

# Zygmunt Haupt's literary engineering\*

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## On method

In her study devoted to the literary works of Zygmunt Haupt, Ewa Wiegandt draws attention to their sophisticated narrative structures, made of fragments and quotations, reminiscent of collages and *silvae rerum*. According to Wiegandt, this prose is “not only written, but it also writes itself,”<sup>1</sup> insofar as there is a constant tension between narration, that is what one can see on the surface, and structure and composition. Haupt's prose draws on the modernist theory and aesthetics of fragmentation, but in its genealogy and genology it also refers to Romanticism. According to Wiegandt, the fragmentary nature of Haupt's stories is further reinforced by a unique writing method, described by her as “a montage of memories”<sup>2</sup> or “a metaphorical montage and metonymic enumerative description.”<sup>3</sup> This essay aims to discuss those features of Haupt's memoir-based prose that are connected with the method thus described, especially in relation to the construction of literary characters.

<sup>1</sup> Ewa Wiegandt, “Wszystko-nic Zygmunta Haupta” [Zygmunt Haupt's all or nothing], in: *Niepokoje literatury. Studia o prozie polskiej XX wieku* [Literary anxieties. Studies on Polish twentieth-century prose] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Wojewódzkiej Biblioteki Publicznej i Centrum Animacji Kultury, 2010), 209.

<sup>2</sup> Wiegandt, 206.

<sup>3</sup> Wiegandt, 208.

In the introduction to the essay *Mój Lwów* [My Lviv], Józef Wittlin writes that recollection is an illusory bliss, because it unexpectedly brings to the surface of consciousness monsters, ghostly figures, ghostly memories, voices, and the laughter of shadows.<sup>4</sup> Zygmunt Haupt's prose is highly symptomatic and monstrous in this respect, because it is inhabited by monsters, which is clearly visible in ghostly characters such as Stefcia, a woman who drowned, or Anusia, a "tattooed monster."<sup>5</sup> This form of recollection, that is a montage of memories which revives individual characters and at the same time marks them with death is reminiscent of a drive, as discussed by Jacques Lacan in the context of montage (as I further explain below). Constructing the represented world, Haupt places both himself and his literary characters on a stage, and makes everyone act in a scene. Such an artistic practice finds its additional justification in psychoanalytic theory: Sigmund Freud also used the metaphor of the scene to describe the workings of psychic apparatus animated by drives and desires (using terms such as *der Szene*, *der Auftritt*, *der Bühne* or *der Schauplatz*). Laying the foundations of his own theory of representation, the father of psychoanalysis used, among other things, the notion of representation, *die Vorstellung*, to describe how the psychic apparatus and drives' investments work. This word however refers also to a spectacle, a performance, or a show, as Freud notes, "ideas [*Vorstellungen*] are investments [*Besetzungen*, "cathexes" or "occupations"]."<sup>6</sup> The German word *die Besetzung* means also a cast, like a cast in a film or a theatrical performance, for example. In what is *re-presented* (*vor-stellen*) there is a difference that expresses the subject's alienation in relation to the represented object, and at the same time points out the distance and separation which make irony possible. A scene thus constructed becomes a space of mediation. On such stage, as Freud self-reflectively notes, "our hypotheses are but pictorial representations."<sup>7</sup> Indeed, this statement brings to mind one of Haupt's narrators who makes similar comments pertaining to the mechanism of his own thinking in the story "*Kiedy będę dorosły*" ["When I'll grow up"]. By placing himself in a scene, he initiates a literary play, when in the opening of the story, he mentions his own journey and return by train to Z.<sup>8</sup> This whole literary scene is, like a train which represents drive, in motion, and "drganie i stukot kół na złączach szyn wprawiają człowieka w stan hipnozy" [the vibration and clatter of the wheels on rail joints hypnotize] (BD 38). In this hypnotic state memories can cross the censorship of consciousness. Thoughts themselves, as the writer notes, do not appear in any fixed order. Haupt further admits that "pewnie jest wzrokowcem i myśli prawdopodobnie obrazami" [he is probably a visual person, and he most likely thinks in pictures] (BD 38). Bringing together hypnotic reminiscences, associations, and memories, as well as free-appearing images, the

<sup>4</sup> Józef Wittlin, *Mój Lwów* [My Lviv] (Wrocław: Wrocławskie Wydawnictwo Warstwy, 2017), 9.

<sup>5</sup> Zygmunt Haupt, "Madrygał dla Anusi" [Madrigal for Anusia], in: Baskijski diabeł. Opowiadania i reportaże [The Basque Devil: Stories and Reportages], 2nd ed., collected, edited and with an editorial note by Aleksander Madyda (Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2016), 354. Further quotations from this collection of short stories are marked with the letters BD and the page number.

<sup>6</sup> Sigmund Freud writes: "ideas are investments of energy – basically in memory traces – whereas emotions and feelings correspond to processes of discharge." See: Sigmund Freud, "The Unconscious", in: *The Unconscious*, trans. Graham Frankland (London: Penguin, 2005), 46.

<sup>7</sup> Freud, "The Unconscious", 40.

<sup>8</sup> Ewa Wiegandt is right when she writes that "the authorial narrator of Haupt's prose," as the writer, observes the rhetorical requirements of writing and then "transforms into writing, into literature". See: Wiegandt, 204. Identity and non-identity (of the author, the narrator, the protagonist) thus determine the stakes of Zygmunt Haupt's literary game. Haupt is here an author, as defined by Foucault: he is a function of the text, or texts, signed with the same name. See: Michel Foucault, "Who is an author?", in: *Aesthetics, Method, And Epistemology*, trans. Robert Hurely and others (New York: The New York Press, 1998), 205-222.

mechanism of thinking described in this way resembles the mechanism of free association and remembering developed in psychoanalysis. In addition, as Jacques Lacan notes, “hypnotic remembering is, no doubt, a reproduction of the past, but it is above all a spoken representation and, as such, implies all sorts of presences.”<sup>9</sup> In speech, this form of representation combines image and word, the imagined and the symbolic; and it combines Zygmunt Haupt’s writing method and the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan.

