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PASSAGES AND THE *EPISTEME* OF CROSSING A THRESHOLD

ABOUT THE READING OF WHAT WAS NEVER WRITTEN DOWN, BUT
THE BODY INSCRIBED IN THE TEXT

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Abstract

This text is an attempt to collect traces of readings on the hermeneutics of the city as a space dense with meanings that require discernment in a completely unusual phenomenology, and not just the topography of the city. The modern humanities have greatly contributed to an understanding of and searching for discourse of such places/non-places, passages, alleys, and labyrinths, in which the body each time feels different and forces a different description than a neutral one or an indifferent one. It

is not without significance that we have long known that sometimes the “genius loci,” as well as our fear, alienation, or, on the contrary, domestication, and captivity truly reign. This article is a survey of my readings and fascinations that arose thanks to them. Walter Benjamin’s reflections on passages are the basis of my discourse. I also use the accomplishments of outstanding Polish humanists, creatively fitting into this perspective.

Keywords: reading, passages, *flâneur*, labyrinth, city, body, text, *episteme*.

Pasaže in *episteme* prehajanja praga. O branju tistega, kar nikdar ni bilo zapisano, a je telo vpisalo v tekst

Povzetek

442 Besedilo je poskus razbiranja sledi branj hermenevtike mesta kot prostora, polnega pomenov, ki zahtevajo razločevanje s popolnoma neobičajno fenomenologijo in ne samo s topografijo mesta. Moderna humanistika je veliko prispevala k razumevanju in iskanju diskurza takšnih krajev/ne-krajev, pasaž, uličic in labirintov, pri katerih se telo vsakokrat počuti drugače in vsiljuje od nevtralnega ali indiferentnega drugačen opis. Nikakor ni brez pomena, da občasno resnično zavladajo tako »genius loci« kakor tudi naš strah in odtujitev ali, nasprotno, udomačitev in očaranost. Pričujoči članek je raziskava mojih branj in fascinacij, ki so nastale zahvaljujoč njim samim. Refleksije Walterja Benjamina o pasažah so osnova mojega diskurza. Sklicujem se tudi na dosežke izjemnih poljskih humanistov, ki se kreativno umeščajo znotraj tovrstne perspektive.

Ključne besede: branje, pasaže, *flâneur*, labirint, mesto, telo, besedilo, *episteme*.

“Life seemed worthwhile only where the threshold between sleep and wakefulness was *trampled* as if after the *march* of an endless series of *images*, where language was only itself and nothing more, where sound and image, image and sound with the precision of the automaton overlapped ...” (Benjamin 1996, 57.)¹

“Reading is a space created by experiencing a place that is a system of signs—something that has been written down.” (Benjamin 1996, 117.)

“Thus, a *new visual epistemology* developed, by definition combining seeing and believing and seeing and speaking.” (Buczyńska-Garewicz 2006, 28.)

“... a place, like a human being, has a name, in which the whole of her individuality resides.” (Buczyńska-Garewicz 2006, 28.)

Introduction. Let us learn to read people like a city, and let the city read the living body of the subject

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Drawing on Benjamin’s highly influential *Passages*, I include the category of *walking* as vital in the publications on the text, “afterimages,” the reading of places, and reading itself. At the same time, I regard as vitally important the analyses of the city, which claim “that [it] fulfills itself in the ‘passage,’ ‘exit’ and ‘departure’” (Sławek 2010, 52). The studies of the relationship between subjectivity, space, and the crossing of the threshold “between dreaming and wakefulness” have revealed the area of the problem, both in the broadest dimension of inspiration stemming from “geo-poetics” and in a narrower dimension. The latter concerns the parallels between walking and speaking in the construction of identity or in the appropriation and actualization of city places, as well as their linguistic elaboration and visualization.

¹ All English-language citations that appear in this article are my own translations from Polish.

The reading of cultural texts, including the city as a network of transitions, flows, and pulsations, corresponds to the subjective experience of meanings, space, and places in various cognitive representations and in various types of individual epistemologies. “The reading of the city” and “the reading of people” is, therefore, a specific, comparative strategy of being in (their) culture and experiencing the combined symbolic memory of both subjects. It is a reading strategy both in terms of the acts of texts’ selection (cities) and the interpretation of what happens in personal reading. It provides a perspective on personalized experiences and encounters. The reading of the city as a specific type of bond is a combination of images—mental figures—enabling the practice of subjectivity, that is, an attempt to understand oneself, to examine the places of the appearance of clearances and flows of identity, language (and/of) the body and relationships, and to adopt the position of subjective evaluation of such reading. Urban semiosis, this “cauldron of texts and codes” (Sławek 2010, 22), urban eventfulness and contingency, iconic hypertrophy, and flickering excess, can therefore be viewed as a cultural text, built on “links and joints” (ibid.).

444 Full of spatial codes and palimpsest records, containing translucent meanings, the city is also a *faerie* of disturbed discursive orders. In addition, it occurs as an unfinished space, flashing, and implies the co-creation of this cognitive, emotional, and existential mixture.

In addition to the sense-forming fabric of entangled, internal meanings, built by the reading of the urban space along with overwritten imaginings, the text of the city also has a superstructure and a substructure, giving the city a cultural function. The urban text, as an interpenetration of perspectives and cultural cross-sections, is:

[...] a kind of super-narrative, the sum of stories grown “around” the city, feeding on the city, to take it to a higher level, to supplement the code composed of various types of sensory signs, inscriptions, voices, events, with a myth, urban legend, sometimes gossip or anecdote. (Szalewska 2012, 124.)

