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VSEBINA / INDICE GENERALE / CONTENTS

- Adi Bunyamin Zamzamin, Dahlan Ghani, Amir Aarieff Amir Hussin & Mohd Zaky Khairuddin:** Technological Advancement through Character Design: Darth Vader as Case Study 1
Lo sviluppo tecnologico tramite il design dei personaggi: Darth Vader come case study
Tehnološki napredek skozi oblikovanje filmskih in drugih likov: Darth Vader kot študija primera
- Pavel Jamnik, Petra Leben-Seljak, Borut Toškan, Matija Križnar, Stanislav Glažar, Bruno Blažina & Janez Bizjak:** Grobišče v Imenskem rovu / Rovu starih podpisov v Postojnski jami. So bili obiski Postojnske jame sredi 17. stoletja »turistični« ogledi grobišča? 11
La necropoli della galleria Imenski rov (Galleria dei nomi) / Rov starih podpisov (Galleria dei nomi antichi) delle Grotte di Postojna. Le visite delle Grotte di Postojna, risalenti alla metà del XVII secolo, possono essere interpretate come visite »turistiche« fatte alla necropoli?
Burial Ground in the Imenski rov (Passage of names) / Rov starih podpisov (Passage of Old Signatures) in Postojna cave. Did Visits of the Postojna Cave in the Middle of the 17th Century mean »Tourist« Visits of the Cemetery?
- Darja Mihelič:** Ekonomska privlačnost srednjeveškega Pirana za tuje doseljence 31
L'attrattività economica del Pirano medievale per gli immigranti esteri
The Economic Attractiveness of the Mediaeval Piran for Foreign Immigrants
- Miodarka Tepavčević:** Stefan Mitrov Ljubiša i Crna gora – povijesno-kulturne veze 41
Stefan Mitrov Ljubiša e il Montenegro – relazioni storico-culturali
Stefan Mitrov Ljubiša and Montenegro – historical and cultural bonds
- Michał Kopczyk:** Those Problematic Slavs. Silesia in the Eyes of a German Traveler (Case Study) 53
Quei slavi problematici. La Slesia negli occhi di un viaggiatore tedesco (uno studio di caso)
Ti problematični Slovani. Šlezija v očeh germanskega potnika (analiza primera)
- Boris Dorbić, Anita Pamuković & Milivoj Blažević:** Djelovanje kotarskog agronoma Vinka Anzulovića u edukaciji puka Šibenskog kotara iz biljne proizvodnje u razdoblju 1921–1940. 61
Le attività dell'agronomo principale del distretto Vinko Anzulović nell'educazione delle masse nel distretto di Sebenico sulla produzione delle piante durante il periodo tra 1921 e 1940
The Activities of the District Agronomist Vinko Anzulović in the Education of the Masses in Šibenik District on the Topic of Plant Production during the Period from 1921 to 1940
- Jasna Potočnik Topler:** Norman Mailer in Yugoslavia 81
Norman Mailer in Jugoslavia
Norman Mailer v Jugoslaviji
- Estera Cerar, Raša Urbas & Urška Stankovič**
Elesini: Razvoj informacijske infrastrukture v letih 1960–1991 s primeri iz slovenske tekstilne industrije 89
Sviluppo dell'infrastruttura informatica negli anni 1960–1991 con esempi dell'industria tessile slovena
Development of Information Infrastructure between 1960 and 1991 in Slovenian Textile Industry
- Anica Čuka, Lena Mirošević, Josip Faričić & Vera Graovac Matassi:** Phylloxera Revisited: The Spread of Grapevine Disease in Dalmatia and its Influence on Socio-economic Development and Agricultural Landscape 101
Fillossera: La diffusione della malattia della vite in Dalmazia e il suo effetto sullo sviluppo socio-economico e sul paesaggio agricolo
Filoksera (trtna uš): Širjenje trtne bolezni v Dalmaciji in njen vpliv na družbeno-gospodarski razvoj ter kmetijsko krajino
- Vera Graovac Matassi & Davor Relja:** Demografska dinamika na otoku Rabu od sredine 19. st. do danas 119
Dinamica demografica nell'isola di Rab dalla metà del XIX secolo ad oggi
Population Dynamics on Rab Island from mid-19th Century to the present

