

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

THE CONCEPT OF THE DUPLICITY OF BEING (FROM GERMAN ROMANTICISM TO PRESENT)

Abstract

The following scientific paper aims to show the realization of the romantic concept of progressive universal poetry by Friedrich Schlegel on the basis of the works of E.T.A. Hoffmann and Thomas Mann. To this purpose, the fairy tale “The Golden Pot” (“Der goldene Topf”) and the novella “Tonio Kröger” are subject to analysis. In the analysis of the literary works and the presentation of the poetics of the writers, the main emphasis is on the problem of the relationship between poetry and reality, spirit and nature, which lies at the basis of the concept of the duplicity of being.

Keywords: cognition, truth, duplicity, dualism, literary-aesthetic reflections.

Introduction

The well-known romantic concept of progressive universal poetry of Friedrich Schlegel had already developed by 1800. According to this concept, Romantic poetry consists of a permanent alternation of poetry and reflection of poetry. Through the permanent representation of content-related and/or formal opposites, a state of suspense is achieved, which is referred to as romantic irony. It plays with the construction of illusion and the destruction of illusion, which results in the presentiment of the unity of both.

However, with the help of romantic irony, romantic literature expresses a fundamental critique of fiction: “...the critical metafictionality of romantic irony includes a critique of the conceptual comprehensibility of last reality. However, it does not abolish it as the last reality” (Quendler, 2002, p. 167).

Romantic poetry can only approach its goal (unity with the universe), but it is created in the

first place by the opposition that separates poetry from its objective. This is what creates the romantic motif of longing.

Accordingly, specific conditions for the creation of literary work are typical for romantic writing, which are always reflected upon. As Novalis (1978) says, “To write is to create. All poetry must be a living individual” (p. 323). The poet creates his world, and he is a creator. Through his subjectivity, he “becomes the medium of a truth occurring through artistic representation” (Knaller, 2006, p. 28). This results in the poet’s very high valuation: “The artist is a revelator, the ‘Messiah of Nature’ (Novalis), whose creative component is expressed in him, and becomes a guarantor of aesthetic distinctiveness, becomes nature himself and acts as such. Poet and poetry become transcendent greats and authorities, whose place is in a general natural structure” (Knaller, 2006, p. 29). In Novalis’ concept of the natural poet, the opposites of nature and spirit are thus also suspended.

The separation of nature and spirit goes back to the triadic model of the world history postulated in modern times by both the classics and the early Romantics. This model is based on a historical-philosophical-abstractly conceived sequence of times: the first stage of development forms the so-called “Golden Age”, its middle phase stands for alienation, and the third stage symbolizes the ideal state, which is a reflected synthesis of the first and second ages. The “Golden Age”, which should also be mentioned in the analysis of the fairy tale “The Golden Pot” (“Der goldene Topf”), characterizes the still unreflected and therefore self-evident unity of nature and man. The second phase stands for the modern present, namely the conflict with nature, which has arisen because of the exclusive orientation of man towards intellect and science. The future third phase is presented as a conscious and reflexively potentiated harmony with nature, in which man is to achieve harmony with himself.

In this regard F. W. J. Schelling emphasizes the free will of man, and he sees the goal of the world history in the fact that man faces up to the task of his own free will: The painful development of the Godhead comes to its end, and everything, redeemed from humanity, enters the eternally unmoved rest of the Godhead. Thus, nature and spirit would again form a unity and no longer oppose each other as opposites (Wühlr, 1998, pp. 79-86).

Using the works and literary-aesthetic reflections of E. T. A. Hoffmann and Thomas Mann, this scientific paper will show how creatively these poets implemented the early Romantic demands in their works. In presenting the works of these writers and their poetics, the article will highlight the problem of the relationship between poetry and reality, spirit and nature, which lies at the basis of the concept of the du-

plicity of being.

Main Text

In E. T. A. Hoffmann’s work, the fact-fiction problem is reflected in the following literary principles, namely the “Serapionic Principle”, the “Callot’s Principle” and the principle of the “recognition of the duplicity” of the world.

