

Some Comments on Authothematic Description (and Not Only).

Wiersz (Trackless)

by Andrzej Sosnowski from the
Perspective of Philosophy of Language*

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Wiersz (Trackless) was first published in the volume *Taxi* from 2003. It soon became one of the most recognizable autothematic poems by Andrzej Sosnowski. Characteristic lines such as “wiersz wychodzi z domu i nigdy nie wraca” [a poem leaves home and never returns], “wiersz nie pamięta domu którego nie było” [a poem does not remember a home that never existed], and “wiersz traci pamięć za rogiem ulicy” [a poem loses its memory behind the corner of the street]¹ have permanently entered the quotes canon used for commenting on poetry from the turn of the 21st century (as those which are evidently subject to the traditional, structuralist analysis, convinced of its finiteness and exhaustiveness of interpretation). The poem in question belongs to the *stricte* deconstructive network of notions, indeed freeing itself (at least at first glance) from the ties of tradition (one of the connotations of “memory”) or the power of the author. The poem is homeless, and it does not have any ties with its source – a source which does not exist itself. Or maybe this is not true?

¹ The first one was originally used in the poem *Acte manque* from the volume *Sezon na Helu*. It should be mentioned that an auto-quotation is a form of memory in itself, as indicated by Marta Koronkiewicz (Koronkiewicz Marta, *Zmysłowe nawyki, w I jest moc odległego życia w tej elegii. Uwagi o wierszach Andrzeja Sosnowskiego*, Wrocław: Fundacja na Rzecz Kultury i Edukacji im. Tymoteusza Karpowicza, 2019), 52. And so even a poem that cannot be traced has some story and location, even if its place is poetry itself. *Mise en abyme* – for which auto-quotation is indisputably some form – in a way provides this “homeless” poem a defined framework, which should be stressed from the beginning.

Let us have a look at the whole text:

Wiersz traci pamięć za rogiem ulicy
W czarnym powietrzu brzmia wołania straży
Szukałem siostry i nie mogłem znaleźć
Nie miałem siostry więc nie mogłem szukać

Nie miałem siostry jak sięgnąć pamięcią
Wstecz wzdłuż ulicy której dawno nie ma
W naszej okolicy zgubi się w podwórkach
Nie zna białego ranka Pije w suterrenach

Marzy godzinami przy murku śmietnika
Moje ciemne powieki ciężkie są od wina
Wiersz wychodzi z domu i nigdy nie wraca
Wiersz nie pamięta domu którego nie było

Dla tej ciemnej miłości dzikiego gatunku
Wstecz wzdłuż ulicy której dawno nie ma
Idzie bez pamięci i znika bez śladu
Nie ma wiersza pamięci siostry ani domu²

One should pay attention to indications of “loss” (of memory) and “escape” (from home), paradigmatic for the whole poem, as two major characteristics of poetry; this rhetorical device is actually used before the key declaration of “a home that never existed”. If anyone or anything was able to leave anywhere, the place in question must have ceased to exist. If memory can be lost, it must have been active before; at least, this is what commonly-understood logic would suggest. However, in the deconstructive mode of the poem, both the home and the memory – understood as peculiar sources of literature – are only phantasms created “backwards”, supported by the Derridean opposition against the metaphysics of presence. A poem **exists** – it does not require any mythological beginning, reason, or past to exist; it is culture (customs, habits) that orders us to seek relationships for it. However, each new relationship will be secondary to its unprecedented freedom, trying to find an organized cosmos in the chaos, tempting scholars with undiscovered, yet actually existing truths (as one wishes to believe).

And yet, home and past do exist, at least through negation: even if they are only a distant echo of the Derridean metaphysics of presence or cognitive familiarization of the wild world, they

² Andrzej Sosnowski, *Wiersz (Trackless)*, w *Dożynki 1987-2003* (Wrocław: Biuro Literackie, 2006), 237.