## On montage

Formulating his own theory of representation in reference to the Freudian category of the ideational-representative, *die Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*, Jacques Lacan points to its impulsive nature, inherently connected with absence and separation (resulting from the absence of the object). For him, a drive is a forward-looking project or montage, which can be compared to a surrealist collage. This paradoxical representation combines animate and inanimate elements in such a way that they produce (seductive) beauty:

The montage of the drive is a montage which, first, is presented as having neither head nor tail – in the sense in which one speaks of montage in a surrealist collage. If we bring together the paradoxes [...] I think that the resulting image would show the working of a dynamo connected up to a gas-tap, a peacock’s feather emerges, and tickles the belly of a pretty woman, who is just lying there looking beautiful.<sup>10</sup>

The French psychoanalyst compares this drive montage to a dynamic image, thus showing how a particular mechanism of drive-representation works. The combination of the image and the drive mechanism based on representation will be important for understanding Zygmunt Haupt’s prose. Also, considering the fact that, as Lacan further writes, “the drive is precisely that montage by which sexuality participates in the psychical life.”<sup>11</sup> The aforementioned mechanism causes the image, a certain representation, to undergo a significant shift, as a result of which it is placed in the drive-sphere of the sexual. When Lacan writes that the montage of the drive “is presented as having neither head nor tail” and refers to montage in a surrealist collage, it brings to mind Haupt’s prose. Indeed, when Haupt reflects on his own work, he uses a similar metaphor; he also refers to surrealism. Analyzing his relationship with Panna [Lady], to whom he devoted a whole series of stories, he writes in *Wyjazd o świcie* [Departure at dawn]: “nie ma w tej historii ani początku ani końca, nie zdarza się w nim nic, co by zakrawało na «zawiązanie się węzła dramatycznego» w artystycznym tego słowa znaczeniu, nie jest ono pisane według żadnej tak zwanej recepty, nawet surrealistycznej Bretona” [there is no beginning or end to this story, nothing happens in it that could be considered a “dramatization” in the artistic sense of the word, it is not written according to any so-called method,

<sup>9</sup> Jacques Lacan, “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis”, in: *Écrits*. The first complete edition in English, trans. Bruce Fink in collaboration with Héloïse Fink and Russell Grigg (New York-London: Norton, 2006), 212.

<sup>10</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London : Routledge, 1996), 169. The surrealistic inspirations of Jacques Lacan’s theory are discussed by Elisabeth Roudinesco in Jacques Lacan: *An Outline of a Life and History of a System of Thought*, trans. Barbara Bray (London: Polity Press, 1997).

<sup>11</sup> Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, 176.

even Breton's surrealist method] (BD 83). The French psychoanalyst, speaking of a drive as a montage, evokes a mental image of a beautiful woman and describes how a peacock's feather tickles her belly. Similarly in the short story *Kulig* [Sleigh ride] Haupt writes:

Myslałem o Pannie. Była tuż obok, za ścianą. Myśleć o niej to przywoływać sobie przed oczy rysy jej twarzy, coś bez cienia, pasma włosów przez uszy spadające na kark, ręce o niewymownym wdzięku. To, co myślałem wówczas, nie da się ująć w okresy, składnia więzi mię, nawet surrealistyczna recepta Bretona wydaje mi się czymś uporządkowanym.

[I was thinking about the Lady. She was right next to me, behind the wall. To think of her is to conjure before my eyes the features of her face, without any shadows, strands of hair falling over her ears, her indescribably graceful hands. What I thought at the time cannot be put into periods, I find syntax too limiting, even Breton's surreal method is too systematic] (BD 73)

Thus, Haupt places the representation of Lady in the drive-sphere marked by lack and absence. It is beauty that is at stake in the scene placed in a field of a drive. Expressed in a literary space, subject to the economy of lack and complementation, this scene also raises the question of truth in representation. For the above does not reflect it, precisely because representation results from and refers to this essentially alienating displacement, substitution, absence and non-identity that constitute the dialectic of the subject in relation to himself and to the object of his desire. In a different fragment, but in a similar context, Haupt reflects on the mechanism of writing and the mechanism of thinking behind it. When not only beauty but also love is at stake, the writer struggles with this mechanism. Writing about love arouses disgust, aversion and "nienawiść przeciw samemu sobie" [self-hatred] because, as Haupt writes in the short story *Jeździec bez głowy* [Headless Horseman], "niesamowitej fizjologii miłości nie da się wymienić, przetłumaczyć na słowa" [the amazing physiology of love cannot be exchanged or translated into words] (BD 345). Even if these are the most sophisticated and accurate words, it will not change anything, which the writer expresses with a rhetorical question: "bo jak tu oddać coś, co odwija się w człowieku jak spiralna sprężyna albo co jest jak oddech zahamowany nagłym przypomnieniem albo bólem doznany, [...] albo brzmi jak odległe kroki, zaleci zapachem zapomnianym kwiatów, głosem ptaków, zamazane jak przedmioty widziane we mgle?" [because how can you express something that unwinds in a person like a spiral spring or what is like a breath stopped by a sudden memory or experienced pain [...] or sounds like distant footsteps, smells of forgotten flowers, the voice of birds, blurred like objects seen in the mist?] (BD 345; emphasis mine – M.Z.). It is this spiral spring mentioned by Zygmunt Haupt that makes writing possible and resists it at the same time. It is also behind the drive mechanism on which writing and this metaphorical montage of memories are based.

