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GOMBROWICZ AND FRISCH: ASPECTS OF THE LITERARY DIARY

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

PH.D.

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GOMBROWICZ AND FRISCH: ASPECTS OF THE LITERARY DIARY

BY

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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature
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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY
SUPERVISION BY ALEX SIMON KURCZABA
ENTITLED GOMBROWICZ AND FRISCH: ASPECTS OF THE LITERARY DIARY

BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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PREFACE

In concluding his discussion of the significance of the diary in modern literature, Peter Boerner makes an indirect exhortation to scholarship. He writes

Whatever differences may still exist between the artistic and pedestrian aspects of writing, with regard to the diary they are no longer categorical, but merely qualitative. Although there are authors who have used--and still use--the diary as an artistic expedient, there are others who have found in it a highly sensitive means of literary expression. The modern diary both because of its perfection in the hands of a few gifted writers and because of its appearance in droves, has become a phenomenon of the intellectual life of our epoch. If for no other reason, this alone would seem to justify its consideration by scholars of modern literature¹

Max Frisch, the contemporary German-Swiss writer (1911-), and the Polish writer, Witold Gombrowicz (1904-1969), are two literary artists who, I believe, have "found in [the diary] a highly sensitive means of literary expression" and in indigenous yet interconnected ways have refined it as a literary form. This dissertation is conceived, in part, as a response to Boerner's exhortation. Its object of investigation essentially consists of Frisch's Tagebuch

1946-1949,² Tagebuch 1966-1971,³ and Gombrowicz's Dziennik 1953-1966 (Diary 1953-1966).⁴ Both Gombrowicz's Diary and Frisch's Tagebücher appeared in the post-World War II period, more or less contemporaneously but, as far as can be determined, independently of each other. The treatment of these works focuses on genetic and generic questions implicated by the texts. In considering these questions, I advance the hypothesis that the Essais of Montaigne represent a common prototype for the diaries of Frisch and Gombrowicz, as well as for many of the attitudes toward literature and writing which form the matrix for those diaries. Thus, Montaigne's Essais serve as a tertium quid for the comparative treatment of Gombrowicz and Frisch.

It should be stressed at the outset that my aim is not to analyze exhaustively all of the thematic, formal, and aesthetic issues that link the two diaries. Rather, I intend to profile the two diaries by highlighting a salient feature of each; hence, special attention is paid in Chapter II to the element of parody in Gombrowicz's Diary and in Chapter IV to the complementary concern with expression in Frisch's Tagebücher. The present study is conceived as a preliminary investigation of the interrelatedness of Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries. It is not intended to seal this topic, rather to open it.

Notes

¹ "The Significance of the Diary in Modern Literature," Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, No. 21 (1972), p. 45.

² Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1950. All references are to the text of the 1974 reprint of the first edition.

³ Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972. All references are to the text of the 1974 reprint of the first edition.

⁴ Hereafter, I refer to Gombrowicz's Dziennik 1953-1966 by means of the English title, Diary. It should be noted that there exist considerable textual variations among the three major versions of the Diary. Originally published serially in the Paris-based Polish monthly, Kultura, the diary texts appeared under several titles: "Fragmenty z dziennika" ("Fragments from a Diary") and "Dziennik transatlantycki" ("Transatlantic Diary"). The serialized texts were gradually gathered together and, with considerable editing, published in book form as follows:

Dziennik 1953-1956. Paris: Institut Litteraire, 1957.

Dziennik 1957-1961. Paris: Institut Litteraire, 1962.

Dziennik 1961-1966. Operetka. Paris: Institut Litteraire, 1966.

The Diary was re-published, again with some textual variations from the first edition, in the Dzieła Zebrane (Collected Works), Volumes 6, 7, and 8 (all Paris: Institut Litteraire, 1971). The only translation of the complete Diary is Walter Tiel's German rendition: Tagebuch (Pfullingen: Neske, 1970). The third (last) volume of the German translation contains additional diary texts, not included in any of the Polish editions, which were published occasionally between 1966 and 1969, the year of Gombrowicz's death. All references to Gombrowicz's Diary in this study are to the text of the Dzieła Zebrane, vols. 6, 7, 8, with accompanying German translation (Walter Tiel's).

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INTRODUCTION

I

Gombrowicz's Diary and Frisch's Tagebücher are instances of the literary diary. There have been several attempts at defining the phenomenon of the literary diary. All of them propose one common criterion: eventual publication as a pre-conceived purpose or executed fact. Beyond this, Albert Gräser attempts to delimit the phenomenon of the literary diary by means of four basic traits: repetition ("Wiederholung"), structural dynamics ("Formdynamismus"), temporal sequence ("Zeitfolge"), and historicism ("Geschichtlichkeit").¹ Grenzmann and Just, on the other hand, propose broader criteria. For Grenzmann the literariness of the literary diary accrues from the "Zwang zu begrifflicher und sprachlicher Fixierung,"² while for Just its literariness derives from the "energische Wille zur kunstvollen Ausgestaltung des Niedergeschriebenen."³ For the purposes of this study, a literary diary is conceived as an essentially a-fictive narrative work written for publication, constructed according to a more or less calendaric sequence or, in the case of a travel diary,

according to the stages of a journey, and possessing artistic and aesthetic value. This conception may be taken as a broad working definition⁴ by which, it should be noted, the phenomenon of the diary-novel is excluded.

II

The phenomenon of the literary diary often raises the question of the boundaries of literature. This is evinced by the discomfort some students of literature seem to suffer when confronted by a diary, uncertain to what extent it may in fact be taken as a legitimate work of literature.⁵ It is my feeling that such problems arise from a distorted view of literature. No single literary form can be said to occupy the center of literature;⁶ thus, it makes little sense to speak of the literary diary or, for that matter, of the essay, aphorism, sermon, or autobiography as located somewhere on the periphery of literature. The question that ought to be asked is what constitutes the literariness of the literary diary, or as Earl Miner puts it, which are the "symptoms [that] might make us regard a diary as a work of literature."⁷ In attempting to come to terms with this question, Miner considers the emergence of prose fiction in the form of the Poetic Diary in tenth-century Japan--about

seven centuries prior to the emergence in the West of a similar literary form, the literary diary or literary autobiography, as represented by Montaigne, Pepys, and Pascal, and eight centuries prior to the rise of the novel in England. To account for this priority, Miner presents what he calls the Asian hypothesis regarding the nature of literature. According to this hypothesis, "the author was believed to express what was important to him in himself and in the world about him, even when the voice speaking might be a literary creation."⁸ In such a view of the literary enterprise, a form like the diary becomes the archetypal literary medium.

The Asian "expressive" hypothesis contrasts sharply with the prevalent "mimetic" hypothesis of Western literary theory in which fiction is, at least implicitly, considered an indispensable ingredient of a work of literature. "It was not till the mimetic preoccupation began to yield in the West that the literary diary or literary autobiography became possible," concludes Miner. "It is particularly interesting," he adds, "that when the novel gets under way in England it does so by assuming two expressive forms akin to the diary: the confessional autobiography of Defoe and the letter of Richardson."⁹ The point of all this is that fiction is, no more than prosody, a necessary element of

literature. In works (such as the diary) which tend away from the fictional or in which there occurs a blurring of fiction and non-fiction as in Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries, other literary symptoms take on greater significance. Miner mentions as symptoms of literature in the diary both rhythms of scene construction--parallelism, cadence, imagery, evocative power, perspective, pace, and resolution--and narrator's pose: "that essential human occupation of playing a role in order better to understand, or be, oneself."¹⁰ As regards the diaries of Frisch and Gombrowicz, fiction, in the form of plot and character, is not a determining structural and thematic factor. Yet, in Gombrowicz's "metafictionality" (discussed in Chapter II) and Frisch's preoccupation with experience and expression (discussed in Chapter IV), there is at work the shared fundamental awareness that everything couched in words tends to become fictive; that, in other words, language inevitably effects fiction.

The literary diary straddles the boundary that separates literature from philosophy. Writers like Gombrowicz either conceive themselves or, more often, are conceived by others as 'philosophizers.' This should not be surprising, for there is a long tradition of litterateurs who claim to be--or are claimed as their own--by philosophers; likewise,

there have been and continue to be philosophers who produce works of high aesthetic value and consequently are studied for their literary value. The confusion of literature and philosophy is particularly evident in French literature where names such as Montaigne, Rabelais, Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau occupy high places in the history of French thought as well as literature. In other literatures such figures as Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Kierkegaard occupy similar positions. Furthermore, Gombrowicz's Diary falls squarely into a long and vibrant Polish tradition of "borderline" genres--diaries, memoirs, sermons, and political tracts--that are characterized by a fusion of the socio-political and the philosophical with the literary.¹¹ It is significant that for many of the writers who straddle the boundary of literature and philosophy the diary or diary-like forms have been important media of expression. Montaigne's Essais, Rousseau's Confessions, Nietzsche's Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, Pascal's Pensées, Kierkegaard's Enten-Eller (Either-Or) exemplify this process. One can also cite the case of Sartre who utilizes the form of the diary-novel for one of his best-known works, La Nausée. "In the works of Montaigne, Pascal, Nietzsche," Polin points out, "the philosophical fragments are closely blended with the fragments of purely literary intent, and thought having a conceptual

framework with actually experienced testimonies."¹² In the twentieth century "we see philosophy linked more closely than ever with literature."¹³ Names like Claudel, Valery, Gide, Gabriel Marcel, Malraux, Sartre, and Camus exemplify this tendency. The confusion or--should we say--fusion of the two modes of expression, of literature with philosophy, can be traced back to Plato's Dialogues. Gombrowicz's concern with "Form" and "immaturity" and Frisch's approach to personal identity and his preoccupation with image-making have inspired a number of speculative discussions.¹⁴ The Diary of Gombrowicz and the Tagebücher of Frisch belong first and foremost to the domain of literature, but it is important to grasp their unique position within this domain, that is, not to overlook their philosophizing tendencies. In analyzing them one must do justice to their aesthetic as well as their speculative aspects.

III

Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries share six common features: (a) both were written for publication, that is, with a public readership in mind; (b) in both there occurs a blurring of the boundary between fiction and non-fiction; (c) both cope with and similarly resolve the same basic

problem of talking about oneself as a way out of self-encapsulation and as a means of clarifying personal identity; both resolve this problem by means of an extroverted orientation; (d) as consciously-constructed works of art, both are variants of the first-person narrative; both have an open form, in which the individual diary entry, the basic structural unit, becomes the center of tension; (e) both are written by "exiles," that is, by writers who feel culturally alienated from the milieu in which they find themselves or from which they originate; (f) in contrast to traditional writers' diaries, the diaries of Frisch and Gombrowicz occupy a central rather than a tangential position within the respective authors' creative output. Many of the features common to Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries can also be predicated of other postwar literary diaries, notably Elias Canetti's Die Provinz des Menschen: Aufzeichnungen 1942-1972¹⁵ and Gustaw Herling-Grudziński's Dziennik Pisany Nocą 1971-1972¹⁶ (Diary Written by Night 1971-1972). For several compelling reasons, however, the diaries of Frisch and Gombrowicz merit separate comparative investigation. In the case of both Frisch and Gombrowicz, there is a clear vision of the larger implications and wider significance of their diaristic endeavors. In their diaries, Frisch and Gombrowicz adumbrate and pursue the mode of "private literature" which represents nothing less than an alternative

to two prevailing contemporary attitudes toward art: the collectivist attitude of social commitment and the art for art's sake attitude of unbridled individualism. Moreover, in investigating comparatively Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries--and this is another crucial distinguishing factor--it is possible to ascertain and isolate in the Essais of Montaigne a common prototype for the diaries themselves as well as for "private literature" in general. Thus, a close diachronic and synchronic study promises to yield definitive results regarding not only the question of the literary diary as a contemporary art form but also its larger artistic implications and aesthetic significance.

At this point, the six basic shared features of Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries require closer scrutiny. First, Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries are public diaries, "anti-diaries," so to speak, if one takes the "private" character of the conventional diary as one of its primary features. "Im Tagebuch spricht man nicht nur zu sich selbst, man spricht auch zu anderen,"¹⁷ asserts Canetti. Boerner maintains that the modern literary diary often "serves its author as a platform for a public dialogue."¹⁸ The author of a literary diary enjoys "a proximity to his public which is hardly matched by other literary media."¹⁹ The serialization of Gombrowicz's Diary in the Paris-based Polish

emigré journal, Kultura, particularly underscores this aspect of the literary diary. As Boerner points out:

Frisch tries constantly to draw others into his own opinion-forming process; he regards the unknown reader as a partner who is already present when he formulates his entries. Gombrowicz emphasizes the hope that the experiences described in his diaries might become useful to others who would vicariously re-live them.²⁰

In fact, polemics with his readers provide Gombrowicz with a large part of the raw material for his Diary.

Secondly, the diaries of Frisch and Gombrowicz transcend the traditional fiction--non-fiction dichotomy. In them, the burden of literariness is not shouldered by the standard elements of a "Fabel"; plot--with its rising action, complications, denouement, and resolution--as well as character development and character constellations do not provide an overall structure as in traditional narrative fiction. Yet, fiction is not altogether absent. Both Frisch and Gombrowicz may be said to become 'heroes' of their respective diaries. The self that each presents in the diary is a stylized self. Much like the novelist, each diarist assumes a persona. A further and more explicit way in which Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries are "fictional" is the occasional composition of individual fragments or entries in a clearly fictional manner. This tendency is

exemplified in Frisch's Tagebuch 1946-1949 by such pieces as "Der andorranische Jude" and the recurring "Marion" fragments. In Gombrowicz's Diary we see it most clearly in the passus subtitled "The Rio Paraná Diary" (v. I, pp. 259-266). The blurring of the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction in the diaries of Frisch and Gombrowicz represents a tendency of the literary diary going back to Kafka's Tagebücher 1910-1923 and Kierkegaard's Enten-Eller (Either-Or) (1843). It is a development in narrative technique that, as suggested earlier, was common in the tenth-century Japanese Poetic Diary.

The third shared feature of Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries is the similarity of their resolution of the central dilemma of autobiography: the effort to speak truthfully about oneself. It is difficult enough to speak truthfully about external matters, however, to speak without distortion about oneself is a much more complex undertaking. All too often, "he who likes to talk about himself lies to a lesser or greater degree."²¹ One possible resolution of this problem is to speak in the way of Montaigne as much as possible about external matters, about the objective world. The result is a literary self-portrait wherein the self emerges as a result of the confrontation with the external world and with the other--a

portrait in relief, as it were. It is their orientation to the outside world and its affairs that generates the "Kulturkritik" of Gombrowicz's and Frisch's diaries. Both diarists do not hesitate to suggest how they stand on issues of the day as well as on timeless themes. By virtue of their external orientation, both avoid the pitfalls of exhibitionism; both succeed in effectively neutralizing the "egotistic pathos" and "monomaniacal introspection"²² inherent in the approach of direct confession-alism as typified by Rousseau, the journal intime, and its twentieth-century "heir," the diary novel.²³

From a more recent historical perspective, the attempt to speak faithfully of oneself by way of the diary represents an attempt at coping with the central problems of twentieth-century literature and philosophy: the problem of communication or "language sickness"²⁴ and of moral authenticity. The writers of turn-of-the-century Vienna were among the first to articulate and try to come to terms with these problems. "By the year 1900," according to Janik and Toulmin, "the linked problems of communication, authenticity and symbolic expression had been faced in parallel in all the major fields of thought and art--by Kraus and Schönberg, Loos and Hofmannsthal, Rilke and Musil."²⁵ Both Rilke, in his autobiographical diary-novel,

Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurid Brigge, and Kafka, in the fragmentary Beschreibung eines Kampfes, "formulated the problem of existence in terms of the limits of language, and the encapsulation of the self."²⁶ Musil, in particular, grapples with the incapability of language "to explain man's innermost being to others"²⁷ and the concomitant feeling that "language cannot express what is most real; this is something which remains forever private in the depths of the person's subjectivity."²⁸ Significantly, in their attempt to find new media of authentic expression, writers like Rilke, Kafka, and Musil often took recourse to the diary or diary-like forms. Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries can be seen as continuing this trend in the post-World War II period.

The fourth feature of Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries is their conscious construction as works of art, the structure of which is determined by an open form--a free-flowing, episodically ordered narrative, with a seemingly arbitrary beginning and end--and the fragment. The fragmentary character of much of twentieth-century art is well-known and this quality seems to be a response to and an expression of the disorientation and fragmentation of twentieth-century life. Again, it was in fin-de-siècle Vienna that one of the earliest and most eloquent statements

of the sources of this predicament was made. In 1902 Hofmannsthal published his "Ein Brief" (the "Chandos Letter") where he tried to explain his reasons for giving up poetry. One of the basic sentiments of the "Chandos Letter" is the concern over the loss of the ability to grasp the world coherently. Hofmannsthal confesses: "Es ist mir völlig die Fähigkeit abhanden gekommen, über irgend etwas zusammenhängend zu denken oder zu sprechen."²⁹ Like modern painting, the twentieth-century literary diary symptomizes the "loss of center" that characterizes twentieth-century art and culture. In it, each individual entry becomes a "center of tension." Yet, to deny the existence in the literary diary of an overall structure or unifying principle is, I think, a distortion. Boerner goes too far when he asserts that:

It [the modern literary diary] appears to be the proper form for authors who are not able or do not want to adopt a definite point of view. It allows artistic statements without the constraint of a complete composition, requires no thread, no leit-motif, no plot.³⁰

Frisch, for one, suggests a different state of affairs. In a prefatory note the Swiss writer expresses the hope that the potential reader of his Tagebuch 1946-1949 "nicht nach Laune und Zufall hin und her blätternd, die zusammensetzende Folge achtete."³¹ Such a sentiment seems to imply

the presence of some element of unity or unifying principle at work in the literary diary. I would submit that there is such a principle and that it derives ultimately from the coherence of the diarist's personality or from a pursuit after such coherence. Whether or not the diarist decides to adopt a certain point of view--to paraphrase Boerner--is a misstatement of the matter. To the extent that the literary diarist possesses a coherent (writing) personality, to that extent his diary will also possess coherence and a degree of unity. It is for this reason that we can so readily recognize Montaigne's Essais as Montaigne's product and Frisch's Tagebuch as the product of Max Frisch. In his prefatory note, Frisch also alludes to the fragmentary structure of the literary diary as "die einzelnen Steine eines Mosaiks."³² If the stress is placed on the word "eines" the sense of "one and unified" is strongly connoted. Hence, the fragments, the daily entries, of Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries represent the individual stones of a single mosaic.

Both Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries were written in a situation of exile, which constitutes a fifth common characteristic. Gombrowicz was born in Poland, left the country just before the Second World War, lived in Argentina until 1963, spent over a year in West Germany, then settled

in southern France where he died in 1969. He began composing his Diary in 1953 in Buenos Aires and continued writing it until shortly before his death. Although political exile had not been forced on Frisch, the Swiss-born writer has not only spent much time living and working outside Switzerland, in the United States, Mexico, Italy, and West Berlin, but also approaches his native country and its culture--a major concern not only of his Tagebuch but also of his other literary works--from the standpoint of a disaffiliated internal exile. Frisch describes his situation as that of a "Verschonter, der ausserhalb der nationalen Lager steht."³³

Gombrowicz summarizes the genesis-in-exile of the postwar literary diary in the following manner:

Jeżeli ten dziennik, już od paru lat prowadzony, nie jest na poziomie--moim, czy mojej sztuki, czy mojej epoki--nikt nie powinien mieć do mnie pretensji, bo to jest praca narzucona mi przez okoliczności mojego wygnania, do której być może nie nadaję się.
Dziennik I, 235.

Wenn dieses Tagebuch, das ich schon seit einigen Jahren führe, nicht auf dem Niveau ist - auf meinem, oder auf dem meiner Epoche -, sollte niemand mir einen Vorwurf daraus machen, denn das ist eine mir durch die Umstände meiner Emigration aufgezwungene Arbeit, zu der ich mich vielleicht nicht eigne.
Tagebuch I, 327.

This might well serve as an epitaph to many works of art and literature created in exile in this century. The cases of Joyce, Picasso, Brecht, Nabokov, and the American expatriates, for instance, immediately come to mind.

The diaries of Frisch and Gombrowicz occupy a central, independent position in the respective writers' oeuvres--their final common feature. Unlike many a traditional "writer's diary" which was kept tangentially to novels, dramas, or poems, Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries constitute the axis, the hidden center of their authors' creative output. Both Gombrowicz and Frisch experimented with the first-person technique and with highly autobiographical narrative forms before arriving at the literary diary as an independent art form, a medium of expression which met their particular needs and dispositions, a medium whose primal impulse is that of all literature: "the desire to share one's experience with others, and by means of this intimate communication to transcend the isolation of the self."³⁴

Two separate pronouncements by Gombrowicz and Frisch distill the striking congruence of their respective conceptions of literature. Reminiscing on the genesis of his Diary in a 1968 interview, Gombrowicz says:

I found myself in sharp conflict with all the post-war tendencies which condemned the word "I." This "I" was excommunicated by the Church as being immoral, it was frowned upon by Science as being in contradiction with objectivism, it was banned by Marxism and by every current of the time which wanted man to despise his selfish, egocentric, old-fashioned, anti-social "self." Severe admonishments came from all sides: you are nothing, forget yourself, live through others!³⁵

Accordingly, his Diary becomes the story of an "I" protesting the banishment of the self by the dominant currents of contemporary culture. The purpose of the Diary became:

To assert myself in this "I" in spite of everything, with the maximum insolence, with a certain stubborn nonchalance, in an unexaggerated, quite natural manner. . . . Starting, of course, with my own needs and my most personal imperatives. That is to say that I had to start by obtaining the right to speak.³⁶

To turn to Frisch, in a segment of his Tagebuch 1966-1971 marked "Interview-Antwort" (1967)--a segment deleted from the published, single-volume edition--Frisch offers the following programmatic formulation delimiting the "domain of literature":

Domäne der Literatur? Fast wage ich zu sagen: das Private. Was die Soziologie nicht erfasst, was die Biologie nicht erfasst: das Einzelwesen, das Ich, nicht mein Ich, aber ein Ich: die Person, die

diese Welt erfährt als Ich, die stirbt als Ich, die Person in allen ihren biologischen und gesellschaftlichen Bedingtheiten -- das ist es, was mir darstellenswert erscheint: die Person, die in der Statistik enthalten ist, aber darin nicht zur Sprache kommt und im Hinblick aufs Ganze irrelevant ist, aber zu leben hat mit dem Bewusstsein, dass sie irrelevant ist. Domäne der Literatur: alles was Menschen erleben, Geschlecht, Technik, Politik, aber im Gegensatz zur Wissenschaft bezogen auf das Wesen, das erlebt.³⁷

Thus, in terms and for reasons much like Gombrowicz's, Frisch likewise envisions as the proper concern of literature that element of nature neglected by science--the unique, particular, indeterminate, enigmatic substance known as the self. To probe this ultimately unfathomable entity, to give voice to its unrepeatability forms the common object of "private literature"--of the writings of Frisch and Gombrowicz. The diaries of these two writers represent the most direct manifestation and exposition of "private literature."

Notes

¹ Das literarische Tagebuch, Saarbrücken: West-Ost Verlag, 1955, p. 120 ff.

² Wilhelm Grenzmann, "Das Tagebuch als literarische Form," Wirkendes Wort, 9, No. 2 (1959), 86.

³ Klaus Günther Just, "Das Tagebuch als literarische Form," Übergänge: Probleme und Gestalten der Literatur (Bern: Francke, 1966), p. 35.

⁴ As far as the strategy of definition is concerned, it runs directly against the grain of literary studies to expect and act as if the kind of clear-cut definitions encountered in the natural sciences were possible or, indeed, desirable in the humanities and social sciences. The fact is there is a fundamental difference between the nature of concepts operative in the natural sciences and those of the humanities and social sciences. Basic to the former is an essentially bi-valued, Aristotelian logic by which a series of definitive attributes can be used to determine inclusion or exclusion of concrete, individual phenomena in general categories. The concepts in the humanities and social sciences, on the other hand, are determined according to a poly-valued, non-Aristotelian logic. Concepts in literary studies, like movement and genre, are ideal types. In Carl Hempel's words: "An ideal type . . . is a mental construct formed by the synthesis of many diffuse more or less present and occasionally absent, concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged, according to certain one-sidedly accentuated points of view, into a unified analytical construct, which in its conceptual purity cannot be found in reality; it is a utopia, a limiting concept, with which concrete phenomena can only be compared for the purpose of explicating some of their significant components." [Carl G. Hempel, Aspects of Scientific Explanation (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 156.] I am grateful to Professor James W. Marchand, University of Illinois, for his guidance in the area of concept formation.

⁵ For instance, Arno Schmidt considers the diary "das Alibi der Wirrköpfe; [das Tagebuch] ist einer der Abörter der Literatur!" In Das Tagebuch und der moderne Autor, ed. Uwe Schultz (Munich: Hanser, 1965), p. 116.

⁶ My point parallels that of Scholes and Kellogg who argue in The Nature of Narrative against a novel-centered view of literature. Cf. in particular, Chapter 1, "The Narrative Tradition," The Nature of Narrative (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 3-16.

⁷ Earl Miner, "Literary Diaries and the Boundaries of Literature," Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, No. 21 (1972), p. 47.

⁸ Miner, p. 48.

⁹ Miner, p. 48.

¹⁰ Miner, p. 47.

¹¹ Since the political and religious quarrels of the sixteenth century, these intermediary genres have occupied an exceptional position in Polish letters--a position analogous to that of the novel in Western European literatures. Beginning with the seventeenth-century sermons of Piotr Skarga and epitomized by the Baroque Memoirs of Jan Pasek, the milestones of this tradition include the writings of Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski, Stanisław Orzechowski, and, in the eighteenth century, by the works of Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz--especially his Travels in America. Also within this tradition and more or less concurrent with Gombrowicz's writing career are such works as Jerzy Stempowski's Meditations of an Unhurried Wanderer and his Diary of Travels through Austria and Germany, as well as Gustaw Herling-Grudziński's A World Apart and Diary Written by Night. Finally, Stanisław Jerzy Lec's Unkempt Thoughts and Czesław Miłosz's Native Realm and Captive Mind round off this tradition. Significantly, many of the works in this a-fictional, essayistic vein of Polish writing consist of loosely-structured narratives centered around a journey--much like considerable portions of Gombrowicz's Diary. (See Czesław Miłosz, The History of Polish Literature [London: Macmillan, 1969], esp. pp. 89-95, 145-48, and 437-40. See

also Catherine S. Leach's Introduction to her translation of Pasek's memoirs: Memoirs of the Polish Baroque [Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976], esp. pp. 1-lvii.)

¹² Raymond Polin, "Literature and Philosophy," The University of Buffalo Studies 23, No. 2 (September 1956), 99.

¹³ Polin, p. 81.

