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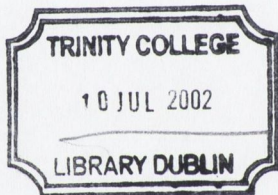
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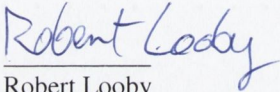


Tesis
6840

Formalism and Parody in Bruno Schulz

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PhD. Thesis
Trinity College, Dublin
July 2001

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Robert Looby

I would like to thank my supervisor, Justin Doherty, for his help and guidance. My thanks also to Władysław Panas, and my proof-readers Breandán Ó Croinín, Huw Illtud AbAlwyn, Éanna Ó Caollaí, and Brian Ó Conchubhair, as well as to my Polish friends and colleagues who helped compensate for the gaps in my knowledge of Polish: Zofia Kolbuszewska, Grzegorz Maziarczyk, Katarzyna Ó Croinín, Ewa Sadowska and everyone else I ever troubled with questions. Any mistakes which remain in the text are my own. My thanks to the Ussher Fellowship scheme and the Russian Department for financial support in the last year of my studies.

SUMMARY

This thesis presents a systematic formal analysis of Bruno Schulz's prose fiction. It applies the methods of study developed by Formalists to aspects of the text ranging from minimal units such as choice of vocabulary to larger considerations such as the overall use and effect of metaphor. Its main finding is that Schulz's work may be read as a parody of Formalist thinking on the nature of literature. It also parodies Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz's theory of Pure Form, which is similar to Formalism in several important respects. The parody is achieved by putting the opinions of Formalists into the mouth of a madman, and then presenting the reader with the results of putting Formalist precepts into action.

Chapter 1 surveys Formalism, establishing the basis for the methodology of the rest of the thesis. It also takes into account the contributions made by some thinkers who might not strictly speaking be considered Formalists.

Chapter 2 examines the literary background against which Schulz's prose was perceived. It does this using secondary literature on the period, as well as contemporary reviews of Schulz's fiction. It also examines the changes which editors made to Schulz's prose in order to bring it into line with prevailing literary norms.

Chapter 3 studies Schulz's artistic technique, starting at the level of individual morphemes, and moving up to encompass syntax and rhythm. How Schulz forces the word into the foreground of attention is the aim of the study.

Chapter 4 studies Schulz's compositional technique. That is, it looks at units of text larger than the paragraph or sentence, such as plot development, and the parallels and symmetries between episodes and stories.

Chapter 5 begins with a discussion of the impact made on Poland by Formalism, before comparing Witkiewicz's theory of Pure Form with Formalism. It then reads Schulz's work as a parody of both Formalism and Pure Form. Schulz parodies both the literary style favoured by Formalists, and their theoretical programme. Statements made by leading Formalists are compared with statements made by a particular character in the stories. The nightmarish vision of a world governed by the laws

expounded by the narrator's father is interpreted as a portrayal of a literature governed by the laws of Formalism.

Titles of Schulz's Stories, with translations.

Sklepy cynamonowe:

Sierpień (August)

Nawiedzenie (Visitation)

Ptaki (Birds)

Manekiny (Mannequins)

Traktat o manekinach albo Wtóra Księga Rodzaju (Treatise on Mannequins, or the Second Book of Genesis)

Traktat o manekinach. Ciąg dalszy (Treatise on Mannequins: Continued)

Traktat o manekinach. Dokończenie (Treatise on Mannequins: Conclusion)

Nemrod (Nimrod)

Pan (Pan)

Pan Karol (Mr. Charles)

Sklepy cynamonowe (Cinnamon Shops)

Ulica Krokodyli (The Street of Crocodiles)

Karakony (Cockroaches)

Wichura (The Gale)

Noc wielkiego sezonu (The Night of the Great Season)

Sanatorium pod klepsydrą:

Księga (The Book)

Genialna epoka (The Age of Genius)

Wiosna (Spring)

Noc lipcowa (July Night)

Mój ojciec wstępuje do strażaków (My Father joins the Fire Brigade)

Druga jesień (A Second Autumn)

Martwy sezon (Dead Season)

Sanatorium pod klepsydrą (The Sanatorium under the Sign of the Hourglass)

Dodo (Dodo)

Edzio (Eddie)

Emeryt (Old Age Pensioner)

Samotność (Loneliness)

Ostatnia ucieczka ojca (Father's Last Escape)

Others:

Jesień (Autumn)

Republika marzeń (The Republic of Dreams)

Kometa (The Comet)

Ojczyzna (Fatherland)

A note on the text:

With a few exceptions, the names of characters in the stories have not been translated into English. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated. Russian titles have been translated. Where names are transliterated, the British Standard system has been used except in the case of masculine adjective endings, which have been rendered “-y.” Where writers have become known under a different spelling, that has been used.

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INTRODUCTION

Bruno Schulz has for years lived with the reputation of being a “modest teacher,” from Drohobycz – the quintessential provincial town. Much is made of the fact that all his stories but one are set in a small town, which, though he never names it, we are sure – or are assured – is his own home town. The stories, then, are read as intensely personal, surreal autobiographical sketches. This thesis studies artistic devices in Bruno Schulz’s stories, taking into account the literary background against which they were perceived, before moving on to read Schulz’s work as a parody of Russian Formalism. An historical link between Formalism and Schulz is provided by the theory of Pure Form developed by Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy), a contemporary of Schulz’s. Schulz’s work is thus seen as a parody of Russian Formalism and of Witkacy’s theory of Pure Form. The similarities between Pure Form and Russian Formalism are examined in chapter 5. The picture which has emerged of Schulz, the lonely provincial, tends to militate against reading his work as a sophisticated attack on contemporary literary theory. One commentator refers to his talent as “appearing suddenly in the literary provinces.”¹ A small amount of biographical detail is supplied to counter this interpretation, but the thesis is largely text-centred.

Schulz’s prose was neglected after the war in communist Poland, and it was not until 1957 that his short stories were reprinted. The late 1960s saw an increase in the number of articles on Bruno Schulz, leading to a conference dedicated to him in 1974, the proceedings of which were published in 1976.² (*Sanatorium pod klepsydrą* was filmed in 1973.³) Bruno Schulz is now widely recognised as one of the most important writers in inter-war Poland, along with Witkacy and Witold Gombrowicz. His work is regularly reprinted, and was included in the Biblioteka Narodowa series of national classics in 1989. The fiftieth anniversary of his death and one hundredth anniversary of his birth was marked in 1992 with conferences and special numbers of periodicals devoted to his work. Lately,

¹ Russell E. Brown, “Bruno Schulz and World Literature,” *Slavic and East European Journal*, 1990, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 224-246, (224).

² Kazimiera Czaplowa, ed., *Studia o prozie Brunona Schulza*, Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach, 115, Katowice, 1976. According to Jarzębski this book was actually edited by Wojciech Wyskiel (Jerzy Jarzębski, “Wstęp: Czytanie Schulza,” in Jerzy Jarzębski, ed., *Czytanie Schulza: Materiały międzynarodowej sesji naukowej ‘Bruno Schulz – w stulecie urodzin i w pięćdziesięciolecie śmierci’ Instytut Filologii Polskiej Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków, 8-10 czerwca 1992*, Cracow, 1994, pp. 5-17, (12, fn. 15)).

³ *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą*, dir., Wojciech Jerzy Has, Agencja producentów filmowych, 1973.

some more attention has been paid to Schulz's critical writings, with the appearance of a collected edition of all his criticism as well as a book on the subject, while the recent discovery and appropriation of some lost art-works (Schulz was also an artist) in Drohobycz has excited more interest in the writer.⁴

Artur Sandauer and Jerzy Ficowski were instrumental in bringing Schulz wider recognition. Sandauer's lengthy essay "Rzeczywistość zdegradowana" was included in the 1957 and 1964 editions of Schulz's prose. He interprets the disasters that befall Father in *Sklepy cynamonowe* and *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą* as indicative of the passing of an age of solid, dignified merchantship, not unlike that depicted in Mann's *Buddenbrooks*. According to Sandauer, the victories scored by the prosaic Adela are Schulz's way of mocking Młoda Polska (Polish modernism), with its high-flown themes. Sandauer writes that in twentieth-century art the writer's experience and work interpenetrate, unlike in the nineteenth century, when the experience was something which preceded and was sharply separate from the writing. Twentieth-century art is, he writes, autonomous and "non-illusionary." Sandauer also laid stress on masochism and the erotic elements of Schulz's work – the new ways of life are tinged with eroticism.⁵ Emphasis on the erotic elements of Schulz's prose may have been influenced by Schulz's graphic art, which features the trappings of sado-masochism.⁶ In addition, Schulz claimed that the reality depicted in his art was the same as that depicted in his prose.⁷

Jerzy Ficowski has been a tireless biographer of Schulz, editing Schulz's letters and reminiscences of his life, and writing the standard reference books on the details of Schulz's life.⁸ He would take the view that what is not present in the writer's life may not be read into the writer's work. For example, he rejects kabbalistic interpretations of Schulz's stories on the grounds that Schulz was a firmly polonised Jew and did not speak Hebrew or Yiddish.⁹ This thesis does not ignore Schulz's biography, but, in accordance with Formalist practice, reserves the right to interpret anything appearing in the text as a literary fact, regardless of whether Schulz put it there consciously or not. So,

⁴ Bruno Schulz, *Szkice krytyczne*, ed., Małgorzata Kitowska-Łysiak, Lublin, 2000; Marta Bartosik, *Bruno Schulz jako krytyk*, Cracow, 2000.

⁵ Artur Sandauer, "Rzeczywistość zdegradowana (Rzecz o Brunonie Schulzu)," in Bruno Schulz, *Proza*, Cracow, 1964, pp. 5-43.

⁶ Bruno Schulz, *The Booke of Idolatry*, trans., Bogna Piotrowska, ed., Jerzy Ficowski, Warsaw, (no publication date given), gives many examples of this type of work.

⁷ Bruno Schulz, Open Letter to S. I. Witkiewicz, *Opowiadania, Wybór esejów i listów*, ed., Jerzy Jarzębski, 2nd edn., Biblioteka Narodowa, I, 264, Wrocław, 1998, pp. 474-479, (475).

⁸ Jerzy Ficowski, *Regiony wielkiej herezji: Szkice o życiu i twórczości Brunona Schulza*, Cracow, 1967; *Okolice sklepów cynamonowych: szkice, przyczynki, impresje*, Cracow-Wrocław, 1986; Bruno Schulz, *Księga listów*, ed., Jerzy Ficowski, Cracow, 1975.

for example, the contention that Schulz parodied Russian Formalism is not supported (or refuted) by historical evidence, but nevertheless, there is a case to be made on the basis of the stories themselves that Schulz – or to be more precise, Schulz’s work – did do so.

Andrzej Sulikowski writes that the editions of Schulz’s prose published in 1957, 1964 and 1973 were accompanied by reviews which generally repeated comparisons with Kafka and Proust.¹⁰ What is called “wpływologia” in Polish (“influence studies”) has been a popular subject of study with reference to Schulz. For example, Włodzimierz Bolecki identifies Schulz as a product of symbolist and avant-garde poetics. Jerzy Speina and Henryk Dubowik examine the influence of surrealism. Krzysztof Miklaszewski writes that *Młoda Polska* is the point of departure for Schulz’s prose. Bronisław Mamoń maintains that Schulz was influenced by *Młoda Polska* and surrealism.¹¹ As well as this, comparisons have been drawn between Schulz and Kafka, Mann, Witkacy and Gombrowicz.¹² These tend to be concerned with the themes of the authors’ works rather than questions of form or technique. For example, Janusz Gołąb finds that Schulz, after Kafka, reflected the “existential situation of the *Grenzjuden* in European culture.”¹³

A survey of the literary background against which Schulz is perceived is called for by the “formal method,” but this thesis will try to avoid using it to pigeonhole Schulz according to literary programmes. The conclusions drawn from the survey concern the concrete expectations people had (and still have) of literary practice. This thesis will not be concerned to discover if Schulz was a symbolist or *Młoda Polska* epigone, but to find out what conventions his prose broke. Chapter 2, then, examines less the influences on Schulz than the pressures on him to conform. A section is devoted to analysing the nature of the textual changes made to the stories by the editors of the periodicals in

⁹ Jerzy Ficowski, “Żywoć człowieka pogranicza,” in *Nowe Książki*, 2000, no. 2, pp. 4-7.

¹⁰ Andrzej Sulikowski, “Twórczość Brunona Schulza w krytyce i badaniach literackich (1934-1976),” *Pamiętnik literacki*, 1978, no. 2, pp. 264-303, (286).

¹¹ Włodzimierz Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym: Witkacy, Gombrowicz, Schulz i inni. Studium z poetyki historycznej*, 2nd edn., Cracow, 1996; Jerzy Speina, *Bankructwo realności: Proza Brunona Schulza*, Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu: Prace wydziału filologiczno-filozoficznego, vol. 24, no. 1, Warsaw-Poznań, 1974; Henryk Dubowik, *Nadrealizm w polskiej literaturze współczesnej*, Bydgoskie Towarzystwo Naukowe: Prace Wydziału Nauk Humanistycznych, Series B, no. 5, Poznań, 1971; Krzysztof Miklaszewski, “O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości prozy Brunona Schulza (na przykładzie *Sklepów cynamonowych*),” *Zeszyty naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, Prace historycznoliterackie, no. 21, 1971, pp. 49-66; Bronisław Mamoń, “Powierzchnie i dna,” *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 1957, no. 46, pp. 4-5.

¹² Paul Kruntorad, “Bruno Schulz: Ein Vergleich mit Franz Kafka,” *Wort in der Zeit*, 1965, no. 3, pp. 9-19; Ewa Odachowska-Zielińska, “Biblijny mit Jakubowy w ujęciu Tomasza Manna i Brunona Schulza,” *Twórczość*, 1982, no. 7, pp. 140-143; Włodzimierz Bolecki, “Witkacy – Schulz, Schulz – Witkacy (wariacje interpretacyjne),” Jarzębski, *Czytanie Schulza*, pp. 127-151.

¹³ Janusz Jakub Gołąb, “Metafizyczne osamotnienie Brunona Schulza,” *Twórczość*, 1988, no. 4, pp.

which they first appeared, reasoning that the editors would have changed the texts in order to bring them into line with prevailing norms. This has not been examined systematically before.¹⁴ The evidence from this backs up the conclusions reached by literary historians of the inter-war period, but has the advantage of being very specific. It is generally agreed that in prose literature of the period simple language was valued. The concrete effect of this on Schulz was that, for example, nouns followed by adjectives were frequently changed by editors back to the more “normal” order of adjective-noun. More such changes are detailed in chapter 2.

A great deal of the critical literature on Schulz has been concerned with interpreting his stories, or deciphering the “content,” which is obscured, as it were, by his complex, metaphorical and wordy style. Thus, Sandauer has explored the meaning of mannequins in Schulz. Czesław Samojlik has interpreted the house/shop opposition as a reflection of the internal division of the human being between the sublime and the earthly. Władysław Panas has interpreted the stories as a re-telling of the Lurianic concept of the cycle of history and redemption. Bożena Shallcross and Shalom Lindenbaum have also written on the Kabbalah in Schulz. Wiesław Szymański has studied the use of myth in Schulz, drawing on the work of Eliade, while Diana Kuprel has written on mythic consciousness with reference to Cassirer. Speina has taken a psychoanalytical approach, which treats Father’s various transformations as attempts to find outlets for frustrated erotic desires. Other commentators have taken a single element of Schulz’s work and studied that. Such topics include Goethe’s *Erkönig*, and the sublime.¹⁵

112-116, (113).

¹⁴ Jerzy Ficowski has observed the removal or substitution of foreign-sounding words by editors and briefly noted that changes to word order were made. *Księga listów*, p. 168.

¹⁵ Sandauer, “Rzeczywistość zdegradowana,” (pp. 28-32); Czesław Samojlik, “Groteska – pisarstwo wszechstronnie banalne...: Sprawa prozy Brunona Schulza,” in Alina Brodzka, Zbigniew Żabicki, eds., *Literatura międzywojenna*, vol. 2 of *Z problemów literatury polskiej XX wieku*, Warsaw, 1965, pp. 266-296; Władysław Panas, *Księga blasku: Traktat o kabale w prozie Brunona Schulza*, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, *Literatura Współczesna – Pisarze i Problemy*, 3, Lublin, 1997; Bożena Shallcross, “‘Fragments of a Broken Mirror’: Bruno Schulz’s Retextualisation of the Kabbalah,” in *East European Politics and Societies*, 1997, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 270-281; Shalom Lindenbaum, “Wizja mesjanistyczna Schulza a jej podłoże mistyczne,” in Jarzębski, ed., *Czytanie Schulza*, pp. 33-67; Wiesław Paweł Szymański, “Wyznawca Absolutu i Materii – Bruno Schulz,” in Bolesław Faron, ed., *Prozaicy dwudziestolecia międzywojennego: Sylwetki*, Warsaw, 1972, pp. 593-615; Diana Kuprel, “Errant Events on the Branch Tracks of Time: Bruno Schulz and Mythical Consciousness,” *Slavic and East European Journal*, 1996, vol. 40, no. 1, pp. 100-117; Jerzy Speina, “Bruno Schulz wobec psychoanalizy,” in Czaplowska, *Studia*, pp. 17-30; Anna Czabanowska-Wróbel, “Obraz Króla Olch w prozie Brunona Schulza,” in Jarzębski, *Czytanie Schulza*, pp. 296-305; Dorota Głowacka, “Wzniosła tandeta i *simulacrum*: Bruno Schulz w postmodernistycznych zaułkach,” in *Teksty drugie*, 1996, no. 2/3, pp. 72-91.

The “formal method” appears to reject this approach, holding that the subject matter is only a pretext for the artistic exercise.¹⁶ An example would be the image of a child carried by a father through the night. Schulz borrows this image from Goethe’s *Erlkönig*, using it in “Wiosna,” but it was also used by Rilke, whom Schulz admired, suggesting that, as Shklovsky says, images change little from age to age and from artist to artist.¹⁷ The “extreme view” is that words should be self-valuable, and that the objects to which they refer do not enter into the artistic equation at all.¹⁸ However, a study of the form which the words take in a work of literature cannot ignore the fact that words carry meaning. In addition, since the work of art is perceived against a background of other works of art, a certain amount of “wplywologia” is not ruled out of consideration. Chapter 4, section 3 looks at some of the parallels between Schulz’s stories and other literature, such as the Bible and the romantic adventure story. It seeks to explain the function of these parallels and how Schulz exploits them.

Chapter 1 consists of a discussion of Formalist theories, with a brief outline of how they will be relevant to the succeeding chapters. Chapter 2 examines the literary background against which Schulz was perceived. It uses secondary literature on the prose and poetry of the period, contemporary reviews of Schulz’s work and an examination of the editorial changes made to Schulz’s stories when they were published in periodicals to illustrate the norms then prevailing in Polish literature and language. The chapter concentrates more on the stylistic devices used by and to some extent expected of writers, rather than the subject matter of literature.

Chapters 3 and 4 study the word (understood broadly, to include artistic elements from morphemes to plot) as such. Chapter 3 is concerned with smaller units of text such as euphony, vocabulary and rhythm. At this “micro” level of the text, the words draw attention to themselves by various means. Repetition is one such way. Words are used in unusual combinations, which convey little information about reality, even the reality within Schulz’s world. Examples are given of sentences whose meanings are absurd due to the subordination of semantics to sound properties or rhythm. The repetition of key words in many different contexts is also a common device for drawing attention to the phonic texture of the words themselves. The sound of words plays a more dominant role in Schulz than in the prose of his contemporaries, often deforming the meaning of sentences. Or

¹⁶ Witkacy is even more dismissive of the subject matter of art.

¹⁷ See chapter 5.

¹⁸ Ann Jefferson deals with the Formalist emphasis on the “self-valuable” word in “Russian Formalism,” in Ann Jefferson and David Robey, eds., *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*, 2nd edn., London, B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1986, pp. 24-45, (33).

as a critic wrote at the time: "One may venture to say that it [the word] never appears in the communicative function common in the novel, but it always carries artistic weight."¹⁹

Some of the difficulties associated with a Formalist approach to the study of literature are illustrated by, in particular, the sections on vocabulary and euphony. For example, while chapter 2 goes some way to establishing the literary background, it is difficult to define the background of everyday language, not to mention dialects. Language is something native speakers grasp intuitively; hence literature is perceived against the background of something which cannot satisfactorily be quantified. This strikes a blow at Formalism's attempts to achieve scientificity since, if non-literary language itself is unknowable, or at any rate ill defined, then so too must a literature which is partly defined by its opposition to non-literary language.

Chapter 4 deals with how the stories and collections of stories are composed by means of plotting, parallels and metaphors. Formalists ostensibly viewed metaphor on a par with other poetic means, but in practice neglected its study. This thesis takes advantage of modern work by writers such as Max Black and John Searle. What is taken from Formalism is the concentration on the function of metaphor in Schulz's stories. In section 2 of chapter 4 *syuzhet* is understood broadly as the artistic arrangement and deformation of the motifs which make up the *fabula*.²⁰ It will look at aspects of text above the level of sentence, such as point of view and narrator, who influences the way the reader learns of the *fabula*, as well as ellipsis, digression, delaying tactics, or "blocking,"²¹ and the maintenance of suspense. Schulz is by no means innovative in all of these respects, but his treatment of time, which goes to the heart of *syuzhet* and *fabula*, is unusual when pictured against a classic realist background.

Section 3, on parallels and repetition, will further examine the construction of Schulz's stories as well as the part played in the stories by already existing literary and non-literary series. Some of Schulz's stories rely on the reader's familiarity with the accepted practical language style for their comic effect, which derives from the clash between semantics and style. Other stories rely on the reader's familiarity with Schulz's own literary style: he occasionally jars the reader by deviating from

¹⁹ Eugenia Krassowska, "O twórczości Brunona Schulza," *Sygnaty*, 1938, no. 51, p. 3.

²⁰ See chapter 1 for a discussion of *syuzhet* and *fabula*.

²¹ Tzvetan Todorov, "Some Approaches to Russian Formalism," trans. Bruce Merry, in Stephen Bann and John E. Bowlt, eds., *Russian Formalism: A collection of articles and texts in translation*, Twentieth Century Studies, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1973, pp. 6-19, (13). "Blocking" is Shklovsky's term.

his own highly ornate prose style (for example, the long, complex sentences are interrupted by very short, abrupt sentences).

Schulz set himself free from the constraints of causal, linear plotting. He has a very modern view of time, viewing it not as a straight line, but as constituent part of space, and by extension the world. This means that he does not feel bound to leave events which have already happened alone. Time in his stories unfolds as one reads them. The stories do not refer to a fixed stock of events which have already happened and have now been recorded for future generations. Writing and “happening” interpenetrate. In practice this means that Schulz has great freedom to indulge in the displays of linguistic skill for which he is well known. He can create a world effectively governed by linguistic parallels because if he ever feels constrained to explain resulting inconsistencies he can simply fall back on the special nature of time. He manoeuvres in time with the same ease as we do in space. This is illustrated in “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą,” where Father is both dead and alive. Furthermore, within the region of the sanatorium, Father is sometimes on his deathbed, sometimes the lively centre of the party.

The results of this study suggest that Schulz was parodying Formalism. Some of his devices are suspiciously close to the Formalist ideal of presenting things in strange and difficult ways to prevent or hinder recognition, so that one begins to wonder if he was not parodying that ideal. Textbook examples of making strange, making difficult, and the shuffling of old forms can all be found in Schulz. The autonomy of the artistic world from the real world is also proclaimed in a childish fantasy: in “Republika marzeń,” he writes of founding a new and independent land, beyond national boundaries, where he and a friend could live under the sign of poetry and adventure and never-ending wonder.

Chapter 5 of this thesis, then, departs from a strictly text-centred study of artistic devices. The Formalist approach is useful only up to a point. To explore the parody the thesis in chapter 5 steps out of the framework of Russian Formalism. “Traktat o manekinach” is read as a parody of the early Russian Formalist programme; the bizarre world presented in the stories is interpreted as the result of Formalist theory put into literary practice. The flat, one-dimensional characters of Schulz’s fiction are interpreted as characters who have been subordinated to the device – the true hero of literary study in the Formalist understanding.

The chapter begins with an examination of the biographical details of Schulz's life. This too is something of a departure from Formalism, which declares the autonomy of literary study from history. The historical evidence does not allow us to say definitely whether Schulz intended to parody Formalism or not, and so the thesis moves to examining the evidence within the stories for the proposition that Schulz's work may be understood as a parody of Formalism. This in itself exposes a weakness in early Formalism, in that strictly speaking, literary study should not concern itself with what the writer wants to say (e.g. "Formalism is a sterile science") but how he says it. However, if literary study can enrich our experience of a text by deciphering, as it were, the "what" of that text, then so much the better.

Chapter 5 looks at Schulz's take on Shklovsky's belief that "Jocular, tragic, world-shaking and intimate works are all equal."²² The distinction between defamiliarisation understood only as describing something in a strange way and defamiliarisation as an effect of all artistic devices becomes important. Schulz's use of already existing conventions is re-examined in the light of Formalism's declarations that there are no new images, and that artistic creation consists in reshuffling a limited number of motifs into new combinations. Schulz's awareness of his own writing techniques, and the ways in which he bares his own devices are also discussed in chapter 5.

Comparisons have been made between Schulz and Witkacy, and even between Witkacy's Pure Form and Formalism, but no one has moved from there to examine the links between Schulz and Russian Formalism in any detail.²³ Sandauer acknowledged Schulz's acute sense of irony, but did not conclude that this might be directed at the type of literary practice (as opposed to literary themes) which he, Schulz, was accused of.²⁴ Czesław Karkowski came closest to the project of this thesis, when he interpreted "Traktat o manekinach" as a statement of Schulz's own literary theory.²⁵ This thesis, however, sees it as a parody of Russian Formalist theory.

²² René Wellek, *German, Russian, and East European Criticism, 1900-1950*, vol. 7 of *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1991, p. 321.

²³ On Witkacy and Schulz see, for example, Wolfgang Hädecke, "Seltsame Dreieinigkeit: Witkiewicz, Schulz, Gombrowicz," in *Literatur und Kritik*, 1973, vol. 76-77, pp. 390-408. Anna Schmidt compares Formalism and Pure Form in Anna Schmidt, *Form und Deformation: Zum kunsttheoretischen und dramatischen Werk von Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*, Slavistische Beiträge, Band 294, Munich, Verlag Otto Sagner, 1992. Miklaszewski mentions Russian Formalism in the context of contemporary interest in linguistics and philosophy, but does not expand on the subject. Krzysztof Miklaszewski, "Poeta prozy (O poetyckiej materii prozy Brunona Schulza)," in *Poezja*, 1971, no. 7, pp. 46-51, (48).

²⁴ Sandauer, "Rzeczywistość zdegradowana," pp. 33-39. Adela's triumph over the romantic Father is seen as a repetition of *Młoda Polska* themes, but this time not as tragedy but as comedy (p. 34). (A common theme in *Młoda Polska* was the artist's battle with the common masses.)

²⁵ Czesław Karkowski, *Kultura i krytyka inteligencji w twórczości Brunona Schulza*, Wrocław, 1979,

Formalist studies of Schulz's language have been few and far between. In fact, there is surprisingly little research on language in Schulz, with Miklaszewski, Panas and Bolecki being the three main commentators.²⁶ These studies might be called Formalist (and Miklaszewski cites Boris Eichenbaum and Osip Brik, while Stala discusses defamiliarisation) in that they are text-centred and concentrate on the use of language.²⁷ Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis aim to complement, rather than polemicise with, the work done by these commentators. In addition, chapter 3 builds on the groundwork of Piotr Wróblewski and Marek Ruszkowski on syntax in Schulz. These writers have quantified and described the syntactic elements of Schulz's prose, providing a reliable basis for further study.²⁸

Russian Formalism distinguishes three types of background against which literature is perceived: that of the text itself, that of other literary texts, and that of normal language.²⁹ Studies like those of Wróblewski and Ruszkowski are a great help in studying deviations from the background provided by the text itself. The background of normal language is problematic. What is "normal language"? Are the Podhale or Silesian dialects of Polish "normal language"? To a certain extent the definition of normal language must be taken on trust. Any codification would be out of date the moment it was finished. The reader must rely on his or her intuitive knowledge of linguistic norms. As the understanding of these norms varies from reader to reader so must the perception and reception of the literary work. Hence, our twenty-first century perception of Schulz's prose style will differ from that of his contemporaries. This is a difficulty faced by all non-contemporary readers. A cultural adjustment must be made when reading older works, and even a refusal to adjust is itself a cultural adjustment which affects the perception of the work. At the very heart of Formalism, which strove for

especially chapter 5, part 4.

²⁶ Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, chapter 4; Władysław Panas, "'Regiony czystej poezji': O koncepcji języka w prozie B. Schulza," in *Roczniki humanistyczne*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1974, pp. 151-173; Miklaszewski, "O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości."

²⁷ Krzysztof Stala discusses "ontological defamiliarisation" in *On the Margins of Reality: The Paradoxes of Representation in Bruno Schulz's Fiction*, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, Stockholm Slavic Studies, 23, Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1993, pp. 112-120. Beds, for example, are removed from their usual context and presented as ships (p. 113). Dariusz Lebioda's "Funkcje języka poetyckiego w *Sklepiach cynamonowych* Brunona Schulza," (*Życie literackie*, 1984, no. 19, p. 4) also deals with poetic language in Schulz, in particular, metaphor.

²⁸ Piotr Wróblewski, "Charakterystyka składniowo-stylistyczna prozy Brunona Schulza," in *Prace filologiczne*, vol. 29, Warsaw, 1979, pp. 289-307; Marek Ruszkowski, "Niektóre właściwości składniowe prozy Brunona Schulza," in Jerzy Brzeziński, ed., *Język osobniczy jako przedmiot badań lingwistycznych*, Zielona Góra, 1988, pp. 153-161.

²⁹ Yury Tynyanov, "On Literary Evolution," trans. C. A. Luplow, in Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska, eds., *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, Cambridge, Mass. - London, MIT, 1971, pp. 66-78, (68). See also chapter 1.

objectivity, there is a leap of faith, but this does not invalidate a Formalist approach since any act of reading requires that the reader make or refuse to make a cultural adjustment.

As regards the Russian Formalist sources, it will be noticed that the discussion of Formalist ideas in chapter 1 includes the Prague Structuralist, Jan Mukařovský. Chapter 1 takes a broad view of Formalism, but chapter 5 narrows the focus to early Formalism, and in particular to Shklovsky. This is because a parody of Formalism will attack the more extreme, possibly less tenable positions, which are better represented by early Formalism.

English language criticism tends not to dwell on language in Schulz. Most sources on Schulz are in Polish, and have been translated into English. The original Polish has only been supplied in the case of literary fiction and in a few other cases. Where a page reference appears in the text of the thesis it is to the following edition of Bruno Schulz's work: *Opowiadania, wybór esejów i listów*, Jerzy Jarzębski, ed., 2nd edn., Biblioteka Narodowa, series 1, no. 264, 1998.

CHAPTER ONE: FORMALISM

Russian Formalism began with two discussion groups made up of young scholars, one in Moscow, the other in St. Petersburg. In 1915 a group of Moscow University students set up the Moscow Linguistic Circle, whose leading members included chairman Roman Jakobson, as well as Petr Bogatyrev and Grigory Vinokur. The St. Petersburg group, formed a year later was called *Opoyaz*, (Society for the Study of Poetic Language). Its members included Viktor Shklovsky, Yury Tynyanov and Boris Eichenbaum. Earlier still, in 1914, Shklovsky had published "The Resurrection of the Word," which gave an early indication of Formalism's belief in the ability of the poetic word to revitalise perceptions: "when you get through to the image which is now lost and effaced, but once embedded at the basis of the word, then you are struck by its beauty – by a beauty which existed once and is now gone."¹ A fuller statement, which amounts to a manifesto, came with his "Art as Technique" in 1917. From the Moscow Linguistic Circle came Jakobson's "The Newest Russian Poetry," published in Prague in 1921, which grew from a paper he read at a meeting of the circle in the academic year 1918-19 entitled "Khlebnikov's Poetic Language."²

This thesis will also consider the work of Jan Mukařovský, who is more usually counted among Prague structuralists. His is still very much a text-based approach to the study of literature, and defamiliarisation, which he developed into the concept of foregrounding, is central to his work. He also shares with Formalism a belief that poetic language is distinguished from practical language by the fact that it focuses attention on the linguistic sign itself, rather than the thing to which it refers.³ A physical link between Russian Formalism and Prague Structuralism is provided in the person of Roman Jakobson, who was active in both schools. Anatoly Liberman perceives no gap between

¹ Viktor Shklovsky, "The Resurrection of the Word," trans. Richard Sherwood, in Stephen Bann and John E. Bowlt, eds., *Russian Formalism: A collection of articles and texts in translation*, Twentieth Century Studies, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1973, pp. 41-47, (47).

² Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History - Doctrine*, 2nd edn., Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 4, London, Mouton, 1965, p. 65.

³ Jan Mukařovský, "On Poetic Language," in *The Word and Verbal Art: Selected Essays by Jan Mukařovský*, trans. and ed. John Burbank and Peter Steiner, Yale Russian and East European Studies, 13, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1977, pp. 1-64, (4). Originally published as "O jazyce básnickém," in *Slovo a slovesnost*, no. 6, 1940.

Russian Formalism and “so-called” early structuralism: “so-called” because of the difficulty in defining early structuralism.⁴

The Formalists were influenced by the work of Alexander Potebnya, Alexander Veselovsky, Broder Christiansen and Ferdinand de Saussure.⁵ De Saussure distinguished between *langue*, the system of language, and *parole*, the individual performance of language governed by, but also itself influencing the rules of the system as a whole. His belief that the relationship between the word (signifier) and the thing it represents (signified) is conventional contrasted with the Symbolist, Bely's, view, that meaning and sound were closely connected, not accidental, and that the sound evoked the thing itself.⁶ De Saussure is also responsible for the oppositional view of language, which holds that each linguistic sign conveys meaning by virtue of its difference from all other signs.⁷ “Language requires only that the sound be different and not, as one might imagine, that it have an invariable quality.”⁸ This concept proved useful to Formalists, who applied it to literature, which they defined by its difference from other orders of facts.⁹ They must also have been attracted by de Saussure's statement: “*language is a form and not a substance.*”¹⁰ Jakobson explains literature in terms of what it is not. “What is Poetry?” starts off with a list of what poetry is not: the moon, a rose, a cliff, a gothic window – these are all the conventional prerequisites of a particular phase of literature, not of literature itself.¹¹ Much later, Mukařovský still finds it necessary to state what literature is not:

Above all, poetic language is not always *ornamental* expression... Nor is *beauty* the constant token of the poetic word... Nor is poetic language identical with language designated for the expression of feelings, *emotive* language... Furthermore, poetic language is not fully characterised by *concreteness* (‘plasticity’)... neither is a *figurative* nature unconditionally characteristic of poetic language... Finally, not even *individuality*, the emphasised uniqueness of linguistic expression, characterises poetic language in general.¹²

⁴ Anatoly Liberman, *Introduction: Trubetzkoy as a Literary Scholar*, in N. S. Trubetzkoy, *Writings on Literature, Theory and History of Literature*, vol. 72, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1990, pp. xi-xlvi, (xxxi).

⁵ Christopher Pike, Introduction, Christopher Pike, ed., *The Futurists, the Formalists, and the Marxist Critique*, trans. Christopher Pike and Joe Andrew, London, Ink Links, 1979, pp. 1-38, (8).

⁶ Carol Any, *Boris Eichenbaum: Voices of a Russian Formalist*, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 55.

⁷ Any, *Boris Eichenbaum*, p. 72.

⁸ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, eds., Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, London, Fontana/Collin, 1974, p. 119.

⁹ Ann Jefferson, “Russian Formalism,” in Ann Jefferson and David Robey, eds., *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*, 2nd edn., London, B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1986, pp. 24-45, (27).

¹⁰ De Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, p. 122.

¹¹ Roman Jakobson, “What is Poetry?” trans. Michael Heim, in *Language in Literature*, Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy, eds., Cambridge Mass. - London, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 368-378, (368). Originally a lecture published as “Co je poesie?” in *Volné smeřy*, no. 30, 1933-34, pp. 229-239.

¹² Mukařovský, “On Poetic Language,” in *The Word and Verbal Art*, pp. 1-3.

Tynyanov and Jakobson look on the two categories of *langue* and *parole* as “the existing norm and the individual utterances” and propose using them in the study of literature as well as linguistics.¹³ Tynyanov’s view of literature as a system of interrelated elements parallels de Saussure’s view of language as a system whose constituent parts are defined by their relationships with the other parts.

Potebnya (1835-1891) believed that the correct subject of the study of literature was language and that the difference between poetic language and prose or practical-scientific language must be established.¹⁴ However, Potebnya’s belief that art is thinking in images was attacked by Shklovsky in “Art as Technique.”¹⁵ Veselovsky (1838-1906) held that the study of literature should be self-contained, and that its proper subject is the motif and its uses.¹⁶ Eichenbaum criticises Veselovsky’s historical genetic approach to literature. It may be true, he writes, that a phenomenon arose from a mechanism for the original performance, but this does not clarify the existence of the phenomenon as a literary fact.¹⁷ Shklovsky disagreed with Veselovsky that the purpose of new form is to express new content, believing, rather, that its purpose is to change old forms that have lost their aesthetic quality.¹⁸

From Broder Christiansen (1869-1945), whose *Philosophie der Kunst* was translated into Russian in 1911, Eichenbaum took the concept of the dominant, that element in a work which plays the dominant role in organising the other elements. While Christiansen emphasised the harmony of such an organisation, Eichenbaum stressed the tension between unequal elements caused by the dominant.¹⁹ The Formalists were also influenced to some extent by Eduard Sievers (1859-1932), author of *Metrische Studien* (1901-1919) and *Rhythmische-melodische Studien* (1912), although they argued against purely acoustic studies of verse.²⁰ Sievers studied the sound structure of spoken language, verse and prose as a means to lay down guidelines to the study of philology. He developed

¹³ Yury Tynyanov and Roman Jakobson, “Problems in the Study of Literature and Language,” trans. Herbert Eagle, in Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska, eds., *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, Cambridge, Mass. - London, MIT, 1971, pp. 79-81, (80).

¹⁴ Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, eds. and trans., Introduction, *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1965, pp. ix-xvii, (xi).

¹⁵ Viktor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 5-24, (5-9).

¹⁶ Lemon and Reis, Introduction, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. xii.

¹⁷ Boris Eichenbaum, “The Theory of the ‘Formal Method’,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 102-139, (117).

¹⁸ Eichenbaum, “The Theory of the ‘Formal Method’,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 102-139, (118).

¹⁹ Any, *Boris Eichenbaum*, p. 61.

the idea of "Ohrenphilologie" (literally "ear-philology"), and hoped to put "Schallanalyse" (the procedure of determining amplitude, frequency and phase) to use in the study of texts.²¹ Sievers' influence can be seen in the somewhat mechanical approach of Formalists to literature, as well as the emphasis early Formalism placed on the sound-properties of poetry, sometimes at the expense of semantics.²² Eichenbaum describes his own *Verse Melody* as connected with the work of, among others, Sievers.²³ Also worth mentioning is another German, Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945), who emphasised the study of artistic style rather than the study of the artist's creative personality, developing the notion of a "history of art without names." Eichenbaum cites Wölfflin, saying that in Russia literary scholarship occupied a position analogous to that of art scholarship in Wölfflin's scheme of things.²⁴

In Russia, Symbolists, in particular Bely and Bryusov, were, like the Formalists, interested in the techniques of verse and the analysis of poetry. Bely's *Symbolism* (published in 1910) contained statistical analyses of Russian versification. However, this interest in technique stemmed from their belief in poetry as the expression of a higher reality. Since poetry was taken so seriously, some Symbolists took this to mean that every element of it was worthy of detailed study.²⁵ Symbolist studies, with their metaphysical speculation, were at times intuitive and impressionistic.²⁶ Formalists tried to escape this subjective approach to literature, preferring to think of its study as an objective science.

