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Man inside metaphors

It has been 10 years since Józef Tischner's death and during that time a lot has been said about his concept of man. His philosophising about human issues is ordered, and it seems that all the crucial moments in his thought have been identified. Attempts in this regard have been made by Barbara Skarga, Adam Węgrzecki, Karol Tarnowski, Tadeusz Gadacz, Aleksander Bobko, Adam Workowski and many others. There is no point in restating their theses or following the same paths. However, to begin with, it is worth mentioning the pivotal points in order to see what else in Józef Tischner's philosophy remains to be elucidated.

Józef Tischner consistently made a point of using the term “philosophy of man” instead of “philosophical anthropology,” which was common practice in the phenomenological tradition, in which he was grounded. This consistency was to be seen in the name of the department¹ he headed at the Pontifical Academy of Theology, the name of the subject he lectured on² and the titles of textbooks he prepared for his students.³ What are the differences between philosophy of man and

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¹ See *The Faculty of Philosophy at the Pontifical Academy of Theology (a presentation)*, ed. T. Gadacz, A. Michalik, W. Skoczny, “Logos i Ethos”, 1991, no.1, p. 167.

² See *ibidem*, p. 165.

³ See J. Tischner, *Wybrane problemy filozofii człowieka*, Kraków 1985; *idem*, *Filozofia człowieka dla duszpasterzy i artystów*, [in:] *idem*, *Myślenie w żywiole piękna*, Kraków 2004, pp. 139–336.

anthropology? Tischner was aware of the way phenomenology perceives the tasks of anthropology. His works do not show he was interested in the question of man's place in the cosmos, and particularly in the inquiry into the essence of man, which would be about looking for a set of properties that distinguish man from the world of animals. This does not, however, mean that Tischner was completely unfamiliar with the problem of the human essence of man, as encapsulated in the classical question: "who is man?" It was arguably on account of these differences that Tischner used the term "philosophy of man," carefully regarding man faced with manifold domains of reality. In a sense one might say that the centre of this philosophy is constituted by "man in the world." It is man as confronted with values, with another man, and last but not least - with God. These three issues provided an organisational framework for Tischner's reflection. One might advance a hypothesis – even though testing it would require a separate study - whereby in his philosophy of man Józef Tischner held a relational position: his way of understanding man was to elucidate manifold relationships that man enters into. These relationships are extremely crucial for capturing that which he is. At the same time, for Tischner himself they are an attempt at going beyond the substantialist concept of man, of which he was many a time critical.⁴

Those who study Tischner's thought readily periodise his philosophy.⁵ Customarily, a distinction is drawn between three periods⁶ differentiated by both the circle of thought inspiration and methods. These differences are clearly significant for the understanding of man and his world.

The first period is one of strong phenomenological inspiration arising from the tradition of Roman Ingarden's thinking. This can be seen in the subject matters addressed: subjectivity, values, axiology, an attempt at

⁴ See idem, *Filozofia człowieka dla duszpasterzy i artystów*, op. cit., p. 163n; idem, *Wybrane problemy filozofii człowieka*, op. cit., p. 8n; *Człowiek przez okna systemu*, [in:] idem, *Myślenie według wartości*, Kraków 1993, p. 353n.

⁵ See A. Bobko, *Poszukiwanie prawdy o człowieku*, "Znak", 2001, no. 3 (550), pp. 56–70.

⁶ See idem, *Wstęp. Józefa Tischnera myślenie o człowieku*, [in:] J. Tischner, *O człowieku. Wybór pism filozoficznych*, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków 2003, p. XVIIIn.

building the concept of axiological “I,” but it is also visible in the linguistic form. The technical language filled with phenomenological jargon is a far cry from Tischner’s idiom of the 1980s or 1990s. The texts written in that period are collected in the book entitled *Świat ludzkiej nadziei*,⁷ and in part also in *Myslenie według wartości*.⁸ This type of thinking can be most clearly seen in his habilitation dissertation entitled *Fenomenologia świadomości egotycznej*.⁹

In the second period Tischner visibly turns to philosophy of dialogue. It is then that he becomes markedly inspired by the thought of Emmanuel Lévinas and Franz Rosenzweig. The key concepts for Tischner are now the ones of an encounter, the fellow human being, the Face. This period bears such fruit as *Filozofia dramatu*,¹⁰ where changed is not only his way of speaking about man, but language itself. Tischner shows a variety of human dramas, and as he uses a new framework of concepts/metaphors he tries to describe a human being in his relationships with others.