The text-city is thus treated as *a metaphor for the visible body*, together with the sphere of an invisible system of iconic connections and flows of life-giving

forces. Furthermore, it is full of layers of meanings (history), phenomena from the mythical, phantasmatic, and spiritual order, with places/non-places, heterotopias, and time-space layers. They relate to the work of memory and imagination, which penetrates the peculiarities and local phenomena because “every city [...] is characterized by the specificity of space, not to be repeated, not to be counterfeited in other circumstances” (Bieńkowska 1999, 96).

Imagination and discourse, focused on the city or on the mental image of the city, neither homogeneous nor unambiguous, read as a text, are the philosophy of perception—the philosophy of *looking, watching, and seeing*. The uniqueness and transience of the observer’s mindfulness can be used to build a parallel *episteme* referring to the process of perceiving and the ways of looking at a person. Let us learn to look at people as if they were cities—a hermeneutically sound and cognitively promising call—also by transferring some observational plans and valuable methodological rules (processuality, mindfulness, the focus on uniqueness, unprejudiced vision, an eye unarmed with interpretative clichés).

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A passerby’s notebook and the new *episteme* of the “moving vantage point”

“The ontology of flâneur is summed up in a gaze, in a *moving vantage point*, of a variable perspective.” (Szalewska 2012, 90.)

“The greatest gift turned out to be the lack of haste, the freedom to choose the route, and the possibility of returning. Sometimes the most important things were suggested by *chance*.” (Zagańczyk 2005, 13–14.)

A textual passage is a formula of expression, referring simultaneously to the place, transition, language, and the record of individual experience (experimenting and wandering). In this “textual trope <I>” (Nycz 2000, 2012), the act of walking corresponds to the act of speaking (Certeau 2008, 99);² the

2 Certeau writes: “The act [of walking] actually has a threefold function of ‘speaking’: it is the process of appropriation of the topographic system by the pedestrian (just as the speaker appropriates and adopts the language); it is the *spatial* realization of

realization of spatial insights is uttered and recorded in the notes of a passer-by (“walking texts”). This means that itinerant figures (turn, return, retreat, stop, doubt, choice, twist, going astray, wandering) have their counterparts in linguistic figures; at the same time, the spatial realization of places, determining the route of walking, wandering, and traveling are close to the montage of statements, while the topography of space is close to a narrative labyrinth. This is a unique epistemology because, as J. Urry writes in *Sociology of Mobility*, “walking is privileged, motivated by the multitude of desires and goals that have their source in the interrelationship between the movement of bodies, fantasy, memory, and the fabric of urban life” (2009, 81).

446 In the history of culture, *flâneur* is, at the same time, a figure of identity in movement, a metaphor for reading, an image of literary individuality, a textual traveling subject, a methodological abbreviation, an analytical category, and a figure of memory and mirror of cultural transformations. *Flâneur* unhurriedly, aimlessly, and solitarily traverses passages, streets, and spaces, indulging in the sensations of the moment, the feeling of (her) being a stranger in the crowd, giving herself the opportunity to reflect on the impressions and their memory constellations, which will form a palimpsest. *Flâneur* is an artist who verbalizes the experienced reality and constructs the subjectivity of a human being on the move, in the promise of adventure, in the fulfillment felt in the solitude of viewing, and not being seen. The passage becomes a medium for crystallizing nomadic identity, a metaphor for the *universum* of thinking possibilities. Wandering is also an “expansion of home.” It is “taking into possession of new content and quality of places” (Buczyńska-Garewicz 2006, 41).

The text passage, the work of a *flâneur*, who “tests the contingency of meaning” (Szalewska 2012, 94), is a trace of the movement of subjectivity, which writes from itself a textual individual experience. It verbalizes the figures of thought, which are triggered by the explored space and are reflexively projected onto it in the form of phantasms. In the practical perspective, the text passage refers

a place (just as the act of speech is the sound realization of language); and finally, it presupposes relations between different systems, that is, pragmatic ‘agreements’ in the form of movements [...].”

to “an essayistic passion” of a special kind, to translating one’s own experience into other languages of culture. It is a circumstance of unhurried reflection on the perception of occurrences, adventures, fleeting experiences, and everyday events. *Flâneur*, as a subject traveling through urban ontology, is a man without a place, a metaphor for the existential situation of being on the road. This model of traveling subjectivity, of aimless wandering, implies another epistemological effort: the strategy of creative energy between the contingency of existential positions and the artistic attitude towards the spaces of meanings that occur in the reading process. *Flâneur* verbalizes the experience of perception and cognition, looking and recalling, by textualizing subjectivity based on the experiences of modernity, everydayness, colloquiality, transience, and possibility, as well as the privilege of looking and seeing. Not without significance for forging the territory of textual-spatial imagination are, therefore, “textual strategies committed to achieving the impression of constant balancing between unique and common qualities” (Sendyka 2006, 47).

The strategy of recording events that comprise the subjectivity of a passerby assumes, thus, a different type of textual practice: essay writing, collecting, noting, commenting, diary writing, reporting, column writing, and requires collage, mosaic, palimpsest aesthetics, which combines space and time. “Walking” texts are a subjective experiment and a record of this experiment concerning the influence of spatial categories on the textual constitution of the subject locating itself in the text. They are a personal, dual *sensorium*, a metaphor for writing (from) oneself, recording from seeing and understanding, appropriating, and marking the anthropology of space with private meanings, creating a topographic image of the space of life in the melancholic imagination.