A poem loses its memory behind the corner of the street/ Cries of guards can be heard in the black air/ I was looking for my sister and could not find her/ I didn't have a sister, so I couldn't have been looking for her// As far as I remembered I hadn't had a sister/ Backwards along the street which is long gone/ In this neighborhood she would get lost among the backyards/ She does not know early dawn Drinks in the cellars// She spends hours daydreaming by the dumpster/ My dark eyelids are heavy from the wine/ A poem leaves home and never returns/ a poem does not remember a home that never existed// For that dark love of a wild species/ Backwards along the street which is long gone/ She walks without memory and disappears without a trace/ There is no poem memory sister or home [translation mine, PZ]

are some points of reference for the poem. It is difficult to evaluate the character of those ties beyond the notion of loss, which is clearly evoked through the sister persona. According to Joanna Roszak, *Wiersz (Trackless)* may also refer to George Trakl, an important Austrian poet, who suffered the loss of his sister, Greta, for whom he had rather un-family-like feelings³. The sister is gone, and what is left are words “set free”, denoting “Trakl’s sister”, constantly reminding us about the annihilation of some element of reality,

However, the character of Greta may not necessarily refer the reader to any specific person (according to Roszak⁴). It is enough to have a look at the works of language philosophers (especially Gottlieb Frege, John Searle and Bertrand Russell⁵), who argue for unclear relations between words and objects. First and foremost, the term “sister” (or even “Trakl’s sister” is not a proper name, but rather a description whose real denotation may not exist – or more than one such an object may exist⁶. The “existence of an object” is not exhausted by any collection of descriptions, so even if one admits that specific words are closely related to some person to whom they refer, it is impossible to claim that they grasp the whole object, exhausting its possible denotations⁷. Greta Trakl represented far more than being just a sister of a specific poet: there are definitely people who are unaware that her brother was a poet, or that she had siblings at all, and who associated her with other characteristics (appearance, character, behavior). Thus, the description does not determine the actual existence of a character such as “Trakl’s sister”; in one sense, such an entity does not exist at all (because even a purely theoretical character of its existence significantly goes beyond any possible linguistic denotation), and in another, each language user may have a different description of such a possible protagonist, and so he or she may think of a completely different object.

Terms such as “sister” or “Trakl’s sister” should label some element of reality, simplifying the identification of an object in communication. However, one should also notice that we need synthetic knowledge in order to verify our knowledge of the factual rather than purely textual existence of such a person⁸ (and we assume that poetry readers deal predominantly with literature, i.e. text – they do not normally need to compare a poem with a history of Austrian poetry and analyze the author’s biography). According to Frege’s theses, even if we assume the purely “textual” existence of Greta (in which case, we would not need synthetic knowledge), her name – and so the whole persona to whom it refers – does not have any sig-

³ See Joanna Roszak, *Kim jestem Ja i kim jesteś Ty (w poezji Andrzeja Sosnowskiego)?*, w *Wiersze na głos. Szkice o twórczości Andrzeja Sosnowskiego*, edited by P. Śliwiński (Poznań, Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna i Centrum Animacji Kultury, 2010), 143-144.

⁴ See Roszak, 144: Roszak claims that the sister figure is extra-linguistic.

⁵ Digressions about the sense, meaning and role of description and proper names have been taken from three papers which have been important for language philosophy: Gottlob Frege, *Sense and reference*; John Rogers Searle, *Proper names*; Bertrand Russell, *Denoting*. All three papers can be found in the volume *Logika i język. Studia z semiotyki logicznej*, selection, translation, introduction and notes by J. Pelc (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1967).

⁶ Some philosophers argue that the existence of a proper name does not decide the actual state of “being” of a given object (for example “Aristotle” has been long dead, or “Romeo and Juliet”, who never actually lived). However, Frege would explain that the latter case – through belonging to literature – does not contain any denotations understood as a relationship between a name and what it denotes.

⁷ See Searle, *Proper names*.

⁸ See B. Russell, *Denoting*.

nificance, only possible meanings⁹. Finally, according to Russel (again), the terms “sister” or “Trakl’s sister” are not proper names, and so they are unable to simplify this labeling of reality (creating an impression that it refers to it directly, and that its object remains original, unique and special), and they are also a complex description in a way, because in order to decipher its potential denotations, we also need to know who Trakl was (or generally – a reference to a person who would be its relative). In other words, this term is completely devoid of a reference, both in terms of meaning (based on the relationship with reality), and sense (stemming from the text itself). The “sister” who appears in the poem is thus a “free” word, somewhat detached from the “real” object. Although it is slightly against linguistic logic, we may say that it is perfectly aligned with its function in Sosnowski’s poetry: to connote a sense of “loss” and loosen the ties between *signifiant* and *signifié*.