Darko Likar: An Architectural and Urban-planning Perspective on Cultivated Terraces in Northern Istria 131 <i>Terrazzamenti coltivati dell'Istria settentrionale in una prospettiva architettonica e urbanistica</i> <i>Arhitekturno-urbanistični pogled na kulturne terase na območju severne Istre</i>	POLEMIKA / POLEMICA / POLEMIC
Tanja Plešivčnik: Pomen estetskega doživljanja v skrbi za okolje 147 <i>L'importanza della visione estetica nella cura per l'ambiente</i> <i>Aesthetic Experience of the Environment and its Importance in Care for the Environment</i>	Stanko Flego, Lidija Rupel & Matej Župančič: Considerazioni su alcune cavità indagate da Raffaello Battaglia sul Carso triestino (discussione) 207
Mirela Müller: Educational Standards in the School Curriculum and the Role of the Mass Media. The Case of Croatia 159 <i>Standard educativi nel curriculum scolastico e il ruolo dei mass media. Il caso Croato</i> <i>Izobraževalni standardi v šolskem učnem načrtu in vloga množičnih medijev. Primer Hrvaške</i>	OCENE / RECENSIONI / REVIEWS
Aleksander Janež, Roberto Biloslavo & Armand Faganel: Sustainable Business Model: a Case Study of Fonda.si 175 <i>Modello di business sostenibile: Il caso di studio Fonda.si</i> <i>Model trajnostnega poslovanja: Študija primera Fonda.si</i>	Slaven Bertoša): Migracije prema Puli. Primjer austrijske Istre u novom vijeku (Dean Krmac) 209
Nada Poropat Jeletić: Italoфона dijasistemska raslojenost u hrvatskoj Istri: jezični i komunikacijski status, korpus i prestiž 191 <i>Stratificazione del diasistema italofono nell'Istria croata: status, corpus e prestigio linguistico e comunicativo</i> <i>Italophone Diasystem Stratification in the Croatian Istria: Linguistic and Communicative Status, Corpus and Prestige</i>	Christopher Duggan: Fascist Voices. An Intimate History of Mussolini's Italy (Matic Batič) 210
	Elvis Orbanić: Ignazio Gaetano de Buset: Visita spirituale del 1788 in Istria / Ignacije Kajetan Buzetski: Duhovna vizitacija iz 1788. godine u Istri (Ana Jenko) 212
	Salvator Žitko: Avstrijsko Primorje v vrtincu nacionalnih, političnih in ideoloških nasprotij v času ustavne dobe (1861–1914) (Branko Marušič) 214
	IN MEMORIAM
	Darko Likar (1952–2017) (Ljubo Lah) 218
	Kazalo k slikam na ovitku 210 <i>Indice delle foto di copertina</i> 210 <i>Index to images on the cover</i> 210
	Navodila avtorjem 221 <i>Istruzioni per gli autori</i> 223 <i>Instructions to authors</i> 225

THOSE PROBLEMATIC SLAVS. SILESIA IN THE EYES OF A GERMAN TRAVELER (CASE STUDY)

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ABSTRACT

The attention of the author of this paper is focused on the analysis of the account of a trip to Silesia, written in the last decade of the eighteenth century by an inhabitant of Prussia, referring to himself as "Cosmopolitan". In his conclusions, the author of this paper remarks that the traveler applies the categories which were in use by the Prussian political discourse in the second half of the eighteenth century, therefore, he likens the borderline Prussia – Silesia (Germanness – Slavness) to the opposition civilization – barbaria. In this way, he creates a message, which – according to the categories drawn from postcolonial criticism – can be described as imperial narrative. It is characterized by the undermining of the value of what is different, and the rhetorical appropriation of otherness.

