinga Goffmana až po Clifforda Geertza, Michela Foucaulta a Pierra Bourdieua, uzatvára perspektívou teoretického programu, ktorý sa pokúša prekonať dilemu tohto neistého dvojitého vzťahu medzi textológiou a praxeológiou. (588 – 643) Vzdáva sa totalitných predstáv o homogénosti na oboch stranách a upúšťa od vzájomne inkluzívnych, hierarchizovaných zovšeobecnení v prospech heterarchickej „interferencie metód: analýzy praxe a analýzy diskurzov“ (2008, 195).

Švajčiarsky historik Philipp Sarasin konštruktivistickým spôsobom zovšeobecňuje epistemologicky nevyhnutný odkaz na text a médiá, avšak bez toho, aby sa vzdal praxeologických, teda sociologických otázok:

Pre nás neexistuje ani minulé realita, ani rekonštruovateľný „zmysel“ v ideáli mimo zdrojov. Opis a analýza minulosti preto nikdy nemôžu byť oddelené od opisu a analýzy prameňov [...]. To, čo sa takto dostáva do zorného poľa, však napriek tomu nie je ľubovoľná, údajne „postmoderná“ hra textov, ktoré len vzájomne na seba odkazujú bez vzťahu k realite, ale [sú] to konkrétne, sociálne lokalizovateľné formy a vzťahy médií a komunikácie, spracovania informácií a produkcie významov. (2003, 58)⁴

Táto pozícia síce pripomína filozofiu jazyka Jacquesa Derridu zhmotnenú v jeho diele *De la grammatologie* (Gramatológia; „il n'y a pas de hors-texte“): „Nič nejstuje mimo textu. [...] [V]ždy boli iba suplementy, substitutívne významy sa mohli vynoriť iba v reťazci diferencných poukazov, ku ktorým ‚skutočnosť‘ prichádza, pridáva sa iba tak, že nadobúdajú zmysel zo stopy a odkazu na suplement atď.“ (1999, 167)⁵ Aj sám Derrida s odkazom na dekonštrukciu odmieta „textualitu“, ktorá si „svet, spoločnosť a dejiny zamieňa s knižnicou“ (1997, 52).⁶

Aby sme však neskončili ako nešťastný mladík v básni Friedricha Schillera *Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais* (Zahalený obraz v Saji), ktorý si namýšľa, že odhaľuje pravdu (v časopise *Die Horen* 1795; Schiller 2004, 189),⁷ mohli by sme si z Derridových a Sarasinových výrokov vziať aspoň nasledujúce ponaučenie: Byť spokojný s mediálnymi „závojmí“ – „suplementami“ – a brať ich vážne ako nezávislé entity práveže neznamená popierať alebo zabúdať, že existuje alebo existovalo niečo skutočné, čo reprezentujú a zároveň zahalujú a čomu vďačia za túto svoju funkciu. Znamená to však tiež pripustiť, že sú závojmí, ktoré spoľahlivo nezobrazujú to, čo je za nimi, ale odkazujú aj na seba samy – hoci svoju sebareferenčnosť dokážu maskovať ako vonkajšie odkazy a poznanie reality sa bez nich nezaobíde (analogicky k *vela* Francisca Bacona z jeho *Novum Organum* [1620]).

Naproti tomu empirická literárna veda výskumnej skupiny okolo Siegfrieda J. Schmidta manévruje do samoúčelnej pasce praxeologickej (sociologickej, potom predovšetkým kognitívno-biologickej) absolutizácie na úkor, ako uvádza Reckwitz, „významovo a vedomostne orientovanej koncepcie kultúry“ (2000, 84), najneskôr vtedy, keď sa obráti k historickým predmetovým oblastiam Schmidtovou štúdiou *Die Selbstorganisation des Sozialsystems Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert* (Samoorganizácia sociálneho systému literatúry v 18. storočí), resp. keď sa pokúsi písať dejiny literatúry podľa vlastných teoretických noriem (Schmidt 1989). Zároveň sa však domnievala, že sa zaobíde bez samostatnej analýzy literárnych textových prameňov – kvôli sebaklokáde, ktorá je z hľadiska academickej teórie zbytočná a ktorá zamieňa lingvistickú a semiologickú analýzu textu s oprávnenou kritizovanou ontologizujúcou hermeneutikou textu.

Ak podľa Schmidta „dejiny literatúry [v empirickej teórii literatúry] znamenajú: výskum dejín všetkých [...] prvkov systému ‚literatúry‘ v kontexte ostatných spoločenských systémov“ (1982, 32), potom sa natíska otázka, na akom empirickom základe sa má rekonštruovať diachronia literárneho systému, jeho minulé stavy a procesy jeho zmien. Problémom, ktorý má prednostne riešiť výskum súvisiaci s textom v rámci empirickej literárnej vedy, je literárnohistorické „zabezpečenie empirie“, t. j. zabezpečenie overiteľnosti literárnohistorických výpovedí.

Schmidtovo tvrdenie, že „texty nemajú ani štruktúru, ani význam“, je potom rovnako neprípustné, pretože je ontologizujúce, ako aj jeho opak; keďže štruktúra a vý-

znam, ako Schmidt ďalej argumentuje, sú „kognitívne atribúované a komunikačne pripisované“ (1991, 20; cit. podľa Ort 1994, 111), majú intersubjektívne overiteľný význam a štruktúru len do tej miery, do akej boli metodologicky overiteľným spôsobom atribúované. Pomeriavanie takto vedecky vytvorených „komunikátov“ individuálne odlišnými, subjektívnymi „komunikátmi“ nevedeckého čítania či „interpretácie“ je však založené na zámene metaroviny a objektovej roviny, ktorá len reprodukuje staré námietky hermeneutiky proti štrukturálnym analytickým postupom (t. j. intencionalistické alebo recepčno-empirické námietky typu, že analýza A nepostihuje subjektívne kognície autora B alebo nevedeckého recipienta C).⁸

Schmidtovo odmietnutie staršieho typu hermeneutickej interpretácie diel ako prístupu neschopného produkovať teóriu či empiriu v žiadnom prípade neznamená, že sa treba úplne zriecť textovej analýzy. Literárna história už nie je len históriou textov či dokonca diel, ani diachrónna rekonštrukcia literatúry ako sociálneho systému sa však nezaobíde bez textovo-analytických metód.

Schmidt opisuje východisko z tejto slepej uličky vo svojej knihe *Geschichten & Diskurse. Abschied vom Konstruktivismus* (Príbehy a diskurzy: Rozlúčka s konštruktivismom) z roku 2003. Jej podtitul však neodkazuje na epistemologicky podložený konštruktivismus, ale na ontologický základ doteraz propagovaného „radikálneho konštruktivismu“, na jeho konečné kognitívno-biologické zdôvodnenie vedúcemu vedie k redukcionizmu,

ktorý bráni práve tomu, čo je jednou z hlavných požiadaviek konštruktivistického uvažovania, a to úplnému zdôvodneniu teórie sebou samou a dôslednej aplikácii teórie samej na seba. Ďalšia rozlúčka sa týka všetkých variantov „vulgárneho konštruktivismu“, ktorý ako modlitebný mlynček len opakuje, že všetko je vykonštruované bez toho, aby hodnoverne zdôvodnil použitý pojem konštrukcie. (24)⁹

Na tomto pozadí Schmidt tiež pripúšťa, že sociálna a mentálna stránka poznania ako „schematizovanej a kondenzovanej skúsenosti získanej z činnosti a komunikácie“ závisí od „vnímateľnej materiálnosti“, t. j. od „spoľahlivých semiotických foriem vyjadrenia [...], ktoré umožňujú komunikáciu poznania“ (90 – 91).

Aj preto treba súhlasiť s Michaelom Titzmannom, ktorý definuje pojem „literárny systém“ tak, že „tento systém možno rekonštruovať len na základe literárnych textov“ (1991, 416), pretože

literárna história je [...] možná len vtedy, ak sa tradujú literárne texty, a mala by byť možná už aj vtedy, ak sa odovzdávajú len literárne texty, teda už aj vtedy, ak sú informácie o kultúrnych súvislostiach, ktoré môžu byť pre túto literatúru relevantné (t. j. o štruktúrach myslenia a sociálnych dejinách), k dispozícii len neúplne alebo nie sú k dispozícii vôbec. (416)

Gerhard Plumpe a Niels Werber v polovici 90. rokov 20. storočia z rovnakých dôvodov v duchu teórie systémov zredukovali vzťahy sociálneho systému literatúra k jeho sociálnym prostrediam na vzťahy vzájomného pozorovania, resp. na vzťahy text-kontext, a teda na vzťahy text-text, t. j. na obsahové vzťahy medzi literárnymi a neliterárnymi textami (ktoré nazvali „polykontextová literárna veda“: Právo nepozoruje literatúru v kazuistikách; literatúra nepozoruje právo len v kriminálnom žánri; to isté platí pre medicínu, náboženstvo atď. (1995; Plumpe 1995)

2. „TEXT“

2.1 MINIMÁLNE TEXTUALISTICKÉ POZÍCIE (MICHAEL TITZMANN, MORITZ BASSLER)

V súvislosti s teóriou a výskumnou praxou vyvodili Michael Titzmann a Moritz Baßler porovnateľné závery z dilemy literárnohistorickej praxeológie – prvý dávno pred „vedomostným“ boomom podnecovaným kultúrными štúdiami, druhý, radikálny, ktorý môžeme pozorovať najneskôr od roku 2005.

Pri pohľade späť Titzmann zhrnul:

[...] neexistuje [...] priamy [...] relevantný vzťah medzi svetmi navrhnutými literatúrou a skutočnými sociálnymi štruktúrami spoločnosti, ktorej texty prináležia: existuje len vzťah medzi literárnymi svetmi a predstavami spoločnosti o sebe samej, t. j. jej predpokladmi, jej [...] vedomosťami o sebe samej, ktoré zasa možno získať z jej teoretických textov (pričom, samozrejme, semiotické formy prezentácie týchto vedomostí opäť umožňujú vyvodiť závery o systéme vedomostí). (2010, 399)

Keďže chýba nešpekulatívna „doplňujúca metodológia, ktorá by nám umožnila z kultúrnych prejavov vyvodzovať závery o ‚skutočnosti‘“ (1991, 411), literárna história (no nielen ona) sa môže zaoberať len porovnávaním literatúry s „kultúrnym myslením a vedomosťami o ‚skutočnosti‘“ (426–427), ale nie so samotnou „skutočnosťou“:

Poznanie jednotlivcov alebo skupín možno [...] odvodiť tak z pozorovania ich neverbálneho správania a praktík, ako aj z ich výrokov. Keďže väčšina kultúr patrí minulosti, ktorá je nám prístupná predovšetkým prostredníctvom ich textov, obmedzím sa na [...] prípad produkcie, uchovávanía a šírenia vedomostí prostredníctvom textov. V skutočnosti sa poznanie istej skupiny alebo kultúry môže javiť ako priemer vedomostí jej členov: v rekonštrukcii sa javí ako priemer z určitých tried výrokov z rôznych textov. (1989, 58)

Mimochodom, už v roku 1977 sa Titzmann usiloval o textualistické fundovanie „kultúrneho poznania“ a formuloval textové kritériá relevancie kontextového poznania, ktoré reštriktívne systematizujú prechod od výpovedí z príslušných kontextov (Baßlerove „priestory rezonancie textového korpusu“) k poznávacím výpovediam v literárnych textoch – ako ich „pragmatické predpoklady“ (Titzmann 1977, 263). Teoretickou výzvou v Titzmannovom textovo-kontextovom škálovaní nie je to, že kultúrne vedomostné korpusy s rôznou sémantickou špecifickosťou alebo všeobecnosťou tvoria textovo špecifické interpretačné predpoklady, ale skôr rôzny stupeň prítomnosti či neprítomnosti, latentnosti či explicitnosti sémantiky takýchto „kultúrnych propozícií“ v rámci príslušného (literárneho alebo neliterárneho) znakového systému ako takého, teda do akej miery literárne texty na poznanie kontextu nielen odkazujú, ale takéto poznanie aj vnútorne reprezentujú.

