

tłumaczy widzowi jakąś część tej innej rzeczywistości. Na przykład scena, w której Karolina kłóci się z kimś. Wystarczy zamknąć oczy albo odwrócić głowę – i już kłótnia przerwana.

Razem z Karoliną idziemy na próbę Polskiego Teatru Tańca, podczas której Karolina spotka się z jego dyrektorem – Ewą Wycichowską. I przed nią zatańczy... Czy w efekcie dostanie propozycję przyszłej pracy? Czy poprzez taniec będzie miała szansę wejścia do tego innego, lepszego (?) świata.

Postacią łączącą oba światy jest nauczycielka Karoliny, Ania, śliczna, o dużym temperamencie i niespożytej energii. Wbrew temu, co sama mówi, stanowi przeciwagę dla powiedzenia „głupia jak baletnica”. Od kilkunastu lat jako jedyna w Polsce prowadzi zajęcia baletowe między innymi z głuchoniemymi, wiele więc może o nich powiedzieć i nie boi się obnażać też przykrej prawdy. Między innymi o tym, iż żyją w przekonaniu, że wszystko się im należy, że są mało ambitni i leniwi, że szybko się zniechęcają, itp. Tym większy kontrast stanowi tutaj rodzina Kasi.

Ania zna zaledwie kilka słów w języku miogowym, ale bez trudu komunikuje się z dziećmi. Jak mówi: „ja ich uczę tańca, a one uczą mnie swego języka”. Przesuwa palcami jakby szybko rozwijała wachlarz – to znaczy ładnie. Tak dzisiaj tańczyły dziewczyny. Patrzę na Karolinę – stanęła na swoich bladuróżowych pointach z rękami wzniesionymi ku górze. Ani drgnie. Jakby czas się zatrzymał...

Pointa

Karolina skończyła szkołę zawodową, zdobyła zawód cukiernika. Nie została baletnicą Polskiego Teatru Tańca, ale zdała egzamin i przyjęto ją do baletu poznańskiego Teatru Muzycznego. Niestety, długo się w nim nie utrzymała. Zabrakło jej wytrwałości? Motywacji? Wróciła do rodzinnej wioski, wyszła za mąż za bardzo przystojnego kolegę ze szkoły. Na ślub zaprosiła swojego wychowawcę i nauczycielkę baletu. Podobno jest szczęśliwa. A ja piszę o niej scenariusz. Będzie się nazywał *Historia bez pointy*.

Images performed by words in Howard Jacobson's novel Kalooki Nights. Remarks about intersemiotic relations among words and pictures

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Introduction

The wor(l)d is not a picture, not an image, not even the meanings. This statement is provocative from semiotic and communicational perspective. Michel Foucault's interpretation of tension between word and picture revealed that the difference between both of these forms of creating messages are rather fluent^[1]. Howard Jacobson's^[2] novel *Kalooki's Nights* shows that words can function as the pictures, images, like representations before meanings.

This article concerns the question created by the narrator of Howard Jacobson's novel

titled *Kalooki Nights*. These questions are not the most important parts or frames of this novel. They are rather the margins of this text. There are many diverse issues and topics

[1] M. Foucault, *To nie jest fajka (Ceci n'est pas une pipe)*, trans. T. Komendant, Gdańsk 1996.

[2] Howard Jacobson is a British author and journalist. He wrote i.a. *Kalooki Nights* (2006, Polish edition 2008), *The Mighty Walzer* (1999), *Who's Sorry Now* (2002), *The Making of Henry* (2004), *The Act of Love* (2008).

which are presented in this novel. Big part of them is connected with these “margins”. Generally, according to Sally Feldman: “The novel sets out to explain why the Jews are like they are: why they are victims, why they suffer, and why they can’t escape” [3].

How it is possible to be a Jew after the Holocaust – this is one of the most remarkable aspects which creates the frame of narration. The main character is telling a story about his family, his friends, his life in the context of the history of his friends Mannie’s ultra-orthodox Jewish family, in the context of the tragedy of this family which is spread through the conflicts between Jewish tradition and challenges of contemporary secular Western world. These conflicts (often “axiological competitions”) are modeled by the confrontation between Eros (a romance of Mannie’s elder brother with a woman who was not Jewish) and Thanatos (Mannie gassed own parents who did not accepted the romance of their elder son, Asher [4]). There are many other realms where the dialectics between Eros and Thanatos are important in Jacobson’s novel.