Thus, there is no sister, but there is no Trakl either, which is rightly pointed out by Roszak¹⁰. *Wiersz (Trackless)* is defined at the very beginning as a poem examining some key characteristic of a postmodern (or interpreted in a postmodern way) work of art: an independent artifact, free from various ties. Thus, (*Trackless*) becomes a metonymy of the poem in general, describing not only the work by Andrzej Sosnowski, but also all other literary works. This is supposed already in the title, which makes the general term “wiersz” [a poem] superordinate. Its characteristic is further defined by the ambiguous word “trackless”, which means “having no paths or tracks on it”, or even (in case of animals), impossible to follow (or trace; however, this claim is more controversial). The poem is in constant motion – it is lost in the backyards, walking down disappearing streets – and so it does not leave any traces that would allow us to reconstruct its history, which means that it is deprived of a narrative of its own past. Ultimately, the poem-protagonist loses not only its tradition or family relations, but also the very intertextual reference. *Trackless, trackl-less* also means taking Trakl away from it. According to interpretative traditions, the poem refers to the Austrian poet, and so it is deprived of a definite, reconstructable “track” – which he used to enter the world, determined by references to the past, i.e. memories of a sister, house or street. It is additionally deprived of its inspiration – Trakl – which destabilizes the fundament of its own existence.

Thus, the process of freeing the poem is full: a reference to Ludwig Wittgenstein and the notion of family resemblance¹¹. A literary work that operates a reference – even if meticulously hidden – to some kinship, in fact presents (as Thomas Mann would put it) the story of the downfall of the family in question. The sister is nobody’s sister, and Trakl cannot be referred to as a brother, unless the character of their relationship had ever allowed such a classification. Trakl becomes an “unowned” entity, deprived of roots in the world (founded by family, i.e. memory, tradition, history); he only appears in the form of an “alternative summoning”. The poem referring to Trakl in fact renounces him, choosing the freedom of a roadless track (which, *notabene*, allow George and Greta – no longer brother and sister – to fulfill

⁹ See Frege.

¹⁰Rozzak, 143.

¹¹See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, translated by B. Wolniewicz (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1997); *Dociekania filozoficzne*, translated by B. Wolniewicz, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2012).

their romance, impossible during their lifetime, by making the relationship not incestuous), rather than ties. In the philosophical interpretation, the family resemblance supposed by Wittgenstein, which decides about communication opportunities thanks to the acceptance of not so much the identity of specific elements (the universal compatibility of names) as the possibility to accept their similarity for the sake of agreement, is abolished. It is thus impossible to start a conversation: *signifiant* is completely deprived of *signifié*.

However, if the poem (the one in question by Sosnowski – and any other) indeed did not leave any traces, it would be completely incomprehensible. Not in the sense of “incomprehensible poetry”, represented most famously by Andrzej Sosnowski, but in the sense of complete lack of communicativeness. Separating any statement or element of reality from what is known, recognizable, and nameable makes this element inaccessible, and hence alien¹² (such a poem would have to detach itself from the basic guarantor of intersubjectivity, i.e. language). However, the suggestion – even if reflexive, negative and autothematic – that the poem is independent, and additionally directly stating what the poem is independent from, allows us to construct some interpretative framework (or at least a collection of dispersed reference points). Yet again, description through negation is used here: poetry is free from home, family and memory – speaking directly, it is free from any roots and stability – however, mentioning those terms allows us to situate it in the real world. Although the poem has no past, the very mention of the word “past” (which may be of significance in other linguistic games, even if it is entitled to this significance based on strategic essentialism) allows us to understand against what the poem stands, and thus to give it some features, and specify what position it has in the world (or its position against the world). It allows us to simply describe it, and thus allow some basic cognitive activity.

All of the above obviously leads to the deconstructive notion of a trace – and the poetic category of a trope¹³. In Derrida, a trace is what is “added” through the reading process to other elements of reality (inspiring associations, motivating to notice or rather construct certain relations)¹⁴, rather than something juxtaposed with meaning (a thought, figure, reference), something that leads to meaning. A trace is thus established backwards: instead of leading from the source to the destination, it leads from the destination to nowhere, since the source does not exist (or rather, it does not exist according to postmodernism; it functions only in such a way as “Trakl’s sister” does – as a term without denotation, an empty description). Thus, it attracts attention not to the starting point, but to the way – some movement, an interpretative gesture. In this sense, a track becomes similar to a trope – a semantic transformation. They are based on the same rule: they inspire cognitive activity; however, their “vectors” are different. A trace leads us “backwards”, forcing us to exam-

¹²The same conviction can be found in Searle.