Keywords: Silesia, travel accounts, stereotypes, Slavs, colonial narrative

QUEI SLAVI PROBLEMATICI. LA SLESIA NEGLI OCCHI DI UN VIAGGIATORE TEDESCO (UNO STUDIO DI CASO)

SINTESI

L'interesse dell'autore del presente articolo è rivolto all'analisi della relazione di un viaggio attraverso la Slesia, stilata durante l'ultimo decennio del XVIII secolo da un abitante della Prussia, sotto lo pseudonimo di Cosmopolita. L'autore nota nelle conclusioni che il viaggiatore fa ricorso alle strategie che venivano impiegate nel discorso politico prussiano della seconda metà del XVIII secolo; pertanto identifica il confine Prussia – Slesia (germanità – slavità) con la contrapposizione tra civiltà e barbarie. In questo modo il viaggiatore crea un messaggio che, conformemente alle strategie attinte dalla critica postcoloniale, è possibile descrivere come narrazione imperiale. Le sue caratteristiche sono: la confutazione del valore di ciò che è diverso nonché, grazie alle procedure retoriche, l'appropriarsi della diversità.

Parole chiave: Slesia, relazione di viaggio, stereotipi, Slavi, narrativa coloniale

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

Although there is a number of works elaborating on cultural aspects of Polish-German and the Silesian-German relations, and the subject has always attracted the interest of researchers (including those outside of the two countries), it is difficult to assert that the problem has been described and studied exhaustively. Especially, the question of the multiculturalism of Silesia, which is an indirect consequence of the fact that the region belonged to the following countries: Great Moravia, Czechia, Poland, Austria, Prussia or Germany has missed a sufficient analysis. Also, little do we know about the mechanism of the formation and preservation of mutual stereotypes (especially German-Polish ones) and its entanglement in a historical context (Orłowski, 1998).

For a reconstruction of the context, we need detailed knowledge, which often goes beyond what is normally associated with the term ‘historical’; what seems of particular value, for example, are sources providing knowledge about collective consciousness. For this reason, it is autobiography-like accounts that are a valuable research material. They are normally subjective and biased, but they surpass traditional historical sources by adopting “every day’s perspective” typical of them, which highlights categories such as: details, events, portraits, dialogue and an incident. The value of personal documents have been appreciated by modern social sciences and literature studies, taking interest in an artist’s biography and its relation to his/her artistic output, aware of the complexity of the relations that exist between them (Sztumski, 1995).

It is also postcolonial criticism that has provided new tools for research on stereotypes in recent years. Its supporters seem to have convincingly substantiated the usefulness of conducting postcolonial research (or post-dependence one, as some researchers prefer) related to Central European regions, uncovering many aspects of modernity (and the past), which formerly were beyond our cognitive capacities (Scheibner, 2009, 67; Moore, 2011, 111–128).¹ It was also Silesia that evoked the interest of the supporters of the postcolonial theory. This interest favored a new evaluation of the past of the region, especially the role the Prussian State played in it. (Nijakowski, 2014, 84).

I agree with the arguments of the researchers who advocate the application of tools developed by postcolonial criticism for the research on Silesia. However, I am aware of the risk related to this approach – the use of terms such as: dependence, colonization, conquest and inculturation (when we refer them to the areas within Europe) needs special attention and precision since it entails the risk of a mechanical transfer of categories developed in the study of non-European cultures to native conditions. Furthermore, I do not think it is legitimate – as some researchers argue – to use the category “internal colony” understood as an immanent and timeless feature of this region (Skórczewski, 2007, 145–153).

This text is not a voice in the discussion on the status of Silesia from the post-colonial perspective; its objective is more modest: by offering the reading of the selected account of the Prussian traveler visiting Silesia at the end of the eighteenth century, it tends to indicate the features of the imperial narrative in it. I believe that the essence of the narrative is the presence of the following factors: a sense of cultural superiority and a suggestion that the inclusion of that area under external tutelage will help improve its situation, even if that intention remains concealed or is even one the traveler is not aware of.² The objective of my research is in conformity with the essential challenge of postcolonial criticism, which is – here I agree with Izabela Syrynt – “*search throughout texts for traces of violence towards diversity and its resistance to domination*” as well as “*the exposure of the rhetorical appropriation of cultural, ethnic, national or finally racial Otherness*” (Syrynt, 2007, 27).