Keďže sa však podľa Titzmanna všeobecné alebo špecificky skupinové kultúrne poznanie týka výrokov, ktoré buď „(takmer) všetci členovia kultúry považujú za pravdivé“, alebo „ich zdieľajú len členovia jednej alebo viacerých skupín“ (1991, 403), môžu niečo vedieť a považovať za pravdivé len subjekty, nie však samotné literárne a neliterárne texty, ktoré produkujú a prijímajú, nie informácie v nich uložené ako predmety poznania. Pojem poznanie by preto bolo lepšie nahradiť pojmom sémantika.¹⁰

A v roku 2005 Moritz Baßler vyjadril svoje znepokojenie nad systémovo-teoretickou paradigmatickou konceptualizáciou „textu ako komunikácie“ a odporučil tomu dôsledne čeliť textualistickým spôsobom, a síce z pohľadu „archívneho imanentného štrukturalizmu“ (361), ktorý „pojmovovo striktno oddeľuje text a komunikáciu a chápe texty nie ako časti, ale ako prostredia sociálnych systémov“ (13, 331)¹¹ a poskytuje „priestory rezonancie textového korpusu“ a podľa Baßlera „na rozdiel od Foucaulta textualistické chápanie ‚archívu‘ [...] neznamená podmienky umožňujúce produkciu výpovedí, ale skôr uložené a tradované dokumenty kultúry“ (2007a, 229).¹²

Peter V. Zima vyvodzuje v rámci iných teoretických východísk ešte radikálnejší dôsledok z tézy Theodora W. Adorna o „dvojakom charaktere umenia“ ako heteronómnom „sociálnom fakte“ a autonómnom estetickom znaku, ktorý sa zbavuje všetkých problémov atribúcie v sociológii literatúry či vedomostnej sociológii a definuje „samotnú spoločnosť ako text“ (Zima 1980, 66–87), teda „ako textovú súvislosť, ako sociolingvistickú situáciu“ (63).¹³

Podľa môjho názoru sa sociologické pripisovanie „sémantik“ (naratívov, obrazových komplexov, kolektívnych symbolík) mikro- a makrosociálnym kontextom používania a fungovania (praxe) nachádza medzi špekulatívnym „mentalistickým pripisovaním“ poznania subjektom na jednej strane a „pozitívne čitateľným archívom“ textov (Baßler 2007b, 368) ako pamäťových nosičov potenciálneho spoločensky zdieľaného poznania na druhej strane. Táto možnosť uznáva empirickú nevyhnutnosť bez toho, aby z nej robila teoretickú cnosť, t. j. bez toho, aby sa od začiatku zriekla praxeologického, spoločenskovedného modelovania.

Inými slovami, kým Schmidtova praxeológia pri historickom objekte empiricky zlyháva, Titzmannov a Baßlerov textualistický prístup nemôže zlyhať, pretože sa vyhýba akémukoľvek praxeologickému riziku, upúšťa od teórie sociálnych systémov.

2.2 TEORETICKO-TEXTOVÉ APLIKÁCIE

V tejto súvislosti je užitočné krátko sa pozrieť na variant textovej imanencie, ktorý je pre našu tému mimoriadne podnetný, ale aj problematický. Ide o prístupy, ktoré aplikujú sociálne a kognitívne teórie ako interpretácie na literárne texty, a tak súčasne predpokladajú mimézis sociálneho alebo kognície, presnejšie: mimézis praxeológie, t. j. akúsi príbuznosť s teóriou. Teórie sociálnych alebo kognitívnych systémov, podľa Petra M. Hejla „aktívnych systémov“, sa aplikujú na „pasívne systémy“, t. j. na „sociálne vytvorené konštrukty reality, pokiaľ sú uvedomované ako opisy“, ktoré generovali prax „členov“ „aktívnych systémov“ (1992, 193).

To opakovane vedie k metaforicky sociologizujúcej „hermeneutike“, napríklad keď Nina Ort postuluje: „V rámci teórie systémov možno [Kafkov] *Ortiel* [...] pozorovať ako sociálny systém“ (2002, 204). Sám som sa o to v tom istom zväzku tiež pokúsil a orálnosť a gramotnosť zobrazené v Kafkovom *Ortieli* som interpretoval pomocou „teórie symbolicky zovšeobecnených komunikačných prostriedkov“ Niklasa Luhmanna (Ort 2002). Príspevky v zborníku *Systemtheoretische Literaturwissenschaft. Begriffe – Methoden – Anwendungen* (Systémovo-teoretická literárna veda: Koncepty – metódy – aplikácie), ktorý editoval Niels Werber, tiež takmer bez výnimky pozostávajú z takýchto aplikácií Luhmannovej teórie na literárne texty,

teda na texty, ktorým sa pripisuje literárna mimézis sociálnej teórie (Werber 2011). Či sa takto metaforicky a selektívne zobrazené svety v beletristických textoch stávajú hodnovernejšími, alebo, naopak, či len ilustrujú teórie, zostáva otáznе. Ako treba hodnotiť výsledky takejto literárnej „mimézis sociálnej teórie“ a čo z nich možno vyvodíť o vzťahu medzi literatúrou a spoločnosťou, t. j. či ide o viac než o recipročný preklad literatúry do sociálnej teórie, ktorý sa vyčerpáva v obyčajnej sociologickej „hermeneutike“ bez výpovednej hodnoty, bude treba skúmať od prípadu k prípadu.¹⁴

To však bude možné len s výhradou, ktorá sa vzťahuje na „prenos vedomostí“ prostredníctvom „analogického myslenia“ vo všeobecnosti (Albrecht 2015, 275). Teda

pri analogickom uvažovaní nejde o riskantnú konfrontáciu s „otvoreným problémom“, ktorý sa človek snaží vyriešiť pomocou hypotéz a ich falzifikácie alebo potvrdenia, ale predovšetkým o snahu poskytnúť existujúcemu riešeniu [...] ďalšie možnosti aplikácie. V dôsledku toho nejde o domnienky *ex ante*, ale o prenosi *post hoc*, ktoré sa skôr riadia konzervatívnym predpokladom *potvrdenia* vedomostí než ich inováciami. Tvorba úspešných analógií teda zdôvodňuje nasledovnú subsumpciu: Predtým nevyriešený vedecký problém sa interpretuje ako špeciálny prípad etablovanej teórie. (275 – 276)¹⁵

V menšej miere to platí aj pre niektoré textové odkazy v „kognitívnej literárnej vede“, napr. pre príspevky v zborníku *Schlüsselkonzepte und Anwendungen der Kognitiven Literaturwissenschaft* (Kľúčové koncepty a aplikácie kognitívnej literárnej vedy, 2016), ktorý editovali Roman Mikuláš a Sophia Wege. Pojem „empirický“ v názve edície *Poetogenesis. Studien und Texte zur empirischen Anthropologie der Literatur* (Poetogenesis. Štúdie a texty o empirickej antropológii literatúry) odkazuje hlavne v prípade jedenásteho zväzku tejto edície predovšetkým na pozorovanie intradiegetického „času“, „vnímania“ a „komunikácie“, čiastočne s extrapoláciami recepcnej estetiky, t. j. zväčša s „antropológiou literatúry“ v *genitivus subjectivus* (literárne reprezentovanou antropológiou), niekedy aj s plynulými prechodmi k „antropológii literatúry“ v *genitivus objectivus*, v ktorej sa samotná prax literárnej komunikácie, recepcie a pôsobenia stáva predmetom kognitívneho výskumu.¹⁶

Najmä pri aplikáciách teórie systémov na text treba poznamenať, že postulovaná epifánia „sociálneho“ a procesuálneho v samotnom texte zamlčuje deficit, že textová sémantika sa musí najprv explicitne vzťahovať na dostupné semiotické suplementy takéhoto sociálneho „bytia“, takejto „praxe“.

Pierre Bourdieu a výber jeho textov *Zur Soziologie der symbolischen Formen* (O sociológii symbolických foriem, 1974), i neskoršie „teórie poľa“ a „teórie habitu“ tiež podliehajú pokušeniu mimetických skratov, keď ide o literárno-sociologický prienik do diegetiky samotných textov. To sa týka predovšetkým jeho flaubertovskej analýzy *Les règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (1992). Bourdieu v nej analyzuje literárne „pole“ na pomedzí komercializácie a „avantgardy“, ktorému vďačí za svoju produkciu a formu román Gustava Flauberta *L'Éducation sentimentale* (1869; *Citová výchova*, 1967).¹⁷

Len analýza genézy literárneho poľa, v ktorom sa Flaubertov projekt formoval, môže viesť k pravdivému pochopeniu produkčného vzorca, ktorý je základom diela, ako aj práce, ktorou ho Flaubert dokázal *implementovať do diela*, pričom v jednom a tom istom

pohybe objektivizuje túto generatívnu štruktúru a sociálnu štruktúru, ktorej je dielom. (Bourdieu 1999, 83)¹⁸

Ak však Flaubertov román sám „poskytuje všetky potrebné nástroje pre vlastnú sociologickú analýzu“ (Bourdieu 1999, 19), pretože jeho diegéta „pozoruje“ literatúru ako sociálny systém, potom sa vonkajšie sociálne a ekonomické pozície autora v danom poli homogenizujú s vnútornými pozíciami postáv v diele, a vtedy sa Flaubert sám stáva Flaubertovým analytikom, „sociológom, ktorý [...] je schopný ponúknuť sociológiu Flauberta“ (Bourdieu 1999, 9)¹⁹ a samotný autoreflexívny román pre nás nadobúda vlastnú literárno-sociologickú interpretáciu. „Štruktúra diela, ktorú odhaľuje ‚striktne imanentné‘ čítanie, t. j. štruktúru sociálneho priestoru, v ktorom sa odohrávajú Frédéricove dobrodružstvá, sa ukazuje aj ako štruktúra sociálneho priestoru, v ktorom sa nachádzal sám autor diela. (19)

Treba poznamenať, že metodologická medzera, ktorú zanechali neskoré marxistické sociálne dejiny a literárna sociológia so svojimi homológiami medzi sociálnymi, textovými a žánrovými štruktúrami (od Georga Lukácsa po „genetický štrukturalizmus“ Luciena Goldmanna), stále nie je uspokojivo preklenutá, ale mohla byť nanajvýš metaforicky prekrytá textovou alebo praxeologickou totalitou (texty ako „sociálne systémy“/spoločnosť ako „text“) alebo sociálnoteoretickou mimézis praxeologickej textovej hermeneutiky – Clifford Geertz v nej už v roku 1973 rozpoznal „istý druh sociologického esteticizmu“ (1983, 43).

3. POZNANIE

3.1 MEDZI SOCIÁLNOU TEÓRIOU (PRAXOU) A TEÓRIOU ZNAKOV (TEXTOM): HABITUS, DISKURZ, POZNANIE

Kto nechce spomínanú medzeru týmto spôsobom maskovať, musí ju vyplniť iným spôsobom. A kto chce transparentne a explicitne riešiť problém vzťahov, ktoré existujú medzi „aktívnymi systémami“ a semiotickými, teda „pasívnymi systémami“ (Hejl 1992, 193), narazí na problém každej vedomostnej sociológie. Uprednostňuje explicitne sprostredkujúce pojmy, ktoré z nej robia triviálnu sociológiu, čím sa tento problém ešte znásobuje. Tento problém sa stáva obzvlášť zreteľným vo vedomostnej sociológii Niklasa Luhmanna, ktorá sa zaobíde bez takýchto sprostredkujúcich konceptov. Keď Luhmann problém atribúcie už neformuluje „paralelne so vzťahom subjekt [poznania] – objekt [poznania]“ a nepýta sa už primárne „na nositeľov poznania“, ale na „koreláciu či kovariáciu poznania a sociálnych štruktúr“ (1980, 15) a zároveň sa zrieka hypotézy „reprezentačnej funkcie poznania“ (1995, 159), nerieši síce problém atribúcie praxe a sémantiky, ale aspoň sa vzdáva skratových pseudoriešení. V tomto ohľade Luhmannova vedomostná sociológia, ako to v roku 1999 vyjadril Oliver Jahraus, systematicky a bez terminologického rozruchu rozpracúva „teoretický bod bifurkácie“ „sémantiky“ a individuálnej či kolektívnej „praxe“ (1999, 265).

Luhmannov nástupca Rudolf Stichweh (2000) reaguje na tento problém tak, že chápe rozdiel medzi dvoma systémovými referenciami „sémantika a sociálna štruktúra“ ako optickú ilúziu dvoch opisov toho istého stavu vecí, takže sémantiku a sociálnu štruktúru nemožno pozorovať oddelene. Obe treba pozorovať a rekonštruovať rovnako, s použitím vhodných, t. j. odlišných nástrojov pozorovania (te-

órií), aj keď, ako už bolo spomenuté, z empirických dôvodov je často k dispozícii len sémantická stránka sociálnej a kognitívnej praxe, t. j. tá, ktorá je uložená v textových zdrojoch.

