

Lubię wrony – Poet's Words and Cultural Scripts

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“Our life was like wearing an old, shabby, worn-out suit. We knew it had holes in the elbows, that everyone could see your butt through pants, but we did not sense any chance for a change, because elsewhere there were other, better suits. In a way, we were doomed to that Poland. And we loved that Poland”.

(Stanisław Lem¹)

I Introduction

Lem's observations cited above, regarding the non-heroic heroism of staying and working in one's own motherland in conditions which are far from optimal, are also present in works by Wojciech Młynarski, a “song poet”², although he is one generation younger than Lem. *Lubię wrony* [I like crows], one of the most famous and appreciated³ texts by Młynarski, undertakes this issue. One factor behind its popularity was the language: simultaneously innovative and based on collective images of reality, well-rooted in language and culture, and referring to both of these areas in a way that was clear to readers, even if they were not educated in the humanities.

Today the specificity of those images and the ways in which they manifest themselves in creative texts interest linguists representing the anthropological-cognitive movement, who

¹ Lem, Stanisław, in an interview by Stanisław Bereś. Telewizja Literacka TVL. accessed: 15.05.2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnUwxKcZR9Y>

² Piotr Derlatka, *Poeci piosenki* [Song poets] 1956-1989. Agnieszka Osiecka, Jeremi Przybora, Wojciech Młynarski i Jonasz Kofta (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2012).

³ “It was the favorite song of, among others, Stanisław Dygat, who in 1968 had me rewrite it by hand and hung it above his desk”. Wojciech Młynarski, *Rozmowy* [Conversations] (Warszawa: Prószyński i S-ka, 2018), 355.

stress that even the most spontaneous, private expression of individual experience is deeply permeated by the symbolic systems of culture⁴. Researchers who study culturally-conditioned interpretation of the world rooted in language and taking place via language in the process of speaking and writing⁵ use varied methodological tools, including script theory.

1.1 Script theory in linguistic and textual studies

The meaning of the notion of *script*, which is my focus here, was proposed for the first time in 1970s by Schank and Abelson⁶, primarily in reference to the mental representation of what we know about typical, routinely performed actions and events in which people normally participate, such as eating in a restaurant⁷. With time this term extended its meaning and started to include conceptualizations of various event-related experiences shared by members of a given cultural community: from holiday rituals, such as Christmas⁸, to everyday activities, such as trade⁹ or office work¹⁰, to the stereotypical course of emotional human interactions, such as sensual love (from falling in love to breaking up¹¹) or anger (from feeling offended to physiological arousal, negative thoughts and a desire for revenge, to defensive and retaliatory reactions¹²).

Zdzisław Chlewiński observed that script is a defining structure (context) of a notion, which would be incomprehensible without it¹³, thus highlighting the cognitive character of this phenomenon. Meanwhile, Wojciech Burszta stressed its cultural and communicational dimension:

An individual growing up in a socio-cultural system learns to recognize them [scripts], mostly via language, which gives names to such “bricks” of shared cultural experiences. Language is thus rooted in experience, and aspects of this experiences, conceptualized and described by language, become cultural schemas, complete units which are not easily taken apart¹⁴.

⁴ Anna Pajdzińska, *Sposoby uobecniania się podmiotu w tekście* [Ways of manifesting subject's presence in a text], in *Podmiot w języku i kulturze* [Subject in language and literature], eds. Jerzy Bartmiński, Anna Pajdzińska (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2008), 227-228.

⁵ Anna Pajdzińska, *Interpretacja w języku* [Interpretation in language], in: *Polonistyka w przebudowie*, ed. Małgorzata Czerwińska, et al. (Kraków: Universitas, 2005), 293-304.

⁶ Jean Matter Mandler, *Opowiadania, skrypty i sceny: aspekty teorii schematów* [Stories, Scripts, and Scenes: Aspects of Schema Theory], trans. Małgorzata Cierpisz (Kraków: Universitas, 2004), 99.

⁷ Mandler.

⁸ Wojciech J. Burszta, *Antropologia kultury. Tematy, teorie, interpretacje* [Anthropology of culture. Themes, theories, interpretations] (Poznań: Zysk i S-ka, 1998), 77.

⁹ Ryszard Tokarski, “Skrypty w semantycznym opisie systemu i tekstu” [Scripts in a semantic description of a system and a text]. *Poradnik Językowy*, no. 6 (2012): 46-55.

¹⁰ Aneta Wysocka, *Fakty – język – podmiotowość. Stylistyczne osobliwości reportażu Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2016), 102-118.

¹¹ For a script of the language of love in English, see Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphors of Anger, Pride and Love. A Lexical Approach to the structure of concepts* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing House, 1986). For Polish: Aneta Wysocka, *O miłości uskładanej ze słów. Obraz miłości erotycznej w polszczyźnie ogólnej oraz poezji Marii Pawlikowskiej-Jasnorzewskiej, Anny Świrszczyńskiej i Haliny Poświatowskiej* [On love constructed of words. The image of erotic love in general Polish and the poetry of MP-J, AŚ, and HP] (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2009), 157-204.