“*Flâneur’s* city is an *imaginary space*, a series of staged scenes whose scenography shows inspiration taken from real topography; it is *a spectacle set in the imagination*” (Szalewska 2012, 100). It is, therefore, a specific type of discourse of space, filtered by subjectivity, a mode of “essayistic writing” on the aesthetics of events. It is a kind of text passage, a text map of meanings, and, at the same time, an ethical and epistemological challenge. Referring to the postulate of the integration of subjective, identity sensations and their naming, *flâneuring*, in the poetics of perception and rhetoric of the gaze, reaches the ephemerality of everydayness, the split moments of time, the impressions

of flashes, the variability of meanings, forgotten meanings, marginalized, underestimated, and excluded values.

448 The seemingly pointless search for real and symbolic worlds in the walking, unhurried reflection of the *flâneur* reaches and touches hidden, otherwise imperceptible things, sometimes intentionally concealed, invisible in the procedural *episteme*. At the same time, *flâneur* reaches things that are arbitrarily destined to and prepared for manipulated reception and want to pretend to be something different than what they are. *Flâneurism*, through the interference of subjectivity and space, and their pictorial-textual movements, does not allow for an easy closing of perception to things potentially useful in reflective and critical thinking, problem-solving, as well as the prudent and contemplative organization of existence. Thus, the anthropology of walking and its epistemic accomplishments resists the disappearance of places and impermanent forms of being. This is not only the slowness of gaze and the epistemology of mindfulness, but also the discursivization of marginalized and secondary places; it is “a constant *going astray* from the main route towards motifs/topics less recognized, less illuminated,” it is “a distance from the thoughts of the crowd” (Szalewska 2012, 113).

Wandering is here an attempt to theoretically bring out private, intimate issues that are located between texts. *Flâneur*'s text passage is not only a specific essay, but every existentially relevant utterance.

Entrances, slips into passages and labyrinth tests. *Flâneur* and her passion for alleys, gates, and windows

“[...] in all these situations, *the figure of the labyrinth* appears—either as a real path leading to a *place of transformation* or a metaphorical idea of reaching the center of the (sub)conscious.” (Czapiga 2013, 49.)

“Each of the gates suggests movement, the movement of one gate refers to the movement of the other.

The space here is a repository of restless mobility, a storehouse of aspirations, a labyrinth, in which each passage says: go-enter-exit-come to-go through-come closer-go away-go around-come nearer.” (Symotiuk 1997, 17.)

The text passage as the form and content of individual experience and the record of “moving” imagination is a narrative recovered in afterimages as sediments of perception, awakened in flashes, clearances of reminiscent, penetrating thought. It is a narrative obtained from hybrid memories, reconstructed from reading the space-palimpsest.

In the context of the above outline concerning the key category of the passage here, it seems to be most significant to recognize narrative figures in the forms of peregrination, written and inscribed in the body, real or imaginary. One of them is the figure of the narrative labyrinth, with different types of the mystery of places, sublime horror, borderline, and various variants of transitions, from the ritual understanding of this concept as an initial journey and transformation in the (labyrinth)³ of existence to symbolic interfaces of *possible worlds* and imaginary places that reveal *slips* into other ontological or epistemological orders (Caroll 2004a, 2004b).

We must put forward the thesis that the idea of the city as a passage is a metaphor, form, or position of the subject’s consciousness. T. Sławek (2010, 54) names this a network consciousness, because it “brings together a dozen, or so, very distant points.” The network consciousness, generated on the plane of the city, is also the participation of the subject in the experience of the labyrinth. The very capacious, semantic potential of the figure of the labyrinth reveals the possibilities of its textual and pictorial realizations, and this was interestingly and multifacetedly shown by M. Czapiga (2013). Applied to the theme of passages, it gives an idea of special *places of transformation*. The experience of reading the city is about those places and moments of *passage*, in which a human being transcends her identity and existence. It is, therefore, a symbol of a gate that leads symbolically to *the other side*. Being a passage, the gate has a “going-through and flowing” character (Sławek 2010, 32). Mental structures will be the place of the actualization of our thinking about this heuristic connection. In such structures, the text passage will be an uttered realization of the initial *passage* through the labyrinth test; the latter is a place “perfectly

3 An insightful study on the labyrinth, concerning its history, metaphor, catalog, and historical fate of imaginations, is presented by M. Czapiga (2013); cf. also the logic of the tree and the labyrinth, ordering semantic relations, and semiotic richness in: Eco 2009.

embodying all choices” (J. Barth). The labyrinth is a space of *wandering*, but also a place of *resolution*, *reflection*, *decision*, *obsession*, *hesitation*, and a *symbol* of the fight against the “monster,” which is to lead to the experience of *coincidentia oppositorum* and the balancing of the conflicting structures of two places and experiences.

Transition can be associated, not only with an initial, ritual transformation, but also with an equally existentially important experience of the *flâneur*’s contingency and her attempts to become *the other*. *Passage*, as a place of transgression and crossing the border, taboo, and mystery, is a key category in the *flâneur*’s discourse. It is characterized by “a *passion for alleys, gates, city isthmuses, courtyards, and [...] windows*, i.e., those elements of the city architecture that are most strongly satiated, also symbolically and culturally, with transgressivity” (Szalewska 2012, 218). Thus, the *passage* and symbol of the labyrinth-city is a heterotopian place, with an atopic potential, discursively demanding, emotionally irritating, full of initiatory elements in every rite of passage, and leading to a confrontation with what is new, foreign, disturbing, and often normatively forbidden. It can therefore be *vice* and offense, decision, and gain from that stray perception, which is, however, never wasted. Windows, isthmuses, clearances, and tunnels are, thus, a metaphorical description of combining heterogeneous, busy, flickering spaces, symbols of transcending place and self-flow, understanding difference, experiencing, awakening, and transformation. The passages and corridors of the labyrinth are also an exemplification and a symbol of fate and its semantic “density.”