This novel has an interesting Socratic forms of dialogue with a reader: first – a confrontation (elenctic, prejudice), and second – an understanding (maieutics). Why, because the main plot of this novel immersed a reader to the sensational expectation – a young Jewish man who murdered own parents gassing them

– it is interesting (a figure of this naive and instrumental attitude is a person who represents TV corporation in this novel). After Holocaust! It must be interesting! The tragedy is in front of a human (and only in front of him/her) as a kind of necessity and it is impossible to avoid the verdicts of necessity; no one can sell the results of these verdicts! Then, the main character, Max Gluckman (he was Jew) who at the beginning of novel confessed that he wanted to do an interview with his former friend (Mannie), decided to reject a contract of TV corporation. He rejected a possibility of selling “the results of verdicts” (it is a maieutic, ethical choice). There are a lot of questions between these two Socratic patterns of narrations: about identity, about antisemitism, about art, about Jewish community in Great Britain, about religion, about memory and being after the Holocaust, about prejudices, ideology and history. The receiver during the dialogue with the sender of novel (the narrator, the main character) can confront his own prejudices and presumptions with some concrete interpretations of facts, even if they are presented in the fictional reality – and then it can be “given birth” by understanding something (more, sometimes it can be called “truth”).

It is not obvious why Mannie killed his parents gassing them. Maybe he wanted to help his older brother, maybe he decided to “destroy” them because for all his life they lived defining themselves as the victims who rejected their contemporary life (treated by them as a kind of punishment in the contexts of the victims who were murdered during the Holocaust) – so he “helped” them to “participate” in their “being responsible”. Howard Jacobson told in one interview that: “Geography’s interesting. I think my topography is always psychological. I need to know, I obsessively need to know where the character comes from familiarly, so to speak. I always want to – and I have to stop myself – I always want to give my characters a mother and a father. And if you give every character a mother and a father, you’re never going to get to the end of

[3] S. Feldman, *Five thousand of years of bitterness*, <http://newhumanist.org.uk/1008> (download 30.07.2009).

[4] The narrator’s description of the elder Mannie’s brother: “Where Asher walked, the whole of the Old Testament walked with him. Seeded like a pomegranate he was with the sorrows and the tribulations of his people, but juicy with the wine of the pomengranate, too, spicy with spikenard and saffron, calamus and cimmanon, his lips like a thread of scarlet”. Compare with H. Jacobson, *Kalooki Nights* and S. Feldman, *ibidem*.

the novel. And I have to take out endless characterisations of my characters' mothers and fathers. I actually can't understand anything about a person without thinking about their mother and their father"[5]. After reading Jacobson's novel the receiver will not know why Mannie did it, but he/she would understand the horizon of approximation of understanding of the lattice of own "psychological geography". The narration in *Kalooki Nights* is dialectics in a Socrates's paradigm. It is interesting what the receiver creates during the time of reading, what kind of tactics of understanding redefines the dialogues in the context of centripetal and centrifugal confrontations with the reality implicated and represented by the linguistic signs. Paraphrasing Michel de Certeau's statement, the reader must die when he/she is going to be born in the fiction dominated by the written word[6]. The Socrates's dialectics is important when some prejudices taken from reality will be crashed on the rocks of fiction and when some contents from the novel will be crashed on the rocks of reality (often treated as the source of habits, also in thinking). The symbolic act of dying during reading is the introduction to the new birth in the context of possibility of understanding (crossing some prejudices or stereotypes).

The language, the semantic figures and style in the *Kalooki Nights* are such vivid and seditious that mixing the grotesque and realism, confronting the literal and colloquial worlds of words the author provokes to critical thinking about a receiver's glance in many deep, important and apparently obvious prejudices and facts. The irony in this novel – which uncovers in it at the linguistic and discursive level the instrumental and stereotypical forms of understanding the Holocaust, the relations among Jewish and non-Jewish people in the context of contemporary Western culture – has also the shadows of the Socrates's ethics and methods of thinking and discussing. Howard Jacobson told in one interview that: "You are interested in your feelings for a character, how you personalise them, because in the end the

novel is more personal than we probably ever like to acknowledge"[7]. The psychological geography of relations between the receiver and character is shaped by the modes of linguistic and – also visual – codes.

Max Gluckman (the narration is run in first person so he can be treated as the port-parole of the narrator) was a cartoonist who during telling the story many times wondered how he could draw some scenes and characters. How narrator using words can create pictures? This article concerns only the margins of this novel but rooted in the long tradition of ban of representation the transcendence which has in the Jacobson's novel many different masks. The intersemiotic tensions between language and images in the contexts of representation mediated in written linguistic signs are useful in describing the reality also when it is only a fiction. Maybe this novel is a kind of comic book hidden behind the words. Maybe every question about possibility of drawing in *Kalooki Nights* functions as the performative act where writing is a kind of drawing, as the approximation of the convergence of two different codes generating meanings.

The intersemiotic tensions will reveal the performative sketching which represents something what cannot be presented but can be told. *Kalooki Nights* shows how words create potentially the pictures (the plan of showing is realised in the plan of contents), also by introducing differences which cannot be translated from one code to another. The words can be acts of drawing. These dependencies are shown in the context between Eros and Thanatos images. The main hypothesis

[5] Ian McMillan's *Writing Lab*. Howard Jacobson interview, <http://www.open2.net/writing/howardjacobson.html> (download 24.07.2009).