¹² James A. Russel and Ghyslaine Lemay, “Pojęcia dotyczące emocji” [Notions related to emotions], in: *Psychologia emocji* [Handbook of Emotions], eds. Michael Lewis, Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones (Gdańsk: GWP, 2005), 623-625.

¹³ Zdzisław Chlewiński, *Umysł. Dynamiczna organizacja pojęć. Analiza psychologiczna* [Mind. A dynamic organization of notions. A psychoanalysis] (Warszawa: PWN, 1999), 204.

¹⁴ Burszta, 77.

Script has thus become a capacious theoretical category. The present paper will also rely on a broad understanding of it as a more or less conventionalized mental representation of some experience which can be accepted as typical for members of a given community, i.e. constituting part of shared cultural knowledge¹⁵. It has its own linguistic exponents, thanks to which it is actualized in a text, constituting an interpretative base for the text, i.e. it conditions the meaning of a text in a way that is in line with the sender's intention. It is possible to distinguish a typical sequence of scenes or events, their typical actors or participants, typical objects, standard condition triggering events, and typical effects of actions undertaken [Bobryk 1997, p. 62] in a script.

1.2 Imaging and metaphorization in the context of the script theory

Scene – one of the components of a script listed by Jerzy Bobryk – deserves special attention here. The category of *imaging* is significant in considerations regarding organization of scenes; understood in various ways depending on a given methodological tradition, it is nonetheless thought to be crucial in studies in artistic texts. As observed by Elżbieta Tabakowska:

Signing a treaty of mutual help and cooperation between literary studies experts and linguists obviously requires delineating shared research fields. A group of issues defined (both in literary studies and linguistics) as *imaging* is among the most important. In literary studies it is a group of ways of conveying thoughts, emotions, and defined slips of reality in a (literary) text. In modern theories imaging is defined not as imitation, but rather as a reflection of a specific way of seeing the world, conditioned by its many aspects. This definition almost completely overlaps with the meaning of imaging proposed by cognitive linguistics: as a multi-aspect way of conceptualizing an object of perception in the process of cognition¹⁶.

Imaging is considered the foundation of understanding the essence of language in Ronald Langacker's cognitive theory, in which it is equated with conceptualization:

Linguistic meaning resides in conceptualization, which I have so far characterized as being dynamic, interactive, imagistic (as opposed to propositional), and imaginative (involving metaphor, blending, fictivity, and mental space construction)¹⁷.

Langacker states that “an expression imposes a particular construal, reflecting just one of the countless ways of conceiving and portraying the situation in question”, and that human

¹⁵In the literature there are several notions which refer to the phenomenon in question: *shared cultural knowledge*, *knowledge about the world*, *common world*, *common knowledge* and *cultural common ground*. See, respectively: Michael Tomasello, *Kulturowe źródła ludzkiego poznawania* [Cultural Origins of Human Cognition, trans. Joanna Rączaszek (Warszawa: PIW, 2002). Aldona Skudrzykowa and Krystyna Urban, *Mały słownik terminów z zakresu socjolingwistyki i pragmatyki językowej* [A small dictionary of sociolinguistics and pragmatics terms] (Kraków-Warszawa: Rytm, 2000), 146–148. Teun van Dijk, “Dyskurs polityczny i ideologia” [Political discourse and ideology], trans. Aneta Wysocka, *Etnolingwistyka*, No 15 (2003): 7–28.

¹⁶Elżbieta Tabakowska, *Językoznawstwo zastosowane* [Applied linguistics] (Kraków-Budapeszt-Syrakuzy: Asteria, 2019), 69.

¹⁷Polish version: Ronald Langacker, *Gramatyka kognitywna. Wprowadzenie*, trans. Elżbieta Tabakowska i in. (Kraków: Universitas, 2009), 70. English version: *Cognitive Grammar. A Basic Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 43

“imaginative abilities” – with our tendency to think metaphorically – are the basis of this conceptual mechanism.¹⁸

In cognitive linguistics metaphor is treated not simply as a means of poetic imagination and a rhetorical ornament¹⁹; it is considered to be a common phenomenon in everyday speech, constituting an important tool for cognizing the reality and verbalizing the results of this cognition. This refers especially to complex or abstract issues:

We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of how we in part structure and experience, consciously and unconsciously, by means of metaphor²⁰.