The narrative “The Hermit Serapion” is at the beginning of the four-volume work “The Serapion Brothers”. The story “The Hermit Serapion” is at the beginning of the four-volume work “The Serapion Brothers”. Cyprian (one of the friends) reports that he met the hermit himself, who considers himself to be the Saint Serapion of the second century. Thus, Serapion claims to receive visits from Dante, Ariost and Petrarch. In the framework discussion, Serapion’s madness is described as a characteristic feature of the poet: “Your hermit, my Cyprianus, was a true poet, he had seen what he proclaimed, and therefore his speech touched the heart and mind. - Poor Serapion, in what did your madness consist other than in the fact that some hostile star had robbed you of the knowledge of the duplicity by which, in fact, our earthly existence alone is conditioned? There is an inner world, and the spiritual power to see it with full clarity, in the perfect brilliance of active life, but it is our earthly heritage that the outer world in which we are nested...” (Dein Einsiedler, mein Cyprianus, war ein wahrhafter Dichter, er hatte das wirklich geschaut, was er verkündete, und deshalb ergriff seine Rede Herz und Gemüt. – Armer Serapion, worin bestand dein Wahnsinn anders, als daß irgendein feindlicher Stern dir die Erkenntnis der Duplizität geraubt hatte, von der eigentlich allein unser irdisches Sein bedingt ist. Es gibt eine innere Welt, und die geistige Kraft, sie in voller

Klarheit, in dem vollendeten Glanze des regesten Lebens zu schauen, aber es ist unser irdisches Erbteil, daß eben die Außenwelt in der wir eingeschachtelt. . ., Hoffmann, 2001, p. 24).

Serapion's madness consisted in the fact that he could perceive "no outside world" and thus "the hidden lever" (Hoffmann, 2001, p. 24). Serapion's poetic qualities consisted in the fact that he saw the imagined clearly before his eyes, but since he had lost touch with the outside world, he had no insight into the "knowledge of duplicity". The "connection between delusion and reality" (Pikulik, 2004, p. 136), imagination, fiction or hallucination and factuality, between "fantasy and historicity" (Pikulik, 2004, p. 137) Pikulik (2004) calls "one of the most important aesthetic leitmotifs of Hoffmann's collection of stories" (p. 137), if not of the entire work.

The concept of duplicity goes back to Deterding (1982). By duplicity, Deterding means "the sum of all dualisms on the page, by dualisms - the individual pairs of opposites. Together they constitute the unity of the sheet, its harmony, the 'duplicity' of being. Duplicity is thus not only the sum of dualism, but dualism recognized on a second level. For once this has been achieved and also internally affirmed, that is, recognized and acknowledged, then the decisive step has been taken: the overcoming of dualism in the 'perfect' recognition of the duplicity of being, of 'duality'. The term then comes to mean the unity of a double" (p. 31).

According to Deterding (2007), Callot's principle consists in "allowing the fantastic to enter into ordinary life: into a work of art or literature, where it has such an effect that it in its turn penetrates the life of the viewer or reader: into their experienced reality" (pp. 67-68).

These principles are called upon to play a complex game with the relationship between po-

etry and truth or reality and fiction or to transcend it.

Anselmus, the main character of the fairy tale "The Golden Pot", is caught between two opposites. On the one hand, he lives in the bourgeois world among vice-chancellors and privy councillors; on the other hand, his childlike, poetic mind makes his "real" life difficult, but receptive to the wonderful. He is capable of synesthetic perception: green snakes appear to him in elderberry bushes, doorknobs become witches etc. Almost every figure in the "Golden Pot" has its "opponent" in the respective another world. He then falls in love with one of them, namely Serpentina. Although at first, he thinks this apparition is a dream¹, later he accepts a writing job with the Secret Archivist Lindhorst, who is the birth father of the three snakes. It is also mentioned in the fairy tale that the three daughters each receive a golden pot as a dowry, in which "our wonderful kingdom, as it now exists in harmony with all nature" („unser wundervolles Reich, wie es jetzt im Einklang mit der ganzen Natur besteht“, Hoffmann, 1993, p. 321) - Atlantis - is reflected, and in which a never withering fire lily grows, whose scent helps the respective youngster to understand the wonders of Atlantis. The path to Atlantis leads through the recognition of the truth. There [In Atlantis - Y.E.] Anselmus and Serpentina will be happily united, in the "life of poetry, which reveals the sacred harmony of all beings as the deepest secret of nature." („Leben in der Poesie, der sich der heilige Einklang aller Wesen als tiefstes Geheimnis der Natur offenbaret“, Hoffmann, 1993, p. 321).

