

THE PROBLEM OF SELF-EXPRESSION IN PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE

The article is dedicated to anthropological dimension of the problem of constituting and positioning of author in a creating act. The main problem of the article is developing by comparing of the two spheres – philosophy and literature. The question of potential foundation of human existence is explored in this explanation.

It has been noticed a long time ago that the interaction of philosophical and artistic realm, which includes among other things literature, is not just a formal demarcation issue but also anthropological. Besides, nowadays it is quite common to hear that contemporary art is mostly philosophy. While looking at the issue closely one can give endless examples from the literature where the authors introduce philosophical underpinnings into the fabric of their works. This applies to Marcel Proust with “phenomenological calculations” in his monumental novel “In Search of Lost Time” (*la recherche du temps perdu*). On the other hand, Thomas Mann, who believed Oswald Spengler’s “The Decline of the West” (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*) to be “intellectual novel” or notion of Miguel de Unamuno that Hegel’s “Science of Logic” and Kant’s “Critique of Pure Reason” must be regarded as some kind of novels.

In any case, interactions between philosophy and literature have existed for a long time. Ancient philosophers used epic and poetic achievements of Homer and Hesiod, thereby developing an abstract conceptual thinking. They themselves taught their philosophical doctrines by artistic means – examples are the poems of Parmenides and Lucretius. In other cases, they resort to dialogue form of philosophizing, as we see in Socrates and Plato’s works, or use artistic means of writing like Friedrich Nietzsche and the existentialists. The works of Dante, Shakespeare and Goethe are full of philosophical thinking. Therefore, despite the traditional separation of myth and logos, both areas continue to provoke a definite comparison – from Heraclitus even to Hans-Georg Gadamer [4].

In the process of interaction between philosophy and literature, it has become important to decide what needs to be given priority – cognitive or aesthetic aspects. For example, literature is believed to attract the reader’s attention by means of empathy, imagination, feelings, etc., and philosophy has to have a factor of reasoning. In general, it is quite true. In

particular, because philosophy can expand intellectual capacity of literature by means of interpretation. This is what Lev Shestov and Nikolai Berdyaev did, for example, in relation to the work of Fyodor Dostoevsky, which is not devoid of philosophical completeness. Although the writer called himself “sewer” in philosophy. On the other hand, Plato dealt ruthlessly with his poetic achievements when he opened for himself the world of philosophy.

However, is it necessary to look closely at who does have more of – philosophy in the works of Jorge Luis Borges or poetics in Arthur Schopenhauer’s work? Our comparison will look as if there is a dominating realm, which has a leading role in this dichotomy.

The highlight, in our opinion, is not seeing how philosophical and artistic world of words are getting close, but rather how a human being resonates in this interaction.

The starting point of an attempt to show that philosophy and literature converge is to look at the essays of Maurice Blanchot, precisely comparison of what he called “the space of literature” [2] with the concept of “lifeworld” (*Lebenswelt*) of Edmund Husserl in his later works, which represents certain givens that outline the forms of human orientations in the world. It is clear that both approaches cannot and should not be made equal. However, both cases emphasize the importance of special factors - spiritual and semantic principles of a human being.

Nevertheless, phenomenology as a descriptive analysis of pure perception was substantially corrected through development of Martin Heidegger’s [5] hermeneutic dimension of “subject”. Let us recall that in phenomenology after eliminating Cartesian subject the usual problem of unity of consciousness arises, which Edmund Husserl resolves through the unity of transcendental subjectivity, but Heidegger criticizes such subjectivity as unsubstantiated. Later he will speak about the historical dimension of existing being, *Dasein*, which is fully immersed in the stream of becoming and not

reaching synthesis in the acts of consciousness. However, the unity is guaranteed by a limit in the time dimension – like birth and death.

To be fair though, it should be noted that the position of Edmund Husserl was still partially similar to the epic consciousness concept of Wilhelm Dilthey, who liked the idea of multiple individual and unique “living unity” which can be found in realistic novels of the nineteenth century. It is not incidental that Husserl at the end of his life remembered «poetry of the history of philosophy.»

That is why the subject cannot be considered simply as a recipient of various givens. So maybe it must be constantly born in the cycle of a call to create. So now, and especially after Kant’s definition of reflective, spontaneous structure of consciousness, we separate such fundamental philosophical concepts as substance and subject, given their changing character.

Also, let us remind ourselves how Michel Foucault [3] rightly raises questions about the limits of subjectivity by asking. How do you encode an author in numerous scrolls of sexual phantasms that are contained in the works of Marquis de Sade; or what, in fact, belongs to the heritage of Friedrich Nietzsche and subject to publication – printed or copied works, and perhaps also drafts and ruthlessly crossed out lines? In addition – who is behind biographical notes of, for example, Diogenes Laertius – is it really about real characters? Who or what is an author – only a function that organizes discourses and their meanings? Is it possible to create clear references from any name? After all, who was given the authorship of the inscription on a fence, a trivial Heideggerian *das Man*? What if everything lies in hidden possibilities of language?