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The gate is the place where we gain the value of ourselves, of who we are, how we understand our existential position and relationships. Passages, gates, and other places pregnant with meaning store the memory and traces of man’s wandering in the form of palimpsest deposits of collective memory, which can be used as an archive of culture or otherwise defined, a union of *sensorium* and *imaginarium*. It is the multiplicity and diversity in the cross-communication of meanings and attitudes that build the philosophy of the gate. The labyrinth formula will be used here in the context of testing existence and marking its significant, central, border, heterotopian, broken, closed, or detained places. Entrapments in the border spaces of fate, as well as other borderlands of existence, are life-giving places, a chance for a symbolic death and rebirth. At

the same time, they give an opportunity to express the pain in the form of textual insights and narrative studies.

The nomadic status of texts (R. Braidotti). Grateful and ungrateful maps

“Intellectual nomadism is first and foremost *an existential project*.”
(Rybicka 2014, 65.)

The reading of the city as a palimpsest is, therefore, a constant *re-reading* from the beginning, with the addition of further recognition. It involves taking into account previous readings, insights, and accompanying images, cognitive, emotional, diagnostic, and self-therapeutic circumstances. In this sense, the city “resembles *a construction plan*, an architectural design, or a city-carcass, in which senses can later be built-in, it is a delimited space, but with places of indeterminacy, susceptible to the freedom of thought inherent in the essay” (Szalewska 2012, 194). This distribution of the structure and the very structure of the city-memory-subject distribution can be illustrated in the form of a map or an atlas of the nomadic narrative movements of the individual. Therefore, the city must be thought of as “a fluid structure of connections and switches, from which various branches diverge to all sides, leading to subsequent switches and joints, so that the city appears as a labyrinthine network of neurons” (Sławek 2010, 31). Let me complete the reconstruction of T. Sławek’s original idea: “I get to know the city when I create a map of points (and such a map will probably be different for everyone), in which passages are revealed [...]” (Ibid.) The map must, therefore, take into account places that are subjectively marked as gates, *passages*, and fragments (puzzles) of the labyrinth. Such an understanding of the individualized map of the forging and “hatching” of existence will open a *universum* of possibilities and ambiguous horizons and landscapes. It is no coincidence that we read such a confession:

I think that the writing of many of my texts is like drawing maps [...]. It is no coincidence that the image of the map or the drawing of it is so often present in my texts. The frequency of spatial metaphors expresses both the nomadic status and the need to draw maps.” (Braidotti 2009, 43.)

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Braidotti proposes a metaphor of nomadism, which makes it possible to see thinking as being multiple, running to different sides of activity and mobility that reveal themselves in complex and diverse ways of living. Nomadic consciousness is the critical consciousness that determines conscious choice and decision, often in the paradigm of resistance. The movement of people, objects, images, thoughts, knowledge, information, waste, and other cultural goods in the visual metaphor of mobility is the practice and actualization of critical consciousness, in the dimension of individual autobiographies. Translations of metaphors into the meanings of everydayness are possible thanks to the competence of reading virtual movements of thought slipping and moving in the text-map, reading multiple meanings, making imaginary journeys, and even wandering on the margins of consciousness. The maps are “strongly symbolic, using all kinds and also completely arbitrary markings, figures, shadows, shapes, shading, etc.” (Urry 2009, 128). The very process of spatialization of thoughts and memory work of symbolic mapping or mapping of symbols is worth more serious consideration. This is especially true in the case of difficult, tangled, or wounded narratives, which require to be seen in the *space of time* and to be granted with an emotionally weakened, distant narrative and visual character. The cooperation of time and space in auto/bio/geo/graphic writing is the recording of meanings, experiences, and *significant* moments in the individual territory of the cognitive culture of existence, also through the subjective delineation of it through a map. Here, the self-narrative, an illustration of the spatial imagination model, and the dominant (most characteristic of the subject) type of narrative representation meet.

There are many spatial metaphors to be used and filled with subjective content: a cartographic map, space passages, a labyrinth, a warehouse, a library, and a house as a warehouse storing memories and sensory experiences.⁴ Mental maps play not only a cognitive role, but also a mnemonic, stimulating, and causative one, which activates bodily memory (cf. Rybicka 2014, 287). Mental experiences become visualized in images stretched over key elements of space, their recognitions (as compatible with the subject) and incarnations (interiorization of places). The causative role of the place in the design of the

4 Cf. the essay “Metafory, modele i media pamięci” in: Assmann 2013, 89–127.

mental map can be used both in diagnostic processes as well as those that intensify the processes of learning, deepening understanding, or strengthening memorization. Spatial metaphors of thinking and other means of visual representation “can wander in space” (Urry 2009, 128), and show that “moving the map” and animating seemingly motionless margins are epistemologically important (Czapliński 2016).