The theory of conceptual blending, i.e. conceptual integration, originally proposed by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner²¹ is one model for describing metaphorical speech²² in the cognitive paradigm. In the light of this concept, so-called *mental spaces*, i.e. organized groups of information²³, against the background of which a given language structure is understood, play a role in creating non-literary senses. Two of those spaces – each constituting an organized area of some shared, more or less detailed knowledge about a given topic of the sender and the recipient – are called *input spaces*: if we accept that a metaphor is about talking and thinking about one phenomenon in terms of another phenomenon, then intersubjective, conventionalized characteristics of both of these phenomena would be contained in the first and second input space, respectively. On a high level of abstraction both of these spaces have certain general elements in common, thanks to which their conceptual integration is possible: these elements create the so-called *generic space*. This integration results in another mental space, blending, which comprises selected, more or less detailed components of all three spaces. And it is blending which is equated with the metaphorical meaning of a given expression, understood as conceptualization in the cognitive spirit²⁴.

In *Cognitive Grammar* Lagnacker refers to conceptual blending, but he does not use the notion of *script* – instead, he uses a synonym, *scenario*; he understands it also as knowledge accessed

¹⁸Langacker, 18 (Polish version), 4 (English version).

¹⁹Polish version: George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metafory w naszym życiu*, trans. Tomasz Krzeszowski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Aletheia, 2010), 29. English version: *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

²⁰Lakoff, 213 (Polish version), 158 (English version).

²¹Vyvyan Evans, *Leksykon językoznawstwa kognitywnego* [A Glossary of Cognitive Linguistics], trans. Magdalena Buchta et al. (Kraków: Universitas, 2009), 157–158. Similarly: John R. Taylor, *Gramatyka kognitywna* [Cognitive Grammar], trans. Magdalena Buchta, Łukasz Wiraszka (Kraków: Universitas, 2007), 637–641.

²²On the relations between the cognitive metaphor theory and traditional models of metaphors – substitutive, comparative, interactional, and pragmatic – see: Olaf Jäkel, *Metafory w abstrakcyjnych domenach dyskursu. Kognitywno-lingwistyczna analiza metaforycznych modeli aktywności umysłowej, gospodarki i nauki*, [Metaphors in Abstract Domains of Discourse. A Cognitive-Linguistic Investigation into the Domains of Mental Activity, Economics, and Science] trans. Monika Banaś, Bronisław Drąg (Kraków: Universitas, 2003), 95–127.

²³Evans, 116.

²⁴Let us look at John R. Taylor's (Taylor, 640) example of the metaphor of a surgeon-butcher. In Polish, the input space could comprise: common knowledge about doctors representing a given specialization, and about work based on slaughtering animals and dismembering them for meat. The generic space would include general information: the kind of work performed by a person, mammal tissue, using sharp tools. Moreover, the blend would include – apart from the components in the generic space, selected detailed associations derived from each input space, such as: the relationship between the quality of work and a patient's life, brutality, lack of precision.

via a given linguistic expression²⁵. Moreover, in his theory of imaging there is also a number of notions corresponding with the script theory, such as *scene* (place of events), *participants* and *interactions*²⁶, so it is not difficult to imagine shared spaces allowing to combine certain elements of his concept of language with the script theory²⁷.

II. Script in a song: shared cultural basis and its artistic interpretations

One of the more interesting questions emerging in the analysis of creative texts is the way in which “symbolic systems of culture”²⁸ established in language structures, and the individual sensitivity and imagination of a creator who selects specific means of expression, which allow them to realize their own communicative goals, to affect each other. The song *Lubię wrony* [I like crows] (1967) is interesting from this perspective. An interpretation of the picture of social phenomena contained in the song is in line with the writer’s (a poet and a satirist) intention, whose rebellion against reality is specifically connected to acceptance of his own fate, tied with the fate of a community²⁹ – requires referring to a group of intersubjective scenes which provide images illustrating states of affairs important to the artist and implying certain judgments of them. Hence, let us begin with an issue crucial to this text, i.e. the image of the titular characters, to which we shall refer with a term proposed by Jerzy Bobryk, *actors of script*.

II.1 Actors of script – cultural and textual image

Of course crows are *actors* here. The color of their feathers is an important element of their cultural characteristic. An association with the color black lies at the foundation of the name of the species: *wrona* comes from the Proto-Slavic **vornъ* ‘black’, which contains the Proto-Indo-European morpheme **ǵer-* ‘burn, roast’³⁰; the semantic motivation is as follows: ‘black due to burning, charring’. In Poland, there are also hooded crows, which are only partially black, but we should bear in mind that our considerations only indirectly concern the language-reality relation³¹, because they focus on the language-culture relation. The intersubjective imaging of a species established in the semantics of its name is more important here; due to

²⁵He provides an example of a sentence “There is a house now and then through the valley”, whose interpretation is conditioned by the covert scenario of a train trip. See: Langacker, 708–709 (English version: 531).

²⁶Langacker, 471.