Luhmannova snaha prejsť od sémantiky – od konštrukcií významov, vrátane literárnych –, k praxi, však predpokladá „reprezentačné“ chápanie poznania; už v roku 1984 Luhmann definoval sémantiku ako tú časť kultúry, ktorá funguje ako „zásoba tém“ a je „uchovávaná špeciálne na komunikačné účely“ (224). Táto oblasť obsahuje podľa Luhmanna (1997) „významové šablóny“ definované ako „hodné zachovania“ a je uložená v textoch, ktoré boli „vytvorené na rozpoznanie a viacnásobné použitie“ a „koordinujú sebazpozorovanie, ktoré im vyhovuje“ (1997, 887), t. j. uchovávajú a cirkulujú autodeskripcie spoločností ako sociálne, niekedy skupinovo špecifické poznania. Poznanie teda funguje ako sprostredkujúci pojem medzi uloženými informáciami a ich spoločenskou a komunikačnou funkciou ako zmysluplných vedomostných ponúk. Skutočná výzva spočíva v otázke, čo presne táto sémantika „reprezentuje“ a čo z nej selektívne cirkuluje a čo sa komunikuje v tej ktorej historickej situácii. Je jasné, že sémantiky schopné nadobudnúť podobu vedomostí cirkulujú aj sociálne v médiu literatúry, ale je nepravdepodobné, že ich obsah spoľahlivo odráža ich sociálne funkcie a predpoklady a podmienky ich produkcie.

Tiež treba poznamenať, že ak poznanie funguje ako sprostredkujúci pojem medzi sémantikou a komunikáciou, textom a praxou, a ak sa v ňom už stretáva mentalisticko-kognitívny aspekt (subjekt A pozná obsah B) s aspektom textovo-sémantickým (text C sprostredkúva obsah B ako poznateľnú informáciu), potom treba byť opät' opatrný: Ako jánusovský pojem osciluje už sám jeho významový rozsah medzi sociálnou referenciou a referenciou znaku. To isté platí aj o známych pojmoch ako „habitus“ (Bourdieu) a „diskurz“ (Foucault). Zakrývajú spomínanú bifurkáciu sociálnej komunikácie a individuálneho poznania na jednej strane a etablovanej sémantiky, t. j. permanentne archivovaných komunikačných ponúk, na strane druhej, čím hrozí, že sa bude ďalej zahmlievať problém ich sprostredkovania.

Ešte raz Pierre Bourdieu: Vytváraním homológií medzi sociálnymi pozíciami a symbolickými štruktúrami v poli ekonomického a symbolického „kapitálu“ určujú „habituálne dispozície“ od štruktúry závislú, t. j. štruktúrovanú, „prax“ rôznych životných štýlov (štýlov správania, konania, produkcie, písania, vnímania a vkusu).

Keďže [habitus] predstavuje nadobudnutý systém schém produkcie, všetky myšlienky, vnemy a činy [...] môžu byť voľne produkované prostredníctvom habitu, ktorý sa nachádza v rámci hraníc špecifických významov jeho vlastnej produkcie. Habitus kontroluje štruktúra, ktorá ho vytvorila, teda prax, a síce nie v koľajach mechanického determinizmu, ale prostredníctvom obmedzení a hraníc, ktoré sú od začiatku stanovené pre jeho objavy. (1987, 102 – 103)

A Bourdieu ďalej pokračuje o „produkcii systému praktík alebo diel“, t. j. štruktúr diel (vrátane sémantiky) a praktík produkcie a recepcie, ktoré s nimi môžu súvisieť:

Praktiky [sa snažia] reprodukovať [...] zákonitosti obsiahnuté v podmienkach, v ktorých produkovaný základ ich produkcie, a [pritom] sa celkom prispôsobujú požiadavkám objektívnych možností situácie [...], ako ich definujú kognitívne a motivačné štruktúry konštitutívne pre habitus, [...]. Dajú sa [...] vysvetliť len vtedy, ak sa usúvŕstňajú sociálne

podmienky, v ktorých vznikol habitus, čo ich vytvoril, a sociálne podmienky, v ktorých sa uplatňuje, t. j. ak sa prostredníctvom vedeckej práce zistí vzťah medzi týmito dvoma stavmi sociálneho sveta, ktorý habitus dosahuje v praxi a prostredníctvom praxe tým, že ho skrýva. (104 – 105)

Cirkulačne vyskladané vety sa rekurzívne točia okolo habitu ako dispozitívu, ako štruktúry, ktorá umožňuje a zároveň obmedzuje prax, a ako praxe, ktorá zasa štruktúruje, generuje štruktúry (analogicky ku generatívnemu vzťahu medzi langue a parole, medzi kompetenciou a performanciou). Podľa môjho názoru však zakrývajú skutočnosť, že priepasť medzi štruktúrou a praxou nemožno takto uzavrieť a že ich vzájomne generatívny, štruktúrujúci a štruktúrovaný vzťah (usúvšťaženie) iba simuluje, potvrdzuje procesualnosť habitu. Znakové štruktúry existujú vďaka praktikám ich produkcie a umožňujú následnú komunikačnú prax, ktorá opäť vedie k trvalým štruktúram významu a symbolu – ad infinitum.

Skutočnosti, že v tomto bifurkačnom mieste sémantiky a individuálnej či kolektívnej praxe sa nachádzajú aj ďalšie sprostredkovacie pojmy rôzneho pôvodu, sa tu môžeme dotknúť len stručne – „systém myslenia“, „štýl myslenia“, „kolektív myslenia“ (u Karla Mannheima a Ludwika Flecka) a tiež pojem kultúra majú jednak reštriktívnu, de pragmaticizovanú zložku, ktorá sa vzťahuje na artefakty a symbolické štruktúry, a jednak dynamickú, pragmatickú zložku, ktorá zahŕňa spoločensky zmysluplné (napr. morálne) konanie, ako aj kognitívne postoje či praktiky všedného dňa.²⁰ V každom prípade, aby sa nestratila heuristická hodnota takýchto kompaktných pojmov, treba sa pokúsiť o explicitnú detailnú analýzu oboch referencií samostatne namiesto ich používania na označenie oboch súčasne.²¹

Ako je známe, Michel Foucault v knihe *L'archéologie du savoir* (1969; čes. *Archeologie vědění*, 2002) dáva do súvisu dva jánusovské pojmy, a to poznanie a diskurz.

Úkol, který spočívá v pojímání diskursu už ne jako souboru znaků (označujících prvků, jež odkazují k odkazům anebo k reprezentacím), nýbrž jako praktik, které systematicky vytvářejí objekty, o nichž mluví. Diskursy jsou samozřejmě tvořeny znaky; avšak to, jak pracují, je víc než jen užívání těchto znaků pro označování věci. Právě toto *více* je činí neredukovatelnými na jazyk a mluvu. Toto „více“ je tedy třeba odkrýt a popsat. (78 – 79)

Na tomto pozadí je poznanie generatívne definované ako to, o čom možno hovoriť v diskurznej praxi, teda o určitých oblastiach a objektoch, ktoré táto prax konštituuje, pričom „vědění je také prostor, v němž může subjekt zaujmout pozici dovolující mu mluvit o objektech, se kterými se v diskursu pracuje“ (272). Poznatky psychiatrie 19. storočia teda nie sú súhrnom toho, čo sa považovalo za pravdivé, ale súhrnom správania, zvláštností a odchýlok, o ktorých možno hovoriť v psychiatrickom diskurze. Podobne ako v prípade habitu a diskurzu sa generatívne (štrukturalistické) myšlienkové formy produkcie a umožnenia, dispozitívu, očividne prejavujú ako mimoriadne vhodné na rýchle vyplnenie medzery v spomínanom bifurkačnom mieste.

Naproti tomu aplikačne orientované reformulácie diskurzu zo strany literárnej vedy a spoločenských vied majú tendenciu zdôrazňovať jeho textovú a sémantickú stránku. Michael Titzmann napríklad v roku 1991 definuje diskurz ako systém, ktorý reguluje

produkcii poznania [...] [a ako] systém myslenia a argumentácie [...], ktorý je vyabstrahovaný zo súboru textov a ktorý je charakterizovaný po prvé predmetom reči, po druhé zákonitosťami reči [a] po tretie [...] vzťahmi k iným diskurzom [...]. Literatúra nie je diskurz, ale môže využívať rôzne diskurzy a integrovať ich do seba. (403)

Kým diskurz spätne spája s jeho textovo-analyticky rekonštruovateľnou sémanticou zložkou (vyabstrahovanou zo súboru textov) a zároveň ho vymedzuje praxeologicky, so zreteľom na konanie a poznanie subjektov (myslenie, argumentovanie), je poznanie na druhej strane len nepriamo späté s komunikačnou praxou aktérov a mysliteľov a jeho obsahy, z ktorých táto prax vyberá, sa pripisujú sémantike textu. Prechod alebo referenčná cesta od textových (korpusových) výpovedí (sémantiky) k sociálne komunikovateľnému poznaniu ako dvojčlennému vzťahu medzi subjektmi poznania a jeho obsahmi bez ohľadu na to, či sa tieto považujú za pravdivé alebo nie, sa teda uskutočňuje prostredníctvom diskurzno-teoretického premostenia, obchádzkou, ktorá plní rovnakú funkciu ako Bourdieuov habitus ako dispozitív a modus operandi.

Dočasná interdisciplinárna popularita „výskumu poznania“, „teórií poznania“ a „dejín poznania“ približne do roku 2015 spôsobila, ako je dobre známe, módný rozmach pojmu poznanie v prázdnych formulkách. Za túto módu, ako sa zdá, vďačí tento pojem práve svojej jánusovskej funkcii. V dôsledku toho začal fungovať len ako *petitio principii*, ako zaklínadlo istého výskumného programu. Uvedený trend skôr znemožnil vyhranenie záujmov poznania vedomostnej sociológie – najmä pod záštitou kultúrnych štúdií. Uvediem aspoň dva príklady:

Ralph Klausnitzer (2008) syntetizuje odkazy na znakový a sociálny systém poznania namiesto toho, aby ich dôsledne rozlišoval v zmysle vedomostnej sociológie. Poznanie definuje v troch pokusoch takto:

Poznanie [možno] konceptualizovať ako súhrn odôvodnených (alebo zdôvodniteľných) vedomostí, ktoré sa získavajú a odovzdávajú v rámci kultúrnych systémov prostredníctvom pozorovania a komunikácie, resp. prostredníctvom skúseností a procesov učenia, a poskytujú reprodukovateľnú zásobu možností myslenia, orientácie a konania. Poznanie je však viac než len (neustále sa meniaci) súhrn uložených a vyhľadateľných vedomostí, ale je vždy aj procesom [...]. [...] Poznanie teda zahŕňa každodenné vedomosti a produkty epistemologicky konštituovaných vied, ako aj implicitne regulované praktiky (*tacit knowledge*) a explicitné pravidlá inštitucionalizovaných a autoreflexívnych sociálnych systémov. Stručne povedané: Poznanie je dynamickým súhrnom všetkých tých procesov a výsledkov, v ktorých sa formujú a realizujú pravidlami riadené spôsoby zaobchádzania s dobre podloženými poznatkami, ktoré nadobúdajú účinnosť a menia sa na základe symbolických poriadkov a technológií. (12 – 13)

Podobne definuje „kultúrne poznanie“ Birgit Neumann vo svojej štúdii „Kulturelles Wissen und Literatur“ (Kultúrne poznanie a literatúra) z roku 2006 ako

celkové množstvo vedomostí, ktoré cirkulujú v kultúre a ktoré sa vytvárajú, získavajú a odovzdávajú prostredníctvom komunikácie a skúseností. Poskytuje reprodukovateľnú zásobu kultúrne možných vzorcov myslenia, orientácie a konania, ktoré sa v príslušnom kultúrnom rámci považujú za spoločensky platné a hodnotné. Kultúrne poznanie je radikálne rozptýlené vo všetkých kultúrnych objektivizáciách a činnostiach – vo vedeckých

traktátoch, ako aj v každodenných praktikách a poverách, v obradoch a rituáloch, ako aj v kánonických textoch. (43)

3.2 ČO „VIE“ LITERATÚRA? ZA VEDOMOSTNÚ SOCIOLOGIU LITERÁRNEJ SÉMANTIKY

Čo teda vie literatúra o svojom spoločensko-praktickom prostredí, o svojom poli pôsobenia a o mimoliterárnom, teda o svojom kultúrnom (sociálnom a semiotickom), kontexte? A je vôbec možné na základe textových (korpusových) analytických zistení vysloviť hypotézu o spoločenských funkciách či výkonoch napríklad určitej symboliky, určitého žánru alebo literatúry a čo tieto funkcie následne vypovedajú o sociálnych štruktúrach literárnych systémov a ich funkciách pre príslušnú spoločnosť? Nesnaží sa interpretácia literatúry ako sociálno-historického dokumentu (v zmysle Foucaultovej archeológie poznania) len zakryť jej nevyhnutný sebareferenčný charakter „monumentu“? Vytvára teda literatúra ako systém znakov tiež len implicitné sebapozorovania či autodeskripcie, alebo jej zmeny možno interpretovať aspoň ako reakciu na zmeny v spoločenskom systéme? Akú pramennú hodnotu má literatúra pre takéto otázky? Aké vzťahy možno predpokladať medzi stavmi sémantického systému spoločnosti (alebo jedného z jej subsystémov) a stavmi sociálneho systému?²²