## On intimacy

Inspired by psychoanalysis, W.J.T. Mitchell in his book *What Do Pictures Want?* recounts Pliny the Elder's ancient legend, according to which love was supposed to give rise to drawing. According to him a girl outlined the shadow of her lover on a wall, and that was the beginning of

pictorial representation. The shadow, or rather its outline, was both a metonymy and a metaphor of the lover, ultimately concretized by the father of the girl in the form of a carved relief.<sup>12</sup> Image is born of desire, it is its outline, symptom, spectral trace of life – despite the absence of the object. Thus, by combining images with desire and love, the artist places it in a dialectic relationship in-between life and death, presence and absence. However, what is important for Mitchell is the reciprocal relationship between desire and image. In the inverted perspective, desire may turn out to be an effect (and not a cause) of images. Desire and image are inseparable “as if the two concepts were caught in a mutually generative circuit, desire generating images and images generating desire.”<sup>13</sup> For images not only express human desires, but also make desires human precisely by relying on representation. “Pictures,” however, “do not want to be reduced to the terms of systematic linguistics based in a unitary Cartesian subject.”<sup>14</sup> They rely on the difference expressed by the position of the one who watches and the one who is watched. In this context, pictures are “feminine;” however, as Mitchell emphasizes, he does not focus on “images of women, but images as women.”<sup>15</sup> Such a metonymic shift allows him to ask both “what do images want?” and “what do women want?” because “the power of pictures and of women is modeled on one another. [...] The power they want is manifested as *lack*, not as possession.”<sup>16</sup> Images therefore have the power to seduce and stimulate desire even when they express “desire not to show desire,”<sup>17</sup> that is, when they emphasize their own autonomy, independence, and aesthetic beauty. This combination of image and femininity will be significant in the case of Haupt, who writes extensively about women he loved in his youth.

Inspired by Jacques Lacan, Mitchell’s theory of visual representation allows us to capture an important aspect of literary representation in Zygmunt Haupt’s prose. We can see that clearly in the short story *Madrygał dla Anusi* [Madrigal for Anusia], dedicated to the title character, to whom Haupt – in the plot plan – used to be very close. In the opening of the story, he writes about the girl in a way that evokes associations with a living painting or statue:

A Anusia, Anusieczka, Anusienieczka, to była dopiero, to zachwycenie! Sam tego sobie nie chciałem powiedzieć, sam się bałem. Bywało, że podpatrzę ją, jak się ruszy do okna i spódnica jej rozciągnie się w kroku jak flaga, jak fałda chitonu Niki samotrackiej, i nogę postawi na ziemi tak solidnie, jakby była z marmuru. Bywało, zsunie się jej włos na skroni i rzęsy położą się na policzkach, a oderwie oczy od czegoś, nad czym zajęta, i zatoczy w tył, to tak, jakby nagiął gałąź agrestu. A ręce po łokcie to miała takie niewinne, jak u dziecka. W tych rękach co wzięła, to nabierało osobnego szczęścia, żeby tam nie wiem miało to być jak trywialne. Do czego przyłożyła ręce, to było już drogie. Ręce to były jakby osobne.

[And Anusia, Anusieczka, Anusienieczka, she was delightful! I didn’t want to admit it myself; I was afraid. Sometimes I would watch her go to the window and her skirt would stretch like a flag, like a fold of Nika of Samothrace’s chiton, as she took a step and put her foot on the ground as solidly

<sup>12</sup>W.J.T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2005), 66.

<sup>13</sup>Mitchell, 58.

<sup>14</sup>Mitchell, 47.

<sup>15</sup>Mitchell, 35.

<sup>16</sup>Mitchell, 36.

<sup>17</sup>Mitchell, 44.

as if it were made of marble. There were times when the hair on her temples would slide off and her eyelashes would cast a long shadow on her cheeks, and she'd take her eyes off whatever she was doing and lean back, as if you'd bend a gooseberry branch. And her arms, up to the elbows, were as innocent as a child's. Whatever she took in her hands, it was endowed with a quality of happiness, no matter how trivial it was. Whatever she touched was dear. Her hands were as if independent] (BD 263)

The dynamics with which the writer draws Anusia's portrait emphasizes both her character traits and the energy that animates her. Haupt points to his own admiration and fear. And this description refers to looking; the narrator admits that he is watching the girl. The movement of writing in this case repeats the process of looking, and a literary portrait corresponds to a dynamic sketch. Anusia herself resembles a statue, especially when Haupt writes that her legs are "made of marble". Anusia thus becomes what Mitchell calls a "figure that stands for desire."<sup>18</sup> And writing, like drawing, is an act of desire; it is alluring because "desire just is, quite literally, drawing, or a drawing – pulling, or attracting force, and the trace of this force in a picture."<sup>19</sup> Both writing and drawing, however, face a lack that limits every representation, which will forever remain insatiable and incomplete. This is related to the aforementioned ambivalence of the drawing, painting, or writing subject. The image cannot match the original. Perfect reproduction, whether by means of words or images, is impossible. Image, *re-presentation*, thus creates an alienating space between the I and the other. Haupt uses metonymy to emphasize this unattainable intimacy:

Obrzeź ją sobie, wyfiligranuj, utocz jej obrazek w dłoniach jak glinę, a nie ma pełnego obrazu. To pewnie dlatego, to pewnie ja, a wydaje mi się, że to ona. Czasami miałbym ochotę przymknąć oczy, którym nie dowierzam, i, jak ślepi, wodzić po jej twarzy dłońmi, ażeby naprawdę wiedzieć, ażeby naprawdę nauczyć się jej; wydaje mi się, że dotykiem sprawdzona byłaby prawdziwsza, „namacalna”, wiedziałbym, że jest. Czasami, zamiast słuchać jej głosu, chciałbym położyć rękę na jej krtani, jak to robią niemi, ażeby wyczuć drganie jej gardła i chwycić w dłoń jej głos, i trzymać jak spłoszoną gołębicę...

[Draw her outline, make a filigree out of her, mold an image of her in your hands like you would mold a piece of clay, and there is no complete picture. That's probably why, it's probably me, and I think it's her. Sometimes I would like to close my eyes, and I do not trust my eyes, and, like a blind man run my fingers over her face, to really know, to really understand her; it seems to me that she would be more real, more "tangible" when traced with my fingers; I would know that she is there. Sometimes, instead of listening to her voice, I would like to put my hand on her larynx, as deaf people do, to feel her throat vibrate and to catch her voice in my hand and hold it like a startled dove...]. (BD 268)

But not only is it impossible to hold one's voice in one's hands, it is also impossible to satiate the eyes and ears when it comes to drive or desires that remain unsatisfied.<sup>20</sup> Thus, writing

<sup>18</sup>Mitchell, 59.