[6] "Il faut mourir au corps pour que naisse l'écriture". M. de Certeau, *L'écriture de l'histoire*, Paris 1975, p. 329.

[7] Ian McMillan's *Writing Lab*. Howard Jacobson interview.

concerns the relations between writing and sketching which model performative pictures hidden in words related to reality which cannot be told or shown. It is a paradox of the convergence of the two meaningful codes in the intersemiotic level. All what cannot be told (written) or shown still remains the field of potential transcendence, even when this term implicates only the secular connotations spread by the quotidian denotations.

Eros – image – Thanatos

What does the photograph mean when showing death becomes a source of erotic thoughts? Max Gluckmann and Errol Tobias, main character's other friend, when they were a boys they looked at photos taken from book about the Holocaust and then first time in their life they saw the naked women's bodies. These women were the prisoners of death camps, they were conducted to gass chambers^[8], or for medical experiments or were

conducted because of other cruel purposes. This historical photograph after many, full of death years became a source of excitement^[9]. The young Jewish boys, after the Holocaust, learnt women's sexuality from pictures represented people who were treated as the death objects. There was a kind of Eros hidden behind the representation of Thanatos. The narrator creates a traditional description of photo which may function as the *ekphrasis* (not in the traditional literal meaning)^[10] of doubled destruction: first – of other people (women in death camp), second – of own sexuality (main character stated that as the young boy he thought that these bodies were the source of erotic representations rather than the bodies of victims).

There is a necessity of being the internal bond between civilisation and barbarity, progress and suffering, freedom and the lack of happiness. This bond, as Herbert Marcuse wrote^[11], reveals in the relation between Eros and Thanatos which is not clear. There is a question, fundamental, is it possible that Eros can be a tool of Thanatos, is it possible that every aim of life is a real, long and circular way to death? In the context of Freud's and then Marcuse's interpretation the relation between instinct of death and life is not obvious and rather nebular. The picture reveals the pattern of potential source of meanings. In the horizon of death revealed the will of sexuality, so life is condemned to death but also to remember about mass death as the part of past which cannot be forgotten. This photograph stored the anthropological power of image which saved (rescued) primordial illusion of (former) world^[12]. This was like an alternative reality and that is why these young boys could see in this pictures naked women rather as the source of excitement than as the source of memory about pain. There was no esthetization but the representation, almost real. The key-word is "almost" because they showed the real anonymous, instrumentally treated by the perpetrators in the historical time (and by the young boys

[8] Compare with: M. Shermer and A. Grobman, *Denying history. Who says the Holocaust never happened and why do they say it?*, California 2000, p. 135. There are some photographs which show naked women on their way to Crematorium V (at Auschwitz-Birkenau). They are the representation of tragedy. Jacobson shows that photograph can reveals pain showing sexuality – it is a sign of time and the context of (mis)understandings.

[9] H. Jacobson, *Wieczory kaluki (Kalooki Nights)*, trans. M. Świerkocki, Warszawa 2008, p. 93.

[10] S. Wyslouch, *Literatura i obraz. Tereny strukturalnej wspólnoty sztuk*, in: *Intersemiotyczność. Literatura wobec innych sztuk (i odwrotnie)*. *Studia*, ed. by S. Balbus, A. Hejmej and J. Niedźwiedz, Kraków 2005, p. 20.

[11] H. Marcuse, *Eros i cywilizacja (Eros and Civilization)*, trans. H. Jankowska and A. Pawelski, Warszawa 1998, p. 43.

[12] R.K. Przybylski, *Jak fotografia zahaacza się o rzeczywistość? A jak literatura wiąże się z fotografią*, in: *Intersemiotyczność*, p. 135.

in the novel during their puberty) bodies. Paraphrasing Susan Sontag's statement it is important to add that people desire not because of photograph but they desire the photographs – so the desire could mean “to remind oneself the photograph” [13]. The history creates only the context of desire (understanding). If it is truth that for the longest period of life of people they are created rather by the pain than the happiness, it will reveal the fact – in the context of this part of novel – that the young boys who looked at the picture just suspended the real level of their meaning (pain), experienced the erotic excitements (as the phenomenon of happiness).

Eros and Thanatos both can become one when power functions as the sphere of their mutual confrontations and tensions. Ilse Koch [14], a historical person [15], in the description of the narrator of the novel forced the prisoners to paint her naked body. She was accused because of sadistic procedures and because of taking souvenirs from the skin of murdered inmates with distinctive tattoos. She

was also called by the prisoners because of her sadistic cruelty and lasciviousness in English “The Beast of Buchenwald” and “The Bitch of Buchenwald” [16]. She revealed her body partially, never the whole in one moment, and when she saw that anyone of them would be excited because of looking at her she punished him (the last step of the process of painting was killing them). It is the interpretation one of her sadistic leaning from the novel *Kalooki Nights*.