Begun with *Spór o istnienie człowieka*,¹¹ the third period of his thinking about man shows ever-growing influence of religious thinking. Józef Tischner introduces into the language of his philosophy of man the concepts borrowed straight from theology: grace, salvation. Good becomes the central category, and the former axiological horizon – known from the first period – becomes replaced with an agathological horizon. This period is perhaps the most mysterious one. Back then the author of *Spór o istnienie człowieka* addressed themes that he was not able to pursue to their conclusion because of his disease and premature death. Therefore, there is merely a visible outline of the profound change in thinking, including thinking about man. The vistas that are opened up by this turn are hardly adumbrated.

⁷ See J. Tischner, *Świat ludzkiej nadziei*, Kraków 1975.

⁸ See idem, *Myslenie według wartości*, op. cit.

⁹ See idem, *Fenomenologia świadomości egotycznej*, [in:] idem, *Studia z filozofii świadomości*, Kraków 2006, pp. 131–418.

¹⁰ See idem, *Filozofia dramatu. Wprowadzenie*, Kraków 1998.

¹¹ See idem, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, Kraków 1998.

It is debatable whether these three periods are separated by revolutions in Tischner's thinking, or whether the transitions from one to the other are smooth. Undoubtedly, each one of these changes puts a slightly different perspective on thinking about man. But there is one other thing worth noting. Apart from the substantive kind of evolution, there is another one, more often than not regarded less seriously. When comparing earlier works – ones written by more or less 1978 – with the later ones, one can see a distinct change in style. Tischner's early works were full of precise phenomenological language, the culmination of this period being his habilitation dissertation. Later on, this quite rigorous language grows slack and Tischner often makes use of metaphors and symbols; it is also at that time that some key concepts – so essential for Tischner's late philosophy – appear in his texts, e.g. Face, drama, encounter, promise. They are stylistically distant from phenomenological phraseology.

Among Tischner's students this change is most often commented on in the following simple manner: Tischner's command of language was better and better; Tischner needed more casual terms to describe the experiences he was dealing with – the experiences from the borderline between philosophy, pastoral work and commentary journalism; Tischner felt suffocated in the straitjacket of phenomenological jargon. All these explanations assign the new language a not really vital function, though it is not that accidental.¹²

It is all just about changes in style, or maybe the metaphoricity of the language is supposed to refer to a more serious problem?

Around the year 1980 Tischner publishes three texts which can be viewed as a peculiar philosophical manifesto. As a man in his 50s, who has already written his academic degree dissertations, he tries to ask himself a question about what was and what would be the reflection that he was pursuing. And so, in the introduction to *Myślenie według*

¹² Such opinions quite often appear in talks and casual conversations, so it is difficult to point to specific research papers that address the issue. I cite this position in order to point out some atmosphere that is being created around Józef Tischner's thinking.

wartości he tries to problematise his of own philosophising, trying to avoid identification with any “-ism.” These three texts – included in the aforementioned collection – are the eponymous *Myślenie według wartości*¹³ [Thinking in Values], *Myślenie religijne*¹⁴ [Religious Thinking] and a paper most interesting from the perspective of this short study: *Myślenie z wnętrza metafory*¹⁵ [Thinking from within the Metaphor]. These three *Thinkings* are attempts at describing Tischner’s philosophical self-understanding back in that period.

The text of *Thinking from within the Metaphor* is an attempt at answering the question about the place of the metaphor in philosophical thinking. There appear several interesting tropes that will later on be continued in Tischner’s later texts. They show that the peculiar method of his philosophising is not an embellishing afterthought, but it results from his metaphysical convictions. Since much has been written about Józef Tischner’s philosophy of man, it is no use restating familiar theses. Therefore, instead of asking about the WHAT of that reflection on man, it is worth asking a question about the HOW.

How does Tischner think about man, what words and structures does he couch his reflections in? What might be the meaning of these ambiguous metaphors which enchant some with their beauty, while annoying others with their vagueness? This short study will address one problem: how Tischner thinks about man.

1. The inside of metaphors

As we take a closer look at metaphoricity at the level of linguistic expression, literality seems to be the natural opposite of this manner of describing the world. Thus, a metaphor is juxtaposed with a concept. A concept is accurate, unambiguous, characterised by a high degree of

¹³ See J. Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, [in:] idem, *Myślenie według wartości*, op. cit., pp. 506–523.

