

## SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

*Slawomir Sikora*

An Autobiography Composed of Photographs. The Metaphor and the Photography

The author discusses and interprets an unusual book – album by John Berger and Jean Mohr: *Another Way of Telling* (1982), and in particular focuses on an interpretation of the photo-narrative composed of about 150 photographs and conceived as a fictitious autobiography of an old peasant woman. Attention is drawn to the fact that one of the foremost manners of creating meaning by resorting to a configuration of photographs can be deciphered as an attempt at creating metaphors. The latter not only "provide food for thought" and stimulate the imagination but are also an attempt at bringing the viewer-reader and viewed reality emotionally closer. The author accentuates the non-linear nature of the narrative composed of two supplementing paradigms – history (chronology) and association proper to human memory as well as to mythical thinking. As a result, however, the narrative possesses more of a spatial (image) than a temporal (film, book) nature. In the opinion of the author, such a narrative meets the requirements of new postmodernist ethnography, outlined by Stephen Tyler, whose task is not so much the depiction or representation of reality as its evoking.

*Ryszard Kasperowicz*

Aesthetic Tautology and the Primacy of Perception. A Brief Remark on the Burckhardt Vision of Art upon the Example of *Erinnerungen aus Rubens*

The scientific works and personality of Jacob Burckhardt inspired historians of art representing such diverse methodological stands as Heinrich Wölfflin, Aby Warburg or Edgar Wind, connected with the milieu concentrated around the latter. Burckhardt himself conceived art to be one of the most important sources of cognition; in his project of the history of culture, the work of art comprises the most essential point in which the past meets the present and offers the scholar insight into the meaning of history and the uninterrupted process of rendering it topical in the present. Via art, the historian of culture is capable of transcending beyond the historical fact and the variability of events, seeking certain anthropological foundations of man within history. Upon the example of *Erinnerungen aus Rubens*, one of the last works by Burckhardt, published posthumously, this study tries to indicate the significance of the artistic analysis of the paintings by Rubens performed by the Swiss scholar, demonstrating, at the same time, the place of art and its perception in the model of historical cognition, subjected to the ideals of directness and the stirring of historical imagination.

*Dariusz Czaja*

Image and Realism. Notes Concerning Bacon

This text was written on the margin of a Polish translation of *Conversations with Francis Bacon. Brutality of Fact* by D. Sylvester. One of the most frequent themes in Bacon's statements is his conception of painting, the key being realism. The author tries to reconstruct and render more precise the „new realism" proposed by the artist. He refers it to the dual comprehension of the category of mimesis in Plato and Aristotle, and confronts it with Bacon's opinions about the imitative duties of painting. In its ultimate consequences, the realism expanded by Bacon transcends far beyond aesthetics and remains metaphysical.

*Hubert Czachowski*

Miraculous Photographs

On many sites of contemporary Marian revelations, photographs comprise one of the most interesting of the assorted miraculous signs of the sacrum. Apparently, some of the

subsequently developed pictures depict the sacrum, which assumes various forms: from irregular white rays and the Host, to the figure of John Paul II and even the face of God the Father. Thousands of pilgrims present at the sites of the miracles are convinced about the veracity of their experiences, an attitude which, to a considerable degree, shapes their religiosity. They perceive a photographed miracle as proof of the truth of the faith and God, in accordance with the principle, still universal in folk mentality, that a photograph cannot lie.

*Ewa Klekot*

The Most Holy Heart of Jesus. Scenes from the Life of a Symbol

The article discusses the changeability of the meaning of the visual symbol upon the example of the symbolic depiction of Jesus, known as the Most Holy Heart. Its deciphering, conducted upon numerous levels, changes depending on the cultural, social, and historical context in which the depiction appears. This religious symbol, whose tradition dates back to the Middle Ages, became involved in politics, and to a considerable degree assumed the role of the visual sign of Catholic fundamentalism. In turn, the aesthetic dimension of the depictions, whose majority is rejected by art as a symptom of par excellence kitsch, determined its reception to such a degree that the religious interpretation was no longer possible: images of the Most Holy Heart became the carrier of caricature-like simplified meanings, and the visual symbol changed into a stereotype.