Mendel, a fictional character, was one of the painters. He was a Jew who was forced by her to paint her naked body. The narrator shows the erotic tension between Mendel, who knew that at the end he would be killed by her, and Ilse Koch, but he wanted to look at her, to imagine her as the death lover. Koch told to Mendel that if she saw his erection during painting she would beat him (it would be the form of punishment). On every day he had to erase all what he painted before. He had to paint her not looking at her, it was forbidden for him [17]. On every day she would reveal the

[13] E. Domańska, *Historia niekonwencjonalne. Refleksja o przeszłości w nowej humanistyce*, Poznań 2006, p. 236.

[14] There are presented in *Kalooki Nights* also other historical, sadistic persons who are responsible for killing and torturing Jews in death and concentration camps, for example: Irma Grese and Dorothea Binz. Compare with: H. Jacobson, p. 116.

[15] In 1937 she came to Buchenwald not as a guard, but as the wife of the commandant, Karl Otto Koch. It was alleged there that, under the influence of her husband, she began torturing the inmates of the camp. Ilse Koch forced prisoners to rape one another in plain sight and would later be disciplined by Nazi authorities for her sexual eccentricities. In 1941 Ilse Koch became an Oberaufseherin (“chief overseer”) over the few female guards who served at the camp. In 1941 Karl Otto Koch became the commander of Majdanek. She and her husband were arrested in 1943 by the Gestapo for embezzlement of SS funds, and the murder of certain

inmates in an attempt to cover up these crimes. She was imprisoned by German authorities until late 1944 or early 1945 in Weimar. She was well recognized as the person who selected inmates with interesting tattoos to be killed so that their skins could be made into lampshades for her home.

Compare with: <http://www.jewishvirtual-library.org/jsource/biography/ikoch.html> (27.07.2009) and J. McCarthy, *Frau Ilse Koch, General Lucius Clay, and Human-Skin Atrocities*, <http://www.jewish-virtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/skin.html> (download 27.07.2009); http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilse_Koch (download 27.07.2009).

[16] H. Jacobson called this character using the historical quotations „The Beast of Buchenwald” and „The Bitch of Buchenwald”. H. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 118.

[17] The narrator of *Kalooki Nights* introduced the historical Ilse Koch's habits. She wanted to be observed by the inmates of the camp in Buchenwald, but

next part of her body which Mendel had to paint. Ilse Koch was for him a kind of symbolical lover, he called her in his mind: "My Ilse"^[18]. He could paint her without looking at her. His erection would symbolize seen by him her nudity, he could not avoid his excitement even when the "sign" of excitement would be punished by her. She would beat his penis. She could touch his body. When he kissed her hand she beat him. Mendel treats this punch as a kind of kiss of her whip^[19]. Her lashes are for him like kisses which – in his mind – let him to feel as her partner, at the symbolical level he is equal to her. Painting was a kind of representation of something what could not be shown (Mendel had to erase everything what he painted before). He could not be indifferent, because in this dramatic tension between her and him the lack of erection was treated as a form of crime and on the other hand the erection was also treated as the crime^[20].

His situation was tragical, he could not avoid Eros and – because of Ilse Koch's power and body – also Thanatos. The limit of her body were the frame and the horizon of the

power of system which let her to destroy by the mimetic references to creation his sexuality, language and being, she was the representation of heterosexual regime where body can be dissolved within "magical" rituals – in *Kalooki Nights* – words (she gave him orders) and erased images^[21]. Ilse Koch in this novel reveals as the goddess of death – Mendel as the Jewish painter cannot paint her because she is "unpresented". The portrait of Ilse Koch painted by Mendel was an approximation of unpresented transcendence of evil. The narrator's *ekphrasis* described the "absolute comics" because of written words showed a picture which was the representation based on displaying of erased source of unpresented reality. The image is the body of selfdestruction by showing the erotic creative will of representation. This plot is an interesting form which shows that the representation which gives something is taking back more, even life. Painting in this story is shown as the anthropological form of confrontation with illusion of reality which is doubled by the dialectics: of Eros and Thanatos, Jew (Mendel) and the German (Ilse Koch), act of creation and the act of destruction, the body and the "erasing of it", the penis and the whip, the representation of reality and unpresented reality, the prisoner and the "bitch" and an art as the slave of power. All of these doubled images of history (fictional) are the traces of the redemption of absence in history.

Mendel was the representation of Eros understood as the will of creation (painting) and as the lack of the object of desire (the painting of Ilse Koch), but this Eros was in the mimetic tension to Thanatos (Ilse Koch) because she was the goddess of nothingness, of nihilism, of destruction, of erasing. Mendel as the Eros imitated Thanatos – he knew that he must look at her and paint her, so as the result of the will of creation was the act of destruction. Ilse Koch wanted to kill and punish him but as the substitution of destruction she used the body, its representation and his penis as the symbolical prosthesis of her whimp^[22],

it was forbidden for them. D.A. Hackett, the author of the book titled *The Buchenwald Report*, told in his story about Ilse Koch's habits in the program shown in Discovery Channel *The most evil women in history – Ilse Koch*, that she was provocative in a sexual way and that she wanted to tease inmates, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrPWHbLC7po&NR=1> (1–3) (download 27.07.2009).