Despite these developments in the study of literature, especially in German thought, Erlich writes of the time that:

Sterile 'biographism' which focused attention on the minute details of the poet's life rather than on the work of poetry and its components was, as it were, the line of least intellectual resistance and seemed to offer the safest escape both from the disturbingly broad problem of

²⁰ Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, pp. 88, 217.

²¹ *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie*, 17th edn., Wiesbaden, F. A. Brockhaus, 1966-74, (20 vols.), vol. 17, p. 409.

²² Ladislav Matejka, "The Formal Method and Linguistics," in Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, pp. 281-295, (281-2).

²³ Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'," in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 125.

²⁴ Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'," in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 104.

²⁵ Lemon and Reis, Introduction, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. xiii.

²⁶ Victor Erlich, "Introduction: Modern Russian Criticism from Andrej Belyj to Andrej Sinjavskij: Trends, Issues, Personalities," in Victor Erlich, ed., *Twentieth-Century Russian Literary Criticism*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1975, pp. 3-30, (9-10).

the relation between literature and society and from the exacting task of looking at aesthetic analysis.²⁷

Pushkin's private life, he continues, was particularly carefully studied, resulting in studies of his love affairs and liking (or not) for smoking.

Russian Formalist writings spanned over a decade and came from a variety of students. Accordingly, there were differences within its ranks, and three phases in its development have been identified by Peter Steiner.²⁸ The early phase is mechanistic, and sees the literary work as a collection of devices. Many of the early Formalists exhibited a "distrustful attitude toward the problem of meaning."²⁹ Early Formalism is also characterised by a polemical tone which sometimes led to rash statements. In 1921 Shklovsky, for example, claimed that the content, or soul, of a literary work was no more than the sum of its stylistic devices.³⁰ Shklovsky also wrote – and the italics are his – that in art "*the object is not important.*"³¹ During this early period, Eichenbaum writes, many of the principles advanced by Formalists were also slogans, designed with propaganda purposes in mind.³²

The second phase sees the text as an organism of interrelated parts, while the final phase sees the literary text as the product of an entire literary system, influenced by the interaction of the literary system with other historical systems.³³ This last phase is illustrated by Tynyanov and Jakobson's "Prague Theses" of 1928, and marks a move from Formalism to Structuralism.³⁴ Tynyanov and Jakobson write, for example, that establishing the correlation between literary series and non-literary series must be preceded by an elucidation of the structural laws that characterise literature.³⁵ The autonomy of literary study is re-affirmed, but its interaction with the non-literary is acknowledged. The later phase of Formalism, in the beginnings of Structuralism, treats the literary work as a system

²⁷ Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, p. 54.

²⁸ As well as the division of Formalism into three different phases, Steiner also distinguishes between four branches within Russian Formalism: mechanical, organic, systemic and linguistic. Steiner's work is described in Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, Peter Brooker, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 4th edn., London, Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997, p. 30 and in Any, *Boris Eichenbaum*, p. 235, fn. 1.

²⁹ Matejka, "The Formal Method and Linguistics," Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, p. 284.

³⁰ Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher, Illinois, Dalkey Archive Press, 1990, p. 190. (First published in 1925, this translation is based on the Moscow edition of 1929.)

³¹ Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 12.

³² Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'," Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 120.

³³ Selden et al., *A Reader's Guide*, p. 30.

³⁴ Selden et al., *A Reader's Guide*, p. 45.

³⁵ Tynyanov and Jakobson, "Problems in the Study of Literature and Language," Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, p. 79.

of elements, functions and interrelations. For example, in this passage from 1927, Tynyanov is careful to use neutral words like “element”: “The interrelationship of each element with every other in a literary work and with the whole literary system as well may be called the constructional *function* of the given element.”³⁶ Jakobson, in discussing the dominant, uses the word “component,” and Tynyanov uses the word “factor” in his definition of motivation (see below).

In “The Theory of the ‘Formal Method’” Eichenbaum maintains that “Formalism” is not a method, writing elsewhere that “principle” would be more apt; it is concerned not with how to study literature, but what to study.³⁷ Zhirmunsky agrees: “It is apparent that it would in principle be more correct to speak not of a new method, but rather of new tasks [zadachi] of study, of a new sphere of scientific problems.”³⁸ In the title of Eichenbaum’s essay “formal method” is placed in quotation marks, and Osip Brik refers to it as the “so-called” formal method.³⁹ The label “formal method” appears to be one with which not all Formalists agreed, Eichenbaum instead suggesting the name “specifiers.”⁴⁰ *Opozay* was labelled the “Formalist school” by its opponents.⁴¹ Hence the apparent contradiction between Eichenbaum’s essay title and the assertion that Formalism is not a method. Eichenbaum writes: “We posit specific principles and adhere to them insofar as the material justifies them. If the material demands their refinement or change, we change or refine them.”⁴²

Formalists tried to turn the attention of literary scholars away from what they saw as matters extraneous to literary study, belonging rather to the field of psychology, sociology or history, and back to the text. The object of the study of literature is, to use Jakobson’s formulation, the “literariness” of the text.⁴³ How does a writer make us perceive the word as an object worthy of interest in itself, and

³⁶ Yury Tynyanov, “On Literary Evolution,” trans. C. A. Luplow, in Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, pp. 66-78, (68). Originally published, in Russian, in 1927.

³⁷ Eichenbaum, “The Theory of the ‘Formal Method’,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 102, fn. 18; see also his “Concerning the Question of the ‘Formalists’,” trans. Christopher Pike and Joe Andrew, in Christopher Pike, ed., *The Futurists, the Formalists, and the Marxist Critique*, pp. 49-62, (51).

³⁸ Viktor Zhirmunsky, “On the ‘formal method’,” in *Theory of Literature: Poetics, Stylistics*, Nauka, Leningrad, 1977, p. 94. Originally published in 1923.

³⁹ Osip Brik, “The So-called ‘Formal Method’,” *Lef*, no. 1, 1923, pp. 213-215. Reprinted in: *Screen*, 1971/2, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 42-44. Translation, by Richard Sherwood, originally appeared in *Form*, no. 10, October, 1969.

⁴⁰ Eichenbaum, “Concerning the Question of the ‘Formalists’,” trans. Christopher Pike and Joe Andrew, in Christopher Pike, ed., *The Futurists, the Formalists, and the Marxist Critique*, pp. 49-62, (51).

⁴¹ Krystyna Pomorska, “Russian Formalism in Retrospect,” in Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, pp. 273-280, (273).

⁴² Eichenbaum, “The Theory of the ‘Formal Method’,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 103.

⁴³ Roman Jakobson, “The Newest Russian Poetry,” Prague 1921, p. 11; quoted in Eichenbaum, “The

not merely shorthand for a thing, person, emotion or event? Why would a detailed paraphrase of a poem not necessarily be considered literature, even if it were more economical, more succinct, clearer, more vivid, or more lyrical? How does language as it is used in literature differ from language as it is used in practical communication? In general terms, the Formalists see the difference as consisting in the fact that in the literary use of language, attention is focused on the words themselves (the “poetic function”) while in practical language, attention is on the things to which they refer (the “communicative,” or “referential” function).⁴⁴ “Language in poetry does not point to an object beyond itself, nor does it carry any emotional weight from its speaker; it is entirely self-sufficient, or, as the Formalists would say, ‘self-valuable’.”⁴⁵

Early Russian Formalist writings could give the impression that poetic language and practical language were two different things. Matejka writes that in the early stages of Formalism there was a “series of attempts to isolate poetic language from practical language, rather than to consider their common properties and to seek the difference in distinct *applications* of the same inventory” (italics mine). Roman Jakobson moved Formalism toward a functional approach to literature.⁴⁶

In reality a verbal message is rarely exclusively communicative or poetic. A poetic work may have a communicative function. It may be related to philosophy, history or psychoanalysis. By the same token people often use words for their own sake in everyday communicative speech. Jakobson writes: “The same alliterations and other types of euphonic devices are used by the rhetoric of the period; what is more, they even occur in everyday, colloquial language. Streetcar conversations are full of jokes based on the very figures found in the most subtle lyric poetry.”⁴⁷

In fact, there is no intrinsically literary language. Polish uses the word “miesiąc” (“month”) as a “poetic” version of the word “moon,” and it is marked in dictionaries as poetic, but this is only a convention, easily automatised, and, therefore, losing its perceptibility. Once this has happened, “miesiąc” in the sense of “moon” is no more poetic than “miesiąc” in the sense of “month.” Essentially the same point is made by Ann Jefferson:

Theory of the ‘Formal Method’,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 107.

⁴⁴ Roman Jakobson, “Linguistics and Poetics,” in *Language in Literature*, pp. 62-94, (66-70). Originally published 1960.

⁴⁵ Jefferson, “Russian Formalism,” *Modern Literary Theory*, p. 33.

⁴⁶ Matejka, “The Formal Method and Linguistics,” Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, p. 282.

⁴⁷ Jakobson, “What is Poetry?” *Language in Literature*, p. 369.

Poetic speech does not differ from ordinary speech just because it may include constructions or vocabulary not found in everyday language (the *lo's*, *thous* and word-order inversions conventionally allowed in English poetry), but because its formal devices (such as rhyme and rhythm) act on ordinary words to renew our perception of them, and of their sound texture in particular.⁴⁸

In its early stages, Formalism placed heavy stress on the phonic properties of words, Jakobinsky, for example, arguing that the dominance of sound is what distinguishes poetic language from practical language, where considerations of sound are secondary.⁴⁹ The search for forms which were repeated through various literary works meant that specific content tended to be excluded from consideration.⁵⁰ However, later Formalism stressed that the message of a text was inseparable from its form (see below). Jakobson describes the shift in Formalist emphasis as follows: “(1) analysis of the sound aspects of a literary work; (2) problems of meaning within the framework of poetics; (3) integration of sound and meaning into an inseparable whole.”⁵¹

Shklovsky's concept of defamiliarisation is central to early Formalism. The artistic work makes us perceive things as if for the first time. It refreshes our perceptions of objects by making them unfamiliar. Shklovsky develops the concept of defamiliarisation in “Art as Technique.”⁵² Firstly he rejects two concepts of art. One, put forward by Potebnya, is that art is thinking in images. Shklovsky reduces imagery in poetry to the same level of importance as other devices such as parallelism, comparison and balanced structure. It is, he says, a “means of creating the strongest possible expression.”⁵³ The second concept, economy of energy, applies only to practical language. Poetic language is language “made difficult” by use of various devices. It is precisely when reading poetry that we do not slur, mumble or half-finish words and sentences. In an important passage he writes:

And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects ‘unfamiliar,’ to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.*⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Jefferson, “Russian Formalism,” *Modern Literary Theory*, p. 28.

⁴⁹ Any, *Boris Eichenbaum*, p. 30.

⁵⁰ Any, *Boris Eichenbaum*, p. 65.

⁵¹ Roman Jakobson, “The Dominant,” trans. Herbert Eagle, in *Language in Literature*, pp. 41-46, (41). The essay is based on lectures delivered in 1935.

⁵² Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 5-24.

⁵³ Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 8.

⁵⁴ Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 12. A more literal translation of the last sentence is supplied by Robert Scholes: “art is the means for experiencing the making of the thing, but the thing made is not important in art.” Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature: An Introduction*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1974, p. 84, fn.

Where the writer deliberately seeks rhyme, for example, the search for the word with the right sound often leads him or her away from the expression or syntax which would express the meaning with the greatest clarity and economy of effort. This Formalists referred to as the making difficult of form.

Shklovsky goes on to show how Tolstoy makes things strange by describing things as if seen for the first time. He does this by adopting the point of view of someone who does not know the conventional names for the objects being described. However, Shklovsky writes: "I personally feel that defamiliarisation is found almost everywhere form is found."⁵⁵ There is more to defamiliarisation than giving something an odd or unusual description. When we feel the stoniness of the stone – this is unfamiliar, as we are used to simply registering the stone. Shklovsky sees defamiliarisation as the end-result of artistic processes. For example it can result from slowing down, drawing out or interrupting familiar actions, as in *Tristram Shandy*.

It is not only objects, but words themselves, that are defamiliarised. Jakobson's essays "The Newest Russian Poetry" and "What is Poetry?" make this point.⁵⁶ In the first he writes that poetry is a message oriented towards expression. "The communicative function, ascribed to practical language and to emotional language as well, here is reduced to the minimum."⁵⁷ Defamiliarisation is implicit in this understanding. Any word which is felt as a word has been defamiliarised, since outside of art, it serves as a token for a more important thing. "Poeticity is present when the word is felt as a word and not a mere representation of the object being named or an outburst of emotion, when words and their composition, their meaning, their external and inner form, acquire a weight and value of their own instead of referring indifferently to reality."⁵⁸ Literary criticism's task is to analyse the devices the writer uses to make the word felt as a word.

Carol Any credits Eichenbaum with moving Formalism away from extra-literary objects, writing that he generally "avoided treating the work as a defamiliarisation of the outside world."⁵⁹ The examples Shklovsky uses in "Art as Technique" show reality outside of the text being defamiliarised,

⁵⁵ Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 18.

⁵⁶ Jakobson, "What is Poetry?" *Language in Literature*, pp. 368-378.

⁵⁷ Roman Jakobson, "The Newest Russian Poetry," Prague 1921, p. 10. Quoted in Krystyna Pomorska, *Russian Formalist Theory and its Poetic Ambiance*, Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 82, The Hague, Mouton, 1968, p. 22.

⁵⁸ Jakobson, "What is Poetry?" *Language in Literature*, p. 378.

⁵⁹ Any, *Boris Eichenbaum*, p. 57.

which means that defamiliarisation can be seen as a “variant” of mimesis.⁶⁰ In Eichenbaum’s essay on Gogol’s “Overcoat” he concentrates on how the language used – as opposed to the “little man” of Gogol’s story – is made perceptible. Matejka emphasises that in Shklovsky’s view, expressed in “Art as Technique,” both language and the objects referred to are made strange, while Jefferson writes that defamiliarisation became focused on language.⁶¹

The concept of the dominant was borrowed from Broder Christiansen in Eichenbaum’s *Melody in Russian Lyric Verse* (1922). Roman Jakobson defined the dominant as “the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components.”⁶² He defines a poetic work as “a verbal message whose aesthetic function is its dominant.”⁶³ The dominant can be found in an individual’s poetic work, in a poetic canon and in the art of a given epoch. Jakobson moves Formalist attention to the function of devices in the text, where Shklovsky had merely said a text was the sum of its devices.⁶⁴ A Formalist study might examine how the dominant deforms other components of the work of art – how Eichenbaum’s tension makes itself felt.⁶⁵ Tynyanov also emphasised the tension within a literary work caused by the subordination of other factors to the dominant: “Since a system is not an equal interaction of all elements but places a group of elements in the foreground – the ‘dominant’ – and thus involves the deformation of the remaining elements, a work enters into literature and takes on its own literary function through this dominant.”⁶⁶

The notion of the dominant turned the Formalist conception of the literary work from a collection of devices into a dynamic system. Jakobson argued that literary history is a question of shifts in the mutual relations of the components of the literary system, i.e. a question of shifts in the dominant.⁶⁷ The dominant of one period of poetry (e.g. syllabic scheme) becomes in another period subordinate to something else (e.g. rhyme). “With the further development of Formalism, there arose the accurate conception of a poetic work as a structured system, a regularly ordered hierarchical set of artistic devices. Poetic evolution is a shift in this hierarchy.”⁶⁸ The motor of poetic evolution is the constant desire to refresh automatised literary forms. Once the dominance of a certain element is,

⁶⁰ Any, *Boris Eichenbaum*, p. 57.

⁶¹ Matejka, “The Formal Method and Linguistics,” Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, pp. 281-295, (285); Jefferson, “Russian Formalism,” *Modern Literary Theory*, p. 28.

⁶² Jakobson, “The Dominant,” *Language in Literature*, p. 41.

⁶³ Jakobson, “The Dominant,” *Language in Literature*, p. 43.

⁶⁴ Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, p. 190.

⁶⁵ Any, *Boris Eichenbaum*, p. 61.

⁶⁶ Tynyanov, “On Literary Evolution,” Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, p. 72.

⁶⁷ Jakobson, “The Dominant,” *Language in Literature*, p. 44.

through over-familiarity, no longer perceptible, a shift takes place in the hierarchy of elements. However, the immanent laws of literary history do not allow us to predict the path literary evolution will take when several, theoretically possible, alternative paths exist.⁶⁹

In his essay "On Literary Evolution," Tynyanov writes:

An element [of a literary work] is on the one hand interrelated with similar elements in other works in other systems, and on the other hand it is interrelated with different elements within the same work. The former may be termed the *auto-function* and the latter, the *syn-function*. Thus, for example, the lexicon of a given work is interrelated with both the whole literary lexicon and the general lexicon of the language, as well as with other elements of that given work.⁷⁰

Words are "felt" when they deviate from a norm. It is possible in Formalist theory to distinguish three norms: (1) the norm of practical, communicative language, (2) that of literary language (Tynyanov's "auto-function"), (3) the norm existing in the individual work in which the word appears (Tynyanov's "syn-function"). The complexity of the notion of "practical speech," which has various different functions, such as conversational, scientific and oratorical, was acknowledged by Jakobson in "On Dialogic Speech."⁷¹ Later stages of Formalist thought realised that devices themselves could be automatised, and, therefore, defamiliarised by literature. Ann Jefferson writes: "This means that the habitual/made-strange opposition is now located within literature itself and is no longer co-extensive with the distinction between literature and non-literature. Literariness is a feature not just of form as *impeded speech*, but more importantly, of *impeded form*."⁷² Shklovsky recognised the possibility that forms themselves could become automatised quite early on, writing in "Art as Technique": "Should the disordering of rhythm become a convention, it would be ineffective as a device for the roughening of language."⁷³ The recognition that artistic devices themselves could be automatised is the source of norms (2) and (3), above. In "The Dominant" Jakobson describes how Turgenev corrected the rhythm and style of late-Romantic lyricists like Tyutchev and Fet in order to improve them and "adjust them to the extant norm."⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Jakobson, "The Dominant," *Language in Literature*, p. 44.

⁶⁹ Tynyanov and Jakobson, "Problems in the Study of Literature and Language," Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, p. 80.

⁷⁰ Tynyanov, "On Literary Evolution," Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, p. 68.

⁷¹ Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 128, fn. 44.

⁷² Jefferson, "Russian Formalism," *Modern Literary Theory*, p. 29.

⁷³ Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 24.

⁷⁴ Jakobson, "The Dominant," *Language in Literature*, p. 46.

Shklovsky's differentiation between recognising (once a form has been automatised) and seeing (when it is defamiliarised) is taken up by Jakobson:

Recognition becomes instantaneous. We no longer see a picture. The ideogram needs to be deformed. The artist-innovator must impose a new form upon our perception, if we are to detect in a given thing those traits which went unnoticed the day before. He may present the object in an unusual perspective; he may violate the rules of composition canonised by his predecessors.⁷⁵

Early Formalists, with their close links to Futurism and polemical style, may have given the impression that the more drastic the break with tradition the more literary the result, but the deviation from a norm need only consist of a missing syllable or two. Even a very short poem may establish its own metrical norm, or follow a widely accepted and well-known norm, building up expectations in the reader, which can then be frustrated by dropping a single syllable.

Formalists brought a new concept of form into literary study. An analogy used to describe the traditional view of form and content is a glass of wine, with wine representing the content, and glass the form. It does not matter what shape of glass the wine is poured into; it is still the same wine. Formalists disagreed with approaches to literary study that concentrated on the wine and regarded the shape of the glass as incidental. Rhyme, rhythm, and imagery are not to be regarded as decorations attached to an all-important idea expressed in a poem. However, Formalism does not simply switch the emphasis of study from the wine to the glass. Christopher Pike writes that: "In essence they [Formalists] wished to demonstrate that the boundaries between these two traditional categories were so fluid as to render the distinctness of the categories themselves meaningless." However, their need to polemicise led to extreme statements such as "form dictates content."⁷⁶ Their aim was to do away entirely with the separation of the two, and put forward a notion of form which has no complementary content. According to Shklovsky, "a literary work is pure form."⁷⁷

What is meant by the new sense of form is explained in Eichenbaum's "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'": "The notion of 'form' here acquires new meaning; it is no longer an envelope, but a complete thing, something concrete, dynamic, self-contained, and without a correlative of any kind. Here we made a decisive break with the Symbolist principle that some sort of 'content' is to shine

⁷⁵ Roman Jakobson, "On Realism in Art," trans., Karol Magassy, in Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, pp. 38-46, (39-40). First published in Czech in 1921.

⁷⁶ Pike, Introduction, *The Futurists, the Formalists, and the Marxist Critique*, p. 11.

⁷⁷ Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, p. 189.

through the 'form'.⁷⁸ To change one aspect of the form (as traditionally understood) means changing the content. Eichenbaum comes to the conclusion that "sounds in verse are not at all merely elements of a superficial euphony, and [...] they do not play a mere 'accompaniment' to meaning, but rather [...] they have an independent significance."⁷⁹ It may seem that the form/content division is resurrected by Formalism under the guise of "device/material," but Formalism does not attach any literary value to the material used to create form. For example, the events which go into making up a story – be it a popular adventure novel or a serious exploration of the human condition – are held to be irrelevant from the point of view of literary study. What matters is how the events are formed into an artistic whole.

"No matter how the events were originally arranged in the work and despite their original order of introduction, in practice the story may be told in the actual chronological and causal order of events."⁸⁰ Formalists understood story (*fabula*) to be the pre-artistic raw material of a work. Plot (*syuzhet*) is the artistically structured arrangement of that material. Shklovsky writes: "The concept of plot (*syuzhet*) is too often confused with a description of the events in the novel, with what I'd tentatively call the story line (*fabula*). As a matter of fact, though, the story line is nothing more than material for plot formation."⁸¹ Plot is linked to defamiliarisation. It often prevents the reader from easily assimilating the events that make up the story. This can be done by introducing digressions, as in *Eugene Onegin*, or transposing parts of the story, as in *Tristram Shandy*.⁸² Another form of plot impediment is to present several actions simultaneously without making the connection between them clear.⁸³ In theory, the material which makes up the story is of no interest to the Formalist student of literariness, as anything may serve as the events which the artist transforms into literature. Tomashevsky writes: "Real incidents, not fictionalised by an author, may make a story. A plot is wholly an artistic creation."⁸⁴ This stems from Formalism's refusal to locate literariness in any one theme: "Jocular, tragic, world-shaking and intimate works are all equal. The confrontation of a world

⁷⁸ Boris Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'," Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 112-113.

⁷⁹ Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'," Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 110.

⁸⁰ Boris Tomashevsky, "Thematics," in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 62-95, (66-67). Originally published in "Theory of Literature," Leningrad, 1925.

⁸¹ Viktor Shklovsky, "Theory of Prose," p. 170.

⁸² Viktor Shklovsky, "Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*: Stylistic Commentary," Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 27-57.

⁸³ Viktor Shklovsky, "Theory of Prose," p. 136.

⁸⁴ Tomashevsky, "Thematics," Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 68.

with a world matters as much or as little as that of a cat with a stone,” Shklovsky wrote.⁸⁵ However, much as Formalists may have wanted to rule the writer out of discussion, it is the writer who selects which events are to become a part of the *fabula*, and, which therefore, can be organised by *syuzhet*. Tzvetan Todorov reviews Formalist theory regarding *fabula* and *syuzhet* in “Some Approaches to Russian Formalism,” before concluding: “I think we should insist that the sequence created by the events described in a text is a field of literary study, since these events can have no autonomous existence outside the boundaries of this text.”⁸⁶ He goes on to show how many texts gain their effect by forcing the reader to reconstruct *fabula* from *syuzhet*, “while some modern fiction makes any reconstruction by the reader impossible”⁸⁷

Tomashevsky defines motif as the smallest particle of thematic material. “The theme of an irreducible part of a work is called the *motif*: each sentence in fact has its own motif.” An example of a motif, given by Tomashevsky, is “Raskolnikov kills the old woman.”⁸⁸ A bound motif is one which cannot be omitted without destroying the coherence of the story. A free motif is one which is not essential to the coherence of the story (*fabula*). Bound motifs often appear unchanged in various different periods of literature, but free motifs are more subject to literary tradition – each literary tradition has its “characteristic stock” of free motifs, which may dominate the structure of the plot (*syuzhet*).⁸⁹ Bound motifs are also influenced by prevailing literary norms, according to Tomashevsky, who points to examples from nineteenth-century Russian literature of groups of stories with similar themes.⁹⁰

Motivation is the way in which the introduction of motifs or groups of motifs is justified. Tynyanov, in *The Problem of Verse Language*, defines motivation as the justification of “some single factor vis-à-vis all the others.”⁹¹ In many cases the motivation is a realistic one of cause and effect. For example, the introduction of the motif: “Raskolnikov is punished” is justified by the motif “Raskolnikov is caught.” But Tomashevsky points out that readers can become accustomed to very

⁸⁵ René Wellek, *German, Russian, and East European Criticism, 1900-1950*, vol. 7 of *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1991, p. 321. Quoted from *The Knight's Move*, 1923.

⁸⁶ Tzvetan Todorov, “Some Approaches to Russian Formalism,” trans. Bruce Merry, in Bann and Bowlt, *Russian Formalism*, pp. 6-19, (17).

⁸⁷ Todorov, “Some Approaches,” Bann and Bowlt, *Russian Formalism*, p. 18.

⁸⁸ Tomashevsky, “Thematics,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 67.

⁸⁹ Tomashevsky, “Thematics,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 68.

⁹⁰ Tomashevsky, “Thematics,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 68-9.

⁹¹ Yury Tynyanov, “Rhythm as the Constructive Factor of Verse,” trans. M. E. Suino, in Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, pp. 126-135, (130).

improbable motivation, overlooking, for example, the absurdity of characters in plays failing to recognise each other until the last act.⁹²

The desire to introduce motifs realistically can have a deforming effect on the *fabula*. A free motif describing a sunset may be present mainly because it is a literary convention to describe nature. It can often be observed how realism is stretched or distorted to provide a justification for the free motif: the author may take some trouble to place the hero of the novel in a place where the sunset can be observed, resulting in a convoluted story.

Shklovsky is enthusiastic about works where the device is “laid bare,” i.e. “the aesthetic form is presented without any motivation whatsoever, simply as is.”⁹³ In his discussion of Pushkin’s short story “The Shot” he notes that time shifts in the telling of the story are motivated. This is contrasted with Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, in which time shifts are presented without any motivation. He refers to this as laying bare the technique.⁹⁴ Sterne would use an old method to splice together story-lines, but he “did not hide its conventionality but rather thrust it out protrudingly and toyed with it.”⁹⁵

Criticisms of Russian Formalism are well documented, and hence this section is restricted to those criticisms which are relevant to Schulz.⁹⁶ A criticism made of Formalism is that it does not evaluate literature.⁹⁷ Carol Any describes, for example, how Eichenbaum was able to show effectively how both Lenin’s speeches and Pushkin’s prose were made, but unable to show that Pushkin is more poetic than Lenin.⁹⁸ The Formalist reduction of non-literary issues (society, psychology, history) to the same level of artistically valueless “material,” coupled with their emphasis on technique, leads to genre novels being treated with the same earnestness as more serious literature. This is a criticism which, it will be argued, Schulz also makes of Russian Formalism, using parody as his means of attack.

Carol Any also criticises Formalism for removing the reader’s response to literature from literary study. “In general, Formalist theory and practice were concerned not with new or variant

⁹² Tomashevsky, “Thematics,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 81-2.

⁹³ Shklovsky, “Theory of Prose,” p. 147.

⁹⁴ Shklovsky, “Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 30.

⁹⁵ Shklovsky, “Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 31.

⁹⁶ Jefferson, “Russian Formalism,” *Modern Literary Theory*, pp. 42-44; Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism*, pp. 326-327 and P. N. Medvedev and M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, trans. Albert J. Wehre, The Goucher College Series, Baltimore and London, John Hopkins University Press, 1978 (originally published 1928 in Leningrad) all contain accounts of the drawbacks and failings of Russian Formalism.

⁹⁷ Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism*, p. 326.

⁹⁸ Any, *Boris Eichenbaum*, p. 78.

readings but with establishing a 'baseline' reading of works by reconstructing the literary conventions in force at the time of writing."⁹⁹ Shklovsky admitted the possibility of different perceptions existing in different cultures and periods, but did not consider that differences in perception might exist within the reading public.¹⁰⁰ Ann Jefferson points out that "the concept of defamiliarisation does implicitly presuppose a reader or a reading public whose expectations are jolted or subverted by the defamiliarising devices of the literary text," noting that Jauss drew on this in the development of the theory of "the horizon of expectations."¹⁰¹ Jakobson does in fact consider the differing perceptions of readers in "On Realism in Art." He discusses the different concepts of realism, including "A work may be called realistic if I, the person judging it, perceive it as true to life."¹⁰² He writes that the Primitives' "incompatibility with the norms on which we were raised was immediately evident, [but] their faithful adherence to their own norms and tradition was lost from view...."¹⁰³ The issue of reader perception has implications for Formalism's aim for scientificity, and is discussed in chapter 3, section 2.

⁹⁹ Any, *Boris Eichenbaum*, p. 70; Trubetzkoy, in a letter to Roman Jakobson, writes that the formal method with its isolation of the devices and specification of their function is useful for getting "into the skin" of the old Russian reader and learning to look at literature from his point of view. N. S. Trubetzkoy, *Writings on Literature*, p. 113.

¹⁰⁰ Any, *Boris Eichenbaum*, p. 70.

¹⁰¹ Jefferson, "Russian Formalism," *Modern Literary Theory*, p. 45.

¹⁰² Jakobson, "On Realism in Art," Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, p. 38.

¹⁰³ Jakobson, "On Realism in Art," Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, p. 42.

CHAPTER TWO: THE LITERARY BACKGROUND

How did Schulz's use of language differ from the literary norm? To answer this question it would be helpful to know something about the standard literary practices of Poland between the wars. But not only that, we must also know what conventions had prevailed for a longer period. It is possible that a writer may break with locally obtaining norms without deviating greatly from more universal conventions. We might find, for example, that Schulz's use of foreign words was not accepted literary usage in 1930s Poland, but that on a larger scale foreign words often are used in literary Polish. For example, Mickiewicz was in his day criticised for using foreign words, but after his example, such usage became more widely accepted.¹ The opposite may also be true: it is possible for the generally prevailing norm to be for literature to use more exotic words than everyday language, but that in a given period there be a turn toward more everyday language. Thus we must be aware of two time-scales when trying to answer the above question.

A second remark concerns methodology. How do we find out what the literary conventions of 70 years ago were? One way is to read all the literature produced then or study the large body of research on just this subject.² As well as drawing on this literary-historical material, I will refer to contemporary reviews of Schulz's fiction to deduce what aspects of his writing, if any, differed from what had gone before. A third way of working out what norms applied in Schulz's day is to compare the texts which appeared in periodicals with those that appeared in more or less definitive book form. The differences between the two should tell us something of at least the periodical editors' perceptions of the norms of literary language.

Simplifying greatly, we may say that the literary convention in Schulz's day was for prose to be prosaic and poetry poetic. Bolecki writes that Schulz's aesthetic principles are opposed to the rules of the "traditional" novel.³ The prose of *Młoda Polska* (ca. 1890-1918) differed greatly from the nineteenth-century realism of Prus, but was still essentially understandable and transparent. *Młoda*

¹ Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, *Język polski: Pochodzenie, powstanie, rozwój*, 2nd edn., Warsaw, 1951, p. 356.

² See, for example: E. J. Czerwinski, ed., *Dictionary of Polish Literature*, Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1994; Czesław Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, 2nd edn., Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983; Julian Krzyżanowski, *Dzieje literatury polskiej*, 3rd edn., Warsaw, 1979.

³ Włodzimierz Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym: Witkacy*,

Polska prose is marked by lyricism, but it communicates something, be it a mood or a world view. By contrast, Julian Przyboś writes of inter-war period poetry that it grew out of symbolist poetry, which “removed from poetry descriptive-narrative themes, cleansing it, bringing it to pure lyricism.”⁴ He goes on to say that from the advent of symbolism, poetry became less and less about expressing things, and more and more about creation. As a result of this it became difficult to summarise poems. To answer the question: “What did the poet want to express in this work?” it is necessary to quote the whole poem. “For less sensitive people, accustomed to prose” he continues, “post-symbolist poetry lost more and more ‘content’.”⁵

Schulz’s peers and immediate predecessors in prose were considerably more communicative than the prose writers of *Młoda Polska*. Jarzębski describes this as a time when “more and more neo-naturalistic and descriptive generic works” were appearing.⁶ Poetry was a more complex matter. The main tendency in poetry, notwithstanding Przyboś’s remarks, was represented by the Skamandrites, who valued rhyme and rhythm, the classic *Differenzenqualitäten* of poetry. Other groups existed, probably closer to Przyboś’s heart, such as the Futurists, and amongst them there was a tendency towards opacity and difficulty.

Schulz differs from most of his peers by blurring the boundaries between a prose which apparently subordinates decoration to communication and a poetry which subordinates communication to decoration. Bolesław Faron writes in “Między psychoanalizą a dokumentaryzmem”: “The novels and stories of Witkiewicz, Schulz and Gombrowicz played a decisive role in the struggle with the nineteenth-century convention of narratorial experiences, with our national complexes, and with simplified understandings of culture.”⁷ Bolecki proposes a model for reading Schulz, whose short stories he characterises as poetic prose. This poetic model stands opposed to conventional, realist prose, whose semantics “activate first and foremost elements *above the level of the sentence* (narrator, narration, plot, characters etc.)”⁸ Earlier still, Eugenia Krassowska wrote that Schulz was closer to that group of writers (she mentions Kurek and Pięta) practising poetry in the novel.⁹

Gombrowicz, Schulz i inni. Studium z poetyki historycznej, 2nd edn., Cracow, 1996, p. 251.

⁴ Julian Przyboś, (Odpowiedź na ankietę) “Jak oceniam literaturę dwudziestolecia?” *Twórczość*, 1947, no. 4, pp. 44-59, (55).

⁵ Przyboś, “Jak oceniam literaturę dwudziestolecia?” *Twórczość*, 1947, no. 4, p. 56.

⁶ Jerzy Jarzębski, “Reading Schulz,” trans. Marilyn Nelson, in *Periphery*, 1997, vol. 3, no. 1-2, pp. 70-74, (70).

⁷ Bolesław Faron, “Między psychoanalizą a dokumentaryzmem,” in Bolesław Faron, ed., *Prozaicy dwudziestolecia międzywojennego: Sylwetki*, Warsaw, 1972, pp. 5-21, (14-15).

⁸ Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 10. See also Krzysztof Miklaszewski, “Cena świadomości (Próba

This study cannot but be brief, and will single out only some aspects of the background against which Schulz was perceived. When reviewing literary history it is important to bear in mind that secondary literature is hind-sighted and sometimes gives the impression that pioneers represented the norm. For example, Zawada's *Dwudziestolecie literackie* includes only Schulz, Gombrowicz and Witkacy under "novel" in its "short anthology of texts."¹⁰ It is safe to concentrate on the likes of Mickiewicz and Prus because their status, and influence on Polish literature, was already recognised well before Schulz's time. But Witkacy and Gombrowicz had not yet achieved the recognition that they now have when Schulz was writing. It would be a mistake to think that Schulz was perceived against a background of absurd, grotesque avant-garde literature. It is only now that we see these to be the important literary trends of the time, but Dąbrowska and Nałkowska, not usually considered grotesque or absurd, were both well established when Schulz was writing.

This chapter consists of three main sections. The first will work from primary texts and secondary literature to deduce some at least of the literary norms. As this is a Formalist study of Schulz it will be more concerned with linguistic devices, plotting, and structure than with the actual themes and subject matter of the works surveyed. Section 2 is an analysis of contemporary reviews of Schulz's stories and to a lesser extent other writers' work with an aim to determine what characteristics of Schulz's prose stood out from the literary norms. The third section looks at how periodical editors altered Schulz's stories to see if these changes reflect the prevailing literary norms.

Primary Texts and Secondary Literature

Most commentators (e.g. Miłosz, Krzyżanowski, Czerwinski) divide modern Polish literature into successive phases: Romanticism, Positivism, Młoda Polska (Young Poland), inter-war literature, etc. The closer we come to the present the more problematic such divisions are. Czerwinski acknowledges that Młoda Polska is a very broad term, covering Parnassianism, Symbolism, Impressionism and Expressionism, while Krzyżanowski writes that due to Młoda Polska's similarity with what was happening in Western Europe, various ready-made labels were used, such as Modernism, "the new art," Impressionism, Decadence and Symbolism.¹¹ Miłosz writes: "The closer we move to our own

analizy opowiadania Bruno Schulza pt. 'Pan')," *Ruch literacki*, 1966, no. 6, pp. 285-295, (294) and "Poeta prozy (O poetyckiej materii prozy Brunona Schulza)," in *Poezja*, 1971, no. 7, pp. 46-51.

⁹ Eugenia Krassowska, "O twórczości Brunona Schulza," *Sygnaly*, 1938, no. 51, p. 3.

¹⁰ Andrzej Zawada, *Dwudziestolecie literackie*, Series: A to Polska właśnie, Wrocław, 1995.

¹¹ Czerwinski, *Dictionary of Polish Literature*, pp. 273-280, (276); Krzyżanowski, *Dzieje literatury*

time, the more difficult it becomes to present the contradictory currents that shaped the life of Europe.”¹² The period after World War One is characterised by the existence of various movements such as the Skamandrites, the Cracow avant-garde, the Futurists, and realism in prose, and there is no unanimity over what to call this: Krzyżanowski hazards “inter-war neo-realism” as a blanket term. Such broad divisions as “Romanticism” and “Positivism” are useful as long as the student does not try to read Positivism, for example, into a certain work just because of its publication date. As long as we do not allow Orzeszkowa’s ideological dissimilarity to Mickiewicz to blind us to the similarities between her *Nad Niemnem* and his *Pan Tadeusz*, it is worth knowing something of the schools to which they “belong.”

The most obvious predecessor to Schulz’s lyrical prose is the prose of *Młoda Polska*, of which Miłosz writes: “Overembellishment and rhythmicity at the expense of the normal syntax made the style of ‘Young Poland,’ a few decades later, a synonym for bad taste.”¹³ Schulz’s prose is commonly described as poetic, and while Positivism in Poland is not noted for its poetry, it is to Orzeszkowa’s positivist *Nad Niemnem*, not Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz* that Schulz’s prose is closer. A comparison of Schulz with *Nad Niemnem* is instructive. Orzeszkowa’s novel contains many natural descriptions which use “poetic” devices like assonance and alliteration, just as in Schulz, e.g. “rumianym kwiatem gęsto usiane, słały się na szerokich przestrzeniach liściaste puchy koniczyny” (“densely strewn with the ruddy flower, the leafy down of trefoil floated on the wide expanses”).¹⁴ This passage also has a strong rhythm, as is true of most of Orzeszkowa’s extended descriptions of nature. But this is a realist novel, and leaves are green, not black, as in “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą.” Although Orzeszkowa uses folk words for flowers, the vocabulary does at times sound like Schulz: “rosły wysokie i grube jawory otoczone niższą od nich gęstwiną koralowych bzów, akacji, buldenezów” (“sycamores grew tall and thick, surrounded by a shorter thicket of elder, acacia and guelder roses”).¹⁵ However, this is nature in its place, subdued by man: “potężnie rozrosłe krzewy wyglądały świeżo i zdrowo” (“the powerfully exuberant shrubbery looked fresh and healthy”).¹⁶ In Schulz we might expect to see “dziko” (“wildly”) instead of “świeżo” and “chorobliwie” (“sickly”) instead of “zdrowo.” Perhaps the most fundamental difference, though, is that in *Nad Niemnem*, this

polskiej, p. 472.

¹² Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, p. 322.

¹³ Miłosz, *The History of Polish Literature*, p. 329.

¹⁴ Eliza Orzeszkowa, *Nad Niemnem*, Warsaw, 3 vols., 1971, vol. 1, p. 6.