<sup>19</sup>Mitchell, 59 (emphasis original).

<sup>20</sup>Jacques Lacan points out that "[e]ven when you stuff the mouth—the mouth that opens in the register of the drive—it is not the food that satisfies it, it is, as one says, the pleasure of the mouth." Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, 167.

and drawing become figures of respectively metaphor and metonymy. They point to absence and lack, difference and mystery, the absent center around which desire revolves. Jacques Lacan called this point *objet petit a*. Desire revolves around it, description and outline concentrate around it, interpretation also focuses on it.

Despite the alienating dimension of representation, or perhaps because of it, Haupt employs the aesthetics of empathy to play with literary representation. It is a game of intimacy. According to Mitchell, “intimacy [...] implies collectivity, a circle of acknowledgment and recognition. If the game of intimacy is played by two, it requires the third as witness or participant – sometimes even an unwitting witness [...].”<sup>21</sup> Representation of intimacy in art endows its scene with an additional dimension, because “we come to this scene as the third party. We interrupt the empathic monologue-dialogue and transform it into a scene of intimacy. The dialectic, the dialogism of alienation and empathy, is transformed into a ‘trialogue,’ a three-way encounter – perhaps even a missed encounter.”<sup>22</sup> The Other, to whom Haupt directs his (rhetorical) questions, plays such a role here. And it is the reader that is usually placed or finds himself in this position.

## On the scenic

Such writing based on empathy and intimacy may be a strategy of engagement. *Madrygał dla Anusi* is a testimony to both beauty of the title character and something that Haupt calls “demon rozdźwięku” [the demon of dissonance] (BD 74). Haupt is the protagonist of the short story and Anusia comes to visit him. He was not at home but in an apartment upstairs. He watched as the girl knocked on the door, waited, and then began to walk away; he watched her “bezwstydnie i lubieżnie jak Zuzannę w kąpielni” [shamelessly and lustfully like Susanna in her bath] (BD 272) until she could no longer hear or see him. And then something struck him:

Chciałem zawołać, już był najwyższy czas, pomimo ruchu ulicy mogła mię doskonale usłyszeć. Wystarczyło zawołać: „Anuuusiaaaa!” i odwróciłaby się, odzyskana i jedyna. Ale nie potrafiłem. Wyciągnięty na parapecie okna patrzyłem w ślad za nią. [...] Ale ja patrzę w ślad za nią, jakbym patrzył w plecy samego siebie, idącego w swoją bezcelową drogę. Prędko! Jeszcze czas! To dobrze tak sobie mówić, ale to tylko słowa. Cóż znaczy: prędko? Cóż znaczy: jeszcze czas? Odszedłem od okna, chodzę po głupim, obcym, obojętnym mieszkaniu i sam nie wiem. Pytam się samego siebie: co to? [...] co się zmieniło? Czy oszukiwałem się sam – co to było? Co to było?

[I wanted to call her, it was about time, despite the traffic she could hear me perfectly. It was enough to shout: “Anuuusiaaaa!” and she would turn around, reclaimed and beloved. But I couldn’t. Lying on the windowsill, I watched her go. [...] But I watch her as if I was looking at my own back, going on my aimless quest. Quick! There’s still time! You can say that, but they’re just words. What does ‘quick’ mean? What does ‘there’s still time’ mean? I walked away from the window, I walk around a stupid, strange, indifferent apartment and I wonder. I ask myself: what is it? [...] what has changed? Was I kidding myself – what was that? What was that?]. (BD 272–273)

<sup>21</sup>Mitchell, 230.

<sup>22</sup>Mitchell, 230.

By postponing the meeting the I confirms and perpetuates his own desire. By asking the above questions, the writer turns to the Other, thus defining the space and field occupied by the reader. The reader is a witness to a scene in which, as it might seem, everything has been said and made visible, and yet something remains incomprehensible and invisible. The reader becomes the third party in this scene; the literary/artistic form evokes him as a mute recipient and spectator, thus giving rise to the three-way meeting described by Mitchell, which in fact turns out to be a missed encounter. The reader's presence, as Mitchell points out, is meant to confirm the "intimacy" of this essentially modern scene. The viewer/ the reader also turns into a voyeur, a participant in a missed encounter. Looking and not seeing may in this case be associated with an inability to see, with inattentiveness or clumsiness characteristic of someone who faces the incomprehensible – who therefore does not understand, and thus asks himself what actually happened. Especially in the scene described above, when life itself (sustained by desire) is embodied in Anusia, when what the subject is trying to see in the above scene is not only the passage of time but also himself, his life passing by. "Za dobrą chwilę zleciałem po schodach, zabijając się po drodze" [In quite a while I run down the stairs, killing myself on the way], we read further, "ulica była pusta, jeszcze pobiegłem do rogu i nic" [the street was empty, I ran to the corner and did not see anything] (BD 273).

Logical time creeps into the gap between the place where life takes place and the position and sphere of the subject; thus, the subject always appears to be late. This time is required for recognition, as a result of which the subject faces loss or death (after all, Haupt says that he killed himself by falling down the stairs). By shifting and postponing, it confronts the subject with emptiness and nothingness. It is the time of mourning, uncertainty, and waiting. The subject is thus alienated, as a result of which he both is and is not at home (with himself), which the story hints at the beginning of the described scene.