¹⁴ Jacques Ehrmann, for one, takes seriously Gombrowicz's claim--as set forth in the latter's facetious self-interview, "J'etais structuraliste avant tout le monde" (La Quinzaine Litteraire, 1 May 1967)--to have been a forerunner of Structuralism. See Ehrmann's Introduction to his anthology of essays, Structuralism (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970). See also Renato Barilli's essay, "Sartre et Camus juges dans le Journal" [Gombrowicz, Série Slave, No. 14, ed. Dominique de Roux and Constantin Jelenski (Paris: Editions de l'Herne, 1971), pp. 290-300]; Claude Jannoud's prefatory note to Gombrowicz's "Guide de la philosophie en six heures un quart" [Gombrowicz, Série Slave, No. 14 (Paris: Editions de l'Herne, 1971), pp. 390-91]; Jacques Volle's chapter on Gombrowicz's Diary in his monograph, Gombrowicz: Bourreau-Martyr (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1972, pp. 200-17). As for philosophical approaches to Frisch, see: Hans Jürgen Baden, Der Mensch als Partner. Das Menschenbild in den Romanen von Max Frisch (Wuppertal: Jugenddienst, 1966); Monika Wintsch-Spiess, Zum Problem der Identität im Werk Max Frischs (Zürich: Juris, 1965); Eduard Stäubli, Max Frisch, Gedankliche Grundzüge in seinen Werken (Basel: F. Reinhardt, 1967); W. G. Cuncliffe, "Existentialist Elements in Frisch's Works," Monatshefte, 62, No. 2 (1970), pp. 113-22.

¹⁵ Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1976.

¹⁶ Paris: Institut Litteraire, 1973.

¹⁷ "Dialog mit dem grausamen Partner," Das Tagebuch und der moderne Autor, ed. Uwe Schultz (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1965), p. 60.

¹⁸ Peter Boerner, "The Significance of the Diary in Modern Literature," Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, No. 21 (1972), p. 43.

- 19 Boerner, p. 43.
- 20 Boerner, p. 43.
- 21 Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, "Pan Samuel Pepys" in Drugie Przyjście (The Second Coming) (Paris: Institut Littéraire, 1963), p. 110.
- 22 Both characterizations are coined by Boerner in "The Significance of the Diary in Modern Literature," Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, No. 21 (1972), p. 43.
- 23 As Lynn Barstis argues in her dissertation, "The Modern Diary Novel: Heir to the Journal Intime" (Univ. of Illinois 1972).
- 24 Dallas M. High's formulation coined in the Introduction to his monograph, Language, Persons, and Belief (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 3, 8.
- 25 Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, Wittgenstein's Vienna (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), p. 118.
- 26 Wittgenstein's Vienna, p. 118.
- 27 Wittgenstein's Vienna, p. 118.
- 28 Wittgenstein's Vienna, p. 118.
- 29 "Ein Brief." Quoted from Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben, Prosa II (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1959), p. 11.
- 30 Boerner, "The Significance of the Diary in Modern Literature," p. 44.
- 31 Tagebuch 1946-1949, p. 7.
- 32 Tagebuch 1946-1949, p. 7.
- 33 "An den Leser," Tagebuch 1946-1949, p. 7.

34 Arthur Koestler, Arrow in the Blue (New York: Macmillan, 1952), pp. 23-24.

35 A Kind of Testament (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 112-13.

36 A Kind of Testament, p. 113.

37 Gesammelte Werke in zeitlicher Folge, 6 vols., ed. Hans Mayer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1976), p. 89.

CHAPTER I
GOMBROWICZ'S DIARY, MONTAIGNE'S ESSAIS,
AND THE LITERARY DIARY

The purpose of this chapter is not to measure influence in the strict sense but to outline the conspicuous correspondence of purpose and attitude as well as the distinct parallelism in the apprehension and treatment of several problems central to the literary diary as typified by Gombrowicz's and Frisch's diaries--a correspondence and parallelism that clearly links the two diaries with Montaigne's Essais.¹ I will concentrate in this chapter on Gombrowicz's relationship to Montaigne. (In Chapter III Frisch's relationship to Montaigne will be examined.) The Essais serve here as a mirror that helps to bring out several seminal features of the literary diary in general and Gombrowicz's Diary in particular.

I

Tous les genres sont bons, sauf les genres ennuyeux!
French aphorism

Les auteurs se communiquent au peuple par quelque marque particuliere et estrangere; moy, le premier, par mon estre universel, comme Michel de Montaigne, non comme grammairien, ou pöete, ou jurisconsulte. Si le monde se plaint de quoy je parle trop de moy, je me plains de quoy il ne pense seulement pas à soy.
Montaigne, Essais (II, 223)

Gombrowicz often invoked the names of Montaigne and Rabelais to suggest explicitly the specific tradition of classical European literature to which he considered himself a legitimate and direct heir. In his Diary he asserts quite simply: "I descend from Montaigne and Rabelais" ("wywodzę się z Montaigne'a i Rabelego").² The nature and extent of his affinity to Rabelais is suggested in a pronouncement in his Conversations with Dominique de Roux. Discussing contemporary literature and the nouveau roman, he asks rhetorically: "Where are the good old days when Rabelais wrote as a child might pee against a tree to relieve himself?"³ To the Polish writer, Rabelais represented the kind of writing that is unabashedly direct, vigorous, and visceral; a type of literature effected with ease and providing joy and satisfaction to the writer; a school of art reflecting lust for life in its depth and breadth. The creator of Gargantua and Pantagruel thus was a model to emulate if contemporary literature was to regain flesh and

blood. There is clearly something of Rabelais in the aggressive tone, the shameless style, and the broad thematic range of Gombrowicz's Diary--its author equally at home exploring the depths of low life, e.g., the character of the proletariat or the Retiro bohème, or surveying the heights of the spirit, e.g., the music of Bach and Beethoven. More precisely, Gombrowicz's self-acknowledged and oft-reiterated link to Rabelais consists of a common expropriation of what has been called the "extemporal style." This style involves the use of "the impulse to write as a way of discovering where [lies one's] subject matter."⁴ In other words, with "extemporalists" the act of writing precedes, as it were, the subject matter. Gombrowicz expresses such an approach to literary production in a "recipe" reflecting his own writing technique.

Wejść w sferę snu.

Po czym zacznij pisać pierwszą lepszą historię, jaka ci przyjdzie do głowy . . . pisz, nie licząc się z rzeczywistością, dążąc tylko do zaspokojenia potrzeb twojej wyobraźni.

Dziennik I, 104-5.

Trete in die Sphäre des Traums.

Danach fange an, die erste beste Geschichte zu schreiben, die dir in den Sinn kommt . . . schreibe, ohne mit der Wirklichkeit zu rechnen, nur nach Befriedigung der Bedürfnisse deiner Vorstellungskraft strebend.

Tagebuch I, 134-5.⁵

Reacting to the restrictive conventions governing the realistic novel of the nineteenth century, a host of twentieth-century writers, particularly those who have recently come to be called "the fabulators,"⁶ have exhibited in their narrative experiments a return to the unrestricted freedom of the extemporal vein.

A number of "extemporal" features distinguish Gombrowicz's diaristic style in particular, and that of the postwar literary diary in general. The extemporalist--Rabelais being the prototypical instance--"trusts to the moment: it will provide." In the literary diary the moment determines both structure and subject matter. Furthermore, as we read the extemporalist product, "the outlines of the writer's self start to emerge . . . his own private obsessions grow more and more blatant." The "extemporalist"--Rabelais again the example par excellence--is not "primarily interested in character or plot." He favors "large, loose, episodic structures: wars, quests, symposia." Travel, the metaphoric vehicle of the quest for identity in Gombrowicz's and Frisch's diaries effectively expropriates this facet of the "extemporal" style. In addition, the "symposium," understood as a collection of thoughts on a given theme, plays an especially significant role not only in Gombrowicz's Diary, but also in Frisch's Tagebuch. But the most important juncture of the

extemporal style with Gombrowicz's Diary comes in the fact that in the latter, in place of elaborate character development and tight plot structure, the writer gives free rein to all the voices inside him. Yet, despite such general links with Rabelaisian art, the Polish writer's debt to Montaigne is more substantial; his affinities to the author of the Essais are not just pervasive: they are definitive. It is Montaigne's Essais which delimit the particular literary matrix from which Gombrowicz's ethics and aesthetics ultimately emanate. It is Gombrowicz's affinity with Montaigne that clarifies, among other things, the Pole's oft-expressed fondness for the seventeenth-century Memoir of Jan Chryzostom Pasek as well as--a cognate matter--his sharp indictment of Polish literature and culture for its alleged historic neglect of the problems of the individual in favor of those of the collective. Moreover, Montaigne's Essais--as a prototype of the kind of non-biographic, essayistic autobiography pursued in Gombrowicz's and Frisch's diaries and, further, as an example of a highly pliable literary form where the author, in "essaying" a broad range of topics, ultimately defines himself--influence the Polish writer's views regarding the nature, purposes, and capacities of literary art; they also determine the essential character of his Diary. In short, Montaigne's Essais can be considered a spiritual progenitor of the Diary.

"Je suis moy-mesmes la matiere de mon livre,"⁷
 proclaims Montaigne in his note, "Au Lecteur," prefacing the
Essais; Gombrowicz makes essentially the same claim, though
 less prosaically, in his assertive opening of the Diary:

Poniedziałek	Ja
Wtorek	Ja
Środa	Ja
Czwartek	Ja <u>Dziennik</u> I, 11.
Montag	Ich
Dienstag	Ich
Mittwoch	Ich
Donnerstag	Ich <u>Tagebuch</u> I, 9.

Like Montaigne, Gombrowicz believed firmly in the conver-
 gence of life and literature, more precisely the convergence
 of the personal life of the writer and his works. In his
 works he attempted to directly convert the one into the
 other, to transform his private spiritual and experiential
 adventures, struggles, and obsessions into the subject mat-
 ter of art works with perennial appeal. Montaigne first

expressed this approach in the essay entitled, "Du repentir," where he writes: "Icy, nous allons conformément et tout d'un train, mon livre et moy. . . . qui touche l'un, touche l'autre" (II, 223-24). And in "Du dementir" he is even more emphatic, declaring: "Je n'ay pas plus faict mon livre que mon livre m'a faict, livre consubstantiel à son autheur, d'une occupation propre, membre de ma vie, non d'une occupation et fin tierce et estrangere comme tous autres livres" (II, 69). Gombrowicz takes this a step further and predicates such inseparability or "consubstantiality"⁸ of all literary works. Concerning "such and such an interpretation of his (an artist's) work and of his person" he maintains that "one thing entails the other."⁹ And this line of thought leads him to the view of literature as "a struggle for spiritual existence--equally as ruthless as every other struggle for existence."¹⁰ Thus, it was perhaps not so much a "hypertrophic ego"¹¹ that generated the numerous self-commentaries, the frequent self-analyses of his individual fate, his personal lot in life. Rather, the autobiographical impulse of the Diary, the Conversations with Dominique de Roux, as well as the autothematic strain of his novels stem from the conviction that self-discovery, self-orientation, self-definition, and, indeed, self-assertion, are the essential tasks of life and, therefore, of literature. The Polish

writer's numerous self-commentaries were simply part of a strategy in the struggle for autonomy and authenticity.

Besides the close parallelism in their views on the nature and function of literature there is, furthermore, a general correspondence in the basic technique and structure of the Essais and the Diary. Both Montaigne and Gombrowicz employ what may be called the extroverted approach in painting their self-portraits. In his essay "De l'institution des enfans" Montaigne thus adumbrates this approach: "Ce grande monde . . . c'est le miroüer où il nous faut regarder pour nous connoistre de bon biais" (I, 169). Hence, the Essais are oriented outwards, directed towards the world of man and nature. Their themes include ideas, customs, culture, opinions, events of history, and aspects of external nature. In essence, this objectivizing extroverted approach characterizes the diaries of Gombrowicz and Frisch and sharply distinguishes them from the characteristically introspective endeavors of traditional diarists.

Although the Essais are organized according to subject-matter rather than daily entry, Montaigne, nevertheless, formulated and applied in his own Essais the basic attitude to and treatment of time as we find it in the literary diary in general and in Gombrowicz's Diary in particular. This treatment derives from a world-view in which movement, mutation, flux, and metamorphosis occupy a decisive position.

Indeed, as Walter Kaiser points out,¹² the idea of motion informs one of the dominant images of the Essais where we find the following passage:

Le monde n'est qu'une branloire, perenne. Toutes choses y branlent sans cesse: la terre, les rochers du Caucase, les pyramides d'AEgypte, et du branle public et du leur. La constance mesme n'est autre chose qu'un branle plus languissant. Je ne puis assurer mon object.

II, 222.

The progression of ideas and opinions, that is, the dynamics of culture, and the march of events, that is, history, but reflect the movement of the physical world itself. Gombrowicz asserted simply that "existence is movement." To convey this idea in his Diary he compares existence to a river:

Egzystencja jest jak rzeka - ta, gdy natrafia na przeszkody, natychmiast zaczyna szukać innych dróg i przecieka, którędy się da, otwierając sobie nowe ujścia nieraz w kierunkach, które ani się jej śniły!

Dziennik II, 1972.

Die Existenz ist wie ein Fluss - dieser, wenn er auf Hindernisse stösst, beginnt sofort andere Wege zu suchen und fließt hindurch, wo es nur geht, sich neue Ausflüsse eröffnend, manchmal in Richtungen, die ihm nie geträumt haben!

Tagebuch II, 217.

Another diary entry acutely evokes the sensation of movement and metamorphosis in their various aspects, a specific river, the Paran, again connoting movement:

Czwartek

Geografia.

Gdzie jestem?

Szedłem po drodze eukaliptusowej, ostatni raz przed wyjazdem. Tam byłem, wobec tych drzew, w perspektywie alei, na tym miękkim gruncie, pośród rzeczy wyraźnych: drzewa, listek, grudka, patyk, kora.

Ale zarazem byłem w Południowej Ameryce--gdzie północ, zachód, południe, jak jestem umieszczony względem Chin, czy Alaski, w jakiej stronie biegun?

Zmierzch--i olbrzymie sklepienie pampy wyrzuca z siebie gwiazdy, jedną po drugiej, roje ich ukazują się wydobyte nocą--a świat namacalny drzew, ziemi, liści, ten jedynie przyjazny i wiarogodny, rozplątał się w jakimś nie . . . niewidzeniu, nieistnieniu . . . zatarł się. Mimo to idę, brnę i brnę, ale już nie drogą, tylko w kosmosie, zawieszony w astronomicznej przestrzeni. Czyż glob ziemski, sam zawieszony, może zapewnić grunt pod nogami? Znalazłem się w bezdennej otchłani, w łonie wszechświata i, co najgorsze, nie było to złudzenie, tylko właśnie najprawdziwsza z prawd. Więc można by oszaleć, gdyby się nie było przyzwyczajonym . . .

Piszę w pociągu, który uwozi mnie do Buenos Aires--na północ. Paran, to olbrzymia rzeka którą popłynę.

Jestem spokojny, siedzę, patrzę przez okno, przyglądam się kobiecie, która siedzi na przeciwko i ma ręce drobne, piegowate. A zarazem jestem tam, w łonie wszechświata. Wszystkie sprzeczności dają sobie we mnie rendez-vous--spokój i szacunek, trzeźwość i pijaństwo, prawda i blaga, wielkość i małość--ale czuję że znów na szyi kładzie mi się dłoń żelazna, która powoli, tak, bardzo nieznacznie . . . ale się zaciska.

Dziennik I, 258.

Donnerstag

Geographie.

Wo bin ich?

Ich ging auf dem Eukalyptusweg auf und ab, das letztmal vor meiner Abreise. Dort war ich, angesichts dieser Bäume, in der Perspektive der Allee, auf diesem staubfeinen Boden, inmitten deutlicher Dinge: Bäume, ein Blättchen, ein Krümlein, ein Stöckchen, Rinde. Aber zugleich war ich in Südamerika - wo ist Norden, Westen, Süden, wie bin ich plaziert hinsichtlich Chinas oder Alaskas, in welcher Richtung ist der Pol?

Dämmerung - und die riesige Wölbung der Pampa wirft Sterne aus sich heraus, einen nach dem anderen, ihre Schwärme zeigen sich, von der Nacht hervorgeholt - und die greifbare Welt der Bäume, der Erde, der Blätter, diese einzige freundschaftliche und glaubhafte, zerfloss in irgendein Nicht . . . Nichtsehen, Nichtdasein . . . verwischte sich. Trotzdem gehe ich, wate und wate, aber schon nicht mehr auf dem Wege, sondern in einem in astronomischer Weite aufgehängten Kosmos. Ob die Erdkugel, selber aufgehängt den Grund unter den Füßen zu sichern vermag? Ich fand mich in einem bodenlosen Abgrund, im Schosse des Weltalls, und, was das Schlimmste ist, es war dies keine Täuschung, sondern eben die wirklichste der Wahrheiten. Also könnte man wahnsinnig werden, wenn man nicht gewohnt wäre . . .

Ich schreibe im Zuge, der mich nach Buenos Aires entführt - nach Norden. Der Paraná, das ist ein riesiger Strom, auf dem ich dahinschwimmen werde.

Ich bin ruhig, ich sitze, schaue durch das Fenster, sehe einer Frau zu, die gegenüber dasitzt und kleine, sommersprossige Hände hat. Und gleichzeitig bin ich dort, im Schosse des Weltalls. Alle Gegensätzlichkeiten geben sich in mir ein Rendezvous - Friede und Raserei, Nüchternheit und Rausch, Wahrheit und Aufschneiderei, Grösse und Kleinheit - aber ich fühle, dass sich mir wieder eine eiserne Hand um den Hals legt, die sich allmählich, ja, ganz unmerklich . . . aber sicher zudrückt.

Tagebuch I, 358.

In the extended entry that immediately follows, entitled "Diario Rio Paraná," a boat excursion up the Paraná serves to depict the presence of movement (the progress of the boat) even within the most routinely uneventful everyday milieu (life aboard the boat).¹³ As for the world of culture, Gombrowicz observes that "today's world differs from the old in that it is ever more on the move."¹⁴ The increased rate of change in the contemporary world, as books such as Alvin Toffler's Future Shock have pointed out, demands continual re-appraisal and re-examination of the individual's relationship to newly arising cultural and material developments. The literary diary provides an especially well-suited medium for such re-appraisals; at the same time its characteristic structure of daily entries conveys a distinct impression of the flow of time and the flux of life. These qualities account in part for its prominence among postwar continental writers.

II

It is also in the Essais that we find a delineation of one of the characteristic qualities of mind shared by those attracted to such forms as the essay and, by extension, the literary diary. "Si mon ame pouvoit prendre pied," writes Montaigne in "Du repentir," "je ne m'essaierois pas, je me resoudrois; elle est tousjours en apprentissage et en

espreuve" (II, 222). A pervasive skepticism is then one of the characteristic features of the mentality of the essayist. This scepticism preserved in the motto, "Que sais je?", goes hand in hand with the *raison d'etre* of the essay genre as developed by Montaigne.

The term "essai," as Montaigne understood it, meant "try-out" or "attempt," a connotation preserved in the English verb: "to assay." This connotation is faithfully preserved in the German and Polish equivalents for the title of Montaigne's classic: "Versuche" and "Próby" ("Probes"), respectively. The "essay," then, can be said to signify an experiment in perception grounded in personal experience generating the expression of a judgment--in other words, a "self try-out." The judgment or perspective expressed essayistically is necessarily tentative, exploratory, and contingent, always holding out the possibility of subsequent modification, expansion, or shift in position. So conceived, the essay becomes an appropriate vehicle for the expression of the frame of mind of the sceptic. It is, moreover, my contention that the daily entry of Gombrowicz's and Frisch's diaries consistently acquires the force of an essay. Gombrowicz's and Frisch's diaries are, in effect, "essay diaries." The daily entries of these diaries typify the category of the Montaignesque informal essay as distinguished from the formal or "Greek" variety.¹⁵ In short, the daily entry of

Gombrowicz's and Frisch's diaries is essentially a daily essay. Hence, it often becomes a vehicle for the dramatization of a scene or the evocation of a setting, the transmission of dialogue or interior monologue, the expression of mood or thought.

If scepticism marks the mentality of the essayist Montaigne, the approach of Gombrowicz is even more radical, for the Polish diarist, much like his Swiss-German counterpart, aims scepticism at the issue of personal identity itself. Gombrowicz maintains, "I don't know who I really am. . . . I know what I am not."¹⁶ He is to himself like Robert Musil's character: a "man without qualities." In "De Democritus et Heraclitus," Montaigne sketches the characteristic manner of apprehending the world shared by the essayist/diarist and suggests the way in which this is reflected in the technique and form of the literary diary:

Je prends de la fortune le premier argument. Ils me sont également bons. Et ne desseigne jamais de les produire entiers. Car je ne voy le tout de rien. Ne font pas, ceux qui promettent de nous le faire veoir. De cent membres et visages qu'a chaque chose, j'en prends un tantost à lecher seulement, tantost à effleurer, et par fois à pincer jusqu'à l'os. J'y donne une pointe, non pas le plus largement, mais le plus profondement que je sçay. Et aime plus souvent à les saisir par quelque lustre inusité. Je me hazarderoy de traiter à fons quelque matière, si je me connoissoy moins. Semant icy un mot, icy un autre, eschantillons despris de leur piece, escartez, sans dessein et sans promesse, je ne suis pas tenu d'en faire bon, ny de m'y tenir moy mesme, sans varier quand il me plaist; et me rendre au doubte et incertitude, et à ma maistresse forme, qui est l'ignorance.

Essais I, 334-5.

This fragmentary apprehension of and approach to the world which in the context of the twentieth century seems to be objectivized by the sociopolitical dissonance and disorder of the external world is reflected in Gombrowicz's complaint:

Gdybym mógł przez sekundę bodaj sprostać całości. Ciągłe żyć tylko fragmentami--ułamkami? Skupiać się zawsze na jednej rzeczy, aby wymknęły się wszystkie pozostałe?
Dziennik II, 166.

Wenn ich doch nur eine Sekunde lang dem Ganzen gerecht werden könnte. Immer nur mit Fragmenten--mit Bruchteilen? Sich immer auf eine einzige Sache konzentrieren, damit mir alle übrigen entwischen?

Tagebuch II, 209.

This sentiment is graphically reproduced in the unusual structure of the diary segment in which it is expressed.

This segment is subdivided into "particles," that is, fragments of the day marked by time of day. The passage is organized according to subentries varying in length from several lines to several paragraphs, as follows:

SATURDAY: 10 A.M. (in Cafe-Querandi);
 10:45 A.M. (at home); 11:30 A.M.;
 Noon (at the Ambassador's);
 5 P.M. (in the attache's car);
 6 P.M. (at home); 6:30 P.M.;
 8 P.M. (at the corner of Las Heras),
 8:15 P.M. (in the streetcar);
 8:30 P.M. (in Sorrento Restaurant);
 8:40 P.M. (in Sorrento Restaurant);
 9:00 P.M. (on Corrientes Street),
 9:10 P.M. (Corrientes Street);
 9:15 P.M. (Corrientes);
 9:20 P.M. (In a bar at the corner of Lavalle and
 San Martin);
 12:10 A.M. (on the way home);
 12:20 A.M.; 12:30 A.M.; 12:50 A.M. (at home).

Thus, Gombrowicz illustrates Frisch's contention: "Wir leben auf einem laufenden Bahn" (Tagebuch I, 22).

The fragmented, rapidly changing representation of the external world which seems to be one of the central features of modern art might be attributable to, among other things, the experience of travel in significantly faster means of modern transportation. The possibility of such a correlation is particularly strong with regard to the post-war literary diary for a chief genetic circumstance of many of these works is the condition of travel. Frisch's and Gombrowicz's literary diaries arose to a large extent under the impact of travel or frequently changed living locale.

Moreover, the "journey" serves here as in works of fiction like Gulliver's Travels, Moby Dick, or Heart of Darkness as metaphor or setting for spiritual or psychological experience.¹⁷

Montaigne's question, "Que sais-je?" displays an eminently epistemological concern. Montaigne does not merely say, "I doubt." He seeks after not only the content of knowledge but the manner of acquiring it. His answer to the question after the sources of and paths toward truth is classically subjectivist: "Others look before them; I look within," he says. And he claims: "I myself am the groundwork of my book." He rejects reason as a reliable path to knowledge in favor of personal experience which he explores by means of essays. The direct analogue in Frisch and Gombrowicz to Montaigne's epistemological scepticism is the two diarists' common concern with the problem of expression. This concern manifests itself in the expropriation of parody as a structural and stylistic device in Gombrowicz's Diary (the subject of Chapter II); similarly, it is reflected in the concern with the inadequacy of language in Frisch's Tagebuch (the topic of Chapter IV).

III

An important link between Montaigne and Gombrowicz is their common inclination toward the use of "minatory imagery,"¹⁸

an inclination which betrays a broadly similar attitude toward the ultimate function of art. In his essay, "De la solitude," for instance, Montaigne writes:

despetrons nous de ces violentes
 prises qui nous engagent ailleurs et es-
 loignent de nous. Il faut desnoïer ces
 obligations si fortes, et meshuy aymer
 cecy et cela, mais n'espouser rien que
 soy. C'est à dire: le reste soit à
 nous, mais non pas joint et colé en façon
 qu'on ne le puisse desprendre sans nous
 escorcher et arracher ensemble quelque
 piece du nostre. La plus grande chose du
 monde, c'est de sçavoir estre à soy.
 I, 272-73.

In the same essay Montaigne writes:

Nous emportons nos fers quand et nous
 I, 270.

and

il se faut escarter des conditions popu-
 laires qui sont en nous, il se faut se-
 questrer et r'avoir de soy.
 I, 269-70.

For his part Gombrowicz proposes:

W moich utworach ukazałem człowieka rozpiętego na prokrustowym łożu formy.

Dziennik I, 123.

In meinen Werken habe ich den auf dem Prokrustesbett der Form ausgespannten Menschen gezeigt.

Tagebuch I, 159.

For him:

Ludzkość jest tak zrobiona, że wciąż musi siebie określać i wciąż uchylać się własnym definicjom. Rzeczywistość nie jest czymś, co dałoby się bez reszty zamknąć w formie. Forma nie jest zgodna z istotą życia. Lecz wszelka myśl, która by pragnęła określić tę niedostateczność formy, też staje się formą i przeto potwierdza jedynie nasze dążenie do formy.

Dziennik I, 122.

Die Menschheit ist so beschaffen, dass sie sich selber immer umreißen und sich immer den eigenen Definitionen entziehen muss. Die Wirklichkeit ist nicht etwas, das sich restlos in eine Form einschliessen liesse. Die Form ist nicht übereinstimmend mit dem Wesen des Lebens. Doch jeder Gedanke, der diese Unzulänglichkeit der Form umreißen möchte wird ebenfalls zur Form und bestätigt dadurch einzig unser Streben nach Form.

Tagebuch I, 158-9.