The text which I examine here inclines us to look at the political and cultural situation of Silesia in the second half of the eighteenth century. Since the death of Polish King Ludwik Jagiellończyk (Louis II of Hungary) in 1526, Silesia was ruled by the Habsburgs. Afterwards, as a result of the so-called Silesian Wars (1740–1763), Friedrich II von Hohenzollern (Frederick the Great) annexed both Lower Silesia and Upper Silesia, including Kłodzko (except for Cieszyn Silesia and Opava Silesia) to his state. The new rules, introduced by the Prussian ruler, meant the deterioration of the situation of the local population in many aspects, which makes one think of the essentially exploitative nature of the annexation.³ The Prussian propaganda, which portrayed Silesia as a culturally and economically backward region, was

1 Among the works published in recent years, I consider the following ones as valuable and somehow exemplary. Written by: David Moore, Ewa Thompson, Tamás Scheibner, Lary Wolff, Dariusz Skórczewski, Hanna Gosk, Clare Cavanagh, Aleksander Fiut and Maria Janion. This list of the names is far incomplete, though. ‘Post-colonial’ approach did also find favor with researchers interested in the description of German-Polish relations (Cf. Syrynt, 2006 and 2007; Hahn and Hahn, 2002).

2 Mary Louise Pratt applies in this context the suitable concept “appropriation” (passively), by identifying it with the rhetorical “imposing” his own cognitive categories on the reality, thus making the vision of the world by the indigenous people inferior. „(...) imperial eyes passively look out and possess (Pratt, 2008, 9).

3 They meant, among others, a significant reduction in privileges which, under the rule of the Habsburgs, guaranteed Silesia a broad self-government, i.e. tax increase, obligation to keep a 35-thousand-army and (since 1744) the introduction of exclusive German language in courts of law (previously also Czech, Polish and often Polish were used). Nevertheless, the qualification of Prussian domination in Silesia (“integration or exploitation?”) continues to be debatable among historians and depends largely on the criteria assumed (Wąs, 2002, 197–228).

supposed to fulfill these objectives. This backwardness was mainly attributed to the inertia of the Habsburgs' administration (Joachimstahaler, 2006, 204; Cegielski and Kądziela, 1990, 142–148) and it was argued that the only effective way to take control of the anarchic and potentially dangerous element was the policy of paternalistic supervision (Joachimstahaler, 2006). This argumentation was generally supported by travelers' accounts, presenting Silesia as a place whose original (by implication, German) uniformity was 'contaminated' by a foreign element, which, in turn, suppressed his natural potency. This diagnosis was mostly confirmed by highlighting the dependencies between the degree of Germanness (the saturation of the region with ethnically German population) and civilizational advancement. German-speaking, mainly Protestant Silesia along with Wrocław was contrasted with Catholic and mostly Polish-speaking Upper Silesia. It was only the former that would be termed 'progressive' or 'civilized' (Joachimstahaler, 2006, 204–205; Eberhardt, 2005, 463–483).

The categories used by the Prussian propaganda were addressed to the state of awareness at that time, especially that of enlightened social classes. By the end of the eighteenth century under the influence of pre-romantic and, then, romantic trends, the revision process of Enlightenment *episteme* began and so did anthropological, social, political premises related to it. The qualities regarded by rationalism thus far as less important such as 'naturalness', 'emotionalness', primordial 'savagery' and 'innocence' (Neuger, 2005, 68) became a focus of attention. The effect of these transformations – which took place at the earliest in German culture and were most prevalent in it – was also a proclivity for a redefinition of established premises relative to the understanding of the concept of civilization, i.e. which of its elements were constitutive for it, and who deserved to be called civilized. Although these processes also affected the way the Germans perceived their Slavic neighbors (it was them that were most frequently referred to as 'natural', 'emotional', 'savage' and 'virgin'), their meaning remains an open question – especially open about the profundity of changes, i.e. how justifiable is the discussion about the change of a cognitive paradigm and the correction of stereotypes. The text under consideration does not provide any answer to the questions thus posed (or provides partial and hypothetical ones). Yet it can be certainly considered as one of the documents whose examination will facilitate our comprehension of the nature of this phenomenon.

CHARACTER

The subject of this analysis is an account written by a Prussian traveler (who uses the pseudonym Cos-

mopolitan), on his journey to Silesia in the years 1792 and 1793.⁴ Concealing his true identity, which did not deviate from the practices of that time, was used primarily to free the author of any concerns about possible consequences that could likely result from his spreading opinions that were contrary to the politics of Prussia at that time. It also freed his pen of the rules defined by moral conventions – as an anonymous person he found it easier to assume the role of a judge of people and their customs. We should remark that as a judge he proved to be harsh, yet fair as he critically assessed both his fellow countrymen and their Slavic neighbors.