¹⁴ See idem, *Myślenie religijne*, [in:] idem, *Myślenie według wartości*, op. cit., pp. 357–382.

¹⁵ See idem, *Myślenie z wnętrza metafory*, [in:] idem, *Myślenie według wartości*, op. cit., pp. 490–505.

lucidity, while a metaphor is ambiguous, vague. According to Tischner this juxtaposition corresponds to some deeper tension of a metaphysical character.¹⁶

At this level, metaphoricity is juxtaposed with factuality. Factuality – and hence the structure of the world presupposed in a natural attitude or in commonsensical intuition – can be phrased with a simple expression: things are what they appear to be, the world is what we experience it to be. The world is a set of facts, and in this sense it is ultimate reality. It is self-explanatory and does not require any external, “unworldly” explanations.

The change in the attitude to reality takes a radical turn when a man tells himself that things might not be what they seem to be. The most outstanding example of such problematisation appears in Plato’s parable about the cave: the world is but a shadow of the world, and things are shadows of true reality.¹⁷ Thus, it is only the sense of some non-obviousness and its attendant sense of non-ultimateness found in the factuality of worldliness that triggers metaphorisation. Metaphorisation is an attempt at proper description of that mysteriousness encountered in the world. If question marks are put over factuality, then the concept too – along with its clarity and lucidity – is called into question. If that which we see is merely some kind of guise, some reflection and not reality itself, then description necessitates other means. And this is where the metaphor appears. Metaphoricity at the linguistic level merely reflects some metaphoricity of the world at the metaphysical level. While it is easy to show the structure of a metaphor at the linguistic level and its relation to the concept (literal meaning), showing metaphoricity at the metaphysical level is somewhat troublesome.

Let us consider that with the aid of some example. As Paul Ricoeur analyses the symbolism of evil, he considers the following pattern.¹⁸

¹⁶ See idem, p. 504n.

¹⁷ See Platon, *Państwo*, trans. W. Witwicki, Warszawa 1994, vol. 2, p. 57n. and: M. Heidegger, *Platona nauka o prawdzie*, trans. S. Blandzi, [in:] idem, *Znaki drogi*, Warszawa 1999, pp. 179–189.

¹⁸ See P. Ricoeur, *Symbolika zła*, trans. S. Cichowicz, M. Ochab, Warszawa 1986, p. 17n.

We have a literal meaning of “stain,” which is related to some physical state. The word “stain” is then taken over from the everyday order; it denotes a certain uncomplicated actual state. This literal meaning is transferred into another field: a stain comes to designate guilt, sin; guilt is in a way a stain. This secondary meaning is not literal, but at the same time the primary one is not completely obliterated. As the Psalmist supplicates God: “wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin!”¹⁹ he plays on these two meanings. That is one aspect of this process of metaphorisation: transferring the literal meaning onto the symbolic plane. The superimposition of the two planes and their continued co-occurrence causes the symbol to preserve its non-transparent character. That is what makes it different from a purely conventional sign. Ricoeur is an important point of reference for Tischner; he is mentioned in many of his texts, e.g. *Thinking from within the Metaphor*.²⁰

There is another aspect of this process, one perhaps less interesting from the hermeneutic perspective – which finds the world already described with the aid of symbols – but unusually vital from the phenomenological viewpoint. Underlying the symbol of guilt, which is in a sense a stain, is some kind of experience of one’s own sinfulness. Unconceptualised, unnamed, but calling for some kind of expression. A man experiences something, but at the same time feels that the reality he is coming into contact with defies encapsulation in simple words, or description with literal meanings. Therefore, the reality of evil does not require a concept, but a metaphor. At this stage one might say the world of human experience can be divided into two spheres: one capable of being described with concepts (a camel, a sheep, a tent, a well), and the one capable of being described with symbols. The latter one requires a symbolic expression, because it contains some mysteriousness, non-transparency. Love is non-transparent, guilt is non-transparent, and all

¹⁹ Ps 51:4, New International Version, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+51&version=NIV>.

²⁰ See J. Tischner, *Myslenie z wnętrza metafory*, op. cit., p. 503.

the sacred is non-transparent. To describe this sphere with concepts would mean to distort them.

In order to qualify this deliberation, it is worth introducing a distinction between the symbolised and the symbolising. As regards guilt as a stain, guilt is symbolised as a stain, and the stain is the symbolising with reference to the experience of guilt.