An archipelago of text. To grant fragments with “the grace of presence”

The virtual landscape is a symbol of man entering the aura of a place with a *topos* potential. About the archipelago (Bogalecki 2008),⁵ the image we will use as a metaphor for reading (text) space, E. Rewers wrote in *Post-polis*: “The city in this approach is not an isolated place, a cultural island, but an archipelago of discontinuous, fragmentary cultures.”⁶

An archipelago of discontinuous snippets sets in motion games with perspective. *Topoi*, scattered over a space that is not easy to identify, thwart the construction of a landscape map (semiotic landscape) and the planning of the way of passage. Everywhere, we face displacement, transcendence of self, and going beyond, through movement towards *another* fragment, which must be “bestowed with the grace of presence.”⁷ The archipelago as a structure in unstable suspension is a model and metaphor for the reading of ephemeral, impermanent, disappearing, virtual, moving, and leaping things. This is because “the archipelago trusts in intervals that constitute a living expression of presence” (Scappettone 2010, 162), and the structure of the fissures fascinates with an infinite number of internal connections. Lost in the chasms, cracks, and the “spacing” of this personified *topos*, they generate a troublesome form of understanding and interpretation: dynamic, relational, influential, outflowing, fleeting, and transitory. In these chasms, full of life-giving energy, the seeds of understanding potential forms that require different readings are born. Understanding must be built on a *volta* in thinking, between fluid points

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⁵ See also Scappettone 2010, 133–172.

⁶ Quoted according to Scappettone 2010, 133–172.

⁷ H. James, after Scappettone 2010, 172.

of thought, trying to grasp a hard piece of land. Condemned to a multitude of transitions, reflecting the variety of displacements, the archipelago symbolizes not the unrealizability of the connection, but the possibility of bestowing energy on fragments in leaps and spaces between them.

The virtuality of the archipelago's landscape will be decided on an imaginary plane. It is based on the insertion of a subjective reference to the landscape, an understanding of its dynamics of development, through the forces of transformation and displacement. It needs the aesthetics of fragmented particles of the archipelago, demanding attention and cooperating with the subjective imagination. The sense of incompleteness will generate constant attempts at virtuoso polishing of perception, thoughts, and interpretations.

Passage—an intertextual inheriting of quotations and landscapes. To “obliterate” the fragments and “arrange them according to the hidden melody”

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“So, it remains for me to imitate a bird building the nest: to *obliterate those passages* that correspond to my readings of Nabokov, and *arrange them according to the hidden melody*, which accompanied me while I was reading his novels.” (Karpiński 1989, 78.)

“*Everything is a quotation*, a combination of the already existing parts, from which the author, like a rag [...] tries to build a clump.” (Delaperrière 1997, 40.)

The synchronous coexistence of various semiotic codes, even tiny parts of codes, is a situation in urban space that is not devoid of epistemological value. The city-text, constituting the passage, is here a kind of intertext, interlaced with sometimes conflicting interpretations, revisions of meanings, the collision of the effects of memory work, revalorization of the memories of places, as well as transit flights and junctures of symbolic communication routes.

Szalewska clarifies the analysis of the metatextual being of fragments in passages, their actualization between texts, stating that in the intertextual co-writing of passages we find various coincidences: “First, individual sentences are woven according to the principle of *a patchwork of quotations*, crypto

citations, allusions, or paraphrases, which are often not separated graphically.” (2012, 169.) The question that arises in the analyses not only by Szalewska, is, therefore, to what extent passages make the space covered by the *flâneur* privately, and to what extent a borrowed or repeated experience is the “truth of the mediation of two subjects” (cf. Szalewska 2012, 169)? Interpreting, associating, comparing, marking, and inscribing meanings into space with the body is a quality that can be culturally reproduced and inherited in the network of readings. This happens in the process of collective coexistence in the history of places, in the development of their spiritual, “common” biography. “The passage would become, in such an optic, an ivy developing between texts.” (Ibid., 175.) The second property of the intertextuality of passages, according to Szalewska, consists in creating—and here she uses the term by D. Danek—“quotations of structures” *implicite* “manifesting the belongingness to the textual community of text passages, and what is more—through intertextuality somehow creating this community” (ibid., 170). In this sense, “the technique of assembling prefabricated elements, quotations—by cutting them out of their original context and recontextualizing them—would become a dismantling of borrowings and discursive strategies” (ibid., 174), entailing “the necessity to maintain for many years a sharpened attention to every *random quotation*, to every *fleeting mention*” (Benjamin 2005, 517).

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The above considerations sensitize us to the fact that the quality of the montage itself will be an issue that is not without significance in the study of text’s tiny bits and their compilation “according to the melody.” In the work of assembling, we are dealing with a special kind of “prefabricated elements”: thoughts, impressions, ephemeral things, personal concepts, intimate variations, and alterations of fragments on the internal plane. Assembling as a rule is “the building of a great structure from the smallest, clearly carved building elements,” but also from “short, unspoken fragments, rarely allowing to guess” (Thiedemann 2005, 7).⁸ Especially since, according to Benjamin, quotes—“robbers” that we encounter through collection and recontextualization—“attack the reader,” and often force us to change perception and montage, imposing a non-subjective path of reflection and even interpretation, making

⁸ Cf. also Benjamin 2005, 506 and further.

observation difficult or limiting the meaningfulness of quotation polyphony, which further complicates the smooth flows of passages.⁹

Benjamin writes about the principle of his activity:

The method of this work: *literary montage*. I have nothing to say; *just to show*. I do not steal anything of value, nor do I appropriate any sophisticated wording. Only *rags and waste*, but not to stock them, but to do justice to them in the only way possible—by using them.” (Benjamin 2005, 505–506.)