The impression with both writers is that of man imprisoned, man enchained even when alone. In both cases the crucial task facing man is to escape his prison, to free himself-- which also involves freeing himself from himself. "Si c'estoit à moy à me dresser à ma mode," writes Montaigne,

"il n'est aucune si bonne facon aù je vouleusie estre fiché pour ne m'en sçavoir desprendre" (II, 238). Montaigne and Gombrowicz clearly express what Lionel Trilling calls "the primary function of art," namely, "to liberate the individual from the tyranny of his culture . . . and to permit him to stand beyond it in an autonomy of perception and judgment."¹⁹ As Montaigne put it, "Entre les arts liberaux, commençons par l'art qui nous faict libres" (I, 171). Thus, self-emancipation from the "tyranny of Form" or, to use Frisch's formula, from the distortions accruing from adherence to the "image" ("Bild") contributes to the allegorical significance of the literary diary.

IV

In his various attempts to explain the purpose and method of the Essais, Montaigne often compares his undertaking to a painted and, less often, sculpted self-portrait. In doing so, he raises the question of the relationship and comparability of literature, painting, and sculpture in general. The phenomenon of self-portraiture may, indeed, serve as a touchstone for comparing, contrasting, and differentiating these various art modes, for isolating their essential features, for pointing out their relative strengths and weaknesses. It should be noted at the outset, however,

that, for all the differences in methods and materials, the basic motive for self-portraiture in painting as well as literature remains the same: through self-representation, the artist aims at self-definition.

The subject matter of the self-portrait is, of course, the artist himself. Yet, one of the essential features of the self is its mutation. In "Du repentir," Montaigne delineates the interrelationship of time and self, that is, the mutation of the self in time, and describes how this relationship affects his undertaking. He writes:

Les autres forment l'homme; je le recite et en represente un particulier bien mal formé, et lequel, si j'avoy a façonner de nouveau, je ferois vraiment bien autre qu'il n'est. Mes-huy c'est fait. Or les traits de ma peinture ne forvoyent point, quoy qu'ils se changent et diversifient. . . . La constance mesme n'est autre chose qu'un branle plus languissant. Je ne puis asseurer mon object. Il va trouble et chancelant, d'une yvresse naturelle. Je le prens en ce point, comme il est, en l'instant que je m'amuse à luy. Je ne peints pas l'estre. Je peints le passage: non un passage d'aage en autre, ou, comme dict le peuple, de sept en sept ans, mais de jour en jour, de minute en minute.

II, 222.

It is important to note here the sharp contrast set up in the opening words of this essay: "Les autres forment l'homme; je le recite." In distinguishing between "forment" and "recite," Montaigne makes a point of differentiating his procedure from that of the other arts

and of other writers. John Florio, the first English translator to wrestle with Montaigne's diction, transposed "je le recite" with "I repeat him"; Donald Frame renders the same phrase as "I describe him"; a gloss in the Garnier edition approximates "recite" with "raconte, decris." (In the same essay, we find: "Je n'enseigne point, je raconte.") According to Walter Kaiser, a more literal but precise rendition of these famous words would read: "Others form man, I tell of him." Despite the diverse translations, the direction of Montaigne's sentence is clear. "To form" or, as other English translator's propose, "to shape," suggests immovability and immutability. "Recite," on the other hand-- stressing, as it does, the linguistic nature of the undertaking--evokes closeness to nature; it also connotes the kind of flexibility that permits the stalking of a continually changing subject. "I recite him," is, therefore, the only proper translation.

Since the self is always "on the move," constantly changing, it is, in effect, inexhaustible as a subject for art and literature. For this reason, in literature a genre such as the diary, because of its open form seems particularly well-suited to capture the mutability and resulting multifariousness of the self and thus to do justice to its apparent thematic inexhaustibility. Echoing at times the contrasts between literature and sculpture set forth in

Lessing's Laokoon, Gombrowicz presents in his Diary an explicit summation of the contrasts between literature and painting that are implicit in the various similes and metaphors connecting painting and literary self-portraiture used by Montaigne to define his undertaking in the Essais. Significantly, the summation is presented in the form of a dialogue, a quintessentially literary vehicle not available to the painter. Furthermore, dialogue graphically evokes one of the chief differences separating literature from painting, namely, the capacity to capture and create the effect of motion. Coming upon a group of young bohemian painters in the vicinity of Quequeno, the diary-narrator greets them with the taunting assertion:

Nie wierzę w malarstwo (no credo en la pintura)!
Odpowiedzieli wybuchem śmiechu.

Dziennik II, 56.

Ich glaube nicht an die Malerei (no credo en la pintura)!

Sie antworteten mit einer herausplatzenden Lache.

Tagebuch II, 66.

The narrator accuses painters of 'paralyzing' nature by neglecting motion:

Chcę powiedzieć, ni mniej ni więcej, że pędzel wasz nie jest w stanie oddać aspektu plastycznego świata. Gdyż świat, to forma w ruchu. Nawet gdy kształt jest nieruchomy, światło,

powietrze, się zmienia. A wy na płótnach
 waszych skazujecie naturę na paraliż
 odbierając kształtowi jego życie: ruch.
Dziennik II, 56-57.

Ich will nichts mehr noch weniger sagen, als
 dass euer Pinsel nicht imstande ist, einen
 plastischen Aspekt der Welt wiederzugeben.
 Denn die Welt, das ist eine Form in Bewegung.
 Sogar wenn die Gestalt unbeweglich ist, so
 ändert sich das Licht, die Luft. Und ihr
 verteilt auf eueren Leinwänden die Natur zur
 Paralyse, indem ihr der Gestalt ihr Leben
 nehmt: die Bewegung.

Tagebuch II, 67.

The narrator furthermore mocks the relative "poverty" of
 the means of expression at the painter's disposal:

Żadna sztuka nie jest tak uboga w środki
 wyrazu--prócz może rzeźby.
Dziennik II, 57.

Keine Kunst ist derart dürftig in
 Ausdrucksmitteln--ausser vielleicht
 der Bildhauerei.

Tagebuch II, 68.

Stressing that his concern is "real" motion, not its mere
 suggestion, the narrator points out that the quality of
 motion is inherent in the word, the material of the lit-
 erary artist. Thus, if the paramount aim of art is to
 capture life (which is "movement"), language--and therefore
 literature--has an innate advantage over the plastic arts.
 Gombrowicz, the writer, asks his opponents to compare line
 and color with the expressive power of the word. He writes:

Porównajcie pod tym względem barwę i linię ze słowem. Słowo rozwija się w czasie, to jak pochod mrówek, a każda przynosi coś nowego, nieoczekiwanego, ten kto wyraża się słowem co chwila odradza się na nowo, zaledwie skończyło się jedno zdanie już następne je uzupełnia, dopowiada, i oto ruchem słów wyraża się gra nieustanna mojego istnienia--wyrażając się słowem jestem jak drzewo na wietrze, szumiące, drgające.

Dziennik II, 57-58.

Vergleicht in dieser Hinsicht Farbe und Linie mit dem Wort. Das Wort entwickelt sich in der Zeit, das ist wie eine Prozesion von Ameisen, - jede bringt etwas Neues, Unerwartetes, - derjenige, der sich durch das Wort zum Ausdruck bringt, gebiert sich jeden Augenblick aufs neue, - kaum ist ein Satz zu Ende, schon ergänzt ihn der nächste, sagt zu Ende aus, und so, in der Bewegung der Worte kommt das unaufhörliche Spiel meines Daseins zum Ausdruck, - indem ich mich durch das Wort ausdrücke, bin ich wie ein Baum im Winde, ein rauschender, zitternder.

Tagebuch II, 69.

Concerning painted as compared with literary self-portraits, the narrator--betraying Gombrowicz's distinctively personalist aesthetic--claims:

Jakież to naciągane--twierdzić, że van Gogh czy Cézanne przekazali na płótnach swą indywidualność! Malować jabłka trochę odmienne od naturalnych--i tymi jabłkami chcieć rywalizować z lotnym stawianiem się poezji, muzyki . . . Człowiek wyrażony jabłkiem! Nieruchomym jabłkiem! Gdyby mnie, literatowi i poecie, powiedziano, że mam siebie wypowiedzieć jabłkiem, siadłbym i płakał w upokorzeniu. Ale cóż--gdy mówimy o sztuce i jej mistrzach, nawiedza nas pewna pobłażliwość . . . i

sympatia, czy nawet uwielbienie, sprawiają, że skłonni jesteśmy patrzeć przez palce na wiele drobnych i mniej drobnych nieścisłości, byle tylko nie popsuć parady . . . tak tedy gotowi jesteśmy przysięgać, że to jabłka, lub słoneczniki, wprowadziły nas w Cézanne'a czy van Gogha, a zapominamy, że jeśli oni stali się naszymi bliskimi znajomymi, to dlatego, iż biografie uzupełniły olbrzymią lukę, pozostawioną przez słoneczniki i jabłka. Gdyby słowo nie przekazało nam ich życia, nie na wiele przydałyby się nam ich autoportrety.

Dziennik II, 58.

Wie ist das gesucht und an den Haaren herbeigezogen - zu behaupten, van Gogh oder Cézanne hatten ihre Individualität auf Bildern übermittelt! Äpfel, ein wenig andere als natürliche zu malen - und mit diesen Äpfeln wetteifern zu wollen mit dem beflügelten Entstehen der Poesie, der Musik . . . Ein Mensch, ausgedrückt durch einen Apfel! Einen bewegungslosen Apfel! Wenn man mir, einem Literaten und Poeten sagen würde, ich solle mich durch einen Apfel zum Ausdruck bringen - ich würde mich hinsetzen und in Demütigung weinen. Doch was - wenn wir von der Kunst und ihren Meistern sprechen, überkommt uns eine gewisse Nachsicht . . . und Sympathie, oder gar Verehrung, und verursachen, dass wir geneigt sind, durch die Finger zu sehen auf viele kleinere oder grössere Ungenauigkeiten, um nur die Parade nicht zu stören . . . so sind wir denn bereit zu schwören, dass es Äpfel oder Sonnenblumen sind, die uns in Cézanne oder van Gogh eingeführt haben, und vergessen, dass wenn sie zu unseren nahen Bekannten geworden sind, so darum, dass die Biographen eine riesige Lücke ergänzt haben, welche die Sonnenblumen und Äpfel belassen hatten. Hatte nicht das Wort uns ihr Leben überliefert, wurden uns ihre Selbstporträts wenig nutzen.

Tagebuch II, 69-70.

In many of the passages in which he draws a comparison with painting, Montaigne alleges--besides self-contradiction

["je me contredits bien à l'aventure" (II, 222)]--the supposed "artlessness" of his endeavor; he describes it as a product of "chance" and associates "artlessness" with nonidealization, that is, the representation of oneself without suppression of what may be taken as negative features. He writes, for instance:

Considerant la conduite de la besongne d'un peintre que j'ay, il m'a pris envie de l'ensuivre. Il choisit le plus bel endroit et milieu de chaque paroy, pour y loger un tableau élaboré de toute sa suffisance; et, le vuide tout au tour, il le remplit de crottesques, qui sont peintures fantasques, n'ayant grâce qu'en la varieté et estrangeté. Que sont-ce icy aussi, à la verité, que crottesques et corps monstrueux, rappiechez de divers membres, sans certaine figure, n'ayants ordre, suite ny proportion que fortuite?

Je vay bien jusques à ce second point avec mon peintre, mais je demeure court en l'autre et meilleure partie; car ma suffisance ne va pas si avant que d'oser entreprendre un tableau riche, poly et formé selon l'art.

(I, 197-8)

Quoy qu'il en soit, veux-je dire, et quelles que soyent ces inepties, je n'ay pas deliberé de les cacher, non plus qu'un mien pourtraict chauve et grisonnant, où le peintre autroit mis non un visage parfait, mais le mien. Car aussi ce sont icy mes humeurs et opinions, je les donne pour ce qui est en ma creance, non pour ce qui est à croire. Je ne vise icy qu'à découvrir moy mesmes, qui seray par adventure autre demain, si nouveau apprentissage me change. Je n'ay point l'autorité d'estre creu, ny ne le desire, me sentant trop mal instruit pour instruire autruy.

(I, 158)

In his prefatory note to the first volume of his Diary and many times in the text itself, Gombrowicz too alleges the "artlessness" of his product and admits the possibility of self-contradiction. He writes:

Dziennik ten to pisanina dość bezładna, z miesiąca na miesiąc--zapewne nie raz się powtarzam, nie raz sobie zaprzeczam. Uładzić to? Oczyszczyć? Wolę aby nie było zanadto wylizane.

Dziennik I, 7.

This diary represents a quite disorderly scribbling, performed month to month--surely I repeat myself more than once, and more than once contradict myself. Shall I polish this? Clean it up? I prefer that this not become too shiny.

Dziennik I, 7.

Artlessness in self-portraiture derives, of course, from the need of the artist-subject for avoiding self-delusion, from the desire for maximum verisimilitude, in order to achieve utmost authenticity. This requires vigilance over the tendency toward affectation, posturing, and posing. In the case of the Essais, "artlessness" applies to the style and level of language; to the internal structure of each essay, its organization and the progress of ideas within it; and to the composition of the Essais as a whole. As Walter Kaiser observes, "the colloquial style in which the essays are written--a casual style which intensifies our experience of the meandering course of Montaigne's thought--is as deliberate as the lack of formal, logical

order in the arrangement of ideas."²⁰ The Essais are written in "the language of the Paris marketplace, a formless and abrupt speech, a popular gibberish, and proceeding without definition, without partition, and sans conclusion";²¹ they are composed in the same language the author spoke, "without affection, without polish, making no attempt to avoid slang or gross terms."²² Yet, a concerted effort at avoiding affectation often ends up, ironically, as a different kind of affectation. Indeed, a calculated, concerted artlessness can lead to artfulness. Montaigne testifies to this paradox when he writes of his own attempt at self-portraiture:

Moulaut sur moy cette figure, il m'a fallu si souvent dresser et composer pour m'extraire, que le patron s'en est fermé et aucurrement formé soy-mesmes. Me peignant pour autruy, je me suis peint en moy de couleurs plus nettes que n'estoyent les miennes premieres.

(II, 69)

In their approach to the problem of verisimilitude in self-portraiture and in autobiography in general, Gombrowicz and Frisch go beyond Montaigne's understanding and handling of this problem. For one thing, they partake of a more complex view of the nature and workings of literary language. They accept, it seems, the inherent distortive effect of language. They are acutely conscious of the fact

that all representations of the world couched in language--because they impose form upon an innately amorphous, entropic reality, thus endowing it with shape--become, in effect, fictive constructs and hence are both artificial and artful. [It is on Frisch's and Gombrowicz's attitudes toward the problem of expression that I will focus in the analyses of the diaries themselves (Chapters II and IV)]. It is upon such assumptions regarding the workings of language that the "artfulness" of, for instance, the reportage, the basic narrative unit of Frisch's Tagebuch, is founded as well as, it might be noted, the "artfulness" of such a related genre as the nonfiction novel á la Capote and Mailer. Another major divergence between Montaigne's approach to self-portraiture and that of Gombrowicz and Frisch lies in differing conceptions of personal identity. The Essais are built upon the presupposition of the existence and discoverability of a primal core of identity. Although he expresses a distinct sensitivity to the pitfalls of affectation and the corrosive pressure on the self of convention and social role-playing, the author of the Essais clearly assumed the autonomous existence of a unique "I," an "I" that he could little by little reveal to himself and to others. In contrast, Gombrowicz and Frisch, like many twentieth-century writers, have come to doubt the very existence of an indigenous core of identity,

of a unique "I." The sources of this doubt lie in the specific conditions of twentieth-century life and the peculiar experiences of twentieth-century man.

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The guiding contention of this chapter has been the proposition of both a genetic and generic link between Montaigne's essayistic art and the diaristic art of Frisch and Gombrowicz. Montaigne's Essais are viewed here as prototypical in a structural and a thematic sense; they provide the classic precedent of the essay form as perfected in the hands of the sixteenth-century French writer. They represent, furthermore, the classic instance of a work of literature that is consubstantial with its author--in which, in other words, the writer and his central theme are one.

That Montaigne's Essais should exert such a definitive impact upon diaristic art is no accident, for Montaigne's essayistic art itself developed under the direct influence of a diary. In 1580-1 for reasons of health, Montaigne undertook the longest journey of his life, a trip to the baths of Lucca via Germany and Switzerland. In conjunction with this trip he kept a diary which was published almost two centuries after his death under the title, Journal du voyage de Michel de Montaigne en Italie, par la Suisse et

l'Allemagne en 1580 et 1581 (1774). Many of the experiences, episodes, and daily details recorded in the diary were taken over into the Essais. Moreover, the trip and the experience of keeping a travel diary substantially affected both Montaigne's style of composition and his thought as manifested in the Essais. The experience of writing away from his extensive library--that is, without access to copies of the ancient classics he was so fond of quoting especially in Books I and II of the Essais--forced him to devote more effort and space to the expression of personal impressions, observations, and reflections in Book III.²³ The substantial reduction in quotations is directly attributable to the circumstances involved in writing while traveling. Furthermore, the impetus toward direct self-expression intrinsic to the diary form is reflected in the increased instances of explicit self-portraiture evident in Book III.²⁴ The experience of travel fortified a number of intellectual and psychological features intrinsic to Montaigne's basic orientation, including his skepticism and relativism, his tolerance for intellectual and social diversity, his faith in experience, and, above all, his innate subjectivism. Dédéyan summarizes the impact of the voyage on Montaigne and the Essais as follows:

Le voyage a donc cette conséquence en apparence paradoxale de le faire, une fois sorti de lui-même, rentrer en lui-même, en lui montrant que le monde ne peut fournir à notre expérience que des renseignements négatifs et en lui prouvant l'absence qu'il soupçonnait déjà d'une vérité unique. Le profit accessoire qu'il a pu tirer de ses pérégrinations, il l'a éparpillé tout au long des Essais.²⁵

Besides its impact upon the Essais, Montaigne's diary, it should be noted, has an intrinsic significance. The concerted effort at faithful expression of detailed observations anticipates the technique of the modern travel reportage,²⁶ a sub-genre that forms the point of departure for an important aspect of Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaristic art.

Notes

¹ In his essay, "Gombrowicz" (Odra, 12, 1 (131) (Jan. 1972), 41-54), Krzysztof Wolicki establishes an affinity between Gombrowicz and Montaigne on the basis of a common radical individualism. In contrast to the present study, Wolicki centers his attention on Gombrowicz's novels.

² Dziennik (Paris: Institut Litteraire, 1971), I, p. 49. All further references to the Dziennik appear in the text.

³ A Kind of Testament (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1973), p. 140.

⁴ Gabriel Josipovici, "A Modern Master," New York Review of Books, 13 October 1977), pp. 34-35. All references concerning the "extemporal style" (in this and the immediately following paragraph) come from this article, pp. 34-35.

⁵ With similar terms, Max Frisch draws a parallel between the dream experience and literary art, thus providing a psychological rationale for Gombrowicz's "recipe." Frisch writes:

Unser Bewusstsein als das brechende
Prisma, das unser Leben in ein Nacheinander
zerlegt, und der Traum als die andere Linse,
die es wieder in sein Urganzes sammelt; der
Traum und die Dichtung, die ihm in diesem
Sinne nachzukommen sucht--
Tagebuch 1946-1949, p. 23.

⁶ Robert Scholes, The Fabulators (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967).

⁷ Essais, ed. Maurice Rat. 2 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 1962), I, 1. All subsequent references are to this edition and are given in the text.

⁸ In his essay, "Gombrowicz," Krzysztof Wolicki defines the basic shared feature of Montaigne's and Gombrowicz's narrative styles in terms of "consubstantiality." In both cases, he observes, the narrator converges with the "one who is narrated." Wolicki writes:

Obaj zawsze opowiadają siebie; w tej dwoistej roli, opowiadanego i opowiadającego, są na kartach swych książek nieprzerwanie obecni; wewnętrzne zaś tej dwoistości napięcie stanowi o głównej opozycji stylowej dzieła.

(Odra, p. 41 [see Note 1, p. 56])

Both always relate themselves; in this dual role--of the one narrated and narrator--they are uninterruptedly present on the pages of their books; the internal tension of this duality, on the other hand, determines the chief stylistic opposition of their works.

⁹ A Kind of Testament, p. 113.

¹⁰ In an interview with Karol Świerczewski published in Kultura, Nr. 358-59 (July- August 1977), p. 63.

¹¹ The term is Maurice Nadeau's from his Introduction to A Kind of Testament, p. 10.

¹² In his Introduction to Selected Essays of Montaigne, trans. John Florio, ed. Walter Kaiser (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1964), p. xxii.

¹³ The "boat" is a favorite choreographic and metaphoric device with Gombrowicz. Its more prominent uses occur again in the Diary III (pp. 75-90), that is, in the opening segments of the portion of the Diary separately published under the title, Journal Paris-Berlin and Berliner Notizen, in the story Zdarzenia na Brygu Banbury (Incidents on the Brig Banbury) (Dzieła Zebrane, vol. 9), and in the pre-war sketch, "Jak po maśle" (Dzieła Zebrane, vol. 10).

¹⁴ A Kind of Testament, p. 61.

¹⁵ In Rhetoric in a Modern Mode (Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1967), Bell and Cohn thus describe the essay:

In its highest and best sense, as a form of serious art, the essay is subtle, powerful, infinitely variable--a kind of poetic fiction. . . . The essay as poetic fiction . . . discovers, portrays, and communicates the deepest intellectual, emotional, and spiritual meanings of human experiences. Thus it can be--is--an art. (p. 126)

Bell and Cohn distinguish two types of essay: the formal or Greek and the informal or French variety. The Greek essay is marked by lucid, logical form. In it an argument is developed point by point or an idea anatomized systematically. "It is a distinct type of essay," Bell and Cohn maintain,

with a recognizable historical tradition, ranging from Aristotle's Poetics, through Cicero's De Oratore and De Legibus, to Edgar Allan Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition" in America and to the work of many nineteenth-century English essayists, including T. B. Macaulay, Thomas De Quincey, Thomas Carlyle, Walter Pater, and Matthew Arnold. (p. 127)

The informal essay, on the other hand, a distinct type of prose writing fashioned by Montaigne, tends to be "personal and self-revelatory; confidential and unconventional; free from stiffness and pretense; humorous, droll, and witty, or grave, sober, and earnest; often tentative and incomplete" (p. 127). Informal essays "often imply far more than they say. And they may have . . . 'a rambling structure.' . . . the informal essay when it approaches art, has organic form . . . its organization reflects the writer's experience, the twists and turns of his mind, the pattern his eye perceives." Furthermore, the informal essay "is characterized by less conventional language and development. The style of the informal essay may be eccentric, playful, grotesque, wildly colloquial, and possibly obscene" (p. 128). Many of the techniques of the informal essay are, according to Bell and Cohn, borrowed from fiction. "The informal essay may rely heavily on scene-setting, on detailed description, on vivid action, on dialogue" (p. 128).

In his Introduction to the anthology, The Modern Mexican Essay (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1965), José Luis Martínez provides a casual taxonomy of the essay. (In the following list, Martínez's examples from Mexican literature are not given).

1. Essay as a type of literary creation. This is the most noble and illustrious form of the essay, being simultaneously invention, theory, and poem.
2. Brief, poetic essay. This is similar to the type just mentioned but shorter and less connected; like lyrical philosophical notes or the recordings of simple curious observation.
3. Essay born of fancy, wit, or casual meditation, of an evident English type. It requires a whimsical freshness and wit, or that subtle art of deep and sincere reflection without loss of fluidity and apparent lightness. . . .
4. Essay-discourse or oration (instructional). This is the transmission of cultural or civilizing messages. Formally it ranges from the oratorical style of the public address to the academic dissertation, but it is bound to the essay properly so called by its consideration and interpretation of material or spritual realities.
5. Interpretative essay. This is the form that may be considered the most normal and common form of the essay: a brief exposition of a subject with an original interpretation.
6. Theoretical essay. This differs by just a shade from the interpretative essay, since while the ideas expressed in the interpretative essay flow more freely and generally deal with personalities or historical or cultural events, those expressed in the theoretical essay, more closely knit, hold solely to the field of concepts.
7. Essay on literary criticism. It has already been noted . . . that when literary criticism, of whatever kind it may be, has in addition the characteristics of the essay, it encroaches upon this territory. . . .
8. Expository essay. This is an exposition of the monographic type and with synthetic vision which at the same time contains an original interpretation. . . .
9. Chronical-essay or memoirs. In this the essay is allied with historical or autobiographical reminiscences.

10. Brief journalistic essay. This is, finally, the light, passing record of the impulses, topics considered, opinions, and facts of the moment, noted as they flit by, but with a keenness or emotion which lifts them above simple journalism.

(Martinez, The Modern Mexican Essay, pp. 7-9)

Essays belonging to the first three of Martinez' categories are the proper concern of literary study.

With regard to the historical origins of the essay form, Martinez contends that "essayistic touches may be recognized in oriental books and in books of the Old Testament, as well as in various Greek and Latin texts" (p. 3). "Essayistic touches" occur, according to Martinez, in:

Proverbs, Wisdom, and Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament; in the maxims of Confucius and the teachings of Lao-Tse; in various Greek texts and especially in the Memorabilia of Xenophon, the Parallel Lives of Plutarch, the Dialogues of Plato, Aristotle's Poetics, and Theophrastes' Characters; also in passages of Horace's Poetic Art, Quintilian's Oratorical Institutions, the letters of Pliny the Younger, Cicero's Offices and Marcus Aurelius's Soliloquies--perhaps, along with Seneca's Moral Treatises, the two books of antiquity which most merit being considered as essays--the Confessions of Saint Augustine, and Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy.

(Martinez, p. 3)

- ¹⁶ A Kind of Testament, p. 77.

¹⁷ In this respect, Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaries are closely related to the tradition of literature in which the condition of travel plays a central role in plot structure as well as thematic development. Such works as the Aeneid, the Divine Comedy, Candide, Pilgrims' Progress, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and Eliot's The Waste Land form part of this tradition. (Gombrowicz, it is noteworthy, wrote a burlesque essay in literary criticism, "On Dante.") A more "prosaic" but no less "literary" branch of the same tradition--a branch tending toward the a-fictional and a-tectonic to which the label, "travel literature" in its

strict sense is usually attached--includes works like Goethe's Italienische Reise and Heine's Reisebilder. (Heine's Deutschland, Ein Wintermärchen, on the other hand, belongs to the former category.)

18 Kaiser, p. xxiv (see Note 12).

19 Lionel Trilling, Beyond Culture: Essays on Literature and Learning (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966), p. xiii.

20 Kaiser, p. xxxi.

21 Kaiser, p. xxxi.

22 Kaiser, p. xxxi.

23 Charles Dédéyan, Essai sur le journal de voyage de Montaigne (Paris: Boivin, 1947), pp. 147-48.

24 Dédéyan points out: "Plus que les deux premières le troisième livre est plein de ses portraits . . . ou l'artiste se décrit sans illusions et avec une minutie quelque peu indiscrete: nous le voyons sous toutes ses faces." Dédéyan, p. 150.