¹³Of course, this category has numerous descriptions in the humanities; however, here I do not treat them in the „traditional” way, but as some universal functioning rule for poetic texts, which transform the literal meanings and extract new, cognitively valuable qualities. For the traditional interpretation, see, for example, Agata Stankowska-Kozera, *Poezji nie pisze się bezkarnie. Z teorii i historii tropu poetyckiego* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2007). On the cognitive role of metaphors (and other tropes) – see for example Krzysztof Stepnik, *Filozofia metafory* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1988)

¹⁴See, for example, Jacques Derrida, *Forma i znaczenie. Uwagi o fenomenologii języka*, translated by B. Banasiak, in: *Pismo filozofii* (Kraków: Inter Esse, 1992).

ine what is retrospectively possible “behind” a word, even if “it” does not exist, whereas a trope pushes recipients “forward”, towards a field that is only opening, inspiring us to lay possible interpretative paths, to map the “unknown ground”. Another difference between a trope and a trace lies in the actor; someone “leaving traces” is impossible to define before capturing him or her (according to Sosnowski’s poetry this moment is the mythical goal of any form of creative activity), whereas a “tracker” is relatively easy to identify – a subject, reader, interpreter, or critic.

However, Sosnowski’s poem initially does not motivate readers to pick up any trail. Instead, it notices the trackless character of literature “as such”, always through negation (as in the case of “Trakl’s sister”), forcing readers to look for traces and immediately deconstruct their character. The meanings transmitted by the poem are *trackless*, impossible to track, because the descriptions are deprived of their denotations; they function as “dead words”, similar to the famous roses of Boethius, who claimed that even if all the flowers in the world died, we would still have a word for them; in other words, even if our world was left without any roses, we would still have their name. The poem in question is thus: “For that dark love of a wild species/ Backwards along the street which is long gone/ She walks without memory and disappears without a trace”, and ultimately “there is no poem memory sister or home”. The trace left by (*Trackless*) is the lack of trace, and searching for any history belonging to it (understood as concise narration) is pointless, as it would be a history of loss – loss of memory and all relationships, including spatial, temporal (after all, the poem loses its way and forgets), semiotic, and referential. Such a history would not have the “traditional” structure, trying to collect dispersed motifs and combine them into stories, and so it would not be a history, but rather some description of “tracklessness”.

As a result, it shapes a paradoxical situation: it gives life to traces which by definition do not lead to any particular destination, and in the case of the poem in question, they lead us to some defined nothingness. As it seems, this is perfectly summarized by the whole poetic project by Sosnowski, full of various references and allusions, which expose their own “suppression”, “obliteration”. Any attempts at further definitions are first of all an elitist intellectual play, aimless going back to subsequent levels of mediation (like in Heidegger’s hermeneutics), and secondly, resisting the characteristic of poetry, which is key in Sosnowski. A poem’s duty is to move, constantly getting lost, even if it leads to looping and negating its own existence.

In this sense, the deep structure of the poem *Wiersz (Trackless)*, or any poem in general, is the analogous turn of the structure of *mise-en-abyme*, based on constant, trope-like movement directed at itself. An autothematic poem that – according to Jonathan Culler – consists of a “speaking” layer and a layer that “discusses speaking”, a statement level and a “meta” level¹⁵, has an easy-to-grasp trope: the layer that “discusses speaking” – the narration of an autothematic poem – leads us to the “proper” text, which exists somewhat before this narration (or under it: under the description).

¹⁵See Jonathan Culler, *Changes in the Study of the Lyric*, w *Lyric poetry beyond New Criticism*, edited by Ch. Hošek and P. Parker (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 38-55.

The constantly-pursued text to which the description leads exists only conditionally (“would it exist, if the description is exhausted” or “would it really exist, if one exhausted the description (achieve the impossible)?”). The descriptive or discussing layer of an autothematic poem remains its proper tissue; however, it is similar to a trope, which never exhausts its meanings on “what is”, but rather waits for “what will be”; in this sense, it perfectly imitates the structure of description, for there is no object whose descriptive catalogue can ever be full¹⁶.