¹⁵ Orzeszkowa, *Nad Niemnem*, vol. 1, p. 20.

lyrical language is restricted to the author's voice. It is sandwiched between dialogue and business-like plot development. Lyrical description is a luxury the realist writer rarely grants her characters: real people simply do not give two to three page descriptions of nature in their everyday conversations (some of Orzeszkowa's descriptive passages are very long). Schulz cuts direct speech to a minimum and gives authorial voice free reign. There is no restriction of lyricism to nature or any one other area: all subjects are equally worthy of his poetic attention. Where he does give characters voice (almost always it is Father), the character speaks remarkably like the author.

It would be a mistake, however, to read too much into these similarities between Schulz and one leading Positivist writer. Of Bolesław Prus's great positivist novel *Lalka*, Henryk Markiewicz writes: "It is most often said of the style of *Lalka* that it is 'imperceptible', 'absent.' Transparent in its 'colloquialism,' it does not draw the reader's attention to itself."¹⁷ Maria Dąbrowska, in her introduction to Prus's works, notes that his language and style "do not intrude or draw attention."¹⁸ Certainly Prus and Schulz are very dissimilar. Take, for example, Prus's description of a night sky:

Była już noc duża, bezksiężycowa i bezobłoczna, a na niebie więcej gwiazd niż zwykle. Wokulski otworzył okno i przypatrywał się konstelacjom. Przyszły mu na myśl syberyjskie noce, gdzie niebo bywa niekiedy prawie czarne, zasiane gwiazdami jak śnieżycą, gdzie Mała Niedźwiedzica krąży prawie nad głową, a Herkules, Kwadrat Pegaza, Bliźnięta świecą niżej niż u nas nad horyzontem.¹⁹ (It was an expansive, moonless and cloudless night, and in the sky there were more stars than usual. Wokulski opened the window and took a look at the constellations. He was reminded of the Siberian nights, where the sky is usually almost black, sown with stars like a snowstorm, where the Little Bear revolves almost directly overhead, and Hercules, the Pegasus and the Twins glow lower over the horizon than in Poland).

The language is careful and restrained ("more stars than usual") and the associations raised by the night sky (with Siberia) are realistically motivated. Prus also supplies the kind of scientific detail about the elevation of the constellations above the horizon that Schulz dispenses with (or invents or replaces with pseudo-science) in his descriptions of night skies:

O, gwiazdna arena nocy, porysowana aż po najdalsze krańce przez ewolucje, spirale, arkany i pętle tych jazd elastycznych, o cykloidy i epicykloidy egzekwowane w natchnieniu po

¹⁶ Orzeszkowa, *Nad Niemnem*, vol. 1, p. 21.

¹⁷ Henryk Markiewicz, Afterword to *Lalka*, by Bolesław Prus, 2 vols., each in 2 parts, Warsaw, 1977, vol. 2, part 2, pp. 541-592, (584). This essay is based partly on H. Kurkowska, "Uwagi o budowie w *Lalce* Prusa," *Sprawozdanie z posiedzeń Komisji Językowej Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego*, vol. 3, Warsaw 1949, p. 67.

¹⁸ Maria Dąbrowska, "O Bolesławie Prusie," in *Nowele*, vol. 1 of Bolesław Prus, *Wybór pism w dziesięciu tomach*, 5th edn., Warsaw, 1974, pp. 5-34, (24). Further references to the text of Prus's *Lalka* come from this edition, in which volumes 6 and 7 form *Lalka*.

¹⁹ Bolesław Prus, *Lalka*, vol. 6, p. 77.

przekątniach nieba.... Z tych dni wszak datuje się nowa konstelacja, trzynasty gwiazdozbiór przyjęty na zawsze w poczet Zodiaku, świetniejący odtąd na niebie naszych nocy: 'Cyklista' ("Kometa," 367) (Oh, starry arena of night, drawn on even to the furthest extremes by the aerobatics, spirals, lassoes and loops of those elastic journeys, oh cycloids and epicycloids executed in inspiration through the diagonals of the sky... Why, from those days dates a new constellation, the thirteenth, accepted for ever into the fellowship of the Zodiac, glowing from then on in the sky of our nights: 'The Bicyclist')

By comparison with the passage from Prus, this passage is marked by repetition ("spirals, lassoes and loops") and fantasy (a new constellation is discovered). In addressing the sky ("oh starry arena of night"), Schulz makes it an active partner in the literary process, whereas in Prus the sky is a passive object existing outside the consciousness of the writer. Markiewicz writes that Prus's style is marked by preciseness, clarity and objectivity. He uses contemporary, colloquial Polish (remarking that in Prus's time rhetorical devices were much more common in everyday speech than they are now) and avoids words with strong emotional colouring.²⁰ For the sake of irony, though, Prus will from time to time abandon stylistic "invisibility." For example, he takes the trouble to enclose "poetic talk" in inverted commas: "Tymczasem dokoło niego wciąż 'wre i kipi, i szumi, i pryska'" ("meanwhile, all around him was 'seething and surging and roaring and splattering'").²¹ Prus's own comment, quoted by Dąbrowska, seems a fair description of his style: "Good language is language that is simple, clear and precise... At any rate, the soul of all speech and writing is nouns, nouns and once again concrete nouns!"²²

Czerwinski sees *Młoda Polska* as a reaction against Positivism's pedestrianism. A younger generation wanted to free literature from "social obligation." Przybyszewski and Przesmycki, writes Czerwinski, "proclaimed that art had no other aim but to propagate art, which brought man closer to metaphysical values and the essence of the universe."²³ *Młoda Polska*, coming at a time of general mistrust in Europe of scientific knowledge and empiricism, turned toward the inner life of the individual. It did not affect the novel as deeply as it did other forms of literature, but Naturalism's weakening of compositional rigour did influence Polish novels. Naturalism also made narrative more subjective. The narrator lost the position of power he or she had enjoyed in realism and the reader sees the world through the eyes of someone in that world – not above or beyond it. With this came the use of free indirect speech. The protagonist's vocabulary and speech patterns penetrate the narrator's. To

²⁰ Markiewicz, Afterword to *Lalka*, Warsaw, 1977, p. 588.

²¹ Prus, *Lalka*, vol. 6, p. 14.

²² Quoted in Maria Dąbrowska, "O Bolesławie Prusie," pp. 25-26.

²³ Czerwinski, *Dictionary of Polish Literature*, p. 277.

introduce a different style it is necessary only to introduce a new character and situation. In *Młoda Polska* prose the purpose of description is less to tell us about the object than it is to tell us how the hero perceives it, although Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska maintains that the purpose is often to create moods.²⁴

According to Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, *Młoda Polska*'s contribution to literary language was to refresh it with archaisms and dialect-words.²⁵ Reymont, Poland's foremost naturalist, used folk vocabulary gathered from various different regions, but with literary sentence structures, including complicated hypotaxis.²⁶ Maria Komornicka says of Reymont's style that he had no time for "kunszt" ("skill, artistry"). Writing in 1905, she says approvingly: "He has so far been *without style*, a rich profligate of words. He lacks discipline, sharp internal artistic alertness... He permits himself monotony, bluster, haste, carelessness, overuse of adjectives... He does not have in his blood the sacred maxim of Art, that *everything unnecessary is superfluous*."²⁷ The language of many *Młoda Polska* prose works is marked not by a cosmopolitan decadence but by the use of peasant dialecticisms ("gwary"). This is a dominant trend in Polish prose. In this respect at least, most Polish writers seem to have been realists, or at least realistic. Mickiewicz used many words peculiar to Lithuania, particularly in *Pan Tadeusz*. The characters speak naturally, according to their background.²⁸ This trend continues through Positivism. Orzeszkowa used folk names for flowers in *Nad Niemnem* and local expressions, such as "wchody" for stairs instead of standard Polish's "schody."²⁹ Prus was very careful to write "correct" Polish, but Maria Dąbrowska writes of him that the most important feature of his prose is the agreement between style and speaker.³⁰ Rzecki's, Wokulski's and Izabela's styles in *Lalka* are all clearly separated. The key word here, though, is style; the vocabulary of his Warsaw characters is similar, and presents few difficulties to a modern reader of standard Polish. With *Młoda Polska* and *chłopomania* (peasant-mania), Positivism's attempts at verisimilitude begin to look quite half-hearted. Not only do peasant characters in Reymont, Wyspiański and Tetmajer speak a very

²⁴ Michał Głowiński, "Powieść I 1890-1918," in Alina Brodzka et al., eds., *Słownik literatury polskiej XX wieku*, Wrocław, 1992, pp. 839-842, (839-840); Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *Literatura Młodej Polski*, Warsaw, 1997, p. 55.

²⁵ Lehr-Spławiński, *Język polski*, p. 423. Lehr-Spławiński's bias is towards strict philological accuracy. In a discussion of Wyspiański's use of Old Polish and dialecticisms (pp. 412-413) he notes that the author knew the dialecticisms more thoroughly than he did Old Polish.

²⁶ Lehr-Spławiński, *Język polski*, pp. 397-9.

²⁷ Maria Komornicka, "Chłopi: Jesień, Zima," in Barbara Kocówna, ed., *Reymont: Z dziejów recepcji twórczości*, Warsaw, 1975, pp. 177-182, (181-2). Originally published in *Chimera*, 1905.

²⁸ Lehr-Spławiński, *Język polski*, p. 356.

²⁹ Orzeszkowa, *Nad Niemnem*, vol. 1, p. 21, fn.

different language, but that language sometimes spills over into the third person narrator. In Reymont's *Chłopi*, "cosik" is used instead of "coś" ("something"), "tatulo" instead of "tato" ("Dad"), "wójt doma" instead of "wójt w domu" ("is the wójt at home") and so on.³¹ In Tetmajer's *Na Skalnym Podhalu* we find such Podhale dialectisms in the dialogue as: "bedem" which in standard Polish would be "będę," and "dejcje jesce" instead of "dajcie jeszcze."³²

Discussion of dialecticisms in Polish literature brings us to the foreign words used by Schulz, much to the dismay of critics. Certainly, the ground had not been laid for Schulz. Foreign words are much rarer in the works surveyed than in Schulz, and where they are used (for example in *Lalka* and *Nad Niemnem*) they are differently motivated, and serve a different purpose. Neither Sienkiewicz, Orzeszkowa nor Prus use Latinate words to mystify the reader. Foreign words usually occur in the speech of characters, and are realistically motivated. The upper classes in Poland spoke French, and to give an accurate reproduction of their speech, Orzeszkowa must take heed of this. In *Lalka*, a key conversation takes place in English – Prus translates for us. *Lalka* contains foreign words such as "kundman," but these are present not for their own sake, as in Schulz, but because they were parts of the vocabulary of trade. Likewise, russifications enter the text through the offices of Wokulski's Russian trading partner. *Młoda Polska*, perhaps the most international and cosmopolitan of Poland's literary phases, does not make as much use of foreign words as might be expected, partly because of *chłopomania*.

The dominant trend in inter-war poetry, represented by the Skamandrites, was traditionalist. In "Słowo wstępne do Skamandra" they set out their programme, expressing their belief in "the sanctity of good rhyme" and the divine provenance of rhythm. Schulz, prose writer though he is, might seem to be more at home with their declaration that "the greatness of art appears not in themes but in the forms in which they are expressed, in that lightest and intangible play of colours and words which changes harsh experiences into a work of art."³³ Influential as the Skamander group was, the same licence was not extended to prose writers, where the subject of the work was held to be of great importance.

³⁰ Dąbrowska, "O Bolesławie Prusie," p. 24.

³¹ Examples from Władysław Reymont, *Chłopi*, 2 vols., Warsaw, 1977, vol. 1, pp. 14, 15 and 23.

³² Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, *Na Skalnym Podhalu*, Orbis, London, 1946, pp. 57 and 18, respectively.

³³ "Słowo wstępne do Skamandra," *Skamander*, 1920, no. 1, reprinted in Alicja Badowska, ed., *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, Appendix literacki, Warsaw-Wrocław, 1993, pp. 125-7, (127).

Apart from the Skamandrites, there were numerous other poetry groupings in this period. In looking at them, it should be remembered that despite the number of such groups, and their manifestos, they did not represent the literary norm, but one part of the background, which, in hindsight, has come to seem important. Their manifestos often proved more important for the future development of Polish poetry than their actual poetry.³⁴ Tadeusz Peiper, editor of *Zwrotnica*, opposed the smoothness of Skamander poetry, and sought instead opaque imagery and metaphor. (Tuwim's skamandrite "Słopiewnie," though, is "opaque" in that it is composed of Slavic-sounding nonsense-words: the title is not to be found in any dictionary.) Peiper stressed metaphor and rhyme in poetry. The two members of a metaphor should, in his view, be widely separated. Metaphor "is a creation of conceptual links which do not correspond to anything in the real world."³⁵ He came out against musical rhythm and the regular rhyme which until then had been the dominant, proposing instead "distant" rhyme (every fourth, fifth or sixth line).³⁶

Futurist poets, such as Bruno Jasiński, rebelled not only against rhythmical lyricism in poetry, but against Polish rules of orthography. In the manifesto "Do Narodu Polskiego" (subtitled "Mañifest w sprawie natyhmiastowej futuryzacji życia" (sic), or "Manifesto in the Matter of the Immediate Futurisation of Life") Bruno Jasiński rejects the idea of "pure art" or "art for art's sake," calling instead for artists to get out on to the streets. "Art must only and above all be human, that is, for people, for the masses, democratic and universal."³⁷ This Futurist manifesto also glorifies science and technology, exhorting engineers to make more "unparalleled" ("ñebywałe") discoveries.³⁸ On the subject of poetry, Jasiński grants every artist the right to his own system of logic. Artists must use associations which, to the petty bourgeois mind-set, are far removed. Even sentences should be rejected on account of their bourgeois nature. Instead poets should use condensed verbal compositions, unhindered by any considerations of syntax.³⁹ Czesław Miłosz, then associated with the

³⁴ Alicja Badowska, Introduction, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, pp. 11-14, (12).

³⁵ Tadeusz Peiper, "Metafora terażniejszości," in *Tędy*, 1930, reprinted in Badowska, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, p. 137.

³⁶ Tadeusz Peiper, "Poezja jako budowa," in *Nowe usta*, 1925, reprinted in Badowska, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, pp. 138-140, (140).

³⁷ Bruno Jasiński "Do Narodu Polskiego: Mañifest w sprawie natyhmiastowej futuryzacji życia," *Jednodñuwka Futurystuw*, 1921, reprinted in Badowska, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, pp. 130-2, (131).

³⁸ Jasiński "Do Narodu Polskiego," Badowska, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, p. 132.

³⁹ Bruno Jasiński, "Mañifest w sprawie poezji futurystycznej," *Jednodñuwka Futurystuw*, 1921, reprinted in Badowska, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, pp. 133-6, (135).

“Żagary” group, also produced, in 1931, a manifesto, which proposed, among other things, the replacement of emotionalism with a “dictatorship of the intellect.”⁴⁰

Literature in the first decade of the inter-war period was still strongly influenced by *Młoda Polska*.⁴¹ Berent, Żeromski and Strug, novelists who had all debuted before the war, were still writing, while poets Leopold Staff and Bolesław Leśmian were seen as continuers of the pre-war tradition.⁴² Jerzy Rozental gives an example of *Młoda Polska* stylisation from Daniłowski’s *Tętent* in a passage describing the suffering of the heroine: “W piersiach siedział z nastroszonymi skrzydłami okrutny potwór, nie rozbudzony jeszcze zupełnie, o sennych ślepiach, ale wietrzący ofiarę, rozbewiający się z wolna zapachem krwi” (“In her breast sat with bristling wings a cruel monster, sleepy-eyed, not yet entirely awakened, but scenting its victim and slowly going mad with the smell of blood”).⁴³ Another example given comes from *Andrzej Panik: Morderca Amundsena* by Jalu Kurek (1926), and is an apostrophe to the sun made by a tailor (not a Schulzean tailor, dealing in humdrum off-cuts and trash but a *Młoda Polska* tailor who weeps over Anhelli (a Słowacki character), has a chequered, exotic past and is really a poetic soul): “O słońce, pociecho nasza... O zanieś mnie tam... O słońce, osłodo naszych ust...” (“O sun, our solace... O take me there... O sun, relief to our lips...”) Rozental comments: “The aestheticising ..., pompous style of the hero’s speech, full of nostalgia, expressing boredom and a flight to nature, clearly come from *Młoda Polska*.”⁴⁴

Stanisław Jaworski describes the years before 1932 as containing many new programmes and currents, often optimistic (in view of Poland’s recently won independence) and with an emphasis on the lyrical. After 1932 (in which year appeared Dąbrowska’s epic *Noce i dnie*) social concerns come to the fore in literature, along with the epic, and novels describing the ways of life in certain environments (“powieści obyczajowo-środowiskowe”).⁴⁵ Stefan Żółkiewski writes that for some

⁴⁰ Czesław Miłosz, “Bulion z gwoździ,” in *Żagary*, no. 5, 1931, reprinted in Badowska, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, pp. 141-2, (141).

⁴¹ Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, (Odpowiedź na ankietę) “Jak oceniam literaturę dwudziestolecia?” *Twórczość*, 1947, no. 4, pp. 71-74, (72); Jerzy Kwiatkowski, *Literatura Dwudziestolecia*, Warsaw, 1990, pp. 167-168; Michał Głowiński, “Powieść II 1918-1939,” in Brodzka, et al., *Słownik literatury polskiej XX wieku*, pp. 842-845, (842).

⁴² Stanisław Jaworski, “Literatura lat 1918-1939,” in Marian Stępień and Aleksander Wilkoń, eds., *Historia literatury polskiej w zarysie*, 4th edn., vol. 2, Warsaw, 1987, pp. 95-160, (98).

⁴³ Jerzy Rozental, “Elementy poetyki Młodej Polski w powieściach lat 1918-1928 (Na wybranych przykładach),” in Artur Hutnikiewicz and Helena Zaworska, eds., *O prozie polskiej XX wieku: Materiały konferencji ogólnopolskiej w Toruniu, Listopad 1968, Z dziejów form artystycznych w literaturze polskiej*, 24, Wrocław, 1971, pp. 57-70, (61).

⁴⁴ Rozental, “Elementy poetyki Młodej Polski,” in Hutnikiewicz and Zaworska, *O prozie polskiej XX wieku*, p. 65.

⁴⁵ Jaworski, “Literatura lat 1918-1939,” in Stępień, *Historia literatury polskiej*, p. 98.

critics (e.g. Stawar) 1932 saw the end of the period of the lyric's domination and the start of a period dominated by the epic and the novel.⁴⁶ The 1930s saw a flowering of the psychological novel (e.g. *Panny z Wilka*).⁴⁷ Michał Głowiński speaks of three fundamental tendencies: realistic, psychological and grotesque.⁴⁸ Ryszard Matuszewski exercises caution here. Literature in 1930s Poland is now seen as "belonging" to Witkacy, Gombrowicz and Schulz, but this is with the benefit of hindsight. Matuszewski writes of the new tendencies in the inter-war period, but points to the Galsworthys as well as the Joyces of the age:

there exists at this time a much richer realist-psychological literature.... it would be a mistake to characterise it [the inter-war period] only in terms of avant-garde literature, a literature of formal explorations and the destruction of psychological and linguistic sense.... Uniłowski, Rudnicki, Rembek, Parandowski in *Niebo w płomieniach*, Wittlin in *Sól ziemi* and especially Maria Dąbrowska with her great novelistic epos *Noce i dnie* are writers [as well as Nałkowska] who undoubtedly portrayed man against a realistically conceived background; they fulfilled the demands of some kind of realism.⁴⁹

In speaking of the grotesque, Głowiński probably has in mind such works as *Sklepy cynamonowe*, Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke* and the novels of Witkacy and Jaworski, but writes that at that time "it enjoyed only the smallest of esteem," only gaining recognition towards the end of the inter-war period.⁵⁰ In short, Schulz was not perceived against a background of grotesque literature, even if it seems to us now that the grotesque was the most important literary phenomenon of the time. Rather, he was seen against a mixed background, dominated, perhaps, by Dąbrowska's *Noce i dnie*. For example, in the section on the novel in 1934's *Rocznik literacki*, Leon Piwiński gives the two most important literary events of the year as the publication of the first two novels in Berent's *Nurt* trilogy, and the appearance of the final volume of Dąbrowska's *Noce i dnie*.⁵¹ The psychological novel was represented by Zofia Nałkowska, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Michał Choromański, Maria Kuncewiczowa, and Tadeusz Breza.⁵²

⁴⁶ Stefan Żółkiewski, "Cezura 1932 roku," in Stefan Żółkiewski, *Kultura Socjologia Semiotyka literacka: Studia*, Warsaw, 1979, pp. 199-223, (203).

⁴⁷ Żółkiewski, "Cezura 1932," in *Kultura Socjologia*, p. 216.

⁴⁸ Głowiński, "Powieść II 1918-1939," in Brodzka, et al., *Słownik literatury polskiej XX wieku*, pp. 842-845, (842-844).

⁴⁹ Ryszard Matuszewski, (Odpowiedź na ankietę) "Jak oceniam literaturę dwudziestolecia?" *Twórczość*, 1947, no. 4, pp. 60-69, (62-65).

⁵⁰ Głowiński, "Powieść II 1918-1939," in Brodzka, et al., *Słownik literatury polskiej XX wieku*, pp. 842-845, (844).

⁵¹ Leon Piwiński, [Section on "Powieść"], *Rocznik literacki 1934, 1935*, pp. 81-111, (84).

⁵² Głowiński, "Powieść II 1918-1939," in Brodzka, et al., *Słownik literatury polskiej XX wieku*, pp. 842-845, (843).

Although the inter-war period started with Jan Lechoń's famous declaration in "Herostrates": "A wiosną – niechaj wiosnę, nie Polskę, zobaczę" ("And in spring let it be spring, not Poland that I see"),⁵³ the "Polish question" was still high on the agenda in inter-war fiction, especially as it became increasingly obvious that free, independent Poland was not a free, democratic country. Maria Dąbrowska denied the charges that inter-war literature was self-obsessed and unconcerned with society, giving a long list of books of the period which were socially engaged.⁵⁴ Dąbrowska's theme is taken up by Jaworski, who describes the politicisation of art in the 1930s. For example, the literary group "Przedmieście," of which Schulz was briefly a member, aimed for meticulous description of reality, rejecting literary fiction and plotting in favour of social documentary.⁵⁵ Leon Kruczkowski's *Kordian i cham* (1932) gave a Marxist class-based reading of Polish history from the point of view of the working masses.⁵⁶ Earlier still, Żeromski's *Przedwiośnie* (1925) presented the disillusionment experienced by many in independent Poland.

Experiments in prose made immediately after World War One were less daring and productive, and usually came from poets, especially the Skamandrites.⁵⁷ Jerzy Kwiatkowski mentions, for example, Iwazkiewicz's *Wieczór u Abdona* (1923), which is an attempt to imitate a musical composition.⁵⁸ The 1930s sees more experimenting with the structure and narration of the novel.⁵⁹ This is exemplified by Michał Choromański's *Zazdrość i medycyna*, with its complex time structure. The events leading up to the scene presented in the first pages of the book are described from several different points of view. Episodes, even trivial ones, often overlap so that some events are described twice. The town, the hospital and the operation central to the book are all described with verisimilitude, and are plausible, but the author's manipulation of the story elements strongly accents

⁵³ Zawada, *Dwudziestolecie literackie*, p. 24.

⁵⁴ Maria Dąbrowska, (Odpowiedź na ankietę) "Jak oceniam literaturę dwudziestolecia?" *Twórczość*, 1946, no. 12, pp. 102-106, (102-103). It is worth remembering that the article was written during the most politically repressed time in Poland. The accusations, which she denies, that inter-war literature was elitist may have been politically motivated, in order to discredit all that came before communism. For example, an article in *Kuźnica*, a Marxist organ, sneered at inter-war literature for being an escape to cinnamon shops, a clear reference to Schulz. (*Kuźnica*, "Poza rzeczywistością historyczną," 1945, no. 1. Cited in Artur Sandauer, "Wojna o Schulza," *Współczesność*, 1965, no. 5, p. 3. On *Kuźnica*, see Kazimierz Koźniewski, *Historia co tydzień: Szkice o tygodnikach społeczno-kulturalnych 1944-1950*, Warsaw, 1977.)

⁵⁵ Hanna Maria Małgowska, "Nowa formuła powieści społecznej: Z działalności grupy literackiej Przedmieście," in Alina Brodzka, Zbigniew Żabicki, eds., *Literatura międzywojenna*, vol. 2 of *Z problemów literatury polskiej XX wieku*, Warsaw, 1965, pp. 392-409, (392).

⁵⁶ Jaworski, "Literatura lat 1918-1939," in Stępień, *Historia literatury polskiej*, p. 135.

⁵⁷ Kwiatkowski, *Literatura Dwudziestolecia*, pp. 195-196.

⁵⁸ Kwiatkowski, *Literatura Dwudziestolecia*, p. 197.

⁵⁹ Kwiatkowski, *Literatura Dwudziestolecia*, p. 271.

the constructed nature of the novel (the opening scene is “explained” by a gigantic coincidence). Choromański withholds information, plants clues and retards the action with a meticulous description of an operation. The language used is clear and communicative, but Choromański’s structuring of events is not. It calls attention to itself. Likewise, in her *Cudzoziemka* (1936) Kuncewiczowa also abandons linear narration. Like *Zazdrość i medycyna* it starts at the end of the story and then proceeds, by means of flashbacks which do not occur chronologically, to sketch in the details of the heroine’s life. The majority of the book is taken up by these flashbacks.⁶⁰

Iwaszkiewicz’s *Panny z Wilka* (1932) reads like a classic Russian short story. In the preface to the French translation of *Panny z Wilka*, Edmond Jaloux compares the story to Turgenev in particular. In it, as well as in Iwaszkiewicz’s *Brzezina*, Jaloux sees a return “to the laws of the novel” – a reaction to post-war eccentricities.⁶¹ Elements conspicuous by their absence in Schulz’s short stories can be found here: *Panny z Wilka* has a point, and a close thematic unity. It explores the psychology of the main character and the language is restrained, seemingly subordinated to that purpose. The descriptions of nature are not as lyrical as in Schulz, and more attention is paid to the inner life of the hero. The same remarks could also be made of *Brzezina*, which deals with the theme of death with a seriousness notably absent in Schulz.

In Leon Kruczkowski’s *Kordian i cham* the writer’s concern is with the social problems of the country. Kruczkowski himself describes *Kordian i cham* as a “documentary novel” and this is borne out in the matter-of-fact descriptions.⁶² In contrast with Schulz, the presence of foreign words in the text is realistically motivated: they appear in those parts which describe the aristocracy, and when the author himself uses words such as “*écritoire*,” it is with a Polish diminutive ironically attached.⁶³ The kind of alliterative flourishes which are so common in Schulz are sharply limited in this realistic prose, e.g. “Która to wiedza smrodem i chłodem, a i głodem się znaczy...” (“knowledge which means stench and cold, aye and hunger too...”)⁶⁴ Here, though, the assonance calls attention not so much to itself, as to the message that Leon Kruczkowski wants to convey (that education is the tool of the

⁶⁰ Ludwik Fryde, “Maria Kuncewiczowa: *Cudzoziemka*,” in Lesław Eustachiewicz, ed., *Dwudziestolecie 1919-1939*, 2nd edn., Warsaw, 1990, pp. 195-200, (195-196). Originally published in *Droga*, 1937, no. 11.

⁶¹ Edmond Jaloux, “Jaloux o ‘Pannach z Wilka’,” *Wiadomości Literackie*, 1938, no. 35, p. 8.

⁶² Leon Kruczkowski, “Od autora,” *Kordian i cham*, Warsaw, 1983, pp. 5-6, (5).

⁶³ Kruczkowski, *Kordian i cham*, p. 50.

⁶⁴ Kruczkowski, *Kordian i cham*, p. 27.

oppressors). By contrast, it is extremely difficult to read a political or any other message into Schulz's "zielenie zieleńsze od zdziwienia" (133) ("greens greener than astonishment").

One thing that is noticeable even in this brief survey is the continuity of Polish literature. This is not to say there is a smooth, logical progression, but that each generation of writers is acutely aware of the previous and feels obliged to respond. There are numerous references, more or less veiled, to the works of earlier writers – to Mickiewicz above all. Gombrowicz polemicises with the literary canon in *Ferdydurke*. Before him, the Futurist poet Jasiński wrote in "But w butonierce" ("Boot in a buttonhole," 1921) "One jeszcze nie wiedzą, że, gdy nastał Jasiński,/ Bezpowrotnie umarli i Tetmajer i Staff" ("They don't know yet that when Jasiński took over,/ Tetmajer and Staff were dead for ever").⁶⁵ In Wyspiański's *Wesele*, (1901) the Jew's daughter knows her Przybyszewski, populariser of Nietzsche and art for art's sake.⁶⁶ The Jew's line: "tu interes – a tu serce" ("here business, and here too the heart")⁶⁷ bears at least a passing resemblance to the count's in *Pan Tadeusz*: "Tu serce, tam powinność! tu zemsta, tam miłość!" ("Here my heart, there my duty! vengeance here, there love").⁶⁸ *Lalka* contains numerous references to Mickiewicz, as when Wokulski comes across a book of his poetry: "Zmarnowaliście życie moje... Zatruliście dwa pokolenia!... – szepnął. – Oto skutki waszych sentymentalnych poglądów na miłość..." ("You have wasted my life... You have poisoned two generations!" he whispered. "These are the results of your sentimental views on love...")⁶⁹ He hurls the book of poetry at the wall. Prus also refers to Sienkiewicz's *Ogniem i mieczem* to describe a character: "Broda jak u zbója, pysk jak u Longina" ("a beard like a bandit's, and a face like Longinus").⁷⁰ In *Nad Niemnem*, the books the peasant Anzelm Bohatyrowicz shows the young Positivist, Witold Korzyński, include Kochanowski's Psalms, and *Pan Tadeusz*.⁷¹ A more significant if less explicit connection to the preceding literary tradition is in the character of Zygmunt, the failed artist who has the audacity to consider selling his land. He is convinced that "he needed mountains, cliffs, seas, wildernesses, hot blue sapphires, naked models, fantastic tapestries, the buzz of voices,

⁶⁵ Bruno Jasiński, "But w butonierce," reprinted in Badowska, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, p. 76.

⁶⁶ Stanisław Wyspiański, *Wesele*, Biblioteka Narodowa, 1, 218, Wrocław, 1973, act 1, scene 17, lines 502-4, p. 42.

⁶⁷ Wyspiański, *Wesele*, act 1, scene 17, line 515, p. 42.

⁶⁸ Adam Mickiewicz, *Pan Tadeusz*, Book II, in Adam Mickiewicz, *Wybór Pism*, Warsaw, 1950, p. 158.

⁶⁹ Prus, *Lalka*, vol. 6, p. 69.

⁷⁰ Prus, *Lalka*, vol. 5, p. 466.

⁷¹ Illiteracy in Russian-partitioned Poland, where *Nad Niemnem* is set, was nearly 50% as late as the 1920s. M. K. Dziewanowski, *Poland in the twentieth century*, New York, Columbia University Press,

fever and pursuit in order to feel, think and create” (“trzeba mu było gór, skał, mórz, puszczy, gorących szafirów niebieskich, nagich modeli, fantastycznych draperii, gwaru, gorączki, gonitwy, aby czuć, myśleć i tworzyć”).⁷² One is reminded here of the scene in Słowacki’s *Kordian* (1834) where Kordian delivers a soliloquy “na najwyższej igle góry Mont-Blanc” (“on the highest pinnacle of Mont Blanc”).⁷³ Sienkiewicz’s description of the town of Łubnie is reminiscent of the austere, soldierly life of Mickiewicz’s self-sacrificing Konrad Wallenrod. It is a place of “żelazo nad złotem, dźwięk trąb obozowych nad gwarem uczt i zabaw” (“iron over gold, the sound of bugles over the noise of feasts and parties”).⁷⁴ Such is the stature of Mickiewicz in Polish literature, that even faint echoes like this cannot be ignored.

Schulz stands somewhat apart from this.⁷⁵ However, even he is not immune. In “Druga jesień” he makes a brief mention of Sopliców, the country estate on which the action of *Pan Tadeusz* takes place, but when he looks back over his shoulder it is more usually to the Old Testament, to Goethe and to a very personal childhood myth. In a literary tradition marked by a serious approach to one’s fathers, Schulz’s flippant attitude to his own father stands out.

The Critical Reception of Bruno Schulz

Studies of the critical reception of Bruno Schulz have been written by Andrzej Sulikowski and Włodzimierz Bolecki.⁷⁶ Jerzy Jarzębski’s introduction to the Biblioteka Narodowa edition of Schulz’s prose also contains a discussion of the pre-war critical reception. In it he notes that the pre-war reviews tell us more about the “reading consciousness” (“świadomość czytelnicza”) of the time than they do about Schulz himself.⁷⁷ Of these studies, the most thorough is Bolecki’s, and the conclusions here do not differ greatly from Bolecki’s: the literary norm of the time, which Schulz deviated from,

1977, p. 109.

⁷² Orzeszkowa, *Nad Niemnem*, vol. 3, p. 34.

⁷³ Juliusz Słowacki, *Kordian*, Paris, 1834, act 2, reprinted in Wrocław, 1967.

⁷⁴ Henryk Sienkiewicz, *Ogniem i mieczem*, 2 vols., Warsaw, 1977, vol. 1, p. 78.

⁷⁵ Witold Kośny, (in “‘Bo czymże jest wiosna, jeśli nie zmartwychwstaniem historyj’: (Zu Bruno Schulz’ Erzählung ‘Wiosna’),” *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie*, 1995-6, Band LV, Heft 1, pp. 312-322) does find some parallels between “Wiosna” and *Pan Tadeusz*, for example Mickiewicz’s “spring omens” and Schulz’s “horoscope of spring,” (pp. 316-317) but he devotes more space to Thomas Mann, Goethe and the Bible than to the Polish background.

⁷⁶ Andrzej Sulikowski, “Twórczość Brunona Schulza w krytyce i badaniach literackich (1934-1976),” *Pamiętnik literacki*, 1978, no. 2, pp. 264-303. (Sulikowski’s bibliography has been invaluable source material in the writing of this section); Włodzimierz Bolecki, “The Critical Reception of Bruno Schulz’s Prose,” trans. Agnieszka Kukulska, in Hanna Dziechcińska, *The Reception of Literary Works*, Literary Studies in Poland, vol. 9., Wrocław, 1983, pp. 129-144. This is an earlier version of chapter 4, part 3, of Bolecki’s *Poetycki model prozy*.

was for prose to be clear, "simple," communicative, written in good Polish, without stylistic devices which might distract attention from the all-important "content."

What appears to have exercised critics most about *Sklepy cynamonowe* and *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą* is Schulz's perceived failure to deal with any social or human issues. Behind the stories stands no reality or truth. Critics of Schulz, then, did precisely what Witkacy had been complaining of all along: they tried to read and evaluate the work less on its own, internal artistic merits than on its relationship with things outside the text (see chapter 5). Interestingly enough, Eugenia Krassowska, a Formalist-influenced critic and student of Manfred Kridl,⁷⁸ is one of few critics to point this out without damning Schulz for it. Schulz, she writes, does not try to create an illusion of objectivity.⁷⁹ A dimmer view is taken by other critics. Andrzej Pleśniewicz writes: "I'm afraid the small amount of intensity in the realistic background weakens rather than strengthens the effect of the psychological grotesque in many of the stories in *Sklepy cynamonowe*."⁸⁰ Niesiołowska-Rothertowa complains that: "no profundity of experiences is hidden behind the technical display."⁸¹ Ignacy Fik writes: "We should disregard those methods of expression which serve no purpose, and consist purely of play with the words and ideas of an undisciplined fantasy."⁸² Broncel writes: "We come to a fundamental question: Where are the limits of literary experimentation? 'Wolność Tomku w swoim domku' – but literature is for society, not for snobs and a small clique of seekers of new form,"⁸³ while Chmielowiec describes Schulz's literary path of pure fantasy as a homeless wandering: literature must have a problematic.⁸⁴ Similar pronouncements are also to be found in reviews written by Marian Promiński (who does not, however, present this lack of a problematic as a fault) and Jan Lorentowicz, who writes: "the most wonderful form without a definite content is no more than a choice of beautiful words."⁸⁵

⁷⁷ Jerzy Jarzębski, Introduction to Schulz, *Opowiadania*, pp. v-cxxviii, (cxii).

⁷⁸ Marian Maciejewski, "Czesław Zgorzelski – uczonek i wychowawca (17. III. 1908 – 26. VIII. 1996)," *Zeszyty naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego*, 1998, no. 1-2, pp. 39-65, (42). Kridl was a leading Polish Formalist (see chapter 5).

⁷⁹ Eugenia Krassowska, "O twórczości Brunona Schulza," *Sygnaty*, 1938, no. 51, p. 3.

⁸⁰ Andrzej Pleśniewicz, "Fantastyczne miasteczko," *Pion*, 1934, no. 4, pp. 10-11, (10).

⁸¹ Z. Niesiołowska-Rothertowa, Review of *Sklepy cynamonowe*, in *Kobieta Współczesna*, 1934, no. 5, p. 83.

⁸² Ignacy Fik, "Co za czasy!" *Nasz Wyrz*, 1938, no. 7-8, pp. 1-2. Reprinted in Ignacy Fik, *Wybór pism krytycznych*, ed., Andrzej Chruszczyński, 2nd edn., Warsaw, 1961, pp. 212-221, (220).

⁸³ Zdzisław Broncel, "Literatury maligny: O *Sklepiach cynamonowych* Brunona Schulza," *ABC literacko-artystyczne*, 1934, no. 6, p. 1. "Wolność Tomku w swoim domku" is a Polish idiom meaning you can do what you like in the privacy of your own house.

⁸⁴ Michał Chmielowiec, "Zdarzenia bezdomne," *Kultura*, 1938, no. 13, p. 5.

⁸⁵ Marian Promiński, Review of *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą*, *Sygnaty*, 1938, no. 40, p. 5; Jan Lorentowicz, Review of *Sklepy cynamonowe*, *Nowa Książka*, 1934, no. 1, pp. 27-28, (28).

On the other hand the critics' verdict on the lack of plot in Schulz's stories tends to confirm what has been said above (about Choromański, Nałkowska, Iwaszkiewicz's *Wieczór u Abdona*): that the inter-war period was open to experiments with narrative technique.⁸⁶ Bolecki writes that Schulz's prose, in the opinion of critics, lacked the basic compositional-semantic principle required of the epic in those years. What concerned critics most was the lack of a hierarchy of elements and ideas in Schulz, leading to what, for them, was unacceptable chaos.⁸⁷ Wyka accuses *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą* of being artistically immoral because of its absolute lack of hierarchy.⁸⁸ For the lack of plot they were prepared to be more forgiving, the way having been paved by, among others, Kaden-Bandrowski's *Zawody* (1911), a series of sketches which are loosely connected, if at all. The lack of plot in Schulz's short stories is noted by Hollender, Krassowska (who refers to the lack of a novelistic plot), Pleśniewicz, Domański, and Józef Czechowicz, who writes that the action has duration ("akcja trwa") but does not advance.⁸⁹ Only Hollender presents this as a fault. Piwiński describes the composition of *Sklepy cynamonowe* as musical rather than literary. Czechowicz notes the "a-hierarchic" principle of composition of writers like Schulz, which leads many to call it mistakenly oniric composition. Pleśniewicz comments merely that he does not think Schulz intended to give *Sklepy cynamonowe* a "compact, novelistic construction."⁹⁰ Hollender's criticism of the composition is somewhat half-hearted: the book "has faults in its composition as a whole, but nonetheless some chapters [rozdziały] are simply wonderful." His use of the word "rozdział" seems to imply he was judging this collection of short stories on the same terms as a novel.⁹¹

Schulz's vocabulary drew sharp criticism, mainly for his use of foreign or recondite words, but also for the use of pseudo-scientific words, written off as "pretentious" in one review.⁹² Wiktor Godziszewski writes ironically: "Indeed, not all the expressions used by him can be found in a dictionary of foreign words. Obviously this is not the fault of this 'Polish' writer, but of the reader,

⁸⁶ "Plot" ("fabuła" in Polish) in this chapter is not used in the Formalist sense of something to be distinguished from story.