25 Dédéyan, p. 151.

26 Boerner, Tagebuch, p. 41.

CHAPTER II

THE DIARY AS PARODY AND PLAY. WITOLD
GOMBROWICZ'S DIARY 1953-1966

I

In the view of the contemporary Czech novelist, Milan Kundera, Gombrowicz figures alongside such writers as Thomas Mann and William Faulkner as one of the foremost novelists of the past fifty years.¹ In his seminal study, La nueva novela hispano-americana, the Mexican novelist and critic, Carlos Fuentes considers Gombrowicz a major influence on the recent Spanish-American novel.² Gombrowicz's stories and novels are widely read, his plays continue to be regularly staged and even televised in West Germany. A long German doctoral dissertation has recently been published on the linguistic features of his novel, Trans-Atlantyk.³ Gombrowicz's Diary (Dziennik), on the other hand, is not quite so well-known, at least in the United States, and has, on the whole, received less critical attention.

One reason for such a state of affairs, one suspects, is the very title, "diary." Potential readers attracted to the diary genre in its traditional form are likely to be disenchanted when they do not find what they are accustomed to and expect to find. Those, on the other hand, who continue

to view literature in terms of an oversimplified "fiction--non-fiction" dichotomy and who have a preference for "fiction" might not bother to take up the book at all. The fact is, Gombrowicz's so-called "Diary" divulges few secrets concerning the author's private life. Unlike the experience we have in reading traditional diaries, one gains little hard information concerning the historic Gombrowicz from reading his Diary for the impulse simply to confess did not determine the genesis of this work of art.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine this peculiar work of art. I will focus on its genesis, its philosophical orientation, and finally, its generic and stylistic features.

II

Among the critics who have concerned themselves with the Diary, Konstanty Jeleński underscores the quasi-fictional and innately artful character of the Diary. Terming it a "de-sacralized autobiography," he distinguishes it from the "mythological autobiography" of Gombrowicz's novel, Trans-Atlantyck.⁴ In like manner, Andrzej Nakov stresses the status of the Diary as an independent work of art.⁵ Hans Mayer observes that the diary-form represents the ideal mode of expression for a writer who, like Gombrowicz, is "in love" with "immaturity," that is, with that which is unfinished,

developing, in a state of flux, with process.⁶ Finally, Zdravko Malić stresses that with the Diary Gombrowicz again "showed his capacity for breaking accepted literary convention . . . for shaping the latest literary form to his own taste and needs, according to the demands of his poetry."⁷

Gombrowicz once referred to his Diary as "a task imposed upon me by the circumstances of my exile."⁸ 'The Diary clearly represents an attempt to break out of the cultural isolation that forms one of the main characteristics of the exile condition. It was initially generated by the need for contact with an audience that might provide that measure of critical feedback without which the work of art perishes in a spiritual vacuum. While living in Argentina in the early 1950s, the Polish writer sought to establish contact with the newly organized Polish emigré journal, Kultura, published in Paris. The second or third of his contributions was submitted in the form of diary entries. Encouraged by Kultura's editor, Jerzy Giedroyc, to continue in that form, Gombrowicz kept his serialized diary almost until his death in France in 1969.⁹ Thus, a perceptive editor became midwife to one of the classics of postwar Polish literature. It is noteworthy that Frisch's Tagebuch 1946-1949 also materialized, due largely to the active interest and encouragement of a perspicacious publisher: Peter Suhrkamp.¹⁰

Within Gombrowicz's oeuvre, the Diary occupies a central position. It derives from the intense concern with the question of personality, its formation and deformation by social and cultural forces, that is first forcefully enunciated in Ferdydurke. It continues the use of the first-person point of view used in practically all of his narrative works. As in the novels, Gombrowicz himself appears as a character, a direct participant in the action. The diary-I is no more, no less than a stylized persona. As an innately open form, the Diary represents the extreme instance of the basic external structure favored by Gombrowicz in his novels, all of which open in medias res and close open-endedly. As in the novels, in place of a unilinear plot and a final tying-up of the threads, the structure, built up episodically, is, episode by episode (or essay by essay), "blown up" or deflated by means of humor.

The characteristically malleable structure of the diary form provides an exceptionally suitable vehicle for concretizing the central motifs of Gombrowicz's world-view and vision of art. Gombrowicz maintained that art must retain intimate relation to ordinary life, to the "demi-monde." As a means of explicating and portraying the dynamics of the demi-monde, the ferments and eruptions of the world that underlie and undermine the cultural, civilizational, scientific, and ideological superstructures imposed upon it

by "high culture," he formulated his "maturity-immaturity" antinomy. In Gombrowicz's hands this antinomy finds pervasive applicability. Besides describing, in its common use, the course of development of the individual personality, it also has a social and ontological dimension. Some synonymous polarities include: the elder versus the youth; authority versus subordination; the masculine principle versus the feminine principle, that which has ripened, has taken final shape or form versus that which is growing, developing, expanding, still chaotic. Thus, if the ultimate value is life, then the sphere of the "immature," of the young and developing, the realm of potential and possibility, takes precedence over that which is already ripened, has taken final form. However, there is a fundamental tension between, on the one hand, art which must impose form and the artist who is after all a shaper, a master of form, and the artist's ultimate subject matter, i.e., life, which remains in constant flux, is immature in the ontological sense, chaotic and shapeless. As Gombrowicz would have it, the artist in capturing life, in endowing it with form, must remain faithful to the essentially "immature," random, accidental, quality of life. The indeterminate, form-resistant, a-tectonic character of the diary form closely complements such a vision of life and art.

III

Gombrowicz's Diary emerges out of a well-defined philosophical current. In many ways, it is an artful refraction of ideas theoretically formalized by such existentialist thinkers as Karl Jaspers and Martin Buber. In Die geistige Situation der Zeit (written in 1930), especially in the chapter, "Haltung des Selbstseins in der Situation der Zeit," Jaspers defines the threat posed by the specific conditions of twentieth-century life to the continued existence of the authentic individual. He points out the necessity for the individual to resist the pressures towards conformity, towards defining himself according to his specialized functions. He equates the predicament of twentieth-century man with that of primitive man: the latter struggled for physical survival against the forces of nature, the former struggles for spiritual survival against forces and threats of his own making. The fundamental question of our time is, according to Jaspers, "ob der unabhängige Mensch in seinem selbstergriffenen Schicksal noch möglich sei."¹¹ Jaspers further contends: "Die geistige Situation erzwingt heute den bewussten Kampf des Menschen, jedes Einzelnen, um sein eigentliches Wesen."¹² In his "Fragmenty z dziennika" ("Fragments from the diary"), Gombrowicz includes as an epilogue to one series of entries

a loose Polish rendition of a passage from Jaspers' Die geistige Situation der Zeit. The passage, which in the original is subtitled, "Der gegenwärtige Mensch," reads:

Das mögliche Heldentum des Menschen ist heute in der Tätigkeit ohne Glanz, im Bewirken ohne Ruhm. Es bleibt ohne Bestätigung, wenn es, dem Alltag gewachsen, die Kraft des Aufsichselbststehens ist. Es wird nicht bezaubert von unwahrhaftigen Erwartungen und von falschem es vor sich selbst verschiebendem Widerhall. Es verwirft die Erleichterung durch das, was alle tun und jedermann billigt, und lässt sich nicht erschüttern durch Widerstand und Ablehnung. Ihm eignet die Verlässlichkeit im Gehen eines Weges. Dieser Weg ist das Wagnis der Isolierung, wenn die Nachrede, solche anmassende Eigenwilligkeit werde verdientermassen allein stehengelassen, fast hineinzwingt in das, was alle wollen. Darin ohne Eigensinn und ohne Schwäche seine Richtung zu halten, nicht im Augenblick düpiert zu werden, auch noch in der Ermüdung bei ermattendem Verstand den Halt des in das eigene Wesen übergegangenen Entschlusses zu bewahren, ist eine Aufgabe, bei der fast jeder einmal strauchelt. . . .

Wenn der Mensch als Held dadurch gekennzeichnet ist, dass er sich bewährt vor der Übermacht, die, jedem Zeitalter eigentümlich, gegen ihn durchsetzt, was sie blind will, so bewährt er sich heute vor der Masse, die ungreifbar ist. Sie darf heute von dem Einzelnen nicht radikal in Frage gestellt werden, wenn er in der Welt leben will; er muss stillschweigend dulden und mittun oder Märtyrer werden gegen diesen Despoten, der still und unmerklich vernichtet . . . Der moderne Held als Märtyrer würde seinen Gegner nicht vor Augen bekommen und selbst unsichtbar bleiben als das, was er eigentlich ist.¹³

To this Gombrowicz adds the laconically poignant postscript:

Pisane w roku 1930. Mogłoby być napisane sto lat temu--nic w tym nie ma nowego. A jednak dzisiaj to staje się prawdziwsze niż było, coraz ostrzejszą treść wkłada w to czas.

Written in the year 1930. Could have been written a hundred years ago--there is nothing new in this. And yet it becomes more real than it was; time puts into it an ever sharper theme.¹⁴

The excerpt from Jaspers and the fact of its inclusion suggest Jaspers' views as a definitive component of the philosophical matrix of the Diary. From this perspective, the Diary becomes a response to the challenge of the times as defined by Jaspers; it becomes a singular manifesto on behalf of the struggle for a radically independent, uncompromisingly free self. Among the more explicit diaristic expressions of this struggle for authenticity are the following:

ukazać moją walkę z ludźmi o własną osobowość i wykorzystać wszystkie te osobiste zadrażnienia, jakie powstają między mną a nimi, dla coraz wyraźniejszego ustalenia własnego ja.

Dziennik I, 120.

jedyne co mi pozwala uratować od zagłady moją osobowość, to sama wola autentyczności, owo uparte wbrew wszystkiemu ja chce być sobą.

II, 11.

pragnę bronić mej osoby i wyrobić jej miejsce wśród ludzi.

I, 120.

Meine Methode beruht darin: meinen Kampf mit den Menschen um die eigene Persönlichkeit aufzuzeigen und alle die persönlichen Aufreizungen auszunutzen, die zwischen mir und ihnen entstehen, zur immer deutlicheren Feststellung meines eigenen Ich.

Tagebuch I, 156.

das einzige, was meine Persönlichkeit vom Untergang retten kann, ist allein der Wille zur Authentizität, jenes trotz allem hartnäckige ich will ich selber sein.

Tagebuch II, 8.

ich (möchte) meine Person verteidigen und ihr einen Platz unter den Menschen erarbeiten.

Tagebuch I, 155.

The struggle for authenticity, however, is made difficult not only by social, political, and economic factors. It is complicated even more by the very nature of man's intercourse with man. In Ferdydurke, for instance, we read: "Man is most deeply dependent on the image of himself formed in the mind of another man."¹⁵ Gombrowicz elaborates this notion in the Diary:

Nie przeczę, że istnieje zależność jednostki od środowiska--ale dla mnie o wiele ważniejszą, artystycznie bardziej twórczą, psychologicznie bardziej przepaścistą, filozoficznie bardziej niepokojącą jest to, że człowiek jest stworzony także przez pojedynczego człowieka, przez inną osobę. W przypadkowym zetknięciu. W każdej chwili. Mocą tego, że ja jestem zawsze "dla innego" obliczony na cudze widzenie, mogący istnieć w sposób określony tylko dla kogoś, egzystujący--jako forma--poprzez innego. . . .

Jego "ja" jest mu zatem wyznaczone w owej "międzyludzkości."

Dziennik II, 10.

Ich bestreite nicht, dass eine Abhängigkeit des einzelnen vom Milieu besteht, --aber weit wichtiger, künstlerisch viel schöpferischer, psychologisch abgründiger, philosophisch beunruhigender ist für mich dies, dass der Mensch ebenfalls durch einen einzelnen Menschen geschaffen wird, durch eine andere Person. In einem zufälligen Kontakt. In jedem Augenblick. Kraft dessen dass ich stets und immer "für einen anderen" bin, berechnet für fremdes Sehen, in einer un-rissenen Weise nur für jemanden und durch jemanden existieren könnend, existierend--als Form--durch einen anderen.

Sein "Ich" ist ihm daher in jener "Zwischenmenschlichkeit" bestimmt.

Tagebuch II, 7-8.

Gombrowicz himself recognized and testified to the close correlation of his vision of the "interhuman sphere" with Martin Buber's evocation of the "sphere of the between." He expressly points to the parallelism between his own and Buber's notions in a letter to Jarosław Iwaskiewicz of January 28, 1950 (see Appendix 1). Moreover, in a letter to Gombrowicz, Buber himself clearly alludes to the proximity of their respective positions (see Appendix 2).

In his letter to Iwaszkiewicz, Gombrowicz discusses Buber's book, What is Man?, an item he had recently read. He limits his observations to the closing chapter where Buber suggests a "third alternative"--namely, "the sphere of the between"--to the "false alternatives" confronting contemporary man: the choice between individualism or collectivism. Specifically, Buber maintains that "the I

exists . . . only through the relation to the Thou."

He contends that:

The fundamental fact of human existence is man with man. What is peculiarly characteristic of the human world is above all that something takes place between one being and another, the like of which can be formed nowhere in nature. . . .

Man is made man by it, but on its way it does not merely unfold, it also decays and withers away. It is rooted in one being turning to another as another, as this particular other being, in order to communicate with it in a sphere which is common to them but which reaches out beyond the special sphere of each. I call this sphere . . . the sphere of "between" . . . it is a primal category of human reality. . . .

"Between" is . . . the real place and bearer of what happens between man . . . ever and again re-constituted in accordance with men's meetings with one another.¹⁶

In connection with Buber's postulates, Gombrowicz refers Iwaszkiewicz to his preface to The Marriage where we read:

Man is subject to that which is created "between" individuals, and has no other divinity but that which springs from other people.¹⁷

Gombrowicz, however, is also quick to point to the inevitable divergencies between his and Buber's positions. Of these, the most significant for our purposes is intimated in Buber's letter to Gombrowicz. In it the Jewish thinker speaks of the definitive role of "irony, parody, and satire" in Gombrowicz's art. The relationship between Gombrowicz and Buber

constitutes a classic case of ideological polygenesis and philosophical rapprochement. There is, as the above-noted allusions suggest, a distinct confluence of thought and perspective which links the Jewish thinker and the Polish writer.

What I have sketched above is a picture of Gombrowicz's immediate intellectual genealogy which suggests the specific philosophical context of the ideas that form the cornerstone of his Weltanschauung and which also constitute the ideational heart of his Diary. However, as concerns the status of the Diary as a work of art, the more important question remains to be answered. That question deals with the "how," the manner in which certain ideas and visions are transformed into art. And in isolating "irony, parody, and satire" as a distinct component of Gombrowicz's art, Martin Buber suggests the direction to be taken.

IV

Gombrowicz composed his Diary from the very beginning for publication. Hence, the paradox of a "public" diary or "anti-diary," if one takes the private, confessional character of the traditional diary form as one of its dominant features. The transformation of the private diary form into a public literary genre represents one more application of Gombrowicz's favorite literary device, the device that

determines and defines his art, namely, parody. His first major success, the novel *Ferdydurke* (1936), was conceived as a parody of the philosophical novel à la Voltaire. *Pornografia* (1960) constitutes a parody of the "powieść wiejska," the manorial novel. *Trans-Atlantyk* (1953) was conceived as a parody of *Pan Tadeusz*. *Cosmos* (1965) parodies the detective thriller. As for the plays, *The Marriage* (1948) and *Ivona, Princess of Burgundia* (1935) were conceived as parodies of *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*, respectively, while *Operetta* parodies the classic Viennese operetta.¹⁸

Gombrowicz indicates the extent and significance of parody for his art as follows:

My literature is based on classical models . . . I use classical forms because they are the most perfect and the reader is accustomed to them. But . . . with me form is always a parody of form. I use it but I locate myself beyond it. . . . I look for the connection between these old, readable literary forms and the freshest possible, the latest perception of the world.

Testament, 136-137.

In its basic sense, parody involves a departure from a model, the model being, in the case of Gombrowicz's *Diary*,¹⁹ the ideal type of the conventional diary, that is, a composite whose primary ingredients consist of, on the one hand, the externally oriented travel diary (e.g., *Italienische Reise*), and, on the other hand, the internally oriented journal intime. From this perspective, Gombrowicz's *Diary* represents a departure in several important ways. Rather than a private

instrument of introspection, Gombrowicz's Diary becomes a vehicle of direct polemics. In its travel segments, on the other hand, instead of the objectivizing impulse, the subjective response to the new surroundings is recorded. An essentially "naive construction," the faithful recording of daily events organized according to the calendar, is replaced by deliberate construction, stylization, and fictionalization. The consistent use of the first-person gives way to direct address of the reader and the intrusion of a commentator who reflects on the "action" in the third-person.

The journal intime, as one of the classic forms of the diary genre, provides in its conventions and general ambience, a prime object for parody. Gombrowicz regularly transforms into bathos the pathos that is associated with the introspective meditations of the journal intime. This is effected by, among other things, the incorporation of nonsense rhymes, popular saws, and colloquial jingles. Often, the elevated tone is punctured with an exclamation like: "A kuku! (II, 112; III, 192). At least once the narrative flow is interrupted by the defiant: "Gadu, gadu, bla, bla, bla!" (II, 15). Another specific object of parody is the convention of conscientiously recording mundane details of everyday reality as so often occurs in the Diary of Samuel Pepys. Thus, Gombrowicz records in his "public" diary such intimate facts as:

Środa
 Sznycel. Ananas. Dzień szary.
Dziennik II, 236.

Mittwoch
 Schnitzel. Ananas. Grauer Tag.
Tagebuch II, 299.

7. IV. 68
 Wylałem kompot!
Kultura, 6/248-7/249, 1968, p. 42.

7. IV. 68
 Ich habe Kompott verschüttet!
Tagebuch III, 259.

Parody results in a metamorphosis of the external structure of the conventional diary-form. The characteristic external structure consisting of a series of daily entries gives way, on the broadest level, to a structure made up of distinct formal units marked by Roman numeral. Within these chapter-like units, the daily entry, as has been pointed out, regularly acquires the force of an informal essay. The immediate catalyst for these "essay-entries" consists of pieces of correspondence, items read, empirical experiences or occurrences. But whatever the immediate stimuli and regardless of the shape its literary transformation takes, the element of travesty is always just around the corner, as it were, determining the ultimate handling of the subject matter. Typically, the situation, scene, mood, or thought initially set up, is deflated by a final unexpected turn. In many ways, this process of deflation, debunking, demystification, of breaking the spell represents the transposition

into essayistic prose of the poetic technique immortalized by Byron in his Don Juan. Like Byron, Gombrowicz does not identify with the diary-I as evidenced, in particular, by the occasional assumption of the role of the third-person commentator. As in Don Juan, the element that unifies the divergent moods and thoughts is the voice. Indeed, the parallels between Byron's wide-ranging satire and Gombrowicz's unrelenting ironic excursions extend not only to method and technique but apply also to their fundamental aims--the unmasking of pretense, sham, cant, and self-deception--their basic perspective and attitude--from playful facetiousness to an almost cynical realism--their aesthetic biases--the distrust of the fictionalizing and idealizing tendency inherent in art and literature--and, finally, to their biographical predicaments resulting from their unremitting exposures of the foibles and follies of contemporaries, peers, and fellow countrymen.

Parody also determines the narrative viewpoint of Gombrowicz's Diary. The diary-persona is a function of the parodistic style. The nature of the diary "persona" is suggested in a rhetorical question:

pajac? kpiarz? mędrzec? oszust? odkrywca?
 blagier? przewodnik?
 A może jest on tym wszystkim naraz?

Dziennik II, 238

ein Hampelmann? ein Spotter? ein Weiser?
 ein Betrüger? ein Entdecker? ein Blagueur?
 ein Führer? Und vielleicht ist er das alles
 zugleich?

Tagebuch II, 301.

Thus, in the Diary Gombrowicz dons the mask of the serious jester and with it assumes the wisdom of the clown. The complex style resulting from this clownish perspective is faithfully summarized in the words of the title of a peculiar nineteenth-century German play: Scherz, Satire, Ironie, und tiefere Bedeutung.²⁰ The mechanism that generates the narrative thrust is the diversification of tones: the elevated and the lyric alternate--one could say, are relieved by--the comic, the ironic, the grotesque, at times by the erotic or mystic. Such a stylistic polyphony goes hand in hand with a contrapuntal thematic method whereby a limited number of general themes are recurrently treated, each time being variegated and deepened from a slightly different perspective. This technique replaces the intrigue, unilinear plot development, and character constellation of traditional narrative fiction. That the structure and style of Gombrowicz's Diary rest so heavily on what are essentially musical principles of composition accords with the spirit of parody, for "paroidia" originated in ancient Greek music as an antiphon.

V

I have outlined the implications of parody for the style and structure of the Diary. However, parody, in the broad sense of departure from a model, also determines the thematics of the Diary, both on the private and public level. Nowhere is the thematic function of parody more evident than in the highly stylized series of entries devoted to an excursion from Buenos Aires to Santiago del Estero (volume II, chapters IX, X, pp. 98-121). The segments in question come roughly halfway in the Diary and represent a critical juncture in the life of the diary-I. The objects of parody here are Thomas Mann and, indirectly, Goethe. In this case, however, parody does not bear the character of farcical travesty, nor is it laced with mocking invective. The well-controlled tone corresponds to the serious nature of the experiences and encounters recorded. It accords also with the esteem in which the Polish writer held the two masters of German literature. Regarding Mann, Gombrowicz wrote (using the third-person to refer to himself):

Ze wszystkich tych stylów wielkości, proponowanych przez tylu mistrzów, jemu najbliższy był może ten, który Tomasz Mann wypracował w ciągu długoletniej swej kariery. . . . często zwykł on w rozmowach powoływać się na tego autora i na jego prześliczne w rysunku opowiadanie Tonio Kröger, w którym on, Gombrowicz, wcześniej odczytał swój los i powołanie.

Dziennik II, 130-131.

Von allen diesen Stilen der Grösse, von so vielen Meistern propagierten, war ihm vielleicht der am nächsten, den Thomas Mann während seiner langjährigen Karriere ausgearbeitet hatte. . . . oft pflegte er in Gesprächen sich auf diesen Autor zu berufen und auf dessen in der Zeichnung so wunderschöne Erzählung "Tonio Kröger," in welcher er, Gombrowicz, frühzeitig sein Schicksal und seine Berufung herausgelesen hatte.

Tagebuch II, 161-162.

Mann and, to a lesser degree, Goethe constitute the models from which Gombrowicz here departs--formally, stylistically, and ideologically--with the hope of sounding a divergent apprehension of the "Künstlerproblem," as well as a different sensibility.

The segments in question represent a kind of Künstler-novelle presented in the form of a Reisetagebuch. The geographical aspect of the northward trip from Buenos Aires to Santiago del Estero offers both a parallel and a parody of Aschenbach's trip from Munich to Venice. The physical or climatic equivalent for "going South" in Europe (or the Northern Hemisphere) is "going North" in South America (or the Southern Hemisphere). The sense of reversal, or putting upside down, in other words, physical parody, is registered in the traveler's entry:

Tak gwałtowna zmiana--tam było surowo i chłodno--a tu zmysłowo i, zdaje się, lekkomyślnie . . . nagle jak gdybym zanurzył się w Południu (tutaj nazywa się "Północ," bo na południowej półkuli).

Dziennik II, 99.

Eine solch plötzliche Veränderung--dort war es rauh und kalt gewesen--hier ist es sinnlich und, scheint es, leichtsinnig . . . plötzlich, als sei ich in den Süden eingetaucht (hier heisst es "Norden," weil auf der südlichen Halbkugel).
Tagebuch II, 123.

Physical parody sets the tone for thematic and formal "reversals." Gombrowicz himself becomes a latter-day Aschenbach; Buenos Aires is his Munich; Santiago del Estero his Venice. Like Aschenbach's fatal trip to Venice, Gombrowicz's departure from Buenos Aires is generated by the prospect of regeneration. He wonders:

Cwartek

Dlaczego przyjechałem do Santiago? Czy żeby uniknąć wilgotnej zimy w Buenos Aires ze względu na kiepski stan moich oskrzeli?
Dziennik II, 107.

Donnerstag

Warum bin ich nach Santiago gekommen? Um den feuchten Winter in Buenos Aires zu entgehen mit Rücksicht auf den schlechten Zustand meiner Bronchien?
Tagebuch II, 134.

Thereupon, assuming the third-person point of view by which he comments from above, as it were, and in a tone whose calm detachment and formality contrast with the relatively unbridled impressionism of the diary-I, he notes:

Witold Gombrowicz wybrał się do Santiago del Estero żeby uniknąć wilgotnej zimy w Buenos Aires.

Dziennik II, 107.

Witold Gombrowicz hat sich nach Santiago del Estero begeben, um den feuchten Winter in Buenos Aires zu entgehen.

Tagebuch II, 134.

The Buenos Aires winter, however, externally complements the "wintry" state of his soul, for he adds:

Ujawniło się jednak niebawem, że zdrowie było właściwie pretekstem, a prawdziwy utajony cel podróży był inny. Gombrowicz, zaszachowany nadciągającą starością, szukał gwałtownie ratunku.

Dziennik II, 108.

Es zeugte sich jedoch alsbald, dass die Gesundheit eigentlich ein Vorwand und das wahre, geheimgehaltene Ziel der Reise ein anderes war. Gombrowicz, im Schach des herannahenden Alters, suchte gewaltsam nach Rettung.

Tagebuch II, 134.

Like Aschenbach's, "Gombrowicz's" initial response upon encountering the sensual virility of the "South" is one of ecstasy and exuberance recorded in the exclamatory language of his diaristic notations:

Poniedziałek

Słońce oślepiające i kolorowe, jakby przez witraż przepuszczone, zdawałoby się, że to ono nasycza. Niebieskość natrętna nieba. Drzewa obciążone żłocistymi i ogromnymi pomedos, kwitnące czerwono . . . żółto.

Dziennik II, 100.

Plac kręcił się, jak karuzela, tłumem sobotnim,
 roześmianym, z którego biły we mnie oczy ol-
 brzymie i czarne, krucze włosy . . . lśniący
 śmiech . . . lekkość taneczna kończyn . . .
 głosy wesołe, swobodne, i poczciwe.

Dziennik II, 99.

Montag

Die Sonne ist blendend und bunt, wie durch ein
 Kirchenfenster hindurchgelassen, es könnte
 scheinen, dass sie es ist, die Gegenstände mit
 Farben sättigt. Glanz und Schatten. Aufdring-
 liche Bläue des Himmels, Bäume, von goldfarbenen
 und riesigen "pomedos" beschwert, rotblühend
 und gelb.

Tagebuch II, 124.

Der Platz drehte sich wie ein Karussell von
 lachendem Samstag-Gedränge, aus dem riesige
 und schwarze Augen in mich drangen, krause
 Haare . . . gleissendes Lachen . . . tän-
 zerische Leichtigkeit derglieder . . .
 fröhliche Stimmen, freie und ehrliche.

Tagebuch II, 123-24.