Stefan Ringel (1997) now divides the already mentioned experience of the dualisms in "The Golden Pot" into three categories: "First,

¹ According to Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert, man can only recognize the truth of nature and God in a state of dream or madness.

the inner intuition of the infinite collides with the seemingly finite outer sensory world” (p. 107). The conflict was already evident in the first chapter (Vigilie) when the infinite broke into the world of the finite. In the second chapter, the second conflict is described. Inside Anselmus and the reader, the idea of the infinite becomes questionable. Anselmus did not know how to interpret what he had experienced because it contradicted the ordinary.

In the third chapter, finally, the whole event is placed in a “universal mythical context, which represents the struggle between the demonic and the divine principle” (Ringel, 1997, p. 107).

Serpentina appears in the fairy tale as the voice of nature and Anselmus is supposed to overcome the separation between spirit and nature in order to reach her. However, the path to recognition proves to be difficult for him, since he is long rifted between his philistine life and the new world of poetry that opens up to him.

While rewriting the manuscript, Anselmus once had an accident: despite Lindhorst’s warning, he made an ink stain on the valuable manuscript and was banished to a bottle as punishment. However, he is freed from the glass by an insight, namely that the bottle is made of crystal and glass at the same time, i.e. that it has properties of the miraculous as well as the ordinary. As long as he has not grasped their mutual interpenetration, he is trapped in contrast (Pikulik, 1969, p. 341). This is the origin of the concept of duplicity (or in other words - polarity) of being, which is the sum of all opposites. It is “recognized dualism. Cognition leads away from suffering the contradiction - towards its recognition. Dualism is recognized and acknowledged, inwardly affirmed and thus overcome. Duplicity means to take the step ... from suffering the contradiction to the sovereignty of recognizing the

contradiction. Now, at this stage, the dual on the one hand is ambiguous - on the other hand - is dissolved into duplicity. From this duality, the sharpness of the opposition ... has disappeared; what remains is ‘both-and’. This is the new unity... This realization is, if one wants, a synthesis of the contradiction” (Deterding, 1991, p. 268).

It is precisely this knowledge that frees him from captivity. He recognizes that both “worlds” or forms of existence determine each other, that they are both true, and this offers itself as a way to overcome the contradiction. The student Anselmus thus transforms from a rewriter into a writer, a poet and reaches the path to cognition. There, as it has already been mentioned, the love for Serpentina leads him. Finally, he reaches the realm of poetry, where all the beings of nature are one. This does not mean, however, that man should take refuge in poetry, but rather that only through the experience of the dualism of poetry and everyday life can its duplicity be recognized and a level of consciousness be reached in which man’s alienation from nature is lifted. Preisendanz (1976) summarizes this experience as follows: “It is only through this reflexive relationship of the narrated world to a narrator, in whom the victory of inner forces is completed and who thus embodies humour as applied fantasy, that the dualism of the fantastic and the ordinary disappears in a recognition to which confirms precisely the ambivalence of all that is real that basically everything is one” (p. 90).

It can, therefore, be concluded that poetry and reality, the imaginary and the real contradict each other until their duplicity is recognized. For with the power of imagination, a connection between the two is created, and a stage of reflection is made possible, on which the duplicity becomes recognizable, and the suffering of the contradiction dissolves.

The creative power of the imagination becomes visible through the fact that the Romantic literature reflects itself, its conditions of literary production and even its reception, which our scientific article touched upon in the very beginning.