By declaring himself a cosmopolitan, the author of the account gave the reader grounds for specific expectations of himself. I shall embark on a journey, he seemed to say, to broaden the scope of what I call mine and treat as a space of domesticity. For this to happen, I ought to adopt an attitude of sincere yet rational openness – exactly in the spirit advocated by the philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment. The fact that the author of the account favored this understanding of cosmopolitanism is confirmed not by his references to the must-read educational books in the spirit of classicism and critical rationalism as well as his opinions invariably hostile to what deviates from common sense. It was also his self-presentations formulated outright, which consistently constructed a rationalist image of the narrator.

Another trait of mentality which definitely links the traveler with the ideals of the Enlightenment is the fact that his trust in reason is accompanied by the postulate of verifying a theory by means of experiments, which is manifested, inter alia, in an ironic distance towards philosophy understood as a domain of sheer abstraction. The cosmopolitan differs from a 'normal' philosopher in – as he argues –

(...) he believes that it is sometimes more useful to spend some time in an inn than in the most famous library, that it is better to view nature as a whole with one's both eyes than a plant under a microscope, that although he values statistics in so far as it reveals errors present in the constitutions of most countries, he considers the enrichment of sciences unnecessary, because there is no need to collect more and more arguments to prove that most constitutions fit our times like children's shoes fit a young man's feet and that they always ignore heraldry because one day it will be exhibited in the gallery of the human mind's monsters, that they bow down before medicine, and they wish the revision of the education system was immortal. So no one else but such a traveler can devote more time and calm to turn his attention to the things which in the descriptions of educati-

4 The text entitled *Schilderungen oder Reisen eines Kosmopoliten*, was published in Leipzig in 1795. I use the Polish edition entitled *Opowiadania albo podróże jednego Kosmopolity* (Szymański, 2006). Also, I use quotes from the book in accordance with this edition.

onal, botanical, artistic, medical and other travels are called insignificant or marginal, e.g. human faces of any features, short, elongated, distorted, straight, ugly, pretty, smooth, wrinkled, human figures and attire, shape of shoes, not excluding their age, differences in manners once an individual appears in outdoor outfit or in a state of undress at home and a thousand things of this kind, the naming of which I shall not upset any honest man about (Kosmopolita, 2006, 61).

The words above can be read as a manifestation of a spiritual aristocratic state, self-less interest in the world, and at the same time, distance towards existing views, scientific meticulousness and classism. The narrator reiterates his bourgeois genealogy, he considers his lack of complex resulting from his class origin apparently as yet another proof of its progressiveness. He also knows that the rhetorical vividness of his vision will be enhanced by placing it on a solid empirical foundation. It is this foundation rather than books that will become his main point of reference.

PLACE

The traveler's itinerary includes Lower and Upper Silesian places, e.g. Wrocław (Breslau), Brzeg (Brieg), Opole (Oppeln), Tarnowskie Góry (Tarnowitz), Pszczyna (Pless), Góra Świętej Anny (Sankt Annaberg), Rybnik and Racibórz (Ratibor). In his narrative, he clearly highlights the differences between German-speaking and Polish-language Silesian areas, and above all between the German-speaking and Polish-speaking inhabitants of the region.

His account combines two perspectives of evaluation. The first one is outlined by the author's declarative identification with the ideas of the Enlightenment, including particularly the system of values close to rationalism, the second one – the presentation of those elements of knowledge prevalent in the Prussian state of the time, regarding its easternmost areas, which was part of the official policy of this country.