*Andrzej Piotr Kowalski*

On the Pre-history of the Symbol

The author characterises the most significant stages in the development of the symbolic. Initially, cultural values were devoid of the status of a symbol and remained an immanent component of the existence and activity of archaic man. Symbols appeared in cultures which had at their disposal a dually defined image of the world. In order to justify this thesis, the author refers to historical poetics and presents premetaphorical forms of being in the world. The oldest forms of magic are represented by metamorphoses, which are connected with thinking that identifies assorted classes of objects. Traces of metamorphoses can be discovered in transmissions of folklore speaking about the transformation of cultural heroes, in religious views concerning metempsychosis, and in early philosophical conceptions about motion and change.

Mdetamorphic magic was supplanted by thinking in categories of comparisons. It was comparison which for first time revealed the necessity of evaluation, and distinguished the ontological relation of mutual dependencies.

The function of symbolising to the metaphor, which is a conventional change in the characteristic of given objects. The metaphor does not serve a magical identification of objects and their meaning but leads to their minute distinction. The author is of the opinion that the symbolic and the existence of the ideative sphere of values comprise a problem facing anthropologists and their exegetic thought; this is probably the reason why as such it did not exist in archaic culture.

*Jadwiga Wais*

Gilgamesh and His Star

For four and a half millennia, the epic of Gilgamesh fascinates with the fantastic adventures of its hero. What does the Gilgamesh phenomenon consist of? This unusual tale would not have survived for so long if it did not contain a timeless meaning: the rebellion against death. Although the sages, shamans, and priests of all eras tell us that such defiance is senseless, we naively hope that Gilgamesh will succeed.

His failure is twofold: Gilgamesh does not win immortality nor does he experience spiritual transformation. He disobeys all teachers of life, and remains a vanquished hero. This defeat is also part of our humanity, and despite the abyss of time Gilgamesh is one of us.

*Monika Sznajderman*

The Angel in Popular Imagination

The author deals with religious beliefs and images which, usually ignored by anthropology, constitute a curious collage blending the religiosity of the Age of Aquarius with traditional folk religiosity; she does so upon the example of popular and thriving angelology. At the same time, the article proposes the thesis that this unique renaissance of a belief in angels, with which we deal predominantly (albeit not solely) in present-day American popular culture, is closely connected with religious sensitivity; the angel is a living form of contemporary popular religious imagination. The world of angels has come back; furthermore, it has accomplished this feat only in an outwardly changed form. Actually, many old beliefs concerning its nature and function have survived and inherited the legacy of theology and the apocryphs. Today, man needs the angel as much as he did in past centuries.

*Joanna Tokarska-Bakir*

The Prayer of the Elements. A Tibetan Buddhist Woodcut

The text outlines the cultural context of the woodcut in Buddhist art of the Great Tibet region (Tibet proper, Nepal, and North India). The author inquires into the purposefulness of applying the term „art” in reference to Buddhist painting, sculpture, and woodcuts. She presents the theology of depictions and the so-called effective means (Sanskrit: *upaya*) of Dharma, the Buddhist teaching, and proposes her own classification of Tibetan woodcuts. Finally, the article cites details concerning the preparation of the matrix and the making copies as well as the ceremony of consecrating the prints.

*Wojciech Michera*

Body and Imagination

This text is composed of three scenarios for the television series *Body and Imagination* which W. Michera directed in 1996–1997 for Polish Television. The series (a total of twelve episodes) deals with the history and anthropology of imagination, and is an example of popularisation which uses forms proper for artistic programmes. The presented scenarios: *To Be a Woman*, *To Be a Man*, *Artificial Face* are preceded by brief comments on the anthropological understanding of imagination and the popularisation of science.

*Krzyszyna Czerni*

Token

For ages, the tattoo was a universal way of decorating the body and granting a person distinction and significance. The author presents numerous examples of the application of the tattoo and subsequently discusses the painless and bloodless Tattoos by Zbigniew Bajek in which the author himself becomes the object. In ensuing numerous photographic self-portraits, Bajek shows slides of assorted world-known paintings upon his white painted face. In this manner, the latter becomes a living canvas for compositions by Bosch, Dürer, Brueghel or Dali. The author interprets the activity of the artist involving his own face, and contrasts it to i.a. the tradition of self-portraits, including those by Witkacy or *The Pillow Book* by Greenaway. In an age of bloody experiments, the Bajek photogrammes are a safe example of the artistic usage of the body. Bajek demonstrates traces of art upon the body, the tokens of culture and its illumination. In doing so, he proves that art does not exist without a recipient and that the art

work requires an embodiment and becomes subjected to a sui generis metempsychosis by proposing a screen projection of human thoughts, experiences, and sensitivity.