[18] H. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 118.

[19] Ibidem, p. 186–187.

[20] Ibidem, p. 188.

[21] Compare with Ch. Shilling, *The Body in Culture, Technology and Society*, London 2005, p. 51.

[22] Mass culture presented lascivious habits of Ilse Koch in the context of sadistic and erotic culture. This perspective is well described in *Kalooki Nights*. Ilse Koch is shown as an attractive woman who used her body to destroy other

so the act of destruction was the imitation of sexual confrontation, not the act but confrontation – because in the discourse of power bodies can rather confront than act^[23]. The approximation of creation at the erotic level “re-painted” (painting picture and erasing of it) death. Mendel painting created the invisible eroticism as the whole which consisted of the only parts. The canvas of his painting is for him a symbolical shroud (his sex and identity is modelled by the Koch’s emodied power) in which he would be laid to the grave of erasing. This self-destructive painting covers the mystery of “self”. In the camp his “self” belongs to Ilse Koch’s power. Mendel’s canvas is the skin of repression, his body is his grave. It is no doubt that the notion of sexuality evoked in this plot provides both origin and destiny for the traditional history of erotic writing^[24], whether for the author behind the work (Mendel behind his picture) and the reader in front of it (Ilse Koch who checks the “results” of painting) wanting to create by the destruction his and her single story of repression.

Both of these examples from *Kalooki Nights* show that images are spread in the frames of limits of being traced by the mimetic relations where the will of creation is supplemented by the traces of destruction (Eros) and the will of destruction is crossed by the prosthesis of creation (Thanatos). There are some implicated spheres of confrontation between Eros and Thanatos: power, body, art, sexuality, history, reality, language and an illusion of representation. All of them function as the euphemisms of real tragedy because the final surrender of victim (although Mendel imagined at the symbolical level that he and Ilse Koch are equal) causes that the perpetrator’s perspective becomes the truth^[25]. The main hypothesis of this part of article concerns that written words can function as the representations of images, pictures. The introduction to the results of this acting were described above revealing some – not only intersemiotic, but also axiological and communicational – levels.

Intersemiotic tensions

Are the words in novel such peculiar like *Kalooki Nights* the only codes of description of the pictures? Maybe they are also a part of pictures or maybe they are some kind of images? There are the examples of description of images – when the narrator tells about the photograph showing naked women but there is something different when the narrator creates the story about Mendel and Ilse Koch. It is a form of referring to the act of painting and erasing of things which are painted. The words in this second plot of the novel create the frame which differentiates the linguistic and iconic objects of evocated imagination. These objects can be defined as the “agents”^[26] of

people. Very often Koch was only the metonymy of herself (her body and power), for example in the film *Ilse, She Wolf of the SS* (1974, directed by D. Edwards) where were avoid the historical facts (simplified, naïve perspective) of mass killing.

[23] Ch. Shilling, op. cit., p. 50.

[24] D. Saunders, I.M. Hunter and D. Williamson, *Historicising obscenity law*, in: *The new media theory reader*, ed. by R. Hassan and J. Thomas, Milton Keynes 2006, p. 70.

[25] R. Girard, *Dawna droga, którą kroczyli ludzie niegodziwi (La route antique des hommes pervers)*, trans. M. Goszczyńska, Warszawa 1992, p. 42.

[26] This term was taken from the original theory of “Society of Mind” described in the article written by Push Singh. The author of this theory, Marvin Minsky who is the author of the book titled *Society of Mind*, created the conception where every mind is really a ‘Society of Mind’, “a tremendously rich and multifaceted society of structures and processes, in every individual the unique product of eons of genetic evolution, millennia of human cultural evolution, and years of personal experience”. Compare with: P. Singh, *Examining the Society of Mind*, <http://web.media.mit.edu/~push/ExaminingSOM.html> (download 30.07.2009).

“images” performed by/in words. Every agent can perform diverse functions more complex than any single word as the sign could. It ultimately produces many attributes which consist of the “image”. The receiver because of presence of them can presume that during the process of reading he/she participates in the process of watching, looking at.

The narrator wonders many times in *Kalooki Nights* how it is possible to draw a picture or images of some scene about which he tells. In the context of this kind of questions the status of words can be redefined. It means that the written words are not the signs of language but can be also the performative patterns of representation (images). In this context the narrator’s questions are not just the introductions to the traditional *ekphrasis* understood as the form of description the

[27] E.H. Gombrich, *Sztuka i złudzenie: O psychologii przedstawiania obrazowego (Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation)*, trans. J. Zaraniski, Warszawa 1981.