It is the well-known and well-worn response of a northerner to the South whose literary archetype was signalled by Goethe in his "Reisetagebuch," Italienische Reise, and continued by, among others, Grabbe in Don Juan und Faust. The diarist refers to himself in the first person as "the nordic" (p. 106; p. 107). He also refers to himself in the third person through the voice of the commentator as "Faust" (p. 109, p. 120). His southward excursion is mock-heroically termed a drama (pp. 120-21). The encounter with the South, however, also has another effect: a loss of psychological bearings, a loosening of the mechanisms of control and measure. This is initially evident in the belated psychological

arrival in Santiago Del Estero. "Ja jestem nie tu, a gdzie indziej"--"während ich nicht hier bin, sondern woanders . . . "; " . . . mmie tu jeszcze nie było . . . ";--" . . . ich war noch nicht hier . . . "; "jeszcze tkwiłem w . . . Buenos Aires";--"da ich eben noch in . . . Buenos Aires gesteckt . . . hatte," notes the diarist. The visitor from the North soon recognizes the potential threat of this exotic environment. He wonders:

Co ci się może zdarzyć tam, gdzie nic ci się nie przeciwstawia i nic nie jest w stanie stać się twoją granicą?

Dziennik II, 104.

Was kann dir zustossen, dort, wo sich nichts entgeggestellt und nichts imstande ist, zu deiner Grenze zu werden?

Tagebuch II, 130.

He soon can answer his question:

Tu wszystko staje się gąszczem w którym błądze.

Dziennik II, 105.

Hier wird alles zu einem Dickicht, in dem ich umherirre.

Tagebuch II, 130.

The noun, "gąszcz,"--"Dickicht" whose primary meaning in the original is "jungle," also connotes the idea of a "mushy liquid" in which something can "dissolve." It suggestively foreshadows the conclusion of the Santiago segments.

Finally, the commentator specifies the visitor's precise condition:

Witold Gombrowicz przyjechawszy do Santiago, uległ fali spóźnionego erotyzmu . . . wzmożonego wyziewami miasta o krwi indyjskiej, łatwej urodzie i gorącym słońcu.

Dziennik II, 109.

Witold Gombrowicz, in Santiago angekommen erlag einer Woge verspäteter Erotik . . . einer verstärkten durch die Ausdeutungen einer Stadt von indianischem Blut, leichter Schönheit und heisser Sonne.

Tagebuch II, 135.

And who stimulates this belated eroticism? The role of "Tadzio" is played by a local "chango." The external characterization by and large parallels Tadzio's features:

Ten czango, piętnastolatek, był najwidoczniej "z porządnej rodziny," oczy tryskały mu zdrowiem, życzliwością i wesołością.

Dziennik II, 104.

Dieser "chango," ein Fünfzehnjähriger, war ganz offensichtlich "aus anständiger Familie," die Augen sprühten ihm vor Gesundheit, Wohlwollen und Fröhlichkeit; . . .

Tagebuch II, 130.

Here the striking parallels with the plot and problematics of Tod in Venedig end.

For all these situational parallels, Gombrowicz's text departs significantly from Mann's story. While in Tod in Venedig Mann provides a psychological portrait of the artist as a locus of the conflict between the Dionysian and Apollonian urges, the experiences of Gombrowicz's aging artist

are interpreted in terms that, although analogous, remain nonetheless, significantly different. Aschenbach is clearly thrown off balance by the confrontation that awakens his vital instincts, the meeting with Tadzio. Gombrowicz's artist, in contrast, recognizes the need for regeneration, seeks the opportunity to satisfy the need, and welcomes the opportunity when it appears. As the commentator explains:

Gombrowicz, zaszachowany nadciągającą starością, szukał gwałtownie ratunku -- i wiedział, że jeśli w ciągu najbliższych kilku lat nie zdoła nawiązać z młodością, nic nie będzie w stanie go uratować.

Dziennik II, 108.

że Gombrowicz, on, doktor Faust, przybył do Santiago celem dokonania wielkiego odkrycia, że postanowił znaleźć na koniec sposób żeby wiek podeszły mógł nawiązać z młodością, żeby pokolenie na ukończeniu mogło u schyłku zaczerpnąć z młodzieży treści zaczynających się, doznać jeszcze raz początku.

Dziennik II, 109.

Gombrowicz, im Schach des herannahenden Alters, suchte gewaltsam nach Rettung--und wusste, wenn er es nicht zustande brachte, mit dem Jugendalter anzuknüpfen, ihn nichts werde retten können.

Tagebuch II, 134-35.

dass Gombrowicz, er, Doktor Faust, nach Santiago gekommen sei, um eine grosse Entdeckung zu machen, dass er beschlossen habe, endlich Mittel und Wege zu finden, um das vorgeschrittene Alter mit dem Jugendalter zu verknüpfen, damit die den Ende entgegengene Generation am Lebensabend aus der Jugend Inhalte an ihrem Beginn schöpfen und nochmals den Anfang erleben könne.

Tagebuch II, 135.

Following a surprise encounter with a young friend from Tandil, the diarist notes:

Jak gdyby jakaś Mechanika Falowa uzupełniła i rozszerzyła moje samopoczucie, poczułem się nie tylko konkretnym indywiduum, skazanym na zagładę, ale falą . . . prądem, rozpiętym między wschodzącym i schodzącym pokoleniem.
Dziennik II, 113.

Als wenn irgendeine Wellenmechanik mein Selbstgefühl ergänzt und erweitert hätte, empfand ich mich nicht nur als ein konkretes Individuum, das zur Vernichtung verurteilt ist, sondern als Welle . . . als einen Strom, gespannt zwischen der aufgehenden und der untergehenden Generation.
Tagebuch II, 141.

The central thematic concern of the Santiago del Estero episode 'is the split between body and soul, between matter and spirit. The explicit evocation of the opening words of the Gospel of Saint John, "Słowo ciałem się stało"--"The Word was made flesh" (II, 107), echoes Faust's struggle with the meaning of a proximate biblical phrase: "Im Anfang war das Wort." It also signals the source of the basic difference with Thomas Mann's apprehension of the same spectrum of themes. While in Tod in Venedig the theme of the aging artist, the homosexual motif, and the relationship of art and decadence is interpreted in categories that are psychological and sociological, in Gombrowicz's hands the same themes are apprehended in ontological and epistemological terms. Instead of intimately portraying the psyche of an

artist, Gombrowicz, in his stylized self-portraiture, focuses on the very nature of experience, laying bare the fictionalizing tendency of perception. "Bekenntnisliteratur" here turns into "Bewusstseinsliteratur." His diaristic notations become, in effect, "tests" or "trials" of consciousness. They acquire the force of "essai" in the sense given that term by Montaigne for whom they were "trials" of judgment. The visitor from the North continually tests or tries to establish the veracity of his impressions, of his responses to and perceptions of the place visited, and often finds them wanting--predetermined by convention and tradition and resistant to articulation by means of inherited modes of expression. Thus, his diaristic notations represent an almost literal materialization of Goethe's definition of the "essay" as an experiment mediating between object and subject ("Der Versuch als Vermittler von Objekt und Subjekt").²¹ Even in his initial exuberance he can record an impression and immediately perceive its precariousness:

Niedziela

Piękności! Tam wzejdziesz, gdzie cię posieją!
I będziesz, jaką cię posieją!

(Nie wierzcie w piękności Santiago. To
nieprawda. To przeze mnie wymyślone!).

Dziennik II, 100.

Sonntag

O Schönheit! Dort wirst du aufgehen, wo man
dich sät! Und so wirst du sein, als welche
man dich sät!
(Glaubt nicht an die Schönheiten Santiagos.
Das ist nicht wahr. Das ist von mir aus-
gedacht!)

Tagebuch II, 124.

In the very next entry we read in reference to the preceding
one:

Poniedziałek

Wracając starałem się skontrolować moje
wrażenia z wczorajszej nocy. Były
przesadne! Mnie się przywidziało.
Dziennik II, 100.

Montag

Auf dem Rückweg bemühte ich mich, meine
Eindrücke von der gestrigen Nacht zu
kontrollieren. Sie waren übertrieben!
Ich hatte es mich eingebildet.
Tagebuch II, 125.

Words like "wymyślone"--"ausgedacht" and "przywidziało"--
"eingebildet" describe what may be called the "artifici-
alization" of objective reality inherent in the idealizing,
hence, fictionalizing process of perception. Words like
"kłamstwo"(109)--"lie," "mylę się" (110)--"I err," and
"nieprawda" (106)--"untruth" in reference to impressions and
their expression in the entries further illustrate this pro-
cess. In the midst of this ongoing process of highlighting
the precariousness of perception and the fictive character

of impression, the opening line of one entry has a supremely ironic force:

Sobota
 Naprzód zanotuję fakty.
Dziennik II, 104.

Sonnabend
 Zuerst notiere ich die Fakten.
Tagebuch II, 130.

If anything, the diary entries of the Santiago segment give acute expression to the very impossibility of ascertaining facts. Thus, parody results in a quintessentially metafictional²² perspective where the process of interpretation--be it of character, event or landscape--that typifies the traditional fictional narratives of psychological realism is put to radical question. Meaning itself or the possibility of attaining it is mocked. The tenuousness of impression, perception, and judgment deriving from the split between subject and object, between body and soul, between matter and spirit, is portrayed. The perennial dilemma of apprehension and expression--that the observer-witness in bringing to bear a unique vantage point upon the object of observation thereby affects, i.e., alters that object--is given artistic expression. The inevitability and pervasiveness of the subjective factor is affirmed. By implication, the objectivizing, omniscient, third-person perspective is rejected because of its epistemological inadequacy. Gombrowicz betrays here his

spirited interest in the classic problems of twentieth-century physics, namely, the theory of relativity and the principle of indeterminacy, an interest he expresses elsewhere in the Diary in more discursive fashion.

The finale of the Santiago del Estero sketches is a parody of a conclusion. It is a typically Gombrowiczian dissolution. The hero-visitor, desperate to resolve once and for all the split between matter and spirit, undertakes a farcical, night pursuit of a local chango who symbolizes for him the epitome of vitality and concreteness, in short of physical being. Gombrowicz, the pursuing artist-spirit, would murder the chango. The murder is averted at the last moment. It takes place, if at all, only in the artist's mind. The "adventure" is smothered by "zwykłość"--"the ordinary" (120). " . . . i nasz Faust ugrążył w dniu powszednim. Wystrychnięto go na dudka!" (II, 120)-- " . . . und unser Faust versank im Alltag. Man hatte ihn zum Narren gemacht!" (II, 152). The underlying pathos and muffled, tragic undertone of Mann's story turns into the bathos of diurnal commonness, of ordinary life, of everyday reality in the non-conclusion of these travel sketches.

The above analysis shows a parodically constructed piece of literature ending up in a preoccupation with the word, that is, with language itself. The logic of such a development inheres in the nature of parody itself. Parody can be

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The above analysis shows a parodically constructed piece of literature ending up in a preoccupation with the word, that is, with language itself. The logic of such a development inheres in the nature of parody itself. Parody can be

understood as a semiotic device, a medium, a specific kind of language which, by means of travesty, signals a critical distance or separateness of speaker to his subject matter or of subject to object. Likewise, in language itself, in the split between signans and signatum, in the separateness of name and object named, there is a split analogous to that effected by parody. It is this question of language which forms the touchstone of comparison between Gombrowicz's Diary and Frisch's Tagebuch where it also represents a prime concern.

VI

Gombrowicz once wrote:

I am a humorist, a joker, an acrobat, a provocateur. My works turn double somersaults to please. I am a circus, lyricism, poetry, horror, riots, games.
A Kind of Testament, 140.

Parody belies a more basic mechanism and disposition operative in the Diary. That mechanism is the play-factor, in the Huizingian sense. Gombrowicz's Diary represents a literary concretization par excellence of the play-spirit. Gombrowicz refers to one of the aspects of his Diary as "the eccentricities, the little lies, the jokes, the hoaxes--games with the reader" (Testament, 115). Again and again in the

diary text he uses terms like "gra, zabawa"--"game, play"--or "dowcip, żart"--"prank, joke"--which connote various aspects of play to suggest the specific nature of his undertaking. The assumption of the role of jester (pajac, fircyk) constitutes a revitalization of the ancient function of the poet as scurra. At the same time, the diary-I becomes a "master of ceremonies," a "reżyser" ("regisseur") who directs the march of reality, reconstructing it according to his private cosmogony. Here, the diary-I takes the role of vates, displaying his broad knowledge and guiding his audience through the "workshop" of culture. Thus, the diary-persona becomes, in effect, a blend of the two primeval functions of the poet. The resulting perspective is put to an eminently modern use, at once private and social:

bronić mej osoby i wyrobić jej miejsce
wśród ludzi

Dziennik I, 120.

meine Person verteidigen und ihr einen
Platz unter den Menschen erarbeiten

Tagebuch I, 155.

Whichever function may predominate at any given moment--the mocking scurra or the combative vates--the spirit of play is always operative: it determines the transformation of reality into the subject matter of the diary and definitively affects the handling.

The most direct manifestation of the play-element is humor. Gombrowicz's humor takes a variety of forms in the Diary. There is, for instance, a marked fondness for word-play. One "entry," for example, ends with the following metathetic play on the name of an Argentinian friend:

Opowiadał mi to Flor de Quilombo (a)
 Florquilo (a) Quiloflor (a) Coliflor
 (a) Flor-en-coli (a) Coli-enflor.
Diary II, 135.

Through the transposition of word elements, a comical connection with "kalafior" ("cauliflower") is clearly suggested. Another, more elaborate instance of metathetic word-play fills up an entire "entry":

21. II. 68

Rosa
 Krągłość
 Gab
 W okrągłościach Rosy gabinetu
 Wieloimienny
 Nieślubny
 Poczęty
 I krąży, okrąża i wczoraj także panią Leonce
 pytał, czy
 Krąg
 Gąb
 Krągtogabsaośćwokrrogab

Kultura, Nr. 5/247
 (May 1968), p. 5.

21. II. 68

Rosa
 Rundheit
 Arb
 In den Rundheiten Rosas Arbeitszimmers
 Vielnamiger
 Unehelicher
 Empfangener
 Und kreist, umkreist und gestern fragte er auch
 Frau Leonce, ob
 Rund
 Arb
 Rundarbngringsrundarb
Tagebuch III, 257.

This forms part of a series of entries facetiously expressing the diarist's (feigned) response of mixed horror and ecstasy to the imminent (fictitious) visit of his illegitimate offspring. In the same series a different kind of word-play is exhibited: the Rabelaisian catalogue. Meditating on the possible name given his newly discovered son, the diarist writes:

10. 1. 68

Pedro?
 Francisco?
 Nicolas?
 Conrado?
 Esteban?
 Manuel?
 Roberto?
 Marcelo?
 Eduardo?
 Luis?
 Lucio?
 Alejandro?
 Bernardo?
 Pablo?

Gregorio?
 Antonio?
 Guillermo?
 Felipe?
 W okrągłościach nieślubnych
 mego z Rosa
 gabinetu

Kultura, Nr. 3/245
 (March 1968), p. 30.

14. 1. 68

Crisostomo?
 Javier?
 Axel?
 Bartolome?
 Basilio?
 Modesto?
 Benito?
 Celestino?
 Nieślubna
 Krągłość
 gab
 ga

Kultura, No. 3/245
 (March 1968), p. 40.

Another catalogue also involving the act of naming and, like the previous instance, conveying a distinct note of exoticism reads:

Wtorek
 --Tilos --pimas --platanos --naranjos --
 palmeras --glicinas --mimbres --alamos --
 cipres --

Dziennik II, 70.

Another form which Gombrowicz's humor recurrently takes is the mock, the tauntful challenge, the scurrillous "calling out." One polemical entry ends:

I czołem, dudki!	--	Und Servus, Narren!
(<u>Dziennik</u> II, 238)		(<u>Tagebuch</u> II, 301)

1 Another begins:

Sobota

A kuku, a kuku, służąca Helena
ma kuku na muniu! Więc
hajda, hajda i cip, cip, cip!
Kukuryku!

III, 29.

Sonnabend

Kuckuck, ei Kuckuck, die Dienstmagd
Helena, ei Kuckuck! Also
heidi, heida, put, put, put!
Kikeriki!

III, 15.

Nonsense rhymes and colloquial jingles are often enlisted as playful taunts as in the following two examples:

Wiedz miły mój Damonie
Że z raju dziś tu -- step
Gdzie dawniej Jowisz był na tronie
Tam dziś panuje . . .

II, 157.

and

25. II. 68

Okrażający syn nieślubny
 Nieślubność krągła syna!
 Gabinet Rosy okrażły
 W którym napoczą się syn!
Kultura, 5/247
 (May 1968), 15.

Excerpts from folk songs, e.g., "Albośmy to jacy tacy, chłopcy krakowiacy!" [(Kultura, 7/262 - 8/263 (July-August 1969), p. 9)], serve as comic relief in many essayistic entries. Finally, there are the games played with the traditional purpose of the diary. Advertisements are incorporated into the text. One such ad in which the diarist's pet dog is put up for sale, becomes a leitmotif for a whole chapter of entries (Diary II, 128). In another advertisement the diarist offers to sell his villa, together with concubine and son [Kultura, 5/247 (May 1968), p. 15]. Also incorporated into the Diary is the diarist's "interview with himself" made for the German newspaper, Die Welt.

Homo ludens, Johan Huizinga's classic treatise on the play element in culture, provides the proper exegetical tools for explicating the function of humor in the Diary. Of specific relevance is Huizinga's contention regarding the relationship of play to "ordinary" life--that is, that aspect of reality, measured by the calendar or, in the case of the travel diary, the map--which becomes the particular subject matter of the diary. Huizinga points out that "play is not

'ordinary' or 'real' life. It is rather a stepping out of 'real' life." It constitutes an "intermezzo, an interlude in our daily lives."²³ It is precisely this feature of play which becomes the central element of the parodic process which results in the explosion of the diary form. The regularly recurrent intrusions of the play element as explicitly manifested in the samples of humor cited above permit the diarist to interrupt the unrelenting tick of the clock, to step outside the gray and brutal determinism of the week, the month, the year. Several successive entries directly express this universal predicament. They begin:

Piątek

Jeszcze to samo i wciąż to samo!
Dziennik III, 43.

Środa (jak mnie nudzą już te dni tygodnia!)
 III, 46.

6. X. 62 (tydzień ma siedem dni; te dni mnie
 znudziły.)
 III, 54.

Freitag

Noch dasselbe und immer noch dasselbe
Tagebuch III, 30.

Mittwoch

(wie langweilen mich schon diese Tage der Woche!)
 III, 35.

6. X. 62
 (die Woche hat sieben Tage; diese Tage haben
 mich gelangweilt)
 III, 46.

Thus, as an integral component of a diary, the play element serves to effectively, even if only momentarily, lift the

existential boredom arising out of temporality.

There are several important thematic and stylistic features of the Diary that are particularly amenable to exegesis by means of the notion of play as defined by Huizinga.

Among Gombrowicz's numerous observations on the nature of art and the artist, is the following:

Artysta jest grą nieustanną . . .
jedynie tylko własny ruch
może przeciwstawić ruchowi
świata.

Dziennik III, 64.

Ein Künstler [ist]ein
unaufhörliches Spiel . . . einzig nur
seine eigne Bewegung kann
er der Bewegung der Welt
entgegenstellen.

Tagebuch III, 60.

Gombrowicz's critique of sculpture and painting essentially consists in highlighting the inherent capacity of language--and hence literature--to approximate motion and, therefore, life as opposed to the static inability of painting and sculpture to do the same. Moreover, as pointed out previously, the organization of the Diary, based as it is on an ongoing variegation of themes and microforms, enlists the essentially musical principles of rhythm and harmony. Play, of course, whose central components also comprise rhythm and harmony, is inherent in the very essence of music. "The processes of plastic art," as Huizinga observes, "run completely outside the sphere of play . . . where there is no

visible action there can be no play."²⁴ Thus, Gombrowicz's distinction of sculpture and painting, on the one hand, and literature, on the other, rest essentially on the absence of the play factor.

A consideration of Huizinga's account of the play factor in poetry brings out the generic peculiarity and artistic distinctiveness of the Diary. Antique poetry, the fountain-head of literature, represented a direct and forceful incorporation, concentration, and crystallization of the play factor. It was "at one and the same time ritual, entertainment, artistry, riddle-making, doctrine, persuasion, sorcery, soothsaying, prophecy, and competition."²⁵ Its content to a great degree consisted of "malicious sallies, innuendos, mockery, invective, and braggadacio."²⁶ Many still-existing aboriginal cultures have kept intact this peculiarity of ancient poetry; their songs, often of a mocking or teasing nature, are made up of "strophe and anti-strophe, thrust and counterthrust, question and answer, a challenge and a rejoinder."²⁷ Word play for its own sake has a significant function in such poetry. As Huizinga notes:

What constitutes the formal poetic element is the assonance which by repeating the same word or a variation of it, links thesis to antithesis. The purely poetic element consists in allusion, the sudden bright idea, the pun or simply in the sound of the words themselves, where sense may be completely lost.²⁸

As the samples of Gombrowicz's humor cited above indicate, a substantial portion of the elements and features of antique poetry find their explicit equivalents in the array of parodic devices and techniques that make up a significant aspect of the style and tone of the Diary. Thus, the diary-I can be considered a latter-day re-animation of the poet as scurra. With its visceral humor, its often scurrilous tone, the Diary revitalizes the antique agonistic function of poetry as contest. Gombrowicz spoke of his Diary as his "War on Poland"; his "war against literature and art in general", his "attacks on pure poetry, on painting, on Paris"; his "war against philosophy" (A Kind of Testament, 115-16). The Diary embodies what Huizinga calls "the urge to be first."²⁹ At the same time, in the forays into "Existentialism, Marxism, Catholicism, and Structuralism" which also form an integral part of the Diary, the diary-I assumes the role of vates, the antique wise man flaunting his knowledge in poetic contest. In both roles, however, as scurra and as vates, the diary-I is a singular instance of the artist on the warpath, the artist vying for his right to exist qua artist. It relates the story of an existential artist-hero struggling to maintain his identity within a world seen as threatening that identity. The aggressively combative quality of Gombrowicz's diaristic quest for

authenticity directly reflects the sense of mortal danger necessitating continual struggle that Jaspers predicates of the current situation of the self.

Play is operative in the Diary from the very opening-- which is, in part, facetious, in part, a "calling out"--to the end, one of the final entries being: "Wednesday: I spilled my compotte" (Kultura, 6/248-7/249, 1968, p. 42--Tagebuch III, 259). Play is inseparable from the parodic factor, parody being by definition the act of playing, or "toying" with a model, with formal convention, with expectations, rituals, and habits. And here, too, one feels the presence of Montaigne, for the element of play is another notable point of affinity linking the Diary with the Essais. The play-factor, variously reflected in word lists, enumerations, and other kinds of verbal accumulations distinctly manifests itself in a number of the Frenchman's essays.³⁰

VII

Concerning the thematic aspect of the Diary, one can discern a number of main threads. The following classification has been proposed by the author himself:

- b. Commentaries on my work and my polemic with the critics.
- c. My war with literature and art in general; the attacks on pure poetry, on painting, on Paris. . . .
- d. My war against philosophy and, particularly, against Existentialism, Catholicism, Marxism and, more recently, against Structuralism.
- e. My war against Poland and secondary cultures.
- f. My observations on man, as creature and creator of Form, an inadequate, immature being.
- g. The eccentricities, the little lies, the jokes, the hoaxes - games with the reader.
- h. The pages of an exclusively artistic nature - humour and lyricism, principally.

Testament, 115-16.

As with any such dissection of a work of art, all the little a's and b's, all the individual categories, are well-mixed up in the text itself. "Every single sentence," cautions the author, "can serve several gods at the same time" (Testament, 116). In the final analysis, however, the *raison d'être* of the Diary is the question of identity. The point of departure for the numerous excursions into diverse fields of art, culture, and thought, the constant point of reference is the question, "Who am I?" The answer to this question does not exist a priori. It emerges gradually with each entry, each segment.

A seminal thematic element of the Diary is its critique of Argentinian culture. Argentina, Gombrowicz maintains,

essentially sees herself as an outpost of Europe's civilization. Such a self-image, however, does not harmonize with reality. Since she lies on the peripheries of the Western world, far removed from the cultural centers of the Old World, the civilizational impulses that emanate from those centers arrive weak and diluted at the distant outpost. Furthermore, given her unique history, particularly the experiences connected with the discovery and settlement of the New World, the resulting exotic mixture of races, and her native Indian culture, Europe cannot serve as a proper model for the culture of Argentina. Thus, the uncritical appropriation of the values, standards, and tastes of Europe greatly hampers the maturation of an authentic Argentinian--and by extension--Latin American culture. In effect, the Polish writer recommends a declaration of independence from the mother culture that would complement the political independence achieved by the various Latin American states in the last century. Gombrowicz considered Borges, with whom he was personally acquainted, as overly Europeanized in his aesthetic predilections and artistic production to effectively cut the umbilical cord.

Perhaps the most volatile thematic aspect of the Diary is that dealing with Poland. When one thinks of Gombrowicz's relationship to Poland and Polish culture, a number

of analogous cases come to mind. One thinks, for instance, of Heinrich Heine and his Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen, a poetic expression of his relationship to Germany; one thinks of Nikolai Gogol's relationship to Russia as set forth in Dead Souls; finally, one thinks of Nietzsche's relationship to German culture, that is, his Kulturkritik, e.g., as expressed in "Die Gefährdung der deutschen Kultur." The analogies reach the level of text as well as biography. In a very real sense, all of these writers were exiles. Significant too, for what it tells us about the therapeutic power of the sense of irony, an irony also directed against oneself, is the fact that Gombrowicz and Heine were spared the extreme psychic anguish which clouded the last days of Gogol and Nietzsche. In his critique of Polish culture, Gombrowicz takes a position that is of universal relevance. In a nutshell, it is a stand against both ethnocentricity and collectivism wherever these might appear and whatever form they may take.

How does Gombrowicz's Diary fit into the literature of our time? The Diary is a typical instance of "essayistic autobiography" which, as Roy Pascal hypothesizes,³¹ has become the representative form of autobiography in the realm of contemporary literature. Thus, as an "essay diary" it is intimately related to Max Frisch's Tagebuch 1946-49 and

Tagebuch 1966-71. With his Diary, Gombrowicz participates in a major concern of twentieth-century literature: the quest for authenticity. This quest has, significantly, been pursued by means of a closely related form, the diary-novel, e.g., Rilke's Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge (1910), Sartre's La Nausée (1938), and Max Frisch's Stiller (1954). As regards historical precedents, the works that come to mind are, besides Montaigne's Essais, Jan Pasek's Pamiętniki (Memoirs) (1650-1688). However, even with numerous diachronic and synchronic, thematic and formal parallels and interconnections, the fact remains that in form and spirit the Diary of Witold Gombrowicz represents a truly unique contribution to the literature of our time.