Such an understanding of a symbol²¹ clearly shows that it cannot be perceived as a “proto-concept.” Thus, a symbol cannot be easily demystified in line with the following principle: in days of yore people used to create symbols, because they were not able to think through the issues concerned with, say, evil, but today we can develop these symbols into concepts, clarifying that which originally was unclear. A symbol will always remain murky and non-transparent,²² affecting our understanding in a completely different manner than a clear and lucid concept.

In particular situations the sphere of metaphoricity encompasses the whole world, putting question marks over all conceptual approaches. This can be seen in the use of metaphors in Plato’s cave. And again we can see another replication of Ricoeur’s pattern. There is a literal meaning of the cave, which is transferred onto a different plane: the world (or: the world of human experience) is like a cave – obscure, reflecting shadows, etc. The image is complemented by the other aspect of the metaphorisation process. The world we experience as the only one (and in this sense the ultimate one) is not the only one, nor ultimate; it is not what it seems to be in the sensual experience. What is it then? It is a shadow of the world, a reflection of the true world. If so, if the ostensibly unproblematic experience of the world reveals some kind of its non-obviousness, some mystery, then concepts need to be replaced with metaphors. Concepts would be mere distortions, because they would create the appearance of transparency and their self-sufficiency. But the symbol

²¹ For the purpose of the present study I use the concepts of “metaphor” and “symbol” interchangeably, just like Józef Tischner does in his texts. He was aware of the difference between the two, but - as he himself observed - Paul Ricoeur equated them with each other. See J. Tischner, *Myslenie z wnętrza metafory*, op. cit., p. 503.

²² See P. Ricoeur, *Egzystencja i hermeneutyka*, trans. S. Cichowicz i in., Warszawa 1985, p. 62n.

with its non-transparency serves as a reference to “another world,” to the true reality. Therefore, metaphors arise out of the experience of the uncertainty and non-obviousness of the world. In this sense, they express some fundamental philosophical truth.

Another example of the totality of symbolical thinking can be furnished by primitive cultures, where every fact is an epiphany, where all reality – and not just some demarcated area of experience – becomes a manifestation of the sacred, and by extension is a symbol of something else. In a sense, such cases show a reversed direction of metaphorisation. An ordinary tree acquires a symbolic significance, because it is a manifestation of another world. We still say “tree,” but the reality that lies hidden underneath this word is far more complex and non-obvious than a natural fact: the structure of tissue and the processes that take place in it. At the same time, the tree does not cease to be a “flesh and blood” tree. A question then arises whether these two processes of symbolisation are of an identical character. In the first case, the non-literally understood word “stain” became a metaphorical expression for the experience of guilt, while in the second case, it is the tree itself that in some experience reveals its “depth,” becoming a symbol of “something more.” If we were to phenomenologically distinguish between these two cases, that is point to the phenomena found in experience, then in the first one we have an experience of guilt as a stain (the stain being something added), while in the second one we have an experience of a tree as an epiphany of the sacred. This genetic order is essential from the perspective of phenomenology, but in a ready-made symbol it becomes less essential for hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is presented with a symbol which is a living tension between literality and metaphoricity.

However, this order is of significance from the phenomenological perspective. What is the object of experience in the metaphorised world? Symbols or experiences which are then expressed in symbols? In the context Tischner’s philosophy it is a crucial matter.

In the text *Thinking from within the Metaphor* Tischner mentions a few metaphors. He presents Plato's cave,²³ mentions Descartes' malicious demon²⁴ (this metaphor will be elaborated in *Spór o istnienie człowieka*²⁵), but it is to the metaphor of giving birth that he assigns a special place.²⁶ Tischner takes a closer look at the way it is used in the context of thinking about the Holy Trinity. At the literal level giving birth is a process of biological life. A new life is born, which involves a woman's pain and suffering. In the context of the Holy Trinity this act of giving birth is subject to peculiar idealisation. God cannot suffer, and so giving birth becomes detached from any pain. And so we have a non-literal meaning of giving birth. We are left with a process that describes a relationship between the Father and the Son. Why can't this be described non-metaphorically? The argument is quite obvious: the sphere of Divinity is inaccessible and non-transparent to us, and so any pronouncements on it with the aid of transparent concepts may result in distortions. An example of a transparent concept might be a cause-effect relationship or a category of creation. But both these approaches underestimate consubstantiality. As an effect, the Son would be less perfect than the Father, while as a creation would be a reflection of God at best, something metaphysically different, as different as creation is different from the Creator. But then there is a metaphor. Until that point the symbolism of giving birth follows the above-described pattern.