A napokon, môže ísť azda len o uznanie skutočnosti, že sociálno-ekonomickú genézu literatúry, jej spoločenské prostredie z nej sotva možno mimeticky odčítať jedna k jednej, že literárne príspevky k autodeskripcii spoločnosti neponúkajú mimetické zobrazenie jej reálneho spoločenského vonkajšieho sveta, že literatúra aj tam, kde reprezentuje svet, primárne hovorí len o tom, ako simuluje vonkajšiu referenciu. A že reprezentačné vzťahy by sa nemali zamieňať s kauzálnymi determináciami, že účinky a dôsledky literárneho konania a komunikácie – teda literárne texty – nemusia nevyhnutne odrážať príčiny a podmienky sociálnej praxe, ktorej vďaka za svoj vznik, a že účinky neodrážajú len svoje príčiny?²³

Literárne konštrukcie fiktívnej spoločnosti preto treba analyzovať predovšetkým ako autodeskripcie, sebapozorovanie literatúry ako súčasť spoločnosti, a nie len ako mimézis, teda ako napodobňovanie spoločnosti. Literatúra predovšetkým vie niečo o sebe, nie o svojom skutočnom prostredí, a práve toto nepriame poznanie o sebe samej treba interpretovať sociologicky. O tom, do akej miery potom takéto implicitné autodeskripcie literatúry fungujú ako autodeskripcie spoločnosti, ktoré v médiu literatúry uvádzajú do obehu určité diskurzy a sémantiky, nemožno rozhodnúť len na základe pozorovania literatúry.²⁴

Možnosť vedomostnej sociológie, ktorá spolu s Luhmannom odhaľuje a vyostruje problém atribúcie medzi praxou a textom, medzi spoločnosťou a literárnou sémantikou namiesto toho, aby ho prekrývala, spočíva v tom, že sa najprv daný problém pokúša na viacerých úrovniach štruktúrovať mikro- a makrosociologicky, akoby táto možnosť *netrpela* nedostatkom sociologicky pozorovateľných údajov, akoby *nebola* nútená nahrádzať ich textovými údajmi. Interpretácia údajov získaných z textových korpusov ako potenciálne pravdivých sémantik schopných predstavovať sociálne poznanie by sa za predpokladov vedomostnej sociológie v žiadnom prípade nemala

uskutočňovať bez sociálno-teoreticky rozpracovaného praxeologického referenčného rámca, ktorý sociálnu komunikáciu a individuálnu a kolektívnu kogníciu (poznanie) v zásade uznáva ako doplnky textov a zároveň ich interpretuje ako nevyhnutné doplnky sociálnej praxe (sociálny rozmer).

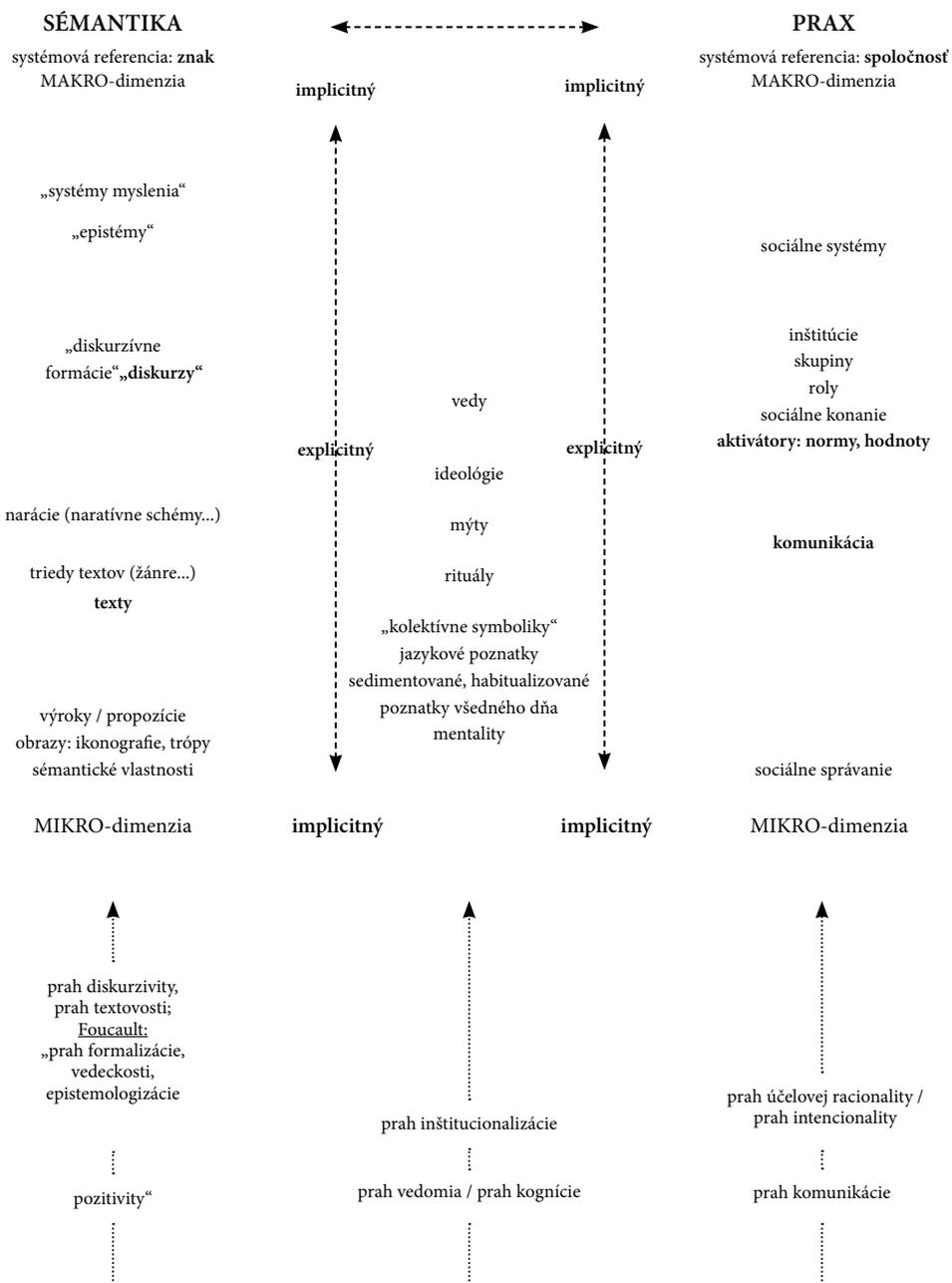
Nadmerné zovšeobecňovanie jednej z dvoch strán rozdielu medzi „písmom“ a „komunikáciou“ sa tak javia ako hierarchizujúci, inkluzívny a homogenizujúci pokus o usporiadanie, ktorý sa snaží zrušiť ich nezavŕšiteľnú diferenciu na úkor referencie sociálneho systému alebo referencie znakového systému a prekonať vzájomné obmedzenie ich nárokov na platnosť. Takéto apropriácie sú nahradené heterarchicky otvorenou mapou nezávislých atribučných dimenzií a pojmových radov – od príslušnej mikroúrovne až po makroúroveň. Mimochodom, táto mapa (obr. 3) odkazuje okrem iného na úrovne atribúcie, ktoré navrhol už Karl Mannheim. Ako jeden z klasikov modernej vedomostnej sociológie (popri Maxovi Schelerovi) – pripomíname diela *Ideologie und Utopie* (Ideológia a utópia, 1929) a *Das konservative Denken* (Konzervatívne myslenie, 1927) – už na začiatku diferencoval takéto referenčné cesty v jemnej škále vnútorných a vonkajších referencií, znakových a spoločenských referencií textov, pričom vonkajší pohľad možno – ako doplnok – odvodiť zo zdrojových textov (Mannheim 1970b, 394 a n., 406).²⁵

Takýto prístup bez váhania uznáva, že literatúra sama nič „nevie“, ale že v Luhmannovom zmysle uchováva sémantiku, resp. informácie o spoločnosťou poznateľných výrokochoch a uchováva ich tak, že sú pripravené na následné komunikácie,²⁷ a svoje zistenia sa pokúša interpretovať v rámci vedomostnej sociológie. Sociológia literárneho poznania sa však stáva vedomostnou sociológiou literárnej sémantiky; jej východiskom nie je predpokladaný status poznania literárnej sémantiky, ale, naopak, rekonštrukcia literárne uloženej sémantiky a estetizovanej ponuky zmyslu. A o ich funkcii ako komunikačne prepojitelného, spoločensky atribuovateľného poznania nemožno rozhodnúť bez ďalších dát, spravidla bez dát vo forme textov.

Medzi „epistémou“ a „doxou“, validovaným poznaním a názorom, vedou a poznaním všedného dňa, externe uloženými poznatkami a implicitne procedurálnymi vedomosťami (praxou) prechádza poznanie všetkými mediálnymi stupňami externalizácie a internalizácie a stupňami emergencie medzi dvoma neredukovateľnými referenčnými osami od subjektu k sociálnemu systému a je viazané na nároky pravdy alebo istoty (stratégie argumentácie a legitimizácie) definované špecificky pre každý sociálny systém alebo skupinu. To v konečnom dôsledku platí pre všetky typy poznania na všetkých agregáčnych úrovniach – od individuálne nevysloveného každodenného poznania, ktoré sa takmer nikdy nezapisuje a zriedkavo sa dostáva do sféry spoločensky archivovanej sémantiky, cez „kolektívne symboliky“ (podľa Jürgena Linka) a percepčné stereotypy až po trvalo archivované alebo tradičné, napríklad mytologické naratívne a interpretačné vzory a vedecké poznanie, ktoré je zasa zvyčajne len selektívne zovšeobecnené a má tendenciu cirkulovať v rámci skupín.

Literárne texty, žánre a druhy sú teda schopné nielen zachovávať a odovzdávať svoje ponuky významov, sveta a sebainterpretácie – t. j. svoj príspevok k autodeskripcii spoločnosti – v určitých momentoch a v konkrétnych spoločenských podmienkach, ale ich aj komunikačne prepojitelným spôsobom stabilizovať ako spoločenské

POZNANIE / VEDOMOSTI



Obr. 3²⁶

poznanie. Týmto spôsobom sa potenciálne stávajú hybnou silou tvorby poznania. Produkujú nielen informácie o samotnom médiu literatúry – poznanie samotnej literárnej fikcie –, ale prispievajú aj k tomu, aby sa toto poznanie šírilo aj mimo literatúry ako literárne nešpecifické „poznanie predmetov prehovoru“ a oblastí reality a nachádzalo si cestu do iných diskurzov (napr. vedeckého, filozofického). Túto teoretickú možnosť nenazývam – je v tom jemný rozdiel – sociológiou literárneho „poznania“, lebo texty uchovávajú informácie, ale nič „nevedia“, ale sociologickou interpretáciou literárnej sémantiky.

Úlohou literárnej vedy, ktorá sleduje záujmy vedomostnej sociológie, je teda predovšetkým splniť si svoju domácu úlohu špecifickú pre daný odbor, t. j. precízne rekonštruovať príslušné znakové systémy – narácie, sémantiku, obraznosť, symboliku –, ale bez toho, aby sa kvôli často skromnej dátovej a pramennej situácii o „reálnej“ spoločenskej praxi komunikačných prepojení zriekla nároku interpretovať zistenia analýz textových korpusov či diskurzov z hľadiska vedomostnej sociológie. Na mape možných referencií sociálneho systému archivovanej sémantiky však môže zostať veľa bielych miest: nemali by sa ani zahalovať, ani ignorovať, ani by sa v dôsledku toho nemalo viac spochybňovať to, čo označujú ako prázdne miesta. A ak ich možno doplniť textami, t. j. odkázať na textové zdroje, tie by sa zasa nemali zamieňať so spoločenskými praktikami, ktorým vďaka za svoju existenciu a ktoré napriek tomu skôr nahrádzajú, než zobrazujú.

To treba pripísať na vrub nielen niektorým starším variantom štrukturalistickej a postštrukturalistickej sebestačnosti, ale najmä krátkozrakým analogizujúcim hypotázam, t. j. tak aplikáciám sociálnych teórií na texty, ako i znakovo-teoretickým apropriaciám praxeologických záujmov o poznanie.