456 The non-linearity of “only-to-show”-passages, composed as a kind of collage, labyrinth, or *bricolage*, is related to the transition of narrative into the narrative, with participation in the narrative of the *other*; it is a reflective stop at selected places or the use of a repository of imagination to choose the road and interpret signs on the road: “Stories about places are *bricolages*. They are made from the remains of the world.” (Certeau 2008, 108.) Such a collage composition of text passages,¹⁰ often including descriptions and dialogism, reminds us of the fragmentary nature of scraps of memories and thoughts, of interrupting the circulation of thought with the intrusions of the *Unconscious*. It testifies to the need to break the hegemony of what is easily imposed on perception and interpretation: “The passage, through the openness of the form, allows us to add and break in half a sentence, a *deviation* from the main urban route towards the periphery.” (Szalewska 2012, 139.)

We read in Szalewska’s work: “The collage and the element constituting it—a fragment—as privileged forms epistemologically mediate the complex process of perceiving polyphonic space, repeatedly semiotized.” (Ibid.) This indicates another important circumstance that collage, and even more so the

9 In the introduction to his study on Benjamin’s *Passages*, R. Rożanowski writes: “Benjamin’s work—if we are to refer to his own words—is like *a robber on the road*, he jumps out of an ambush to take away readers’ beliefs. Not only on a purely textual level, but also on a more hidden level—funding the ‘infinite possibility of discourse’ as understood by Foucault.” (1997, 10.)

10 “The verbal remains that make up the story, associated with lost stories and incomprehensible gestures, resemble a collage, which—because it is *based on unintended relationships*—constitutes a symbolic whole. They *express themselves through what is lacking*.” (Certeau 2008, 108.)

essayization, allows for the juxtaposition of various forms of expression in the text passage, with a particular indication of those that have the power to uncover meanings of some hidden existence that is deeply rooted in the body. This requires stereometric reading (Syndyka 2006, 155–156), which takes into account the breaks in the difficult, “excavating” narrative, and forces to disrupt its course in terms of temporal succession, returns of motifs, fixation on specific issues, and traps of narrative gaps. “*Flâneur*’s work resembles that of a *bricoleur*, using the means at hand, tools found around him, although not necessarily intended for such use. *Flâneur*’s book is written without a plan, without order, without a method.” (Loska 1998, 42–43.)

The (self-)creative activities of the subject include the construction of metaphors interpreting the experienced space, arranged in the “edifice of thought,” or other textual activity oscillating around some spatial metaphor. These activities relate to the work of the *bricoleur*, which:

[...] consists in introducing into the constructed, intellectual edifice an order, a principle that is inherent in every collage, even if it is expressed in deliberate chaos. Order, which is at times hidden for the recipient, is always recognizable by the *flâneur*, because it constitutes his testimony—passage.” (Szalewska 2012, 194.)

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The processual and personalized character of the passages is also associated with the placement of certain accents, which make the text passages into separate, individualized wholes of narrative labyrinths, strategies of disguising in costumes (Szalewska 2012, 135). This is regardless of the invariant features of the passage, resulting from the *flâneur*’s speaking structure. Walking is a form of discourse, and we will remain in this aesthetic, although we will go beyond the content of the material and the cityscape. Finally, let us ponder the idea of a garbage can. Along with the segregation of cultural waste, there appears the concept of the “certainty of recovery,” which must be associated here with “rummaging in the garbage can of the culture of waste.”¹¹

11 K. Miklaszewski states: “[...] well-segregated garbage is a certainty of recovery. In

The “garbage dump of ideas” generates the possibility of saving fragments from being lost or historically, ideologically, and aesthetically disregarded. It is worth looking at it with one more remark in the background:

The artist, like the “diver” (this is how a poor man living off waste is called), will never give up the garbage can. He will plunge into it every day and persistently, and will always find something interesting. Especially, since a real garbage can, next to the matter almost completely consumed, contain many elements prematurely and hastily discarded. What is more: the “professional diver” chooses appropriate garbage cans, well-promising ones, i.e., garbage cans of ideas, garbage cans of styles and conventions, garbage cans of form, as well as all media dumps. (Miklaszewski 2007, 9.)

458 *A professional garbage-diver* who chooses “promising garbage cans” is a wandering author, and her “wandering” is a “disagreement with the meaning at the first level” (Lupa 2003, 183).

How to read those “tiny pieces” “emerging to the surface” that force you to repeat (yourself)? How to elicit fragments, pregnant with meaning, from these historically stored wholes? How to infer meaning (Benjamin), how to *pick out pearls* (Lupa), and how to *immerse yourself* in the search for ideas (Lynch)? To articulate this most emphatically, it is about connection and communication with “*the whole spectacular junkyard of history*” (Debord 2007, 43). Is this the creative archaeology of ruins and palimpsest-city gathering, as in Benjamin, or “burying” in “trash cans,” as in Žižek? Or, maybe, it means “approaching eternity through a rubbish bin,” as in Kantor,¹² or still something else?

the garbage can, everything is only seemingly someone else’s. The moment we start digging into it, it is ours. I realized then that *Kantor’s ‘waste’* had so much contributed to my home dumpster that *it began to live anew* and affect not only me. Therefore, I would like to share this abundance of inspiration once again, arranging *a new collage* out of my film, radio, and text recordings, many of which come to light for the first time.” (2007, 11.)

12 Cf. Miklaszewski 2007. This is a publication, about which A. Burzyńska wrote in

In lieu of conclusion. The body “takes” space and voice. On the right to “search through our interiors”

“Each body occupies *its place*.” (Augé 2010, 35.)

“An average human being makes text into a performance, in text and through text.” (Certeau 2008, 6.)

“*The human body is conceived of as a part of space, with its own boundaries, centers of vitality, its defense mechanisms, and weaknesses, its armor and shortcomings.*” (Augé 2010, 40.)