Notes

- 1 "Kundera on the Novel," The New York Times Book Review (8 January 1978), pp. 3 and 40-41.
- 2 Carlos Fuentes, La nueva novela hispano-americana (Mexico City: Editorial Mortiz, 1969), pp. 20-22; 38-39.
- 3 Krystyna Schmidt, Der Stil von Witold Gombrowicz' Trans-Atlantyk und sein Verhältnis zur polnischen literarischen Tradition (Meisenheim am Glan, Verlag Anton Hain, 1974).
- 4 Kultura, 9 (Jan. 1957), p. 36.
- 5 Kultura, 248/249 (June-July 1968), p. 181.
- 6 Ansichten zur Literatur der Zeit (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1962), p. 289.
- 7 Telegram (Zagreb), No. 377, 1967, n.p.
- 8 Dziennik I (Paris: Institut Litteraire, 1971), p. 235.
- 9 The basis for this reconstruction comes from Gombrowicz' remarks in A Kind of Testament (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1973), p. 109. All further references to this work appear in the text.
- 10 The notes in the Gesammelte Werke, II, shed much light on Peter Suhrkamp's involvement in the genesis of the Tagebuch 1946-1949. There we read:
 Am 25. 11. 1947. besuchte M. F. die
 Premiere von Carl Zuckmayers Des Teufels
 General in Frankfurt. Nach der Aufführung
 lernte M. F. den Verleger Peter Suhrkamp
 kennen. Suhrkamp regte an, Frisch solle das
Tagebuch mit Marion fortsetzen. Der bisherige
 Verleger M. F.'s . . . war für den Plan nicht
 zu gewinnen. Ab August 1947 setzte M. F. das
 Tagebuch fort; das Manuskript ging am 16. I.
 1950 an den Suhrkamp Verlag . . . ab.

And in his letter of 17 May 1950 to Peter Suhrkamp and Dr. Gottfried Bermann Fischer Frisch explicitly notes the decisive role played by Peter Suhrkamp in the evolution of the Tagebuch 1946-1949. Frisch writes:

da es Herr Peter Suhrkamp gewesen ist, der sich seit mehr als zwei Jahren, bevor wir in persönlicher Bekanntschaft standen, mit meinen bereits veröffentlichten Arbeiten befasst und dann insbesondere die Entstehung meines Tagebuches das sich zur Zeit im Druck befindet, eigentlich angeregt hat, erscheint es mir selbstverständlich, dass ich das genannte Buch, im Sinne des unterzeichneten Vertrages, an den in Gründung befindlichen Suhrkamp Verlag gebe.

(Gesammelte Werke, II, 776)

The Tagebuch 1946-1949 first appeared in September 1950, published by the Suhrkamp Verlag.

¹¹ Karl Jaspers, Die geistige Situation der Zeit (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1953), p. 209.

¹² Die geistige Situation der Zeit, p. 180.

¹³ Die geistige Situation der Zeit, pp. 174-5.

¹⁴ Kultura (December 1953), p. 24. The quotation from Jaspers with Gombrowicz's "postscript" were not included in the book-form edition of the Diary.

¹⁵ Ferdydurke (New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 9. In this novel, the dual of grimaces between Mientus and Siphon is one of numerous episodes that graphically illustrate the theme of mutual "image-making." Here, we have a striking echo of Frisch's explorations of the same theme. In Andorra, to name but the most explicit case, as well as in his Tagebuch 1946-1949, Frisch continually concerns himself with the ramifications of the Biblical injunction: "Man soll keine Bilder machen."

¹⁶ Between Man and Man (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 203.

¹⁷ The Marriage, trans. Louis Iribarne (New York: Grove Press, 1969), p. 15.

18 See pp. 42, 97, 107 in A Kind of Testament; the author's "Introduction" to Pornografia, p. 10; the "Introduction" to Operetta, p. 8; Dziennik III, p. 174 (on Kosmos).

19 The problem of parody in Gombrowicz's works is the subject of brief studies by Michał Głowiński and David Brodsky. Głowiński focuses on the function of parody in the novel, Pornografia ("Parodia Konstruktywna--o Pornografii Gombrowicza" (Twórczość, 1973, No. 1, 69-82). Brodsky examines the element of parody in Trans-Atlantyck and in the story, "Premeditated Crime." (In his paper presented at the 1977 Convention of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages.) See also Karl Dedecius, "Ein Drama als Parodie eines Dramas," Akzente, 18, No. 4 (1971), 296-309.

20 By Christian Dietrich Grabbe.

21 Goethe, Schriften zur Morphologie, Vol. 18 of Gesamtausgabe der Werke und Schriften (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1959), pp. 76-88.

22 In his monograph, The Mythopoeic Reality; the Postwar Non-Fiction Novel (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1976), pp. 38-41, Mas'ud Zavarzadeh sets up a typology of post-modernist narrative forms in which the phenomenon of "metafiction" occupies an important place. In Zavarzadeh's system, the writings of John Barth, Donald Barthelme, Robert Coover, and Gombrowicz exemplify "metafiction." Furthermore, parody is isolated as a definitive feature of the metafictionist's method. Zavarzadeh writes:

the most radical narrative idioms for articulating the agitating content of today's extreme situation have developed in the form of "transfiction" and the "nonfiction novel" . . . from an historical perspective one may see these two forms arising from the disintegration of the narrative, descriptive, and discursive components of the classic novel.

"Transfiction" is a type of narrative which is constructed upon the process of what might be called, in terms of the poetics of the Russian Formalists, a baring of literary devices: unmasking narrative conventions and turning them into counterconventions in order to shatter the illusion of reality which is the aesthetic foundation of the totalizing novel. This use of countertechniques played off against a background of conventional devices in transfiction creates a narrative tension which varies in degree according to the different modes of

transfiction ranging from "metafiction" through "surfiction" to "science fiction."

"Metafiction" is ultimately a narrational metatheorem whose subject matter is fictional systems themselves and the molds through which reality is patterned by narrative conventions. . . . Metafiction, more than other modes of transfiction, is conscious of its own fictivity and, in contrast to the interpretive novel, which operates with aesthetic assumptions of verisimilitude, exults over its own fictitiousness, which it uses as the very terms of its narrative ontology--it is a "mask which points to itself." . . . This intense self-reflexiveness of metafiction is caused by the fact that the only certain reality for the metafictionist is the reality of his own discourse, thus, his fiction turns in upon itself, transforming the process of writing into the subject of writing. The credibility of fiction, therefore, is itself. The main countertechniques of metafiction are two-dimensional, flat characterization, consciously contrived plots, and paralogical, noncausal, and anti-linear sequences of events, all of which are carried out in a highly fore-grounded language embedded in a counterhumor that is nondidactic, distancing, and not "concerned about what to do about life but how to take it." Through an extravagant over-totalization and mock interpretation of the human condition, the metafictionist accentuates the arbitrariness of uniting the elements of a disjunctive universe into a significant whole. His over-totalizing approaches a parody of the ordered, causal, and realistically performed interpretation of the fictive novelist. By substituting parody of interpretation for straight interpretation, the metafictionist demonstrates the confusing multiplicity of reality and thus the naivete involved in attempting to reach a total synthesis of life within narrative. The metafictionist's over-totalization, consequently, creates a work with low-message value at the zero degree of interpretation, thus freeing the narrative from an anthropomorphic order-hunting and insuring that, as Barthelme says, there is nothing between the lines but white spaces. Barthelme's (and the metafictionist's) attitude echoes Witold Gombrowicz's concept of the mocking of meaning and his advice to his readers (in

Ferdydurke) to "start dancing with the book instead of asking for meaning."

Concerning Gombrowicz, parody, and the question of "post-modernism," see also the suggestive study by Ihab Hassan, Paracriticisms: Seven Speculations of the Times (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1975), esp. p. 86.

23 Johann Huizinga, Homo Ludens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), pp. 8-9.

24 Huizinga, pp. 166-67.

25 Huizinga, p. 120.

26 Huizinga, p. 120.

27 Huizinga, p. 120.

28 Huizinga, p. 122.

29 Huizinga, p. 105.

30 I cite only two of the more prominent instances:
 Quoy des mains? nous requerons, nous promettons, appellons, congedions, menaçons, prions, supplions, nions, refusons, interrogeons, admirons, mobrons, confessons, repentons, craignons, vergoignons, doubtons, intruisons, commandons, incitons, encourageons, jurons, temoignons, accusons, condammons, absolvons, injurions, mesprions, deffions, despitons, flattons, applaudissons, benissons, humilions, moquons, reconcilions, recommandons, exaltons, festoyons, resjouissons, complaignons, attristons, desconfortons, desesperons, estonnons, escrions, taisons; et quoy non? d'une variation et multiplication à l'envy de la langue. De la teste : nous convions, nous renvoyons, advoüons, desadvoüons, desmentons, bienveignons, honorons, venerons, desdaignons, demandons, esconduisons, égayons, lamentons, caressons, tansons, soubmettons, bravons, enhortons, menaçons assureons, enquerons.

Essais I, 498.

Honteux, insolent; chaste, luxurieux;
bavard, taciturne; laborieux, delicat;
ingenieux, hebetes; chagrin, debonaire;
menteur, veritable; sçavant, ignorant,
et liberal, et avare, et prodigue, tout
cela, je la vois en moy aucunement, selon
que je me vire.

Essais I, 370.

³¹ Design and Truth in Autobiography (Cambridge: Harvard
Univ. Press, 1960), p. 56.

CHAPTER III

FRISCH'S MONTAUK AND MONTAIGNE

In Chapter III the interconnections of Gombrowicz's Diary and Montaigne's Essais were established. The purpose of this chapter is to expose, by way of an investigation of Frisch's Montauk,¹ the interrelatedness of Frisch's diaristic mode of writing with Montaigne's conception of writing as manifested in and by the Essais. Montauk, published in 1975, thus after both Tagebuch 1946-1949 (1950) and Tagebuch 1966-1971 (1972), palpably evinces the decisive impact of the diary-form on Frisch's narrative style.

I

Both Frisch and Gombrowicz are highly self-conscious writers, who frequently engage in what may be termed meta-literature. One finds in their works a continual reflection upon the nature of literary art and upon their particular style of literary expression, their own methods,

techniques, and devices, their own artistic visions. As regards Gombrowicz, the segments of self-commentary in his first major success, the novel, Ferdydurke (1938), serve as a forum for settling accounts with the self-proclaimed guardians of culture or "cultural aunts." This self-commentary continues in the later Diary (1957, 1962, 1966), in numerous interviews and pseudo-interviews, and in the Conversations with Dominique de Roux (1968). Similarly, in each of the successive narrative works published by Max Frisch one discerns a process of self-discovery propelled by the ongoing introspective interpretation of his writing craft and of his role as a writer on the contemporary literary scene. The Tagebuch 1946-1949 and Tagebuch 1966-1971 are especially rich in such self-reflexiveness. In the later works, too, like Mein Name sei Gantenbein (1964) and Montauk (1975), there is a sharpened self-definition, a refined awareness of his craft. It is precisely this common meta-literary thrust--or, as it has been called, their "autotemática"²--that forms the rationale for their inclusion in at least one comparative study devoted to contemporary narrative techniques.³

Frisch considers his art quintessentially autobiographical and he explicates its autobiographical character vis-à-vis opposing contemporaneous varieties of literary

orientation. In the novel, Mein Name sei Gantenbein (1964),⁴ for instance, he defends the I-oriented nature of his writings in the face of the current vogue for committed literature:

Manchmal scheint auch mir, dass jedes Buch, so es sich nicht befasst mit der Verhinderung des Kriegs, mit der Schaffung einer besseren Gesellschaft und so weiter, sinnlos ist, müssig, unverantwortlich, langweilig, nicht wert, dass man es liest, unstatthaft. Es ist nicht die Zeit für Ich-Geschichten. Und doch vollzieht sich das menschliche Leben oder verfehlt sich am einzelnen Ich, nirgends sonst.

Mein Name sei Gantenbein, 103.

The ultimate value of Frisch's autobiographic excursions, of his "Ich-Geschichten," rests on the conviction that, regardless of the demands of society or of the times, it is the solitary self that inevitably bears the burden for its fulfillment or for its defeat. It is the accounts that the "I" must make to itself that form the themes of Frisch's "Ich-Geschichten."

Montauk is particularly rich in reflections by the first-person narrator (who is a writer) upon the problem of writing. Indeed, the problem of self-expression forms one of the major thematic moments of this narrative. The first-person narrator recalls, at one point, the purchase of a typewriter, a purchase made, as he puts it, "ohne literarische Absicht" (Montauk, 21). The typewriter triggers a related, less pleasant, recollection:

Eine literarische Erzählung, die im Tessin spielt, ist zum vierten Mal missraten; die Erzähler-position überzeugt nicht.

Montauk, 21.

Implicit here is the distinction between the purely "literary story" which did not succeed and the narrative at hand, Montauk itself. A definitive feature of Frisch's and Gombrowicz's narrative method as evinced by their stories and novels, as well as by their diaries is the continual dissolution of the boundary between fiction and nonfiction generated by the autobiographical impulse, to discover oneself and to express that discovery faithfully. This re-crossing of the fiction--non-fiction frontier is especially apparent in each author's relatively unmasked entry into his narrative. The hero of Montauk, who is also its narrator and happens to be a writer, delimits the object of his undertaking as follows:

Ich möchte diesen Tag beschreiben, nichts als diesen Tag, unser Wochenende und wie's dazu gekommen ist, wie es weiter verläuft. Ich möchte erzählen können, ohne irgendetwas dabei zu erfinden. Eine einfältige Erzähler-Position.

Montauk, 82.

The writer-narrator of Montauk seeks after an a-fictional technique, or, at least, one that minimizes fictionalization. The requisite point of view, as it materializes in

Montauk, resembles Gombrowicz's lapses from first to third person in his Diary (see Chapter II, p. 79 ff). Frisch likewise employs a technique involving an alternation between the first- and third-person narrative viewpoints. However, as in Gombrowicz's case, both the "ich" and "er" narrators, though intensionally different, extensionally remain the same; both constitute referents of one and the same empirical entity whose identity is often explicitly suggested by the name, "Max." This peculiar handling of point-of-view, which suggests the status of the "I" as, at one and the same time, observor and observed, as subject and object, as "I" and "It" in Buber's system, results in a telescoping of perspectives as in the following fragment:

MAX, YOU ARE A FORTUNATE MAN
sagt Lynn, nachdem er, um nicht über Meilen hin zu schweigen, wieder einmal die Geschichte erzählt hat, wie ich das Gast-Apartment der Marlene Dietrich bekommen habe, 1963, eine wahre Geschichte zum leichten Lachen. . . . Er ist diese automatische Schaltung nicht gewöhnt. Es ist kinderleicht; er fährt schon zwei Stunden oder länger, man sieht bereits die grauen Umrisse von Manhattan und wieder diesen endlosen Friedhof bei Queens, als sein linker Fuss vergessen hat: Keine Kupplung, das ist die Bremse, und es ist ein Glück, dass Lynn sich angeschnallt hat; ein zweites Glück dass der Fahrer des nächsten Wagens grad noch ausscheren kann vor dem plötzlich gestoppten Ford. . . . Das wäre es: zwei Verkehrstote, eine junge Amerikanerin (die genauen Personalien) und ein älterer Schweizer (die genauen Personalien), ihr Wochenende an der Küste wäre erzählbar, unser Wochenende.

Montauk, 165-66 (emphasis mine)

Straddling as it does the border separating autobiographical fact and the fiction that attends every act of narration, indeed, which inheres in the very act of expression, Montauk typifies that tension between the living and the literary that marks the literature of the self.⁵ The literary artist seeking to portray himself faces a difficult dilemma. The only constant in life is flux, change occurring from moment to moment. Yet, the expressible, once expressed, inevitably ceases to change, that is, in a sense ceases to live ("zwei Verkehrstote"). The struggle with this dilemma lies at the heart of such works as Montauk and Frisch's Tagebücher. To resolve it, that is, to portray an ever-evolving self, Frisch enlists a narrative strategy that does justice to the moment. His technique is programmatically diaristic: it involves a process of reconstructing experience, indeed, of creating experience, by means of reconstructing the moment. "Er ist froh um jede Gegenwart," says Frisch of 'Max.' "Er achtet auf alles, was grad zu sehen ist. Er will keine Memoiren. Er will den Augenblick" (Montauk, 158). In the final instance, Frisch's technique becomes a process of fashioning the self by means of reconstructing moments of the self's experience. "Ich mache Erfahrungen," writes the I-narrator, "nur noch wenn ich schreibe" (Montauk, 12).

Towards the end of Montauk, the first-person narrator settles upon a final resolution to his desire simply to describe a weekend "without in the process inventing anything," that is, without "fictionalizing." Referring to the "I" character, this time in the third person, Frisch's account of the resolution betrays both the sense of relief that comes with the resolution of any nagging problem and the certainty at having reached a satisfactory answer: confidence conveyed by the hypotactic ordering of the clauses beginning with "ohne":

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heisst also der kleine Ort, wo er gestern beschlossen hat, dieses Wochenende zu erzählen: autobiographisch, ja, autobiographisch. Ohne Personagen zu erfinden; ohne Ereignisse zu erfinden, die exemplarischer sind als seine Wirklichkeit; ohne auszuweichen in Erfindungen. Ohne seine Schriftstellerei zu rechtfertigen durch Verantwortung gegenüber der Gesellschaft; ohne Botschaft. Er hat keine und lebt trotzdem. Er möchte bloss erzählen (nicht ohne alle Rücksicht auf die Menschen, die er beim Namen nennt): sein Leben.

Montauk, 155.

What is emphasized here is the decisive rejection of fiction. However, in literature as pronouncedly "I"-directed as Frisch's and Gombrowicz's, the question of fiction versus nonfiction becomes more than a simple option between the employment of two alternate modes of writing. What distinguishes literature engendered by the

question of and the quest for identity is the merging of the categories of fiction--nonfiction. This merging has an ontological analogue in the fictional nature of the existence of the self. "The self," writes J. F. MacCannell, "is a hypothesis, a fiction that exists, as do all fictions, in the manner of its presentation. Its mode, that of the as if, suspends from the outset questions of definite knowledge."⁵ MacCannell points out how such a state of affairs relates to literature. "The self exists, in sum, by virtue of its 'author's' and its 'audiences'' concurrent entrance into what we may call the literary dimension."⁶ In Montauk Frisch expresses this intersection of literature with life, that is, the fictional mode of existence of the self and the fictionalizing tendency of literature in a passage signalled by a quotation from Mein Name sei Gantenbein. The hypothetical or fictional mode of existence of the self, its "als ob" nature, is, of course, intimated by the subjunctive "sei" in the title of the earlier novel which also explores the problem of identity. The passage reads:

ICH PROBIERE GESCHICHTEN AN WIE KLEIDER
 Immer öfter erschreckt mich irgendeine
 Erinnerung, meistens sind es Erinnerungen,
 die eigentlich nicht schrecklich sind;
 viel Bagatellen, nicht wert, dass ich sie
 erzähle in der Küche oder als Beifahrer.

Es erschreckt mich nur die Entdeckung:
 Ich habe mich in diesen Geschichten
 entblösst, ich weiss, bis zur Unkennt-
 lichkeit. Ich lebe nicht mit der eignen
 Geschichte, nur mit Teilen davon, die
 ich habe literarisieren können. Es
 fehlen ganze Bezirke: der Vater, der
 Bruder, die Schwester. Im vergangenen
 Jahr ist meine Schwester gestorben.
 Ich bin betroffen gewesen, wieviel ich
 von ihr weiss; nichts davon habe ich je
 geschrieben. Es stimmt nicht einmal,
 dass ich immer nur mich selbst beschrie-
 ben habe. Ich habe mich selbst nie
 beschrieben. Ich habe mich nur verraten.
Montauk, 156.

Disaffection with life-become-literature, with the
literary story as distinguished from the writer's (the
 "I's") real story effects a continual search for the
 story that fits the self's unique reality. This search
 involves a process that is programmatically essayistic:
 a process of "try-outs" as connoted by the word "probieren."

II

For all its innovativeness, Frisch's intensely I-
 directed conception of the function and capacity of
 literary art does not arise in a vacuum, is not without
 precedents in the history of literature. And in Montauk,
 Frisch explicitly acknowledges his ancestry. The text
 yields two key assertions--typographically set apart by
 spacing and capitalization--referring back to the work itself:

DIES IST EIN AUFRICHTIGES BUCH, LESER
Montauk, 197.

.
 MEINE FEHLER WIRD MAN HIER FINDEN
Montauk, 94.

These assertions are fragments from the motto to Montauk which consists of an edited German rendition of Montaigne's famous preface to his Essais. Frisch appropriates the Frenchman's cautionary note to his readers:

Dies ist ein aufrichtiges Buch, Leser, es warnt dich schon beim Eintritt, dass ich mir darin kein anderes Ende vorgesetzt habe als ein häusliches und privates . . . Ich habe es dem persönlichen Gebrauch meiner Freunde und Angehörigen gewidmet, auf dass sie, wenn sie mich verloren haben, darin einige Züge meiner Lebensart und meiner Gemütsverfassung wiederfinden . . . denn ich bin es, den ich darstelle. Meine Fehler wird man hier finden, so wie sie sind, und mein unbefangenes Wesen, so weit es nur die öffentliche Schicklichkeit erlaubt . . . So bin ich selber, Leser, der einzige Inhalt meines Buches, es ist nicht billig, dass du deine Musse auf einen so eitlen und geringfügigen Gegenstand verwendest./ Mit Gott denn, zu Montaigne, am ersten März 1580.

Montauk, 5.

Thus, allusions to Michel de Montaigne and his Essais, as it were, infuse the narrative, coming at the very beginning, the middle, and toward the end of the text. Moreover, these allusions situate Montauk, and specifically the problem of expression that not only forms

one of its major thematic elements, but also one of the pivotal concerns of all of Frisch's writings, in a clearly defined literary tradition--namely, that of "essayistic autobiography."⁷ Furthermore, if one takes the motto as the beginning of the book, it is possible, in linking Montauk with Montaigne, to start before the beginning, so to speak, that is, with the very title. Even if the obvious identity of the first five letters of "Montauk"⁸ and "Montaigne," as well as the close resemblance of the first phonemic units of the two words should be but an accident, it remains one of those fortunate coincidences that make for the peculiar charm and appeal of art.

III

The narrative structure of Montauk is one which directly descends from the Tagebuch 1946-1949 and Tagebuch 1966-1971 and thus attests to the persistence of the diary form as the definitive mode of Frisch's narrative works. It may be compared to a tapestry woven from a number of thematic strands. One of these, as pointed out, was the problem of expression. Another thematic

strand, one that reflects the impact of Montaigne's Essais, comprises a network of introspective segments signalled by a series of recurrent pointed queries and assertions of which the following are examples:

MAX, YOU ARE A LIAR	<u>Montauk</u> , 52
MAX, YOU ARE A MONSTER	p. 79
MAX, YOU ARE WRONG	p. 161
MAX, YOU ARE A FORTUNATE MAN	p. 165
MAX, DID YOU LOVE YOUR MOTHER?	
YOU DIDN'T LIKE YOUR FATHER	
YOU ARE VERY FOND OF YOUR CHILDREN?	
MAX, ARE YOU JEALOUS?	pp. 120-21

[The use of English, which starkly contrasts with the German of the main text, serves, together with capitalization and spacing, to call attention to changes in theme and tone.] In a segment that forms part of this introspective strand and that closely resembles the intimate listings of physiognomic idiosyncracies sprinkled throughout the Essais,⁹ the narrator provides a glimpse of one of his own physiognomic peculiarities and speculates about its implication:

MAX, WHAT IS YOUR STATE OF MIND?

Ein Zug von Trübsinn, den fast jedes Foto zeigt, missfällt mir seit eh und je. Das kommt von einer Lähmung der Augenlider, was zudem, ich weiss, einen Ausdruck von Suffisance ergibt. Die Lähmung der Augenlider kommt daher, dass ich als Bub, als ich die Masern hatte und im Halbdunkel liegen sollte, insgeheim mit Hilfe einer Taschenlampe stundenlang unter der Bettdecke gelesen habe, DON QUIXOTE. Später wurden die Augenlider behandelt zwei Mal wöchentlich . . . Diese Augenlider (als sei der Blick stets gesenkt: misstrauisch, spöttisch) gehören zu meiner Physiognomie--ich habe als Schüler erfahren, wie sie den einen und andern Lehrer verdrossen hat: ein mässiger Schüler und eine solche Arroganz. . . . Die Physiognomie aber ist geblieben, ihre Wirkung; ich erfahre davon, wenn jemand bei näherer Bekanntschaft sich wundert, dass ich eigentlich nicht arrogant sei. Diese Entdeckung erleichtert den andern mehr als mich. Ich sehe daraus: ich muss auf der Hut sein, ich muss besonders bescheiden sein. Ein natürlicher Stolz, ausgesprochen mit dieser meiner Physiognomie, muss als Arroganz erscheinen. Also gebe ich mich jovial-bescheiden, und wenn der andere darauf nicht eingehen mag, so betreibe ich Selbstbeziehung.

Montauk, 156-57.

Four other fragments signalled by the superscript, "MY LIFE AS A MAN," form a distinctive facet of Montauk's introspective strand. In this series of fragments the I-narrator, playing on the strictly sexual sense of the phrase, "MY LIFE AS A MAN," sketches certain aspects of his relationship to the opposite sex, a subject which constitutes one of the dominant concerns of Frisch's writings. The second and third fragment of this series open as follows:

MY LIFE AS A MAN:
wenn ich zufällig, in einem Konzert-Foyer
zum Biespiel, die Mutter meiner Kinder sehe.

Montauk, 111

MY LIFE AS A MAN:
manchmal meine ich sie zu verstehen, die
Frauen, und im Anfang gefällt ihnen meine
Erfindung, mein Entwurf zu ihrem Wesen.
p. 118

The fourth and final fragment opens with an allusion to the theme of self-discovery introduced in the first fragment of this series:

MY LIFE AS A MAN:
Nach Jahren sehe ich mich und erkenne mich
nicht.

p. 152

The theme of self-discovery expressed here echoes the first fragment of this series which provides a laconic manifesto of Frisch's vision of writing and literature. After earlier asserting: "der Schriftsteller . . . erlebt ungern, was er keinesfalls in Worte bringen kann" (Montauk, 16), the I-narrator declares: "Ich möchte wissen, was ich, schreibend unter Kunstzwang, erfahre über mein Leben als Mann" (Montauk, 24). Thus, for Frisch, the critical import of the act of writing rests in its self-revelatory power. This is a distinctly Montaigne-esque conception of literary art.

Despite the considerable interval of time, there is substantive affinity¹⁰ between the Essais of the sixteenth-century Frenchman who "discovered man"¹¹ and the twentieth-

century Swiss writer who has persistently pursued the question of personal identity in his diaristic narratives. For Frisch, as for Montaigne, self-expression is closely linked with the quest for personal identity. Of his Essais, the Frenchman said: "Je n'ay pas plus faict mon livre que m'on livre m'a faict, livre consubstantiel à son autheur" (Essais II, 18); Frisch postulates: "eigentlich sind nicht wir es, die schreiben; sondern wir werden geschrieben. . . . Wir können nur, indem wir den Zickzack unser jeweiligen Gedanken bezeugen und sichtbar machen, unser Wesen kennenlernen" (Tagebuch I, 22). In other words, both Montaigne and Frisch expropriate the fact that self-expression inevitably results in self-revelation. Writing, for both, constitutes a means to self-discovery, literature becomes a tool in the struggle for self-knowledge. It was Montaigne who institutionalized the form of the essay as an effective medium for sketching the outlines of the writer's self; with Montaigne the form of the essay assumed the character of a test or trial of judgment. With Frisch, who comes after Freud and Husserl, the essay becomes a test of consciousness and in this capacity informs the diary entry, the basic unit of his narrative structures. For both the French essayist

and the Swiss diarist, the guiding imperative of life as well as of literature is the struggle with the Delphic injunction, "Know thyself." Both respond to this command by a concerted effort at self-representation. And both are quick to defend their common conception of literature. Montaigne declares: "Si le monde se plaint de quoy je parle trop de moy, je me plains de quoy il ne pense seulement pas à soy" (Essais, II, 223). Frisch insists: "Und doch vollzieht sich das menschliche Leben oder verfehlt am eigenen Ich, nirgends sonst" (Gantenbein, 103)

Notes

¹ Frankfurt an Main: Suhrkamp, 1975. All references are to this edition and are placed in parentheses following the citation from, or reference to, the text.