Z nemeckého originálu preložil Roman Mikuláš

POZNÁMKY

¹ Nasledujúce vychádza z vlastných predchádzajúcich prác: Ort 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2011. K histórii importu sociologickej teórie do literárnej vedy pozri Schönert 2007.

² Pozri najnovšie Amlinger 2021.

³ Mimochodom, aj úvod do sociológie literatúry autoriek Christine Magerski a Christy Karpenstein-Eßbach (2019) sa takmer výlučne zameriava na spoločensko-demografické aspekty literatúry ako sociálnej a komunikačnej praxe. Iba v rozsahu ôsmich strán pod vágnym názvom „Ästhetischer Wert im Spannungsgefüge außerästhetischer Phänomene: Ideale, Diskurse, Wissen“ (Estetická hodnota v napätí medzi mimoestetickými javmi: Ideály, diskurzy, poznanie; 92 a n.) uvažujú aj o atribútoch znakového systému spoločnosti (s odvolaním sa na analýzy „kolektívnej symboliky“ Jürgena Linka a na pojem „diskurzu“ Michela Foucaulta).

⁴ Pozri tiež „pät téz“ (Sarasin 2003, 58 – 60).

⁵ „Il n’y a pas de hors-texte [...]. [...] il n’y a jamais eu que des suppléments, des significations substitutives qui n’ont pu surgir que dans une chaîne de renvois différentiels, le « réel » ne survenant, ne s’ajoutant qu’en prenant sens à partir d’une trace et d’un appel de supplément, etc.“ (Derrida 1974, 274 – 275) Pozn. prekladateľa: Derrida, Jacques: *Gramatológia* (1999, prel. Martin Kanovský. Bratislava: Archa).

⁶ O vzájomnom dopĺňaní písma a komunikácie pozri Ort 2021, 483 – 485.

- ⁷ „[...] Besinnungslos und bleich / So fanden ihn am andern Tag die Priester / [...] / Was er allda gesehen und erfahren, / Hat seine Zunge nie bekannt. [...] / [...], / Ihn riß ein tiefer Gram zum frühen Grabe.“ (Bezo zmyslu a bledého / Tak ho kňazi našli na druhý deň / Čo tam videl a zažil, / Jeho jazyk nikdy nevyriekol. / Hlboký smútok ho odniesol do skorého hrobu.)
- ⁸ Fúzie úrovní a falošné závery tohto druhu realizuje obzvlášť radikálne Gebhard Rusch (1987).
- ⁹ K Luhmannovmu konštruktivismu ako „realistickej teórii poznania“ pozri okrem toho Lohmann 1994.
- ¹⁰ Definícia „kultúrneho poznania“ u Titzmanna (1977, 268) znie abstraktnejšie a bez aktérov, ale opäť antropomorfizuje (celkové množstvo toho, čo kultúra, vedome alebo nevedome, explicitne vyjadrené alebo implicitne nevyjadrené, predpokladá o „realite“ a „považuje za pravdivé“).
- ¹¹ „Archív“ ako „rezonančná komora“.
- ¹² Podobne Baßler 2007b, 355 – 369.
- ¹³ Por. aj Zima 1986 a Bachmann-Medick 1996.
- ¹⁴ Pre osobitný prípad, keď sa teória literatúry sama vpisuje do literárnych textov, pozri Schilling 2015, hlavne 628 – 632.
- ¹⁵ Na príklade prírodných vied a podľa Karin Knorr-Cetina.
- ¹⁶ Obe perspektívy spája napríklad Rüdiger Zymner (2016). Pozri predovšetkým Eibl 2004. K rozdielu medzi dvoma variantmi „antropológie literatúry“ pozri Ort – Lukas 2011, 4 – 6.
- ¹⁷ Pozn. prekladateľa: Flaubert, Gustave: *Citová výchova* (1967, prel. Soňa Hollá, Bratislava: Tatran).
- ¹⁸ Pozri aj Magerski 2004 a k ranému novoveku Viala 1985. Žiaľ, povrchný náčrt problému v Joch – Wolf 2005 zaostáva za jeho teoretickými možnosťami. Por. aj Wolf 2005
- ¹⁹ K Flaubertovmu románu pozri Bourdieu 1999, 19 – 79.
- ²⁰ Roland Posner hovorí dokonca o „mentefaktoch“ („Mentefakten“; pozri Posner 2008, 53). Posner upozorňuje aj na „mentálnu kultúru ako súbor konvenčných kódov“, ktorá – podobne ako „habitus“ a „poznanie“ – sprostredkúva sociálny systém („spoločnosť ako súbor používateľov znakov“) a „materiálnu kultúru“ ako „súbor textov“ (54).
- ²¹ K pojmu kultúra pozri Ort 2008, 25 – 35.
- ²² Pozri už Ort 1992, hlavne 414.
- ²³ Pozri opäť Reckwitz 2000, 542 – 643. Reckwitz zdôrazňuje nehomogénnu „interferenciu“ výrazových vzťahov, „logickú závislosť“ a „kauzálnu konštitúciu“ (647) a ich „interpretačnú nedeterminovanosť“ (pozri 617 – 643) a žiada „dôkladnejšiu reflexiu“ a zároveň „radikálnejšie spracovanie otázky ich vzťahu“ (637).
- ²⁴ Eva Horn kritizuje ako „slepú škvrnu“ literárnej sociológie „predstavu o jednoduchej – či už symptomatickej, alebo tematickej – čitateľnosti literárnych textov. Táto predstava vychádza z predpokladu, že jazyk literatúry [...] je jazykom (neliterárnej) sociálnej komunikácie“ (2008, 366). To, že sa tento povestný skrat čoraz viac vníma ako falošný záver, je zrejme aj zásluhou postštrukturalistických intervencií. Sama Horn argumentuje v prospech diskurzno-analytickej a „vedomostno-poetologickej“ možnosti (371 – 376).
- ²⁵ Pozri už „tri druhy zmyslu“ in Mannheim 1970a, 103 – 129.
- ²⁶ Pozri tiež schematické znázornenie Ort 1992, 424.
- ²⁷ Pozn. prekladateľa: Luhmannov pojem „Anschlusskommunikationen“.

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ALEX GOLDIȘ – ȘTEFAN BAGHIU (eds.): Translations and Semi-Peripheral Cultures. Worlding the Romanian Novel in the Modern Literary System

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The publication *Translation and Semi-Peripheral Cultures: Worlding the Romanian Novel in the Modern Literary System*, edited by Alex Goldiș and Ștefan Baghiu from the Lucian Blaga University in Sibiu, brings together twelve studies that deal mainly with (but are not limited to) different aspects of the translation of the novel. While the title of the collection suggests that the Romanian novel is the central topic, it also offers studies on foreign-language novels translated (or in some cases untranslated) into Romanian, as well as on poetry and literary anthologies. In terms of content and editorship, it is a continuation of *The Culture of Translation in Romania/Übersetzungskultur und Literaturübersetzen in Rumänien* from 2018 (reviewed in issue 4/2019 of *World Literature Studies*).

The idea of the volume is based on the Goethean premise that “national literatures exhaust their resources when they refuse contact with other cultures”. It also draws on David Damrosch’s concept of the “fertilization” (15) of domestic literary production by translation, which according to Goldiș and Baghiu has not historically been reflected in the way that histories of Romanian literature have been conceived and carried out. For the editors, the novel is the most suitable genre for a translational reading of Romanian literature, mainly because of the dynamics of its development, but also because of its capacity to trigger changes in the literary system. Moreover, translation transforms the novel into a privileged space of negotiation between the local and the in-

ternational. However, according to Goldiș and Baghiu, the role of translation in the formation of the national literary system has been studied unsystematically and without adequate tools of analysis in Romania. Thus, in the space of this book, the methodological tools of descriptive translatology, quantitative literary studies (distant reading, macroanalysis and quantitative approach) and concepts of world literature are used by the individual authors to question not only the role of translation in the Romanian literary system, but also the dependence of Romanian literature on translations and the national policies regarding translation in specific time frames, the defense mechanisms of the target culture against cultural hegemony, the principles of selection, literary assimilation and integration, resistance to certain subgenres, the function of translation in specific moments of the development of Romanian literature. In doing so, several authors refer in their quantitative research to the existing and monumental dictionary works produced by the literary studies institutes of the Romanian Academy of Sciences: *Dicționarul cronologic al romanului tradus în România de la origini la 1989* (The chronological dictionary of the translated novel from its origins to 1989, Doru Burlacu et al. 2005), *Dicționarul cronologic al romanului tradus în România: 1990–2000* (The chronological dictionary of the translated novel: 1990–2000, Ioan Milea et al. 2017), *Bibliografia relațiilor literaturii române cu literaturile străine în periodice: 1919–1944* (The dictionary of the relationships of

the Romanian literature with foreign literatures, Ana-Maria Brezuleanu et al. 1997–2009).

The four chapters in the first part, entitled “The Uneven Exchange within World Literature”, offer variations on the fundamental findings of the contemporary literary historiography and translation studies presented here. In particular, there is the intriguing case of the organic presence of an untranslated foreign work in the receiving culture. Influenced by Franco Moretti’s metaphor of “waves” for imitations and translations circulating in the system of world literature, Ștefan Baghiu’s chapter “Exaptive Translations: The Change in Function of Imported Novels over Time” adapts the theory of evolutionary-biological exaptation to the refunctionalization of (literary) works. Taking the novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as an example, he shows actualizing moments in the interpretation of the text that shifted the political message to a level acceptable, for example, to the demands of socialist realism. Another kind of “exaptation” in the Romanian literary system, according to the author, is represented by the imitations of narrative techniques from the works of Honoré de Balzac and Marcel Proust, which contributed abundantly to the modernization of the Romanian novel. However, these works were only translated after the originals had already been imitated and discussed by Romanian authors and critics, and the translations were thus read through the functions attributed to them by means of the imitations.

In the chapter “Writing Transnational Histories of ‘National’ Literatures: Baudelaire and Proust as Romanian Authors”, Andrei Terian comes up with a bold concept. Starting from the assumptions of the “transnational turn” in comparative studies, he first argues for the legitimacy of “national” literatures as a subject of literary scholarship, but on the assumption that each literature will also be considered implicitly transnational. In contrast to David Damrosch’s concept of world literature as literature circulating in translation, howev-

er, Terian offers the case of two French authors whose works had a “catalytic” effect on the Romanian literary field in the originals even without translations, and, moreover, without their unanimously positive reception by Romanian critics. On this basis, Terian proposes a redefinition of the established definition of world literature: “The factor that truly differentiates (and canonizes) them [authors] is not the extent to which an author becomes known in as many cultures as possible; it is the degree in which a writer is assimilated by various foreign cultures into their most intimate recesses. [...] What is, then, world literature? It is – at least from a certain point of view – the canon of the ‘catalytic authors’ from various national literatures. Or, to put it differently, it is the group of ‘transnational’ authors who succeeded in becoming ‘national’ authors in other literatures than those that produced them” (54).

Alex Goldiș’s chapter “Import and Translation: The Infrastructure of the Romanian Novel Market in the Twentieth Century” presents the results of statistical research on the impact of imported foreign novel production on Romanian literary production in the 20th century. He uses the works of selected authors (Tolstoy, Proust, Dostoevsky, Gide) to show that cultural importation does not happen only through translations and “that hegemonic relationships between literatures constitute the main prerequisite of cultural exchange” (57). In doing so, he disputes Franco Moretti’s claims and the results of descriptive translation studies because they do not take into account other cultural interferences besides the existing data on translated works: “The fact that most of nineteenth- and twentieth-century intellectuals saw Romanian literature as partaking [of] the same ecosystem as French literature triggered the mechanism of import without the mediation of translation” (71–72). However, Goldiș does not explain in his quantitative analysis whether he reached specific numbers and names on the basis of the frequency of occurrence in particular dictionary work, nor how he weighted them.

In his chapter “Transnational Networks, Translational Canons: Foreign Literatures in the Romanian Interwar Periodical Culture”, Emanuel Modoc tries to establish, on the basis of network theory, the translational network in Romanian interwar periodicals. Lacking digitized data, he makes use of the aforementioned lexicographical tools. He first familiarizes himself with his “dataset”, then separates and interprets the data according to the criterion of quantity and through network analysis, and determines the visibility (“popularity”) of the author on the basis of the translations, and the “prestige” of the author according to the number of articles and discussions of his or her literary work. Finally, he proposes a theoretical model which he calls “translation canon formation” in “peripheral” culture and its role in the development of local cultural production. Interestingly, the author raises the issue of “inter-literary relations” (76), but seems unaware that the term “interliterary relations” was developed in another “semi-peripheral” culture, by the Slovak literary scholar Dionýz Ďurišin.