⁸⁷ Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 311.

⁸⁸ Kazimierz Wyka and Stefan Napierski, "Dwugłos o Schulzu," reprinted in Wyka, *Stara szuflada*, Cracow, 1967, pp. 259-271, (263). First published in *Ateneum*, 1939, no. 1, pp. 156-163.

⁸⁹ Tadeusz Hollender, Review of *Sklepy cynamonowe*, *Sygnaty*, 1934, no. 3, p. 5; Krassowska, "O twórczości Brunona Schulza," *Sygnaty*, 1938, no. 51, p. 3; Pleśniewicz, "Fantastyczne miasteczko," *Pion*, 1934, no. 4, pp. 10-11, (10); Henryk Domański, "Wśród prozaików," *Zet*, 1934, no. 1, p. 6; Józef Czechowicz, "Truchanowski i towarzysze: Uwagi marginesowe," *Pion*, 1938, no. 35, p. 2. Czechowicz's essay does not single Schulz out. His remarks apply to a number of writers.

⁹⁰ Pleśniewicz, "Fantastyczne miasteczko," *Pion*, 1934, no. 4, p. 10.

⁹¹ Hollender, Review of *Sklepy cynamonowe*, *Sygnaty*, 1934, no. 3, p. 5.

⁹² Wyka and Napierski, "Dwugłos o Schulzu," reprinted in Wyka, *Stara szuflada*, p. 270.

who in this case commands a vocabulary of a mere 25,000 words.”⁹³ Zdzisław Broncel concludes a review which, with the exception of his criticism of Schulz’s failure to deal with social questions, is fairly positive, with the following strongly worded criticism:

The language does not have a Polish spirit. Schulz simply writes a linguistic *Internationale*. There are entire pages which seem to have been taken straight from a dictionary of foreign expressions. It is a record in language choked with weeds – downright jargon. It is high time this mannerism was attacked, and people not writing in Polish were refused the right to participate in Polish literature.⁹⁴

Tadeusz Breza looks favourably on Schulz’s use of foreign words, but his comments give a clear indication of the literary norms of the time: “The catch-phrase of the times has been to use only Polish products. Foreign words gave contexts a taste of artificiality. That has been and to this day is the feeling. In Schulz foreign words do not sound foreign, but unearthly.”⁹⁵ Not everyone agreed with Breza that Schulz did not sound artificial. Krassowska writes: “His vocabulary teems with [words like] ‘adekwaty’ and ‘transcendenty’,” which threaten to become mannered.⁹⁶ Pleśniewicz goes further. After comparing deciphering Schulz to trying to recognise objects which have been dipped in molten gold he writes:

...in the end the monotony of their glittering patina jars. There is no simplicity [‘Brak prostoty’]. Alongside very supple, light, new sentences we find complex sentences which are too ingenious, overburdened with too many metaphors, or ideas expressed in difficult, seldom-encountered words. The ‘telluryczne ingredencje’ are unfortunately the ‘niestrawiona restancja’ of the author’s uncontrolled erudition, often causing the ‘amorfnosc’ of some passages in *Sklepy cynamonowe*.⁹⁷

In a very negative review Niesiołowska-Rothertowa complains of the artificiality of Schulz’s stylistic virtuosity: “*Sklepy cynamonowe* is a cerebral, artificial, creation, which lacks sincerity and therefore does not move the reader.”⁹⁸ Baczyński complains of Schulz’s complex style and artificial tendency towards originality.⁹⁹ The demand for “prostota” (simplicity) voiced by Pleśniewicz is echoed by

⁹³ Wiktor Godziszewski, “‘Opętany fascynacją awersji’ do uczciwego języka,” *Poradnik językowy*, 1935, no. 2, pp. 34-36. Quoted in Sulikowski, “Twórczość Brunona Schulza,” pp. 266-267.

⁹⁴ Broncel, “Literatury maligny,” *ABC literacko-artystyczne*, 1934, no. 6, p. 1.

⁹⁵ Tadeusz Breza, “Sobowtór zwykłej rzeczywistości,” *Kurier Poranny*, 1934, no. 103. Quoted in Sulikowski, “Twórczość Brunona Schulza,” pp. 266.

⁹⁶ Krassowska, “O twórczości Brunona Schulza,” *Sygnaty*, 1938, no. 51, p. 3

⁹⁷ Andrzej Pleśniewicz, “Fantastyczne miasteczko,” *Pion*, 1934, no. 4, pp. 10-11, (10-11).

⁹⁸ Z. Niesiołowska-Rothertowa, Review of *Sklepy cynamonowe*, *Kobieta Współczesna*, 1934, no. 5, p. 83. This chapter concentrates on the criticisms made of Schulz, and it should be borne in mind that Schulz was generally speaking better received by the critics than the public. For example, Pleśniewicz’s review, quoted above, is actually quite warm.

⁹⁹ Stanisław Baczyński, “Powieść polska w r. 1934,” *Polonista*, 1935, no. 4, pp. 173-176, (175).

Grzymała-Siedlecki, who writes that *Sklepy cynamonowe* is a book which shows promise if Schulz is young, but not if he is old: "...it must be said that he has become too entangled in a dangerous mannerism in an epoch when literature rightly demands simplicity, as the most honest expression of the interior."¹⁰⁰

Two final points concern Schulz's descriptive passages and the presence of "galicianisms" in his prose (Schulz was from Galicia). Leon Piwiński writes of *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą* that were it not for certain, not very numerous, galicianisms, Schulz's would be the best prose of his day.¹⁰¹ Piwiński does not give any examples of galicianisms, but "wysprzedż," "spóźnić się o dwie minuty," and "równocześnie" (as opposed to "wyprzedż," "spóźnić się dwie minuty," and "jednocześnie") are galicianisms.¹⁰² "Wysprzedż" appears in the only surviving manuscript of a story by Schulz, *Druga jesień*. It was replaced with "wyprzedż" in *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą*.¹⁰³ This tendency to favour correct, standard literary Polish is also visible in the editorial changes made to Schulz's stories, to be discussed in the next section. Piwiński also draws attention to Schulz's powers of description, which he rates very highly. Krassowska's remark on description in Schulz tells us more about contemporary norms: "[The quality of nature motifs in Schulz's descriptions] sets his work apart from the contemporary novel, poor in disinterested descriptions of nature (exceptions being Dąbrowska, Zarembina, Kurek and Piętaś) and stems logically from the creative attitude of the author."¹⁰⁴

Judging by the reactions of contemporary critics, the background literary tradition was one of communicative prose, simplicity of expression, a desire for naturalness in choice of vocabulary and use of language and some freedom from the constraints of tight compositional unity, although Piwiński does lament Polish literature's lack of originality in the area of construction, most writers usually aiming for a 'simple', 'ordinary' or 'natural' way of presenting the novel's action, e.g. chronologically.¹⁰⁵ Also, literature was to be concerned with reality, not itself. This is broadly in agreement with the conclusions drawn in section 1 above, and a look at contemporary reviews of other writers also confirms this opinion. For example, Piwiński's round-up of the year in novels mentions the bad press Iwaszkiewicz's historical novel *Czerwone tarcze* got on account of its lack of historical

¹⁰⁰ Adam Grzymała-Siedlecki, "Etiudy planetnicze," *Kurier Warszawski*, 1934, no. 11, evening edition, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Leon Piwiński, Review of *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą*, *Rocznik Literacki* 1937, 1938, p. 61.

¹⁰² Stanisław Urbańczyk, ed., *Polszczyzna piękna i poprawna: Porady językowe*, 2nd edn., Wrocław, 1966, pp. 34-39.

¹⁰³ Bruno Schulz, *Druga jesień*, Cracow, 1973, MS. p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Eugenia Krassowska, "O twórczości Brunona Schulza," *Sygnaty*, 1938, no. 51, p. 3.

atmosphere, obvious anachronisms and use of ideology not in keeping with its time.¹⁰⁶ Here we can see the same bias in favour of strict accuracy that is still present some fifteen years later in Lehr-Splawiński. Critics may have declared themselves anti-elitist when writing about Schulz (and Witkacy and Gombrowicz) but judged harshly any writer whose knowledge of Old Polish was not up to and beyond university graduate level. It also shows that readers expected of novels a close correlation with an extra-literary reality: Ignacy Fik indicates his dissatisfaction with the “ideas side” (“strona ideowa”) of avant-garde literature (by which he means, among others, Schulz, Witkacy and Gombrowicz).¹⁰⁷ He is critical of the a-social character of these writers, and their concentration on abnormal people.¹⁰⁸ Truchanowski’s descriptions of accusations made about his *Ulica Wszystkich Świętych* will by now seem familiar: “I was met with objections of the type: one shouldn’t write like that, it’s too far removed from reality and so on.”¹⁰⁹ Fryde, a contemporary critic, did not single Schulz out, but the following quotation does illustrate the background against which Schulz and others were perceived:

The crisis in realism, the crisis with the sense of reality, the tendency to shape the novel as a lyrical or bombastic subjective vision can be traced in a range of works, such as Choromański’s *Zazdrość i medycyna*, Straszewicz’s *Gromy z jasnego nieba*, Schulz’s *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą*, Rudnicki’s *Niekochana*, Breza’s *Adam Grywald* and Piętaś’s *Młodość Jasia Kunefala*.¹¹⁰

These books appeared from the years 1933 to 1938. In *Nowa Książka* (1934) the critics are still hammering home the message that literature must be about life in reviews of *Sklepy cynamonowe* itself, and of Choromański’s *Opowiadania dwuznaczne*. Much of Lorentowicz’s review of Grzymała-Siedlecki’s *Miechowiec i Syn* is given over to a re-telling of the story, as is to a lesser extent true of his review of Helena Boguszevska’s *Cale życie Sabiny*, showing where the real interests of critics lay – Witkacy’s abhorred “life-related contents” (see chapter 5). Coincidentally, issue no. 5 of *Nowa Książka* also contains a decidedly cold review by Aureli Drogoszewski of Viktor Zhirmunsky’s *Introduction to Poetics*. The reviewer quotes Zhirmunsky’s statement to the effect that studying art as a social phenomenon or as an expression of spiritual activity is *also* possible, and adds with heavy

¹⁰⁵ Piwiński, *Rocznik literacki 1934, 1935*, p. 89.

¹⁰⁶ Piwiński, *Rocznik literacki 1934, 1935*, p. 91.

¹⁰⁷ Ignacy Fik, “Literatury choromaniaków,” reprinted in Ignacy Fik, *Wybór pism krytycznych*, ed., Andrzej Chruszczyński, 2nd edn., Warsaw, 1961, pp. 125-134, (125). Originally published in *Tygodnik Artystów*, 1935, no. 15.

¹⁰⁸ Fik, “Literatury choromaniaków,” *Wybór pism krytycznych*, p. 127.

¹⁰⁹ Kazimierz Truchanowski, “Czy naśladownictwo?” *Studio*, 1936, no. 5-6, pp. 186-190, (188).

irony: "Praise the Lord for this dispensation; we will certainly avail of it."¹¹¹ The unmistakable impression given by the reviewers is that the literary norm was one of sensible, logical communication, with a minimum of stylistic flourishes. Literature was to appeal to the ordinary person, not be the preserve of, in the words of Ignacy Fik, hypochondriacs, homosexuals, drug addicts, exhibitionists and degenerates.¹¹²

Editorial Changes to Schulz's Stories

In this section I will compare in some detail three of Schulz's stories which were initially published in periodicals with the versions finally published in book form by Rój, of Warsaw. "Ptaki," "Genialna epoka," "Mój ojciec wstępuje do strażaków," "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą," "Ostatnia ucieczka ojca," "Martwy sezon" and chapter 17 of "Wiosna," omitted from the *Skamander* version, were published in *Wiadomości Literackie*. "Noc lipcowa" was published in *Sygnaty*. *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* published "Dodo" and "Edzio." "Jesień," "Republika marzeń," "Kometa" and "Ojczyzna" were not published in book form in Schulz's lifetime and do not come under consideration here. The stories I will concentrate on are "Wiosna," which appeared in *Skamander*, 1936, nrs. LXXIV (pp. 326-346) and LXXV (pp. 420-442), "Emeryt," which appeared in *Wiadomości Literackie*, 1935, no. 51-2, (pp. 16-17), and "Edzio," published in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 1935, no. 40, (pp. 789-791). These three stories are of a reasonable length and appeared in three different periodicals. Thus there is enough material to draw some broad conclusions, and, coming from three different sources, the danger of reading too much into one editor's or editorial team's decision is lessened. However, it should be noted that *Skamander* and *Wiadomości Literackie* were both edited by Mieczysław Grydzewski. (*Tygodnik Ilustrowany* was edited by Waław Czarski.) Jerzy Ficowski draws attention to the discrepancies between the *Skamander* version of "Wiosna" and the book version in *Księga listów*, concentrating on the attempts made to polonise Schulz's language. He suggests that it was Mieczysław Grydzewski himself who edited both "Wiosna" and "Ptaki" (which appeared in *Wiadomości Literackie*, 1935, no. 52). Ficowski writes: "The weeding out of Schulz's 'barbarianisms' in *Skamander* was a result of

¹¹⁰ Ludwik Fryde, "Trzy pokolenia literackie," *Pion*, 1938, no. 45, pp. 3-4, (4).

¹¹¹ *Nowa Książka*, 1934, no. 1. Jan Lorentowicz's review of *Sklepy cynamonowe* appears on pp. 27-28 (no. 1); of *Miechowiec i Syn* on pp. 28-29 (no. 1); of *Cate życie Sabiny* in no. 5, pp. 223-224; Stanisław Dzikowski's review of *Opowiadania dwuznaczne* is on pp. 23-24 (no. 1); Aureli Drogoszewski's of *Introduction to Poetics* in no. 5, pp. 215-216, (215).

¹¹² Fik, "Literatury choromaniaków," *Wybór pism krytycznych*, pp. 125-6.

views on linguistic norms, and the stylistic preferences of the editor using his own discretion.”¹¹³ The editor was not alone in having these “linguistically purist” views, Ficowski goes on, referring to Godziszewski’s “Opętany fascynacją awersji do uczciwego języka.”

The version of Schulz’s prose available to most readers today is not identical to the editions published in book form in Warsaw by “Rój” before the war. Most versions are based on the 1964 Wydawnictwo Literackie edition. This took into account the reform in Polish orthography which took place between the publication of “Sklepy cynamonowe” (1933, dated 1934) and “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą” (1937), changing and/or unifying symbols used to introduce direct speech, and correcting the punctuation. The Biblioteka Narodowa edition, which I use here, is a corrected version of the 1964 edition – the original punctuation has been restored. In view of Schulz’s rhythmical prose, Jarzębski writes, “mistakes” in punctuation should not be too hastily corrected.¹¹⁴ Because of the uncertainty surrounding the nature of the “definitive” version of the short stories (the Rój editions were not without typographical errors), I will concentrate on general patterns rather than specific details such as the exact positioning of commas. For example, the version of “Samotność” published in *Studio* (1936, no. 2, pp. 11-13) adds an exclamation mark at one point and removes one at another. It would be unwise to try to draw conclusions on the literary norms from such limited evidence. “Samotność,” in any case, is only two and a half pages long and in the 27 or so textual differences, it is difficult to discern a pattern.

The underlying assumption is that changes to the texts were made by the editors of the periodicals in question and that these changes reveal something of their attitudes to literature. Could the changes not have been made by Schulz *after* publication in periodical form? This seems unlikely. The changes made tend away from the features with which we associate Schulz’s style, so visible in stories which did not appear in periodicals. Ficowski is in no doubt that the changes were made without Schulz’s knowledge.¹¹⁵ Editors tend to prune rather than graft. It is much harder to justify additions made to a story to an angry author than it is to justify minor subtractions. An open letter from an author complaining that editorial cuts had been made without his or her consultation would be something of an embarrassment, but one claiming he or she had been actively misrepresented – that words had been put in his or her mouth – would be a far more serious matter. Unfortunately, there is

¹¹³ Schulz, *Księga listów*, p. 168.

¹¹⁴ Jerzy Jarzębski, Introduction to Bruno Schulz, *Opowiadania*, p. cxxix.

¹¹⁵ Schulz, *Księga listów*, pp. 167-8.

no manuscript evidence to support this contention. The only story of Schulz's to survive in manuscript form is "Druga jesień." This was published without any changes in *Kamena* (1934, no. 3), although there are about a dozen differences between the manuscript/*Kamena* version and the version published by Rój. These changes would indeed probably have been made by Schulz or with his consent, but they are few in number and show no consistent, significant pattern.

The version of "Wiosna" published in *Skamander* contains hundreds of divergences from the text in Rój and is a more promising source of information. An examination of the changes introduced to the text suggests that the editors valued conciseness and concreteness. With the exception of "Emeryt," which Schulz seems to have altered between publication in *Wiadomości Literackie* and book form, words and clauses are removed far more often than they are added or simply altered. The words in square brackets in the following example were removed from the periodical version.

Examples of the removal of words:

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 3:

"stawał wreszcie [zatchniony], ogromny" (151)

"stopped at last, [breathless] enormous"

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 10:

"pełnych zachwyconego protestu [okrzyków ekstazy, spazmatycznych płaczów], aż w końcu..." (158)

"full of enchanted protest [cries of ecstasy, spasmodic weeping fits] until in the end..." (Here two of the deleted words have a decidedly un-Slavic ring to them.)

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 31 (30 of *Skamander* version):

"w fałdach sukienki [spoglądając spod swych poważnych brwi oczyma pełnymi głębokiej żałoby]. Serce ścisnęło mi..." (195-6)

"in the folds of her dress [looking out from under her serious brows with eyes full of a deep mourning.] My heart contracted..."

Wiadomości Literackie, "Emeryt"

"na [jasne] strzępy" (312)

"into [bright] shreds"

"[na wskroś] jasna i rzetelna" (314)

"bright and honest [through and through]"

The periodical version of "Emeryt" has 15 additions compared to 16 excisions (excluding demonstrative pronouns), and is not a good illustration of the editorial changes usually made to the stories in this respect.

Tygodnik Ilustrowany, "Edzio":

"pełną [słodkiego] zapomnienia" (305)

"full of [sweet] forgetting"

The word which is removed most often is the demonstrative pronoun "to" ("ten," "ta," "tamten," etc. This corresponds roughly in English to "this," "these," etc.)¹¹⁶ In the first six chapters alone this is removed 18 times from the text published in *Skamander*. In chapter 19 (18 of the *Skamander* version) the demonstrative pronoun is removed 6 times. In almost all cases the "to" is superfluous from a strictly communicative point of view. Schulz often uses it to specify the object or subject of the verb when there is no need to distinguish the verb's subject or object from others: "Wtedy to miało miejsce [to] objawienie, [ta] nagle ukazana wizja rozplomienionej piękności świata, wtedy to przyszła [ta] wieść szczęśliwa, posłanie tajemne, [ta] misja specjalna o nieobjętych możliwościach bytu." (154) "It was then that the [that] revelation took place, the [that] suddenly shown vision of the fiery beauty of the world, then that the [that] happy news came, the secret message, the [that] special mission of the ungraspable possibilities of being." (In addition, "miało miejsce" is replaced in *Skamander* with "nastąpiło.")

The omission of the last "ta" from the *Skamander* version changes the meaning only slightly, but affects the rhythm. Rhythm – in prose at least – seems to have been deemed less important than meaning. Discussing Młoda Polska poet Jan Kasprówicz's "Święty Boże, Święty mocny!" Lehr-Splawiński writes: "the impression is spoiled somewhat by the overuse of demonstrative pronouns 'te', 'ten', and 'ta', which are often meaningless... and are used only for the purposes of rhythm."¹¹⁷

"Emeryt," being shorter, does not provide such a clear picture. Schulz appears to have removed words or clauses (and one passage of 50 or so words) in between its appearance in *Wiadomości Literackie* and in book form. As regards the demonstrative pronoun it agrees (if not statistically significantly) with *Skamander's* "Wiosna," which is to say that Schulz appears to have

¹¹⁶ The Polish expression is "zaimek wskazujący," which I translate throughout as "demonstrative pronoun." (Barbara Bartnicka and Halina Satkiewicz, *Gramatyka języka polskiego dla cudzoziemców*, Warsaw, 1990, p. 90.)

restored the characteristics of his style cut from the periodical version of "Emeryt." In the case of "Edzio," the most noticeable change is the removal of the demonstrative pronoun. In the following examples the demonstrative pronoun dropped from the periodical version is given in square brackets. Also, in all cases, the Biblioteka Narodowa edition is the same as the 1937, Rój edition.

Examples of the removal of the demonstrative pronoun:

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 1:

"od [tych] horoskopów" (143)

"from [those] horoscopes"

"przestrzenie [tej] nocy" (146)

"the spaces of [that] night"

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 27 (26 of *Skamander* version):

"Wejdziemy w [te] zapomniane zakątki," (184)

"We will go into the [those] forgotten corners,"

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 19 (18 of *Skamander* version):

"w [tę] zawiłą grę" (175)

"in [that] complicated game"

"w [te] przewlekłe rokowania" (175)

"in [those] protracted negotiations"

"przez [to] czerwone zaćmienie krwi" (176)

"through [that] red eclipse of blood"

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 31 (30 of *Skamander* version):

"W [tej] nieruchomej ciszej" (197)

"in [that] motionless quiet"

Wiadomości Literackie, "Emeryt"

"w [tej] jasnej luce" (314)

"in [that] bright gap"

"na [te] melodyjne grające piły" (314)

"at [those] melodically playing saws"

"dyrektor [tej] szkoły" (322)

¹¹⁷ Lehr-Splawiński, *Język polski*, p. 418.

“the head of [that] school”

Tygodnik Ilustrowany, “Edzio”:

“[tej] klątwy dzieci Adama” (301)

“[that] curse of the children of Adam”

“mrowi się od [tych] szybkich, żarłocznych mrówek” (304)

“teeming with [those] quick, voracious ants”

“[ten] duszny welon zmierzchu” (304)

“[that] stifling veil of dusk”

Other classes of words removed include possessive pronouns and personal pronouns, usually not strictly necessary in Polish. The frequency of removal here, however, is considerably lower than that for demonstrative pronouns.

Examples of the removal of personal and possessive pronouns:

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 7:

“[Ty] chciałeś mnie olśnić...” (157)

“You tried to dazzle me...”

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 9:

“Był [on] jak niechętny i leniwy sługa” (158)

“He was like an unwilling and lazy servant”

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 19 (18 of *Skamander* version):

“odslaniają [swe] sedno” (175)

“unveiling [their] essence”

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 31 (30 of *Skamander* version):

“na [ich] wąskich postumentach” (194)

“on [their] narrow pedestals”

“z wypiekami [ich] ostatnich chorób” (194)

“with the flushed cheeks of [their] last illnesses”

“a [jej] oczy podkrążone” (195)

“and [her] dark-ringed eyes”

“gdzie żyli oni wszyscy” (197) / “gdzie wszyscy żyli” (*Skamander*)

“where they all lived”

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 40 (39 of *Skamander* version):

“[Ich] idee” (213)

“[Their] ideas”

Wiadomości Literackie, “Emeryt”

“woła [on] głośno” (309)

“he calls out loudly”

(However, this is counterbalanced by the *removal* of the pronoun “swój” in the book version:

“za maską [swej] spłoszonej dewocji” (310)

“behind the mask of [their] frightened devotion”)

Tygodnik Ilustrowany, “Edzio”:

“zastępują [mu] bezwładne nogi” (306)

“they replace [for him] his palsied legs”

Attempts were also made to modernise Schulz’s style and make it more colloquial, bringing it into line with linguistic norms which now exist in Polish. For example, “oczyrna” is the Old Polish version of the instrumental case of “eyes,” which was and still is in use, alongside the regular “oczami.”¹¹⁸ Schulz preferred the old, irregular form, but in chapter 31 of “Wiosna” (30 of the *Skamander* version), for instance, it is replaced by “oczami” three times (and on one occasion the clause in which “oczyrna” appears is removed altogether).

Examples of the removal of formal or old-fashioned words and forms:

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 21 (20 of *Skamander* version):

“mą pretensję” (179) / “moją pretensję” (*Skamander*)

“my claim,” (the short version of the possessive is now considered to be higher register)

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 31 (30 of *Skamander* version):

“w jakim wypłynął [był]” (195)

“in which he [had] sailed away”

“jak [był] przywykł za życia” (196)

¹¹⁸ Stanisław Szober, *Gramatyka języka polskiego*, 2nd edn., Lviv-Warsaw, 1923, p. 201.

“as he had been accustomed to in life.” This tense was rare in Polish as early as the mid nineteenth-century. By Schulz’s day it was fading out of the language, and is almost never met in contemporary Polish.¹¹⁹

Wiadomości Literackie, “Emeryt”

“daje oczyma” (309) / “daje oczami” (*Wiadomości Literackie* version)

“gives a sign with his eyes”

“me kieszenie” (317) / “moje kieszenie” (*Wiadomości Literackie* version)

“my pockets”

“moją sprawę” (319) / “mą sprawę” (*Wiadomości Literackie* version)

“my affair”

Changes were also made to the syntax of the sentences. It is on occasion simplified, with verbs moved from the final position to the beginning of the clause. The word order is changed from noun-adjective to adjective-noun. Sometimes the editors change the order from adjective-noun to noun-adjective, but instances of the former outweigh instances of the latter by about four to one. In standard Polish the adjective normally comes after the noun only to specify the class to which the noun belongs.¹²⁰ Ruszkowski comments after Buttler, Kurkowska and Satkiewicz: “If, however, as in the case of Schulz, a qualifier expressing an incidental feature occurs after the noun, it is separated from it, as it were, by a mental pause and therefore gains a powerful logical stress, forcing the reader to show greater interest in the original construction.”¹²¹

Galicia, where Schulz was from, was under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire throughout the nineteenth-century and the verb-final position is characteristic of German, the administrative language. Schulz’s “Galician” style has been commented on by Bohdan Budurowycz: “Even his way of writing – long, elaborate sentences, an often complex style and the frequent use of foreign words – is close to Austrian-Galician officialese with its unclear, pretentiously prolix phraseology.”¹²²

¹¹⁹ Zenon Klemensiewicz, *Historia języka polskiego*, Warsaw, 1974, p. 620.

¹²⁰ Bartnicka and Satkiewicz, *Gramatyka języka polskiego*, p. 167.

¹²¹ Marek Ruszkowski, “Niektóre właściwości składniowe prozy Brunona Schulza,” in Jerzy Brzeziński, ed., *Język osobniczy jako przedmiot badań lingwistycznych*, Zielona Góra, 1988, pp. 153-161, (160).

¹²² Bohdan Budurowycz, “Galicja w twórczości Brunona Schulza,” trans. Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska, in Małgorzata Kitowska-Łysiak, ed., *Bruno Schulz in memoriam: 1892-1942*, Lublin,

Examples of changes to adjective and noun word-order:

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 32 (31 of *Skamander* version):

"w lekkiej sukience białej" (181) / "w lekkiej białej sukience"

"in a light white dress"

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 39 (38 of *Skamander* version):

"bezglównych ciem pluszowych" (208) / "bezglównych pluszowych ciem"

"silent fluffy moths"

Wiadomości Literackie, "Emeryt"

"ciała ludzkiego" (314) / "ludzkiego ciała"

"the human body"

"żyjątko ogniste" (314) / "ogniste żyjątko"

"fiery creature"

Examples of the noun being moved *in front* of the adjective are much rarer:

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 2:

"w tym wczesnym gwiezdny aspektcie" (148) / "w tym wczesnym aspekcie gwiezdny"

"in that early starry aspect"

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 32 (31 of *Skamander* version):

"przez kuchenne schody" (198) / "przez schody kuchenne"

"by the kitchen stairs"

The *Skamander* version is more grammatical than the book version, since the adjective ("kitchen") does in fact classify the stairs. The dictionary gives "schody kuchenne" as a set phrase.¹²³

Examples of changes to verb-final position:

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 7:

"i kłam mu zadałeś" (156) / "i zadałeś mu kłam"

"and you gave him the lie / and the lie to him you gave"

Skamander, "Wiosna," chapter 27 (26 of *Skamander* version):

"czego byśmy w najgłębszych naszych rezerwach od dawna nie przeczuli?" (184) /

"czegobyśmy oddawna nie przeczuli w naszych najgłębszych rezerwach?"

1992, pp. 9-17, (13).

¹²³ *Wielki słownik polsko-angielski*, Jan Stanisławski, 2 vols., 1994 edn., vol. 1, p. 464.

“which for a long time we had not felt in our deepest reserves? / which in our deepest reserves for a long time we had not felt?”

(Rój is identical to Biblioteka Narodowa except for two differences connected to the orthographic reforms: “oddawna” and “czegobyśmy.”)

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 40 (39 of *Skamander* version):

“jednak trudno jest niezmiernie dotrzeć” (213) / “jednak niezmiernie trudno jest dotrzeć”

“however extremely difficult it is to reach/ however difficult it is extremely to reach”

“Niezmiernie” must refer to “trudno jest,” as “niezmiernie dotrzeć” does not make sense. In moving “niezmiernie” closer to “jest trudno,” the editor of *Skamander* has gone for this smooth, common-sense reading, which Schulz resisted.

Wiadomości Literackie, “Emeryt”

“wieczorem, na drugim końcu miasta go opuścić” (312) / “wieczorem opuścić go na drugim końcu miasta”

“in the evening leave it at the other end of the town/ in the evening, at the other end of the town to leave it”

“Niestety, regularna praca to nie jest” (315) / “Niestety, praca ta nie jest regularna”

“Unfortunately this work is not regular / Unfortunately, regular this work is not”

Example of the inversion of verb and subject:

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 39 (38 of *Skamander* version):

“W długich powolnych haustach wchłania ciemny pokój ostępy parku w swe głębie” (208) /

“Ciemny pokój wchłania w długich powolnych haustach ostępy parku w swe głębie,”

“In long slow draughts the dark room absorbs the backwoods of the park into its depths / The dark room absorbs in long slow draughts the backwoods of the park into its depths”

The book version inverts the verb-subject order (which cannot easily be illustrated in translation) and places the adverbial at the beginning of the sentence, delaying the appearance of the verb.

Foreign sounding words as well as Latin and Greek-derived words are often replaced with more Polish equivalents, or removed altogether.¹²⁴

Examples of changes to foreign or foreign-sounding words:

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 2:

“antycypując” (147) / “przewidując”

“anticipating”

“awansowała” (148) / “posuwała się”

“advanced”

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 5:

“powszechny” (153) / “uniwersalny”

“universal”

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 19 (18 in *Skamander*):

“ekwatorialne” (177) / “podzwrotnikowe”

“equatorial” / “tropical”

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 29 (28 in *Skamander*):

“profesjonalnie” (188) / “zawodowo”

“professional”

Skamander, “Wiosna,” chapter 39 (38 in *Skamander*):

“regeneruje się” (209) / “odradza się”

“regenerates itself”

“iluzja” (210) / “złudzenie”

“illusion”

Wiadomości Literackie, “Emeryt”

“inherentną” (308) / “właściwą”

“inherent”

“dymensje” (311) / “wymiary”

“dimensions”

“werbalna” (323) / “ustna”

“verbal”

¹²⁴ Ficowski gives some of the same examples. See Schulz, *Księga listów*, p. 168.

“statuować” (324) / “ustanowić”

“decree”

Tygodnik Ilustrowany, “Edzio”:

“cyrograf” (306) / “rękopis”

“pledge” / “manuscript”

The replacements are not always very logical. Sometimes the replacement word is just as foreign-sounding as the word replaced. For example, in *Skamander*, “w interwałach” (153) is replaced with “w pauzach” and “kontrapost” (148) with “pozycja.”¹²⁵ In “Emeryt” “balustrada” (309) is replaced with the scarcely more Polish sounding “bariera.” Nor are all foreign-sounding words replaced: “triumwirat” (184) is not changed.

“Mój ojciec wstępuje do strażaków” is also rich in examples of foreign words being cut out. “Departament” (230) is replaced with “powiat,” “abrewiatury” (231) with “skrót,” “imaginacja” (232) with “wyobraźnia,” “supozycja” (232) with “przypuszczenie,” “kiras” (233) with “zbroja” (“cuirass” / “armour”) and “pompier” (233) with “strażak” (“fireman”).

Two other small points may be noted. One is that “już” (“already, soon”) is often cut from the periodical versions, as is the word “jaki” (in the sense of “a” or “some”). For example, “na w pół już zapuszczoną ... kurtyną” (193) becomes “na pół zapuszczoną ... kurtyną” (“the [already] half-lowered ... curtain”). “Za to jakąś nietykalnością, jakąś wyższą wolnością” (179) becomes simply “za to nietykalnością, wyższą wolnością” (“[some kind of] untouchable quality, [some kind of] higher freedom”).

The second point is the apparent desire of the editors to avoid repetition.¹²⁶ Three examples follow:

“[na wskroś] jasna i rzetelna” (“Emeryt,” 314)

“bright and honest [through and through]”

The expression “na wskroś” is repeated only a few lines later in the book version (“na wskroś zdrowa” (314) (“healthy through and through”). In the periodical version this repetition does not occur.

¹²⁵ See Schulz, *Księga listów*, p. 168.

¹²⁶ Bolecki writes: “The narrator is not ‘ashamed,’ then, to use the same lexical, syntactic or even metaphorical device several times.” Włodzimierz Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy w dwudziestolecu międzywojennym: Witkacy, Gombrowicz, Schulz i inni. Studium z poetyki historycznej*, 2nd edn., Cracow, 1996, p. 268.

Similarly with “Wiosna:” in the book version the expression “dopiero co” occurs twice within four lines:

“dopiero co wzeszłym ... księżycem” (“Wiosna,” 148)

“recently risen ... moon”

“Powietrze, zaprawione [dopiero co] jeszcze zwykłą cierpkością” (148)

“The air, [recently] seasoned with the usual tartness”

In the periodical, this closely spaced repetition does not occur.

The clause “którym haftuje się noc daleko po północy” (208) (“with which the night crochets far beyond midnight”) is simply cut from *Skamander*, leaving the phrase “daleko po północy” (208) which occurs only five lines earlier to stand on its own.

It may be going too far to deduce from these changes that the norm for literary language was for it to be free of repetition, of galicianisms and German-sounding word-order, in agreement with standard Polish grammatical rules concerning adjectives, or syntactically straightforward; but one may venture to say that rhythmical prose, such as Schulz wrote, was not in agreement with literary conventions of the times. All the changes made to the syntax, all the many removals of pronouns, and all the adjectives and words taken out of Schulz’s prose affect the rhythm. It is highly unlikely that such changes would be made to a work of poetry, where rhythm has long been recognised (especially so in the Skamandrite-dominated literary scene of inter-war Poland) as being of central importance. The argument that the changes were made to improve the rhythm seems weak: there is no pattern in the changes to the rhythm – except in so far as disrupting the effect that Schulz sought can be seen as a pattern. If the editor’s desire was to improve on the rhythm of Schulz’s prose we would not expect to see one type of change significantly outweigh its opposite, which in fact we do see, e.g. “to” is removed far more often than it is added, while in *Skamander* adjectives are moved in front of nouns much more often than nouns in front of adjectives: the guiding principle seems to have been grammatical correctness.

The chapter missing from “Wiosna” was published separately not in *Skamander* but in *Wiadomości Literackie* under the title “Zmierzch wiosenny” (“Spring Dusk”). It too differs from the book version. Moreover, the nature of the editorial changes is similar to that of the changes made by *Skamander*, though they could have been made by Grydzewski in both cases. Again, the demonstrative pronoun “to” is removed (ten times), changing, for example, the typically Schulzean

sentences: “Tu są [te] nieskończone inferna, [te] beznadziejne obszary osjaniczne, te oplakane nibelungi. Tu są [te] wielkie wylęgarnie historii, [te] fabryki fabulistyczne...” (170-171) (“Here are [those] endless infernos, [those] hopeless Ossianic regions, those pitiful Nibelungs. Here are the [those] great breeding grounds of stories, [those] fable factories...”) (In the *Wiadomości Literackie* version, the conjunction “i” (“and”) is inserted between “osjaniczne” and “te oplakane.”) Foreign words again come under fire, “drogerie” (170) giving way to “apteki,” and “intermitujący” (174) being left out altogether. The verb is moved from sentence-final position in the line “gdybyśmy na własne oczy nie widzieli” (169), which in *Wiadomości Literackie* becomes “gdybyśmy nie widzieli na własne oczy” (“if we hadn’t seen with our own eyes”).

This brief discussion of the textual changes made to Schulz’s work supports the points made in numerous critical studies dealing with the literature of the inter-war period (Bolecki, Głowiński, Jaworski, Kwiatkowski). It would be dangerous to read too much into the changes, but it is worth noting that they do not contradict what we would expect from a reading of the secondary literature. The picture given of literary conventions by all three approaches (studying the primary and secondary literature, critical reception and textual changes) is broadly consistent.

Conclusion

Bolecki writes of Schulz that he undoubtedly saw his own literary work as a conscious breaking of the convention of epic verisimilitude.¹²⁷ Schulz’s poetic prose broke with the accepted norms of his day, which was for prose to be clear, simple and unpretentious. This is not to say that his like had never been seen before. His prose has some echoes of the *Młoda Polska* era (in which he grew up), but instead of dealing with the standard themes of *Młoda Polska*, such as the struggle of the alienated artist against the common herd, he turns his attention to very private, childhood memories. The high-flown lyricism taken so seriously by many writers before him is now turned to the vulgar, sometimes obscene, and the trivial. Schulz wrote against a “neo-realist” background (to use Krzyżanowski’s description) which had turned its back on highly ornate prose, and sought to be relevant to the times. Mieczysław Dąbrowski describes the period as one dominated by the sensibilities of the *Skamander* group – as can be seen by the fact that a leading literary weekly, *Wiadomości Literackie* was edited by

¹²⁷ Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 248.

the editor and founder of *Skamander* itself.¹²⁸ The avant-garde groupings were very much overshadowed by the Skamandrites.¹²⁹ With reference to works such as Andrzej Strug's *Pokolenie Marka Świdry* (1925), Kaden-Bandrowski's *Czarne skrzydła* (1928-9) and Berent's *Żywe kamienie* (1918) Dąbrowski asserts that they still concentrate on mood, use linear plots built on the principle of cause and effect, and deal with the issues of the day.¹³⁰ Both Dąbrowski and Żółkiewski see the publication of Maria Dąbrowska's *Noce i dni* in 1932 as the end of an era of realism, with the likes of Schulz, Witkacy, Gombrowicz and Choromański ushering in a new one.¹³¹ The literary language of the time is described by Włodzimierz Maciąg as avoiding theatricality, exclamations and lyricism. At times it is close to scientific language or court reporting.¹³²

The consternation shown by contemporary critics at Bruno Schulz's abandonment of social issues affecting ordinary Poles backs up the remarks of Dąbrowski referred to above. A strain of linguistic purism is clearly visible in both the attacks made on Schulz by critics and in the alterations made to his texts. The evidence is that the literary norm in the 1930s was for the simple, clear expression of a message relevant to the layperson. How Schulz challenges these and other norms will be the subject of the following two chapters.

¹²⁸ Krzyżanowski describes these two periodicals as central. Krzyżanowski, *Dzieje literatury polskiej*, p. 602.

¹²⁹ Mieczysław Dąbrowski, *Polska awangarda prozatorska*, Warsaw, 1995, p. 7.

¹³⁰ Dąbrowski, *Polska awangarda*, p. 8.

¹³¹ Dąbrowski, *Polska awangarda*, p. 20; Żółkiewski, "Cezura 1932 roku," *Kultura Socjologia*, p. 200.

¹³² Włodzimierz Maciąg, "Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne," in Jan Majda, ed., *Okresy literackie*, 5th edn., Cracow, 1994, pp. 319-355, (340).