²⁷Ryszard Tokarski also noticed the need to supplement the theory of the script with another concept reporting the mechanism of imaging. In his analyses of creative texts, Tokarski combined these two methodological categories: a *script* and an *interpretative frame* following Fillmore. See: Tokarski, *Skrypty w semantycznym opisie systemu i tekstu*.

²⁸Pajdzińska, *Sposoby uobecniania się podmiotu w tekście* [Ways in which the subject becomes present in a text], 228.

²⁹This special combination of satire with acceptance of his own fate can be observed in Młynarski’s works from different decades, starting from the early *Światowe życie* [High life] (1965) and *Niedzieli na głównym* [Sunday at the main station] (1964), to the song composed in slightly different conditions *Co ma zrobić taki frajer* [What should such a loser do] (1975), to *Toast* ’98; the emotional tone clearly changed at the turn of the century – however, this is beyond the scope of this paper.

³⁰Wiesław Boryś, *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego* [Etymological dictionary of Polish] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2005), 710.

³¹Although words such as *crow* or *raven* are known even to children in a given linguistic community, the ability to recognize those birds and distinguish between them, as well as other similar birds, is not common knowledge.

this imaging a typical crow is black, and in most cases this is the characteristic of the designate which the name of the species contributes in a text³².

Młynarski also wrote about his bird protagonists: “they are black and peck the ground – / and I like them...”³³. Associating crows with the color black has axiological consequences in our culture, to which the author clearly refers in the phrase: “they bravely persist as black characters”³⁴. In this metaphor both the color (associated with something bad)³⁵ and the analogy between the popular image of crows and an actor’s *emploi*, which typically has little in common with the personality of actors playing specific roles, are equally important; a black character is a one-dimensional role, and as such – not very authentic. The legitimacy of considering crows as black characters is thus implicitly questioned in the cited lines of the song, which constitutes one of many textual signals of an argumentative dialogue with the linguistic-cultural convention.

Not treating intersubjective images of crows too seriously is already signaled in the title and the first line: “My taste is twisted, / I like crows”³⁶. It is a clear allusion to the established cultural evaluation of crows – the birds do not enjoy popularity, which is connected to the color of their feathers. But not only: Danuta Kępa-Figura observes that names of species of that family (often confused, by the way) generally inspire negative connotations: crows ‘foreshadow misfortune’, ‘are connected to dark powers’, ‘are ugly’, ‘are menacing’, ‘are a symbol of sadness’, ‘are a symbol of death’, and ‘they are slow, static’, as opposed to the ‘lively’ prototypical bird³⁷.

Two first lines of the song extract another element of the cultural characteristic of crows – the idea that they are not very poetic, and definitely not lyrical. In her jocular, essay-review of *Ptaki Polski* [Bird of Poland] by Jan Sokołowski, Wisława Szymborska wrote:

... one more reason why I like birds is that they have been flying in Polish poetry for ages. Unfortunately, not all of them. Obviously a nightingale is part of the furniture and the darling of poetry. Eagles, ravens, owls, storks, pigeons, seagulls, swans, cranes, larks, cuckoos all belong to the privileged caste. Some less common, but still present in poetry birds include: herons, catbirds, finches, wagtails, chaffinches, blackbirds, and a dozen others. However, there are birds which poetry passes over, only because their names sound so crude that they would destroy the lyrical ambiance.³⁸

Ravens take a relatively high position in the ranking of bird poetics; they are typically associated with the poem by Edgar Allan Poe, and generally with horror stories and thrillers. Meanwhile crows are absent from the list, probably because they are deprived of the aura of mysteriousness which surrounds their bigger cousins. In Polish, the noun ‘crow’ is feminine, and as such seen as weaker than

³²Unless a modifier changes this characteristic.

³³“czarne toto i w ziemi się dłubie – / a ja je lubię...”, Wojciech Młynarski, *Od oddechu do oddechu* (Warszawa: Prószyński i S-ka, 2017). Kindle.

³⁴“mężnie trwają w swym szwarc charakterze”

³⁵Ryszard Tokarski, *Semantyka barw we współczesnej polszczyźnie* [Semantics of colors in modern Polish] (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2004), 43-47.

³⁶“a ja mam taki gust wypaczony, / że lubię wrony”, Wojciech Młynarski, *Od oddechu do oddechu*.

³⁷Danuta Kępa-Figura, *Kategoryzacja w komunikacji językowej na przykładzie leksemu “ptak”* [Categorization in linguistic communication on the example of the lexeme “bird”] (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2007), 91–92 abt 219–233.

³⁸Wisława Szymborska, *Wszystkie lektury nadobowiązkowe* [All non-obligatory reading] (Kraków: Znak, 2015), 586.

the masculine ravens and treated less seriously, which is expressed in the proverb: *Where you send ravens, you can also send crows*³⁹, i.e. when the strong stand against someone, the weak will follow suit. This slightly contemptuous attitude to crows is deictically expressed in the song: “*this black thing*”, which refers to something or someone of little importance⁴⁰. And since crows are considered to be deprived of charm and dignity associated with big predatory birds, it is no surprise that “There are but a few crows / in bergerettes, ballads, canzonas”⁴¹. The names of music genres used by Młynarski are no less significant⁴² than the sound and origin of the borrowings in which the relationship with the source language is still clear: the French and Italian cultures are seen as romantic, unlike crows.