[28] U. Eco, *Nieobecna struktura (La struttura assente)*, trans. A. Weinsberg and P. Bravo, Warszawa 2003.

[29] S. Wyslouch, op. cit., p. 23.

[30] This hypothesis omits all the traditional species of literature where words can function as the pictures (concrete poetry, visual poetry or calligrames). Compare with: <http://www.gardendigest.com/concrete/index.html> (download 27.07.2009) and <http://www.ubu.com/papers/solt/> (download 27.07.2009) or even the digital poetry: E. Kac, *New Media Poetry, Hypertext, and Experimental Literature Bibliography*, <http://leonardo.info/isast/spec.projects/newmediapoetry.html> (download 27.07.2009).

[31] M. Foucault wrote that calligrames make that similarities among words and pictures, the lines of words introduce the shape and contour (outline) of picture. Compare with: M. Foucault, *To nie jest fajka (Ceci n'est pas une pipe)*, p. 15.

[32] H. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 30.

image in the literature. It is not the problem of representation and composition but the problem of the references between images and their meanings transmitted among different codes. This intellectual intuition defines the sign wider than in diadic aspect. Written words, the syntagmas of them, may mean as the forms which are similar to the pictures. Ernst Gombrich[27] and Umberto Eco[28] showed that the iconic sign is not only referential. They questioned “the natural” similarity between iconic sign and the object and they indicated the influence of graphic conventions which determine almost every possibility of understanding a sign and that they are always the result of arbitrary choice[29]. It does not mean the everything what consist of the picture means that it can be translated into words, but that the words in a special contexts can function as the pictures (images)[30]. This possibility of working words[31] in a such meaning will be called “the performative pictures”.

The narrator giving a question about capabilities of drawing, painting in words let to see these pictures – he does not invokes them (what is typical for traditional description the iconic signs in written language). This communicational “permission” is a kind of performative presentation of the objects what in the context of *Kalooki Nights* (where many times the narrator wonders how he can represent something what cannot be presented) is depended on the main character’s religious tradition which many times is the source of questions about horizon of potential presentations of hidden, covered (also by the words) reality. The very nebular analogy can be found in the function of written words in religions where the words are instead of iconic representation of *sacrum*. The narrator in *Kalooki Nights* tells that for Jews words were holy because they did not accept any idols and that is why words for him have a special power[32].

The perspective of giving questions or wondering for example about the composition or the shapes of lines (drawing comics) opens the possibility of focusing the transmissions

of meanings from linguistic patterns of understanding into visual modes of imagination (representation) – visualisation, whereas the act of reading becomes the act of seeing (observing). From this perspective it can be stated that the sphere of composition or representation of performative (received) pictures are implied as the “neutral” result of acting: the narrator is telling how the “painted character” would look like, would stand like, would do this, etc.[33] This order of interpretation is determined by the function of narrator who reveals the scheme of performing the image. This chain of dependencies is similar to the intersemiotic relations between screenplay and the images of film. It is the meaningful correlation: on the one hand the linguistic connotation evokes rather the process of concretization, on the other hand the receiving of image implies more often the abstraction[34]. In the perspective of performing the images the abstraction can be the concretization[35]. That is why the narrator’s remarks focused on this issue are the external form of intersemiotic translation from the verbal “canvas” of words into the visual projection (of potential) images. It is a performing of the icon (words as the elements of image) from the symbol (words as the canvas).

The picture liberates from nothingness. Under the hand reveals something what was not planned during drawing. It is the consequence of lack of love to the reality[36] though from the very beginning it was something denial in drawn (painted) world. The narrator stated that every form of pain in his life should be “re-presented” because the cartoonist’s duty should be breaking the habits and felicity. Images cannot give a simple help, rather must provoke[37]. The main character of *Kalooki Nights*, Max Gluckman, with his friend, Mannie Washinsky, when they were children started working on the comics titled *Five Thousand Years of Bitterness*. Mannie was responsible for the data and contents which concerned five thousand years of pain in the history of Jews. The peculiar and main part of this comics was

focused on the Holocaust. Max Gluckman drew the pictures. This plot of the novel refers to the hard ethical and esthetical question how can be shown some tragical and traumatic facts. When there is a lack of words and somebody starts drawing at the same time he/she creates images, strips in the comic and virulent poetics. For the Gluckman important stylistic tools is grotesque and hyperbole which are useful during revealing the internal atrocity of created characters and their environments[38]. The caricature (about which the narrator tells a few times in the novel) is in this context a form of sublimation of pain[39]. The spirit of Goya’s paintings, for example *The Colossus*, gives the approximation of trauma under the skin of tactile realms of fear and destruction; the will of uncovering the most cruel meanings runs the reader and the painter (writer) to the ports of illusion.

The hypothesis of performative images can be accepted only in the context of intersemiotic interactions between codes and subjects of communication modelled by the centralized

[33] H. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 194.