## On spring

The scenic also determines how Anusia, the main character of the story, is represented. However, this scene is almost *ob-scene*, at the same time delightful and repulsive, and to some extent also caricatural. Her description reads like a drive montage:

Moja Anusia jest jak lunapark. Kręci się z nią wszystko i zanosi śmiechem, wszystko jest w flagach, chorągiewkach i falbankach. Wszędzie jest interesująco, ale już stąd ciągnie gdzie indziej, bo załopocze afiszem na parkanie, zatańczą żarówki sznurkiem jak paciorki, zatupocze jak na deskach sceny albo zasłoni nas cieniem jak skrzydłami namiotu, gdzie wróżą z ręki, z kryształowej kuli i z fusów kawy. [...] Moja Anusieczka to jest i błaźnica, i wołyżerka w trykocie, i ballada wybrząkana sentymentalnie na gitarze w cieniu kasztana. Moja Anusienieczka to także panoptikum osobliwości, jak się ma odwagę w nią zajrzeć: kobieta z brodą, gorylica, anakonda, dwieście kilo żywej wagi (bo mi strasznie leży na duszy, wisi u szyi młyńskim kamieniem), monstrum tatutowane, unikat, Madame Viola i poskramiaczka zwierząt

[My Anusia is like an amusement park. Everything spins and laughs with her, everything is covered with flags, buntings, and frills. Everything is interesting, but we keep moving from one attraction



to the next, because a poster flutters on a fence, light bulbs on a string dance like beads, stage boards stamp and wings of a tent envelop us like a shadow; fortune tellers read your hand, look into a crystal ball, and examine coffee grounds. [...] My Anusieczka is both a clown and an equestrian vaulter in a leotard, and a sentimental ballad played on a guitar in the shade of a chestnut tree. My Anusieńczyka is also a panopticum, a collection of curiosities, if you dare to look inside: a bearded lady, a gorilla, an anaconda, weighing two hundred kilos (because she's so heavy, she burdens my soul, she is an albatross around my neck), a tattooed monster, a rarity, Madame Viola, and an animal tamer]. (BD 268–269).

The dynamism and amorphous nature of representation emphasize and indirectly indicate the driving force driving it. If drive is related to death, in the case of Anusia it was expressed by comparing her to an amusement park. The exaggeration and excess of an amusement park, as well as its artificiality, stand in contrast to the calm and ordinary surroundings. Still, even in a space defined by the euphoric and the carnivalesque, there are echoes of sadness and silence, which operate by way of contrast and opposition. The drive-like nature of representation refers to an amusement park, filled with a cacophony of “szaleństwo, muzyka, dzwon, werbel, piszczałki, lutnie, śpiew, kołatki, kogutki piejące, syreny rozwyte” [madness, music, bells, snare drums, pipes, lutes, singing, knockers, crowing roosters, sirens] (BD 269). It is also coded in the very structure of an amusement park: its rides and attractions brought to life by engineering and electricity. This is as true of the amusement park to which Haupt compares Anusia as of Anusia herself. Haupt further writes that:

Zamyśliła się, zmarszczyła czoło i nagle uderzyło mię: O CZYM ONA MOŻE MYŚLEĆ? [...] Toż tę Anusię – cud, spektakl zadzierzysty i wspaniały – sprowadzam tą obojętnością do roli, do schematu maszynki, że niby w porządku, nie przejmować się, taka już jest: wszystko w niej udało, inteligencja tak sprawna, jak w maszynie do liczenia, reakcje tak poprawne i dźwięczne, jak w automacie, gdzie dobrze ponaoliwiane sprężyny, tak jak ona cała.

[She pondered, frowned, and suddenly it hit me: WHAT IS SHE THINKING ABOUT? [...] With my indifference I reduce Anusia – this miracle, this feisty and wonderful spectacle – to a role, to a structure, to a machine, it should be okay, it should work, that's how she is: she is perfect, she is as intelligent and efficient as a counting machine, her reactions are as proper and melodic as those of an automaton, with well-oiled springs; that's what she is] (BD 266–267; emphasis mine – M.Z.).

The heroine – placed in this drive-montage – turns out to be a doll or an automaton propelled by a spring.<sup>23</sup> This mechanism, which animates Anusia and keeps the amusement park going, corresponds to a certain extent to the mechanism of remembering and writing, and both are inseparably connected in Haupt's works. In the short story *Jak wiosna przyjechała* [How Spring Arrived], the writer notes: “odwraca się we mnie i odkłada wspomnienie” [memories twist and turn in me, they are registered in me] (BD 315). There is something moving in this memory – “coś, co odwija się w człowieku jak spiralna sprężyna” [something that unwinds

<sup>23</sup>This comparison brings to mind *Metropolis*, dir. Fritz Lang. Its female lead turns out to be an automaton, a machine which – by way of substitution – is not only the object of the main character's desires, but also represents workers whose whole life is subordinated to machines that keep the city functioning and safe.

inside you like a spiral spring] (BD 345). This spring becomes a meaningful metaphor for Haupt: it sets the scene of remembering and writing in motion, as well as the very scene of the subject constructed in and through writing. The spring not only sets the scene in motion, but it also animates thinking. “Z myślami to jest tak jak ze spiralą” [Thoughts are as if set in motion by a spiral], Haupt writes (BD 297). And the spiral spring both sets the mechanism in motion and opposes it; therefore, thinking and writing are not without ambivalence, which, according to Sigmund Freud, is “deeply rooted in human feelings.”<sup>24</sup> According to Freud, when it comes to both mourning and melancholia, and thus remembering and writing, ambivalence is the “drive-spring of conflict.”<sup>25</sup>

The spring metaphor recurs in Freud's writings. Freud uses it, among other things, to describe the mechanism of creating a dream scene when “the suppressed material becomes the mainspring of the dream,”<sup>26</sup> or “die Triebfeder des Traums.”<sup>27</sup> Freud explains that a dream can replace, without activating consciousness, the most complicated mental processes. He further says that human pursuit to benefit or “the attainment of pleasure” are “the mainspring of all human activities.”<sup>28</sup> It is in this context that Jacques Lacan uses the very term when he talks about the “mainspring of people,”<sup>29</sup> or “le ressort des hommes,”<sup>30</sup> which is a certain fundamental structure that can be discovered in the phenomenon of the human psyche. Lacan writes about a “structuring force” that is reproduced in structurally defined mental phenomena, and the “spring of structure” [fr. *ressort de la structure*].<sup>31</sup> The French psychoanalyst directly relates it to the structure of the drive, as well as to the Oedipus complex. The relationship between drive and what is translated as the drive-spring was also significant for Freud. After all, he writes that the driving force in the process of creating innocent jokes is the desire to “display oneself” [Ger. *darzustellen*], and that drive corresponds to exhibitionism in the sexual sphere.<sup>32</sup> Freud uses two terms: *die Triebfeder* and *ein Trieb*, indicating that the mechanism discussed by him is actually nothing more than a drive-spring. This spring triggers the mechanism of creating jokes, representations, but it also stands behind the subjective structure based on a drive.