Another textual allusion to the intersubjective image of common, non-poetic birds can be found in the line: “And they would not even dare to dream, / about pretending to be nightingales with their cawing”⁴³. Nightingales are considered excellent singers, and the cultural script containing them is an image of a concert from a hiding place, at a clear, May night, smelling of lilac and lit by the moon, exceptionally suitable for romantic love⁴⁴. Meanwhile crows are characterized by an “ugly caw”, which combined with “flying badly”⁴⁵ (supposedly referring to the already mentioned qualities of being slow and inactive) completes their textual image as birds deprived of abilities worthy of human attention and appreciation.

It should also be mentioned here that although the negative connotations of *cawing* are well established in Polish (for example, we say *don't caw, or you will caw it out*, ‘do not say that something bad will happen, or you will provoke it’), they are not present in the song. The voice of crows is not menacing here, only unpleasant: “When they gape their beaks, they know full well / that their voice sounds rather unpleasant”⁴⁶. The Polish verb *rozdziawiać* [gape] is stylistically charged and highly characteristic – we can also find it in *Pan Tadeusz*: “Dew-drenched crows with gaping beaks are chattering, a frightful sound foretelling rain and damp”⁴⁷. Even though crows in Mickiewicz do not foreshadow misfortune, they do foreshadow something unpleasant, which is why people feel disdain towards them.

Finally, let us have a look at some other associations with crows which are well-established in Polish, i.e. the fact that they are herd birds⁴⁸. We say: *When you step among crows, you must caw like them*⁴⁹ [NKPP] [When in Rome, do as the Romans do], we can also use a word coined by Ju-

³⁹ Julian Krzyżanowski, ed., *Nowa księga przysłów i wyrażen przysłowiowych polskich* [New book of proverbs and proverbial expressions in Polish] (Warszawa: PIW, 1972).

⁴⁰ “Słownik języka polskiego PWN” [Dictionary of Polish], accessed: 15.05.2021, <https://sjp.pwn.pl>.

⁴¹ “W berzeretkach, balladach, kanconach / bardzo rzadko jest mowa o wronach”.

⁴² *bergerette*, or ‘shepherdess’ air, is a form of early rustic French song, Witold Doroszewski, ed., *Słownik języka polskiego* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1958-1969); *ballada*: ‘a piece of music in romantic style with dramatic elements’; *kancona* ‘a lyrical song about love and wartime adventures, characteristic for the Italian Middle Ages’, “Słownik języka polskiego PWN”, accessed: 15.05.2021.

⁴³ Młynarski, *Od oddechu do oddechu* [From breath to breath].

⁴⁴ Wysocka, *O miłości uskładanej ze słów* [On love made up from words], 231-233.

⁴⁵ Młynarski, *Od oddechu do oddechu*.

⁴⁶ “Gdy rozdziawia dziób, wiedzą dokładnie, / że ich głosy brzmią raczej nieładnie”, Młynarski.

⁴⁷ Polish version: Adam Mickiewicz, *Pan Tadeusz, czyli ostatni zajazd na Litwie. Historia szlachecka z roku 1811 i 1812 we dwunastu księgach wierszem*, ed. Stanisław Pigoń (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2015), ks. VI, w. 21-23, Kindle. English translation by Leonard Kress, HarrowGate Press 2006, 117.

⁴⁸ Kępa-Figura, *Kategoryzacja w komunikacji językowej na przykładzie leksemu “ptak”*, 216-218.

⁴⁹ Krzyżanowski, *Nowa księga przysłów i wyrażen przysłowiowych polskich*.

liusz Słowacki – *crowed*, ‘with many crows sitting on it’⁵⁰. Both those conventionalized language structures show that a scene in which crows form a herd are part of the collective imagination, and the proverb also shows that this image is used as a metaphor for human communities.

II.2 Scenery of events – semantics and evaluation

The scenery in which the action takes place is the second constituent of a script. It turns out that also in terms of scenery the vision presented in the song has clear cultural precedencies:

When the wind howls with snow in the fields,
no crow hides for a moment,
that the reason they do not migrate in winter,
is that they are poor fliers⁵¹

Both the time and place correspond closely with the conventional portrayal of crows. It turns out that among textual connotations of crows reconstructed by Danuta Kępa-Figura there is the fact that ‘they occur in fall and winter’⁵². Among others, Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński presented crows in a winter scenery in his *Wierszyk o wronach* [A little poem about crows]:

Crows sit on a tree
in sparkly air
they are held by a thick branch;

it has just started snowing,
the crows are too lazy to fly,
snow is covering them.