² The autothematic element involves "the exposition in the work itself of the creative process and its incorporation into the course of events narrated." George R. McMurray in his review [*World Literature Today*, No. 2 (1973), p. 227] of José Emilio Osses' Algunos aspectos en la narrativa contemporánea Frisch-Cortazar-Jens-Gombrowicz (Santiago Andrés Bello, 1971).

³ José Emilio Osses, Algunos aspectos en la narrativa contemporánea Frisch-Cortazar-Jens-Gombrowicz (Santiago Andrés Bello, 1971). Osses focuses on Frisch's Gantenbein and Gombrowicz's Diario argentino.

⁴ Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1974. All further references to this work are to the 1974 edition and appear in the text.

⁵ Juliet Flower MacCannell, "Nature and Self-Love: A Re-interpretation of Rousseau's 'Passion Primitive.'" PMLA 92 (1977), 900.

⁶ MacCannell, p. 900.

⁷ Roy Pascal, Design and Truth in Autobiography (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), p. 56.

⁸ "Montauk" designates the spot on the easternmost tip of Long Island where the narrative is set. The location has an important symbolic significance. Pointing, as it does, toward the "Old World" it forms a physical counterpart to the direction which the old man's thoughts take. "Max's" mind moves back and forth between the present, that is, Montauk, America, and the young woman, Lynn, and the past, which means, for the most part, Europe. Indeed, one of

"Max's" reminiscences concerns a past visit to a beach in Brittany: Le Mont Saint Michel (see Montauk, 158-60). This recollection forms, as it were, a counterpoint, a miniature mirror image of the present experience at Montauk.

It should be noted that the theme of the Old World versus the New World (as well as of the old order versus the new order) plays an important role in the works of Frisch as well as Gombrowicz. It thus forms a further link between these two writers. One might also note that the very situation--an old man trying to relate to a young woman--distinctly echoes Gombrowicz's concern with the problem of the relationship between old and young [see Chapter II, p. 86 ff.), especially the excerpt from the Diary which reads: "Gombrowicz, im Schach des herannahenden Alters, suchte gewaltsam nach Rettung" (Tagebuch II, 134)].

⁹ As, for instance, in the essay, "De la praesumption," Essais II, 42-43, where the same kind of juxtaposition of external features and internal state is drawn.

¹⁰ Regarding Montauk, one critic has said: "Was Montaigne geplant hatte, will Frisch nachvollziehen: die vollkommene Aufrichtigkeit, die Identität von Leben und Literatur" [Hans Mayer, "Die Geheimnisse jedweden Mannes," in Über Max Frisch II, ed. Walter Schmitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1976), pp. 443-44].

¹¹ One of the major studies of Montaigne is Donald Frame's Montaigne's Discovery of Man. The Humanization of a Humanist (New York. Columbia Univ. Press, 1955)..

CHAPTER IV

THE DIARY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EXPRESSION:

FRISCH'S BLÄTTER AUS DEM BROTSACK,TAGEBUCH 1946-1949, AND TAGEBUCH 1966-1971

The discussion of parody in Gombrowicz's Diary yielded the self-conscious attention to the issue of expression as a major concern of that work. In his consideration of the problem of expression Gombrowicz alluded to the Biblical phrase. "The Word was made flesh." In his Tagebuch 1946-1949 Frisch considers the closely related Biblical excerpt: "Im Anfang war das Wort" (Tagebuch I, 33). Frisch's diaries will here be examined in terms of their treatment of the problems of language and expression.

I

Wittgenstein maintains: "Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen."¹ Stiller, the hero of Max Frisch's novel, asserts: "Wir haben die Sprache, um stumm zu werden" (Stiller, 249).² One of the dominant concerns of twentieth-century art and thought is the problem of expression.³ It entails an acute

sensitivity to the limits and limitations of language as well as an awareness of the disconcerting inadequacy of language as a vehicle of communication and expression. Just after the turn of the century, Hugo von Hofmannsthal in his Chandos-Brief gave stark testimony to the artist suffering from what has come to be known as "language sickness."⁴ "Es ist mir völlig die Fähigkeit abhanden gekommen, über irgend etwas zusammenhängend zu denken oder zu sprechen," confesses Lord Chandos.⁵ The persistent concern with the problem of expression manifests itself in the pervasive dissatisfaction with the inherited media of expression of art and philosophy. It is particularly apparent in the spirited experimentation with literary genres as well as in the abundant new insights of language philosophy.

The Chandos-Brief was published in 1902. In a letter written in 1903 by another subject of the Doppelmonarchie the question of expression is fused with the fathomless mystery of the self. Writing to Oskar Pollak, Kafka ponders·

Wenn Du vor mir stehst und mich ansiehst,
was weisst du von den Schmerzen, die in
mir sind und was weiss ich von den Deinen.
Und wenn ich mich vor Dir niederwerfen
würde and weinen und erzählen, was wüsstest
Du von mir mehr als von der Hölle, wenn Dir
jemand erzählt, sie ist heiss und fürchter-
lich.⁶

Here, the problem of expression becomes a problem of autobiography. In the case of Max Frisch, the fusion approaches a tautology, for, as the present-day Swiss writer postulates, "Schreiben heisst sich selber lesen" (Tagebuch I, 22). the act of expression goes hand in hand with the process of self-discovery. Stiller, who keeps a diary in order to escape the prisonhouse of the self, declares: "Wer schweigt, hat nicht einmal eine Ahnung, wer er nicht ist" (Stiller, p. 249). Frisch's diaristic works, the Blätter aus dem Brotsack, the Tagebuch 1946-1949, and the Tagebuch 1966-1971, are concerted attempts at resolving a language crisis as well as a crisis of identity.

II

Frisch underwent a crisis of serious proportions in his life as a literary artist. His youthful works consisted of Stahl, a play, and Jürg Reinhart (1934), a novel thematically romantic and stylistically couched in lyrical prose. In 1937 he burned all his manuscripts, took an oath to cease writing, and held to it for a full two years. Significantly, it was with the help of the diary form that he gradually worked his way out of his crisis. His first renewed attempt at writing was the Blätter aus dem Brotsack

(1940), written during his service in the Swiss army. Then came the Tagebuch mit Marion (1947) and the Tagebuch 1946-1949 (1950). Even in dramas like Biografie, Ein Spiel (1967) the impact of the diary form is unmistakable. Frisch himself attests to the decisive position of the diary form in his writings: "Die Tagebuchform ist eigentümlich für den Verfasser meines Names. . . . Ich habe keine Wahl."⁷ Even in his pre-crisis period one can see the seeds of the later pre-eminence of the diary. In the 1930s Frisch worked as a journalist, and in this capacity made numerous trips outside Switzerland. Out of his vocation and excursions came a steady stream of travel sketches. Thus, already in his youthful works there emerge the two constants of his later diaristic activity: travel and reportage

Blätter aus dem Brotsack (1940) is the first work to appear after the book-burning episode in Frisch's life. It marks a turning point in his career as a writer. It is the first instance in Frisch's oeuvre of an extended and consistent use of the diary form. Articulated here in embryo form are those attitudes, dispositions, viewpoints, and orientations that will remain with him throughout his career and that will form the cornerstone of his world view and of his art. Perhaps the most important of these is the theme of identity which is first forcefully voiced here. The soldier Frisch writes:

Für uns alle, glaube ich, bleibt in der Stunde, wo es wirklich losgeht, noch immer der ganze Schock, und keiner kann sagen, was und wer er dann, in jenem Augenblick, sein wird. Nur eins ist gewiss. ehrlich werden wir sein, vielleicht zum erstenmal, ohne Maske, ohne erlernte Gebärden. Wir sagen Krieg, aber im Grunde ist es immer nur das eigene Gesicht, was wir fürchten, vielleicht mehr noch als den Tod, der uns auch zu Hause gewiss ist.

Blätter, 63.

The notion of the mask which hides the true face and under which man, with the help of all those gestures acquired in the course of social interaction, ceaselessly plays his roles becomes in the Tagebuch 1946-1949 the thematic basis of the recurring Marion fragments. The condition of crisis, an extreme, external form of which is represented by war, carries with it the prospect of clarifying identity. War represents one type of "shock treatment" which forces a participant to come face to face with himself. It neutralizes the marionette-like responses conditioned by everyday life, and strips away the masks accumulated by daily social roles. The shock of discovering who one really is, of glimpsing one's true identity, if only for a moment, may be more of a trauma than physical combat itself. The perspective of the soldier-observer is replaced in the later diaries by the perspective of the traveler-observer who, by virtue of a changing environment, learns more and more

of himself. In other words, culture shock generated by travel replaces the condition of combat shock, especially in the Tagebuch 1946-1949, much of which arose in conjunction with Frisch's travels in immediate postwar Europe.

The significance of travel for Frisch lies not primarily in the knowledge acquired of different places, people, and cultures. Rather, travel serves as occasion and impetus for clarifying preconceptions ("Bilder") and perceptions, for testing consciousness, for discovering more and more of the traveler-observer's authentic identity. A hint of the centrality of travel in Frisch's approach to life, of travel as metaphor for life, is provided in the Blätter aus dem Brotsack:

wandern und nicht verweilen, wandern von
Stadt zu Stadt von Ziel zu Ziel, von Mensch
zu Mensch, immerfort wandern und weitergehen,
auch da wo man liebt und gerne bliebe, auch
da, wo das Herz bricht, wenn man weitergeht
. . . und auf keine Zukunft sich verträsten,
ganz und gar die Gegenwart empfinden als ein
immer Vergängliches . . . und so ein ganzes
Dasein lang . . . und alles nur erobern, um
es zu verlieren, und immer weitergehen, von
Abschied zu Abschied

Blätter, 27

Thus, in this earliest manifestation of the diaristic narrative style which will distinguish his "post-crisis" narrative works, in this first work to break his vow to write no more, Frisch gives expression to that "Fernweh"

which distinguishes his works from the "Heimweh" that typifies the achievement of the classic Swiss writers.⁸ Travel has remained a permanent feature of Frisch's life and art, and definitively determines the structure of his diaries which, in many respects, are a form of "Reiseliteratur." Exterior journeying becomes an objective correlative of the more fundamental "journey into the interior." A central component of this process is the ongoing attempt at optimum perception or the endeavor "ganz und gar die Gegenwart empfinden."

The germ of Frisch's attitude toward society and, concomitantly, his role as a writer also emerges in the Blätter aus dem Brotsack. As a member of the Swiss Army, a microcosm in which the social and regional differentiation of Switzerland was more sharply defined, and as a soldier on active duty at a time when most of the world was in a state of war, the young Frisch had a unique opportunity to observe, examine, and articulate his perception of social and historical questions. Out of his position came the awareness of the danger of unthinking patriotism. "Wir werden unser Vaterland lieben und es verteidigen, niemals es anbeten" (Blätter, 14), he concludes. Frisch would later look upon Switzerland not so much as his "Vaterland" but as his "Heimat," a

notion somewhat less emotionally charged. However, already in this early diary Frisch voices his skepticism with regard to the ultimate significance of social and historical questions and categories. "Wie schemenhaft bleibt mir alle Geschichte!" (Blätter, 32), notes the diarist, after hearing a conversation about "Hitler, um Macht oder Recht, um Zukunft oder Niedergang des Abendlandes, und auch vom Russen." "Das menschliche Herz," he asserts, "[ist] wirklicher als das sogenannt grosse Geschehen" (Blätter, 22). In the Tagebuch 1946-1949, Frisch's views on society, history, and politics are advanced and sharpened in the course of his confrontation with the thoughts and the person of Bertolt Brecht. In addition to Brecht, Tolstoy's thoughts on government and violence serve as springboard and catalyst for Frisch's positions on society in the Tagebuch 1966-1971. However, his basic scepticism regarding social issues undergoes little change. The problems of the private individual, particularly the quest for personal identity, remain for him the central issues of life and art.

There is also in the Blätter aus dem Brotsack a hint of the artistic presuppositions that will develop into an underpinning for his later handling of the form of the diary. "Über dem Kriege steht der schöpferische Mensch" (Blätter, 59), notes Frisch. Although

the text arose as a response to the immediate circumstances of an actual "war," "war" can be read figuratively, as metaphor for the chaos of experience⁹ which the creative man cannot resist to fashion by means of language. The creative process itself is more important than the finished product, an attitude summarized by reference to Faust II: "Gestaltung, Umgestaltung. / Des ewigen Sinnes / Ewige Unterhaltung" (Blätter, 57). In connection with the same reference to Faust II, Frisch points out in Tagebuch 1946-1949 the dilemma inherent in the relationship of art to life the living is extinguished at the moment in which it receives an adequate form (Tagebuch I, 190). As a highly variegated mosaic in which the individual pieces or entries can be adjusted in tone, style, and mode of presentation (fiction, non-fiction, reportage, etc.) to fit the particularity of the experience, the diary form is one answer to the dilemma. From the point of view of Frisch's crisis which was characterized by a sense of a "lost center," the externally fragmented and seemingly disjointed structure of the diary form may be seen as embodying this centripetal sense of fragmentation. Thus, the highly pliable structure of the diary form permits a continual shaping and re-shaping of experience.

The crisis which led the young Frisch to vow never to write again also involved a breakdown in social

relationships. "In kurzer Folge scheiterten auch alle menschlichen Verbindungen" (Tagebuch I, 279), he recalls. There are three interrelated elements in a crisis of such magnitude in the life of a writer. Typically, such crises include a breakdown in one's relationship to oneself or, to put it another way, one's identity becomes problematic; a breakdown in one's relationship to the external world, that is, to society and the Other ; finally, the decision not to write is, in effect, a form of language crisis which may lead to silence, sometimes to suicide.¹⁰ The rudimentary concern with personal identity and with society in the Blätter aus dem Brotsack has already been pointed out. The effect of language crisis is likewise evident in the self-conscious concern with the very workings of language, with those paradoxes and enigmas posed by verbal expression. Linguistic self-consciousness emerges in a scene where the attempt to bridge a language barrier highlights the primacy of language Frisch writes

Bianca, die französisch spricht, überbrückt uns immer wieder die hilflosen Zustände. Worüber wir reden? Man könnte es kaum sagen; es ist als unterhalte sich die Sprache mit sich selbst, und es genügt, dass man Wörter weiss. Wörter aus allen möglichen Fächern, die nicht zusammengehören. Dass man dennoch einen Satz daraus machen kann, das ist unser eigentliches Gesellschaftsspiel.

Blätter, 72.

The scene concludes on a note that reveals a manifestly logocentric insight. Frisch's words "am Ende ist alles nur Sprache. Oder ein Beispiel zur Sprache" (Blätter, 72), subvene Derrida's assertion that ours is an "epoque logocentrique."¹¹ Certainly, the linguistic heterogeneity of Switzerland and the concomitant rift between regional dialect and "Schriftsprache" with which every Swiss writer must contend, substantially account for Frisch's sensitivity to the issue of expression.¹² Language and the problem of expression become a central concern of the Tagebuch 1946-1949 and Tagebuch 1966-1971.

In 1974, some thirty-four years after the appearance of Blätter aus dem Brotsack, a retrospective re-assessment of Frisch's first public diary was written and published under the title, Dienstbüchlein (1974). The re-assessment involves a re-evaluation of the sentiments and standpoints set forth in the early diary. More important than the sharpening of social and political perspectives which ensued in the period since the Blätter aus dem Brotsack is the indictment of the basic apprehension of the self and the world from which all other sentiments and opinions issued. The young soldier Frisch, for all his acuity and perspicacity, could not resist the force of circumstances. The prospect of death created a pressure "to believe" which outweighed the imperative of "seeing"

and "knowing." "Ich war ziemlich feige," says the older Frisch of the young combatant, "ich wollte nicht sehen, was Tag für Tag zu sehen war" (Dienstbüchlein, 155). And he thus concludes his re-examination of consciousness. "Ich wollte nicht wissen, sondern glauben" (Dienstbüchlein, 158). The will to see and to know constitute one of the basic impulses of the Tagebuch 1946-1949 and Tagebuch 1966-1971. A telling index of the fundamental distinction in standpoint of the Blätter aus dem Brotsack and the subsequent Tagebücher is the differing position of the narrative voice. The predominance in the "war diary" of the second person plural or "wir" form betrays an essential integration of the auctorial personality with its immediate environment, in this case, the military unit. The second person plural all but disappears in the later Tagebücher. The perspective of the narrator in the latter becomes unique, private, essentially distinct from its social environment. With regard to Switzerland it becomes the perspective of an outsider, an internal emigré.

The Tagebuch 1946-1949 and Tagebuch 1966-1971 disclose the fundamental themes and concerns of Frisch's art. They also yield explicitly and implicitly the premises and precepts of that art. The most important of these themes and premises relate to a complex of inter-

related problems including the question of language, the act of writing, and the nature of the self. Structurally and thematically, the Tagebücher can be considered a specific, literary response to the need for new forms of expression issuing from the revolutionary developments of this century in history, science, and culture; forms that might incorporate and complement the revised understanding of the relationship between man and the world generated by those developments. That the problem of language and expression is a major concern of Frisch's is evinced on the broadest level by his unrelenting experimentation with narrative and dramatic genre, genre being, after all, a code, an inherited system of conventions, in short, a type of language, a particular form of expression. The concern with language, furthermore, symptomizes a more fundamental issue--namely, that of representation and the very accessibility of truth and reality. In short, the problem of expression is a literary restatement of the problem of subject and object. An examination of the opening sketches of the Tagebuch 1946-1949 should clarify the significance of language in that work.

III

The recurring Marion sketches which serve as a prologue to the Tagebuch 1946-1949 represent a kind of diaristic "Künstlernovelle." The significance of these sketches is such that an early version of the Tagebuch I was, in fact, published (in 1947) under the title, "Tagebuch mit Marion." The Tagebuch I opens with a relatively short, apparently factual fragment entitled, "Zürich, Café de la Terrasse," which then quickly blends into the fictive fragment. "Marion und die Marionetten." In the first sketch, the diary-I relates an encounter he had on his way to work the previous day. He came, as he tells us, upon a crowd of people being entertained at an impromptu marionette performance. The unnamed marionetteeer, "ein junger Mensch . . . gross, bleich, eher ärmlich . . . aber kein Bettler" (Tagebuch I, 11), engages his audience with a show of his skill. One of his puppets bears a readily recognizable likeness to Christ. The performance, however, is short-lived. A gendarme who, maintaining his official demeanor, remains unimpressed--in direct contrast to the appreciative crowd--puts an abrupt halt to the proceedings. There is subtle irony in the laconic exchange between the young performer and the gendarme which closes the fragment. The gendarme's question,

"Was soll das?" (Tagebuch I, 11), which is aimed at the overall scene, that is, the crowd and the performance, is answered specifically by the young performer. Referring to the single marionette which he has prancing over the pavement, he responds--"lächelnd, da jedermann die Antwort sehen kann"--"Jesus Christ" (Tagebuch I, 77). The gendarme's subsequent response has a double meaning. On the surface the words, "Das geht nicht . . . Hier nicht . . . das geht nicht" (Tagebuch I, 12), refer, of course, to the situation of the crowd spilling over into the road. But the gendarme's words can well be taken also as a direct reference to the "Christ" puppet. In effect, the impression arises that this is no place for Christ. The setting is thus set for the succeeding "Marion" sketch in which Marion, the Christ-like innocent artist, fails in his attempt to integrate himself in the social environment of the city.

The individual elements of the opening fragment are extended and developed in the sketch, "Marion und die Marionetten." The setting of the diaristic tale is "Andorra," a small, mountainous country whose inhabitants have a nagging fear of provincialism. The young puppeteer is named Marion. The features of the wooden puppet he carves while ill bear a strong resemblance to Christ. Marion is clearly an artist in chrysalis. The words of one of his nurses testify to this. She asks Marion, "was er mit diesen Dingen spielen

wollte, was für ein Stück" (Tagebuch I, 13). "Das war die Frage," stresses the narrator. The "question" not only of what kind of play Marion might stage, but more importantly, what sort of role, he, the Andorran artist, will play among his fellow Andorrans is developed in the remaining segments of the sketch.

At first, Marion is presented as a naive, un-self-conscious artist who enjoys entertaining the village poor. This he does "ohne Anspruch, ohne Ehrgeiz, ohne Bewusstsein" (Tagebuch I, 13). At this stage of development, social questions like "warum es Arme gibt und andere; ob darin ein Unrecht liegt oder nicht" (Tagebuch I, 13) have no meaning for him. Soon, however, he is discovered by Cesario, "das Urteil von Andorra" (Tagebuch I, 13). Marion's subsequent move to the city cuts short his state of innocence.

In the city, Marion quickly goes through a series of disillusioning experiences. He discovers, for instance, "wie jedermann sich ein wenig anders verhält, wenn andere am Tische sitzen" (Tagebuch I, 14). He learns, in other words, the primal significance of role-playing. He begins to feel the pressure to conform. He remarks in a letter home. "Was soll unsereiner da reden, damit er nicht immerfort schweigt?" (Tagebuch I, 14). Predictably, his own

rather pathetic effort at mimicking the behavior he observes fails miserably. After he unwittingly repeats the nasty stories he has so often heard to the man--ironically also an artist--who was the very subject of the gossip, he gains painful insight into the nature of society, the predicament of the artist, and into himself. The inevitable alienation from society soon sets in. "Er will den Menschen sagen, was er denkt, so offen als möglich" (Tagebuch I, 14-15), notes the narrator.

Marion soon comes to be identified as a poet. "Sie sind also ein Poet," he is told. "Sie können, was wir nicht können: die Wahrheit denken, sogar die Wahrheit sagen" (Tagebuch I, 16). Marion is gifted with the power of language. His gift, however, is also his curse. "Ein Poet," Marion learns, "darf überhaupt nichts haben--auch keine Angst" (Tagebuch I, 16).

Yet, he also learns that "alles, was man in Wahrheit sagt, hat Folgen" (Tagebuch I, 17). Marion remains unable to cope with the fact that "die Menschen bald so, bald anders redeten" (Tagebuch I, 19). This he considers a defilement of language for he believed that "die Wahrheit irgendeines Mannes liege auf seine Lippen oder in seiner Feder" (Tagebuch I, 19). It is his conception of the inviolability of language that ultimately leads to his insanity: "die Menschen, die Marion sah, bewegten sich nicht mehr

von innen heraus, wie ihn dünkte, sondern ihre Gebärden 'hingen an Fäden, ihr ganzes Verhalten, und alle bewegten sich nach dem Zufall, wer an diese Fäden rührte" (Tagebuch I, 17). It is his attitude toward language that leads to his suicide. In this way, Marion's fate vivifies Hölderlin's poetic definition of language as "der Güter Gefährlichstes."¹³

IV

For Frisch, language is not only a vehicle of communication and expression, but a precarious medium for the transformation and interpretation of experience, a process resulting in heightened self-understanding. "Erst dadurch, dass eine Welt erzählt wird, ist sie da," he asserts (Tagebuch I, 241). A corollary of this is that there is no experience prior to articulation. Experience arises only through verbal exteriorization, through linguistic concretization of internal impressions.¹⁴ "Ich mache Erfahrungen nur noch wenn ich schreibe," confesses the I-narrator of Montauk (Montauk, 12). Hence, the act of writing becomes a means for expanding, deepening, and refining consciousness. It is this that forms the *raison d'être* of Frisch's diaries. With good reason they are considered an example par excellence of "Bewusstseinsliteratur."¹⁵

Coupled with the logocentrism exhibited in Frisch's diaries is an acute sensitivity to the limits and limitations of language . Frisch is acutely aware of what he calls "die fast uferlose Missdeutbarkeit unserer Worte" (Werke, IV, 562). Language carries with it numerous dangers and pitfalls. It can never, for one thing, do full justice to thought and feeling; in Frisch's words, "die Sprache, selbst die Ungesprochene, ist niemals imstande, in einem Augenblick alles einzufangen, was uns in diesem Augenblick, da ein Gedanke entsteht, alles bewusst ist, geschweige denn das Unbewusste" (Tagebuch I, 229). Moreover, language itself, as a depository of inherited values, ideals, convictions, and preconceptions can act as purveyor of distortion and disorientation:

Sprache als Gefäss des Vorurteils! Sie, die uns verbinden könnte, ist zum Gegenteil geworden, zur tödlichen Trennung durch Vorurteil. Sprache und Lüge! Das ungeheure Paradoxon, dass man sich ohne Sprache nähert.

Tagebuch I, 220.

With language, one can at best circumscribe, approximate, intimate, and suggest; there inevitably remains a stratum of inexpressibility: "das Lebendige in jedem Menschen: das was nicht erfassbar ist" (Tagebuch I, 37).

The logocentric attitude involves a kind of tension regarding the act of expression that results from sensitivity toward what may be called the "area of the

inexpressible." Frisch provides explicit and implicit testimony to this tension in many of his writings. In Stiller, for instance, the "hero," who gains abundant experience as a diarist, reflects on the purpose of keeping a diary: "wer denn soll lesen, was ich in diese Hefte schreibe!" he asks. He arrives at the following conclusion:

Schreiben ist nicht Kommunikation mit Lesern, auch nicht Kommunikation mit sich selbst, sondern Kommunikation mit dem Unausprechlichen. Je genauer man sich auszusprechen vermöchte, um so reiner erschiene das Unausprechliche, das heisst die Wirklichkeit, die den Schreiber bedrängt und bewegt. Wer schweigt, ist nicht dumm. Wer schweigt, hat nicht einmal eine Ahnung, wer er nicht ist.
Stiller, 249

Although the self remains, in the end, an elusive, indefinable, an ineffable entity, language provides a means of betraying oneself--like a snake shedding its skin, as Frisch puts it--and thus gaining a clue to one's identity. The locus classicus of Frisch's testimony to the enigma of inexpressibility appears in the Tagebuch 1946-1949:

Was wichtig ist: das Unsagbare, das Weisse zwischen den Worten, und immer reden diese Worte von den Nebensachen, die wir eigentlich nicht meinen. Unser Anliegen, das eigentliche, lässt sich bestenfalls umschreiben, und das heisst ganz wörtlich: man schreibt darum herum. Man umstellt es. Man gibt Aussagen, die nie unser eigentliches Erlebnis enthalten, das unsagbar bleibt; sie können es nur umgrenzen, möglichst nahe und

genau, und das Eigentliche, das Unsagbare, erscheint bestenfalls als Spannung zwischen diesen Aussagen.