But Tischner points to one more moment: the metaphor returns to earth. Processed for thinking about the Trinity, the metaphor of giving birth – now devoid of the moments of pain and suffering – proves useful when describing other spheres of reality, e.g. giving birth to the truth. Thus, metaphors move to and fro, between one world and the other; they return to earth, but when they do, they are changed.

²³ See J. Tischner, *Myslenie z wnętrza metafory*, op. cit., p. 491.

²⁴ See ibidem, p. 493.

²⁵ See J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, op. cit., p. 19n.

²⁶ See idem, *Myslenie z wnętrza metafory*, op. cit., p. 498n.

Where can the true life of metaphors be found then? Certainly not in the exchange of concepts for “soft concepts,” that is metaphors. Plato does not shift his whole story to the plane of the parable of the cave. He tries to elucidate it, his thoughts swinging between one world (mysterious communing with the truth of ideas) and the other (a blinded, chained-up prisoner leaving the cave). A metaphor is not an allegory which copies a problem under examination on a one-to-one basis. A metaphor is about a constant tension between literality and metaphoricity. A reduction of metaphor to just one element: a stain, a cave, giving birth would be in contradiction with this thinking. Thinking from within the metaphor is about constant leaving and returning. A reduction of metaphor to its non-literal pole only might be referred to as excessive poeticization, allegorization. Such a measure moves the metaphor away from thinking and philosophy. On the other hand, a reduction of metaphor to the other pole – replacing metaphors with accurate concepts – is referred to as “terrism.”²⁷ That is an acknowledgement that the world of facts is obvious, self-explanatory and of an ultimate character. The symbol is not to be found on the same level as the allegory.

2. Three anthropological metaphors

The above analyses show Józef Tischner to be a theoretician of metaphor. However, unlike Ricoeur, he did not go about hunting metaphors in cultural texts. The paper *Thinking from within the Metaphor* is a manifesto. Tischner wants to think with the aid of metaphors, because he thinks that is the only way to touch the mystery of experience, the mystery of man. He does not care for accurate language any more, as he finds it to be a threat to philosophical investigations. A metaphor points to uncertainty, non-obviousness; with its tension between the literal and the metaphorical, a metaphor conveys the whole drama of the world. If the problem of man lies at the very heart of Tischner's philosophy, it is worth noting what metaphors he uses to describe man.

²⁷ See idem, *Myslenie religijne*, op. cit., p. 377.

Tischner-theoretician is followed by Tischner-practitioner of metaphor. To what extent does he remain faithful to his theoretical findings? How do metaphors live in his thinking?

From among the many metaphors Józef Tischner uses let us try and pick three. The choice is somewhat arbitrary, but at the same time it reveals tensions of metaphorical thinking.

A metaphor of song comes first in this set: “Man is like a song floating in time.”²⁸ He is both the instrument and the artist. He himself sings that song, according to some sheet music, that is values. In this metaphor Tischner flatly rejects a substantialist view of man.²⁹ The song is unfinished; it cannot be reduced to the sheet music. A true song is a song sung. The relation between the song and the sheet music is defined by man’s freedom.

Another metaphor is a definition of man as a dramatic being, which means: “to live in the present time, with other people around and the ground under one’s feet as a stage.”³⁰ But also “to be a dramatic being means to believe – truly or falsely – that the doom or salvation is in man’s hands.”³¹ This metaphor serves as a foundation for the whole concept of the philosophy of drama, where such theatre symbols as the stage, a mask, drama are utilised to describe man in the entirety of his existence.

The third metaphor appears in the last period of Tischner’s work. It is a metaphor of man’s death. As he makes use of it, Tischner engages in a debate with Michel Foucault’s tradition: “man wants to prove that what he did [the evil of Auschwitz and Kolyma – D. K.] was not done by him, because he never was. Thus arises the idea of «the death of man».”³² This metaphor has a special character: the argument about the death of man invalidates man; man’s condition is non-being. Tischner realises the import and historical character of the experience concerned with

²⁸ Idem, *Etyka wartości i nadziei*, [in:] D. von Hildebrand, J. A. Kłoczowski, J. Paściak, J. Tischner, *Wobec wartości*, Poznań 1982, p. 53.

²⁹ See idem, *Filozofia człowieka dla duszpasterzy i artystów*, op. cit., p. 233.

³⁰ Ibidem, *Filozofia dramatu*, op. cit., p. 7n.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 10.

