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Zygmunt Haupt. Subjectivity and representation

Summary

This thesis discusses the issues of subjectivity and representation in the literary works of Zygmunt Haupt. It outlines the context in which his work can be located: it refers mainly but not only to the writings of Søren Kierkegaard, Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, as well as Jacques Derrida. The thesis is divided into two parts, focused on issues of subjectivity and representation, respectively. In reference to Michel Foucault, the first part points to the linguistic and discursive foundations of the humanities, based on the formulas of *homo sum* and *cogito ergo sum*. Standing at the root of subjective experience, language and words, as Zygmunt Haupt shows in his work, determine the position of the subject in relation to the other and otherness/difference. As described by the writer, they not only serve as tools to discover and experience the world but also to control the fundamental affect – which is anxiety. For it is anxiety that determines the existential situation and position of the subject, as it is shown by Søren Kierkegaard in his book *The Concept of Anxiety*. In his dissertation, the philosopher situates anxiety in the foundations of subjectivity, where it precedes any other kind of experience. Anxiety marks the subject and becomes the impulse that activates the subjective dialectic. Describing the existential situation of man, Kierkegaard uses the biblical model of the first man, Adam. In this example, he also shows the mechanism of language, which introduces prohibition and causes the subject to be, as Jacques Lacan expresses it, divided by the linguistic effect, that is, when the subject no longer controls the meaning because he does not understand what was expressed in language at the moment of prohibition. By introducing difference, language becomes the source of a structure that determines both sexual relations (it introduces sexual difference) and social relations (it establishes the rules of morality). Kierkegaard's description of the subjective structure based on the model of Adam as the first man corresponds to some extent to Sigmund Freud's similar attempt to show the figure of the mythological Oedipus as a model of human subjectivity. The Oedipal structure is based as much on anxiety and prohibition as on wish and desire. The dynamics of anxiety and desire define the dynamics of Zygmunt Haupt's writing especially when he recalls his own childhood, his relationship with his mother or father, and his youthful, unhappily ended relationship with Panna [Maiden]. The Oedipal situation in which the subject of Zygmunt Haupt's prose finds himself also becomes clear when juxtaposed with the interpretation of Jacques Lacan, who, in the stage of the mirror

and through the introduction of the real, imaginary, and symbolic orders, reformulated the field of psychoanalytic theory as well as the Oedipus complex itself. A combination of imaginative thinking based on recollection and dreaming with a literary expression that was put in writing – especially when it touches the fundamental relation to a mother, father, or beloved – creates a symptomatic and significant – impossible to dissolve – tie in Zygmunt Haupt's prose. It resembles the Lacanian Borromean knot. Anxiety and desire thus transposed into a literary structure constitute two modalities of Haupt's thinking. And as one of the goals of his own thinking and writing, the author of "Baskijski diabel" [The Basque Devil] points to reassurance. This calming function literature shares with philosophy. The discussion that Michel Foucault opened about the Cartesian *cogito*, and the subsequent criticism to which Foucault's interpretation was subjected by Jacques Derrida, points to this dimension of language, which – through the discourses founded on it, including the modern discourse of rationality – serves precisely to suppress anxiety. Sensitive to this aspect of language that has the power to shape subjective experience, Zygmunt Haupt situates himself in a tradition that – while remaining critical of the *cogito*-based modern conception of subjectivity – refers rather to a heterogeneous, decentralized conception of subjectivity, determined at its origins by anxiety.

The combination of fear and desire shapes the subjective dialectic; this process is based on the psychoanalytic concept of the drive. The drive in Sigmund Freud's theory connects *die Wortvorstellung* and *die Sachvorstellung*, and thus becomes the reference point for a particular theory of representation founded on a difference and a series of displacements. This theory is taken up and then reinterpreted by Jacques Lacan, who, by interpreting the drive as a montage, shows the mechanisms of constructing moving or static images as figures of the drive and desire. According to W. J. T. Mitchell, Jacques Lacan's understanding of the drive as a montage in its relation to desire, supports critical interpretations of visual representations, whether in the form of images, films, or montages. This method proves useful for interpreting the numerous literary portraits and descriptions made by Zygmunt Haupt, who, after all, admitted himself that he thought through images. And, being one of Sigmund Freud's imperatives, representability or the possibility of representation becomes a category around which the various representations are organized. It determines the imperative, the goal, and the limits of representation. It is found both in the literary portraits drawn by Haupt and in his reflection that reveals the mechanisms of representation itself along with its conditions. Central among these are the issues of time and temporality, and then, related to them, questions of transience, absence, or negativity. For writing – just like words and language in Sigmund Freud's theory – constitutes a particular, and non-linear temporality. As expressed in literature, it allows us to rethink issues related to the

status of literature as art, as well as its symbolism. It also allows us to rethink the nature of the symbol itself, which in Zygmunt Haupt's texts takes the form of a tomb covered with an inscription (and therefore letters). Centred around the symbolism of the tomb and the inscription placed on it, Haupt's reflections correspond to the theoretical assertions expressed in a similar context by both Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida. In conjunction with the symbol of the tomb, writing becomes a sign of absence. Paradoxical and simultaneous presence and absence that reveals itself in what is written defines the essential stakes and proves to be a challenge to the prose of Zygmunt Haupt. Essential, because it constitutes him as a writing author. The relation to what is absent and lost, as well as the relation to the other and otherness/difference, on the other hand, shapes his complex identity. Zygmunt Haupt's literary project, critical towards the possibilities of representation and towards the position of the writing and thinking subject, can be located within the framework of critical modernity. By subjecting it to criticism, the author of *Pierścień z papieru* [The Ring of Paper] seeks a form of writing that would allow a different way of understanding and thinking. At the same time, the writer is concerned with different and revealing ways to experience a world that has been affected by the modern crisis of representation. And perhaps, especially about sustaining the existence of a world that was lost to catastrophe.