I. Morphemes

A morpheme may be defined as the minimal distinctive unit of grammar.¹ Morphemes which can occur as separate words are called “free;” those which cannot are “bound.” A word consisting of a single morpheme is “monomorphemic.” Mukařovský distinguishes three types of morpheme: root, derivational and desinential. The root morpheme is “the carrier of the nucleus of lexical meaning.”² A derivational morpheme “places a word in a certain lexical group, thereby introducing into its meaning a nuance common to all the words derived by means of this morpheme.”³ This can be extended to words which only seem to have the same morpheme (e.g. “rozglądać” and “rosnąć,” which do not in fact share a morpheme). Prefixes and derivational suffixes are included in this group. A desinential morpheme “places a word in the morphological system and at the same time makes it capable of incorporation into the syntactic structure of the sentence.” Excessive accumulation of the same derivative morpheme can “deautomatise” the words.⁴

Although this part of the thesis will make use of Mukařovský’s theories on the morpheme in literature, it might be helpful to use Crystal’s terminology. For example, it is not clear in Mukařovský what position a word consisting of one morpheme occupies, since he writes that a morpheme cannot be independent. In the case of Schulz, it is more convenient to consider the problem of morphemes in terms of derivational affixes (where a new word is created, e.g. *chodzić* – *rozchodzić*) and inflectional affixes (where a different form of the same word is created, e.g. *chodzić* – *chodząc*). This follows Crystal’s more modern definition.⁵ It will be shown that Schulz occasionally defamiliarises derivational affixes by heavy repetition, but does not do so with inflectional affixes. Polish is a heavily inflected language and to defamiliarise inflectional morphemes by repetition would require so much repetition that it would simply become monotonous. Władysław Panas draws the line short of analysing morphemes and phonemes in Schulz: “It seems that the most important phenomena

¹ David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, 4th edn., Oxford, Blackwell, 1997, p. 248.

² Jan Mukařovský “On Poetic Language,” in *The Word and Verbal Art: Selected Essays by Jan Mukařovský*, Yale Russian and East European Studies, 13, trans. and ed. John Burbank and Peter Steiner, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1977, pp. 1-64, (33). Originally published as “O jazyce básnickém,” in *Slovo a slovesnost*, no. 6, 1940.

³ Mukařovský, “On Poetic Language,” in *The Word and Verbal Art*, p. 33.

⁴ Mukařovský, “On Poetic Language,” in *The Word and Verbal Art*, pp. 33-34.

organising language in Schulz's prose are to be detected above the level of the word – smaller units are harder to distinguish and their appearance is more incidental than systematic.⁶

Coupled with Schulz's use of complex three-part sentences, as seen in section 4, below, is his fondness for repeating the same morpheme. This is particularly noticeable with the morpheme "roz" ("(uwydatnia ruch przestrzenny) in all directions, right and left").⁷ Examples of this derivational affix, or what Mukařovský would call a derivational morpheme, are given below:

1. "...gotowej rozpaść się, rozgałęzić, rozsypać w rodzinę" ("Sierpień," 10) ("ready to disintegrate, branch out, to spread into a family")
2. "...który za czyjś niebaczny wejściem rozpadał się, rozlatywał w ruchome kwiaty, trzepocące w powietrzu, aby w końcu rozmieścić się w górnych regionach pokoju" ("Ptaki," 24) ("which upon someone's incautious entrance would disintegrate, fly away into mobile flowers fluttering in the air, to finally arrange themselves in the upper regions of the room")
3. "...rozbijające powietrze na talie kart magicznych, rozsypując je w kolorowe oklaski, sypiące się gęstymi łuskami lazuru, pawiej, papuziej zieleni, metalicznych połysków, rysując w powietrzu linie i arabeski, migotliwe ślady lotów i kołowań, rozwijając kolorowe wachlarze trzepotów..." ("Manekiny," 27-28) ("shattering the air into packs of magic cards, spreading it out in colourful applause, showering down in thick flakes of azure, peacock and parrot green, metallic sparkles, drawing in the air lines and arabesques, flickering traces of flights and circles, unfolding colourful fans of flutters")
4. "Ogród był rozległy i rozgałęziony kilku odnogami i miał różne strefy i klimaty" ("Pan," 55) ("The garden was vast, branching into several offshoots, and had various zones and climates")
5. "...firmament gwiazdny jest tak rozległy i rozgałęziony, jakby rozpadł się, rozłamał i podzielił na labirynt..." ("Sklepy cynamonowe," 63) ("the starry firmament is as vast and ramified as if it had disintegrated, broken into pieces and split up into a labyrinth")
6. "Rozdrażnienie ojca rosło. Rozglądał się bezradnie..." ("Martwy sezon," 248) ("Father's exasperation grew. He looked around helplessly...") The effect of sound repetition is strengthened by "rosło," though it does not in fact contain the same morpheme.

⁵ Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*, p. 12.

⁶ Władysław Panas, "Regiony czystej poezji: O koncepcji języka w prozie Schulza," in *Roczniki humanistyczne*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1974, pp. 151-173, (154).

7. "...robiąc rękami ruch, jak gdyby nas *rozdzielał*, mówił: – A teraz błagam was, tak jak tu jesteście, *rozejdźcie się, rozbiegnijcie chylkiem, cichaczem. i niepostrzeżenie...*" ("Dodo," 298) ("...making a motion with his hands as if he were separating us, he would say: 'And now, I beg you, as you are here, disperse, run along, stealthily, quietly, imperceptibly...'"")

8. "[mrówki], które *rozbiegają, roznoszą na szczątki substancję rzeczy...*" ("Edzio," 304) ("[ants], which take to pieces, break down into fragments the substance of things")

(In this section all italics are mine unless otherwise stated.)

As can be seen, especially in example five, Schulz sometimes uses excessive accumulation of morphemes to deautomatise language. Example one is particularly striking, as the instances of "roz-" occur very close to each other. Also, the general sense of expansiveness carried by "roz-" is closely related to a theme of the story – nature's abundance, as shown in the description of Adela returning laden with food (on page 1), and the description of the "babska bujność" (7) ("female exuberance") of the garden and indeed the quoted sentence itself, which refers to Aunt Agata's fertility. But on the other side of "roz-"s expansiveness is its diffuseness and so the story ends with cousin Emil's face being blown away or dissipated: "twarz odeszła w nieobecność, zapomniała o sobie, *rozwiła się*" (12) ("his face departed into absence, forgot about itself, blew away"). The theme of expansiveness comes up again in examples 4 (the garden in "Pan") and 5 (the night sky in "Sklepy cynamonowe"). But this line of argument can be pushed too far. It is to be expected that in a description of a broad expanse of space, words starting with "roz-" are likely to appear. Example 7 shows the use to which the repetition of certain words (in this case, of morphemes) can be put. The words "a teraz..." are spoken by Hieronim but are clearly the narrator's as the narrator's "roz-" (in "rozdzielał") is repeated twice by Hieronim ("rozejdźcie się," "rozbiegnijcie"), who also finishes his sentence in typically Schulzean style with three adverbials. By putting his own stylistic devices and vocabulary into the mouths of his characters, Schulz underlines both the artificiality of those characters, and his own role in creating them.

But it should be noted that even in the exceptional case of "roz-" this kind of repetition does not occur all that often. Examples of successive words beginning with, for example, "wy-" and "do-" are few, and usually limited to two words in a row. Let us compare the incidences of the affixes "wy-

⁷ *Wielki słownik polsko-angielski*, Jan Stanisławski, 2 vols., 1994 edn., vol. 2, p. 1045.

," "do-" and "roz-" in more detail across three random stories, "Jesień," "Genialna epoka" and "Samotność" in terms of repetition and location.

In "Jesień" the most striking examples of the repetition of "roz-" are the following: "zataczam wzrokiem i rozpostartymi rękoma łuk pełen rozmachu" (336) ("I describe with my eyes and my outstretched arms an arc full of verve") and "Chwilami zdawały się rozpadać, rozlatywać jak kraby.... [woźnice] zbierali do kupy rozluźnione tętenty" (339) ("At times they seemed to break into pieces, fly away like crabs... [the coachmen] tightened up the loose rhythm of the hoof beats"). Repetition is present but it is far from being the dominant of the text. For example, meaning has not been noticeably deformed for the sake of using a word containing "roz-." In the case of "do-" ("*praef* tworzy czasowniki pochodne 1. wyraża osiągnięcie wyniku <celu>,"⁸ ("prefix used to derive new verbs; 1. expresses the meaning of reaching a result <goal>"; it is also a preposition meaning "to")) it can be seen in the following example how its repetition gives the sentence its rhythm: "Jesień to tęsknota duszy ludzkiej do materialności, do istotności, do granic" (337-8) ("Autumn is the longing of the human soul for the material, for the essential, for borders"). The repetition of the "do-" sound in the two sentences which follow the above example is hardly noticeable. In the case of "stworzone do zabawy dla dzieci, jabłka jesienne, czerwieniejące dobrą, domową, prozaiczną czerwienią na oknach mieszkań" (338-9) ("created for the amusement of children, autumnal apples, reddening a good, homely, prosaic red in the windows of apartments") the "do-'s" in "dobra" and "domowa" are not morphemes as they cannot exist independently of "*bry" and "*mowy." They are examples of purely phonic repetition. In the case of "wy-" there are only two, minor example of "felt" repetition: "Ponieważ jest jeszcze godzina do wyjazdu, wybiegam jeszcze raz" (336) ("As there is still another hour before departure, I run out again"), and "gotowała się wylać, wylać z stawidel" (340) ("prepared itself to break out, to flood out of the sluice gates").

The location of "wy-," "roz-" and "do-" does not appear to be significant in "Jesień," but in both "Genialna epoka" and "Samotność" there is a connection between theme and occurrence of morphemes. In "Samotność," which tells of a man walled into his room, there are few examples of a word beginning with "roz-," e.g. "rozumieć," (326) "understand" and "czekający rozkazów" (327) "awaiting orders." Words beginning with "wy-" ("*praef*. 1. (określa ruch w kierunku od wewnątrz do

⁸ *Wielki słownik*, Stanisławski, vol. 1, p. 185.

zewnątrz) out,”⁹) are clustered at the end of the story (only in the last paragraph does the narrator reveal that he is walled in). We find “wykonać” (“execute, do”), “wyczuwalny” (“perceptible”), “wybielony” (“whitewashed”), “wystrzelić” (“shoot out”), “wyjść” (“go out”) and “wyobrazić sobie” (“imagine”) all on the last page (327). Of these six (there is also a “wy-” in “wysokość” (“height”), but this is not a morpheme), only two (“wystrzelić” and “wyjść”) carry the meaning of movement out of something. By comparison, “wy-” occurs five times on the previous page and only once on the page before that (which is a half page in the Biblioteka Narodowa edition). The “do-” morpheme is distributed more or less evenly throughout, with only one, not very perceptible repetition, in combination with the “do-” in “podobna”: “Sunę podobna do ciotki Tekli” (326) (“I glide around resembling Aunt Tekla”).

In “Genialna epoka” the “wy-” morpheme comes to the fore, appropriately enough, in the passage describing Szłoma’s leaving jail. Here too, this is not limited to verbs of motion (one would expect to find “wychodzić” (“go out”) here in practical language too). The freed man is “wyświeżony” (“reinvigorated”); his hair is “wystrzyżony” (“trimmed”); the market square is “wysuszony” (“dried out”); the days are “wydłużone” (138) (“protracted”) and the “globe of the sky” (“bania nieba”) is “wydęta” (140) (“inflated”). Earlier on in “Genialna epoka” we come across two examples of three-fold repetition of the “wy-” sound (the “wy-” in “wyżej,” example (b) is not a morpheme):

(a) Stałem rozkrzyżowany w natchnieniu i wyciągniętymi, wydłużonymi palcami pokazywałem, pokazywałem w gniewie, w przejęciu srogim, wyprężony jak drogowskaz i drżący w ekstazie (131) (I stood, arms outspread in inspiration and with outstretched, extended fingers pointed, pointed in anger, sternly intent, stiff as a road sign and trembling in ecstasy)

(b) Jakaś *idée fixe* [italics in original], wyrosła poza granice ich istoty, wyżej ponad głowę, i wynurzona nagle w światło, zastygła w materię dotykálną i twardą (135) (Some *idée fixe* had grown beyond the boundaries of their being, higher above their heads, and, surfacing suddenly into the light, had set into a tangible and hard matter)

However, given the commonness of “wy-” and the inflected nature of Polish, it might be too much to infer from the presence of “wy-” in these different parts of the text that there is a thematic link between the things being discussed (Szłoma’s release from prison, the narrator’s inspiration and the reason animals have horns). In “Genialna epoka” there are few if any instances of the morpheme “do-” being defamiliarised, and only one example of three-fold repetition of “roz-”: “...gdy już cały czas był

⁹ *Wielki słownik*, Stanisławski, vol. 2, p. 1389.

rozdany, rozdzielony, rozebrany...” (130) (“...when all of time has already been distributed, divided up, shared out...”)

But how significant is this repetition in the overall context? Most of the examples given by Mukařovský are taken from poetry and it would be a mistake to attach a great deal of importance to the repetition of morphemes in Schulz’s prose. Another avenue which Mukařovský suggests exploring is the positioning of the morphemes. He gives the example, from Czech, of “*natryskla-skla*” (“begin to spring a little” – “of the glass/glasses”).¹⁰ The sound “*skla*” is contained in the word “*natryskla*.” Again, this seems more suited to analysis of poetry where there are sharper divisions between lines than in prose. In “*Jesień*” one finds “*rozwidnia mi się w duszy*,” (336), which contains the hidden word “*dniami*” (“days, for days”) but this is hardly perceptible in a prose text.

Much of the repetition can be put down to the nature of the language, and is therefore “accidental,” in so far as anything in literature can be described as accidental. Polish uses prefixes like “*roz-*,” “*wy-*,” “*w-*,” “*po-*,” “*prze-*,” “*do-*,” “*za-*,” a great deal in building words and it would not be unusual to come across instances of repetition in everyday language. In example three, above, the “*jąć*” sound occurs no less than five times, but it is difficult to see how the ideas contained in the sentence could be expressed without this sound recurring.¹¹

The problem with inflectional affixes in particular is that identical ones occur so frequently in non-literary Polish anyway. In the case of a writer like Schulz, who uses many epithets, they are bound to multiply:

1. “*Po wielu perypetiach i zmiennych kolejach losu, których...*” (“after many vicissitudes and changing turns of fate, which...”)
2. “*Kraj... był teraz terenem nędznych, niesławnych, małych klęsk...*” (“The country... was now a land of mean, inglorious, small defeats...”)
3. “*...do jakiegoś punktu zwrotnego mojej drogi, do osobliwego zakrętu mego losu*” (“to some turning point in my road, to a peculiar twist in my fate”)

¹⁰ Mukařovský, “On Poetic Language,” in *The Word and Verbal Art*, p. 34, fn. 36.

¹¹ Brygida Rudzka, *Wśród Polaków: Podręcznik języka polskiego dla cudzoziemców, Część II*, Lublin, 1988, p. 128, fn. The morpheme “*jąć*,” which indicates that the verb is a contemporaneous adverbial participle should be distinguished from “*jący*,” which creates an “active adjectival participle.” Both share the phoneme “*jąć*.”

(All examples are taken from "Ojczyzna," 372)

All of these examples occur on the same page and in fact it is so easy to rhyme words grammatically in Polish that this is looked down upon, and generally avoided by serious poets. It might be more productive to see how a desire to *avoid* this influences Schulz's prose. To avoid excessive repetition of the same morpheme (one thinks especially, in Polish, of affixes such as "-ego," "-ych," and "-ny") Schulz alters the syntax of sentences. For example, rather than:

1. "nad tymi najdrażliwszymi sprawami dynastycznymi" ("on these most sensitive dynastic matters") we have:

1a. "nad tymi sprawami dynastycznymi najdrażliwszej natury" ("Wiosna," 208) ("on these dynastic matters of the most sensitive nature")

Instead of:

2. "Ona, taka zawsze opanowana, poważna, karna i pięknie zdyscyplinowana staje się teraz kapryśna, przekorna i nieobliczalna" ("She, always so self-possessed, serious, rigorous, beautifully self-disciplined, now becomes capricious, contrary and irresponsible") we have:

2a. "Ona, taka zawsze opanowana i poważna, samo uosobienie karności i pięknej dyscypliny, staje się teraz pełna kaprysów, przekory i nieobliczalności" ("Wiosna," 210) ("She, always so self-possessed and serious, the very personification of rigour and beautiful self-discipline, now becomes full of caprices, contrariness and irresponsibility")

What seems to be of more importance, however, is the coincidence between the use of "roz-" and other morphemes and the underlying syntactic structure which gives the sentences their rhythm. The repetition of morphemes, in other words, usually plays a supporting role to other elements. This will be seen in section 4, below. An example of this is: "Wszystko to, splecione i puszyste, przepojone było łagodnym powietrzem, podbite błękitnym wiatrem i napszczone niebem" (55) ("Everything, tangled and downy, was filled by a gentle air, conquered by a blue wind and saturated by the sky"). More can be supplied:

1. "Napełniały pokój świergotem i szeptem..." ("Karakony," 87) ("They filled the room with their warbling and whispering...")
2. "Szli zgodnym, powolnym, rytmicznym krokiem" ("Wiosna," 201) ("They walked with a concordant, slow, rhythmical step")
3. "Tak rozkłada się ta cisza do cna zepsuta i zdemoralizowana w tysiąckrotnych przemyśleniach, w samotnych deliberacjach, obiegając obłądnie tapety w bezświatlnych błyskawicach" ("Wiosna," 205) ("So that silence, rotten to the core and depraved, decays into thousandfold considerations, into lonely deliberations, running around the wallpaper madly in lightless lightning flashes")
4. "Noc za drzwiami była jak z ołowiu – bez przestrzeni, bez powiewu, bez drogi" ("Martwy sezon," 257) ("The night outside the doors was like lead – without space, without wind, without a path")
5. "A teraz patrzcie, co za wylew, co za rozkwit wszystkiego, co za błogość..." ("Genialna epoka," 132) ("And now look what an outpouring, what a blooming of everything, what bliss...")
6. "...te kolorowe pochody, te rzeki sierści i grzyw, te falujące grzbiety i ogony, te łby..." ("Genialna epoka," 134) ("those colourful processions, those rivers of fur and manes, those undulating backs and tails, those heads...")

The repetition of the same morphemes emphasises the rhythm of the sentences, but it does not necessarily give them their rhythm. With a heavily inflected language like Polish a style like Schulz's, which uses a lot of epithets, can lead to a profusion of identical morphemes, which can become monotonous. Examples 4, 5 and 6 are of monomorphemes, and will be dealt with further in the section on euphony in general.

II. Vocabulary

As regards vocabulary, Schulz's style is characterised by verbosity and his use of exotic or foreign words. Also noteworthy are his tendencies to use certain words and word-groups repeatedly, and to choose words for their sound properties rather than their semantic qualities. This second trait gives rise to such oddities as "strychy, wystrychnięte ze strychów" (90) ("attics cheated out of their attics") but also to a more general sense of the absurd or grotesque, which will be examined more thoroughly in

the section on euphony, below. The question of vocabulary presents some problems for a Formalist study, the main one being how to define the norm from which deviations are “felt.”

One norm which Schulz deviated from is the use of native words. This is illustrated by the fate of the short story “Wiosna,” which was published by *Skamander* in 1936 with changes made. These have been examined in chapter 2. In considering Schulz’s preference of words such as “zaaranżować się” to “urządzić się,” or “profesjonalny” to “zawodowy,” we encounter two problems with a Formalist approach. In the Russian Formalist understanding they are all “felt” because they break with a prevailing norm. Does this then mean that to write a work of art we need only throw in a lot of exotic words, whose meanings are inaccessible to all but a well-educated minority of readers? By the same token is every neologism by its nature artistic, simply because it breaks with conventional language? The Formalist view seems to imply that a childish slip of the tongue has as much claim to poeticity as a carefully thought out neologism, and a criticism levelled at Formalism by René Wellek in *A History of Modern Criticism* is that it divorces literary analysis from value and value judgement.¹²

However, the childish slip of the tongue will derive artistic value from its interaction with the object to which it refers. Shklovsky’s statement: “*the object is not important*” is not to be taken at face value.¹³ The object must be of importance, as Shklovsky’s own arguments strongly imply. To take a random example from “Art as Technique,” he writes: “Erotic subjects may also be presented figuratively with the obvious purpose of leading us away from their ‘recognition.’ Hence sexual organs are referred to in terms of lock and key...”¹⁴ Referring to a lock and key as a lock and key would have no artistic value in this understanding. We do not defamiliarise a quilting tool (another of Shklovsky’s examples) simply by calling it a quilting tool. The word used to refer to an object gains some of its artistic value from the relationship between it and the object, since “besides the direct awareness of the identity between sign and object (A is A_1), there is a necessity for the direct awareness of the inadequacy of that identity (A is not A_1).”¹⁵ When Shklovsky wrote that the object is not important, he meant that the correct subject of literary study is, for example, not war or peace, but

¹² René Wellek, *German, Russian and East European Criticism, 1900-1950*, vol. 7 of *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1991, p. 326.

¹³ Viktor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, eds., *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1965, pp. 5-24, (12).

¹⁴ Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 19.

¹⁵ Roman Jakobson, “What is Poetry?” trans. Michael Heim, in *Language in Literature*, Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy, eds., Cambridge Mass. - London, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 368-378, (378). Originally a lecture published as “Co je poesie?” in *Volné smeřy*, no. 30, 1933-34, pp. 229-239.

War and Peace. The importance of semantics to, in this case rhythmical syntactic devices, but by extension all devices, is noted by Osip Brik:

If we take by way of experiment a random sequence of meaningless syllables and try to read them as iambs, trochees, dactyls, anapests, or amphibrachs, the result will be completely even, uniform systems of syllables, the systems differing from one another only by virtue of the basic distribution of stressed and unstressed elements. But as soon as we begin to read, using one of the five possible patterns, a series of meaningful words, we quickly discover that the initially regular curve of intensives becomes increasingly complex.¹⁶

Therefore "the complex system of rhythmic intensives in the poetic line cannot be understood without reference to semantics and syntax."¹⁷

The second problem is with the norm itself. Who defines it? The editors of *Skamander* in the 1930s, or readers in the 1990s? For how long is the definition valid? Norms change and evolve all the time. To a linguistic purist, words like "wymaginalność," "uniwersalny" and "imitujący" may transgress a norm represented by "more Polish" words ("wyobrazić sobie," "powszechny," "naśladowczy") but not everyone is a purist. It is therefore very difficult to decide objectively which words are foreign-sounding. Formalists recognised this problem, and Vinogradov suggested that literary style be viewed in "the context of social linguistic systems which can be discerned within the written and spoken language of the educated classes."¹⁸ In considering how a literary text deviates from the norm we must also try to establish what that norm is. Tynyanov called the extra-literary point of reference of a text its "speech orientation."¹⁹ In most, but not all, of Schulz's short stories, the speech orientation is that of the biographer. Parts of "Manekiny" and "Druga jesień" are orientated towards scientific or didactic treatises, and Panas points to the use of the first person plural in "Noc wielkiego sezonu," and reference to the opinions of "others" as evidence that it is stylised on a "discursive utterance."²⁰ However, this does not solve the problem of Schulz's use of foreign words, as there is no consensus among either biographers or scientists as to the "correct," or conventional use

¹⁶ Quoted in: Ladislav Matejka, "The Formal Method and Linguistics," in Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska, eds., *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT, 1971, pp. 281-295, (287).

¹⁷ Matejka, "The Formal Method and Linguistics," in Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, p. 287.

¹⁸ Viktor Vinogradov, *On Artistic Prose*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1930, quoted in Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History - Doctrine*, 2nd edn., Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 4, London, Mouton, 1965, p. 234.

¹⁹ Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, p. 235.

²⁰ Władysław Panas, "Apologia i destrukcja: ('Noc wielkiego sezonu' Brunona Schulza)," in Kazimierz Bartoszyński, Maria Jasińska-Wojtkowska, Stefan Sawicki, eds., *Nowela Opowiadanie Gawęda: Interpretacje małych form narracyjnych*, Warsaw, 1974, pp. 191-205, (192).

of foreign-sounding words. Mukařovský suggests a way out of the impasse in his essay "Standard Language and Poetic Language."²¹ He says that the more stable and better known the norm, the greater the scope for poeticity, which consists of violating the norm. The question of borrowings and loan-words is a vexed and unresolved one, as can be seen in the attempts of the French Academy to prevent the use of words such as "weekend" passing from English into French (a trend which authorities in Poland have gone some way to follow). Such changes are sometimes politically rather than linguistically or culturally motivated. This confusion is also shown in the case of Schulz by the disagreement among native speakers as to which words have Polish alternatives and which do not (see below). We might reasonably say, then, that the norm as regards foreign language loans (then as now) is neither stable nor well-known and that therefore the scope for poeticity is narrow. Liberal use of foreign words is therefore not in itself a guarantee of literariness.

The question of the richness of Schulz's vocabulary is also beset by the problem of defining the norm. The intuitive response of most readers is that his vocabulary is rich and varied, but Formalism tries to avoid intuitive, subjective impressions. To gain an objective picture of Schulz's vocabulary, one might use a frequency dictionary, but this is not the most satisfactory method of measuring its richness. Words ranked 100th in frequency in one such dictionary (only 22 rankings away from words which occur just once) include "dzieło," "poza," "uważać" and "powinien" – hardly exotic words. Also, the sample texts are taken from journalism in the 1960s.²² Using such a dictionary illustrates a problem with Formalism's attempts at scientificity. It is relatively easy to analyse a text in terms of, for example, average length of sentences, number of sub-clauses, instances of alliteration and so on, but extremely difficult to do the same to the non-literary linguistic background against which the text is perceived.²³ In the case of Schulz the researcher would need a frequency dictionary of inter-war Polish: literary, non-literary, written and unwritten. The user of such a dictionary – if it existed – would also have to take into account the context in which the given word appeared. Formalists tried to escape from a literary criticism dominated by subjective impressions and intuitive guess-work, but it is

²¹ Jan Mukařovský, "Standard Language and Poetic Language," reprinted in Paul L. Garvin, ed. and trans. *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style*, Washington DC, Georgetown University Press, 1964, pp. 17-30, (18).

²² F. E. Knowles, *A Word-Frequency Dictionary of Polish Journalistic Texts*, vols. 1-3, Birmingham, University of Aston, 1981. The dictionary had a sample size of 41,809 words with a total vocabulary of 5,906. The ten most frequently occurring words were: "w" (3.7%), "i" (2.9%), "ten" (2.3%), "się" (2.0%), "być" (1.9%), "z" (1.7%), "na" (1.6%), "nie" (1.1%), "do" (1.0%) and "o" (.8%).

²³ Terence Hawkes also points out that it is much easier to define the norm of the text than it is to define the norm of standard language. Terence Hawkes, *Metaphor*, The Critical Idiom, London,

always the individual who “feels” the archaism, the neologism, the foreign-sounding or out of place word.

For the purposes of this discussion of loan words, I will concentrate on “Wichura,” as a representative example of Schulz’s stories. In “Wichura,” borrowings are often technical terms, for which no satisfactory Polish alternative exists.²⁴ Since this is also true of Polish as a whole, we are forced to conclude that such words do not owe their literary value to sounding foreign. This does not mean the words have no artistic value, but that it derives from other considerations. For example, in “Zdawało się, że w paroksyzmie złości rozgestykuluje się na części....” (95) (“It seemed that in her paroxysm of fury she would gesticulate herself into pieces...”) the choice of “paroksyzm” rather than, say, “atak wściekłości” (“fit of anger”) provides an alliterative z- sound. Words in “Wichura” which will sound familiar to an English speaker with little or no knowledge of Polish include the following: “bateria,” “falanga,” “fermentować” (90), “echo,” “galop,” “kawalkada,” “kolumna,” “amfiteatr” (91), “diagram,” “arkada” (92), “amfilada,” “galeria” and “balast” (93).

I asked several Polish speakers if they could supply “more Polish” versions of the following, less technical, words appearing in “Wichura”: “dandys,” “dynamika,” “furia,” “imitujący,” “kosmiczny,” “lansada,” “lament,” “momentalnie,” “palisada,” “paroksyzm,” “perswazja,” “sugerować,” “szturmować,” “trakt” and “wymaginowany.” The results were inconclusive. Four people, for example, could suggest no “more Polish” alternative for “dandys” and three could.²⁵ “Momentalnie” is the only word for which everyone suggested a “more Polish” alternative, namely “natychmiast.” It is impossible to say that words like “kosmiczny,” or “imitujący” (95) break linguistic conventions if no one can agree what those conventions might be.

The literary norm, then, presents a big obstacle to Formalism’s attempts at scientificity. However, the difficulty of defining the norm, from which literary texts, by Russian Formalist

Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1972, pp. 73-74.

²⁴ Note that this process in non-literary language, of developing new forms to cope with new content, is the opposite to Shklovsky’s conception of the development of artistic language, according to which: “A new form appears not in order to express a new content, but in order to replace an old form, which has already lost its artistic value...” in “The connection between devices of *Syuzhet* construction and general stylistic devices,” trans. Jane Knox, in: Stephen Bann and John E. Bowlt, eds., *Russian Formalism: A collection of articles and texts in translation*, Twentieth Century Studies, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1973, pp. 48-72, (53).

²⁵ The full results were: “dandys,” 4n, 3y; “dynamika,” 5n, 3y; “furia,” 3n, 4y; “imitujący,” 1n, 6y; “kosmiczny,” 5n, 2y; “lansada,” 4n, 2y; “lament,” 2n, 4y; “momentalnie,” 7y; “palisada,” 3n, 4y; “paroksyzm,” 7n; “perswazja,” 3n, 4y; “sugerować,” 5n, 2y; “szturmować,” 3n, 4y; “trakt” 7n; “wymaginowany” 1n, 6y, where “n” means there is no more Polish equivalent, and “y” means there is.

definition, must differ may be approached in the same way as teachers, for example, approach the concept of language itself. It would be a confident speaker of English indeed who claimed to know the entire system of the language, and yet this does not prevent people from effectively teaching it.

There is another norm against which Schulz's use of foreign-sounding words – or at any rate, words which sounded un-Polish enough to critics of the time – can be examined. This is the norm established by the stories themselves. "Wichura," like nearly all of Schulz's stories, is set in a sleepy, boring provincial town, quite at odds with the rich and multi-lingual vocabulary used to describe objects and the events that take place there. Tripping from the lips of a Warsaw sophisticate, words such as "kawalkada" (91), "amfilada" (93) and "perswazja" (94) might draw less attention to themselves. In *Sklepy cynamonowe*, there are only two stories that deal with outside influences on life in the narrator's town: "Sklepy cynamonowe" itself and "Ulica Krokodyli." In the first there is only a short passage referring to the night shops and their strange and exotic wares, while Crocodile Street, although it is a concession to metropolitan life, is a sham. The world of the narrator's town is essentially a closed one. Outside forces are seen as a threat,²⁶ but this does not prevent Schulz from using words of English, French, German, Italian, Czech, and Greek origin.

Schulz's use of foreign words is ironic, satirising a perceived tendency in literature in general (if not in 1930s Poland in particular) to use exotic words to suit the usual themes of literature. Schulz is satirising the idea that literature should be written in the language of the court, or of the capital city rather than that of the village or the provinces. Schulz mocks the self-importance of literature, by deliberately mismatching register and subject matter. Section 4, below, examines how he also uses syntactic conventions to a subversive, mocking end. While Gombrowicz, in *Ferdydurke*, seeks to drag literature down to the vernacular by remorselessly overusing vulgar words such as "gęba" instead of the more polite "twarz" or more literary "lico" for "face," and "pupa" ("bottom") instead of avoiding the "unliterary" subject of backsides altogether, Schulz overuses the standard device of sophisticated vocabulary, and transplants it to a context of trivial, childish fantasy in a boring provincial town. The following examples, taken from "Martwy sezon," show exotic, foreign words placed in less than exotic contexts.

Father is "wycieńczony diareą" (248) ("emaciated by diarrhoea") rather than "wycieńczony

²⁶ See, for example, Jerzy Jarzębski and Teresa Jarzębska, "Uwagi o semantyce przestrzeni i czasu w prozie Brunona Schulza," in Kazimiera Czapłowa ed., *Studia o prozie Brunona Schulza*, Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach, 115, Katowice, 1976, pp. 49-73, (51-52).

biegunką,” the more usual Polish expression. Better still, from the conventional literary point of view, would be to avoid the unpleasant subject altogether, or at least spare the reader the details of what exactly it is that has emaciated Father. An example of how squeamish the world of letters was then is the following extract from a review of Schulz, which refers to his overuse of “a certain requisite of a nocturnal nature. Schulz touches on this low-slung requisite, which serves physiological needs, several times in *Sklepy cynamonowe*.”²⁷ On close reading, it appears the critic has in mind the chamber pot which Father empties in “Nawiedzenie.” For the modern reader at least, Schulz appears to be sending this up by use of circumlocution: Father speaks of a brother turned into a “kiszka hegarowa” (48) (“a Hegar tube”). Hegar was a nineteenth-century German gynaecologist and obstetrician who invented surgical and obstetric medical equipment.

The flies in “Martwy sezon” are marked by a “głębokie i żałobne timbre” (249) (“a deep and mournful timbre”). In a description of the sales assistants, Schulz describes them “imaginując heroiczne bufonady” (250) rather than “wyobrażając bohaterskie błazeństwo” (“imagining heroic tomfoolery”). The bolts of cloth are arranged according to “pokolenie i descendencja” (256) (“generation and descent”) rather than “pokolenie i pochodzenie.” When referring to the night, rather than using the normal Polish expression “różniczkowanie” for “differential analysis,” Schulz uses “dyferencjalna analiza” (257).²⁸ The space of the night is described as “spekulatywne” (257). This is a borderline case. It has a foreign ring to it, but is actually a technical term used in philosophy. Either way, it seems out of place in a story which is ostensibly about the dead season in a provincial fabric shop. Instead of the Polish “pijatyka,” for drinking session, Schulz uses the expression “birbantka” (259), from the Italian, while Adela lies “cataleptic” and “spasming” (“kataleptyczny,” “spazmując” (260)) in bed as Father and the visitor spy on her.

On one level the effect is to add a spurious air of importance to the stories Schulz has to tell, but the use of foreign words is so persistent that the reader begins to question the convention of equating the use of foreign or exotic words with “literature.” Schulz and Gombrowicz, each in their own way, demonstrate that there are no right and wrong words in literature. The intense over-use of foreignisms is a form of baring a tired literary device.

²⁷ Tadeusz Breza, “Sobowtór zwykłej rzeczywistości,” *Kurier Poranny*, 1934, no. 103, reprinted in Tadeusz Breza, *Nelly: O kolegach i o sobie*, Warsaw, 1970, pp. 349-353, (352).

²⁸ This does not appear in *Słownik naukowo-techniczny polsko-angielski*, Maria Skrzyńska, Teresa Jaworska, eds., 8th edn., 1999.

Schulz defamiliarises the material presented by means of unusual or unexpected word combinations, which cannot readily be related back to any real-world object or phenomenon. This has the effect of focusing attention on the words themselves. For reasons of space, this section will concentrate on the examples of Schulz's treatment of colours, light and shade, as they exemplify his defamiliarising use of vocabulary. Briefly, Schulz frustrates the expectations of practical language by joining words in unusual combinations. Not only does the reader meet unexpected combinations, such as "colourful murmur" ("kolorowy pogwar" (23)), but Schulz frequently qualifies the words he has written to such an extent that it is impossible to refer the scene presented to a reality. In this way, the words are felt as words, not tokens for something else.

The first group of examples is taken from "Wichura":

1. "[niebo] srebrzystobiałe i przestronne..." (92) ("silvery-white and spacious [sky or heaven] ...")
2. "grynszpanowe, żółte i liliowe smugi" (92) ("verdigris, yellow and lily trails")
3. "czerwony odbłask zabarwiał je późnymi kolorami" (93) ("the red reflection tinged them in autumnal colours")

Here Schulz prevents the easy assimilation of the words by modifying them in ways contrary to expectations. For example, the "czerwony odbłask" is described as "zimny" ("cold"), whereas we normally associate red with warmth (especially in the context of the story, since the red glare is the reflection of a fire in the suburbs). Also, the "grynszpanowe, żółte i liliowe smugi" are "martwe" ("dead") – not so colourful after all. Even a reference to the brightly lit kitchen is immediately followed by "Za ogniskiem kuchennym i czarnym szerokim okapem komina prowadziło parę stopni do drzwi strychu" (95) ("Behind the kitchen range and the broad black chimney hood, a few steps led to the attic door"). Schulz highlights the organisation of the material by not permitting words to behave in the normal way. Nearly every reference to colour or light is qualified in some way which prevents the taking for granted of what in other contexts is simply shorthand for universally recognised properties. For example: "Szyby lśniły się tłustym odbłaskiem lampy" (93) ("the windowpanes glistened with the greasy reflection of the lamp").

In the use of darkness and the colour black, the tones which dominate "Wichura," defamiliarisation is also at work. "Ciemność" ("darkness") is presented as an active agent in

“Wichura,” which begins: “Tej długiej i pustej zimy obrodziła ciemność w naszym mieście....” (90) (“That long and empty winter darkness reaped in our town...”) A striking example of the use of “ciemność” for largely aesthetic reasons is the line “ich oczy, pełne jeszcze nocy, broczyły ciemnością” (94) (“their eyes, still full of the night, bled darkness”). Here it seems the words cannot refer to any real-life situation. “Ciemność” is chosen to provide assonance with the other “-ocy” and “-oczy” sounds. (“Broczyć” usually collocates with “krew,” giving the meaning “to shed blood.”) The sound properties of the word “ciemność” are of equal or greater importance to its semantics. There is an assonant effect in “obrodziła ciemność w naszym mieście” and also “ciemność zaczęła się wyradzać” (90) (“darkness began to degenerate”).

Use of the word “czarny” (“black”) is generally realistically motivated in “Wichura.” It occurs frequently in the early part of the story, which takes place in ill-lit attics at night. In these circumstances, describing “szpalery” (“lanes”) or an “amfiteatr” as “czarny” does not draw too much attention to the word itself. In any case, “czarny” has so many collocations in Polish (“soul,” “death,” “market,” “thoughts,” “work” etc.) that even describing “sejmy” (“parliaments”) as black is not very defamiliarising. What is striking is its heavy repetition, particularly where those repetitions come closely spaced, as in “Wtedy to wylały się te czarne rzeki, wędrówki beczek i konwi, i płynęły przez noc. Czarne ich, połyskliwe, gwarne....” (91) (“Then those black rivers, the wanderings of barrels and pots overflowed and swept through the nights. Their black, shining, noisy....”) This, coupled with the slightly unusual word order of “Czarne ich, połyskliwe, gwarne,” which emphasises the similar sound of “gwarny” and “czarny,” directs attention to the sound organisation of the sentence, rather than the fairly banal event being described – pots and pans rattling in an attic during a gale. Heavy repetition of the colour black is also noticeable in “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą.”