[...]
And now, for the crows’ glory,
they are sitting there, black, stiff
in saecula saeculorum”⁵³

Młynarski wrote about being inspired by Gałczyński’s poetry in his *List do KIG z Łodzi* [A letter to KIG from Łódź] (1995), which creates an important interpretative context for *Lubię wrony*: “You familiarized me with crows, / when I was a teenager, / and generally speaking, I looked at the whole world, / through your poems”⁵⁴. The scenery is similar in both texts, with one

⁵⁰Witold Doroszewski, ed., *Słownik języka polskiego*.

⁵¹“Gdy na polu ze śniegiem wiatr wyje, / Żadna wrona przez chwilę nie kryje, / Że dlatego na zimę zostają, / Że źle fruwać”, Młynarski, *Od oddechu do oddechu*.

⁵²Kępa-Figura, 215-216.

⁵³“W powietrzu roziskrzonym / siedzą na drzewie wrony, / trzyma je gałąź gruba; / śnieg właśnie zaczął padać, / wronom się nie chce latać, / śnieżek wrony zasnuwa. / [...] / a tak, na wronią chwałę, / siedzą czarne, zdrętwiałe / in saecula saeculorum.” Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński, “Wierszyk o wronach”, Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński’s official website, accessed: 15.05.2021. https://www.kigalczynski.pl/wiersze/wierszyk_o_wronach.html.

⁵⁴“Pan mnie pokumał z wronami, / w ogóle na cały świat / patrzyłem pańskimi wierszami, / gdy miałem naście lat”, Wojciech Młynarski, *W Polskę idziemy* (Warszawa: Prószyński i S-ka, 2018), Kindle.

significant difference. The winter scene created by “Master Konstanty”⁵⁵ is first and foremost picturesque: The night sky is blooming, / Everything is shining with pale blue light: / The night, the wind, crows’ tales”⁵⁶. The scenery in the song is different: the lack of food and hostile aura are highlighted (“the wind howls with snow in the fields”).

In the context of the semantics of achromatic colors – black and white – Ryszard Tokarski observes that in our culture winter is associated with bad things:

Winter activates the image of some space covered in snow, with dead or dormant fauna. It seems that this particular image of nature, especially naked trees, is the key to interpreting winter and snow. This scene is very close to the metaphor of death. The names of the remaining three seasons of the year evoke scenes of living nature, although at different stages of development, but nonetheless completely different than the winter scenery.⁵⁷

Although the scene created by Młynarski does not contain references to death, it does seem hostile and not very cheerful, which – according to Młynarski – corresponded with the historical context of *Lubię wrony*:

When I was writing those words, all around me
There was the sad reality,
March of 1968,
People’s Republic of Poland and censorship (*List do KIG z Łodzi*)⁵⁸

The poet presents a typical behavior of bird “black characters” in the hostile scenery of cold winter, which thanks to such a presentation gains a special meaning.

II.3 Actions of actors of script: images-blends

There seems to be nothing unusual in the actions of bird actors: they fly, caw, look for food in the field. Those activities – not very spectacular, especially the last one – are however significant for the poetic vision of the world:

Fate is not good for them,
with a thin branch and poor field,
[...]
they have no capacious storage room,
if they find more food.

⁵⁵Młynarski.

⁵⁶“Nocne niebo już kwitnie, / Wszystko świeci błękitnie: / Noc, wiatr, wronie ogon. Gałczyński, “Wierszyk o wronach”.

⁵⁷Tokarski, *Semantyka barw we współczesnej polszczyźnie*, 51.

⁵⁸“Gdym to pisał, w krąg była / rzeczywistość ponura, / marzec 68, / Peerel i cenzura”. (List do KIG z Łodzi). Młynarski, *W Polskę idziemy* [We travel Poland].

They know that – in spite of all transformations –
 no bananas will grow in the stubble,
 grubs won't change into caviar,
 because it is what it is...⁵⁹

The quoted stanzas contain a metaphorical image of actions motivated by the wish to meet one's basic needs. It can be assumed that both of those elements – a kind of activity and its aim – create the generic space of blending. In this case, the knowledge of the typical behavior of crows would be the first of the two input spaces, whereas the second would be the image of human life and work. Our linguistic-cultural community is primarily of an agricultural character, which has produced many traces in the form of lexicalized metaphors: *pole* [field] is not just a farming land, but also an area in which someone is interested and in which someone acts, and the diminutive *poletko* [little field] is both a small parcel of farming land, and a field or place where someone tries different experiences in order to later use them on a larger scale⁶⁰. There is also a saying *każdy orze jak może*, 'everyone plows as best they can, everyone tries to achieve something, get something done the best they can'.⁶¹ Additionally, there used to be a phrase "an opulent chamber", i.e. a pantry⁶², such as *Większa komora niż stodoła* [A pantry bigger than a barn], which meant 'spending more than one earns'⁶³ (a barn is primarily 'a building for storing straw, hay, and grain'⁶⁴). All those conventional metaphors referring to various types of human activity, typically those which have little to do with agriculture, are based on the script of farming land and making a living off this land. In the song this script is subject to the process of conceptual integration with a scene showing typical behavior of crows.