³² J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, op. cit., p. 57.

the 20th-century totalitarianisms. But at the same time he advances the following proposition: “even if «man is dead» [...], this means that he existed, and if he did, then he can be reborn.”³³ Man is dead, but people live. Thus, a living man finds man dead. This self-reference introduces a new element into the structure of Nietzsche’s phrase “God is dead.” There, man pronounced God dead; here, man pronounces himself dead. One might say that is only a metaphor - in the sense of an allegory, a simile with no strings attached. The death of man is an embarrassment to some model of humanity, some ideal man, and an end to the existing understanding. But the structure of this figurativeness is more complex: man can survive his own death. And then there is the statement: if man is dead, this means that he lived; therefore, he can be reborn. Who can be reborn? The same man or another one? If that man died, brought about his own self-destruction, then why would we have to resurrect him?

Each one of these metaphors requires in-depth analysis. But now let us focus on their shared structure. All along, the object of study has not been WHAT Tischner says about man, but HOW he does it. He speaks about man with the aid of metaphors. But do these metaphors resemble the ones he himself mentions in the *Thinking from Within the Metaphor*?

In Paul Ricoeur’s writings unfamiliar experience (sin, guilt) becomes explicated with familiar concepts (a stain, losing the way). The symbolised is unclear and therefore needs the symbolising. The symbolising is borrowed from the everyday order: a stain, losing the way – these are common experiences understood by every man. They are supposed to become helpful in capturing that which is so difficult to express in concepts. Thus arises a metaphor. The case of the cave parable was alike. A student of Plato surely did not know what ideas were and how to get to know them – after all, the concept was an effect of Plato’s multi-year dialectical thinking and outstanding perspicacity. But the same student could easily imagine a chained-up man’s plight: the experience of the dark and the way it brightens up, the attendant experience of being blinded by

³³ Ibidem, p. 8.

excess light – these are everyday occurrences for every one of us. Plato uses the familiar as an introduction into the mysterious.

If Józef Tischner uses metaphors in his philosophy of man, he at least wants to tell us that man is mysterious, defies straightforward explanations, and that he cannot be reduced to the worldly only: reduction to factuality – terrorism – distorts the truth about man. But apart from these similarities to the symbolical structures studied by Ricœur, Tischner suggests his own way which slightly diverges from such an understanding of metaphor. He performs metaphorisation of man, but at the same time the symbolising in Tischner is not derived from the everyday order. While man experiences songs, theatre and death in the world, and he can say something about them, it is hard to overlook the fact that these symbols are of a different character than a stain, losing the way, or a cave. Where does the difference lie?

Each one of the words mentioned by Tischner has some aspect of non-transparency about it. While man experiences songs: he listens to them and sometimes himself performs them, but at the same time there is something mysterious about music. While music is subject to mathematical harmonies,³⁴ but at the same time it is some kind of unfathomable elemental force. As every field of art, it contains some unmeasurable, irrational element which defies simple analysis. The same goes for theatre. In a sense, it is describable: the stage, the audience, actors, dramas acted out, but at the same time that which is peculiar to theatre reaches the mysterious elemental forces. Such were the ancient functions of theatre, such is the shape of the Polish dramatic tradition, after all so dear to Tischner: *Dziady* by Mickiewicz, *Wesele* by Wyspiański, the theatre of Grotowski, Kantor and Staniewski are about constant grappling with the mystery. Theatre appears to be even more mysterious than man himself. And last but not least, the death of man. When transferred to the problem of man, the paraphrase of Nietzsche's famous statement "God is dead"³⁵ also tries to voice some unclear experience with a word the sense of which

³⁴ See J. Tischner, *Bezdroża spotkań*, „Analecta Cracoviensia”, R. XII, 1980, p. 152.

³⁵ F. Nietzsche, *Wiedza radosna*, trans. L. Staff, Warszawa 1906, p. 108.

is not that obvious after all. Death itself is a mystery to man, transcends all kinds of experience, is awe-inspiring and terrible.

Thus, Tischner creates an all-new tension in his metaphors. The unfamiliar looks at itself in the mirror of the unfamiliar, the symbol remains inscrutable, which is quite unlike Ricœur's analyses and his own theoretical studies of metaphor. There, a metaphor was shot out into the "heavens" and then it returned to earth. Here, the symbolising does not return to earth (if we understand "earth" as the familiar, everyday and clear). What then does Tischner want to tell us?