In addition, it should be noted that the mutual interaction of philosophy and literature is important not only because it enables to distinguish philosophical meaning of a literary work, or vice versa – to identify literary excellence of philosophical text. It is also important because of a new display of rationality that combines logical foundations with cultural and historical context, such as in the philosophical essays of Bertrand Russell, who received the Nobel Prize in literature (as representative of rationalism and humanism and fighter for freedom of thought and speech in the West). By the way, Russell attempted to expand the boundaries of traditional rationality, by combining logical foundations with cultural and historical context. He, like no one else, demonstrated how literature and art set you free from the tyranny of fact – because it creates the possibility of self-understanding, because we are dealing with the interaction of artistic, philosophical,

mythological and scientific outlook, which expand the entry ways of a human into “being”.

Maurice Blanchot in “*L’Espace litt?raire*” [2] says the following: to write at least one poem you need to fully exhaust your own life. In addition, Martin Heidegger insists that thinking and poetry are serving a language, which gives a man opportunity to be a man.

However, writing and word determine fragile way of self-control as they are ended by death. In the works of Franz Kafka, death is particularly expressive, causing even renunciation of writing. By this refusal, he cannot but accept it as perhaps the only true authority. And if the written work is not only for making the author immortal, as it is believed by the Greeks, then Kafka understands creation rather like the experience of death, which becomes a significant event and not just an unfortunate incident. Despite the fact that death is a part of existence, creation is happening as if getting ready for death, as the desire for the hollow *not-knowing* where there is no human as subjective stability. To speak means to destroy the previous world and be ready for every other one.

Linguistic space paves crossings to other worlds, where the fact of death does not disappear but turns into another dimension of existence. Therefore, experience of immense being becomes a necessary condition for creativity. In the symbolic space of the Greek myth of Orpheus, the ban to look back at Eurydice could mean impossibility of appearance of sacral secrecy, the disclosure of which is punishable by loss of inspiration and removing from the source of the creative impulse. Nevertheless, as a real creator Orpheus wants to tempt his death by entering the Kingdom of Hades.

Thus, the problem of creation of a fair secret. It is impossible *to just want* to write literary or philosophical text. Underneath these intentions, motives and actions are somewhat inaccessible to clear explication.

Jean-Paul Sartre explains the author’s desire to writing as a question to the reader about the legitimacy of own activity, and at the same time as an expression of freedom. Instead, when George Orwell [9] noted that his literary motifs were caused by selfishness, rapid historic impulse or political expediency, we believe him less until he mentions the aesthetic ecstasy. It is even more intriguing when he compares writing with exhausting illness, and the definition of creation as a way to get rid of himself.

However, the most expressive experience is that of Antonin Artaud, who sent once his poetry samples to the editor of the magazine “*La Nouvelle Revue Fran?aise*” Jacques Riviere. Riviere dismissed his

poetry as flawed in its artistic form. Then Artaud wrote several letters to the editor, where he outlined his views on meaningfulness of words due to their inability to express opinion. He insisted on the flaws of words that clumsily fit into the poetic line, for the birth of thinking is accompanied by unbearable pain and inability to capture the author's state. Thus, Artaud seeks to find the centre of his own being, rather than order of rhymes and rhythm structure. In addition, this centre has distinctive "tags".

For example, in number 243 of "Philosophical Investigations" by Ludwig Wittgenstein he asks about the possibility of existence of the "inner language", understandable only to the author:

"A human being can encourage himself, give himself orders, obey, blame and punish himself; he can ask himself a question and answer it. We could even imagine human beings who spoke only in monologue; who accompanied their activities by talking to themselves. — An explorer who watched them and listened to their talk might succeed in translating their language into ours. (This would enable him to predict these people's actions correctly, for he also hears them making resolutions and decisions.)

But could we also imagine a language in which a person could write down or give vocal expression to his inner experiences—his feelings, moods, and the rest—for his private use? — Well, can't we do so in our ordinary language?—But that is not what I mean. The individual words of this language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language." [10, p. 88-89].

The structure of meaning can only be understood by a separate consciousness, it is not possible to get to it, but the expression of meaning becomes a sign, at which we are looking from outside. A complex rhetorical question is still remains: is it possible to highlight in such "individual language" what is our "I"?

Let us turn again to Maurice Blanchot: he/she who writes is somewhere on the side of writing, text, work — and does not even know about it. Position of a man is always beyond existing and definite. In the process of creating, the "I" is lost, and it is necessary to search for it again. This loss is proved by the literature, which becomes a space where a card is played with identity, doubles, crushes and death. Moreover, it is as if the author is constantly writing the same text. This infinity of creating is compared with the infinite spirit and is compared to the work that dooms the creator to loneliness.