*Czesław Robotycki*

The Art and Persuasion of So-Called Billboards

The article examines billboards as an element of communication in its persuasive function and as an element of the visual surrounding. The aesthetic stratum of billboards makes use of postmodern concepts of the fine arts. This role of billboards in Poland deserves further, more detailed analysis.

*Marcin Szporoko*

Poster-clasm or an Untamed Campaign

This analysis of the phenomenon of damaging election campaign posters is conducted upon the basis of material gathered during the 1995 presidential election. The destruction of posters is closely connected with their semiotic aspect. A damaged poster also carries a certain message, which is usually diametrically different from the one intended by its authors. The presented analysis is founded on proposals of deciphering the newly produced communiques. The destruction of depictions – most universal in the phenomenon under examination – is a practice frequently encountered in culture, starting with the distant past. Damage of a substitute is the root of numerous forms of activity from the domain of negative magic, where the person of the enemy is supplanted by his depiction. The conviction about the possession of the „might” and properties of the portrayed person via his image led to Byzantine and Protestant iconoclasm and executions conducted in effigie. The destruction of posters was universal, and pertained to all candidates. It was performed by incurring damage to symbolically marked fragments of the depiction (face, eyes, mouth) and the addition of symbols (star of David, five-armed star, hammer and sickle, swastika) or annotations of various size. The posters were also dirtied or defaced with drawings, including vulgar ones. A specific form of destruction was the use of stickers showing political rivals. In certain instances, the damage stemmed from playful sources, but the majority of cases expressed aggression and animosity towards the depicted person.

*Dorota Gut*

Internet Ethnography

The article inaugurates a series of texts by the author pertaining to the Internet, its philosophy, ethnography, vocabulary, etc.

*Jarosław Jot-Drużycki*

The Urbi et Orbi Board Game

The author describes games in which the players move their pawns on the board along municipal transportation lines (the underground, trams...). The purpose is to become acquainted with interesting objects in the given „town”. Within this context, the author recalls the classification of games proposed by R. Caillois – agon, alea, and mimicry. Mention is also made of the African game of sumangolo whose participants „play in the world of the future”. In conclusion, Drużycki draws attention to the fact that the players create a real space, regardless whether it is London or St. Petersburg, together with its actual spatial configuration, or a mythical „world of the future”.

Jerusalem Jerusalem. An Interview with Narmi Michejda

In 1989, Narmi Michejda, a molecular biologist by training, started taking photographs of places connected with Jewish culture (i.a. Jerusalem, cemeteries). This conversation with Maria Jęczmyk and Małgorzata Baranowska (literary critic) focuses predominantly on photography although

Michejda also talks about her passion and departure from science towards the humanities and poetry. „Photography and painting comprise only a certain stage, necessary in order to get even closer to poetry itself. These forgotten 'beings' possess more and more concealed faces (...). I began to smuggle into the biochemical prison a form of alchemy – Baudelaire, Nerval, Kafka, Borges or my beloved Cioran. In this manner, I betrayed the natural sciences physically and probably spiritually, although I remained loyal to them, albeit in a new way. Biochemistry is a description of life and death. I selected the other half for my new loyalty. As usual, it became apparent that here too – on the 'ice flow' of pain and death – the tongue fails”.

*Magdalena Sieramska*

Is this the vision of doomsday and paradise afterwards?  
An Analysis of one of the Symbols of Man's Destiny that  
Appear in Jewish Cult Art in the Polish Territories

In the article the author will analyse the images which appeared in Jewish cult art in the territories of central western Poland at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and were found until the turn of the twentieth century. It was a scene depicting sheep as they were coming out of a shed and moving towards a well. This picture can be found firstly on tombs, but has often been found as a decoration on *aronot ha-kodesh*. In this analysis, based on biblical texts and fragments of prayers which were made during the holidays of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, the author will try to prove that the scene is actually the vision of Doomsday and the eternal paradise afterwards. She will also attempt to trace the genesis of this image to areas of Poland.

*Bohdan Pocięj*

Seven Gates of Jerusalem

This text discusses *The Seven Gates of Jerusalem*, an oratory by Krzysztof Penderecki, first performed in Jerusalem in January

1997 and in Warsaw in March 1997. The author was inspired by the Faith and Divinity in the Word, revealed in the Bible (a frequent occurrence in the works by Penderecki), in this case – in the Psalms. All composers who follow the example of Monteverdi by writing music to texts of the Psalms and proposing an interpretation of their contents and poetic images in some manner refer to his arch-models. The same holds true for Penderecki whose patron is also the genius of Monteverdi. The author maintains that *The Seven Gates of Jerusalem* can be regarded as the crowning of the composer's hitherto experiences.