The second part of the volume, entitled “Market Selection and Inter-peripheral Imports”, opens with Adriana Stan’s chapter “The Rise of Realist Novel in Romanian Literature: Translations, Foreign Models, Ideologies”. In it, the author highlights the different ideological trends in Romanian literary criticism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, their role in the reception of realist literature from two “centers” – France and Russia – and the ways in which they were rejected, incorporated or imitated in the domestic environment. In doing so, she shows how proponents of both autochthonism and populist ideas tended to lean towards the Russian realist model (often read and promoted, but also popularized by French or German translation) to varying degrees. This was largely out of a so-called “colonization anxiety” (a term used by Andrei Terian in *The Culture of Translation in Romania*) toward the historically dominant French literary model. Stan draws attention to the fact that translations

have in many ways substituted for the shortcomings of ideologized literary movements, as well as for the hybridization of both social conditions (emerging capitalism mixed with patriarchal structures) and the art forms of realism.

Stan’s chapter is followed by Daiana Gărdan’s contribution “A Literary Form and Its Peripheral Uses: (French) Naturalism in Romania and Brazil”, where the author draws on circulating translations of Émile Zola, an important author in discussions of Romanian understanding of realism, to construct a genre model whose reach she traces in literatures as distant and “peripheral” as those she considers Brazilian and Romanian. By comparing two early 20th-century works (Euclid da Cunha’s *Os Sertões*, 1902, and Liviu Rebreanu’s *Răscoala*, 1932), she shows the local remodeling of the main ideas of naturalism, which served these authors as a convenient means of legitimizing the modernization of “peripheral” agrarian and rural communities.

Ana Țăranu and Claudiu Turcuș’s chapter, “Exceptionally Dysfunctional: The Reception of American Literary and Political Imagery in the Interwar Romanian Press”, uses the delayed reception of American socially oriented literature in leftist periodicals of the interwar period as an example. At that time the American literary tradition was seen not only as an alternative to the Russian one but was considered as equally young or “peripheral” as the Romanian. What was created by American leftist movements and art at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries was only adopted by the Romanian socialists in the aftermath of the Great Depression, whose amplifying effect is reflected in this reception.

From the regional perspective, the most interesting study is perhaps Cosmin Borza’s “Peripheral Modernism: The Interwar Translation of East-Central Novels in Romania”, in which the author asks whether the Romanian interest in the literary cultures incorporated into the so-called Soviet bloc after World War II represented an alternative to Western modernity/modernism, or whether

this interest became only its marginal echo (151). The numbers of translated works are strikingly lower than those from the literatures discussed in other chapters (ten novels from Hungarian, nine from Polish, one from Bulgarian, two from Yugoslavia, and six from Czechoslovakia). The author supports this calculation with journal articles and studies that were intended to contextualize the reception of the works, or to present a separate, often ideologically selective, representative panorama of the literature in question. He notes that apart from Hungarian literature, where aesthetic distance from social (politically conflicted) reality was also demanded through translations, in the selection from other Central and Eastern European literatures “regional solidarity prevailed, and the novel reveals its realist-nationalist tendency as well as its critical and socially emancipatory function at the expense of modernist aesthetics. [...] Milo Urban, Jozef Cíger-Hronský [...] thus present an alternative, often critical, rather than a simple reflection of Western modernism” (163).

Ovio Olaru’s study “Translating the North: From Norientalism to Interperipherality” begins with an enumeration of stereotypical images and a rhetorical question about what Romanian and Nordic cultures may have in common, before answering that strange similarities exist and stem from the position of these spaces within a closed European “world” system: distance from an influential “center” (167). The theoretical socio-critical assumptions here collide with the comparison of literatures as export articles, with an implicit description of their low level (at least in the case of Romanian literature). At the same time, this perspective fails to differentiate the changing boundaries and roles between the “center/centers” and the “periphery” over time, i.e. in different periods, which, according to later interpretations, were different. Finally, the author offers three patterns of “interperipherality”, three types of literary transfer: direct, taking place in the interwar and postwar periods either through philo-German ideology or

socialist cosmopolitanism; indirect, or mediated through the Western book market; and a third, based on so-called structural similarities or homologies, mainly related to postmodern nostalgia or autobiographical ultra-realism.

The third part, entitled “Social Entanglement and Cultural Transfer”, begins with Ioana Moroșan’s chapter “Romanian Women Writing Abroad: The Translation of the Novel Written by Women during the Socialist Realist Era”. The author writes in a sociological manner about the situation in the Romanian literary field in the 1950s. She notes the gendered marginalization of women (insofar as they entered the field at all through the ideologically motivated steps of a set cultural policy) to the fringes of the literary system, for example, through the denomination of the genres written by them as inferior, sentimental, or by the provision of a remit in the field of children’s literature, etc.

Snejana Ung’s study “Translating Literature about Former Yugoslavia into Romanian: The Role of Literary Prizes and Festivals” analyzes the quantitative distribution in the Romanian book market of so-called post-Yugoslav literature that thematizes the war conflict: i.e., not only books in the languages of the former Yugoslavia, but also those from other literatures that have touched upon the subject (the corpus includes 21 books in eleven languages). On the basis of source (language) distribution, the author notes heterogeneity but also unevenness, which “points to the effects of globalization in the production and circulation of literary works and hence to the need to understand this unequal distribution in relation to the core-periphery model [...] dominated by English” (206). The main pillars of her study, however, are the institutions of literary prizes and literary festivals and their impact on literary transfer: whether or not international prizes have a major impact on translation production, domestic literary festivals and the physical participation of authors are directly conditioned by translation, or translation often follows in quick succession.

Crina Bud's study, "Revising the National Literary History: Three Anthologies of Romanian Literature Translated into French", uses the methodological basis of the German school of descriptive historical translation studies to study the interference of literary anthologies with literary history. It provides a comparatist perspective on the different images of Romanian literature in the French translations produced by anthologies (especially by their compilers) in various historical periods, with the differences being based either more on the target group (other evaluation for the domestic audience than for the foreign audience) or on political order. She calls this phenomenon cultural resemantization. Bud is the only one of the contributors to the volume to allude to and, in the conclusion, highlight the importance of the actors involved – compilers, translators, authors of accompanying texts – and their agency.

With the publication *Translation and Semi-Peripheral Cultures: Worlding the Romanian Novel in the Modern Literary System*, Romanian scholars show again their potential to absorb new concepts and methods in the field of translation studies and world literature research in an erudite and creative way. The studies in the volume allude to Franco Moretti and Marko Juvan's thesis of "peripheral" and "(semi)peripheral cultures", built on the sociological philosophy of Immanuel Wallerstein. They place Romanian literature on the one hand with the "peripheral", on the other hand with the "(semi)peripheral", or even with both sets, but without

a clearer, let alone critical, view of this hegemonic hierarchy. However, the material analyses themselves (e.g. in Terian and Goldiş) also show the weaknesses of these theoretical concepts: first of all, they demonstrate that the quantitative analysis of translations completely excludes other ways of disseminating world literature in the local (national) context (e.g. through the originals). Another major drawback of quantitative approaches is quite clearly shown to be the so-called domination of the data by "central/core literatures", while marginal "semi- and peripheral literatures" remain, unless they are clustered in regional configuration, unnoticed, below the critical level of perceptibility. Looking at such approaches from other "(semi)peripheral literatures" leaves the reader to draw the bitter conclusion that although doubtless well-intended, such products of research make the "(semi)periphery" visible in the eyes of the "center" only by confirming this commodifying and hegemonizing binarity. The collection unquestionably makes Romanian thinking about literature and translation more visible and, once again, somewhat more strongly captures it in the transnational network of world literature.

EVA KENDERESSY

Institute of World Literature SAS

Slovak Republic

eva.kenderessy@savba.sk

ORCID: 0000-0002-6667-7781

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JUSTYNA TABASZEWSKA: Pamięć afektywna. Dynamika polskiej pamięci po 1989 roku [Affective memory. Dynamics of Polish memory after 1989]

Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2022. 546 pp. ISBN 978-83-231-4901-9, DOI: 10.12775/978-83-231-4902-6

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The aim of the publication *Pamięć afektywna. Dynamika polskiej pamięci po 1989 roku* is to map the entangled temporal relations that shape the work of Polish memory. Justyna Tabaszewska examines all three time periods in her temporal map of Polish culture: the past, the present, and the future. Until recently, the debate about the future in memory studies has mostly concerned the goals of memory, in particular the process of forgetting, or the future of this field of study. Tabaszewska's book raises questions about the role of the future in memory work, thus making an original contribution to the debate on a non-linear understanding of memory. The book offers innovative and inspiring insights into the state of Polish memory and memory work in general.

Pamięć afektywna focuses on the functioning of Polish cultural and communicative memory after 1989. This pivotal year was chosen not only because of the political transformation in Poland and other post-Soviet countries that activated previously forbidden or censored modes of memory; Tabaszewska argues that 1989 is crucial for understanding the ongoing dynamics of Polish culture. For her analysis, she has chosen contemporary Polish fictional literary texts and films, which she sees as media of memory as defined by Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney. These are cultural texts that not only reveal the mechanisms of memory, but also actively co-create frames and patterns of memory. Tabaszewska explores the changes currently taking place in the work of Polish memory

and describes Polish memory as extremely dynamic and unstable, burdened with internal contradictions and tensions. According to her, Polish memory is a constantly looping one and in order to better understand changes in memory work, we need to look beyond the past and the present to the future as a point of reference.

The book has a very well-thought-out structure at the level of parts, chapters and subsections, which reflects both the precision of the theoretical discussion and the depth of the analyses carried out. In the first, theoretical part, Tabaszewska presents the theories and concepts she will use and introduces a broad but consistent set of analytical tools. The second, third and fourth parts are devoted to cultural texts dealing with the past, the present, and the future. Each part begins with an introductory theoretical chapter that clarifies the theoretical framework in relation to the time period analyzed and presents the state of research on this issue in Polish academic discourse. After this theoretical clarification, Tabaszewska interprets selected cultural texts. Although each of these parts focuses on a single time period, Tabaszewska always keeps in mind the interplay between the three time periods, revealing their fluid, non-linear nature.

Autor's basic methodological framework consists of theories within memory studies and affective studies. She follows the insights of contemporary memory studies, where the relational and dynamic nature of collective, cultural, and communicative memory refers

not to a two-point system of past–present references, but to a three-point system of past–present–future references, which she argues should rather be captured as future–present–past references. As Tabaszewska shows, thinking about the future is essential for making decisions about the present and our experience of the present influences how we perceive the past. In contrast to Aleida Assmann, she argues that there is no common future, no single version of the future. Static thinking about the future is a mistake: “There are many futures, not only in the sense that they exist and we simultaneously consider different versions of the future or different plans for the future, but I also think that we use far more than one scheme for imagining what the future actually is and what place it occupies in the structure of time. For the future is not only something to come, it is also our motivation for action in the present, it is the horizon of events embedded in everyday experience, and finally it is also part of the past as once shared visions of what might come” (74). As Tabaszewska argues, the relationship between time and memory can be better analyzed if we incorporate the findings of affective studies into our research. In memory studies, therefore, the question of the future requires introducing new concepts and theoretical tools, such as past futures, affective facts, or alternative histories. Tabaszewska integrates concepts from other fields of research, such as the study of emotions, historiography, philosophical reflection on memory, imagination, time, and possible worlds. Her interdisciplinary approach is primarily inspired by the theories of Brian Massumi (*ontopower*), Lauren Berlant (*affective event*), Sara Ahmed (*happy futures*), Si-anne Ngai (*ugly feelings*), and Charles Altieri (*an aesthetics of the affects*). Tabaszewska also uses the affective neuroscientific approach of Jaak Panksepp (*core self*) and the psychological approach of Lisa Feldman Barrett (*constructed emotion*). The proposed theoretical framework allows her to analyze affective modes of memory work in the experience of the present.

Tabaszewska uses a number of concepts from memory and affective studies that are indispensable in contemporary academic discourse. Her book also discusses new concepts and terminology useful for the study of memory work, such as *affective memory*, which she defines as memory based on the current affective structure produced by past futures. Memory of the future is an extremely dynamic part of memory, as Tabaszewska points out: “the visions of a certain future, once produced and articulated, are then remembered, which means that they are transformed and changed according to the mechanisms of memory, that is, they are constantly revised to harmonise with our ideas about the past and the present” (33). She also uses the category of the *memory loop*, a situation in which the normal functioning of memory (such as the transformation of communicative memory into cultural memory) is interrupted. Memory loops are compulsive returns to the same moments in the past, associated with specific visions of the future that were present at that moment but were not realized. Tabaszewska also draws upon the concept of *poetics of memory* to study the relationship between text and memory. This category offers the possibility of studying the literary text “both as a medium of memory and as a space of free literary expression” (63).