“Different loves give the right to *rummage through our inner being*, to demand explanations, and yet in our lives there are such thoughts that haunt us, push us no one knows where, which only open prospects and call to some misty horizons.” (Herbert and Elzenberg 2002, 54.)

“I travel to learn my own geography.”¹³

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Even “a collective noun has its bodily equivalent,” argues Benjamin (1996, 71). Writing the city in the body, the text passage reminds us of the relationship between literature and the body, which is interestingly problematized by Szalewska (2012, 105). As the author of *Text Passage* clarifies, the relationship between body and utterance is more about the physiology of the creative subject, about the interconnection between thought, walking, the work of feet, and the play of steps.

Tygodnik Powszechny (13. 11. 2007): “Miklaszewski’s assumption was the most correct: he collected various documents, a ‘garbage can’ composed of ‘waste’—unused notes, conversations, photographs, drawings, important and trivial materials. [...] ‘Saving through the garbage’—this is a beautiful metaphor patronizing this publication. // The book has the form of a collage, *silva rerum*, where next to conversations, scenarios of reportages and programs, quotations from reviews, and statements [...] there appear memories, as well as interpretative and polemical texts by Miklaszewski. The whole is complemented by photocopies of press clippings and unique photos and reproductions of Kantor’s more widely unknown works.” (Burzyńska 2007, 5.)

13 M. Réja, after Benjamin 2005, 461.

I would like to draw attention to the elements that connect the subject and its *possible* worlds in the philosophy of walking. They combine the intimacy of symbolic spaces of the subject, which mediate in reading and writing, with a significant existential input. “Books are nothing but metaphors of the body,” writes Certeau (2008, 141), and in this poetics of the experience of the body and writing, we will remain. The body can be written in different ways. It can be done through the erasure of symbolic wounds by means of narration or through the building of a visual-spatial utterance. Photography, image, and collage are manifestations of the conceptualization of the subject’s utterances in such a representational form, no less appealing than a written or printed text. Thus, writing the body is a process of self-analysis, self-therapy, and communication.

460 *Flâneuring* or vagabonding in the form of constructing auto/bio/geo/graphic subject experiments is also about taming the fear of expected and planned initiation into death in places of transits. The participation of the individual gaze in the creation of collective phantasms is related to place. The individual perception of symbolic space and time causes the subject, speaking in the passage, to create a kind of inventive, existential semiosis, where fear, resistance, pain, and other variants of survival are combined with *the need for creation* and contain extratextual substrates. Images, in various senses, as “images of thought” or as a medium-tool in the diagnosis and therapy of memory (and texts), serve the role of reinforcing these “bent lines of writing.” The process is difficult and painful, because “experience and recalling will never be fully synchronized as there is a chasm between them, in which the object of memory is changed, forgotten, distorted, reworked, and reconstructed” (Assmann 2013, 124).

Memory works in different places, and symbolic wounds or the writing of scars on the body can often be read in unforeseen circumstances, when memory seizes the opportunity to connect distant elements, including the unconscious ones. The text written on the body embodies knowledge and culture. In this perspective, L. Shriver’s (2011)—the author of the famous novel *We Must Talk About Kevin*—statement that we experience culture with our whole bodies seems to be quite adequate. The textualization of space, by locating individual experience in it, is the construction of a subjective, semiotic territory that is

recorded in experience and can be written down by means of the subjects' projections and phantasms.

Text-passage created as a personal *flâneuring* of real and imagined worlds is a project of self-analysis, which, taming the unknown, wild, and dark areas, inevitably, leads to an intense work of seeing and interpreting what has not been named or has been difficult to express so far. Moreover, it can lead to a re-reading of one's experience, revisioning, and re-semiotization of existential signs that have led to a specific shape (literary or artistic) of the text passage, to its heteroglossia, heterogeneity, and material polymorphism of expression. Text passage as a journey through possible worlds, non-places, *topoi*, etc., is a complex semiotic system, most often palimpsestic, with numerous accumulations of emotions, images, and meanings, generated by time. There is also another explication of the association with the palimpsest, e.g., in relation to the brain: "What is the brain, if not a natural and powerful palimpsest? *Eternal layers of ideas, images, and feelings rest in your mind [...]. Each new layer seems to bury everything that came before it.* However, in fact, all content is preserved." Another fragment that we need to encircle as an area of interest states: "All these memories can, however, *regain strength [...]. They are not dead, but dormant. [...]* there are no such passions or diseases that would be able to erase *these imprints.*"¹⁴ The brain, mind, and body, as an existential alignment, act (happen) in a space that is not easily attainable. One can emphasize the unavailability of content and the covering of layers that require many trials of the memory work. Memory works as a medium that elicits, recovers, and exploits the meanings of what is *significant* for the subject, and deeply hidden or invisible. In this work of memory, however, something "resists until you can hear the noise of the covered distances."¹⁵

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Distances are not only covered, but also interpolated, perforated by the intensity of the effort of recalling and the impossibility of uncovering larger wholes, especially since "the places, in which we live, are like presences of absence" (Certeau 2008, 109). The unearthing and retrieval, as well as the awakening of the content that lies "dormant" in deep memory, is semantically

14 De Quincey, after Assmann 2013, 95.

15 M. Proust, after Assmann 2013, 107.

associated with metaphor and the act of digging, and is invoked in its relationship with the work of language. To the metaphors of reading and its illustrative developments, we also add the idea of the *reading* of psychological content, traces of archaic layers of the psyche, *as digging* in the ground and traversing the ruins (of the edifice) of identity. This is done to recover what will be revealed in the excavations, to tear off what is embedded in the palimpsest, and what can be taken from the garbage. Places, according to Certeau, are:

[...] fragmentary and cobbled stories, pasts, devoid of a possibility to be read by the other, accumulated times that can develop, but which appear here rather as potential stories, riddles to be solved, and finally symbolizations obtained from the pain or pleasure of the body. (Certeau 2008, 109.)