Tagebuch I, 42.

Gombrowicz, it should be noted, exhibits in his Diary a like sensitivity to this issue. His very terms echo Frisch's words: "W gigantycznym milczeniu kształtuje się nasza niewyznana, niema, i zakneblowana rzeczywistość" (Dziennik 1953-1956, 10)--"In gigantischem Schweigen formt sich unsere uneingestandene, stumme und geknebelte Wirklichkeit" (Tagebuch 1953-1956, 12).

The question of form or genre issues directly out of the struggle for expression. A choice in this matter is a decision on a specific strategy in the struggle with the inexpressible. And Frisch's choice is clear. For him, expression is not in the first place, expression of something, it is not description, although the attempt to describe may form the impetus or point of departure for the act of expression. Expression is always and above all self-expression. "Schreiben heisst: sich selber lesen" (Tagebuch I, 22). This tautology, the fact that the act of expression goes hand in hand with the process of self-discovery, forms the point of departure for his Tagebücher.

In his logocentrism and corresponding sensitivity to the inadequacy of language Frisch carries forth an important current in twentieth-century literature and philosophy.

It was, above all, Wittgenstein who, by laying bare the enigmas of language, gave the issue of the inadequacy of language the currency it has in twentieth-century intellectual life. As noted above, Frisch, particularly in his diaries, likewise accords prime significance to the same issue. It is, therefore, perhaps not entirely incidental that there is a specific convergence between the writer, Frisch, and the thinker, Wittgenstein¹⁶ in the emphasis that both accord the notion of "Bild." In the Tractatus logico philosophicus we read "Wir machen uns Bilder der Tatsachen. . . . Das Bild ist ein Modell der Wirklichkeit."¹⁷ The theory of "pictorial representation," a main component of Wittgenstein's epistemology, forms part of an attempt to come to grips with the relationship of subject to object. The same existential fact, that our access to reality is, in a sense, blocked by "image-making," that is, by representations which by their very nature are unreal, preoccupies Frisch. This preoccupation is especially evident in Andorra (1958), where the main character, Andri, comes to identify himself with the false "picture" that others form of him, and in Stiller (1954), whose protagonist feels hopelessly restricted by the picture others have of him and struggles in vain to break out of the "prison" formed by that "picture." Through the act of writing--and Stiller's diary is an example--

Frisch tries somehow to circumvent or neutralize an eternal dilemma; namely, that on the one hand we see, we recognize, we know, we understand, and we speak by means of "Bilder" or mental representations; yet, because they are inherently fictive, by nature distinct from reality or the objects of representation, they all too easily become misrepresentation, sources of illusion and delusion. All too often the Bild becomes a Bildnis, our "models of reality" become dangerous, misleading idols. Wittgenstein focuses attention on the epistemological implications of the "Bild." For Frisch, it is the ethical dimension of this problem, as embedded in the First Commandment. "Du sollst dir kein Bildnis machen" (the title of one of his diary entries)--and the social consequences of its transgression, that are of prime concern. The role of "Bild" in Frisch's Weltanschauung parallels the significance of "Form" in Gombrowicz's view of man and the world.

Another important aspect of Frisch's attitude toward language and the corresponding handling of the problem of expression derives from the perception of a disjointed, fragmented world, a world tending toward entropy. This view at times approaches the point of crisis as, for instance, when Frisch writes: "Ich hänge am Leben, das ist wahr, auch wenn es mir manchmal verleidet ist . . . Etwas

Ganzes möchte ich sehen, nicht Reste oder Teile oder Ansätze eines Ganzen" (Tagebuch I, 432).¹⁸ This echoes Hofmannsthal's plaint articulated in 1902: "Es zerfiel mir alles in Teile, die Teile wieder in Teile, und nichts mehr liess sich mit einem Begriff umspannen."¹⁹ Hofmannsthal's predicament, as voiced in the Chandos Brief, prefigured an experience characteristic of the inner life of the twentieth-century artist. It is the condition of fragmented identity or, in Gottfried Benn's words, the condition of "diskontinuierliche Psychologie."²⁰ In Hofmannsthal's case, the feeling of fragmentation was a symbol and a symptom of a broader state of affairs, namely, of the cultural, political, and social dissonance of the turn-of-the-century Doppelmonarchie.

The sense of fragmentation that became a common experience for a host of writers, artists, and intellectuals of the late Habsburg Empire was objectivized in the political and social fragmentation spawned by the factionalism of the various nationality groups and in the corresponding spiritual phenomenon known as the "Balkanization of Culture." A situation in which objective reality more and more defied attempts at holistic comprehension, in which the spiritual condition of "loss of center" materialized itself in the social and political environment--such a situation made crucially problematic, not only the matter

of man's social relationship to the world but the very relationship of subject and object, of the nature of perception, and the apprehension of physical reality. Thus the problems of language, communication, representation, and self-encapsulation became important issues of philosophical speculation and artistic experimentation. They held the attention of men like Kafka and Musil, Karl Kraus, Wittgenstein, and Ernst Mach. Hofmannsthal's crisis was generated in large part by the realization that with his early lyricism he had largely isolated himself from his social environment. He saw in the theatre a way out of this predicament, a way of reaching a wider audience with a moral message.²¹

As noted above, Frisch, too, suffered a crisis in his career as a writer. As a university student it seemed to him that everything he heard "lacked a common center." He had somehow to "pick up the pieces." In order to regain contact with the world, he first chose the study of architecture--attracted to it by "das Unpapierne, Greifbare, Handwerkliche, die stoffliche Gestalt" (Tagebuch I, 279). For similar reasons, he gravitated to the diary form conceived as a kind of "mosaic" offering a way of "putting the pieces together," of re-constructing a consciousness, of reshaping (one's) world, without giving a false sense

of continuity. He describes his Tagebuch 1946-1949 as "die einzelne Steine eines Mosaiks" (Tagebuch I, 7).

At first glance, the Tagebuch 1966-1971 contrasts significantly with the Tagebuch 1946-1949. A whole array of typographical devices is brought into play to graphically suggest diversity of tone and theme. New forms of "entries" are enlisted: the questionnaire, the catalog, the album. The inclusion of such forms, all of which make up an inescapable part of the everyday experience of contemporary Western man, lends a distinct air of contemporaneity to the text. The Tagebuch 1946-1949, in contrast, retains, for the most part, the essayistic entry in its traditional, Montaignesque form. Yet, in the final analysis, these differences are superficial. The recurring questionnaire, in particular, which forms a prominent aspect of the Tagebuch 1966-1971 displays that concerted drive for expanded self-understanding that vivifies all of Frisch's diaristic works. The posing of questions, all of which are self-generated and self-directed, represents a Socratic approach to the issue of identity. The means may have changed somewhat but the point of departure and end result clearly remain the same: self-knowledge through a diaristic form of writing.

In the Tagebuch 1966-1971 Frisch exhibits an awareness of the wider context of his diaristic form of writing. He intimates kinship to both Gombrowicz and Montaigne. In an "entry" in which he considers the differences between third- and first-person forms of writing, Frisch makes the following observation:

Die unverblühten ICH-Schreiber wie Henry Miller, Witold Gombrowicz u. a. machen ja keine Beichtliteratur und sind dadurch erträglich, dass das ICH eine Rolle wird. Schreiber solcher Art . . . dichten am eignen Leib und leben ihre Dichtung auf Schritt und Tritt . . . sie sind eben ihr literarisches Objekt, ihre Figur

Tagebuch 1966-1971, 310

The significance of Gombrowicz's name in this context²² differs from that of Miller's in at least one respect. Unlike Miller, whose works bear the character of memoirs, the Polish writer made programmatic use of the diary form in his writings, transforming that form to his own literary and philosophical aims. One can apply to Gombrowicz Frisch's pronouncement concerning the place of the form of the diary in his works: "Die Tagebuchform ist eigentümlich für den Schreiber meines Namens."²³ The diary form occupies not only a central place in Gombrowicz's works but also, as in Frisch's case, signifies a fundamental attitude to writing, to literature, and to the world.

The significance of that form is such that it even affects-- as in Frisch's case--his dramatic works. The mixture of private dream, reality, and the exploration of personality determine both form and content of such plays as Frisch's Biografie: Ein Spiel (1967) and Gombrowicz's The Marriage [1948 (Spanish), 1953 (Polish)]. Furthermore, Miller's first-person narratives rest largely on the assumed pre-existence of a well-defined, unproblematic "I" which proceeds in his storytelling to "tackle" the world from his own perspective. The "I" of Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaristic narratives, in contrast, is neither assumed nor pre-existing. Rather, it is contingent upon and contiguous with the diary text. It emerges by way of trial and error from each individual entry. The self, for Frisch and Gombrowicz, is a subject that cannot be exhausted; identity is a goal that is never won. It is rather a process. Both Gombrowicz and Frisch engage themselves in a literarization of the self which derives its sense from the proposition that both the self and the work of literature exist in the mode of the "as if"--as myth, as role, as idea, as fiction, as "Bild" and as "Form." Miller's exploits have little to do with such matters.

In his Tagebuch 1966-1971, Frisch makes three allusions to Montaigne, each time incorporating into the text

the same quotation from the Essais: "So löse ich mich auf und komme mir abhanden" (Tagebuch II, 75; 115; 138). The quotation comes from Montaigne's final essay entitled "De l'experience." In the original it reads: "C'est ainsi que je fons et éschape à moi" (Essais II, 560). The immediate and literal relevance of these references to the author of the Essais is thematic. Frisch enlists Montaigne's words, which in their original context form part of a consideration of the subject of aging, to signal his own treatment of the same topic, one which forms a major thematic strand of the Tagebuch 1966-1971. But Montaigne's words have a connotation wider than the question of aging. They restate the central theme of the Essais--the quest for identity--while suggesting a particular attitude to this theme. The sense of dissolution or disintegration of the self which they express bears comparison with the similar sense of fragmentation and discontinuity that lies at the heart of the notion of the self which permeates Frisch's diaries. The need for reintegration and reconstruction of the self is equally important to both Frisch and Montaigne. At the same time both are acutely aware of the fragility and ephemeral nature, not only of the self, but of the endeavor to portray it as well.

The genetic relationship of Frisch to Montaigne, which was sketched in Chapter III, "Frisch's Montauk and Montaigne," has its counterpart in a generic congruence, which derives from shared assumptions, premises, and postulates regarding the nature, function, and end result of the literary enterprise. The Swiss author can well apply to his Tagebücher Montaigne's characterization of his Essais. "j'escry de moy . . . mon theme se renverse en soy" (Essais II, 521). Frisch's logocentrism has its counterpart in Montaigne's neo-nominalistic attitude toward language: "Nostre contestation est verbale. Je demande que c'est que nature, volupté, cercle, et substitution. La question est de parolles, et se paye de mesme" (Essais II, 521). The sense of a fragmented reality, which governs the style and structure of the Tagebücher, is correlative with Montaigne's vision of a disconnected, variegated reality which finds expression in the form of the essay. This style is considered a more adequate mirror of reality than the highly refined and finished style of scholarship. As the Frenchman puts it: "Les sçavans partent et denotent leurs fantasies plus specifiquement, et par le menu. . . . je prononce ma sentence par articles descousus, ainsi que de chose qui ne se peut dire à la fois et en bloc" (Essais II, 529-30). Montaigne sees the careful consideration of

personal experience an important way to knowledge. Quoting Manilius, he suggests that this process can also result in art: "Per varios usus artem experientia fecit. exemplo monstrante viam" (Essais II, 516). ("By various experiments, experience has led to art, example showing the way ") In their own way, Frisch and Gombrowicz, enlisting and transforming the form of the diary, engage themselves in the process of assaying experience, conscious, at every moment, of both the artificial and artful nature of their endeavor. Their inventiveness and experiments notwithstanding, their common struggle, pursued by means of the diary, forms a latter-day instance of an age-old quest-- the quest for self-knowledge. By various experiments they have transformed their private worlds into art, Montaigne showing the way.

Notes

¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus logico-philosophicus par. 7, in Schriften (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1960), p. 83.

² References to the following works are provided in the text and are abbreviated as follows:

<u>Blätter</u>	<u>Blätter aus dem Brotsack</u> (Zürich: Atlantis, 1940).
<u>Tagebuch I</u>	<u>Tagebuch 1946-1949</u> (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1950).
<u>Tagebuch II</u>	<u>Tagebuch 1966-1977</u> (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972).
	<u>Dienstbüchlein</u> (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974).
<u>Werke</u>	<u>Gesammelte Werke in zeitlicher Folge</u> , 6 vols., ed. Hans Mayer (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976).
	<u>Stiller</u> (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1970).

³ As regards the study of the problem of language and expressibility, I have profited especially from Prof. James W. Marchand's unpublished paper, "Logocentrism and the Inadequacy of Language: A Perennial Problem of German Literature," delivered at a session of the "Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft," March 1978, University of Illinois, Urbana. See also his forthcoming essay, "Die Unzulänglichkeit der Sprache bei Nietzsche" in Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte.

⁴ The term is coined by Dallas M. High to define a central feature of twentieth-century sensibility. See the Introduction to his monograph, Language, Persons, and Belief (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), pp.43-24.

⁵ Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "Ein Brief." In Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben, Prosa II (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1959), p. 11.

⁶ Franz Kafka, Briefe 1902-1924, ed. Max Brod (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1966), p. 19.

⁷ Horst Bienek, Werkstattgespräche mit Schriftstellern (Munich: Hanser, 1962), p. 24.

⁸ Eduard Stäuble, Max Frisch (Basel: F. Reinhardt, 1967), p. 24.

⁹ In his autobiographical account of experiences during World War II, the contemporary British writer, Goronwy Rees, makes just this kind of extrapolation with regard to the chaos that is war. Rees writes: "Here [in war] all is chance, accident, absurdity. Perhaps indeed the only profitable aspect of the atrocious business of war is that it exposes the principle of indeterminacy which governs all our lives in all its nakedness and simplicity. A Bundle of Sensations, Sketches in Autobiography (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 16.

¹⁰ Cf. Robert W. Funk who argues as follows.

It cannot be contested that the pre-understanding transmitted in language is constantly thrown into question by fresh experiences, new observations and the like. Such "crises" may be minor, involving only the readjustment of certain aspects of the way in which man regards the world without a corresponding shift in self-understanding. That is to say, the whole continues to hang together in the traditional way. However, there are major crises, i.e., which involve a readjustment of the whole of reality, including, or beginning with, the I-relationship, self-understanding. Major crises indicate a break with the common understanding. Now if the common understanding is administered by language, it follows that a decision in such a crisis is a decision with respect to language. In Language, Hermeneutic and Word of God (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 52.

¹¹ Jacques Derrida, De la grammatologie (Paris: Minuit, 1967), p. 13. Derrida observes.

Quoi qu'on pense sous ce titre, le problème de langage n'a sans doute jamais été un problème parmi d'autres, Mais jamais autant qu'aujourd'hui il n'avait envahi comme tel l'horizon mondial des recherches les plus diverses et des discours les plus hétérogènes dans leur intention, leur méthode, leur idéologie (p. 15).

¹² Cf. Walter Schenker, Die Sprache Max Frischs in der Spannung zwischen Mundart und Schriftsprache, Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach und Kulturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, 31 (Berlin. Walter de Gruyter, 1969).

¹³ Friedrich Hölderlin, Sämtliche Werke, ed. Norbert von Hellingrath (Berlin. Propylaen, 1923), p. 246.

¹⁴ Cf. Nietzsche: "Die 'innere Erfahrung' tritt uns ins Bewusstsein, erst nachdem sie eine Sprache gefunden hat, die das Individuum versteht." Werke in Drei Bänden, ed. Karl Schlechta (Munich: Hanser, 1956), III, 805.

¹⁵ It is from this perspective, i.e., Frisch's diaries as a particular instance of "consciousness literature," that Rolf Kieser approaches Frisch's diaristic art in his major study, Max Frisch: Das literarische Tagebuch (Frauenfeld und Stuttgart. Huber, 1975). Of his general standpoint, Kieser writes: "Von Bewusstseinsliteratur als Schrifttum der Selbstschau . . . davon handelt diese Arbeit" (p. 7). Kieser's is the most ambitious study of the role of the diary in Frisch's writings. In contrast to Kieser, the present study focuses upon the congruence between Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaristic art; in addition, it examines the correspondence of Frisch's and Gombrowicz's diaristic art with Montaigne's Essais. My main bone of contention with Kieser involves the latter's interpretation of Frisch's attitude toward Gombrowicz (see Tagebuch 1966-1971, p. 310; Kieser, pp. 144, 310); (see also Note 2, p. 172).

¹⁶ Here, it is pertinent to point out at least one oblique reference by Frisch to Wittgenstein. It comes in Montauk. In the course of a retrospective account of his relationship with "W.," a close, former friend, the narrator recalls:

Die Frau, die ich damals liebte, hatte Philosophie studiert und über Wittgenstein geschrieben, promoviert über Heidegger. Das

könnte W., der sie an diesem Tag zum ersten Mal sah, nicht wissen; ihren Namen hatte er schon gehört, ihr poetisches Oeuvre kannte er nicht. Auch sie hatte Mühe, sich vor W. zu entfalten, auch der TRACTATUS LOGICUS [sic!] den W. nicht kannte, hatte Mühe (p. 48).

17 Schriften, I, p. 14.

18 Cf. Gombrowicz who likewise laments: "Wenn ich doch mir eine Sekunde lang dem Ganzen gerecht werden könnte. Immer nur mit Fragmenten--mit Bruchteilen?" (Tagebuch II, 209).

19 "Ein Brief," in: Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben, Prosa II (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1959), p. 11.

20 "Lebensweg eines Intellektuellen," Gesammelte Werke, ed. Dieter Wellershaf (Wiesbaden: Limes, 1961), IV, p. 36.

21 Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, Wittgenstein's Vienna (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), pp 114-15.

22 It is pertinent to point out here one instance of direct personal contact between the two writers under consideration. According to Walter Höllerer, who was intimately acquainted with both Frisch and Gombrowicz, Frisch, who seems to have held the works of Gombrowicz in considerable esteem, personally met the Polish writer in southern France in the late 1960s. (Personal interview with Walter Höllerer, 15 November 1978.)

23 Horst Bienek, ed. Werkstattgespräche mit Schriftstellern (Munich: Hanser, 1962), p. 24.

CONCLUSION

There prevails among students of Max Frisch a peculiar myopia concerning the question of the wider context of his Tagebücher. It is as if the Tagebücher were so unique that they bear no comparison with any other works of literature. A manifestation of this myopia is the particularly simplistic judgment accorded Gombrowicz's Diary by the few Frisch critics who exhibit awareness of that work. A case in point is that of Horst Steinmetz and Heinz F. Schafroth.¹ Both, interestingly enough, isolate the same pronouncement from Gombrowicz's Diary:

Was ist denn ein Tagebuch, wenn nicht vor
 allem dies: eine private Niederschrift,
 zu eigenem Gebrauch gemacht?
Tagebuch I, 270.

Reading these words in a decidedly literal fashion, both critics allege a disjunctive relationship between Gombrowicz's diaristic undertaking and that of Frisch. Yet, the force of Gombrowicz's pronouncement is clearly ironic;² its sense is distinctly figurative. Concerning the terms, "private" and "eigenem Gebrauch," it can be said that not only was Gombrowicz's Diary conceived from beginning

to end for publication, but in the same passage the Polish author testifies to the innate social character of his undertaking. He declares that for him literature is:

osobistą rozgrywką autora z ludźmi,
narzędziem jego walki o byt duchowy
. . . sprawą towarzyską, narzucaniem
się ludziom, ba, publicznym stwarza-
niem siebie za pomocą ludzi.

Dziennik I, 195.

eine persönliche Auseinandersetzung
des Autors mit den Menschen, Werkzeug
seines Ringens um geistiges Dasein . . .
eine gesellschaftliche Angelegenheit,
ein den Menschen Sich-Aufzwingen, ja,
ein öffentliches Schaffen seiner selbst
mittels der Menschen.

Tagebuch I, 270-71.

His Diary, it hardly needs to be said, incorporates and exemplifies this vision of literature.

The three features ascribed by Frisch to Gombrowicz's works--that in his works he produces no confessionalism, that his life continually intersects with his works, and that, finally, he becomes his own literary object (see page 158)--all of these generalizations apply as much to Frisch's own works as to Gombrowicz's. Together, they simply bear out Frisch's own metaphor for the writing process: that in the course of writing, one sheds one's skin like a snake. Here, the snake--Frisch--emerges from his skin--the kind of writing represented by Gombrowicz. But both skin and snake are ultimately integral parts of

one and the same organism. Of course, there are numerous differences--and some of them significant--separating Frisch's works from Gombrowicz's. But these derive not so much from what they say, that is, their themes, nor from the medium by which they convey their themes, that is, genre, but rather from their fundamental styles and tone. Frisch moves in the direction of balance and measure, or that sober neutrality which seems to typify the Swiss condition. Gombrowicz, on the other hand, tends "unabashedly" to order reality to his own image. Of course, neither succeeds at perfect neutrality nor complete self-imposition. And in this failure rests their comparability. Finally, Frisch's observation regarding the nature of the "Ich-Schreiber": "[sie] dichten am eignen Leib und leben ihre Dichtung auf Schritt und Tritt" (see p. 158), points to the source of this mode of literature, namely, to the conception of the consubstantiality of writer and the written product proposed by Bonet-Clayton and pursued in the Essais.

The relationship between Gombrowicz's Diary and Frisch's Tagebücher is conjunctive rather than disjunctive. There is, as noted above, a divergence of tendencies deriving from contrasting styles of being. Gombrowicz's inclination toward self-assertion which manifests itself in the stylistic elements of parody and play that define his Diary

contrasts with Frisch's disposition toward self-effacement which exhibits itself in the radical reduction of expression to the hic et nunc, a reduction generated by an acute sensitivity to the inadequacy of language and the enigmas of expression. Yet, self-effacement and self-assertion are two sides of the coin of self-consciousness, a self-consciousness triggered and nourished by highly congruent attitudes toward the nature of the self. For both writers, the self exists as an idea, picture, or image--as "Bild" or "Form"--structured by the responses of the Other and by the responses of the self to its environment. The ideas or images of the self are held to be inconsistent with the essential ineffability of the self. Self-expression, the testing of experience by means of the diary, provides a way of confronting the continually arising images of the self, of clarifying personal identity, of expanding consciousness.

The Essais of Michel de Montaigne are demonstrably operative as a source and inspiration for the diaries of Frisch and Gombrowicz. They not only form the prototype for the mode of "private" literature but also in the act of essaying provide the essential stylistic and structural technique of the two diarists. The fragmented, sketch-like character of the diary entry becomes literarized by the

form and spirit of the essay, and is enlisted to serve as a test of consciousness. The "essay-entry" operates as an instrument of mediation between the self and the world of experience. Its tentative and contingent character reflects Frisch's and Gombrowicz's limitation of self-expression to the here and now. Such an approach implies a rejection of system, theory, abstraction, and ideology. Truth for Gombrowicz and Frisch is, in the manner of Montaigne, always subjective; thought is idiosyncratic, individualistic, and concrete. Contingent on the moment, governed by circumstance, by the particularity of time and place, both truth and thought are, like the diary entries in which they are expressed, inevitably partial and tentative.

Notes

¹ Horst Steinmetz in his study, Max Frisch: Tagebuch, Drama, Roman (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1973), p. 13. Heinz F. Schafroth in his essay, "Bruchstücke einer grossen Fiktion," Text und Kritik, Nos. 47-48 (October 1975), p. 59.

² Steinmetz, at least, concedes with reference to Gombrowicz's pronouncement, "die Sätze stehen allerdings in einem gewissen Widerspruch zur von Beginn an beabsichtigten Veröffentlichung des Niedergelegten." Max Frisch: Tagebuch, Drama, Roman, p. 13.

In his monograph, Max Frisch: Das literarische Tagebuch (Frauenfeld and Stuttgart: Huber, 1975), Rolf Kieser asserts that Frisch does not engage in "das offene Rollenhafte" of Gombrowicz's (and Henry Miller's) positions. Yet, in his prefatory note to the Tagebuch 1946-1949, Frisch clearly defines his "role" in the diary. He describes his position as that of a "younger contemporary" ("jüngerer Zeitgenosse") whose "right to writing" ("Schreibrecht") is rooted partly in his "contemporaneity" ("Zeitgenossenschaft") and partly in his special position as "one who has been spared and who stands outside national camps" ("Verschonter, der ausserhalb der nationalen Lager steht"). Thus, Frisch's position in the Tagebuch 1946-1949 is that of a partner as well as of a neutral observer-witness. This, after all, is also a role.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

Excerpt from Gombrowicz's letter of 28 January 1950 to Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz. Published in Twórczość, 25, no. 12 (1969), pp. 21-22.

Have you read M[artin] B[uber]'s book, What is Man? He is a Jewish philosopher in Palestine, whose works were translated into English last year and are supposed to have caused quite a stir. For he maintains that neither Marxism which views man as a function of the mass nor existentialism which approaches him in isolation (together with all of classical psychology) can survive, that one must consider man in his concrete connections with other men; that man "creates himself" "between" men and that philosophy and psychology of the future will have to deal with this "between," and this conception / man must triumph on the ruins of today's anti-nomy. This indeed is strikingly similar to what I say (e.g., in my commentary to the drama¹) --even the phraseology is similar (passing over to be sure unavoidable divergencies). The reading of this book (I am not familiar with any of his other books) gratifies me for if my writing is to gain some sort of support, and moreover from so prestigious a quarter, it would be better received. I really should read other of his books, and even write him, but I don't know if it's worth the trouble.

¹ The reference is to Gombrowicz's own play, The Marriage (1948), which forms the subject of most of this letter. This is one of a series of letters to Iwaszkiewicz in which Gombrowicz, then living in Argentina, requested Iwaszkiewicz's help in securing publication of his drama in Poland.

APPENDIX 2

Letter from Martin Buber to Gombrowicz.

"Talbiyeh, Jerusalem, 9-2-57

"Dear Mr. Gombrowicz,¹

"I have read your drama²--for which I thank you--with special interest. It is an extraordinarily bold experience, almost perilous, and much more important than the curiosities of Pirandello. The result is paradoxical: it is a sort of incarnation of that which should not be incarnated. But here is the problem. Is this experience--and this is the paradox--also a drama? A drama means--something which occurs between people who exist independently and impregnably. The condition of tragedy is this: a genuine conflict between person M and person N, the one destroying the other in a given situation departing from this same otherness. On the other hand, if everything occurs not between M and N but between M and a world imagined by him, then everything is possible--irony, parody, satire except that exceptional affair--a drama. There is no drama where the resistance of the Other is not real; "psychodrama" is not drama because the Other who finds himself in the center of the mind, as mirage or image, is not and cannot be a person.

I salute you and wish you success in realising your goals in an always grand fashion.

Martin Buber³

¹Buber's letter is written in Polish except for the last phrase ("There is no drama. . . etc."), which is in French.

²The reference is to Gombrowicz's play, The Marriage (1948).

³From Gombrowicz, Série Slave, No. 14 (Paris: Editions de l'Herne, 1971), pp. 157-58.

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