The cultural texts in the analytical sections are both representative and diverse. The second part explores affective perceptions of the past, based on the novel *Morfina* (Morphine, 2012) by Szczepan Twardoch and the works of Magdalena Tulli as well as the films *Miasto 44* (Warsaw 44, 2014) by Jan Komasa, *Wołyń* (Volhynia, 2016) by Wojciech Smarzowski, and *Ida* (2013) by Paweł Pawlikowski. In the third part, which focuses on the post-transformation present and the ways in which its memory is mediated and remediated, Tabaszewska interprets works by authors such as Małgorzata Rejmer, Mikołaj Łoziński, Ignacy Karpowicz, Dorota Masłowska and Andrzej Stasiuk. The fourth part focuses on the future, past futures, and

alternative histories and analyzes works such as *Rzeczpospolita zwycięska* (The triumphant republic, 2013) and *Siwy Dym: albo Pięć Cywilizowanych Plemion* (Fracas or five civilized tribes, 2018) by Ziemowit Szczerek, *Xavras Wyzryn* (1997) and *Lód* (Ice, 2007) by Jacek Dukaj, *Widma* (Specters, 2012) by Łukasz Orbitowski, and the Netflix series *1983* (2018). In selecting cultural texts for analysis, Tabaszewska applies several criteria: first, how a given cultural text relates to a currently existing memory cliché, second, whether it is capable of evoking an affective response, third, to what extent a given cultural text is popular (read, watched, discussed), and finally, whether a given cultural text can become a collective text, i.e. if it will be able to shape our past in the future.

Pamięć afektywna. Dynamika polskiej pamięci po 1989 roku is not only an important and original contribution to memory studies, but also a very inspiring one. On a theoretical level, the book shows how

our ideas about the future affect our perception of the present and our recollections of the past. On an analytical level, Tabaszewska formulates a thesis about the instability of Polish memory, which is caused by the fact that some chapters of Polish history remain open. This instability, i.e. the constant attempts to close the past and the failures experienced in this process, result in loops that determine Polish memory. Although the book focuses on the mechanisms of Polish memory, the transformations in memory work described by Tabaszewska are not only specific to Poland but have an almost universal character.

MAGDALENA
GARBACIK-BALAKOWICZ
Institute for Literary Studies
HUN-REN Research Centre
for the Humanities

Hungary
garbacik-balakowicz.magdalena@abtk.hu
ORCID: 0000-0003-1910-5446

BOGUMIŁA SUWARA: Literatúra na rozhraní technológií [Literature in the impact zone of technology]

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Bogumiła Suwara's Slovak-language monograph *Literatúra na rozhraní technológií* (Literature at the interface of technologies, 2022) covers a significant array of research topics related to the widely debated intersection of digital media and literary studies, as well as extending beyond these fields. As stated by the author in the introduction, the publication aims to present her long-term research, supported by various scientific grants as one of "the unified approaches to the research of a broadly understood literature at the interface of the technologization of the word and the technology of the communication media" (8, trans. Z. H.).

Owing to its thematic choices, the book is not only a work of transdisciplinary literary research but can also serve as a valuable resource for academics in art research (especially digital arts and intermedia studies), media studies, communication studies, philosophy, aesthetics, pedagogy, and creative programming. Furthermore, its significance lies in its focus on the Central European perspective, thanks to the referenced material and analyzed works, which offer an alternative to the Western-centric model of literature and art promotion. The range of references includes thinkers from the ancient era, through French structuralism and post-structuralism, to recent and contemporary Polish and Slovak researchers, American media theorists, hypertext specialists, cognitive scientists, and programmers, as well as individuals exploring the latest trends in

electronic literature, techno-aesthetics, post-humanism, and more.

This monograph diverges from the well-established approach in literary-theoretical books of focusing on electronic literature and the mapping of this field. Significant works in electronic literature theory typically introduce new theoretical and/or methodological approaches and then analyze and interpret a selected number of works based on these approaches. Examples of such works include *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary* by N. Katherine Hayles, *Digital Modernism: Making it New in New Media* by Jessica Pressman, and *Digital Art and Meaning: Reading Kinetic Poetry, Text Machines, Mapping Art, and Interactive Installations* by Robert Simanowski, among others.

Suwara's approach does not adhere to this converging structure of textual architecture, but rather, it is more hybrid, resulting in each chapter having a distinct formation. Her book is structured as a gradual exploration of research issues necessary for understanding the positions presented in the subsequent chapters. It progresses from literary, artistic, and media theoretical problems to various approaches for understanding or analyzing intermedia works and hypermedia artifacts. Additionally, it delves into the practical dimensions of these theoretical issues by examining academic multimedia forms, such as PowerPoint presentations, and by revealing the behind-the-scenes preparation for collaborative liter-

ary projects and the obstacles encountered within them.

The first chapter, “Kríza reprezentácie, hybridizácia, remediácia” (Crisis of representation, hybridization, remediation), focuses on several epistemological concepts related to the interrelational representations of text and image, addresses the issue of denotational diversities inherent in both old and new media, and ends with reflections inspired by the history of photography.

The second chapter, “Fotografia ako nástroj hybridizácie textu a obrazu” (Photography as a tool of hybridization of text and image), directly applies theoretical approaches to analyze the strategies employed by selected Slovak and Polish authors in their intermedial projects, whether collaborative or individual. The works are interpreted through strategies of remediation, media specificity, and discourse-reading, while still employing a thematological approach that allows readers to focus on cultural-historical references as well as visual anthropology and even medicine.

Third and fourth chapters “Hypermediálne artefakty” (Hypermedial artefacts) and “Hypermédium a hypertext” (Hypermedium and hypertext) delve into the theoretical, literary, and artistic implications brought about by digital technologies and their impact on the emergence of entirely new socio-cultural phenomena (such as network culture, netocracy, digital collaborations, information literacy, virtual presence etc.). Quoting Margot Lovejoy’s *Digital Currents: Art in the Electronic Age* (2004), Suwara highlights that “digital simulation has finally shattered the paradigm of representation we have been operating under since the Renaissance” (103).

The transdisciplinary and transcultural methodological framework, which traces significant works in these fields back to the 1980s (including references to the Slovak theoreticians František Miko and Pavol Winczer), elucidates the contributions and addresses the pitfalls of digital culture within the broader media landscape and the artistic,

social, and technological transformations we have been witnessing.

The fifth chapter “Skúmanie literatúry a programovateľné médiá” (Research on literature and programmable media) is more narrowly focused, emphasizing the challenges and possibilities of Espen J. Aarseth’s concept of ergodic literature in the context of research on electronic literature and digital games.

Powerpoint as a cross-medial artistic, presentational and educational tool is methodologically analyzed in the sixth chapter “Archeológia médií alebo Formy hypermediálneho artefaktu” (Media archeology or Forms of hypermedial artefacts). Along with the eighth chapter “Autor verus techné alebo Rozširovanie priestoru tvorivosti (literatúry)” (Author versus techné or Expanding the space of [literary] creativity), it directs the reader’s attention to the practical applications of inter/transmedial research on digital technologies.

The seventh chapter “Programovacie jazyky ako zdroj poézie” (Programming languages as a source of poetry) epistemologically originates from Walter Ong’s premise of the “technologizing of the word” and the “interface of the word,” as formulated in his book *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982). It later examines the social implications of electronic textual formats and forms, focusing on the technologization of literature as “equivalent use and abuse of all elements of a specific interface: audiovisual, textual, and finally animation” (264).

The author’s term “hypermedial artifact” can thus be understood as “a phenomenon created based on the unstable, dynamic rules of a virtual environment, where the delineated and differentiated form of post-human consciousness emerges” and “allows the authors to acquire new skills – iteracy” (264–265). Suwara’s proposition to concentrate on the medial strategies of the entire interface (rather than on its individual semiotic systems) and its creation and reception is highly valuable for the entire field of digital arts.

The author connects relatively unrelated theories and methodologies from different fields of research into a transdisciplinary reflection that follows both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. However, as the monograph encompasses a wide range of theories and methodologies, it would have been greatly helpful if it had finished with a conclusion to refresh the reader's memory and summarize the author's fundamental arguments or positions. Additionally, there is no English abstract, which could help promote this monograph abroad.

Suwara's focus on contemporary research in electronic media and the implications it has for entire generations and their approach-

es to acquiring information, education, leisure activities, communication techniques, and even the organization of individual biorhythmic and working environments as well as communal/global living makes this book significant as a historical probe into our techno-social milieu that, through electronic signals, transcends our *hic et nunc*.

ZUZANA HUSÁROVÁ

Digital Arts

Academy of Fine Arts and Design

in Bratislava

Slovak Republic

zuz.husarova@vsvu.sk

ORCID: 0000-0002-0022-3322

SOŇA PAŠTEKOVÁ – DUŠAN TEPLAN (eds.): Mikuláš Bakoš – pluralitný literárny vedec v metodologickej diskusii dneška [Mikuláš Bakoš – a versatile literary scholar in today's methodological discussion]

Bratislava: Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV – VEDA, vydavateľstvo SAV, 2022. 208 s. ISBN 978-80-224-1959-8

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Profesor Mikuláš Bakoš (1914 – 1972) patril a dodnes patrí k najvýznamnejším predstaviteľom modernej slovenskej literárnej vedy druhej polovice 20. storočia. K jej rozvoju prispel nielen ako sprostredkovateľ poznatkov ruskej formálnej školy a stúpenec štrukturalistickej metodológie literárnovedného výskumu, ale aj ako vedec so širokým spektrom bádateľských záujmov, medzi ktoré patrili aj otázky francúzskej i slovenskej literárnej avantgardy, historickej poetiky, komparatistiky, translatológie či interkultúrnej slavistiky. Niet preto divu, že jeho vedecký odkaz dodnes rezonuje v akademických kruhoch, že sa k nemu slovenská literárnovedná obec vracia jednak s úmyslom prehĺbiť poznanie výsledkov jeho práce a jednak so zámerom prehodnotiť aktuálnosť ich impulzov a podnetov z aspektu súčasných materiálových i metodologických trendov humanitného výskumu. Dôkazom tohto faktu je aj zborník *Mikuláš Bakoš – pluralitný literárny vedec v metodologickej diskusii dneška*, ktorý je publikačným výstupom z vedeckého kolokvia usporiadaného Ústavom svetovej literatúry SAV v Bratislave a Katedrou slovenského jazyka a literatúry FF UKF v Nitre.

Okrem úvodu, v ktorom editorská dvojica Soňa Pašteková a Dušan Teplan predstavujú autorov jednotlivých štúdií a ich obsahové zameranie, publikáciu tvorí šesť príspevkov slovenských a českých literárnych vedcov so širokým tematickým záberom reflektujúcim diapazón bádateľských záujmov Mikuláša Bakoša.

Zborník otvára štúdia Iva Pospíšila „Mikuláš Bakoš – problém literárnovedného dedičtva i metodologických kontextů jeho díla“. Vďaka komplexnému pohľadu autora na Bakošovo vedecké dielo je to programový príspevok ašpirujúci na jeho zasadenie do širokého priestorového aj časového rámca evolúcie slovenskej, českej, ale tiež európskej a svetovej literárnej vedy. Takýto holistický prístup umožnil autorovi objektívne reflektovať význam Bakošovho vedeckého dedičtva tak z pozície prítomnosti s adekvátnou mierou zodpovedajúceho prehodnotenia, ako aj z aspektu dobového kontextu, t. j. hodnoty a funkcií, ktoré jeho práca plnila v čase vzniku. Na základe toho dochádza k záveru, že Bakoš sa dokázal v celej svojej výskumnej práci držať metodologického jadra, ktorým je „nepochybné imanentistický komplex formalisticko-štrukturalistický, ale s přesahy k diachronii s přirozenými souvislostmi psychologismu a sociologismu, s inklinací k bádání o literárních žánrech (básnické žánry, román), ale v rámci tradičné poetiky spíše než genologie, a ke komparatistice, zase spíše v její konkrétní aplikaci než v čisté teorii“ (17). Tým vlastne aj implicitne indikuje oblasti, v ktorých výsledky Bakošovej vedeckej práce môžu dodnes podnetne pôsobiť.