462 Participating in the text, the body learns to recognize the languages of communication between the “received” meaning and the unspeakable desire or unspoken spell. The uttering of *the meaningful*, circulating in the body, reflected in the scraps of afterimages, and gathering itself in places of post-*understanding*, is an example of the intermittent, confused, and stray discourse mediated by the *unconscious*. Giving symptoms, allowing to track down the repressed, body-writing, and reading open up other types of reading spaces; reading tactics, applied in the places of *the other*, open up to unbiased meanings, either socially or canonically.

From these places emanate afterimages of the art of living, the normative power of these excerpts of existence, and their subjective elaboration radiates and invokes. The invisible past, in which they remain, will reveal itself in signs. “Place endorses and verifies the narrative” (Assmann 2013, 174), and can, additionally, symbolize the wound that lies in the palimpsest of impressions associated with it. “A traumatic place, referring to the past that does not want to pass, *does not become distant*, nor does it allow itself to be embraced by a positive interpretation.” (Ibid., 175.) These are important excerpts from Assmann, which introduce the complexity of understanding the aura of places, sensual concreteness, and a metaphor for emotions. In our reflection on the text, the body, and space, we are also interested in places symbolically marking

the subject. What counts is: its diachrony, anthropological overwriting, habitual mediation, places interrupted by its existence, and “the strangeness of everydayness, escaping imaginary integration” (Certeau 2008, 95). These are, rather, non-places, heterotopias, where discursive orders are mixed, content is eclectic and *blurred*, and the text becomes an existential production of an expression of everydayness that is *significant* in art. Strangeness, anxiety, and tension—are to be in the act of trying to (completely) understand what was written from the body; it is necessary to get rid of what hurts, what destructively synchronizes identity with difficult everydayness.

Writing can take the form of “erasure” (T. Bernhard) or symbolic “vomiting” (J. Kristeva). Writing out from the body, in the mode of reducing excess and compensating for deficiencies, would be the use of acts and processes: “cutting, plucking, pulling out, removing, etc., or inserting, setting, sticking, covering, bonding, stitching, joining” (Certeau, 2008, 147).¹⁶

The cultural code will be the regulator of social tailoring to the normative formula. So, let us repeat the thesis that culture imprints the body with the text of the *law*, and the body is forced to express itself in a certain code. “There is no law that is not written on the body,” says Certeau (2008, 140). This power over the body came into being during the development of social and cultural normativity. The body is “taken into possession” and marked, persecuted, and stigmatized by cultural patterns in exchange processes and other transactions. The body *is to be* the text of culture, it is written on and erased, marked, and eclipsed; in this aligned resistive communication of the body with culture, there are no winners, but there are victims.

It is the body—susceptible, orderly, and positioned in cultural settings—that will seek its identity in writing. This is because “normative discourse ‘works’ only when it is transformed into a *story*, a text connected with reality and speaking on its behalf, that is, into the law told by bodies and changed into

16 Certeau interestingly develops this motif, showing that clothing is also the tool of power. Clothing is a susceptible intermediary of social control over bodies. In this interpretation, the entire sphere of experiencing everydayness (codes of use) can be classified as tools. “*Where and when can one find in the body something that is not written, reworked, nurtured, recognized by the instruments of social symbolism?*” (Certeau 2008, 148 et seq.)

history” (Certeau 2008, 149). Therefore, “living images of rules and customs” must somehow be written out of oneself, because culture with its normativity and social regulations efficiently and consistently imprints the body, forcing subjects to react according to the cultural order. Thus:

[...] the printed text refers to all that is reflected in our body, that imprints on it the Name or the Law, and finally that which permeates it with pain and/or delight, to make it a symbol of the Other, to transform it into what is *spoken, summoned, named*. (Certeau 2008, 141.)

The tools for writing down and imprinting the body as cultural and placed in an established order work in the body. So, what is writing in its union with the body? Certeau claims that it is the *building* in the space of a text that has power over the exterior, from which it was first isolated (cf. Certeau 2008, 135–136).

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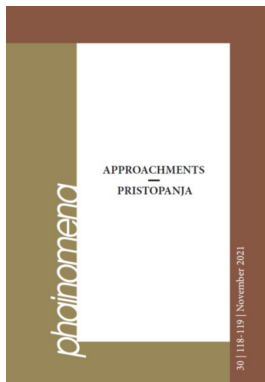
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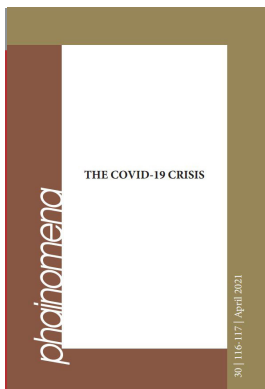
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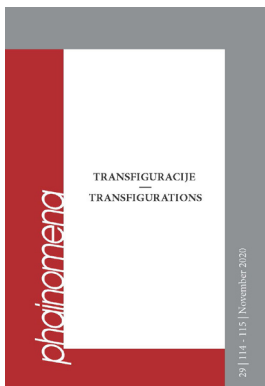


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