The same kind of defamiliarising effect can be observed in “Nawiedzenie,” where adjectives which describe colours, light and shadow have a great degree of independence from their nouns. That is to say, they are wrenched free of their normal context. This is illustrated by the opening lines of the story: “Już wówczas miasto nasze popadało coraz bardziej w chroniczną szarość zmierzchu, porastało na krawędziach liszajem cienia, puszystą pleśnią i mchem koloru żelaza” (13) (“At that time our town was already falling ever further into the chronic greyness of dusk; it sprouted lichen all over the edges of shadow, a downy mould and moss the colour of iron”). The first sentence describes dusk as chronically grey. The second gives a rundown of all the colours of the day from morning to night. Far

from greyness, or moss the colour of iron, the town now seems to be characterised by russet morning mists, amber afternoons, transparent and golden moments, and colourful nights. Nowhere does the grey dusk of the first sentence appear. The expectations raised by Schulz are immediately frustrated. The second sentence is marked by linguistic play rather than any desire to communicate information. Afternoons which at the beginning of the story are amber, are “half-dark” (“półciemne”) a few pages later, while the winter is described as early in part one and late in part two in a self-contradiction typical of Schulz and discussed in chapter 4, section 2. Likewise dawn is variously grey and yellow but not pink, the usual colour of dawn. In this Schulz also deviates from a romantic convention of portraying dawn as rosy or pink. Father’s sleep is black, his vision bleached and the mirrors in the house – like Father’s face when he uses the enema – are pale. Schulz detaches colours from their normal contexts, forcing us to perceive them as colours, and also as words in their own right (see section 3, below), not merely secondary physical properties of objects.²⁹ This strange use of colours also works to deprive things of their normal interrelations, throwing the words normally only used to refer to those things into the foreground. The following sentence shows how Schulz’s manipulation of the vocabulary of light and shadow interacts with his desire to replace realistic links and connections with artistic organisation: “Z nagle otworzyło się okno ciemnym ziewnięciem, i płachta ciemności wionęła przez pokój” (18) (“Suddenly the window opened in a dark yawn and a sheet of darkness wafted through the room”). The opening of the window is linked to the yawning of the sales assistants, described earlier, not by any chain of reasoning, but by the use of the words “ciemny” (“dark”) and “ziewać” (“to yawn”).

This is a pattern which can be traced through all of Schulz’s work. The following examples of colour-words used in ways which do not convey much realistic information about the colour of things are from *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą*.

1. “tęczowa przestrzeń” (115) (“rainbow-hued space”)
2. “fragmenty tęczy zakręciły się” (119) (“fragments of a rainbow twirled”)
3. “bezbarwne, szare szczęście” (121) (“colourless, grey happiness”)
4. “czereśniowa słodycz, czereśniowy świągot szczygłów” (137) (“cherry sweetness, cherry warbling of goldfinches”)

²⁹ See Marek Kujawski, “Znaczenie barw w prozie Brunona Schulza,” *Stupskie Prace Humanistyczne*,

5. "przepływał błękit nieba bez słońca" (138) ("the blueness of a sky with no sun flowed")
6. "żarliwa fanatyczna zieleń" (182) ("ardent, fanatic greenness")
7. "złoty pył senności sypiący się bez końca z lamp elektrycznych" (225) ("a golden dust of sleepiness pouring endlessly from the electric lights")
8. "spłowiałe i blade wianie.... Jakaś późna i ogromna wieczność wstawała z wyblakłych dali i wiała" (230) ("faded and pale breezes.... A late and enormous eternity rose up from the faded distance and blew")
9. "Przez swe grube szkła chromatyczne widzi ojciec wszystkie przedmioty obrzeżone purpurą, w fioletowo-zielonych obwódkach, i ogarnia go rozpacz nad tą eksplozją kolorów, nad tą anarchią barw, szalejącą nad światem w świetlanych orgiach" (248) ("through his thick chromatic glasses Father saw all objects edged in purple, in violet green circumferences, and he was seized with despair over this explosion of colours, over this anarchy of colours, rampaging throughout the world in luminous orgies")
10. "ciemna dynamika lesistego terenu" (263) ("the dark dynamics of the wooded terrain")
11. "Żałobny i późny półbrzask nieokreślonej pory prószył z nieba o niezdefiniowanej szarości. Czytałem z łatwością wszystkie afisze i szyldy, a jednak nie byłbym zdziwiony, gdyby mi powiedziano, że to noc głęboka!" (271) ("The funereal and late half light of an undetermined time of day sprinkled from a sky of undefined greyness. I read with ease all the posters and signs, but I would not have been surprised to be told it was deepest night!")
12. "obtańczony wirującymi arabeskami zmierzchu" (273) ("with spinning arabesques of dusk dancing around")
13. "robaczywa ciemność" (304) ("verminous darkness")
14. "brudny odbłask płomienia tańczy na podłodze" (312) ("the dirty reflected light of a flame dances on the floor")

Some of the above examples (3, 5, 7) come close to metaphor, and the word is so central to Schulz, that it should be no surprise that a study of his vocabulary such as this will overlap with studies of metaphor, euphony, parallels and *syuzhet*. However, some of the examples (such as 4, 6, 10) are very difficult to describe simply as metaphor: they come close to being correctly formed sentences which

no. 10a, Słupsk, 1990, pp. 47-68, for a discussion of the meaning of colours in Schulz.

do not actually mean anything. Number 11 is an example of an initially logical, if figurative, utterance which is then qualified to such an extent that it turns back on itself, forcing careful reading. In example 9, Schulz provides a mock-motivation for the choice of colour-words: Father is wearing “chromatic glasses.” But who really knows off-hand what colours to expect to see through “chromatic glasses”? What *are* chromatic glasses? Schulz could as well have written orange instead of purple, for all the average reader is likely to know about the subject. It seems likely that “purple” was chosen to coincide with Father’s growing rage (“purple with anger”).

This is not to suggest that Schulz writes nonsense stories. Nearly all the words he uses can be found in dictionaries, and his sentences are generally grammatically correct. The sentences, therefore, have meaning, but the meaning created often does not correspond to the reader’s knowledge of the world.

Odd word combinations are not confined to colours, as these examples demonstrate:

1. “ślepy papier zaczynał mglić się” (113) (“the blind paper began to go misty”)
2. “dyskretna pogoda ... zmierzch... pusty jeszcze w swej głębi, daremny i jałowy w swym ogromnym oczekiwaniu” (138) (“discrete weather ... dusk ...still empty in its depths, futile and sterile in its enormous expectations”)
3. “doskonała kula dnia nie zużytego” (139) (“perfect sphere of the unconsumed day”)
4. “z szczęśliwego strachu” (181) (“from happy fear”)
5. “biegły w rytmicznych kadencjach płasko rzeźbione girlandy na lewo i prawo i zatrzymywały się na rogach niezdecydowane” (181) (“flatly sculpted garlands ran in rhythmical cadences to the left and right and stopped undecidedly at the corners”)
6. “zarliwy klasycyzm” (182) (“ardent classicism”)
7. “bezgraniczna martwota szarej aury” (182) (“limitless lifelessness of the grey aura”)
8. “Tajemny fluid mroku, żywa, czujna, i ruchliwa materia ciemności” (226) (“Secret fluid of dusk, living, watchful, and mobile matter of darkness”)
9. “kaskady ozonu” (226) (“cascades of ozone”)
10. “[słup graniczny] grał na wietrze” (230) (“[the border post] played on the wind”)
11. “wjechała w jesień” (230) (“drove into autumn”)

12. "Metaliczne i lśniące muchy ... jakby wydmuchane ze szkła metalicznego" (247) ("Metallic and glistening flies ... as if blown from metallic glass")
13. "Dzień był całkiem szary, przygaszony, bez akcentów" (262-3) ("The day was completely grey, subdued, without accents")
14. "ciemny krajobraz pełen powagi" (263) ("a dark landscape full of seriousness")
15. "Obfite i fałdziste powietrze obłopotalo mi twarz miękką płachtą. Miało w sobie mdłą słodycz odstalej deszczówki" (271) ("A soft sheet of generous and wavy air flapped in my face. It had in it the sickly sweetness of stale rain-water")
16. "czas... pachnący nowością i farbą" (282) ("time... smelling of newness and paint")
17. "gwiazdy migotliwe i wciąż zdmuchiwane" (304) ("flickering stars, constantly being blown out")

Some of these appear to be self-contradictory, such as number 6, above: classicism is normally associated with restraint, rather than ardour. This is true also of number 4: fear is not usually happy. Some come close to synaesthesia, such as 13 and 15, while others mix nouns, verbs and adjectives from different semantic fields, to produce a defamiliarising effect, often, once again, very close to metaphor, e.g. 2, 11, 14, and 16.

Further examples of synaesthesia and near-synaesthesia are given below:

1. "ciemny zgiełk" (91) ("dark tumult")
2. "W pokojach było zimno i pachniało wiatrem" (93) ("In the rooms it was cold and smelled of wind")
3. "obrazy na ścianach brzęczały" (93) ("the pictures on the walls rattled")
4. "Ich futra, nasiąkłe wiatrem, pachniały teraz powietrzem" (94) ("Their furs, soaked with wind, now smelled of the air")
5. "Adela tłukła cynamon w dźwięcznym moździerzu" (95) ("Adela ground cinnamon in a sonorous mortar")
6. "Nie mogłem nasycić oczu aksamitną, soczystą czarnością najciemniejszych partyj, gamą zgaszonych szarości, pluszowych popiołów, przebiegającą pasażami stłumionych tonów, złamanym dławikiem klawiszy – ten nokturn pejzażu" (271) ("I could not satiate my eyes with the velvet, juicy

blackness of the darkest parts, the scale of extinguished greys, the furry ashes, running in passages of muffled tones, piano keys broken by choking – that nocturne of the landscape”³⁰

In example 6 “nokturn” also suggests the musical form of that name, as it occurs along with “gama” and “klawisz.”

In many cases the unusual combination of words results from a metaphor. This is especially true of collocations with “dark” or “black” with their generally sinister connotations (e.g. “ciemny zgiełk” (“dark tumult”). But it is often very difficult to read a literal truth from the metaphorical statement (see chapter 4, section 1). This leaves the reader with nothing to grasp except the shape and the feel of the words themselves.

A deceptively simple question which Mukařovský asks is: “Is the poet’s vocabulary vast or limited?”³¹ Schulz’s, it would seem, is both. In the third paragraph of “Wichura” alone, which consists of one sentence, he uses the words “belka” (“beam, balk, girder”), “krokiew” (“rafter”), “bant” (“king-posted beam”), “platew” (“purlin, bidding rafter”), “tram” (“footing beam”), and “szpaler” (“double row of trees, hedge, lane (of people)”) – four different words for beam, or rather, words for four different types of beam. In the next paragraph, containers receive similar treatment: “beczka” (“cask, barrel, keg”), “konew” (“pot, jug, pewter”), “skopiec” (a type of bucket or container), “ceber” (“bucket, cowl, wooden pail”) and “wiadro” (“pail, bucket,” actually at the start of the following paragraph). This use of specialised vocabulary is a defamiliarising device. Obscure vocabulary is a sure-fire method of making the act of reading difficult. The danger that the reader will be put off can be avoided by sparing use and combination with other devices. In reading, for example, “napelnić przestwory nocy galopem krokwi i zgiełkiem płatwi i bantów” (91) (“to fill the infinity of night with the galloping of rafters and the tumult of purlins and king-posted beams”) the reader’s attention will be focused on the internal rhyme of the sentence: “galopem krokwi i zgiełkiem płatwi.” Because the terms used are somewhat technical, the average reader will not be less likely to automatically refer the word back to the thing it represents. In the opening section of “Wichura” a mass of detail, apparently irrelevant to the information being communicated, places language squarely in the centre of attention. Once this has been done, specialised vocabulary fades out of the picture. There are references to

³⁰ Piotr Wróblewski, in “Stylistyczna funkcja określeń barw w prozie Brunona Schulza,” *Przegląd humanistyczny*, 1978, no. 7/8, pp. 57-73, (72), gives some more examples of synaesthesia.

³¹ Mukařovský, “On Poetic Language,” in *The Word and Verbal Art*, p. 37.

architectural terms such as “galeria” and “amfilada” later in the text, but these, while somewhat specialist, would be familiar to most readers with a general education.

Apart from specialised architectural vocabulary, most readers will readily answer that words such as “grynszpanowy,” “rozwichrzony,” “wybrzuszać,” “sfora,” “bohomasz,” “bruzda” (92), “kazamata” (93), “broczyć” (94), “opończa,” “zziajany,” “wiotczeć,” “zwisnąć,” “krzątać się,” “zaciętrzewiać się” (95), “rozgałęzić się,” “kuśtykać,” “kolankować,” and “zetrzeć się” (96) are not the words of someone with an impoverished vocabulary.³²

Yet commentators have pointed out that Schulz uses a limited stock of verbal raw material.³³ One reason for this is that he returns to the same subjects repeatedly, for example weather and the seasons (“Sierpień,” “Wichura,” “Noc lipcowa,” “Druga jesień”). Another reason Schulz’s verbal raw material may seem limited is that he uses the same or closely related words to describe widely varying phenomena. Bolecki discusses words like “pusty,” “bujny,” “gęsty” and “ślepy” in *Poetycki model prozy*, concluding that Schulz’s seemingly indiscriminate use of the same adjectives in many different contexts robs them of their precision. They become semantically empty: Schulz brings about the “division of sign and meaning.”³⁴ In Bolecki’s understanding, “znaczenie” (“meaning”), agrees with Schulz’s concept of “znaczenie” in “Mityzacja rzeczywistości,” i.e. the everyday connotations which have accreted around words, dulling our sense of their original, true, “mythical” meaning. Schulz does indeed shake the normal connotations off a word like “pusty” and there may well be, underneath those layers of automatised meanings, a “pure” word, but from the Formalist point of view, what he has done is make the reader pay attention to *each new* occurrence of the word. Since “ciemny” need not mean dark, and night may be colourful, the words have achieved independence from the things that in everyday discourse they represent.

³² None of these words, chosen at random because they looked unusual, appears in Knowles’s *Word Frequency Dictionary of Polish*. Another way to approach the question is to take some random sentences and check the words used against a frequency dictionary. For example, in “Pokój drżał z lekka, obrazy na ścianach brzęczały” (61) *pokój* has a frequency of .0454%, *drżeć* of zero, *z* of 1.7317%, *lekka* of .0096%, *obraz* of .0311%, *na* of 1.6193%, *ściana* of .0048% and *brzęczać* of zero. In “Starszy subiekt Teodor podjął się wyprawić w noc i wichurę, żeby zanieść mu posiłek” (61) five words out of thirteen (excluding the proper name, Teodor) have a frequency of zero, while “wyprawić” (frequency zero) could have been replaced with “wychodzić” (frequency .02631%). Incidentally, the “foreign” words “dynamika,” “trakt,” “furia,” “sugerować” and “kosmiczny” all appear in the frequency dictionary.

³³ Krzysztof Miklaszewski, “Cena świadomości (Próba analizy opowiadania Bruno Schulza pt. ‘Pan’),” *Ruch literacki*, 1966, no. 6, pp. 285-295, (285) and Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 263.

³⁴ Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 266.

Shklovsky, in "Art as Technique," discusses Tolstoy's technique of defamiliarising things by not giving them their usual label. Instead he describes the thing as if it were seen for the first time.³⁵ Flogging, for example, is described in graphic detail. To refer to it briefly as "whipping," "flogging" or "corporal punishment" and pass on would not give the reader pause for thought. We know, or we think we know, what a flogging is. Schulz uses this technique on occasion, notable examples being the tramp going to the toilet in "Pan," and Father emptying the chamber pot and using an enema in "Nawiedzenie," but usually he both names and meticulously describes the object in question. The descriptions, a source of Schulz's verbosity, are so elaborate, and so far removed from what the name suggests that there is little risk of the reader immediately recognising without perceiving the object or phenomenon. This can be seen in the titles of the stories, which nearly always directly name the object which the story then describes (e.g. "Ptaki," "Edzio," "Księga") But these clear labels do not in fact prepare the reader for what follows. Sometimes the labels are exaggeratedly prosaic and set up a contrast with the story that follows. An example would be "Mój ojciec wstępuje do strażaków," while Wojciech Wyskiel has compared "Noc lipcowa" to the title of a school essay.³⁶ This trend is followed within the stories, where we find that names, or suggested names, proliferate. In "Mój ojciec wstępuje do strażaków," the firemen are variously referred to as:

"nicponie" ("good-for-nothings"), "urwipołcie" ("rascals"), [by Adela]

"darmozjady" ("freeloaders"), "dryblasy" ("lanky, clumsy types"), [by Teodor]

"młodzieńcy" ("young men"), "strażacy" ("firemen"), [by the narrator]

"bohaterowie" ("heroes"), "młodzieńcy" ("young lads"), "chłopcy" ("boys"), "pompiery" ("firemen" (from the French)), [by Mother]

"synowie ognia" ("sons of fire"), "ród salamander" ("tribe of salamanders"), "istoty ogniste" ("fiery creatures"), "duchy ogniste" ("fiery souls"), [by Father].

Most of the words used to refer to the firemen reflect value judgements made by the characters in the story. The narrator labels them "firemen" but the profusion of conflicting names does not permit this to become familiar. This effect is strengthened by the description of the behaviour of the "firemen."

³⁵ Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 13-17.

³⁶ Wojciech Wyskiel, *Inna twarz Hioba: Problematyka alienacyjna w dziele Brunona Schulza*, Cracow, 1980, pp. 22-23.

They appear to resemble rabbits, or small children, but hibernate in winter. Bolecki comments that the proliferation of names in Schulz underlines the impotence of words: names in Schulz are “negative,” never penetrating to the essence of the object being named.³⁷

In “Noc lipcowa” Schulz repeatedly names the object being defamiliarised (i.e. a July night), but the descriptions are so extensive, and so far removed from ordinary perceptions of a July night that the reader is tempted to see this as a description of something else: “Czy czujecie tajemny, głęboki sens tej przygody, gdy wątły i blady maturzysta wychodzi przez szklane drzwi z bezpiecznej przystani sam jeden w bezmiar nocy lipcowej?” (225) (“Can you feel the secret, deep sense of this adventure when a sickly and pale schoolboy goes out through the glass doors from his safe haven all alone into the measurelessness of a July night?”) This suggests that “Noc lipcowa” may really be about puberty, and the imagery used in describing the night in July is of shooting rockets, trains in tunnels and a “secret fluid” (“tajemny fluid” (226)), all of which support this reading. The effect is to show the inadequacy of the two words “Noc lipcowa” on their own.³⁸

A similar technique can be seen in the lengthy description of chopping wood in “Emeryt.” So much attention is devoted to this everyday task that the reader wonders if a deeper meaning should be read into it. The word “emeryt” (“pensioner”) itself is defamiliarised in the story of the same name. Although pointedly labelling himself a pensioner in the first sentence, (“Jestem emerytem w dosłownym i całkowitym znaczeniu tego wyrazu...” (308) (“I am a pensioner in the full and literal meaning of the word...”)) the description that follows is of a child’s experience in school. The arbitrariness of the label is reinforced by the words: “Byłem już naprawdę dzieckiem” (321) (“I was by now truly a child”). The word “już” (“by now”) might suggest that there has been a progression from “pensioner” to “child” and that they therefore refer to different states, but the evidence of the story is otherwise. The town children treated him like a child before he returned to school, as do the clerks in his office, who do not show him the respect an old age pensioner might expect. Neither the word “emeryt” nor “dziecko” is able to express adequately what this story tells us, despite Schulz’s use of emphatic expressions like “naprawdę” and “w dosłownym znaczeniu.” The words “emeryt” and “dziecko” are removed (though not fully) from their normal associations with the objects “emeryt” and “dziecko.” The link between “emeryt” the word and “emeryt” the thing is, if not broken entirely,

³⁷ Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, pp. 254-255.

³⁸ Wyskiel discusses the gap between the “raw fact” and the “‘unsuccessful’ attempt at description” in *Inna twarz Hioba*, writing: “A word which does not ‘adhere’ to the thing steers attention toward its

loosened, and the reader perceives the word as an object worthy of attention in its own right. The word as object is explored in the following story "Samotność," in which the narrator claims: "I am a parasite of metaphors" ("pasożytuję na metaforach" (326)).

The episode of the dog/man in "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą" also illustrates the inadequacy of conventional labels to fully describe the phenomenon they represent. The phenomenon here is at one point a man, at another a dog. Schulz is quite adamant that it is a man, but also that it is a dog. The discrepancy between what is named and what is described forces the reader to pay close attention to the text. It is impossible to automatise the dog or man because it appears to be both, but neither. To further confuse the issue, the dog/man is also a literary version of Schrödinger's cat in that whether it is in one state or the other depends on the observer.

"Księga" also presents the reader with a large gap between the object and the description of it. Schulz admits that the book is no more than the tattered remnants of a dull magazine. The pages are "same tylko ogłoszenia i anonse" (120) ("just small ads and announcements"). It is the incongruity between the reality of the book, a "scrap of paper" ("szpargał" (124)), and the intensity and detail of the description which refreshes the reader's perception of how imaginative children can be. This story defamiliarises not just mundane advertisements, but the childhood world as well. In "Martwy sezon" Schulz is particularly careful to name the company to which Father is writing his letter: "Chrystian Seipel i Synowie, przędzalnie i tkalnie mechaniczne" (246) ("Christian Seipel and Sons, Spinning Machines and Mechanical Weaving Mills"). This unwieldy title is repeated in full with reference to Father's mysterious visitor, but it is a red herring. It tells us nothing about the letter which Father writes, or the struggle he has with the visitor in part three of the story. When Teodor maintains that the visitor is Seipel himself, the narrator immediately undermines him by saying there is no evidence to support this. Schulz is teasing the reader with the over-precise, wordy designation of the company, when what matters is ancient myths. Father's struggle with Seipel (if it is he) is compared to Jacob wrestling the angel. There is a contrast between the precision of Seipel's company name, and the broad brushstrokes of the comparison with Jacob and the angel. The same device is used in "Księga," where Schulz takes pains to name Magda Wang's publishing house in full, twice.

There are many more instances of such misleading labels, prompting long and detailed descriptions of the object which are at variance with the name given to that object. Examples include

connections within the linguistic system" (92).

mannequins, the stamp album, the sanatorium, the shop, wind and a garden. The effect is to make the reader more aware of the possibilities lying behind a word: August, spring, July, autumn are, while we are reading Schulz, no longer shorthand for well-known times of year. Schulz is willing to name the object being defamiliarised, confident that the description which accompanies it will be rich enough to refresh perceptions of it. Alternatively, he will name a phenomenon whose accompanying description is so elaborate and seemingly unconnected that the reader suspects the given name is a red herring. Whether we call what is described in the story "Noc lipcowa" a "July night" or "puberty" is immaterial. Schulz has demonstrated the arbitrariness of the word which is attached to an object.³⁹ In "What is Poetry" Jakobson writes that modern phenomenology has "skilfully demonstrated the prime importance of the distinction between sign and designated object, between the meaning of a word and the content at which the meaning is directed."⁴⁰ Schulz makes this distinction clear by showing how different, seemingly incompatible words can refer to one and the same object: the man/dog is both man and dog; the Book is both Book of Light and magazine scraps; Father is both a "fencing master of the imagination" ("fechmistrz wyobraźni" (26)) and an enraged fly; the package/letter (characteristically, Schulz uses both words) collected by the narrator in "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą" is both a car and a telescope. Where Jakobson writes that "...besides the direct awareness of the identity between sign and object (A is A_1), there is a necessity for the direct awareness of the inadequacy of that identity (A is not A_1)"⁴¹, Schulz assures the reader that a telescope is a car, a letter a package, a man a dog and a dog a man.

III. Euphony

The role of euphony has been considered in a few cases in passing in the preceding section. It has been seen how the use of certain words is sometimes dictated not so much by semantics, as is more normal in practical language, but by alliteration or assonance (e.g. "ich oczy, pełne jeszcze nocy, broczyły ciemnością" (94) ("their eyes, still full of the night, bled darkness")). The difficulty in relating such

³⁹ Schulz expresses the problem somewhat differently in his open letter to Witkacy: "Ktoś jest człowiekiem, a ktoś karakonem, ale ten kształt nie sięga istoty, jest tylko rolą na chwilę przyjętą, tylko naskórkiem, który za chwilę zostanie zrzucony. Statuowany tu jest pewien skrajny monizm substancji, dla której poszczególne przedmioty są jedynie maskami" (477), ("One person is a human being, someone else a cockroach; but that shape does not penetrate to the essence. It is only a role assumed for a moment, an epidermis, which in a moment will be thrown off. What is decreed here is a certain type of extreme monism of substance, for which individual objects are only masks").

⁴⁰ Jakobson, "What is Poetry?" *Language in Literature*, p. 377.

⁴¹ Jakobson, "What is Poetry?" *Language in Literature*, p. 378.

phrases as “czereśniowa słodycz, czereśniowy świegot szczygłów” (137) (“cherry sweetness, cherry warbling of goldfinches”) back to an objectively existing reality throws the words themselves into the foreground of attention. The reader’s attention is drawn to the fact that “czereśniowy” sounds somewhat like “świegot.” A link has been made between the two words which is not dependent on reason, since there is no such thing as a “cherry warbling.” The link may be strengthened by the fact that goldfinches eat cherries, but the word cherry actually refers to warbling. This illustrates the basic arbitrariness of most of the sounds (onomatopoeia is an exception) we use to represent things – although associations may perhaps grow up around certain sounds. When Schulz writes that “one person is a human being, someone else a cockroach” he implies that the *forms* people adopt are arbitrary and unrelated to the essential nature of the object.⁴² But his literary writings imply that it is *words* which are arbitrary, and by favouring euphony in the organising of sentences he brings out this point clearly.

Another example from the preceding section illustrate how Schulz often favours a word for its sound properties rather than its semantics:

Nie mogłem nasycić oczu aksamitną, soczystą czarnością najciemniejszych partyj, gamą zgaszonych szarości, pluszowych popiołów, przebiegającą pasażami stłumionych tonów, złamanych dławikiem klawiszy – ten nokturn pejzażu (271) (I could not satiate my eyes with the velvet, juicy blackness of the darkest parts, the scale of extinguished greys, the furry ashes, running in passages of muffled tones, piano keys broken by choking – that nocturne of the landscape)

“Soczystą czarnością” is an assonant phrase, while “zgaszonych szarości, pluszowych popiołów, przebiegającą pasażami stłumionych tonów” breaks into two lines, which end with a feminine rhyme (“popiołów / tonów”). It is also assonant (“zgaszonych szarości”) and alliterative (“pluszowych popiołów przebiegającą pasażami”). The effect of this desire for euphony on the semantics of the sentence is illustrated by the literal English translation – a semantic oddity.

As mentioned in the preceding section, dawn is at one point described as “szary,” and at another as “żółty.” The relevant quotations are:

(1) “o jakimś szarym świcie” (13) (“at some grey dawn”)

⁴² Bruno Schulz, Letter to S. I. Witkiewicz, *Opowiadania, Wybór esejów i listów*, ed., Jerzy Jarzębski, 2nd edn., Biblioteka Narodowa, I, 264, Wrocław, 1998, p. 477.

(2) “Wtedy wśród świergotu tapetowych ptaków, w żółtym zimowym świcie, zasypiał na parę godzin gęstym, czarnym snem” (16) (“Then, among the warbling of wallpaper birds in the yellow wintry dawn, he would fall, for a few hours, into a heavy black sleep”).

In both (1) and (2) there is strong alliteration around the word “świt,” brought about by choosing colours that sound (not necessarily look) right. In (2) the words “gęstym, czarnym snem” form a rhythmic counterpart to “żółtym zimowym świcie.” “Gęsty” is one of Schulz’s favourite words. From this example it appears that it is made semantically empty less by repetition in any and all contexts, as Bolecki writes, but by being subordinated to considerations of rhythm rather than meaning.⁴³ “Tapeta” is also a recurring word in “Nawiedzenie” and provides the beginning of example (2) with a series of “t-” and “w-” sounds in keeping with the other elements, one of which, “ptaki,” recurs in *Sklepy cynamonowe*. The words “tapeta” and “gęsty” are again pressed into service and out of semantic shape in the sentence: “[ojciec] czuł, nie patrząc, że przestrzeń obrasta go pulsującą gęstwiną tapet, pełną szeptów, syków i seplenień” (15) (“[Father] felt, without looking, that space was overgrowing him with a pulsating thickness of wallpaper, full of whispers, hisses and lisps”) where they motivate the final three alliterative words.

Examples can be found throughout Schulz’s stories of words used mainly for their sound properties rather than their contribution to the meaning of the sentence (meaning narrowly understood as rational, plausible, even mundane communication of realistic facts). Some examples, taken from *Sklepy cynamonowe*, follow:

1. “Tam te wylupiaсте pałuby łopuchów wybałuszyły się” (7). Here the choice of words with an “ó-” sound lead to the semantic oddity that is, in translation: “there the goggle-eyed puppets of burdocks goggled.” There is little or no realistic motivation for the word “wybałuszyły się.” Its choice is artistically motivated. A result of the absurd meaning of the sentence is to bare the device of assonance. The assonance would not be as noticeable if the sentence meant something “normal” or “ordinary.”

2. “gadała cisza, żółta, jaskrawa, zła cisza” (9) (“the silence, the yellow bright bad silence, chattered”). In this example, the word “żółty” tells us little or nothing about the chattering silence. Not only that,

⁴³ Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 266.

but it is then qualified by “jaskrawy” (“bright, garish, extreme”). There are other examples of Schulz using a word representing a colour to fill a requirement made by the sound of a sentence (see below).

3. “Z wzrokiem wędrującym po dawnych wspomieniach” (11) (“with his gaze wandering across old memories”). Although this is not as grotesque as the above examples, it is hard to escape the impression (on close reading) that the phrase is so constructed in order to provide a series of “w-” sounds.

A few examples from “Ptaki” show the coincidence of foreign-sounding words with alliterative or assonant effects:

4. “spazm orgazmu” (22) (“spasm of orgasm”)

5. “Był to proceder nader zajmujący” (23) (“it was a most absorbing procedure”). Here the alien-sounding “proceder” is brought into contact with the literary “nader” (instead of the commoner “bardzo”) to emphasise their similar sound.

6. “translokacja ojca” (25) (“the translocation of Father”)

7. “każda kapitulacja” (26) (“every capitulation”)

In the two preceding examples transplanting a Latinate word into the Polish achieves rhyme within the sentence.

8. “Leżąc twarzami na futrzanym brzuchu ciemności” (28) (“lying face down on the furry belly of darkness”). “Futrzany” (“furry”) supplies the sentence with an extra “rz-” sound. The visual image created, however striking, has its origin in the sound of a particular word. The image is repeated in chapter 17 of “Wiosna”: “...w tym puszystym futrze zmierzchu...”(168) (“...in that downy fur of dusk...”)

9. “studiować strukturę swych szczupłych i tandetnych ciałek” (33) (“to study the structure of their slim and trashy little bodies”). This example shows how little attention Schulz sometimes pays to the meaning of words. There is near-alliteration in the first four words, but only a few lines later the impression of trashiness (“trashy little bodies”) has been replaced with “szlachetna konstrukcja przegubu” (33) (“the noble construction of her joint”).

10. “W ściany ich mieszkań były wprawione, wmurowane ciała, twarze; w salonie stał ojciec – wypchany, wygarbowana żona-nieboszczka była dywanem” (47) (“In the walls of their houses there were fixed, walled in bodies, faces; in the saloon stood the father – stuffed, a tanned wife-corpse was a carpet”). The grotesque image of a woman who is at the same time a carpet is made even more

grotesque by the fact that the woman in question also happens to be tanned. This is partly because it gives Schulz the opportunity to use a second word beginning with “wy-” to match the two words at the beginning of the sentence beginning “w-” (which themselves are difficult to translate without producing a tautology).

11. “obsypane srebrnym szelestem” (55) (“strewn with a silver rustle”). In this example the onomatopoeic “szelest” is coupled with “srebrny,” which is not onomatopoeic when it is directed at the normal meaning of the word – “silver.”

12. “powracał powoli do siebie, do dnia, do jawy” (59) (“he slowly returned to himself, to the day, to consciousness”). From the point of view of the information communicated in this example, there is no need for the words “do dnia, do jawy.” They are added to provide repetition and rhythm, in other words, for their phonetic properties as well as their semantics.

13. “Jedno jego oko lekko wtedy zbaczało na zewnątrz, jak gdyby odchodziło w inny wymiar” (60) (“One of his eyes then began to deviate outwards slightly as if it were departing into another dimension”). In Polish it is not normally felt necessary to use the possessive (“jego oko” (“his eye”)) in constructions of this type. Also, the word “lekko” seems to have been added for the sake of repeating the final “o-” sound one more time, as in such a strange, unreal image, it hardly matters whether the movement of the eye is qualified or modified. This word has been used, along with “jego,” for reasons which appear to have as much to do with euphony as with meaning.

14. “Poszliśmy gromadą na spacer stromo spadającą ulicą” (74) (“We went for a walk in a group along a steeply falling street”). In this example it is not possible to say definitely whether the word “stromo” (“steeply”) has been chosen only for its sound properties (it provides alliteration with “spacer” (“walk”) and approximate rhyme with “ulicą” (“along the street”)), since the resulting sentence is not notably absurd, but the suspicion remains that the street falls steeply mainly in order to give a euphonic sentence. Similarly, the repetition of “spa-” in “spacer” and “spadającą” (“falling”) may also suggest that the street falls in order to provide alliteration.

15. “kamienice, które, zbudowane jak z kartonu, są konglomeratem szyldów...” (81) (“houses which, as if built from cardboard, are a conglomeration of signs...”) The conspicuously foreign sounding “konglomerat” supplies an additional “k-” sound to match “karton” (“cardboard”) and “kamienica” (“[town]house”). The same is true of “pertraktacje” (“negotiations”), “kokota” (“coquette”) and “konwulsja” in the following three examples:

16. "toczą się w nerwowym pośpiechu pertraktacje z przekupnymi urzędnikami..." (83) ("negotiations with venal officials take place in a nervous hurry")
17. "...że każda kobieta w tej dzielnicy jest kokotą" (83) ("...that every women in this district is a coquette")
18. "z konwulsją wstrętu wrytą dookoła ust" (88) ("with a convulsion of abhorrence etched around his mouth")
19. "Strychy, wystrychnięte ze strychów" (90) ("Attics, cheated out of their attics")
20. "kolorowy turkot kółek" (102) ("the colourful rattle of little wheels"). This example again shows the use of a colour word to provide not a clearer visual image, but alliteration.

However, Schulz does not choose words purely because they sound right. His prose, poetic though it might be, is a long way from Futurist poetry. The question is where and how the balance is struck between euphonic phrases and meaningful, coherent sentences. Schulz's construction of stories by allusion and parallel rather than by strict cause and effect relationships allows him considerable freedom in choosing which words to use. But it would be incorrect to say that the structure of the stories is an accidental side-effect of euphony. The twenty or so examples above of sentences whose meanings are deformed by euphony are greatly outnumbered by sentences which, while they may indeed be euphonic, are also logical and meaningful. Also, phonetically organised sentences are by no means incapable of communicating meaningful information or conveying a visual image, as is shown by example 18, above. The previous section, on vocabulary, gave examples of unusual word-combinations from *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą*, but the majority of them were not motivated by alliteration or assonance:

"żarliwy klasycyzm" (182) ("ardent classicism")

"kaskady ozonu" (226) ("cascades of ozone")

"[słup graniczny] grał na wietrze" (230) ("[the border post] played on the wind")

"wjechała w jesień" (230) ("drove into autumn")

Also, in the following examples from “Wichura,” the euphonic organisation of the text is very conspicuous, but the sentences are essentially logical and understandable, though in some cases highly metaphorical or fantastic:

1. “garnki na garnkach i flaszki na flaszkach” (90) (“pots upon pots and bottles upon bottles”)⁴⁴
2. “pustym bateriom butelek” (90) (“empty batteries of bottles”)
3. “drewnianych kozłów, klękających na jodłowe kolana” (91) (“wooden trestles, kneeling on fir knees”)
4. “najazd pyskujących skopców i bredzących cebrów” (91) (“a raid of bawling pails and raving buckets”)
5. “Dudniąc dnami, piętrzyły się wiadra, beczki i konwie, dyndały się gliniane stągwie zdunów” (91) (“With a drumming of their bottoms, the buckets, barrels and pots piled up, potters’ earthenware vats swung”)
6. “kołatały niezgrabnie kołkami” (91) (“rattled clumsily the wooden pegs”)

More examples can be supplied. The following are taken from “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą”:

1. “Przenosiłem się z wagonu do wagonu” (262) (“I moved from wagon to wagon”)
2. “Była to czerń dziwnie nasycona, głęboka i dobroczynna, jak sen pełen mocy i posilności” (263) (“it was a strangely saturated blackness, deep and compassionate, like a dream full of strength and nourishment”). In this case the presence of the word “dobroczynny” (“charitable, philanthropic, compassionate”) appears not to be motivated at all, whether by euphony or by logic. A colour cannot be charitable, but nor does “dobroczynny” supply any alliteration or assonance, and there are many words which would have done to balance the pair of “deep and compassionate” and “strength and nourishment.” Here it seems Schulz has chosen a particular word out of pure wilfulness, almost literally “without rhyme or reason,” though this is not to deny that “compassionate” has meaning.
3. “Zacząłem na palcach posuwać się od drzwi do drzwi...” (263-264) (“I began to advance on tiptoe from door to door”)
4. “I diareę za diareę...” (269) (“And diarrhoea after diarrhoea...”)

⁴⁴ See Jerzy Paszek, “Anagramy Schulza,” *Kresy*, 1993, no. 14, pp. 72-77, for a discussion of

5. "...do starych kupców, do kupców z poważną przeszłością..." (270) ("...to old merchants, to merchants with a respectable past...") These two examples of repetition come from Father's conversation with Joseph.

6. "Tęgie i bujne powietrze, powietrze upojne..." (272) ("A strong and luxuriant air, an intoxicating air...")

7. "...z twarzą zamazaną zmierzchem" (272) ("with a face blurred by dusk")

8. "niuansa nieba" (277) ("a nuance of the sky")

9. "kończąc jakiś długi wywód wyprowadzeniem ostatecznych wniosków" (277) ("finishing some long argument by drawing out the final conclusions")

10. "wyniesiony ponad wszelką wątpliwość" (280) ("removed beyond all doubt")

11. "wpadliśmy po prostu w pułapkę" (281) ("we've simply been had")

12. "Jest to do cna zużyty, znoszony przez ludzi czas, czas przetarty" (282) ("It is time used up to the very end, worn by people, time worn out")

13. "Dzieją się tu jeszcze dziwniejsze rzeczy, rzeczy, które zatajam przed samym sobą, rzeczy fantastyczne..." (284) ("Even stranger things happen here, things which I hide from my own self, fantastic things...") In this example, as in numbers 3, 4, 5, 6 and 12, euphony borders on matters of rhythm, as it consists in repetition. Here the word "rzeczy" is repeated twice for an effect of neurotic, H. P. Lovecraft-style horror, which touches on the hysterical and is strengthened by the description of the black dogs which follows soon after.

14. "Zmaltretowany, zmiżdżony zgrozą, ledwo odczuwam..." (287) ("maltreated, crushed by horror, I hardly felt...")

15. "wtedy skutek wstrząśnięcia" (289) ("then as a result of the jolt")

16. "wciąż wykrzywia konwulsja wycia" (289) ("a convulsion of howling constantly distorted")

In all of these cases – and many more could be supplied – the euphonious sounds do not greatly or at all deform the sense of the utterance. Also, it will be noticed that the examples taken from "Wichura" are both more immediately perceptible, and concentrated into a smaller amount of text, than those in "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą." This leads to the next point to consider: the distribution of euphonic devices. According to Wróblewski, phonic devices are most heavily concentrated in descriptions,

homonyms, anagrams and word-for-word repetition in Schulz.

especially of plants, the presentation of phenomena connected to the changes of aura, times of day and night, and onomatopoeic descriptions of human activity.⁴⁵

In “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą” descriptive passages – especially of nature – tend to have more alliteration, assonance and repetition. The description of the sanatorium itself is not markedly euphonic, although the description of the landscape is (see section 2, above), as is the description of the town, and the examples the narrator gives of the all-pervading sleepiness in part three. Narrative passages contain fewer such devices, with direct speech containing fewer still. Overall, “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą” is not marked by a heavy use of euphony. Briefly, this appears to be because more happens in it than in other stories. By Schulz’s standards, it is quite an eventful story. The direct speech in the story is also unusual in comparison to other stories. Firstly, there is quite a lot of it, with the narrator having conversations with his father and Dr. Gotard, although by chapter 3 Schulz returns to reporting speech. Secondly, the conversations are closer to realistic dialogue than is usual in Schulz. Coinciding with this is a relative lack of euphonic devices and elaborate turns of phrase. Sentences in direct speech are also quite short, and convey a lot of concrete information. Dr. Gotard uses foreign-sounding words like “reaktywować,” and “trick,” but not to achieve euphony. It is more usual in Schulz for direct speech to be a monologue, with the same style as that of the narrator’s voice (for example, Father’s lectures in “Manekiny” and “Druga jesień” (see section 4, below) and Hieronim’s speech in “Dodo,” given in section 1, above).