<sup>24</sup>Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans. Kegan Paul (London: Routledge, 2012), 178.

<sup>25</sup>Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia”, in: *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 249.

<sup>26</sup>Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. A.A. Brill (London: Wordsworth, 1997), 426. Earlier, however, on p. 76, Freud writes: “The psychic energy accumulated during the day through inhibition or suppression becomes the main-spring of the dream at night.” [*die Triebfeder des Traums*].

<sup>27</sup>Sigmund Freud, *Die Traumdeutung*, ed. Alexander Mitscherlich, Angela Richards (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1961), 103.

<sup>28</sup>Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (London: Norton, 2010), 123 ff.

<sup>29</sup>Jacques Lacan, *The Psychoses: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (London: Routledge, 2013), 276.

<sup>30</sup>Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre III: Les psychoses 1955–1956*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1981), 363.

<sup>31</sup>Lacan, *The Psychoses*, 19; Lacan, *Les psychoses 1955–1956*, 28.

<sup>32</sup>In German this sentence reads : « Die Triebfeder der Produktion harmloser Witze ist nicht selten der ehrgeizige Drang, seinen Geist zu zeigen, sich darzustellen, ein der Exhibition auf sexuellem Gebiete gleichzusetzender Trieb“. See : Sigmund Freud, « Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten », in: *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 6, ed. Anna Freud (London: Imago, 1940), 159. “The motive force for the production of innocent jokes is not infrequently an ambitious urge to show one's cleverness, to display oneself – an instinct that may be equated with exhibitionism in the sexual field.” See: Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, trans. James Strachey (London: Norton, 2010), 120.

## On dolls

Haupt uses a similar mechanism, a drive-spring, when he creates and describes characters of his stories. In the short story *Dziewczynka z nóżkami na księżycach* [Girl with Her Feet on the Moons], he describes his visit to a military camp in Rennes, specifically one of the rooms. He pays special attention to a certain lieutenant and the toys he collected:

Na jednym ze stołów było rozrzuconych kilka zabawek bardzo nawet zabawnych i precyzyjnych, i sprytnych. Był mały samochód nakręcany sprężyną, który, puszczone w ruch, zataczał zdenrowane koła po asfaltowej posadzce i terczał wesoło i śpiesznie, póki nakręcona sprężyna nie rozkręciła się i wtedy stawał nagle i smutnie, prawdziwa zepsuta zabawka. Był mały kran, który był malutką miniaturą prawdziwego kranu czerpaka, jaki widuje się na robotach ulicznych, kiedy łyka rozwartym gardłem tony gruzu i z zawrotną szybkością zatacza swą szyją w półkole, i kiwa mu się ta przeciążona żuchwa. Był żółw, który mozolnie wiosłował koszlawymi łapami-grabami i wahadłowo prznosił swą głowę z prawa na lewo. Były jeszcze inne przemyślne kolorowe, łatwe i koszlawe zabawki. Ten jeden porucznik to cierpliwie je nakręcał i puszczał w ruch, a inni w swych ciężkich zielonych khaki płaszczach stali [...] i patrzyli na to zimno i obojętnie...

[Some very funny and precise and clever toys were scattered on one of the tables. There was a little spring-wound toy car that, when set in motion, made nervous circles on the asphalt floor and rattled merrily and hurriedly until the spring wound up and then suddenly and sadly stopped, a real broken toy. There was a small bucket that was a tiny miniature copy of a real bucket, the kind you see during roadworks when it gulps down tons of rubble and swings its arm in a semicircle at breakneck speed, and his heavy “jaw” is wagging. There was a turtle that laboriously rowed its rake-flippers and pendulously moved its head from right to left. There were other ingenious colorful, easy and crooked toys. This one lieutenant would patiently wind them up and set them in motion, and the others in their heavy green khaki coats would stand [...] and watch, coldly and indifferently...] (BD 370–371)<sup>33</sup>

This story becomes a pretext for Haupt to comment on his own work. In this story, he describes the relationship between one of the lieutenants and a girl who served them meals in a canteen. Haupt noticed something intimate in the lieutenant’s ambiguous and defiant attitude towards the girl, while other witnesses noticed something embarrassing and shameful. Reflecting on this relationship, the writer referred to a comparison between toys and the mechanisms that wind them up. When he was about to leave the camp, he came across the girl who was teased by the said lieutenant. The writer then saw her sad and idle: “ta jej beczynność była jak przebranie. Siedziała doskonale beczynn timer, z rękoma bezwładnie w podołku i patrzyła martwo w te swoje ręce – odmienna, inna, bezwładna, niedzielnie, niedzielnie-popołudniowo beczynna, z włosami, które nieporządnie opadały, wymykały się z jej węzła na karku, w sukience tak

<sup>33</sup>In the story *Stacja Zielona* [Green Station], Haupt admits to his childhood fascination with “mechanicznym światem lalek, ich pałaców, broni, zabawek, ozdób i cudów” [the mechanical world of dolls, their palaces, weapons, toys, ornaments and wonders], which his uncle’s hand, Józio Waszewski, made especially for him. See: Zygmunt Haupt, *Z Roksolanii. Opowiadania, eseje, reportaże, publicystyka, warianty, fragmenty (1935–1975)* [From Red Ruthenia. Stories, essays, reportages, journalism, variants, fragments (1935–1975)], collected, edited and with an editorial note by Aleksander Madyda, 2nd revised, corrected and supplemented edition (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2018), 267.