[34] P. Michałowski, *Niedookreślone i nadokreślone. Między słowem i obrazem*, in: *Intersmiotyczność*, p. 140.

[35] P. Michałowski wrote that the agreement between for example Roman Ingarden and Władysław Tatarkiewicz concerns treating the word as the medium (agent) of image, but the work of literature is a kind of mediated watching. Compare with: P. Michałowski, op. cit., p. 142.

[36] H. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 21.

[37] The statements from the last two sentences which are the paraphrase of the narrator’s opinion are similar to the underground ideas. Compare with: M. J. Estren, *A history of underground comics*, San Francisco 1974, p. 153–156, http://books.google.pl/books?id=hQb_q6DWle4C&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_navlinks_s (download 28.07.2009)

[38] H. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 43.

[39] Ibidem, p. 412.

contents of fiction in novel and decentralized forms of recreating the functions of words and images evoked by them. The interaction between codes makes that the linguistic symbols become the objects of images. They are the substance of meaningful relations at the syntagmatic level of dependencies among words and at the metaphorical level of images created by them in the act of reading. The words as the objects can consist of all imaginable, possible objects. The narrator tells that if he were not a cartoonist, he would become a painter, a surrealist. Words in this interpreted novel are full of irony and sarcasm which are important to break the stereotypes and prejudices. Jacobson's prose is like a body surrounded the skin of reality stigmatized by the conflict between truth and false, fiction is the temperature of it.

The interactions between sender (narrator) and the receiver (reader) are the consequences of social and esthetical expectations. If it is impossible to put the illustration (or the strip) into the novel, maybe it will be better to treat words as the objects of performative images. The similarity determined by the "activated" pictures enables of seeing all the objects which are spoken; this statement can be accepted when – in the context of interaction between sender and receiver – the similarity is defined

rather as the attribute (feature) of thinking than of things^[40]. They are rather rhetorical^[41] because the pictures can be told more than one time. This aspect of interaction between words and images (similar situation is with the calligrammes) in the frame of novel will not change the traditional oppositions born in the history of the written alphabet: showing and calling, displaying and speaking, copying and talking, imitating and signifying, looking and reading^[42]. The narrator's questions (how to draw it, this line, how to show his face etc.)^[43] and some evoked elements are not the description, legend (key) of potential pictures, but rather a form of their illustrations.

The hypothesis of performative pictures in the novel is supported by the intuition that words would be treated not like the words but like the canvas or just the images. The narrator's visions and doubts reveal the subtle pressure between the possibility of not showing yet but also not already just talking (narrating or describing). The intuition that words can be treated as the images can be described by the "doubled framing"^[44]. The inner frame shapes the field of meanings at the text written in words and created by the sender (for example by the narrator in *Kalooki Nights*). The words construct diverse and compound elements – agents. The set of them can be called "agency" which is reconstructed (recreated) by the receiver (the reader) by the crossing of the outer frame of text. The semiotic tension between outer and inner frame reveals the continuity of agents as the performative image where the sign (meaning and reaction) of agent stands for the image which is represented by the words. It is possible to imagine through the performing of words during the visualisation that the act of reading is the act of watching, so that by the words the image can be seen and at the same moment that this images is out of the visual perception of receiver. This process of transforming the relations between sender and receiver shaped by the semiotic tension between inner and outer frame reflects the mechanism of transframing^[45]

[40] M. Foucault, op. cit., p. 50.

[41] M. Rusinek, *Między retoryką a retorycznością Between Rhetoric and Rhetoricity*, Kraków 2003, p. 17–47.

[42] M. Foucault, op. cit., p. 16.

[43] H. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 194.

[44] This idea is inspired by the R. Eshelman's conception of "doubled framing".

Compare with: R. Eshelman, *Performatism, or the End of Postmodernism (American Beauty)*, in: R. Eshelman, *Performatism, or the End of Postmodernism*, Colorado 2008, p. 3.

[45] The term of "transframing" is taken from the text written by P. Singh.

Compare with: P. Singh, *Examining the Society of Mind*, op. cit.

the relations between signs and its representations during the performing of images.

The process of reading is understood as the process of performing the images (in the concret communicational strategies of narrator). Transframing represents all the elements that constituted the process of performing the images through the narrator's description and wondering. It can represent the current (or even uncanny) context and destination of a transformations, who or what would be created, what kind of elements, which strips (which for the narrator the way of disturbing the relations between time and space, it is a kind of tyranny of representation[46]), colours, lines and emotions caused the image of it. Transframing is a subjective form of redistribution of semiotic tools to achieve a new meaningful quality ("agency") of representation. The performing image is the agency where are realised the potential semiotic capabilities of interactions among different codes of communication.

The similarity, wrote Michel Foucault, is important in displaying. The reminding is important for repeating. The similarity is realised by the matrix (pattern) because of which it still can be recognized[47]. The reminding activates *simulacrum* – an inaccurate and reversible relation of analogy. In the context of *Kalooki Nights* the similarity is a tool of visualisation out of words which helps treat them as the performative images. This potential communicational aspect of words is important when the narrator wants to convince the reader that he should look at some recognizable objects. "Written things" show that invisibility and interaction of meaning are the common horizon for the words and the pictures.