Thomas Mann's motivation to write stems from the thesis about the loss of harmony of life. Hermann Kurzke (2010) emphasizes that Mann's search for "lost irrationality" is a romantic move par excellence (pp. 185-186).

The intertwining of life and spirit, life and death find their way into the writer's early work, namely in the novellas "Tristan", "Tonio Kröger", "Death in Venice" and last but not least in the novel "Buddenbrooks". It becomes the metaphysical basis of his entire oeuvre. In the works mentioned, "spirit" and "life" are dissonances: there is still no harmonious connection between them.

Already his Tonio Kröger carried in his heart the longing love for the blond and blue-eyed, embodied in Hans Hansen and Inge Holm, through suffering.

The following quotations from the novella testify to Tonio's inner conflict: "tossed back and forth between holiness and heat, refined, impoverished, exhausted by cold and artificially exalted exaltations, lost, devastated, tormented, sick" („zwischen Heiligkeit und Brunst hin- und hergeworfen, raffiniert, verarmt, erschöpft von kalten und künstlich erlesenen Exaltationen, verirrt, verwüstet, zermartert, krank", Mann, 2004, 2.1, p. 316).

The essays "The social position of the writer in Germany" ("Die gesellschaftliche Stellung des Schriftstellers in Deutschland", 1910), "The writer" ("Der Literat", 1913) and "About Fiorenza" ("Über Fiorenza", 1912) represent a standpoint that resembles the middle position of litera-

ture, because of the polarities stemming from romanticism. Mann (2002) concludes here: "The synthesis is the poet himself. He represents it, always and everywhere, the reconciliation of spirit and art, cognition and creativity, intellectualism and simplicity, reason and demoniac, asceticism and beauty - the [romantic concept of a] Third Empire" (14.1, p. 349).² The tension of this interrelation is reflected in the irony (Etarayan, 2020, p. 90). This very conflict is depicted in the novella "Tonio Kröger".

"Tonio Kröger" was first published in the "Neue Deutsche Rundschau" of February 1903 and was then included in the novella collection "Tristan. Six novellas". Thomas Mann had initially intended "Literature" as the title of the novella, due to the central chapter Lisaveta, which contains a conversation about art and literature, in which the main motifs of the novella are alluded to.

At the heart of the novella is the development of an inwardly fissured character who is involved in the conflict between spirit and life, insurmountable contrast between the spheres of artistry and bourgeoisie. The final chapter of the novella, which consists of a letter to Lisaveta Ivanovna, bears witness to this. In it Tonio tells her the result of his search for identity: "I am standing between the two worlds," he sums up at the end, "I am not at home in either one and as a result, I have a bit of a hard time. You artists call me a bourgeois and bourgeois are tempted to arrest me... I don't know which of the two offends me more bitterly. The bourgeois are stupid; but you, who call yourself worshippers of beauty, who call me phlegmatic and without longing, should consider that there is a sphere of art, so deep, so from the beginning and by fate, that no

² What is meant, of course, is the old, historical-philosophical term, which the Nazis later misused as well.

longing seems to him sweeter and more sensual than that for the delights of the commonplace.” („Ich stehe zwischen zwei Welten“, resümiert er am Ende, „ich bin in keiner daheim und habe es infolgedessen ein bißchen schwer. Ihr Künstler nennt mich einen Bürger, und die Bürger sind versucht, mich zu verhaften... ich weiß nicht, was von beiden mich bitterer kränkt. Die Bürger sind dumm; ihr Anbeter der Schönheit aber, die ihr mich phlegmatisch und ohne Sehnsucht heißt, solltet bedenken, daß es ein Künstlertum gibt, so tief, so von Anbeginn und Schicksals wegen, daß keine Sehnsucht ihm süßer und empfindenswerter erscheint als die nach den Wonnen der Gewöhnlichkeit.“ Mann, 2004, 2.1, p. 317).

Even as a writer, Tonio remains a bourgeois who is excluded from both the bourgeoisie and the bohemian worlds.