Wiersz (Trackless) is different, although it is definitely an autothematic poem. It is subversively metareflective, as it attempts at describing movement in the opposite direction (using the structure of a trope, typical for *mise en abyme*): not towards creating new paths, but towards covering (its own) tracks. However, the descriptive formula, which (*Trackless*) realizes out of necessity, brings those traces to existence, whether it likes it or not, even if it is to immediately negate them. Description is used to grasp a paradoxical story, which is a lack of a story, an entity which is a negation of entity: the character of description itself allows it, description, to talk about roses when the flowers are dead; it offers a chance to mention a sister who is long dead – and even a sister who is nobody’s sister. Perhaps the unique ability of *Wiersz (Trackless)* to talk **about traces using a trope** (and it is known that – at least if one is to believe in the cognitive abilities of literature – a trope does not need a trace in order to lead somewhere) is this troubling incompleteness of description predestinating the incompleteness of a description, which stops at accepting “sorority” yet avoids specifying whose sister a given object is (or was), and thus depriving the word of the indirect link between language and what is external to it (if “it” exists at all).

Perhaps it is a unique ability because it is performed while in a trance or intoxicated – it is enough to pay attention to the archaic phrases referring to alcohol. Perhaps it is unique because it opposes the traditional or accepted literary and interpretative practices (hence the subject hears cries of guards). Perhaps it is because the poem required many hours (spent daydreaming next to a dumpster) in order to break free from “normal” structures, to go from “blackness” “towards whiteness”. Ultimately, it indeed becomes a “wild species” – abusing description not to acknowledge some entity, but to negate it; not to ease denotation, but to make it impossible, since the “sister” that is key to it is “nobody’s sister”, whose blurred, interrupted traces lead somewhere towards Trakl, but are immediately annulled by negation¹⁷. Also, ultimately – perhaps – although a poetic trope does not require a trace, since it does not require game, only a hunter, still a tracker (interpreter) has to either find a trace (and follow it), or create it themselves. He or she does it so that the surrounding space is no longer *trackless*, in order to achieve a goal; even if this goal appeared only at the moment of pursuit, he or she does it because ambiguity is against their cognitive habits.

¹⁶See Searle.

¹⁷Thus reading is not a “find a reference” game; on the contrary, it is an order “not to look for references”, see Justyna Tabaszewska, *Gubienie śladów i tropienie przesunięć, czyli czytelnik w grze Andrzeja Sosnowskiego*, „Teksty Drugie” No 5 (2013), 62-76.

After *Wiersz (Trackless)* follows *Trackless*:

I któż to tak pięknie wykonuje
 bataliony, desant i pancernych
 że w salonie powieści Dekameron – czy tak? –
 zwyczajnie wszyscy mdleją i proszą o jeszcze?
 oksymoron? Nie musimy być onieśmieleni,
 trzeba gruchać, trzeba wdzięcznie słuchać, dziewczeczko.

i każdy w swoim czasie bierze posadę w centrali
 i każdy układa wcześniej kilka melodii pod balet
 dla podmorskich tancerek. A moja syrenka?
 jakaś dziwna owocowość wkradła się w twoją bluzkę
 po ostatnim praniu – powiedz mi, co to jest? O,
 niech skonom. O, nie zgadnę – Deophanteomatic?
 księżyc jak zimny prysznic po zachodach słońca.
 ciemny brzask na śniadanie z końcem opowieści.

Pobudka w piasku należy już do kina.
 ale trzeba by jeszcze poświęcić niebo
 z lotu ptaka. W deszcz desant reverse
 liryczny na podobieństwo Westerplatte
 odlot kropelek, tęcza, uśmiech słońca,
 kiedy swoją drogą schodzą czwórkami na plażę
 w komplecie. Chodziłoby tu o helską Jamajkę?
 Idę czwórkami przed siebie, chodzę i powracam
 nieprzytomny w Jastarni, budzę się w Juracie
 przytomny i zbawiony, na wakacjach –
 akcja
 niebyła w filmie, który nie może się zerwać,
 chociaż raz się zaczął. Raz nawet się zaciął¹⁸.

There are no questions about traces and tropes; the trope-like structure is set in motion, and so there is no need to describe it. Now one should only admire it; after all, a movie “once started” will cause zealous interpreters to look for possible meanings, although each meaning may (and must) prove impossible. Derrida himself wrote about it when he discussed “poetics”

¹⁸Sosnowski, 238.