First of all, the visitor's sensitivity to the perceived symptoms of the people's enslavement accords with the Enlightenment spirit, and so does his appreciation of any activities dictated by common sense. Also, the Cosmopolitan sees freedom largely as a derivative of suitable living conditions. His own observations convince him that the previous authorities were not able to create such conditions, as they were ineffective and weak in terms of *modus operandi*, administrative structures, as well as the social and economic system. At the same time, his favoring the Enlightenment thought which involves the positive evaluation of the role of

authentic emotions makes him appreciate Silesians' 'naturalness', understood mainly as convention-free attitude, honesty, being open and direct in relations with strangers. The traveler instinctively sympathizes with the people whose behavior is dictated by an inner imperative, straightforwardness, sincere feelings or affective reflexes. These qualities, however, have their dark face – the author is irritated by the locals' inability to reflect and self-analyze, making them continuous victims of those who tower over them because of their shrewdness and ruthlessness. Therefore, they simply-heartedly accept their situation. Although Polish-speaking Silesians tend to be kind in direct contact, endear one with their spiritual advantages, they are unable to rise above their own interests and evaluate reality (and their own place in it) even-handedly. It can be argued that they exist in a state of original naturalness and in this sense they have many features of "a noble savage", whose image was markedly imprinted on the philosophical discussions of the Enlightenment held by the adherents of sentimentalism, in particular.⁵

A native is not capable of creating a credible self-image, hence this task is taken over exclusively by the external observer. Although the narrator does not deprive The Other of his voice (he often cites the statements of Polish indigenous people), he denies his words a status of objective knowledge, treating them invariably at a lofty (yet friendly and kind) distance. The travel's mental portrayal of The Other is that of unassuming and plain, i.e. it is possible „to see him through” and to describe him exhaustively – even if his general portrayal is brief and perfunctory (Gawrycki, 2011). This clarity is reinforced by the fact that the traveler did not encounter 'Creoles' – inhabitants of mixed, ambiguous identity – on his way or the perspective he assumed did not let him notice them, since they did not fit in with the dualistic Slavic-German model. Also, no question about the relationship between Polish and Silesian culture is posed (nor it is asked about the identity of the local Polish-speaking or Czech-speaking population), thus non-German Silesians population is considered as culturally uniform.

The difference between the Polish and German-speaking population of Silesia is vividly illustrated by a collapse of a stable in a border town in Kujawy, which, as it were, opens the 'Polish' chapter of the journey. As a result of the collapse, a colt – owned by the local master – is killed and so is a cow owned by the female proprietor of the inn. The fact that the woman mourns only her loss makes the visitor reflect on the irrationality of the economic system prevailing there. His conclusion will be confirmed by a German commissioner who arrives on the scene of the accident. The official matter-of-factly explains the rules governing the witnessed reality:

5 The Cosmopolitan's attitude to Polish-speaking inhabitants of Silesia, though ambivalent, is still much more sympathetic and favorable than the one demonstrated by Johan Gottlieb Fichte in his account of his journey in 1791 (Neuger, 2005).

(...) Poland is not France, and the Poles are not the French and so they are not much better than this cow. (...) Admittedly, they could be ennobled, but if you have a landed estate, it is obvious that you would have to be a fool to do such a thing. A peasant needs to be made wise in so far as he does not consider himself better or worse than what his master wishes; in a word, in so far as he treats himself like a beast of burden created for the convenience of his master. Every one cares about himself, and if a peasant is as wise as his master, then the master has no choice but to tie himself to a plow, if he does not want to starve to death (Kosmopolita, 2006, 28).

Even reluctance to the cynical pragmatism of the one who utters the words does not undermine the authority and legitimacy of his conclusions in the reader's eyes. As 'a local' he witnesses things internally and his Germanness makes him somebody close to both the traveler and the reader (who is assumed to be German-speaking). The knowledge of a state of affairs is also confirmed by his rank giving his findings an official ring. The authority of the German witness does also result from the evident rationality of his attitude, i.e. the Cosmopolitan portrays him as a sober and knowledgeable individual, who captures the reality in simple and clear formulas, perfectly understandable for the visitor.

The image of German-speaking population is, in turn, far less unambiguous. He points at the often manifested criticism of the exaggerated presence of convention in behavior, highlighting particularly glaring examples of hypocrisy, concealed under the facade of politeness. Despite the insincerity which exasperates him so often during his encounters with fellow countrymen, the author is aware that those characteristics are the cause, and also the effect of their civilization success and it is this success that he tends to regard as a factor which clearly elevates them above the Slavic population.