The narrator tells that it is hard to accept comics as the medium which can represent or show the genocide. He suggests, with irony, that the Adorno's words about poetry after the Holocaust should be spread also on the comics. The strips in comics, as he stated, destroy the nothingness, strenghtening them-

selves it the visible spheres. The act of creation of them makes that the cartoonist tries to reconcile (to find the compromise) between the mother's rationalism and the father's godliness[48]. This last correlation shows that written word, legitimated by the tradition of the proportion between style and form[49], is a kind of idiom for a picture. There are some interesting comics represented the Holocaust which are accepted by the public opinion as the enough serious and responsible[50].

There are "spoken comics" in *Kalooki Nights*. The main hypothesis of this text bases on the presumption that some written words treated as the speech acts can be the equiva-

[46] H. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 411.

[47] M. Foucault, op. cit., p. 50.

[48] H. Jacobson, op. cit., p. 187.

[49] J. Szyłak, *Komiks: Świat przerysowany*, Gdańsk 1998; J. Szyłak, *Komiks w kulturze ikonicznej XX wieku: wstęp do poetyki komiksu*, Gdańsk 1999; *Między tekstem a obrazem: przekład a telewizja, reklama, teatr, film, komiks, internet*, red. U. Kropiwek, M. Filipowicz-Rudek and J. Konieczna-Twardzikowa, Kraków 2005.

[50] A. Spiegelman, *Maus. A survivor's tale. Volume 1. My father bleeds history*, 1991 (Polish edition 2001); *Maus II. A survivor's tale. And here my troubles began*, 1991 (Polish edition 2001). E. van Alphen, *Zabawa w Holokaust (Playing the Holocaust)*, trans. K. Bojarska, "Literatura na Świecie", p. 217–245; *Wokół "Pianisty" Romana Polańskiego. Filmowe zwierciadła Holokaustu. Z Agnieszką Holland rozmawia Jan Strzałka*, Agnieszka Holland told in this interview that comics like *Maus* can seriously refer to the Holocaust, "Tygodnik Powszechny", Nr 13 (2803), 30 marca 2003, <http://www.tygodnik.com.pl/tp/2803/filmo8.php> (download 28.07.2009); R.S. Leventhal, *Art Spiegelman's MAUS: Working Through The Trauma of the Holocaust*, <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/holocaust/spiegelman.html> (download 29.07.2009).

lent of displaying of the images. Speaking something can mean doing (acting) something, can mean painting something or drawing something by the introducing (creating) a new form of visible beings^[51]. The written words interpreted as the speech acts (it is important to add in this moment that the intuition of the author of this article is only an interpretation, the narrator of *Kalooki Nights* did not tell in any part of this novel about this kind of intersemiotic dependencies) are the “pictorial deeds”. The words “incise” the limits and patterns of language wanting to close their senses in the frame of imagination. Thinking about the narrator’s acting of images (and/or paintings) some parts of *Kalooki Night* (interpreted in this paragraph) can be called as the “performative comics” where words are only the scar on the surface of visualisation the strips.

Epilogue

It is interesting that words – the substance of *Kalooki Nights* are such important tools in writing about the Holocaust and about anti-Semitism, and about the stereotypes. “The novel’s aim is noble to relive the horrors of the Holocaust lest it be forgotten. And it certainly succeeds as a diatribe against those who seek to trivialise or deny it”^[52].

The intersemiotic tensions, transframing and performing – these terms consisted on main hypothesis of this article. The being of words still means looking through them, through their semantic flaws. There is the paradox of functioning of one word with other words. One word is the abstraction, a few words create a sense, too many words

is again the abstraction. Where can be found the understanding? A similar situation is when we will think about the relations between literature (dominated by written words) and comics (dominated by the strips, images). The history of interpretations of these two sources of semiosphere touches the limits of questions: what can be told, does the language is the system of gathering knowledge about the reality? and what can be shown if it cannot be spoken?

Kalooki Nights confronts the taboo of bitterness and sacrifice with evolution of identity in history. It is impossible to avoid every potential domain of them without the meaningful tensions among different codes of communication. *Kalooki* is not only a game, it is rather the ritual of being together even though permanent change of people around the table, cards and subjects of conversation. Sometimes nights going away do not ask about any sense, sometimes – during playing *kalooki* – night is full of light.

[51] J. Derrida wondered about possible forms of thinking about some kind – in the analogy to speech acts – of pictorial acts in painting. “Can the theory of speech acts find the equivalent in painting?” J. Derrida, *Prawda w malarstwie (La vérité en peinture)*, trans. M. Kwietniewska, Gdańsk 2003, p. 15.

[52] S. Feldman, op. cit.