*Zofia Rydet* (died 1997) was an outstanding Polish photographer. The best known series of her photographs include *Little Man* (the world of children), *The World of Emotion and Imagination* (photo montages dealing with motherhood and the trepidation of old age), *The Infinity of Distant Paths* (metaphorical depictions of human life) and *A Sociological Record*. We publish two opinions concerning Zofia Rydet – by Urszula Czartoryska and Anna Beata Bohdziewicz – as well as her own statements concerning primarily *A Sociological Record*. A discussion on these works places emphasis on the ethical message accompanying the photographs and their author's documentary passion.

We also present the soundtrack from the outstanding film about Zofia Rydet *Infinity of Distant Paths* directed by Andrzej Różycki.

The group of texts connected with the anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski includes a consecutive fragment of correspondence with Elsie Masson, his first wife, prepared by their daughter Helena Wayne (*The Story of Marriage*), a letter by Bronisław Malinowski written during his first stay in London to Aniela Zagórska, a relative and translator of Joseph Conrad.

## W POPRZEDNICH NUMERACH

Problematyce symbolu poświęcony był numer 3/1998 „Kontekstów”, kulturze masowej nr 4/1988, filmowi i fotografii nr 3-4/1992, mitowi i literaturze nr 3-4/1995.

O symbolu w „Kontekstach” pisali m.in.:

w numerze 1/1980: Zbigniew Benedyktowicz, *Mircea Eliade, Rudolf Otto (Od fenomenologii religii do fenomenologii kultury)*;  
w numerze 3/1988: Zbigniew Benedyktowicz, *Symbol w etnografii*, S. Awierincew, *Symbol*, Jurij Łotman, *Symbol w systemie kultury*, Michał Klinger, *Symbol w teologii*, Paul Tillich, *Znaczenie i usprawiedliwienie symboli religijnych*, Mircea Eliade, *Metodologiczne uwagi o badaniu symboliki religijnej*;

w numerze 3-4/1992: Dariusz Czaja, *Symbol i film. Uwagi metodologiczne*, Don Fredericksen, „Bar Yokai”;

w numerze 2/1995: Wiesław Juszczyk, *O antropologii i symbolu*, w tym numerze opublikowaliśmy również rozmowę redakcyjną *O antropologii i symbolu*;

O fotografii w „Kontekstach” pisali m.in.:

w numerze 4/1979: Aleksander Jackowski, *Jana Świdorskiego widzenie sztuki ludowej*;

w numerze 1-2/1986: Krzysztof Kubiak, *Wokół fotografii nagrobnej*;

w numerze 1-4/1987: Roch Sulima, *Fotografia chłopów polskich*;

w numerze 3/1990: Aleksander Jackowski, *Portret ludzkiego losu* [o Zofii Rydet];

w numerze 3-4/1992: Małgorzata Baranowska, *Pocztówka masowa i fotografia uczuć*, Sławomir Sikora, *Fotografia – pamięć – wyobraźnia*, Anna Beata Bohdziewicz, *Fotodziennik, czyli piosenka o końcu świata*, Józef Szymańczyk, *Jestem fotografem* (wywiad przeprowadzony przez Annę Engelking, cz. I), fotografie i teksty Mariusza Wieczorkowskiego oraz Ryszard Ciarka, *Widzieć, odczuwać, myśleć. Rozmowa z Jackiem Ołędzkiem*;

w numerze 1/1993: Józef Szymańczyk, *Jestem fotografem* (dokończenie);

w numerze 1-2/1994: Hubert Czachowski, *O fotografii i etnografii*, Sławomir Sikora, *Fotografia schyłku wieku. Fotografia i mit*;

w poprzednim numerze 1-2/1997: zamieściliśmy blok tekstów poświęconych Bronisławowi Malinowskiemu: Grażyna Kubica-Heller, *Spotkanie z córką Bronisława Malinowskiego i jego biografem*, *Rozmowa z Heleną Wayne*, *Rozmowa z Michaeliem Youngiem*, Helena Wayne (Malinowska), *Wpływ kobiet na życie i dzieło Bronisława Malinowskiego*, Helena Wayne (Malinowska), *Historia małżeństwa. Listy Bronisława Malinowskiego i Elsie Masson* oraz Terence Wright, *Antropolog jako artysta: fotografie Malinowskiego z Trobriandów*.