“Księga” follows a similar pattern to the above, with the exception of direct speech. Descriptive passages are euphonic (e.g. the lengthy first sentence, describing the Book, quoted in chapter 5). Also: “papier zaczynał mglić się, mętnieć, majaczyć błogim przecuciem...” (113-114) (“the paper began to go misty, cloudy, and rave in a blissful presentiment...”) Direct speech, as shown by Joseph’s appeal to his Father, is marked by devices similar to those that characterise descriptive passages. There is word for word repetition (“ty wiesz... ty wiesz dobrze” (117) (“you know... you know well”)) and repetition by use of synonyms (“ten skażony apokryf, tysięczna kopia, nieudolny falsyfikat” (117) (“this tainted, apocryphal book, thousandth copy, inefficient falsification”). In the recounting of the story of Anna Csillag euphony retreats to the background, but it comes to the fore once this is finished, with a static description of a cobbler: “blade oczy nad bezbarwnym, wężącym wąsem” (121) (“pale eyes above a colourless, sniffing moustache”). Less deformed by euphony, but

⁴⁵ Piotr Wróblewski, “Stylistyczne wykorzystanie brzmieniowej warstwy leksyki (na przykładzie

with a strong internal rhyme are the phrases “z palcami w potężnych, mosiężnych sygnetach” (126) (“with fingers in heavy, brass signet rings”), and “demonstrujących w wyszukanych gestach oszukańczy swój towar” (128) (“demonstrating with elaborate gestures our deceitful wares”). Schulz allows himself more freedom from the constraints of logic in descriptive passages, which are strongly represented in his stories.

In “Genialna epoka” euphony is most heavily concentrated in the passages in part 2 describing the narrator’s drawing. In the first passage it takes the form of repeated invocations: “O, te rysunki świetliste...” (133) (“Oh those bright drawings...”) “O, te” is repeated some four times, giving an effect less, perhaps, of euphony than of rhythm. In either case it is clear that the most “poetic” as opposed to prosaic devices are used for descriptions. The second passage on the narrator’s drawings contains the line quoted above: “czereśniowa słodycz, czereśniowy świegot szczygłów” (137) (“cherry sweetness, cherry warbling of goldfinches”), as well as “promienny, poprzedzany przez wieść, przez przecucie, zwiastowany przez loty jaskółek, przez wici świetliste, rozrzucone od mili do mili” (137) (“radiant, preceded by rumour, by presentiment, foretold by flights of swallows, by bright calls to arms, scattered mile to mile”). Although this line concerns the approach of someone, it flows directly from the description of the drawings. As in “Księga,” the dialogue, at least the narrator’s part, is similar in style to the narrative, including the use of euphony and repetition. The young Joseph cries out to his parents: “A teraz patrzcie, co za wylew, co za rozkwit wszystkiego, co za błogość...” (132) (“And now look what an outpouring, what a blooming of everything, what bliss...”)

A brief survey of “Wiosna” shows that, once again, euphonic devices are clustered around descriptive passages. For example, chapters 3, 12 and 21 are descriptive and contain such lines as:

1. “jasne i rozległe, za rozległe niemal...” (151) (“bright and spacious, too spacious almost...”)
2. “Były to dni na wyrost, dni...” (151) (“they were days with room for growth, days...”) ⁴⁶
3. “wyglądał się w wielkim i pustym wianiu i stawał wreszcie zatchniony...” (151) (“starved itself in a great and empty blowing and stopped at last, breathless...”)

prozy Brunona Schulza),” in *Prace filologiczne*, vol. 33, Warsaw, 1986, pp. 433-440, (434).

⁴⁶ Paszek notes that this type of repetition in Schulz is connected with Młoda Polska practice, and in particular with Stefan Żeromski: “Anagramy Schulza,” *Kresy*, 1993, no. 14, p. 73. See also Krzysztof Miklaszewski, “O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości prozy Brunona Schulza (na przykładzie *Sklepow cynamonych*),” *Zeszyty naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Prace historycznoliterackie*, no. 21, 1971, pp. 49-66, (59-61).

4. "Mieliśmy w tych dniach wszyscy wilczy apetyt" (152) ("In those days we all had powerful appetites"). Here the usual word order is rearranged to bring "wszyscy" and "wilczy" together.
5. "w chrzęście tysięcy nadchodzących nóg" (160) ("in the clatter of thousands of approaching feet")
6. "w gwałtownych cichych trzepotach, w daremnych wzlotach entuzjazmu" (160-161) ("in violent, quiet flutters, in vain flights of enthusiasm")
7. "Trzeba pewnej domyślności, pewnej odwagi serca, pewnego polotu..." (179) ("You need a certain perspicacity, a certain boldness of heart, a certain inspiration...")
8. "Wysmukłe nogi o śniadej karnacji przełożone są z niewymownym wdziękiem przez siebie" (179) ("Her slender, dusky complexioned legs are crossed in ineffable charm")

However, in chapters 29 and 37, where more action occurs, euphony is less noticeable, with the exception of those passages which are descriptive, for even in eventful adventure stories like "Wiosna," Schulz always finds space for extensive descriptions. This is true too of the biographical chapter 29, which sets out the history of Franz Joseph I and his brother, Archduke Maximilian.

1. "tysiącrotnie zamkniętych i zapieczętowanych na tysiąc pieczęci milczenia" (188) ("closed a thousand times over and sealed under a thousand seals of silence")
2. "albo dźwięki dzwonów dopełniające się w różanych litanjach" (190) ("or the sounds of bells complementing each other in rosy litanies")
3. "w pięknych kręgach mitologicznych, w kręgach pięknie zagiętych i zatoczonych" (191) ("in beautiful mythological circles, in circles beautifully twisted and turned")
4. "Murzyni, Murzyni, tłumy Murzynów w mieście!" (203) ("Negroes, Negroes, crowds of Negroes in the town!")

Examples (1) and (2) show Schulz's use of euphonic devices at its most noticeable. Perhaps not surprisingly, this is in descriptions of sounds (or, as in example 1, lack of sounds): the examples from "Wichura," above, describe the *noise* made by wind, even if this spills over into visual images. The description in "Edzio" of the giant night-time conversation is also characterised by euphony: "Wszystkie mieszkania domu, wszystkie pokoje i alkierze pełne są wówczas gwaru, wędrowki, wchodzenia i wychodzenia.... posyłają posłańców z pilnymi instrukcjami" (305) ("All the flats in the

house, all the rooms and alcoves are full then of voices, wandering, entrances and exits.... they send messengers with urgent instructions”).

It is difficult to generalise about Schulz’s use of euphonic devices. This is bound to be the case in a prose text, where the dominance or otherwise of euphony in organising the text depends to a great extent on how closely we read the text. As was stated in section 2, above, it is always the individual who feels the neologism and the out-of-place words. While the presence of euphonic words is demonstrable, it is again the individual who perceives and assesses their role in the overall organisation of the text. Prose euphony in particular eludes Formalist attempts to be scientific. Nevertheless, it is evident that the organisation of Schulz’s prose is influenced by phonetics, and that this applies especially to descriptive passages. His abandonment or loosening of realistic causal relationships gives great latitude in the composition of phrases, some of which, like “pod wpływem wiosennej grawitacji miesiąca” (363) (“under the influence of the springtime gravity of the moon”), arise at least partly from a desire for alliteration or assonance. However, there are many semantic peculiarities, like “jak z pękających czarodziejskich tortów” (27) (“as from bursting magical cakes”), which cannot readily be explained as a result of a desire for euphony. Structure in Schulz is influenced by the repetition of the same words, not words which merely sound alike. Euphony is used to draw attention to the words themselves, rather than the objects to which they refer.

IV. Syntax

This section will be concerned with the relationship between (a) syntax and meaning and (b) syntax and narrative. At times Schulz adopts particular styles, which are often signalled by the syntax, as well as vocabulary. Comic effect is gained from the contrast between the style and the subject matter. For example, Father’s speeches are written sometimes in the style of learned discourses, sometimes in the style of lyric poetry, but the conclusions drawn are ludicrous and unsuited to the style. In this case Schulz plays on our familiarity with literary and non-literary conventions: serious subjects do not demand or require a particular type of syntax, for example, consisting of complex, well-balanced sentences, with (in English, if not in Polish) no contractions but are generally associated with, among other things, more formal constructions. This section also looks at the connection between syntax and narrative. A device used by Schulz is delaying the development of the action. This can be done by

various means, such as flashbacks and digressions. Schulz also retards plot development at the level of the individual sentence. This is done by arranging the syntax in a particular way.

This section and the one which follows, on rhythm, illustrate the difficulty of dividing this study into clear-cut discrete areas. For example, Schulz's use of large numbers of epithets has an effect on syntax, but this is dealt with in section 1, above. Some space is given here to Schulz's "biblical" syntax (repeated use of sentences starting with "and"), but this is also covered under the heading of "parallels," since it is the syntax (as well as other things, such as the Joseph dream) which suggests the parallel with the Bible.

The studies of Schulz's syntax which have appeared so far are largely descriptive. They examine the length of sentences, the number and type of clauses and so on, but draw few conclusions as to the relationship of syntax on other elements of the prose. In "Charakterystyka składniowo-stylistyczna prozy Brunona Schulza," Piotr Wróblewski finds that 30% of all predications ("wypowiedzenia") in Schulz are simple sentences (i.e. subject and predicate).⁴⁷ This figure is more or less confirmed by Marek Ruszkowski, whose analysis is based on 15% of all sentences in *Sklepy cynamonowe* and *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą*. He gives a figure of 33.4%, noting that Władysław Śliwiński found the corresponding percentage in inter-war literature to be nearly the same: 31.6%. Wróblewski and Ruszkowski agree that simple sentences in Schulz are characterised by being highly developed.⁴⁸ Wróblewski finds that nearly half of them in Schulz have more than seven elements ("składniki"), while the corresponding figure for Maria Dąbrowska is less than 10%. Ruszkowski writes that 86.8% of simple constructions ("konstrukcje pojedyncze") are developed, the average number of elements being 8.3.⁴⁹ By comparison, among Młoda Polska writers the average length of simple sentences in *Próchno* by Berent, is 3.14 elements; in Tetmajer's *Anioł śmierci*, 3.4; in Przybyszewski's novels, 3.96; in Żeromski's *Ludzie bezdomni*, 6.79 and in his *Popioły*, 7.45.

⁴⁷ Piotr Wróblewski, "Charakterystyka składniowo-stylistyczna prozy Brunona Schulza," in *Prace filologiczne*, vol. 29, Warsaw, 1979, pp. 289-307, (289).

⁴⁸ Marek Ruszkowski, "Niektóre właściwości składniowe prozy Brunona Schulza," in Jerzy Brzeziński, ed., *Język osobniczy jako przedmiot badań lingwistycznych*, Zielona Góra, 1988, pp. 153-161, (155).

⁴⁹ Ruszkowski, "Niektóre właściwości składniowe," p. 155. A problem with comparisons is the inconsistent use of terminology by the authors. Wróblewski uses the terms "wypowiedzenie" (utterance), "zdanie" (clause or sentence) and "wypowiedzenie zespolone" (complex utterance) in accordance with Klemensiewicz's terminology – which he does not expand on (Zenon Klemensiewicz, "Problematyka składniowej interpretacji stylu," *W kręgu języka literackiego i artystycznego*, Warsaw, 1961).

Wróblewski notes that over 80% of nouns in Schulz's prose have a qualifier, with genitival qualifiers being particularly favoured. Unqualified nouns and simple sentences ("wypowiedzenia pojedyncze") which are "undeveloped" are usually separate, serving to close off sections of the text, emphasise an idea, or sum up observations. They sometimes act as "headlines." According to Ruszkowski, only 3.6% of simple sentences are undeveloped.⁵⁰

Complex compound sentences ("wypowiedzenia złożone zespolone") occur more often than simple sentences. Wróblewski finds that Schulz tends to use a greater number of clauses per compound sentence than average, ahead of Breza, Sienkiewicz, Dąbrowska and Słowacki, as well as Ingarden and Milewski (non-fiction). For example, predications ("wypowiedzenia") consisting of more than five elements form 3.1% of Dąbrowska's prose, but 13.6% of Schulz's.⁵¹ Ruszkowski gives the average length of hypotactic-paratactic complex predicates ("wypowiedzenia złożone") as 4.2 clauses ("zdania składowe").⁵² For purely hypotactic complex predicates the figure is 2.3 clauses ("wypowiedzenia składowe").⁵³

Wróblewski and Ruszkowski evidently accept Klemensiewicz's theory that hypotaxis is more intellectual than parataxis, but this does not seem to help clarify matters. Ruszkowski finds a relatively high incidence of hypotaxis (66.1% of all complex constructions ("konstrukcje złożone")) in Schulz, but then qualifies this by saying that "pure hypotaxis" only accounts for 32.4% of complex sentences.⁵⁴ This high frequency, Ruszkowski says, suits what he calls Schulz's "universalist ambition" to penetrate the essential nature of the depicted events, to fathom the sense of the world, and to draw conclusions from apparently insignificant facts.⁵⁵ Speina agrees that Schulz's ambition is "universalist" and that analysing and arguing finds its natural form in complex sentences with many subordinate clauses.⁵⁶ However, Krzysztof Miklaszewski writes in "Cena świadomości": "A certain conscious 'primitiveness' in the syntax is confirmed by the dominance of the paratactic relationship of complex sentences (62%) over hypotactic."⁵⁷ Speina also finds that in Schulz's prose there is a

⁵⁰ Ruszkowski, "Niektóre właściwości składniowe," p. 157.

⁵¹ Wróblewski, "Charakterystyka składniowo-stylistyczna," p. 299.

⁵² Ruszkowski, "Niektóre właściwości składniowe," p. 157.

⁵³ Ruszkowski, "Niektóre właściwości składniowe," p. 158.

⁵⁴ Ruszkowski, "Niektóre właściwości składniowe," p. 157.

⁵⁵ Ruszkowski, "Niektóre właściwości składniowe," p. 158.

⁵⁶ Jerzy Speina, *Bankructwo realności: Proza Brunona Schulza*, Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu: Prace wydziału filologiczno-filozoficznego, vol. 24, no. 1, Warsaw-Poznań, 1974, p. 84.

⁵⁷ Miklaszewski, "Cena świadomości," p. 289.

sometimes monotonous excess of hypotaxis, pointing to a link between Schulz and *Młoda Polska*,⁵⁸ though it will be remembered that Ruszkowski finds Schulz's simple sentences to be more developed than that of typical *Młoda Polska* writers.

Schulz, Wróblewski notes, uses parataxis in those situations where it is used universally – for example in enumerating phenomena existing simultaneously, or when giving a dry report. Hypotaxis is, according to him, the best way to achieve what Schulz has in mind – exploring connections between things and getting to the root of matters. He concludes on the basis of the material examined that Schulz does not reduce the amount of information communicated in exchange for greater transparency. The very long and developed sentences permit a unified presentation of a mood or image. Short sentences would break the unity.

Wróblewski concludes that the proportion of qualifying subordinate clauses is high because a single qualifying word on its own would not convey enough information: clause is built upon clause in order to provide as much information as possible. However, I see no reason why more information could not be conveyed without complicating the syntax in this way, although Wróblewski would argue that to do so in any other way would break the unity of the presentation. In considering complex compound sentences Wróblewski assumes that the author wishes to make his or her meaning clear (increasing the number of clauses in a sentence also increases the amount of information conveyed, but at the cost, as it were, of clarity and ease of transmitting information). A Formalist would argue that far from making the meaning clear, the point of poetic language is to make the reader aware of the words themselves at the cost, if necessary, of clarity of communication.

Among other characteristics of Schulz's syntax noted by Wróblewski are the following three: (1) the use of comparative qualifiers, (2) the use of many complements defined by qualifiers, and (3) frequent use of "gradation" qualifiers, which describe not just the properties of an object, but the intensity of those properties. Ruszkowski draws attention to Schulz's habit of placing the adjective after the noun and to his positioning of verbs at the end of clauses,⁵⁹ which, as was seen in chapter 2, was resisted by the editors of the periodicals in which his stories appeared.

Wróblewski also notes Schulz's preference for emotive indicators ("wyznaczniki") such as "o!" and "ach!" over intellectual ones such as "oczywiście" and "zwłaszcza." Further, Wróblewski

⁵⁸ Speina, *Bankructwo realności*, p. 84.

⁵⁹ Ruszkowski, "Niektóre właściwości składniowe," pp. 159-160.

finds that in compound sentences Schulz's use of "and," "that" and "but" does not diverge widely from the norm, except in the case of "i," which gives a biblical flavour to the prose (see below).

Mukařovský writes that aesthetic effect can come, for example, from the predominance of simple (subject and predicate) over developed (more than subject and predicate) sentences (or vice versa)⁶⁰ and as we have seen Wróblewski and Ruszkowski go to some trouble to quantify this. For Wróblewski, aesthetic effect comes from the sense of unity provided by long, complex sentences. Mukařovský advises relating syntax (syntax especially) to the whole work. In this section I will begin by examining the relationship between syntax and meaning in "Druga jesień." Here a very clear relationship exists between syntax and theme. At the beginning the syntactic style suits the subject matter. This changes in the course of the story, as Schulz presents Father's lecture, until at the end it is hard to tell whether father or son (the narrator) is speaking.

In the first part of "Druga jesień," the narrator tells us about his father's studies on the local climate. The sentence structure here is typically Schulzean – the first sentence exemplifies much of what Wróblewski has called attention to:

Wśród wielu prac naukowych, podejmowanych przez mego ojca w rzadkich chwilach spokoju i uciszenia wewnętrznego, pomiędzy ciosami klęsk i katastrof, w jakie obfitowało to życie awanturnicze i burzliwe – najbliższe jego sercu były studia nad meteorologią porównawczą, a zwłaszcza nad specyficznym klimatem naszej prowincji, pełnym jedynych w swoim rodzaju osobliwości (238) (Among the many scientific studies undertaken by my father in rare moments of peace and inner serenity between the blows of disasters and catastrophes in which his adventurous and stormy life abounded, closest to his heart were studies of comparative meteorology, particularly those of the peculiar climate of our province, full of one-of-a-kind oddities)

"Studies" is qualified twice with single words ("many" and "scientific") and once with a whole clause ("undertaken by my father...") "Moments" is qualified three times: ("rare," "of peace" and "of inner serenity"). "Blows" has two genitive qualifiers ("of disasters" and "of catastrophes"). "Life" is described with two adjectives, and "climate" has three elements qualifying it. Even the word used to describe the features of the climate, "oddities," has to be qualified: they are "one-of-a-kind" oddities. All this is in a sentence of 49 words with just two finite verbs.⁶¹ There is a mixture of sentence types in the story, but long and developed ones predominate.

⁶⁰ Mukařovský, "On Poetic Language," *The Word and Verbal Art*, p. 48.

⁶¹ "Praca" has two qualifying adjectives and one qualifying clause; "chwile" has three qualifying elements ("rzadkie," "spokój," and "uciszenie"); "ciosy" has two genitive qualifications; "życie" has two qualifiers; "klimat" has three qualifiers.

Beginning with “Kilka rzeczowych uwag o naszym muzeum...” (238) (“A few material remarks about our museum...”) the syntax becomes more businesslike. Formal register constructions using the anterior participle, such as “odkupiwszy” (“having bought”) and “wyznaczywszy” (“having granted”) (239), rarely encountered in speech, make an appearance. Schulz avoids using relative clauses introduced by “który” or “co” (“which”), preferring instead constructions of the type: “tylko fachowcom znane” (239) (“known only to experts”) to the more colloquial “które były znane tylko przez fachowców” or “które tylko fachowcy znali” (“which were known only by experts” / “which only experts knew”). This somewhat stuffy, bureaucratic syntax is (at first) in keeping with the subject matter: a dry evaluation of the administration of an art bequest. As the narrator moves into describing the paintings themselves, the syntax changes. Clauses are introduced by “jakby” (240) (“as if”) and the word “and” (“i”) appears more often – once at the beginning of a sentence. “A” (the contrastive “and”) is also used to begin a sentence.

This loosening of the syntactic structure reaches its height when Father is quoted directly but it is significant that the change is not abrupt. The gradual change suggests that Father’s tract on the climate is a further development of his son’s pre-amble; that there is in fact only one speaker here. This impression is strengthened by what is happening at the thematic level. The son’s initially dry narration has become steadily more fanciful until the point where Father takes over the story. Father’s first utterance is a rhetorical question: we have come a long way from the academically titled “Zarys ogólnej systematyki jesieni” (238) (“An Outline of the General Systematics of Autumn”). Father’s treatise abounds in rhetorical flourishes. The second sentence is full of phrases and clauses which add little or no new information to the ones preceding them, e.g. “złudne licytacje/ tłumne aukcje/ udane wyprzedaje” (“deceptive auctions/ crowded auctions/ successful clearance sales”); “dziki hazard/ gra na baissę” (“wild gambling/ speculation”); “utrącajusz/ marnotrawić” (“profligate/ to waste”); these examples are on page 241. If we compare this to the first sentence of the “rzeczowe uwagi” it can be seen that the latter is a far more efficient giver of information, though still a complex sentence. In Father’s speech (for it is a speech, judging by the syntax, and not a scholarly dissertation) verbs begin to drop out of sentences: “Nigdy nie dotrzeć do żadnego sedna” (241) (“Never to reach any core”) and “I ta pośpieszna gorączka, ten zdyszany i późny karnawał, ta panika nadrannych sal balowych i wieża Babel masek, które nie mogą trafić do swych szat prawdziwych” (241) (“And that hurried fever, that breathless and late carnival, that panic of early morning ballrooms and the tower of Babel of masks

that can never reach their real garments”). There is more word-for-word repetition: “*naszą drugą, naszą pseudojesienią*” (241, my italics) (“our second, our pseudo-autumn”) and “Jesień, jesień...” (242) (“Autumn, autumn...”) Schulz’s device of beginning sentences with “i” (“and”) noted by Wróblewski, reaches biblical proportions in Father’s speech: “I jest wielkie bezhołowie i każdy ciągnie za sznury kurtyn, i niebo, wielkie jesienne niebo wisi w strzępach prospektów i pełne jest skrzypienie bloków” (241) (“And there is great chaos and everyone pulls on the curtain ropes, and the heavens, the great autumnal heavens hang in strips of prospectuses and are filled with the screeching of pulleys”).

Aesthetic effect comes here from the clash between language and theme.⁶² Father’s speech is at one level lyrical poetry; at another an academic discourse, as is the case in “Traktat o manekinach.” Careful use of syntax is one of the devices used in preparing this clash. Father’s “Outline of the General Systematics of Autumn” ends with three sentences beginning with the particle “jak” (“jakże,” “jakich” and “jak”), the first an exclamation, the last two rhetorical questions. The change of syntax that follows the end of Father’s speech is far more abrupt than that which came at the start of it. It is followed immediately by two shortish sentences from the narrator. But this return to earth is short-lived. From “Jesień nie chciała się skończyć” (242) (“Autumn did not want to end”) on, each sentence gets progressively longer and more complex, returning in style to that of Father. Here too, this is accompanied by a change in subject matter – from the concrete reality of Father’s life (mention of the threat of Adela) to the high-flown fancy of the final sentence’s imagery: “jak nalot kolorowych *confetti* – wspaniałe pawie i feniksy” (242-243) (“like a coating of colourful confetti, magnificent peacocks and phoenixes”). The last sentence, though formally separate from Father’s treatise, actually belongs to it, from the point of view of both its imagery and its syntax.

In “The connection between devices of *Syuzhet* construction and general stylistic devices” Shklovsky deals with the important story-telling device of retarding or delaying the action.⁶³ This is necessary if the reader is to focus on the telling of the story itself. According to Shklovsky, it can be easily observed in folk legends and fairy tales, where episodes often occur three times for no realistically motivated reason. Apart from Shklovsky’s examples, this three-step construction is also very common in jokes, many of which pre-suppose three characters for this very reason. The essence

⁶² Ruskowski holds that the modelling of the language on that of the Bible harmonises with the importance of the theme (Ruskowski, “Niektóre właściwości składniowe,” p. 161).

⁶³ Viktor Shklovsky, “The connection between devices,” in Bann and Bowlt, *Russian Formalism*, pp.

of the joke could be given in the last of the three steps but, even though jokes seem to rely more than poetry on a “point,” which is seldom as open to interpretation as the “point” or “meaning” of a poem, they are rarely if ever told without the apparently superfluous first two steps.

Schulz delays the action of his stories at the level of the individual sentence and of larger elements. This is characteristic of his style and can be seen in all of his stories but is very striking in “Pan.”⁶⁴ The “punch line” of “Pan” is that the young narrator comes across a tramp going to the toilet on a piece of wasteland. But we cannot arrive at this point too soon, or the irony of the clash between a child’s imagination and coarse reality would be lost. There must be a build-up before the fall. Schulz delays the final image of a Pan without a flute by means of fantastical descriptions of the garden, but also by interfering with the syntax of individual sentences.⁶⁵ The sentences become very long, swelled by “unnecessary” diversions and repetitions. There are many examples: “Wszystko to, *splątane i puszyste*, przepojone było łagodnym powietrzem, podbite błękitnym wiatrem i napuszczone niebem” (55, my italics) (“Everything, tangled and downy, was filled by a gentle air, conquered by a blue wind and saturated by the sky”). Neither “splątane” (“tangled”) nor “puszyste” (“fluffy, downy”) add anything to our knowledge. “Puszysty” has already been used two sentences previously, as has “zmieszany” (mixed, mingled), a near synonym of “splątany” in the context. Then there are the three instrumentals which end the sentence, none of which tells us much. What, for instance, does “saturated by the sky” mean? A more skeletal version of the sentence might read: “Wszystko to przepojone było, podbite łagodnym wiatrem.” There is also the word order of these retarding clauses to consider. This can be seen in another example, similar to the above: “A jedna z tych roślin, *żółta i pełna mlecznego soku w bladych łodygach, nadęta powietrzem, pędziła...*” (55, my italics) (“And one of those plants, yellow and full of milky juice in its pale stems, puffed up with air, went...”) Schulz slows the sentence down with commas. The first comma indicates a parenthetical remark. It serves as a warning to keep the noun-phrase (“jedna z tych roślin”) in mind because it may be some time before we return to it with the verb of which it is the subject: “pędziła.”

The syntax is very artfully arranged in the following sentence:

54-72.

⁶⁴ Bolecki says that retarding syntax is a typical of a verbose style (“stylistyka wielosłownia”). Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 75.

⁶⁵ Krzysztof Miklaszewski interprets the long digression describing the wild, overgrown garden as a parallel with the wild overgrown tramp of the title. (“Cena świadomości,” pp. 285-286).

Ale w miarę, jak opadał w głąb długiej odnogi i zanurzał się w cień między tylną ścianę opuszczoną fabryki wody sodowej a długą walącą się ścianę stodoły, wyraźnie pochmurniał, stawał się opryskliwy i niedbały, zapuszczał się dziko i niechlujnie, *srożył się pokrzywami, zjeżał bodiakami, parszywił chwastem wszelkim*, aż w samym końcu między ścianami, w szerokiej prostokątnej zatoce tracił wszelką miarę i wpadał w szal (56, my italics) (But as the ground fell off into the depths of a long spur and plunged into the shadow between the back wall of the abandoned soda-water factory and the long, falling down wall of the barn, it darkened greatly, became harsh and unkempt; it fell into wild and slatternly neglect, raged with nettles, bristled with thistles, went mangy with all kinds of weed, until at the very end, between the walls, in the broad rectangular bay, it lost all moderation and went insane)

Again, three instrumental phrases interrupt the flow of the sentence to its conclusion, which itself is split in two (“tracił...i wpadał”). The conclusion is also delayed by the repetition of the information that this happens between the walls (which are no less carefully described for being incidental to the sentence), as well as the comparison of this space to a bay (“zatoła”).

When Schulz comes down from these flights of descriptive prose the syntax changes. The more narrative information there is, as opposed to descriptive – Formalists might talk of dynamic and static motifs respectively⁶⁶ – the shorter, less complex the sentence.⁶⁷ “Wtedy nagle ujrzałem go. Zanurzony po pachy w łopuchach, kuczał przede mną” (57) (“Then suddenly I saw him. Submerged up to his armpits in cockleburs, he squatted in front of me”). A handful of sentences at this point develop the action of “Pan” more than the contents of the preceding several pages, and this is true of many of Schulz’s stories. In “Nawiedzenie,” for example, Father’s illness is introduced thus: “Mój ojciec powoli zanikał, wiądnął w oczach” (18) (“My father was slowly fading away, withering before our eyes”), to be followed by an extended description of the symptoms, with similarly extensive sentences:

Zdawać się mogło, że osobowość jego rozpadła się na wiele pokłóconych i rozbieżnych jaźni, gdyż kłócił się ze sobą głośno, pertraktował usilnie i namiętnie, przekonywał i prosił, to znowu zdawał się przewodniczyć zgromadzeniu wielu interesantów, których usiłował z całym nakładem żarliwości i swady pogodzić (18) (It might have seemed as if his personality had split into many quarrelling and discordant selves, because he argued loudly with himself, he negotiated strenuously and passionately, he persuaded and asked; then again he seemed to be presiding over a meeting of many interested parties whom he tried mightily to reconcile with energy and conviction)

Here every new element in the sentence immediately splits in two (“pertraktował usilnie i namiętnie, przekonywał i prosił”) while the “motor” of the sentence, “Zdawać się mogło...” also is split in two: “...to znowu zdawał się.” To avoid a monotonous see-saw effect, there are not two but three verbal

⁶⁶ Boris Tomashevsky, “Thematics,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 62-95, (70).

units: “klócił się...pertraktował...przekonywał i prosił.” This not only slows down the progress of the story toward its end, but mimics Father’s apparent schizophrenia. Parallelism, which organises the disposition of the material (see chapter 4, section 3), is also at work in the syntax of “Nawiedzenie”:

An example of parallel-based syntax is the long sentence:

Pełne wielkich szaf, głębokich kanap, bladych luster i tandetnych palm sztucznych, mieszkanie nasze coraz bardziej popadało w stan zaniedbania wskutek opieszałości matki, przesiadującej w sklepie, i niedbalstwa smukłonożnej Adeli, która, nie nadzorowana przez nikogo, spędzała dni przed lustrami na rozwlekłej toalecie, zostawiając wszędzie jej ślady w postaci wyczesanych włosów, grzebieni, porzuconych pantofelków i gorsetów (13) (Full of large wardrobes, deep sofas, pale mirrors, and trashy artificial palms, our apartment sank deeper and deeper into a state of neglect owing to the indolence of my mother, who sat around the shop most of the time, and the negligence of slim-legged Adela, who, unsupervised by anyone, spent her days in front of mirrors doing herself up and leaving her traces everywhere in the shape of combed-out hair, combs, discarded slippers, and corsets)

The four objects mentioned in the first clause are matched by the four things Adela leaves scattered around her in the final clause. There is also a parallel between the use of the genitive in “w stan zaniedbania” and in “w postaci wyczesanych...” Retardation is at work in the sentence: “Od dni, od tygodni, gdy zdawał się być pogrążonym w zawitych konto-korrentach – myśl jego zapuszczała się tajnie w labirynty własnych wnętrzości” (16) (“For days, for weeks, while he seemed to be engrossed in the complicated current accounts – his thoughts had been secretly exploring the labyrinth of his own entrails”). Here it is achieved by the repetition of information (“for days, for weeks”). Another example in “Nawiedzenie” occurs on page 20: “Wiecznie zaaferowany, chorobliwie ożywiony, z wypiekami na suchych policzkach, nie zauważał nas i przeoczał” (“Perpetually confused, unhealthily excited, with flushes on his dry cheeks, he paid us no attention and overlooked us”). Here there is a three-step retardation of the action of the sentence, which is that Father ignores the family. The following sentence, “Przywykliśmy do jego nieszkodliwej obecności, do jego cichego gaworzenia, do tego dziecinnego, w sobie zatopionego świetotu, którego trele przebiegały niejako na marginesie naszego czasu” (20) (“We became accustomed to his harmless presence, to his quiet babbling, to that childlike, self-absorbed twitter, whose trills as it were ran along the margins of our time”) also displays three-step construction, (do jego...do jego...do tego), a device which Schulz defamiliarises by building into the third member a sub clause with an extra syllable, which thus makes itself “felt.”

Do tego dziecinnego

aAa aaAa

⁶⁷ Miklaszewski, “Cena świadomości,” pp. 287-8.

The three-part construction gives the sentence a strong rhythm, which is then broken by the presence of an extra syllable in “zatopionego.”

“Noc lipcowa” begins with fairly compact sentences (e.g. “Siostra po ciężkim położu wyjechała do kąpiel, szwagier pojawiał się tylko w porach posiłków, a rodzice przebywali do późnej nocy w sklepie” (223) (“After a very difficult confinement, my sister went away to a spa, my brother-in-law began to appear only at mealtimes, and my parents stayed in the shop till late at night’)) but once the scene has been set for the description of a July night, the more characteristically Schulzean sentences come to the fore, with the notable (and therefore “felt”) exception of the two-word invocations (“Noc lipcowa!” (225)) In this story too, Schulz is freer with formal syntactic considerations, some sentences lacking finite verbs in what is closer in parts to lyric poetry than prose: “Noc lipcowa! Tajemny fluid mroku, żywa, czujna i ruchliwa materia ciemności, nieustannie kształtująca coś z chaosu i każdy kształt natychmiast zarzucająca!” (226) (“July Night! Secret fluid of dusk, living, watchful, and mobile matter of darkness, ceaselessly shaping something out of chaos and immediately rejecting every shape!”)

The effect of these short sentences, sometimes set off typographically in their own paragraph, is also to break the rhythm built up by the carefully balanced clauses of the longer sentences.⁶⁸ The break in rhythm is sharp because it so often coincides with a switch from static motifs to dynamic, and will be discussed below.

V. Rhythm

For his use of highly rhythmical prose, Schulz is sometimes accused of being an epigone of *Młoda Polska*. Stefan Napierski writes (in 1939): “It all belongs to secession and its hackneyed repertoire.... All of Schulz’s ‘thaumaturgy’ is nothing more than the mummification of modernism.”⁶⁹ Artur Sandauer also refers to *Młoda Polska* in “Rzeczywistość zdegradowana,”⁷⁰ and in *Kaden-*

⁶⁸ Miklaszewski observes this at the level of individual syllables within sentences. “O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości,” pp. 58-9.

⁶⁹ Kazimierz Wyka and Stefan Napierski, “Dwugłos o Schulzu,” reprinted in Kazimierz Wyka, *Stara szuflada*, Cracow, 1967, pp. 259-271, (268-269). First published in *Ateneum*, 1939, no. 1, pp. 156-163.

⁷⁰ “Rzeczywistość zdegradowana (Rzecz o Brunonie Schulzu),” in Bruno Schulz, *Proza*, Cracow, 1964, pp. 5-43, (33-34). See also, for example, Zygmunt Frydryszczak, “Avangarda czy epigonizm? O

Bandrowski's lines, written in 1911, there is something of Schulz: "Tu mieszka: na wydmie, na wydmuchu, na odsłoniętym chylu. Tu pod pokrywą zamkniętych murów wrogo sprawuje srogie rzemiosło"⁷¹ ("This is where he lives: on the dune, on the windswept place, on the uncovered bend. Here under the cover of closed-in walls he harshly pursues his harsh trade").

Rhythm is generally defined as the passage of regular intervals of time between definite events. The appearance in writing of regular intervals raises expectations in the reader, which may or may not be fulfilled. If the expectations are fulfilled too precisely, the rhythm becomes monotonous. Prose rhythm is a problematic area, with widely varying approaches to its study. Krzysztof Miklaszewski for example, considers the recurrence of analogous situations to be a constituent factor of rhythm, while D. W. Harding maintains that such parallels may indeed create rhythm in a play or novel, but it will only be discernible on close study.⁷² When reading on the subject one often finds quite subjective statements to the effect that, for example, finishing sentences with "sharp" adjectives and beginning with "pliant" adjectives adds briskness.⁷³ Holman's *Handbook to Literature* has the following to say about prose rhythm: "Attempts have been made from time to time to evolve a system of scansion for prose, but none of them has proved satisfactory."⁷⁴

Writing rhythmical prose is an artistic device whose effect is to divert attention to the language rather than the message. The part played by syntax in giving Schulz's prose rhythm has been examined by Wróblewski and by Miklaszewski. Wróblewski finds Schulz's prose to be strongly rhythmical. The rhythm is often achieved by means of a three-fold syntactic structure, or by repetition. He gives by way of an example the following sentence:

"To mieszkanie puste i zapuszczone nie uznawało go,
te meble i ściany śledziły za nim z milczącą krytyką." (Pan Karol, 60)

("The flat, empty and deserted, did not recognise him,
the furniture and walls followed him with silent criticism")

Sklepach cynamonowych B. Schulza," *Warmia i Mazury*, 1985, no. 3, pp. 8-9. (Frydryszczak places Schulz in the avant-garde.)

⁷¹ Juliusz Kaden-Bandrowski, "Hycel," in *Zawody. Zbytki. Nowele*, Cracow, 1982, p. 28.

⁷² Miklaszewski, "O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości," p. 51; D. W. Harding, *Words into Rhythm: English speech rhythm in verse and prose*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 136.

⁷³ Charles R. Crow, "The Style of Henry James: *The Wings of the Dove*," Harold C. Martin, ed., *Style in Prose Fiction: English Institute Essays 1958*, New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1959, pp. 172-189, (175).

The two parts each have the same number of syllables, and, Wróblewski points out, in four cases the stress falls on identically placed syllables in each line (underlined, above).⁷⁵ His study of this aspect is less thorough than Miklaszewski's, noting only that there are plenty of examples in Schulz of rhythmic prose.

In "O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości prozy Brunona Schulza" Miklaszewski explores various recurring "definite events" which give Schulz's prose rhythm. One of these is "situational rhyme," dealt with in this thesis in chapter 4, section 3. Another is the recurrence of similar vowel sounds. The consideration of recurring identical or similar sound groups is an issue dealt with in sections 2 and 3, above. Miklaszewski briefly notes that the choice of sentence groupings is not dictated solely by meaning but also by sound.⁷⁶

The author examines the number of syllables in "conceptual-structural units" ("całostki myślowo-konstrukcyjne") (usually, in practice, marked off by commas), finding that the units are often of the same or nearly the same number of syllables.⁷⁷ In Schulz, this is a far more common way of achieving syllabic parallels than the use of words that sound alike. A problem with this approach is that not everyone will agree what constitutes a conceptual-structural unit. Prose allows the reader much more freedom in this respect than verse. Nevertheless, Miklaszewski produces some examples which are hard to argue with:

Ale szczęśliwy <u>moment</u> <u>mijał</u> ,	(9 syllables)
amalgamat <u>świtu</u> <u>przekwitał</u> ,	(9 syllables)
wezbrany <u>ferment</u> <u>dnia</u> ,	(6 syllables)
już <u>niemal</u> <u>dościgły</u>	(6 syllables)
opadał z <u>powrotem</u> }	
w <u>bezsilną</u> <u>szarość</u> }	(6+5 syllables) ⁷⁸

⁷⁴ C. Hugh Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*, 3rd edn., Indianapolis, Odyssey Press, 1972, p. 420.

⁷⁵ Wróblewski, "Charakterystyka składniowo-stylistyczna," p. 305. Quoting the 1964 edition of Schulz's prose, Wróblewski places commas after "mieszkanie" and "zapuszczone." These do not appear in the Biblioteka Narodowa edition used in this thesis.

⁷⁶ Miklaszewski, "O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości," pp. 53-54.

⁷⁷ Miklaszewski, "O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości," p. 56.