This quality seems in as far vital as, as we find out, the Polish-speaking inhabitants are deprived of it because their 'logic' is curtailed by their odd understanding of particularistic benefits. In other words, a Polish-speaking Silesian has adapted to the conditions he lives in so effectively that he has failed to develop an ability to assess this reality in the categories of commonly understood common sense and objectivity. His/her dominant features turn out to be: ability to adapt to the realities, no matter what they may be, and a complete lack of critical distance towards these realities. These features, in turn, go hand in hand with a sense of their own powerlessness towards the world whose principles are considered as both constant and obvious, since they are defined by means of forces indifferent to an individual's desires or needs.

The traveler found out that "Poland is not France" on many occasions, and the exploring of Silesia provided him with a great number of opportunities to demonstrate not only his own progressiveness, but the praise of his own country, whose enlightened quality seemed to him the more obvious, the more he witnessed the civilizational backwardness of the perceived world.

He saw a sign of this backwardness in the position enjoyed by the Catholic Church in Silesia. By describing the manifestations of this position, he emphasizes his own skepticism towards religious fervor displayed by the locals and the omnipotence of the church institutions preying on the credulity of the unenlightened believers. He is not even prone to mitigate his criticism once a local merchant explains to him that the superstitious nature of the local religion was justified by the necessity to adapt it to the minds of primitive people. As a person aware of the mechanisms of social engineering, the merchant is perceived by the traveler as an advocate of the elites' awareness (not only church-related ones), thus as yet another example of their hypocrisy.

The visitor continues expressing the same strong criticism towards social relations prevailing in Silesia, especially the ubiquitous, in his opinion, obsequiousness and servility with which the local population treats people of noble origin or even those of neat appearance (indicating a privileged social standing). His account includes the scene showing an old man prostrating in front of him in humble greeting; he will be similarly welcomed in the Rybnik home for war disabled people. A non-commissioned officer, who shows him around, proudly presents him with the advantages of the almshouse, without suspecting that the visitor will respond to that with rather sad reflections on the servility, which is – as he argues – "one of the main features of the national character" of the Silesians (Kosmopolita, 2006, 87).

CONCLUSIONS

Contrary to declaratively posed objectives and a skeptical attitude of criticism considered dogmatically, the author of the account ultimately refers to categories employed by the Prussian political discourse of that time, he identifies the pair: Prussia – Silesia (German vs. Slavic) with the opposition: civilization – barbarism. Silesia as described by the Cosmopolitan constitutes an invariant of 'the East', construed as a 'wild' area of vague boundaries stretching between Russia and Germany,⁶ whereas its salient features are: cultural, economic and civilizational backwardness. Placing freedom among major values – at both individual and collective level – does not interfere with the traveler's assertion that the subjection of the lands inhabited mostly by Slavic population will bring more benefits than possible losses. Nor

6 In the south, "the East" stretched up to the Balkans, the inhabitants of which did not really differ from their western and eastern Slavic kinsmen in the eyes of the German neighbors. This was presented convincingly by Božidar Jezernik (Jezernik, 1998).

does it interfere with his view that this objective can be achieved only via organized action of civilization. Accordingly, the text under consideration does obviously apply the system of rhetoric figures which (after Edward Said, 2005) might be referred to as „a technology of power over the East” or simply a colonial narrative. The archaic social relations that prevail on the visited area allow German readers to appreciate the freedom they enjoy in their own country and to strengthen their beliefs that the people inhabiting the lands have basically servile mentality.

Undoubtedly, what is “to be partially blamed” for the traveler’s susceptibility to ready-made cognitive patterns and stereotypes is the lack of a deeper knowledge about the world perceived by him. The shortage of categories by which the perceived world could be ‘tamed’ and, to some extent at least, deprived of the ring of exoticism and irrationality, opened the traveler to ready-made cognitive patterns. However, the lack of knowledge does not explain everything in this case as we should remember that the military expansion-based policy of Frederick II met with the approval of a large part of intellectual elites. Body-forming groups of the Enlightenment fascinated by absolutism noticed the perfect incarnation of an enlightened ruler in the Prussian king who was capable of forcibly imposing the world order based on rational principles. Not surprisingly, the choice between reason and order and disorder, impotence and obscurantism was usually in favor of the former. Humanitarian considerations were here of secondary importance, especially since it was not difficult to logically justify the existence of relationships between individual welfare and the rationality of external conditions and, consequently, the boon for the citizens of the lands annexed to Prussia attributed to the tutelage of the ‘enlightened’ dictatorship. It helps one understand why the Germans’ perception of their Slavic neighbors proved to be not only persistent, but also peculiarly ambivalent. Klaus Ziemer aptly captured its essence:

On the one hand, Poland is seen as a civilizationally, economically and socially backward country. As a matter of fact, its citizens are attributed to qualities such as ‘courageous’, ‘brave’, ‘heroic’ but, at the same time, they are called ‘unruly,

‘changeable’ and ‘unpredictable’. In fact, Poland is not able to organize itself politically and economically, which is a direct cause of the loss of its statehood (Ziemer, 1996, 16).

The above-mentioned vision was motivated primarily by the specific understanding of the category of *Realpolitik*, allowing one to regard the area located in the east of their borders as one of economic exploitation. However, the benefits, which were related to the conquest, were not limited to measurable categories. A „prize” was, after all, also the comforting sense of accomplishing a civilizing mission. Another one was the possession of an ‘anti-example’, ‘inferior’, ‘barbarian’ who by virtue of his existence justified the validity of the aggressor’s civilizational and political solutions, and strengthened his sense of superiority. In this way, a process of the essentialization of the culture of the eastern neighbors in the eyes of the Germans gradually took place. Slavic neighbors assumed the role of Others necessary to build their own identity⁷. Such visions were supported by the vast majority of accounts on „travels to the East”, linking generally the Enlightenment’s system of values with „imperial perception”, which mostly consisted in creating sharp contrast between the values represented by “a seeing man” and the rules, which the perceived world was governed by (Pratt, 2008, 9). In this respect, the Cosmopolitan’s account can be regarded as one of the voices that contributed to constructing a stereotype about the Poles.

To what extent does the image affect today’s perception of Poland (and other Slavic communities) by the Germans? To what degree does the stereotype formed two centuries ago is productive to date; if/to what extent does it constitute an element of contemporary thinking about us and our culture? Although a thorough answer to both questions certainly requires solid research, there is no doubt that a comprehensive answer needs considering not only the stereotypes that have been cultivated by Germans and Slavs against each other but also the ideas about one another that particular groups of Slavs have constructed for centuries (Sowa, 2011, 472). Once the questions above are clarified, the mechanism in all its aspects can be seen and all the traumas, dreams and interests underlying it can be identified.

7 This fact was noted before by Wolff (1994) and Skórczewski (2009).

TI PROBLEMATIČNI SLOVANI. ŠLEZIJA V OČEH GERMANSKEGA POTNIKA
(ANALIZA PRIMERA)

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POVZETEK

Prispevek predstavlja analizo potopisa pruskega avtorja (njegov priimek ni naveden; popotnik sam sebe imenuje "Svetovljan"), ki je pri koncu 18. stoletja potoval po Šleziji. Način pripovedovanja je v članku na osnovi dveh dejavnikov opredeljen kot imperialna naracija. Prvi dejavnik je popotnikov občutek, da zastopa kulturo, ki je nadrejena v odnosu do opisovanega ljudstva. Drugi dejavnik predstavlja njegov namig, četudi ni izražen neposredno, da bi morala opisovana dežela priti pod germansko kuratelo, kar bi bistveno izboljšalo njen položaj. Predstavljena analiza se uvršča med osnovne naloge postkolonialne kritike. Ugotovljeno je, da kljub skeptičnemu kriticismu potopisec uporablja miselne kategorije, ki jih je uporabljal pruski politični diskurz v drugi polovici 18. stoletja. Gre za poistovetenje stika Prusja – Šlezija (oz. germanskost – slovanskost) z razmerjem civilizacija – barbarstvo. Opisana Šlezija se v potopisu predstavlja kot invariant "Vzhoda", torej "divje", kulturno, gospodarsko in civilizacijsko zaostalo območje brez natančnih meja, ki leži nekje med Rusijo in Nemčijo. V tem smislu analizirano besedilo uporablja sistem retoričnih sredstev, ki jih po Edvardu Saidu lahko opredelimo kot "tehnologija oblasti nad Vzhodom" ali kot imperialna naracija.

Ključne besede: Šlezija, potopis, stereotipi, Slovani, kolonialna pripoved

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