szarej i pepitowej, i bezpłciowej, sukieneczynie, i z jej zgarbieniem wąskich pleców. Siedziała zapatrzona w swe ręce, niewidząca, odległa” [Her idleness was like a disguise. She sat perfectly idle, her hands lifeless in her lap, and stared blankly at those hands of hers – other, different, limp, idle on a Sunday, idle on a Sunday afternoon, her hair fell, slipping out of a knot at the nape of her neck. She sat there in a gray and black printed houndstooth dress, so sexless, and with her hunched narrow back. She sat staring at her hands, blind, distant] (BD 372). The girl resembles a doll whose mechanism does not work. The contrast between Anusia and this strange girl results from a desire and drive-force that animated one, and is absent in the other. The girl was sad, we can presume, because the military unit for which she worked in the local canteen was leaving. And the annoying lieutenant with whom, as the writer believed, she had a relationship was leaving too. These ambiguous relations between the girl and one of the soldiers, and especially his role in the story, made Haupt think that:

W sekrecie to ja sam zabawiam się takimi mechanicznymi zabawkami. Układam sobie sytuacje, nakręcam je, potem patrzę w ślad tego, jak rozkręcona sprężyna porusza nimi i jak wymyślony mechanizm nimi pokieruje

[I secretly play with such mechanical toys myself. I arrange situations for myself, wind them up, and then I watch how the spring propels them and how the mechanism guides them]. (BD 371)

A similar scene may be found in the short story *O Stefcu, o Chaimie Immerglücku i o scytyjskich bransoletkach* [About Stefcia, Chaim Immerglück and Scythian bracelets]. It talks about a relationship between young Haupt and the title character, Stefcia. At the same time, the story is a kind of literary game of imagination in which the writer tries to imagine “jak by to było, gdyby było” [what it would be like if it happened] (BD 235). The writer draws an image of a girl from the depths of thoughts, memories, and dreams – she is “topielicy o spuchłych wargach i oczach wyjedzonych przez żwir rzeczny, o rękach pocętkowanych trądem wodnym” [a woman who drowned; a woman with swollen lips and eyes eaten away by river gravel, her hands marked with water leprosy] (BD 236). Haupt then imagines her as a bride whom, having taken her hand, he leads down the aisle. The whole scene becomes phantasmagoric:

Weźże tę topielicę za rękę i odprowadź do ołtarza [...]. Powiedz ją poprzez próg kościelny, aż niech ugną się resory fiakra, którego chabety przystrojone są w weselne wstążki. Zagub za sobą ostatnie piszczały i dudy organowego „Veni Creator”! Poprowadź ją naprzód poprzez froterowane firmamenty posadzek, fornirowane floresy mebli, fryturę faszerowań kuchennych, fioritury fryzur modnych, fatamorgany firanek sypialnianych... Oto następnego dnia, rana małżeńskiego, jest popsuta jak zabawka, jak lalka, w której coś się pokręciło, i już nie mówi więcej: „mama”, a jak ją położyć, to raz na zawsze zamknęła oczy i nie może ich otworzyć

[Take this drowned woman by the hand and lead her down the aisle [...]. Lead her through the threshold of the church; the springs of the carriage drawn by horses decorated with wedding ribbons should squeak. Leave the sounds of springs and pipe organ playing *Veni Creator* behind you! Lead her inside through the polished firmaments of floors, the veneered zigzags of furniture, fried food in the kitchen, fashionable and frenzy coiffures, the mirages of bedroom curtains... The next day, on the marital morning, she is broken like a toy, like a doll that has been mishandled, and she

no longer says “mama,” and when I lay her down, she closes her eyes once and for all and she cannot open them]. (BD 236)

The toy mechanism described above, the spring that moves and propels toys, corresponds to the mechanism and dynamics of drive, the Freudian drive-spring, which stimulates and propels humans and makes them achieve their goals. This mechanism both drives the characters in the scene and sets the scene in motion, especially when it concerns specific elements of the plot. It is also a writing mechanism, something Haupt has elsewhere referred to as “mechaniczny schemat składni” [a mechanical syntax structure] (BD 443). This structure limits and disciplines the mind, as the inanimate apparatus of writing and syntax limits and disciplines the disordered and incomprehensible life. In this way, thanks to a spring, toys play the role of lifeless mannequins, brought back to life for a moment in and through memories and representation. They also reveal the mechanism which propels characters; they are moved by writing and drive. This is also the case with Anusia, who “śmieje się i śmiech jej jest jak nakręcona katarynka. Śmieje się mechanicznie, bo coś w niej łaskocze się i przewraca...” [laughs, and her laughter is like a wind-up barrel organ. She laughs mechanically because something inside her tickles and turns...] (BD 265).

## On surrealism

This type of memory both animates and petrifies the characters, turning them into puppets, locking them in the mechanism of (literary, theater or film) representation. It deprives them of agency. Animated by this mechanism of representation, they turn into figures, actors, who imitate life. They are animated by a drive mechanism that inseparably links the living with the dead; within this space the imagined other turns into an object: an object of fear and desire. At the same time, as Katarzyna Fazan notes in her commentary on Tadeusz Kantor’s works, materialized on the literary or theatrical stage, the puppet becomes a “surrealist object.”<sup>34</sup> Haupt, like Kantor, places himself on the (literary) stage, blurring the line between the real and the fictional. One such scene is the one mentioned at the beginning of this essay, found in “*Kiedy będą dorosły*”. Haupt is on a train, and he sees and describes himself as he goes to meet Panna. A similar scene may be found in *Jak wiosna przyjechała*, when Haupt, as he writes, picks up his girlfriend at a train station and then they go home in a carriage. Everything is in bloom. It is spring. The arrival of spring and the arrival of the girl make the writer resort to a metaphorical or rather a metonymic shift: the girl becomes the personification, the incarnation of, spring, and even spring itself. The joy of seeing the girl and the joy of spring make the journey a celebration. The carriage ride turns surreal:

To właśnie z nią, z wiosną, jechałem, trzęśliśmy się wiosną dorożką, fiakrem, ze stacji kolejowej. Proszę uważać: wiosną, w wiosenny dzień biały jechaliśmy z dworca kolejowego [...] słońce nie-

<sup>34</sup>Katarzyna Fazan, Kantor. *Nie/obecność* [Cantor. *Presence/Absence*] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2019), 320. In the chapter “Martwe/żywe. Od marionety do symulakrum” [Dead/Alive. From puppets to simulacrum], Fazan discusses the role of mannequins and puppets in contemporary art, also in reference to the works of Tadeusz Kantor. She writes about “modernist ghostly mannequins” (p. 324). Haupt seems to draw on this tradition.

bieskie i przypieka. Czerwona twarz dorożkarza, jak księżyc powstający o wieczornej śręzodze, i bat postawiony w tulejce na koźle. I już jesteśmy usadowieni, i słodko gną się resory wiktorii, i pachnie starą, niegdyś lakierowaną skórą fartucha, i siedzenia dorożki wysłane białuškimi, czystymi, niebywale pokrowcami, i przed nami tylko wysoki koziół woźnicy siedzącego szerokim zadem tłuściocha i okręconego kraciastym pledem, i wiktoria hušta się na kamieniach bruku, i dwie szkapki dorożkarskie, jakby drewniane i mechaniczne, i nie żywe, ale sztuczne maszyny, manekiny końskie, idą wprawnym truchtem, i kłapią kopyta po bruku w takt, w takt, błyszczą wypucowane latarnie po obu stronach koźła, hušta się pudło powozowe i jesteśmy jak para królewska: ja i wiosna

[It was with her, with spring, that I rode, we were riding in a carriage, in a buggy, from the train station. It was spring. Indeed: it was spring, the day was beautiful, we were driving from the train station [...] the sun was shining bright. The coachman's red face was like the moon rising in the evening midday; his whip was in a socket on the driver's seat. And we are already seated, and the springs of the carriage go up and down, and we can smell the old, once lacquered leather driving apron, and the seats of the carriage are covered with incredibly white clean covers, and in front of us we can see the tall driver's seat, and this fat man with a wide rump is sitting on it, wrapped in a checkered plaid, and the carriage goes up and down on the cobblestones, and the two horses, as if wooden, mechanical, and dead, more like artificial machines, horse mannequins, walk steadily on the cobblestones, step by step, and the lanterns shine on both sides of the driver's seat, the carriage box swings and we are like a royal couple: me and spring] (BD 317).

This solemn scene, complete with mechanical horse mannequins, is like a surreal puppet theater performance. The horses' pace, shiny lanterns, and a coffin-like carriage box bring to mind a funeral procession and render the journey surreal. The mechanical clatter of the horses' hooves on the cobblestones, just like a hypnotic clatter of wheels on rail joints or the clatter of a typewriter, the "ustawiczne skandowanie czasu" [constant chant of time] (BD 582), which Haupt described in various contexts, represent the mechanism which tells the tempo, makes the time present, and points to the end of life, as well as to death, awaiting us at the end of life (hidden behind this paradoxical mechanism of representation which animates the inanimate).

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In *Manifestoes of Surrealism* André Breton wrote that "Fear, the attraction of the unusual, chance, the taste for the extravagant, are devices [Fr. *ressorts*] which we will never summon in vain."<sup>35</sup> These devices are the springs that both Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan referred to. Breton also writes about the wonderful, *marvelous*, which characterizes and defines each epoch. According to him, in modernity the marvelous takes the form of a dummy. As a writer, Zygmunt Haupt – like Tadeusz Kantor – fits well into the tradition and epoch thus defined. His literary portraits and representations bear the features of drive-montages. Employed in the process of representation, they are placed in a literary scene on stage whose mechanism resembles that of an amusement park, fair, or circus, all of which are powered by

<sup>35</sup>André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver, Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), 16.

electricity, where different characters resemble “potwory, maskary, klowny, pierroty, motyle, stwory, niedźwiedzie, małpy, ptaki, owady, żyrafy, co tylko teratologia ma w zapasie, jakieś fantazje jak z obrazów Breugla lub kuszenia świętego Antoniego, harpie, ludzie-żołądki i ludzie-lichtarze, węże, lamparty i zupełne fantazje do niczego niepodobne, i ten tłum strzyg i dziwolągów krążył obłądną karuzelą, *merry-go-round*, wirem, malstromem absurdu pod kaskadami światła...” [monsters, devils, clowns, Pierrots, butterflies, creatures, bears, monkeys, birds, insects, giraffes, whatever teratology has in store, fantasies found in Bruegel’s paintings or the temptation of Saint Anthony, harpies, stomach-people and candlestick-people, snakes and leopards and utter fantasies unlike anything else, and so many witches and freaks in a mad carousel, a merry-go-round, a whirlpool, a maelstrom of absurdity under cascades of light...] (BD 145). The metonymic enumerative description mentioned in the introduction to this essay turns out to be a metaphorical montage. And Haupt turns out to be a writer-engineer who constructs a literary scene and sets it in motion, and then observes where the springs take his characters.

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

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# KEYWORDS

D O L L

*montage*

REPRESENTATION

SURREALISM

**ABSTRACT:**

With the tools borrowed from the psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, this article discusses the topic of the represented world, and especially literary characters, in the prose of Zygmunt Haupt. The concept of the drive presented as an artistic montage – as developed by Lacan – turns out to be particularly useful in the analysis of literary portraits depicted by Haupt. Constructed as a montage of memories, this prose points to the very mechanism of imaginary representation driven by what is described by Freud as “drive-spring”. It constructs a stage on which individual characters are presented; it drives them as characters. It is also a metaphor describing the mechanisms of remembering and writing. Propelled by the “drive-spring” those literary characters resemble dolls or mannequins; they also point to the surrealist tradition within which these literary representations can be located.

JACQUES LACAN

## ZYGMUNT HAUPT

*mannequin*

*Sigmund Freud*

**NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

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