Might there be a mistake here? Is it conceivable that as Tischner was beguiled by his own symbolism, he failed to abide by the perception of metaphor he himself had earlier developed? Such conjecture is always risky. A mistake is rather out of the question, if one treats Tischner's own words seriously. In the introduction to *Filozofia dramatu* he defines the purpose of his deliberations: "The primary aim is to restore the proper and peculiar gravity to the word drama."³⁶ Did Ricœur attempt to restore the proper and peculiar gravity to the word "stain"? No, his purpose was to examine the symbolism of evil. A stain was simple and straightforward; as regards its gravity, a stain is of no great import, inasmuch as it does not serve us in better understanding of the phenomenon of guilt. Therefore, the purpose of metaphorisation is not to raise the status of the symbolising, but to better understand the symbolised.

However, in Tischner there is some confusion in this respect. It might seem that the purpose of the philosophy of drama project is to show some truth about man, some important truth expressed in the metaphor of a dramatic being. However, something else transpires: it is about a better understanding of the concept of drama. A purpose thus redefined might suggest that Tischner's main goal is a peculiar philosophy of theatre. If man appears in it, he will only be there as a means to restore the "gravity." But Tischner is not interested in theatre as a goal, which is corroborated by almost all analyses of the book quoted here. He is not even interested in drama as such, unless it can be used as

³⁶ J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu*, op. cit., p. 7.

a handy metaphor to explain the problems of human destiny. One might even hazard a hypothesis whereby Tischner wrote the introduction to *Filozofia dramatu* with completely different discussion in view. By way of illustration, he wrote that time is the substance of drama.³⁷ Substance, that is something tremendously important - just like in the metaphor of song time is “an internal reality of the melody,”³⁸ essential for the existence of the song. But there are not many analyses of time and temporality to be found in the body of *Filozofia dramatu*. Tischner also writes about the stage,³⁹ but he is quick to drop this element of metaphor. Apart from the introduction, he does not really care for the stage.

Therefore, it is neither man, nor drama. How to get out of this pitfall? Tischner’s method is different. Apparently, it is no accident that the three major metaphors use words that themselves require explication. Many years intervene between these metaphors: for the first time the “song” appears in the mid-1970s; the metaphor of “drama” appears at the end of the same decade⁴⁰ and finds its culmination in *Filozofia dramatu* (first edition – 1990); the analyses of “the death of man” emerge in the mid-1990s. Thus, there are two decades of consistent – and different from the posited theory – “practice of metaphorisation” developed by Tischner.

Since it is not a matter of accident – replication of the same measure over the years points to some consistency – then it is fitting that a question is posed about the method. What is metaphor for Tischner? The symbolising and the symbolised remain in a constant state of tension. Man is a mystery, and drama (song, death) is mysterious. Metaphors are constructed to enable understanding of man. It is not merely a hermeneutic measure in Tischner’s writings. He sees man as a dramatic being, he experiences human existence as drama. In this respect he is extremely close to the thinking of Ricœur himself. As he distinguishes the symbol from the allegory, Ricœur writes that allegory

³⁷ See *ibidem*, p. 8.

³⁸ J. Tischner, *Filozofia człowieka dla duszpasterzy i artystów*, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

³⁹ See *idem*, *Filozofia dramatu*, *op. cit.*, p. 8n.

⁴⁰ It is difficult to point to one single moment, but a major step in this field was certainly Tischner’s paper *Fenomenologia spotkania*, published in the journal “*Analecta Cracoviensia*,” R. X, 1978.

is always a kind of hermeneutic, but a symbol is not; a symbol remains on a different plane, preceding hermeneutics.⁴¹ If for Tischner drama is a metaphor thus construed, then it is in a sense experienced, and not chosen as a handy tool. If it were a mere tool, it could be replaced with another tool. However, if drama and the dramaticism are phenomena of human experience, then their presence is no accident. That is why Tischner posits, as one of the objectives of his analyses, the restoration of the gravity to the concept of drama. It is not that neither drama nor man is the purpose of the project. Both man and drama are the purpose – simultaneously. If we restore the proper and peculiar gravity to the word drama, we will be in a better position to reveal the truth about man. Man explicated by “any sloppy” drama will remain unknown.

Tischner discerned the complexity and mysteriousness of the subject he explored all his life. That might arguably serve as explanation for the turns in his thinking: it is all the time about the elucidation of man, but a proper language needs to be found. Prior to the periods of Tischner’s philosophy of man that I mentioned before, there was one more: of the language of Thomism learnt at seminary. Tischner was quite quick to see its uselessness in the description of human experience.⁴² Therefore, his further investigations are concerned with an attempt to find a language to express man: both his exteriority and hidden depths, both his simplicity and mysteriousness.