We should also observe that the bird actors evaluate food in a typically human way⁶⁵. An actual bird would enjoy grubs (not appetizing for people) and would never think about *bananas* or *caviar*; even if those foods were within the bird's reach, it would rather not appreciate them. The choice of names of foods was not accidental – both bananas and caviar inspire numerous cultural connotations in the historical context in which the song was written: back then both foods were relatively expensive and hard to get. Caviar is still considered a luxury, unlike bananas, which however used to be associated with exoticism and luxury due to being from faraway countries characterized by a warm climate⁶⁶. The blending thus brings a characteristic of members of a given community, who have access to only modest material resources, and in

⁵⁹"Los im dolę zgotował nieletką, ./ cienką gałąź i marne poletko, / [...] / nie składają w komorę zasobną, / jak więcej dziobną. // Wiedzą, że – mimo wszelkie przemiany – / nie wyrosną na rżysku banany, / nie zamienia się w kawior pędraki, / bo układ taki...", Młynarski, *Od oddechu do oddechu*.

⁶⁰Mirosław Bańko, ed., *Inny słownik języka polskiego PWN* [A different Polish dictionary] (Warszawa: PWN, 2000).

⁶¹Piotr Müldner-Nieckowski, *Wielki słownik frazeologiczny języka polskiego* [Phraseological dictionary of Polish] (Warszawa: Świat Książki, 2004).

⁶²Bańko, *Inny słownik języka polskiego PWN*.

⁶³Krzyżanowski, *Nowa księga przysłów i wyrażeń przysłowiowych polskich*.

⁶⁴Bańko, *Inny słownik języka polskiego PWN*.

⁶⁵The reality of human social life is also associated with the phrase "it is what it is", which probably alludes to the phrase *na układy nie ma rady* 'it is difficult to change something, one should accept the situation'. See: Müldner-Nieckowski.

⁶⁶The PRL phrase *bananowa młodzież* [banana youth] is based on this phrase. Jerzy Bralczyk explains it as "youth from rich families, privileged, consuming bananas inaccessible to others". See: Jerzy Bralczyk, "Bananowa młodzież", accessed: 15.05.2021, sjp.pwn.pl/ciekawostki/haslo/Bananowa-mlodziez;5391622.html.

spite of this, can survive and – regardless of dreams about more attractive goods – accept their situation convinced that a significant improvement in living conditions is beyond their reach.

Another behavior ascribed to crows that is important to the semantics of the song is that they do not migrate in fall and winter, whereas other birds migrate to warmer countries⁶⁷.

When the wind howls with snow in the fields,
no crow hides for a moment,
that the reason they do not migrate in winter,
is that they are poor fliers

but a crow, young or old,
does not try to come up with
any manifesto or ideology,
and it becomes it...⁶⁸

This stanza contains another metaphor significant for reading the intentional meaning of the text as a whole. According to the theory of conceptual blending, an image of moving living creatures caused by worsening living conditions would be its generic space. In this case, the first input space is the script of behavior of native birds: that some spend winter in the country, and others migrate “overseas”, and the second – shared, common knowledge about Poles’ emigration from the People’s Republic of Poland. This blending takes into account the issue of the motivation of emigrants, which is nonetheless somewhere in the background. What is highlighted is the thought of reasons which make others stay in their motherland. Slightly perversely and in line with the cultural convention, the actors of the script are ascribed with ineptness (“poor fliers”), yet the following stanza presents them in a different light:

Crows are flying over the stubble with dignity,
as if they were content with everything,
and this is where their
self-irony lies⁶⁹.

The poet gives crows two positive qualities, *dignity* and *self-irony*. These qualities seem typically human and – when combined with each other – they co-create an image of a person characterized by self-awareness, a critical approach, and courage. Therefore, talking about members of one’s own community in terms of crows has a different meaning in the song than suggested by the image of those birds established in language and culture.

⁶⁷The common belief that crows do not migrate is not true, which Młynarski used in his *List do KIG z Łodzi*, whose protagonist, “professor-ornitologist” explains: “Polskie wrony na zimę / odlatują na Węgry! // I każdej mroźnej zimy / na ich miejsce, kolego, / przylatują tu wrony / ze Związku Radzieckiego” [Polish crows / migrate to Hungary in winter // And every frosty winter / Soviet crows come here / to take their place, my friend]. Młynarski, *W Polskę idziemy*.