And who so beautifully performs/ battalions, airborne, armor/ that in the living room of Dekameron – is it so? -/ everyone just faints and asks for more?/ oxymoron? No need to be intimidated,/ one has to coo, listen politely, little girl./ and everyone takes a job at the central/ and everyone composes several tunes for ballet/ for submarine dancers. And my little mermaid?/ some strange fruitiness has come to your blouse/ after you last washed it – tell me, what is it? Oh,/ as I live and breathe. Oh, I won't guess - Deophanteomatic?/ moon like a cold shower after sunsets/ dark dawn for breakfast with the end of a story./ Waking up in the sand belongs to the cinema./ but we should also bless the sky/ from a bird's eye view. In the rain airborne reverse/ lyrical just like Westerplatte/ little drops flying away, rainbow, sun's smile,/ when I walk down to the beach my way/ in a set. Maybe it is about Hel's Jamaica?/ I walk in fours ahead, walk and return/ unconscious in Jastarnia, I wake up in Jurata/ conscious and redeemed, on a holiday -/ action/ was absent from a movie, which cannot break down,/ once it started. Once it even got stuck [translation mine, PZ]

as some “experience” which, according to him, denotes a journey, a wandering, a verse that can go off the beaten track and worry the traveller, who may do the same¹⁹. *Wiersz (Trackless)* is a manual for *Trackless*: it argues against looking for traces, because the subject him/herself “walks in fours ahead, walk and return/ unconscious in Jastarnia” and “wakes up in Jurata”, suddenly “conscious and redeemed”, and so escapes any causality and logics; he/she forgets about his/her own roots, which thus cease to exist, and so his/her memory is characterized by maximum economy²⁰. In this sense, *Wiersz (Trackless)* becomes a double autothematic poem. For if *Trackless* is a meta-reflective poem – which is indicated by numerous textual and artistic references – *Wiersz (Trackless)* must somewhat double this meta-reflexivity. This is why it talks about traces, even though it is a trope itself; this is why it manages to create a separate, wild species, while at the same time containing its own content – i.e. loss – and a manual to it: do not trace possible references, for each will be, to a lesser or greater extent, only a ghost of the self that is used to traditional reading. To speak Derridean: a poem is some removable road, which does not lead anywhere, whereas poetry is a spiky hedgehog that hides its (irrelevant, ghostlike) essence²¹. *Wiersz (Trackless)* is both a poem about a wilderness and a poem about a poem about a wilderness: thus, Sosnowski (at least to some extent) makes the trope-like autothematic dream come true, i.e. the simultaneous “speaking” and “discussing”, their perfect simultaneity. However, it pays a high price for that; first of all, such a poem can only talk about loss, since it allows for identifying “self” with a “story of self”: only the self is subjectless, and so description is its “essence”. Thus, “talking” necessarily turns out to be “talking about nothing”, an empty description, which has no denotation. Secondly, reaching the destination means end of the story, but life (the subject’s life) goes on. And since it cannot push new life forward, towards new tropes, it has to retrospectively establish traces which led to it – or which would lead to it, if the destination required them.

“Life” does not require “understanding”; everything is possible, especially when intoxicated, even “Hel’s Jamaica”, especially if one absorbs artistic ways of arranging reality, either belonging to the cinema or literature, and replay them, those composed “tunes”, to politely “listen” and “coo”, and – for example – to record the album *Trackless*. The answer to the question “what is poetry” remains impossible, for instead of understanding, it is better to “feel it in your heart”²². This means that one has to, after all, tell stories and leave traces, even though the destination was reached a long time ago, as the end of the world is “dark dawn for breakfast”, awareness of the end of the world; it is against existing and the strong urge to understand, and thus everyone –in spite of everything – asks for more.

translated by Paulina Zagórska

¹⁹Jacques Derrida, *Che cos'è la poesia?*, translated by Michał Paweł Markowski, [w:] „Literatura na Świecie” No 11/12 (1998), 155-161.

²⁰Derrida.

²¹Derrida.

²²Derrida, 156.

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KEYWORDS

Andrzej Sosnowski

mise en abyme

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ABSTRACT:

The paper attempts at interpreting the famous poem *Wiersz (Trackless)* by Andrzej Sosnowski based on some theses of language philosophers (Fregge, Searle, Russel). The notions of a trace and trope extracted from the poem serve as the basis for interpreting the phenomenon of *mise en abyme* (which, as is suggested, has a trope-like structure). Issues such as a trope, trace, *mise en abyme*, language philosophy, are problematized according to the category of description, which is understood as: 1. The basic way of framing “lack” and “loss”, key terms in Sosnowski’s poetry; 2. A key element of an autothematic poem which – according to Jonathan Culler – consists of the described and describing layers; 3. Fundamental way of cognition, especially in the face of ambiguities related to the category of a name supposed by language philosophy.

language philosophy

Jacques Derrida

trope

trope

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