For this purpose Tischner needs his “dark metaphors.” He does not translate the issues concerned with man into an allegorical language of a different conceptual framework, even though it might seem to be the case: the world is a stage; relationships with people are dramas, etc. He combines two “dark” concepts in one grip. A metaphor does not soar up to the sky only to return disburdened, which is where Tischner discerns a threat to metaphorisation.⁴³ That is what he perhaps fears,

⁴¹ See P. Ricoeur, *Symbolika zła*, op. cit., p. 19n.

⁴² See *Spotkanie. Z ks. Józefem Tischnerem rozmawia Anna Karoń-Ostrowska*, Kraków 2003, pp. 41, 55n.

⁴³ See J. Tischner, *Myslenie z wnętrza metafory*, op. cit., p. 502.

only rarely tapping the arsenal of colloquial terms, e.g. “a stain.” That grip of metaphor goes even deeper: song, drama, death (if we treat it ontologically, and not ontically) are inconceivable themselves without man. But a stain and a cave are not. Hence, those Tischnerian metaphors are integrated into man not at Tischner’s behest, but by nature. As a result, one of the purposes of the philosophy of drama – viewed even as an intellectual tool to elucidate some phenomena of human destiny – must also be work centred around drama, because without it the elucidation will not be successful.

3. The Logos of Metaphor

The purpose of this short study is not to show WHAT Józef Tischner wrote about man, but rather HOW he formulated that. The linguistic array proves to be not only a tool, but also a method resulting from metaphysical convictions. Thinking from within the metaphor arises out of the conviction that “a metaphor, a symbol are no accidental phenomena in radical thinking, but they are simply manifestations of its radicalism.”⁴⁴ At the same time, this radicalism acts as an agreement not to have thinking prevailed over by the desire for oversimplified elucidation, clarification and disambiguation. There are places in thinking that can be thought only “from within the metaphor.” Therefore, a metaphor is not some kind of linguistic expression external to thinking, but it is something that underlies thinking.

Noteworthy, there is some internal *logos*, some extraordinarily accurate structure that can be encapsulated in metaphors. A particular *logos* is contained within the metaphors used by Tischner, who thinks about man from within such ambiguous and mysterious concepts as “drama,” “song” and “death.” In his philosophising these concepts become combined with the concepts of man by way of a very strong and not entirely penetrable relation: in order to describe man, one needs to make use of the metaphor of drama, but in order to do that, one needs

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 504.

to restore the proper gravity to the concept of “drama.” How can this be done? Tischner shows that throughout *Filozofia dramatu*: he describes man from within dramatic figurativeness, highlighting a variety of pivotal points in his life: the drama of temptation, the drama of the truth, the drama of beauty. Couching these phenomena in new symbols reveals their internal tensions and connections which might not have been visible before. At the same time, each one of these analyses restores the proper gravity to drama. Thus, both the polar opposites of metaphor are essential to one another. Subjugating either one to the other – which might be suggested by the distinction between the symbolised and the symbolising – is not as easy as in the case of metaphors, which make use of the everyday order. The polar opposites of Tischner’s metaphors live off each other, becoming more firmly combined at every turn of thinking.

The three metaphors which Tischner used in different periods of his philosophising about man have been mentioned above. Each one could be analysed in depth in order to capture the innermost structures in this “*logos* of metaphor.” One might also point to many other metaphors: a face, a home, a hideout, etc., which populate the Tischnerian *universum* of symbols. All this, however, is a task exceeding the compass of the present study. What remains then? A strong conviction that Tischner is yet to be discovered, that we need a new attempt at comprehensive interpretation of his philosophy of man, which will arise from the thoroughly thought-through logic (or better: dialectic) of the Tischnerian metaphors. This attempt is yet to be made.

Abstract

The subject of the article is a role of metaphor in Józef Tischner’s philosophy. In late seventies he shaped an idea of „thinking within metaphor”, which was an essential modification of phenomenological method Tischner used before. Metaphorizing is not only an unliterally language expression, but also the metaphysical statement, that the world an human experience cannot be described in strict concepts. Metaphors and symbols have their own logic and hermeneutics, which shows their inner tensions. I proposed a new approach to Tischner philosophy, which allows unveil this „life of metaphor”.

Key words:

Józef Tischner, metaphor, human experience

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