⁶⁸“Gdy na polu ze śniegiem wiatr wyje, / żadna wrona przez chwilę nie kryje, / że dlatego na zimę zostają, / że źle fruują, / ale wrona, czy młoda, czy stara, / się do tego dorabiać nie stara / manifestów ni ideologii – / i to ją zdoła...” Młynarski, *Od oddechu do oddechu*.

⁶⁹“Wrony fruną z godnością nad rżyskiem, / jakby dobrze im było z tym wszystkim, / i w tym właśnie zaznacza się wronia / autoironia,” Młynarski, *Od oddechu do oddechu*

Lubię wrony may be considered a text expressing – importantly, indirectly, metaphorically – one's own attachment to the motherland, which is how Izabela Mikrut⁷⁰ has interpreted it. The scholar highlighted the author's manifested disapproval of contemporary emigration and simultaneous understanding for those who decided to emigrate. In this context, we should refer here to another song expressing the same attitude in a decisively more veiled way – the 1982 *Song szczura* [A rat's song]:

I am an atypical rat,
I do not run away when the ship is sinking.
[...]
because I want to live here, even if I don't have to⁷¹

Here Młynarski pays attention to both the anti-emigration message, which corresponds with the song *Lubię wrony*, and the specificity of the main character – a rat – and its script: life on a ship. The animal protagonists of both songs – species which are neither liked nor appreciated – in both cases served the poet and satirist's perverse play with the linguistic-cultural convention. In fact, it is a characteristic quality of Młynarski's style: his interest in what is commonly considered worse, common, uninteresting; it is not a coincidence that his text *Moje ulubione drzewo* [My favorite tree] he writes about a hazelwood rather than an oak. Such a choice of actors and related scripts which are used to portray own community allows Młynarski to express pride without grandeur; it is a way of expressing a patriotism of a special kind: one that ostentatiously resigns from lofty words and symbols, and that consists not in a heroic fight with the enemy, but in everyday work and consistently facing the challenges in one's motherland that constitute its distinguishing feature.

III Conclusion

Works by Edward Sapir, author of the famous sentence quoted below, are an important source of inspiration for contemporary linguistics, especially anthropological-cognitive ones:

The understanding of a simple poem, for instance, involves not merely an understanding of the single words in their average significance, but a full comprehension of the whole life of the community as it is mirrored in the words, or as it is suggested by their overtones⁷².

His observation remains valid also in reference to the song *Lubię wrony*, in which it is easily observable how an individualized, unusual vision of the world is constructed on the basis of cultural scripts displaying – as it is typically the case – a high level of stereotypicality. For it turns out that even though language may suggest some interpretation and evaluation of

⁷⁰Izabela Mikrut, *Przymrużonym okiem. Radość czytania satyryków* [Tongue in cheek. The joy of reading satire] (Wydawnictwo Internetowe E-bookowo, 2016). Kindle.

⁷¹“ja jestem nietypowy szczur, / nie zmykam, kiedy statek tonie. / [...] /bo tu żyć pragnę, choć nie muszę...”, Młynarski, *Od oddechu do oddechu*.

⁷²Polish version: Edward Sapir, *Kultura, język, osobowość. Wybrane eseje*, trans. Barbara Stanosz, Roman Zimand (Warszawa: PIW, 1878), 89. English version: *Culture, Language, and Personality. Selected Essays* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 69.

phenomena whose image has been established for generations in its lexical and grammatical structures, we are not obliged to thoughtlessly follow those suggestions. However, ignoring them requires some cognitive effort, which is manifested – and motivated – by an artistic text:

In fact the mother tongue [...] forces us to do a few things and makes a few things impossible. But every language facilitates and suggests something (different!), certain cognitive schemas are somewhat ready in it. Everything else requires intense activity of the subject.⁷³

translated by Paulina Zagórska

⁷³Anna Pajdzińska, “Czy «zaklęty krąg języka» można przekroczyć?” [Can the «enchanted circle of language» be broken?], in *Relatywizm w języku i kulturze* [Relativism in language and culture], edited by Anna Pajdzińska, Ryszard Tokarski (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2010), 52-53.

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KEYWORDS

language and style of songs

works by Wojciech Młynarski

ABSTRACT:

The paper concerns various manifestations of intersubjective images of nature, established in language and culture, in an artistic text: Wojciech Młynarski's song *Lubię wrony*, and two other poetic works which have intertextual relationships with it: *List do KIG z Łodzi* by the same author, and *Wierszyk o wronach* by K.I. Gałczyński. Methodologically, the paper is based on the theory of cultural scripts combined with cognitive concepts of imaging and conceptual blending. The analysis presented reveals the way in which Młynarski reinterprets shared cultural knowledge in order to express his own patriotism in a form which differs from conventionalized ways of expressing such an attitude.

script in an artistic text

LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL IMAGE OF BIRDS

blending in an artistic text

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