Käte Hamburger (1932) brings the character of Tonio close to the romanticists. She describes him as “the one who suffers from the original Romantic problem: the loneliness of the self and longing for the world”, and because “this suffering, as Thomas Mann deeply recognized, was carried out by Romanticism in the form of irony” (p. 26). In reference to K. Hamburger, we³ point out that, philosophically, Mann’s understanding of irony can be traced back to F. Schlegel’s concept of romantic irony, but is by no means identical with it; the author himself, in his “Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man” („Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen“) points out that his concept of irony is identical with Nietzsche’s, which consists “in the self-negation of the spirit in favour of life” (Hamburger, 1932, p. 26). It is precisely this polarity of life and spirit

that Thomas Mann expands into antithetic, and this artistic design principle permeates the whole early work of Thomas Mann. However, in his early work, the overcoming of polarity and the mutual penetration of these spheres are not yet achieved.

The central theme of his early work is a discerning (erkennender) spirit that experiences life and its “otherness”: That it has “an icy and outrageously presumptuous awareness of this prompt and superficial handling of feeling through literary language” („eine eisige und empörend anmaßliche Bewandnis mit dieser prompten und oberflächlichen Erledigung des Gefühls durch die literarische Sprache“, Mann, 2004, 2.1, p. 277) is the reverse side of Tonio Kröger’s high experience of the power of the spirit. For this reason, the irony remains the predominant principle of representation in this phase of Thomas Mann’s work, which Hamburger regards as “an expression of [an] already very Romantic problem situation” (Hamburger, 1932, p. 30), which Romanticism, because of Friedrich Schlegel, represents in its preliminary stage.

Conclusions

The modernity of Hoffmann’s interpretation of the concept of universal poetry consists in the fact that he lets the poetization of the world begin with his readers. This means that only through the experience of the dualism of poetry and everyday life, imaginary and real, can their duplicity be recognized and a level of consciousness be reached in which man’s spirit from nature is removed. Finally, it is the power of the imagination that creates a connection between the two and a stage of reflection, where duplicity is recognized and the suffering of contradiction dissolves, becomes possible. The creative power of

³ This scientific article summarizes some theses of the statements of present monograph of Yelena Etaryan: *Formen literarischer Selbstreflexion bei Thomas Mann und Günter Grass*. Königshausen & Neumann, 2019.

the poet's imagination is essential in keeping with the Romantic world and its concept of literature.

For Thomas Mann, the question of art is thus directly connected with the relationship between the fields of spirit and life. In the works of the early period, the poet or writer is usually the main protagonist who represents the sphere of the spirit and is not yet able to establish the relationship to life. For the Romantics also, poetry belongs in the middle position between the phenomena mentioned. It has also been found that irony is a central topic of the theoretical-aesthetic subject by Thomas Mann.⁴

It has been pointed out that the Romantics and Thomas Mann share the same conception of irony that is on floating between polarities, which draw and are in need to each other, though are not easily reconciled or abolished, but at the same time are maintained in their explicitness and can merely be merged partly. It should be noted, however, that F. Schlegel's concept of irony is not based on the dualism of life and spirit, but a division of the self and saying the self. This means "a tension of self-creation and self-negation" (Pikulik 2000, p. 157), which is reflected in two moments of experience - in the "unconsciously" or unconsciously living moment of the self and in reflecting on this self thus experiencing (Schlegel, 1967, p. 204), in other words, formulated in "life" and "consciousness" (or spirit). The poetic processing of this problem requires the transfer of this dualism out of the "I" of the poet himself into two objectively and antithetically opposed figures or worlds of figures, into the realms of "life" and "spirit".

⁴ See also the article Etaryan, Y. (2020). Ironie als „Fermentation philosophischer und ästhetischer Spekulation“ (von Friedrich Schlegel und Thomas Mann). *Wisdom*, 1(14), 88-97 (in English).

The above mentioned is reflected in the striking parallel between the main protagonists of the works "The Golden Pot" and "Tonio Kröger", as both Anselmus and Tonio Kröger are rifted, and the path to cognition proves to be difficult and full of suffering for both of them.

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