Ďalších päť zborníkových príspevkov venuje pozornosť čiastkovým aspektom Bakošovho vedeckého odkazu. Štúdia Jána Gbúra „Metodologické limity Bakošovho verzologického výskumu slovenského verša“ je kritickou reflexiou jednej z kľúčových Ba-

košových prác – monografie *Vývin slovenského verša* (1939), v neskoršej redakcii premenovanej na *Vývin slovenského verša od školy Štúrovej* (1966). Autor štúdie si všima nielen metodologické východiská Bakošových analýz (teóriu veršového rytmu rozpracovanú ruskými formalistami, metodologický objektivismus štrukturalistického výskumu verša, koncepciu historickej poetiky ako základ analýzy historického vývinu veršových foriem; 35) a ich aplikáciu, ale aj „pobakošovský“ vývin bádania v tejto sfére v slovenskom aj českom kontexte. V závere konštatuje, že Bakošov štrukturalistický model výskumu významne obohatil poznanie vývinových premien veršovej štruktúry slovenskej poézie, zároveň však poukazuje aj na výskumné problémy, ktoré v jeho prácach pôsobili ako limitujúce faktory (napr. funkčné prepájanie tvarových a sémantických, resp. semiotických zložiek básnického textu; 67).

Štúdia Sone Paštekovéj „Mikuláš Bakoš a svetová literatúra (K dynamike vnútroliterárnych a medziliterárnych procesov)“ predstavuje Bakoša ako vedca, ktorý inšpiráciu prácami ruskej formálnej školy pretavil do vlastnej syntetizujúcej metodológie, ústiacej do kreovania historickej poetiky ako teoreticky koncízneho systému literárnej vedy. Práve cez prizmu historickej poetiky sa snažil skĺbiť štruktúrny a historický prístup k literárnym javom. V tomto duchu vnímal – ako konštatuje autorka štúdie – aj pojem svetová literatúra: „Koncepciu pojmu ‚svetová literatúra‘ M. Bakoš pertraktuje v zmysle syntézy imanentného a kontextuálneho vývinu národných a nadnárodných celkov dejín literatúry, v tom vidí kľúčový význam a dosah historickej poetiky nielen pre dejiny národných literatúr, ale aj pre literárnovednú komparatistiku, porovnávací výskum európskych a svetových literatúr“ (81). V rozvíjaní tejto sféry jeho vedeckého odkazu, ako ukazuje Pašteková, pokračovali a pokračujú jeho súčasníci a následníci (Dionýz Ďurišin, Ladislav Franek, Róbert Gárik a i.) v rámci výskumného programu Ústavu svetovej literatúry SAV, ktorého zakladateľom a dlhoročným riaditeľom bol práve Bakoš.

Ondřej Sládek v štúdiu „Ohlas a druhý život Bakošovy Teórie literatúry“ sa vracia k jednej z najvýznamnejších publikácií Mikuláša Bakoša – k jeho prekladovej antológii prác ruských formalistov, ktorá vyšla v dvoch vydaniach v rokoch 1941 a 1971. Všima si nielen genézu prvého a sčasti aj druhého vydania, ale aj – a najmä – ich recepciu a rezonanciu v českom i medzinárodnom (najmä americkom a francúzskom) literárnovednom prostredí. Napriek pozitívnemu prijatiu v českých literárnovedných kruhoch sa recenzie vzhľadom na nepriaznivé vojnové podmienky objavili až v rokoch 1946 (Karel Svoboda, časopis *Naše věda*, č. 24) a 1947 (Josef Hrabák, časopis *Slovo a slovesnost*, č. 1); po roku 1948 a ideologickej kritike ruského formalizmu aj českého štrukturalizmu sa na Bakošov výber z formálnej metódy jednoducho v Československu „zabudlo“. Zaslúžený ohlas však vzbudil u českého profesora Michiganskej univerzity Ladislava Matějku, ktorý na podnet Romana Jakobsona vydal v roku 1962 antológiu *Readings in Russian Poetics* a v roku 1971 jej rozšírenú verziu pod názvom *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*. Na Bakošovu antológiu i na Matějkov výber reagoval v roku 1965 aj francúzsky teoretik Tzvetan Todorov knihou *Théorie de la littérature: Textes des Formalistes russes*. Inšpiratívne pôsobenie prvej redakcie Bakošovovho výberu je zrejme aj zo Sládkovej analýzy obsahu všetkých štyroch publikácií.

Štúdia „Textologické reflexie Mikuláša Bakoša z dnešnej perspektívy“ z pera Martina Navrátila venuje pozornosť Bakošovým prácam zaoberajúcim sa textológiou ako samostatným vedným odborom. Ako uvádza autor štúdie, Bakoš analyzoval zásady „výberu východiskového (základného, bázoového) textu, aplikácie pravidla poslednej ruky v praxi, spôsobu uplatňovania jazykovej aktualizácie textu, obsahovej náplni v slovenskej vydavateľskej praxi ustáleného čitateľského (populárno-vedeckého) vydania či potenciálu estetického analýzy diela v praxi textológa“ (107). Na všetkých uvedených úrovniach dokumentuje evolúciu Bakošovho

textologického myslenia i možnosti využitia jeho zistení v podmienkach súčasného stavu vývoja slovenskej textológie.

Posledný príspevok zborníka predstavuje práca Dušana Teplana „K prameňom modernej literárnej vedy na Slovensku (Vzájomná korešpondencia Mikuláša Bakoša a Andreja Mráza)“, ktorá prináša autentický záznam ich pracovnej komunikácie z rokov 1934 – 1939. Je to ďalší kameň dopĺňajúci pestrú mozaiku Bakošovho vedeckého dedičstva o poznanie začiatkov jeho vedeckých aktivít. Publikovaná korešpondencia totiž presvedčivo ukazuje – povedané slovami Dušana Teplana – „aký zásadný význam mali pre začínajúceho vedca úvahy o základných funkciách a potrebách domáceho výskumu literatúry. Tomuto záujmu potom zodpovedali aj konkrétne kroky, ktoré mali za cieľ vybudovať zo slovenskej literárnej vedy modernú humanitnú disciplínu s adekvátnym teoretickým aparátom, stabilným metodologickým zázemím a širokou škálou výskumných tém“ (141).

Zborník *Mikuláš Bakoš – pluralitný literárny vedec v metodologickej diskusii dneška* teda nielen sumarizuje tradíciu skúmania odkazu tohto významného reprezentanta slovenskej literárnej vedy, ale v širokej tematickej škále rozkrýva aj možnosti jeho inšpiratívneho pôsobenia. Ak by sme sa oblúkom vrátili k vstupnej štúdii Iva Pospíšila, mohli by sme so zreteľom na vyššie uvedené fakty spolu s ním konštatovať, že „[n]ejde tedy o vzpomínkovou pietu, ale o jistý druh pokory před našimi předchůdci, uznání možnosti, že i v minulosti vznikaly hodnoty, že v této vědě nepíšeme rok nula“ (10), že objektívne zhodnocovanie nadobudnutého minulého poznania podmieňuje kvalitu súčasného vedeckého myslenia a otvára perspektívy jej plodného budúceho vývoja.

ANTON ELIÁŠ

Pezinok

Slovenská republika

anton.elias@uniba.sk

ORCID: 0009-0006-7692-9475

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Fictional Realities of Eternal Peace

JOHANNES D. KAMINSKI (ed.)

Knihy Bogumily Suwary syntetizujú výsledky výskumov zameraných na skúmanie literatúry v kyberpriestore, textu na internete ako javu r@evolúcie kultúry a hypermediálneho artefaktu v postdigitálnej dobe. Zachytáva dobovo vyhranený úsek procesu technologizácie literatúry a s ňou spojených posunov v oblasti kultúrnych praktík, ktoré ovplyvňujú samotný proces literárnej tvorby, jej skúmanie a recepciu. Sleduje posuny spôsobené aplikovaním digitálnych technológií v oblasti literatúry: plasticosť a difúznosť jej hraníc atď.

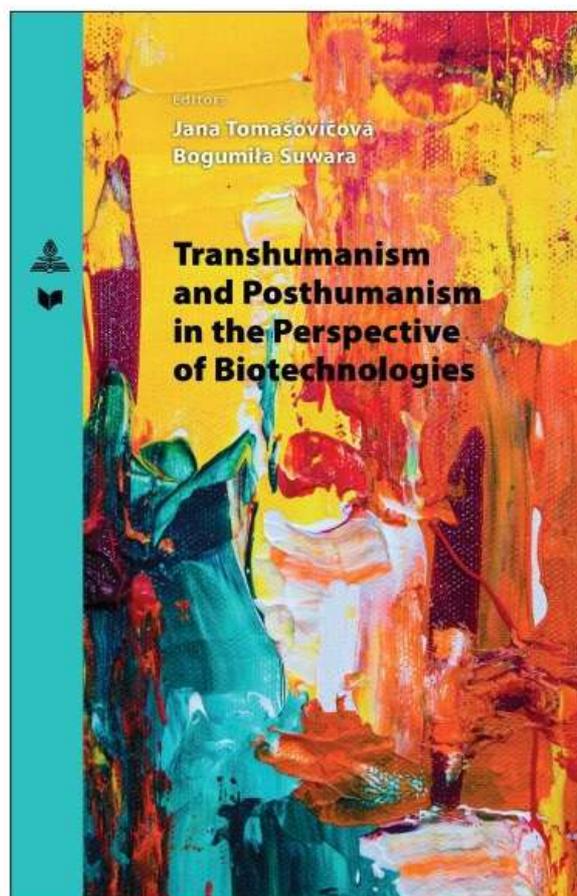
Bogumiła Suwara's *Literature in the impact zone of technology* synthesizes the results of research focused on the exploration of literature in cyberspace, the text on the Internet as a phenomenon of r@evolution of culture and the hypermedia artifact in the post digital age. The publication captures a temporally distinct section of the process of technologization of literature and the associated shifts in cultural practices that affect the very process of literary production, its exploration and reception. It traces the shifts brought about by applying digital technologies in the field of literature: the plasticity and diffuseness of its boundaries etc.

BOGUMIŁA SUWARA: *Literatúra na rozhraní technológií*.
Bratislava: Ústav svetovej literatúry SAV, v. v. i. – VEDA, vydavateľstvo SAV, 2022. 309 s. ISBN 978-80-224-1974-1.
DOI: 10.31577/2022.9788022419741

Dynamický rozvoj biotechnológií, ako aj poznatkov prírodných a informačných vied rozširuje možnosti modifikácie ľudských bytostí. Kolektívna publikácia *Transhumanizmus a posthumanizmus v perspektíve biotechnológií* analyzuje súvisiace myšlienky z viacerých filozofických perspektív a skúma, ako sa prelínajú s umeleckou tvorbou. Zaoberá sa skúmaním možných dôsledkov transhumánnych a posthumánnych predstáv i analýzou vplyvu týchto myšlienok na literárne, vizuálne, kinematografické a digitálne umenie, ako aj možnosti interpretácie.

The dynamic development of biotechnologies as well as natural and information sciences expand the possibilities of human modification. In this collection of texts the ideas of transhumanism and posthumanism are analyzed from several philosophical perspectives, examining their overlap with artistic expression. The possible implications associated with the fulfillment of transhumanist and posthumanist visions, and the influence of these ideas on literary, visual, cinematic, and digital art are analyzed, and interpretative possibilities are explored.

JANA TOMAŠOVIČOVÁ – BOGUMIŁA SUWARA (eds.):
Transhumanism and Posthumanism in the Perspective of Biotechnologies. Berlin – Bratislava: Peter Lang – VEDA, vydavateľstvo SAV, 2023. 240 s. ISBN 978-3-631-90354-4, ISBN 978-80-224-2020-4.





Pod vplyvom dynamického biovedeckého vývoja zaznamenala interdiskurzívna komunikácia medzi literatúrou a bioetikou výrazné premeny. Štúdie tematického ťažiska tohto čísla mapujú posun od tradičného zobrazovania vzťahu medzi lekárom a pacientom smerom k novým témam inšpirovaným bioetickými výzvami, ako sú regeneračná medicína, editovanie génov, klonovanie, vylepšovanie človeka, eutanázia a ďalšie. Zároveň sú príkladmi vzájomného prestupovania diskurzov a vytvárania nového interdiskurzívneho priestoru. Literatúra a umenie prostredníctvom umeleckých obrazov prispievajú k obohateniu racionalistickej bioetickej rétoriky a normatívnej argumentácie o mnohé humanistické aspekty, vrátane naratívneho prístupu k etike a obzvlášť k bioetike.

The interdiscursive communication between literature and bioethics has gone through significant changes under the influence of dynamic bio-scientific advancements. The articles in this issue document the shift from the traditional portrayal of the doctor-patient relationship to new themes inspired by contemporary bioethical challenges, including regenerative medicine, gene editing, cloning, human enhancement, and euthanasia, thus demonstrating the reciprocal transfer of literary and bioethical discourses. Through the emergence of this new interdiscursive space, literary and artistic representations are enriching the rationalist ethical rhetoric and normative argumentation with many humanistic aspects, including a narrative approach to ethics, specifically bioethics.