Thus, the act of creation appears also as intimacy. Can we not feel it in Mykola (Nikolai) Gogol's and Franz Kafka's works, who denounced their own creations? Do the late works of Arthur Rimbaud

demonstrate it not strange, this inability to create? In each of these cases, we are witnessing a kind of intolerance of the work, which is not even understood by the author himself. So maybe it means the author is getting closer to himself. Then what is this intimacy? There are no regulations that would measure skill or ability to perform.

This does not have solid grounds, and that is why it keeps the ability to sink into the abyss of uncertainty and find the strength to make order, find the right words to say something after all is said. That is why creating is a question about yourself. Writing comes from fear in the face of loneliness, Maurice Blanchot constantly repeats. Moreover, it is not easy writing that presumes existence of letters, though arranged in a certain way. You can write a diary, capturing every moment of your life. Would it become the literary work, which tells a timeless story? Creativity comes from obsession from the loss of being. However, not in the sense what Samuel Beckett was trying to do, by melting into the infinite Nothing. This is about a special "setup" of the language. Not the exact grip of what is difficult to express but permanent enchantment of the inexpressible.

Whoever does this constantly exposes himself to the risk and sacrifices himself. This existential concern points to the possibility of creation, the starting point of which is getting closer to the point that does not open/explain anything. Saying about this point does not mean grasping its meaning. This is an unreachable realm. You only aspire to get to it without reaching. This makes the process of creating similar to prayer, but not in the traditional sense. It resembles the situation of self-loss, when it is difficult even to mention the word "I". Friedrich Hölderlin [6] describes this, when he says that the gods retreated from the world. Nevertheless, it is not enough to seek refuge in the external world. You have to know where to look for self.

In the speeches of Zarathustra, there is a chapter called "On the Bestowing Virtue", where Friedrich Nietzsche wrote:

"One repays a teacher badly if one always remains a pupil only. And why would you not want to pluck at my wreath? You revere me, but what if your reverence falls down some day? Beware that you are not killed by a statue! You say you believe in Zarathustra? But what matters Zarathustra! You are my believers, but what matter all believers! You had not yet sought yourselves, then you found me. All believers do this; that's why all faith amounts to so little. Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you" [7, p. 59].

Indeed, where do you look for yourself? On the other hand, maybe after all these talks about the «death of the author / subject' this is impossible?

Quite a good example of the complexity of the author's identity in Ukrainian literature is the figure of Viktor Petrov-Domontovych-Ber. It was under these three names that a man was "hiding", the man who managed to live several parallel lives: be an author of fiction, a scholar, a Soviet spy. This sort of "splitting" of the author's "I" makes it impossible to gather together a person's real life. However, without such diversification of identities it is difficult to talk about the completeness of personality. Not surprisingly, the implementation of different strategies of identity often moves to "the space of literature" as expansion of the human "being-in-the-world".

The concept of Mikhail Bakhtin's "polyphonic novel" [1] is also similar to the realm of "the space of literature". He studies the problem of the author's expression looking at the "polyphony" of consciousness represented by the characters of Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels. Every thought is complemented/interrupted by parallel imaginary voices that act as a sort of ideological doubles. This creates a situation where the characters begin to live their own lives and do not depend on the total figure of the author. The latter is not their sole master, but he also is influenced by the "imaginary voice".

Are we adding to the importance of the issue unnecessarily? The thing is that the problem of keeping the voice of the *Other* in the human mind is a measure of the ability to represent the existence of the subject, which is in the process of formation.

Actually, now it is clear why the thesis of the "death of the author" in Roland Barthes does not qualify as a simple elimination of subjectivity that is supposedly replaced with something like «automatic writing.» It is rather the absence of monopoly on the sources of meaning or standardization of the text levels, and, therefore, consciousness.

Here we see the emphasis on continuity of creation of the author's "I". Hearing the voice of the *Other*, as it is done by Mikhail Bakhtin, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Lacan or Paul Ricoeur, must keep the connectors with the rest of previous voices. Only then, the author becomes a master of the elusive speaking, in which one can feel loneliness. Capturing potential modalities of "I" creates liminal (marginal) [8] personality whose centre is everywhere and nowhere. This requires continuous "interacting" of individual units of Alter Ego. Karl Gustav Jung insists that the existence of permanent "shifts" in the structure of subjectivity is sometimes an overwhelming task, although it is quite normal for the psyche.

This is what practical philosophy of Hryhoriy Skovoroda was about, he is famous for his saying "The World was trying to catch me, but did not catch me". Therefore, existence involves changing faces as ways of human existence. With the beginning of creation, the author is born too. The more words he frees from the ocean of language, the more balance his personality gets. But the minute he starts creating again, his "I" will certainly go into the threshold state and will transform into an element of "self-alienation" in order to once again feel the impulse to creation.

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