⁷⁸ Miklaszewski's example, p. 56; stressed syllables underlined. The line can be found on p. 30 of

Schulz frequently places stressed monosyllables in his prose, which, like most Polish prose, is generally made up of trochaic, amphibrachic, and peonic groups. Miklaszewski attributes two functions to this. It breaks up the monotonous melody, and it “brings into relief the dramatisation of the presentation.”⁷⁹ Rhythm, he continues, is often created by word for word repetition (see section 3, above) and repetition of synonyms. Rhythm’s effect (of drawing attention to itself) is particularly strong, when the same word or words are repeated at the beginning or end of successive sentences or clauses (see the example of “jak,” in “Druga jesień,” in section 4, above). Generally, according to Miklaszewski, the function of rhythm in Schulz is to poeticise the text. The material is organised according to syllabic and accentual considerations, which are more usually associated with poetry than prose.

Miklaszewski has written two very thorough studies of rhythm in Schulz.⁸⁰ What I will concentrate on here is, for the reasons stated above, a very simple “definite event” that provides the prose with rhythm. This is the occurrence of the full stop. And this being a Formalist study, it will naturally be more interested in those occasions where the interval between two full stops is different to what we expect. In the case of Schulz, whose sentences are generally long, this means the shorter sentences.

The rhythm of the prose constantly underlines the divergence of Schulz’s prose from everyday, communicative language, so much so that when a “normal” sentence does occur *it* is felt as a departure from the norm.⁸¹ This is often used to comical effect. After a lengthy passage, Schulz brings us back down to earth with a bump, mocking us for taking all this seriously, e.g.

Zdradzony przez wszystkich, wycofał się ojciec bez walki z miejsc swej niedawnej chwały. Bez skrzyżowania szpad oddał w ręce wroga domenę swej byłej świetności. Dobrowolny banita, usunął się do pustego pokoju na końcu sieni i oszańcował się tam samotnością.

Zapomnieliśmy o nim. (27) (Betrayed by all, Father retreated without a fight from the places of his recent glory. Without crossing swords, he surrendered into the hands of the enemy the realm of his former splendour. A voluntary outcast, he removed himself to an empty room at the end of the hall and there entrenched himself in solitude.

We forgot him.)

Opowiadania.

⁷⁹ Miklaszewski, “O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości,” p. 59.

⁸⁰ Miklaszewski, “O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości,” and “Cena świadomości.”

⁸¹ Wyskiel writes that every sentence in Schulz is, as it were, enclosed in inverted commas and supplied with the comment: “that’s how you might say it in a ‘poetic’ way,” *Inna twarz Hioba*, p. 106.

Schulz seems to be saying that people will believe anything if it's dressed up in literary language. The return to everyday language – the abrupt interruption of the rhythm with “Zapomnieliśmy o nim,” which is set off in a paragraph of its own – is where the scales fall from our eyes: of course they did not just forget about their father. But, Schulz implies, perhaps if he had communicated that information in a ten-clause paratactic sentence, we would have quietly accepted it and continued reading, disbelief suspended, searching for some great literary insight into life. The possibility that Schulz's ornate style was mocking *Młoda Polska* was certainly missed by Napierski and Wyka in “Dwugłos o Schulzu.”⁸² A similar effect is achieved in “Sklepy cynamonowe.” After a detailed description of the cinnamon shops, complete with complex, rhythmical sentences, there comes a return to reality.

A (1) “Słabo oświetlone,

(2) ciemne i

(3) uroczyste

ich wnętrza pachniały

B (1) głębokim zapachem farb,

laku,

kadzidła,

B (2) aromatem dalekich krajów

i rzadkich materiałów.” (65)

(“(A1) Weakly lit, their (A2) dark and (A3) ceremonious interiors bore the (B1) deep scent of paint, lacquer, incense, (B2) the aroma of faraway countries and rare materials”). Here the build-up is aided by the description of the exotic and weird goods for sale in the shops. The let down comes: “Sklepów ani śladu” (66) (“There was no sign of any shops”). There is also something mocking in his naming the story after the missing shops, which play such a small role in the action.

The same device can be seen in “Emeryt”:

Wreszcie z dreszczem wewnętrznym, z oczyma pełnymi nocy wytrząsa przez okno wielką, obfitą pierzynę i leca na miasto puszki pierza, gwiazdki puchu, leniwy wysiew rojeń nocnych.

Wtedy marzę o tym, żeby zostać roznosicielem pieczywa, monterem sieci elektrycznej, albo inkasantem kasy chorych. Albo choćby kominiarzem. (312) (At last, with an internal shiver, with eyes full of night, she shakes from the window a large, voluminous eider down, and feathery fluff, stars of down, the lazy sowing of night dreams fly over the city.

⁸² Wyka and Napierski, “Dwugłos o Schulzu,” reprinted in Wyka, *Stara szuflada*.

Then I dream of becoming a deliverer of bread, an electric company fitter, or a premium collector for the insurance company. Or even a chimney sweep.)

Here a short and abrupt sentence disturbs the rhythm. After going to all the trouble of constructing the balanced preceding sentences, Schulz tacks on "albo choćby" as an afterthought, without even using a comma to integrate it more smoothly with "Wtedy marzę..." In "Emeryt," Schulz tries to convince the reader that he is enjoying a second childhood, but paradoxically it is the two short sentences which openly inform us of this: "Ale nie rozumiałem go" ("But I didn't understand him") and "Byłem już naprawdę dzieckiem" ("I had truly become a child") (321) that break the illusion. Up to this point his school experiences are described in syntactically sophisticated sentences. The sudden reversion to short, factual sentences again mocks us for being so willing to suspend our disbelief in an old age pensioner going back to school as long as it was described "artistically": "Patrzyłem obojętnie na ich niewczesną skruchę, na zdeformowane nagłym płaczem twarze, jak gdyby z pierwszymi łzami zeszła z nich maska ludzka i obnażyła bezkształtną miazgę płaczącego mięsa" (321) ("I looked indifferently at their untimely remorse, at their faces deformed by sudden weeping, as if with the first tears the human mask had fallen off them and stripped bare a formless pulp of weeping flesh").

In "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą" the narrator's encounter with the dog is described in Schulzean language:

A1 "Zdrętwiały ze zgrozy

A2 cofam się

do przeciwnego, najdalszy kąt podwórza i

B1 instynktownie szukając jakiegoś ukrycia,

B2 chronię się

do małej altanki tam stojącej,

z całym przeświadczeniem daremności moich wysiłków" (287)

("Numb with terror, I retreated into the opposite, furthest corner of the yard and instinctively seeking some kind of cover, took refuge in a small summerhouse standing there, fully convinced of the futility of my efforts") until the point where, in his own words, the scales fall from our eyes ("teraz opadają mi łuski z oczu" (287)) ("now the scales fell from my eyes"). There follow three short, but rhythmical exclamations: "Jak wielka jest moc uprzedzenia! Jak potężna jest sugestia strachu! Co za zaślepienie!" (287) ("How great is the strength of prejudice! How powerful the suggestion of fear! What

blindness!") and then comes the switch from literary prose to simple narrative: "Toż to był człowiek" (287) ("Why, it was a man"). The rhythm of the passage goes to pieces, like our suspension of disbelief, with the next short sentence: "Proszę mnie źle nie rozumieć. Był to pies – niezawodnie, ale w postaci ludzkiej" (288) ("Please don't misunderstand me. It was a dog – undoubtedly – but in human form"). Schulz uses short sentences to disrupt the rhythm established by the longer, lyrical sentences and to convey information, usually quite banal, such as "it was a man" or "we forgot about him," which finally makes it impossible to believe what we are reading. Syntax, rhythm and meaning work very closely together here. The break in rhythm would not be perceived as sharply if "Toż to był człowiek" were replaced with the more logical "Byłem przestraszony" ("I was terrified"), nor would the ridiculousness of the scene be perceived if "Toż to był człowiek" were introduced into the passage without disturbing the rhythm.

In chapter 10 of "Wiosna," it also seems that Schulz is mocking the reader. Chapter 9, which is very short, and not in fact comprised only of long sentences, ends with the following sentences: "Patrzył z zazdrością na refleks dalekich światów wędrujący cichą gamą kolorów po mojej twarzy. Dopiero odbity od mego oblicza, dochodził go daleki odbłask tych kart, w których dusza jego nie miała udziału" (158) ("He looked with jealousy at the reflection of distant worlds wandering in a quiet scale of colours over my face. Only when reflected by my countenance did the distant glow of those pages, in which his soul had no part, reach him"). Here Schulz uses the literary "oblicze" for face instead of the more usual "twarz." Also the word "gama" is normally used with reference to music, but here it is applied to a visual phenomenon, and he uses the foreign sounding "refleks" rather than "odbicie" for "reflection." This sets up the reader's expectations for the deflation which follows: chapter 10, which is an apparent *non-sequitur* ("Wiosna" has a tighter plot development than most of Schulz's stories). The first sentence is: "Widziałem raz prestidigitatora" (158) ("Once I saw a conjurer"). This comes directly after a serious, sophisticated high tone description of the relationship between, lest we forget, two small boys and a stamp album. Chapter 10 starts with a short, bathetic sentence, and in its description of a thimble rigger's act quickly returns to mystification, its final words being: "Bóg jest nieprzeliczony..." (159) ("God is uncountable...") In this chapter Schulz frames a series of very long and developed sentences with two three-word sentences. ("Bóg jest nieprzeliczony" is not strictly speaking a sentence, but it is set off from the preceding sentences by a

colon, which also marks a sharp pause.) Both sentences disturb a rhythm of long, flowing sentences, and the chapter is short enough for the difference in tone between the two statements to be noticed.

Schulz prevents us from passively accepting the strangeness of the world he presents by disrupting the literary style with which he describes it. The disruption is all the more perceptible for coinciding at the levels of semantics, rhythm and syntax. A final example comes in "Kometa," when the narrator describes how Father turns his uncle into a doorbell. "Ale instalacja była już gotowa, i wuj Edward, jak był przez całe życie wzorowym mężem, ojcem i człowiekiem interesów, tak i w tej ostatniej swej roli poddał się w końcu wyższej konieczności. Wuj funkcjonował znakomicie" (361) ("But the installation was already ready and Uncle Edward, as always the model husband, father and businessman, in this his last role submitted himself in the end to higher necessity. Uncle worked perfectly").

We have by now become used to Father's eccentricities. Any reader will immediately associate Schulz with bizarre transformations, surreal, dream-like events, and the grotesque. Schulz has spent some time hinting at what is to befall Uncle Edward, but when the revelation is finally made, it is off-hand and, coupled with the break in syntactic style, defamiliarises the image of him being turned into a doorbell. It is no surprise to the reader that this can happen, but what is surprising is that Schulz, master of complex syntax, deals with in such an apparently careless manner.

I. Metaphor

Contemporary reviewers of Schulz's fiction drew attention to metaphor, which Władysław Panas refers to as the main organising principle of the basic devices of his linguistic procedure.¹ A common feature of metaphor in Schulz, he writes, is the extended chain of metaphors and similes. That is, where metaphor might typically be described as saying "A=B," in Schulz we are more likely to find "A=B and B=C and C=D." The effect of comparisons is to create what Bolecki later called "microstories" ("mikronowelki") which break up the flow of the narrative.² This can be seen in the passage from "Pan Karol" describing a night's sleep. In this long passage Pan Karol is described as a fighter, a swimmer, a baker, a kind of castaway and again as a fighter. Sometimes metaphor is used, sometimes simile. After a brief return to non-figurative language ("Spał tak do późnego przedpołudnia" (59) ("He slept so until late morning")) the metaphor changes to one of travel by road and rail.

Panas sees the main function of metaphor in Schulz as the creation of multiple worlds, while Bolecki likens the use of comparisons to Sterne-like digression: it loosens the narrative structure, disrupts its continuity, and makes explicit connections to elements appearing earlier.³ Krzysztof Stala attributes a number of functions to metaphor in Schulz.⁴ The placing of unexpected comparisons in descriptive passages weakens the referential potential of the surrounding sentences and is, he says, reminiscent of defamiliarisation. According to Stala, the basic function of metaphor in Schulz is to transform the world. A technique he uses is to make literal truth of metaphor, something which Schulz

¹ Władysław Panas "'Regiony czystej poezji': O koncepcji języka w prozie B. Schulza," *Roczniki humanistyczne*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1974, pp. 151-173, (155). Reviewers who have discussed metaphor include: Tadeusz Breza, "Sobowtór zwykłej rzeczywistości," *Kurier poranny*, 1934, no. 103, reprinted in *Nelly: O kolegach i o sobie*, Warsaw, 1970, pp. 349-353; Michał Chmielowiec, "Zdarzenia bezdomne," *Kultura*, 1938, no. 13, p. 5; Artur Sandauer, "Szkola mitologów: Bruno Schulz i Witold Gombrowicz," *Pion*, 1938, no. 5, p. 4; Dariusz Tomasz Lebioda, "Funkcje języka poetyckiego w *Sklepiach cynamonowych* Brunona Schulza," *Życie literackie*, 1984, no. 19, p. 4. See also Theodosia S. Robertson, "Obrazowanie i historia w opowiadaniach Brunona Schulza: Przypadek kolei żelaznej," in Jerzy Jarzębski, ed., *Czytanie Schulza: Materiały międzynarodowej sesji naukowej 'Bruno Schulz – w stulecie urodzin i w pięćdziesięciolecie śmierci'* Instytut Filologii Polskiej Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków, 8-10 czerwca 1992, Cracow, 1994, pp. 220-230.

² Włodzimierz Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym: Witkacy, Gombrowicz, Schulz i inni. Studium z poetyki historycznej*, 2nd edn., Cracow, 1996, p. 288.

³ Panas, "'Regiony czystej poezji,'" p. 164; Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 288.

⁴ Krzysztof Stala, "Modalności Schulzowskiej metafory," *Kresy*, no. 14, 1993, pp. 57-71.

himself commented on, referring to it as “the materialisation of metaphor.”⁵ An interesting observation made by Stala is Schulz’s way of revitalising dead metaphors. The example he gives is “feverish movement,” which in “Noc wielkiego sezonu” is developed over several paragraphs – i.e. people do not just move quickly, but actually carry the symptoms of fever.⁶

Formalists did not pay very much attention to the problem of metaphor. Krystyna Pomorska writes that during the entire existence of *Opoyaz*, not one of its members wrote a work on metaphor. It was generally agreed in *Opoyaz* that metaphor is not privileged in poetic language. It is not specific to poetic language, and as it exists in everyday language it cannot be the defining characteristic of poetry. Shklovsky’s understanding was that since it can be spoken of only in terms of the receptive disposition of the reader it does not yield to scientific investigation.⁷

Metaphor is to speak of A in terms of B. If B is part of A, we have synecdoche; if B is something related to A, we have metonymy. Metaphor defamiliarises by its nature, but this can also be said of words in general, since when we refer to an object by means of a symbol and/or sound we are using a metaphor (the thing is not the sound, but the sound means the thing). I. A. Richards pointed out that metaphor is therefore central to language, not a deviation from a literal norm.⁸ Metaphors, like words, can be automatised (e.g. “the table leg”) and defamiliarised. Richards’s “transaction” view of metaphor is developed by Max Black in his essay “Metaphor.”⁹ Metaphor derives its force from the interaction between the word used metaphorically and the literally-used surrounding words. This interaction model does not simply replace the concept of metaphor as substitution or comparison (which Black calls a special type of substitution). The three types can exist side by side. In the interaction metaphor when we read that A is B our thoughts and conceptions (which may be shaped by common knowledge, prejudices, or the author himself, but at any rate need not be accurate) about A and B interact to create meaning. Certain associations with A will not be transferred to B, so, for example, when we say “man is a wolf” we think of the wolf’s rapacity, but not of the fact that it has four legs or, for that matter, that it is, like man, a mammal. The metaphor organises features of the

⁵ Quoted in Panas, “‘Regiony czystej poezji’,” p. 157. See also Krzysztof Miklaszewski, “Cena świadomości (Próba analizy opowiadania Bruno Schulza pt. ‘Pan’),” *Ruch literacki*, 1966, no. 6, pp. 285-295, (291-2).

⁶ Stala, “Modalności Schulzowskiej metafory,” p. 67.

⁷ Krystyna Pomorska, “Teoria języka poetyckiego i przedmiot poetyki w tzw. szkole formalnej,” *Pamiętnik literacki*, 1963, no. 4, pp. 391-414, (406-408).

⁸ I. A. Richards, “Metaphor,” in *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, The Mary Flexner Lectures on the Humanities, 3, New York, Oxford University Press, 1936, pp. 87-112, (90-91).

⁹ Max Black, “Metaphor,” *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, Ithaca, New

principal “by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject.”¹⁰ The “principal” may be understood as man in the example, and the “subsidiary” as wolf. This characteristic of metaphor, the suppression of certain associations, was noted by Jan Mukařovský in “On Poetic Language,” where he refers to a point made earlier by Otaka Zich in “O typach básnických,” in which he (Zich) states that when Neruda wrote that the brigand’s boat ran like a fox, we ignore the image of a fox running on water, and consider only the speed and predatory nature of the fox and the boat (or rather, its owner).¹¹ According to Artur Sandauer, Schulz achieves the identification of form with content by means of metaphor: in Schulz either member of the metaphor may be regarded as the principle or the subsidiary.¹²

John Searle, in an article also titled “Metaphor,” makes a point which is usefully borne in mind in the case of Schulz. It is that in living metaphors it is precisely because there is no change in meaning of the words in a metaphorical utterance that the utterance is metaphorical.¹³ All the words in the utterance mean only what they mean, but the meaning which the reader constructs from the words is not what the words mean at face value. A commonly held view is that we interpret a statement as metaphorical if it is literally absurd or untrue. In fact this view does not account for all instances of metaphor because, as Black points out, we may read something as a metaphor because it is literally absurd – but also because it is banal, or pointless or incongruent.¹⁴ Nevertheless, it is a useful point of departure for studying Schulz’s metaphorical technique. Many of Schulz’s metaphors can be read literally, if surreally or fantastically. For instance, when he writes that “in the thicket of wallpapers telling looks ran back and forth” (“w gęstwinie tapet biegly tam i z powrotem wymowne spojrzenia” (39)), is this a metaphor, or did it really happen (“really” in the confines of the fictional world of the short story)? If it is a metaphor, what is the literal meaning? Schulz constantly poses this question in his stories.

York, Cornell University Press, 1962, pp. 25-47.

¹⁰ Black, “Metaphor,” pp. 44-5.

¹¹ “On Poetic Language,” in *The Word and Verbal Art: Selected Essays by Jan Mukařovský*, Yale Russian and East European Studies, 13, trans. and ed. John Burbank and Peter Steiner, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1977, pp. 1-64, (42). Originally published as “O jazyce básnickém,” in *Slovo a slovesnost*, no. 6, 1940.

¹² Sandauer, “Szkola mitologów,” *Pion*, 1938, no. 5, p. 4. Sandauer also discusses this in “Rzeczywistość zdegradowana (Rzecz o Brunonie Schulzu),” in Bruno Schulz, *Proza*, Cracow, 1964, pp. 5-43, (37).

¹³ John R. Searle, “Metaphor,” in Andrew Ortony, ed., *Metaphor and Thought*, 2nd edn., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. 83-111, (90).

¹⁴ Black, “More about Metaphor,” in Ortony, *Metaphor and Thought*, pp. 19-41, (34).

On close examination of metaphor in stories by Schulz, one is struck by a number of things, some of which are readily noticeable, and have been commented on before (see above). For example, metaphor is often used to animate and personify objects. Things are spoken of in terms normally (or literally) reserved for animals and humans. Examples include the furniture in "Pan Karol": "wśród tych mebli, które tolerowały go w milczeniu" (61) ("among that furniture which tolerated him in silence"); furniture in "Jesień": "Stare meble zbudzone ze snu" (340) ("Old furniture woken from its sleep"); pots and pans in "Wichura": "te czarne sejmy garnków, te wiecowania gadatliwe i puste" (90) ("the black parliaments of pots, those garrulous and empty rallies") and the waxworks dummies in "Wiosna." Conversely, people are dehumanised by metaphor. For example, in "Martwy sezon": "Na chwilę stawał się ojcem płaskim, wrośniętym w fasadę... Iluż ojców wrosło już tak na zawsze w fasadę domu..." (244) ("For a moment he became a flat Father, grown into the facade... How many other fathers have already grown forever into the facades of houses...") This metaphor again raises the question: did it really happen, or is it a metaphorical description of the appearance of Father? Wojciech Wyskiel has noted that in Schulz the "degree of reality" is unclear: the reader cannot be sure, for example, whether the narrator actually walked through the Crocodile Street area, or just leafed through a brochure full of boring advertisements.¹⁵

This makes any study of Schulz's metaphor difficult. Metaphors may be classified as "functional," "sensuous," "verbal," "appositive," "copulative," "genitive," and so on, but in the case of Schulz, it is very difficult even to produce a round total number of metaphors.¹⁶ For example, when Father says, in "Księga," that "Księga jest mitem" (117) ("The Book is a myth"), this could be a metaphor or the literal truth. (For the sake of argument I ignore the fact that "the book is a myth" is a dead metaphor to start with.) Later on Schulz writes of the book he is reading: "Był to Autentyk, święty oryginał..." (124) ("It was the Authentic, the sacred original...") Should this be counted among ("copulative") metaphors or is it the simple, literal truth within the fictional world of "Księga"? Another methodological problem is that of dead or nearly dead metaphor. It will be a matter of opinion whether "animal scream" ("wrzask zwierzęcy") (8) is a living or dead metaphor. Christine

¹⁵ Wojciech Wyskiel, "Zagubiona Księga," in Kazimiera Czaplowska, ed., *Studia o prozie Brunona Schulza*, Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach, 115, Katowice, 1976, pp. 115-124, (118-119). Speina also draws attention to the erasure of the border between the real and the imaginary. Jerzy Speina, *Bankructwo realności: Proza Brunona Schulza*, Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu: Prace Wydziału Filologiczno-filozoficznego, vol. 24, no. 1, Warsaw-Poznań, 1974, p. 22, fn. 14.

¹⁶ The terms used here are taken from Christine Brooke-Rose, *A Grammar of Metaphor*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1958.

Brooke-Rose writes that the metaphor used as adjective quickly loses force. Her example is “hard man,” which is not equated with wood or steel or anything hard.¹⁷ The same may be said of “animal scream.” For some readers pictures “gone blind with age” (“ośleple od starości”) (9) is actually a dead metaphor, as the dictionary definition of “ośleply” gives (after “blind”) the meaning of “dull.” These reservations as to the simple act of counting metaphors in Schulz make a thorough classification impossible. However, certain types of metaphor outweigh other types so heavily that we may talk of patterns in Schulz’s use of metaphor.

An examination of the metaphors in “Sierpień” shows the following tendencies in Schulz’s choice of “subsidiaries” (that is, the thing with which the metaphorically described object is equated).¹⁸ The most common group of subsidiaries is “other,” showing how widely Schulz casts his metaphorical net. In the “other” group I include subsidiaries which appear twice or less, such as gold, fire, fans, a hammer, fabric, vehicles, fog and silence. Close reading bears out the subjective impression that Schulz uses metaphors to personify or animate things. Around a third of the subsidiaries in “Sierpień” are animate. For example, the heat of the day breathes (“upał dnia oddychał”); the piano music faints (“dwa, trzy takty refrenu... mdlejące”); the midday hour dreams (“od marzeń południowej godziny”) (4); Tłuja lets out an animal scream (“wrzask zwierzęcy”) (8). Also common, but considerably less so than animating and/or personifying subsidiaries, are book or text-related subsidiaries, musical subsidiaries, liquid subsidiaries and subsidiaries which are either spatial or specific places.¹⁹ For example: “wielka księga wakacyj” (“the great *book* of the holidays”); “czysta poezja owoców” (3) (“the pure *poetry* of fruit”); “barwy schodziły o *oktawę* głębiej” (4) (“colours descended an *octave* lower”); “słoneczna kąpiel dnia” (4) (“the sunny *bath* of the day”); “na *rubieżach* nieskończonego dnia” (6) (“on the *outskirts* of an endless day”) (my italics). In a number of instances colourless objects are spoken of as if they did have colours, e.g. days are white from the heat (“białe od żaru... dni”) (3) and the weather is colourful (“w głębi kolorowej pogody”) (5).

Looking beyond “Sierpień,” a similar pattern holds. A wide range of things serve as subsidiaries, but people, animate things, books, music and paintings often recur. The following things, among others, are personified or animated: the stuffed condor in “Karakony”; the scratching in the floorboards (they are equated with Father by being his fellow conspirators, although it might well be

¹⁷ Brooke-Rose, *A Grammar of Metaphor*, p. 238.

¹⁸ Black, “Metaphor,” pp. 44-45.

¹⁹ Bolecki notes Schulz’s predilection for portraying the world in terms of books in *Poetycki model*

argued that this dehumanises Father by equating him with the scratching noises), the scenery and masks in the theatre, a horse, the moon (all in "Sklepy cynamonowe"); a garden, a lane, time, cabbages and thistles ("Pan"); the dog, Nimrod, whose feelings and experiences are described with a precision and insight that strongly suggests they belong to a human ("Nemrod"); day, night, tailors' dummies (in "Manekiny") and the roofs of the town ("Nawiedzenie"). Spring, tailors' dummies and the Crocodile Street area of the town are equated with books or texts in the stories after which they are named. In "Kometa" the week has a dust jacket, like a book. In "Jesień" autumn days and landscapes are identified with books. In "Noc lipcowa" the band of light between door and threshold is equated with a musical instrument. In "Martwy sezon" bolts of material are spoken of as if they were musical instruments, capable of sounding the scale of notes. In "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą" the road leading through the landscape is compared to a melody, while the artistic term arabesque is applied to darkness. (See section 3, below for a discussion of the recurrence of "arabesque".)

Schulz tends to personify plants, animals and time, while dehumanising people, as may readily be seen in Father's numerous transformations into lower creatures. Ironically, perhaps, it is the prosaic Adela, not the colourful, rebellious figure of Father, who most strongly resists dehumanisation. Other characters resist dehumanisation, but, with the exception of the narrator, who does not usually refer to himself metaphorically anyway, none is so central as Adela. Another characteristic of metaphor in Schulz is to speak of time as if it had spatial properties.²⁰ Despite living in a Polish backwater, Schulz was aware of recent developments in relativity and quantum physics.²¹

Other ways of classifying metaphors can be put forward. For instance one might examine the conceptual distance between principal and subsidiary. One view is that the more "probable" the metaphor (by which is meant the more logical, or analogous the connection between the two members) the less effective the metaphor is.²² This is similar to the position adapted by Tadeusz Peiper (see chapter 2) and is in fact an artistic convention. Far-fetched metaphors can, like predictable

prozy, pp. 258-259.

²⁰ This is discussed by Sven Spieker in "'Stumps Folded into a Fist': Extra Time, Chance and Virtual Reality in Bruno Schulz," *East European Politics and Society*, 1997, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 282-298, who notes that representing spatial relations in terms of time was a current in European modernism. See also Krzysztof Stala, "Architektura Schulzowskiej wyobraźni," in Jarzębski, *Czytanie Schulza*, pp. 188-219, (210-211).

²¹ See his review, "Wędrówki sceptyka," *Proza*, pp. 425-428, (427). Jerzy Jarzębski comments on Schulz's fascination with the natural sciences in "Schulz: spojrzenie w przyszłość," in Jarzębski, *Czytanie Schulza*, pp. 306-320, (306).

²² This is discussed in Terence Hawkes, *Metaphor, The Critical Idiom*, London, Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1972, pp. 74-5.

metaphors, become automatised. It is possible for a banal metaphor to be effective precisely because of the contrast it provides with an adventurous, but overused metaphor. Max Black holds that there is no blanket reason why some metaphors work and others do not.²³ In this section, then, I propose to concentrate on the function of metaphor in Schulz's work, rather than the conceptual distance between the two members of metaphor.²⁴

Both Goślicki-Baur and Nowakowska point out that Schulz's metaphors are often quite conventional.²⁵ Nowakowska writes that in "Martwy sezon" Schulz employs a conventional metaphor of light as a liquid. This was pointed out by Tadeusz Breza, who wrote that Schulz surprises us by finding comparisons close at hand, where one would have thought the wells had run dry.²⁶ Certainly it requires no great leap of the imagination to see why, for example, a mannequin is used as a metaphor for a human. What is of more interest is the way Schulz uses metaphor to destabilise the reality he depicts.

It is often relatively easy to incorporate personification into an essentially realistic view of the world presented by Schulz. That is, when we read of frowning or disapproving cupboards, we can rationalise this as a metaphorical expression of somebody's feelings. For example, when Pan Karol is followed by his furniture and walls with "silent criticism" ("milcząca krytyka" (60)) we can explain this literally as an expression of the author's disapproval of, or Pan Karol's own guilt over the way he has been leading his life. We are told of his "nocturnal revels" ("nocne populanki" (58)) and "sexual over-indulgences" ("nadużycia płciowe" (60)). Roman Jakobson classifies this use of anthropomorphism as metonymy, which he relates to prose especially.²⁷

In the case of dehumanisation it is harder to rationalise, harder to supply a literal "real-world" alternative to the metaphor. Pan Karol appears to turn into a vegetable. This could be a metaphor for his state of mind upon waking up after another wild night, but perhaps he *was* changed into a vegetable. After all, another uncle, Edward, is turned into an electric doorbell, in "Kometa," and

²³ Black, "Metaphor," p. 45.

²⁴ Bolecki has noted that Schulz uses words from very different semantic fields to describe things, for example, every day life is described in terms of theatre. Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 281.

²⁵ Elisabeth Goślicki-Baur, *Die Prosa von Bruno Schulz*, Slavica Helvetica, Bd. 8, Herbert Lang, Bern; Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 1975, p. 49; Ewa Elżbieta Nowakowska, "Selected Liquid Metaphors in Bruno Schulz's Fiction in an English Translation," on the web at: <http://www.filg.uj.edu.pl/ifa/przeklad/przeklad2/krytyka3.html>.

²⁶ Breza, "Sobowtór zwykłej rzeczywistości," reprinted in *Nelly*, p. 352. (The figure of speech is Breza's.)

²⁷ Roman Jakobson, "Marginal Notes on the Prose of the Poet Pasternak," trans., Angela Livingstone, in Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy, eds., *Language in Literature*, Cambridge Mass. - London,

Father turns into a fly, a cockroach and a crab. Even with personification the matter is not so simple. Are the waxworks dummies in “Wiosna” really animated? Schulz is saying that A=B where A is a dummy and B is a living creature. This answers the definition of a metaphor, but could it not simply be true? In a fantasy novel, for example, we do not necessarily view the appearance of a dragon as a metaphor. By using metaphors to raise these questions, Schulz blurs the boundaries between the fantastic and the real. This technique has been noted by Krzysztof Stala, who writes: “The most obvious outcome of the Schulzean ‘magical practices’ is the undermining of ontological security, suspending the reader’s beliefs in the presupposed truthfulness of the represented world.”²⁸

Let us take a closer look at one story, “Pan Karol.” To begin with, there is a clear-cut division between metaphoric language and literal language, which is emphasised (at least on close reading) by the presence of a dead metaphor (“wdowiec słomiany” (58), “grass widower”) in the very first sentence. Schulz leads us into metaphor with the qualification of “dlań” (“for him”) in the following passage: “była dlań wówczas jakaś błoga przystań, wyspą zbawczą” (58) (“it was then for him a blissful haven, an island of safety”). This is also localised in time (“wówczas” (“then”)). It is metaphor firmly in its place. In the next paragraph we are plunged into an extended metaphor, which itself becomes a mini-narrative (or “mikronowelka”), noted earlier and quoted here in full:

Omackiem, w ciemności zapadał się gdzieś między białawe góry, pasma i zwały chłodnego pierza, i spał tak w niewiadomym kierunku na wspak, głową na dół, wbity ciemieniem w puszysty miąższ pościeli, jak gdyby chciał we śnie przewiercić, przewędrować na wskroś te rosnące nocą potężne masywy pierzyn. Walczył we śnie z tą pościelą, jak pływak z wodą, ugniatał ją i miesił ciałem, jak ogromną dzieżę ciasta, w którą się zapadał, i budził się o szarym świcie zdyszany, oblany potem, wyrzucony na brzeg tego stosu pościeli, którego zmóc nie mógł w ciężkich zapasach nocnych (58) (Groping blindly in the darkness, he sank between the whitish mountains, ranges and heaps of cool feathers and slept as he fell topsyturvy in an unknown direction with his head at the bottom, burying the crown of his head into the downy pulp of bedding, as if he wanted to drill through in his sleep, to wander across the powerful massifs of the eiderdown growing in the night. He struggled in his sleep with that bedding, like a swimmer with water, he crushed and kneaded it with his body, as if he were sinking in a giant bowl of dough, and woke up at grey dawn, panting, covered in sweat, thrown up onto the shore of that mountain of bedding, which he had been unable to overpower in the strenuous nocturnal wrestling)

Extended though this metaphor is, we never lose sight of the literal meaning of these mountains, seas and dough, namely that Karol is sleeping in his bed. In fact “simple” or “tight” metaphor, in which there is only one point of similarity, is often more difficult to understand than compound metaphors, in

The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 301-317, (306-310).

²⁸ Krzysztof Stala, *On the Margins of Reality: The Paradoxes of Representation in Bruno Schulz’s Fiction*, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis. Stockholm Slavic Studies 23, Stockholm, Almqvist &

which there are many.²⁹ All the time we are fairly certain it is a metaphor. With the image of Karol exuding the remains of the previous day, we begin to lose sight of the literal meaning of the metaphor – if it is a metaphor: “Pan Karol wyziewał ze swego ciała, z głębi jam cielesnych, resztki dnia wczorajszego... Tak wyrzucał z siebie ten piasek, te ciężary – nie strawione restancje dnia wczorajszego” (59) (“Mr. Charles exuded out of his body, out of the depths of all his bodily cavities the remains of yesterday... In this way he threw out the sand and encumbrances, the undigested remains of the previous day”). There is a return to intelligibility when Karol does his calculations, and when the light in the room is described as watery (“wodnisty”) we can rationalise this as a metaphor for his eyes – perhaps watery from drink. Then, however, he falls into a vegetative state and there comes the strange image of his future growing up in an unknown dimension. The language used to describe the future is the same as that used in the initial, readily understood, metaphor of the vegetable:

Gdy tak siedział w bezmyślnym wegetatywnym osłupieniu, cały zamieniony w krążenie, w respirację, w głębokie pulsowanie soków, rosła z głębi jego ciała, spoconego i pokrytego włosami w rozlicznych miejscach, jakaś niewiadoma, nie sformułowana przyszłość, niby potworna narośl, wyrastająca fantastycznie w nieznaną dymensję (60) (While he sat there in a thoughtless, vegetative stupor, completely changed into circulation, respiration and the deep pulsation of his juices, there grew from the depths of his perspiring body, covered with hair in numerous places, an unknown, unformulated future, like a monstrous growth, growing fantastically into an unknown dimension)

We are tempted to treat this as a metaphor, but of what? By the time we reach the closing paragraphs of the story, the lines between reality and fantasy have been so blurred by metaphor, that we wonder if the silent criticism of the walls and furniture might not be literally true (within the story) and not, after all, a metaphor. Schulz has used metaphor to make it difficult for us to separate extravagant metaphorical descriptions from literal truth. The fantastic, unreal episode of the future growing up inside Karol makes it difficult to rationalise the personification of objects. When in the last sentence his reflection (referred to as “ktoś” (“someone”)) in the mirror retreats from him as he leaves the flat, there is a stronger than usual identification of the “ktoś” with a real person.³⁰

Wiksell International, 1993, p. 112.

²⁹ Joseph T. Shipley, *Dictionary of World Literary Terms: Forms. Techniques. Criticism*, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1970, p. 197.

³⁰ On top of all the confusion and obfuscation discussed above, it is worth bearing in mind that according to Freud dreaming (but is Karol dreaming?) of walking through empty rooms is a brothel dream. (Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1954, p. 354.)

A key element of this technique is Schulz's refusal to demarcate the boundaries between real, biographical detail and fantasy. The outlandish adventures of "Wiosna" are recounted with the same seriousness as the more realistic experiences in "Nemrod." Neither is in any way marked off from the other. Such retrospective phrases as "I now realise" or "I later learned" are conspicuous by their absence. If they were present, it would be relatively easy for the reader to divide up the text into "real" and "unreal." Large passages would be ascribed by the reader to a child's overactive imagination.

An exception that proves the rule occurs in "Mój ojciec wstępuje do strażaków":

Nigdy potem nie mogłem się od matki dowiedzieć, ile rzeczywistego było w tym, co widziałem owej nocy przez zamknięte powieki, zmorzony ciężkim snem, wciąż zapadając w głuchą niepamięć, a ile było płodem mojej imaginacji (232) (Afterwards, I could never find out from Mother how much reality there was in what I saw that night through closed eyelids, overcome by heavy sleep, perpetually falling into dead forgetfulness, and how much was the fruit of my imagination)

This is one of the few times that Schulz admits to some kind of division between reality and fantasy in his work, although he often states that the events to be described took place in some kind of "illegal" or parallel time (see section 2, below). However, there is nothing (for Schulz) particularly untoward or dreamlike about the events which then unfold in the family house. Neither does the statement mark a sharp break with the atmosphere preceding it (either in the individual story or in the collection as a whole). Immediately before the passage quoted above the reader learns that the narrator and his mother have crossed a tollgate into autumn. On their journey: "Czas upływał nie liczony, tworząc dziwne węzły, abrewiatury, w swym upływie" (231) ("time passed uncounted, creating strange knots and abbreviations in its passage"). Time and space become knotted together, and this is *before* the period which the narrator admits may not really have happened.

Schulz generally leaves the reader to make up his or her own mind on the reality presented. The following passage, from "Nawiedzenie," presents at least two possible interpretations:

[ojciec] czuł, nie patrząc, że przestrzeń obrasta go pulsującą gęstwina tapet, pełną szeptów, syków i seplenień. Słyszał, nie patrząc, tę znowę pełną porozumiewawczych mrugnięć, perskich oczu, rozwijających się wśród kwiatów małżowin usznych, które słuchały, i ciemnych ust, które się uśmiechały (15-16) ([Father] felt, without looking, that space was overgrowing him with a pulsating thickness of wallpaper, full of whispers, hisses and lisps. He heard, without looking, that plot full of knowing winks, Persian eyes, developing among flowers of ear-like shells that listened, and dark lips that smiled)³¹

³¹ To make Persian eyes is a Polish idiom meaning to "make eyes."

The first interpretation is that the passage is a metaphor for Father's insanity. The whispering, pulsating wallpaper represent the voices in Father's head. Alternatively, the wallpaper appears to pulsate in the heat haze caused by a lamp; the whispering is the rustling of trees outside the window; the "Persian eyes" are simply designs on the wallpaper; the whole scene, in short, is a cross between a child's misunderstanding of everyday reality, and his desire to fantasise. Father's lonely monologues, also mentioned in "Nawiedzenie," may simply be a distorted image of a man counting and summing aloud. Schulz withholds the information which would allow the reader to favour one interpretation over the other. Jarzębski makes a similar point about "Nawiedzenie." How the appearance of the Demiurge is understood is the reader's decision: it can be understood as the product of the narrator's imagination; it can be treated as a metaphorical continuation of the description of Father on the chamber pot; or the reader may treat the story as fantasy, and the Demiurge's appearance as a real event of the story.³²

In "Edzio" an initially straightforward, even banal metaphor also leads into more complex questions of metaphorical truth and literal surreality. The people (presumably) who live on the lower floors of the house are described as ants, a metaphor which is then stretched into pure fantasy:

Ale w dole zaczęła się już prędką i cichą robotą zmierzchu, tam mrowi się od tych szybkich, żarłocznych mrówek, które rozbierają, roznoszą na szczątki substancję rzeczy, objadają je aż do białych kości, do szkieletu i żeber fosforyzujących majaczkliwie na tym smutnym pobojuwisku (304) (But down below, the rapid and silent work of twilight has already begun; down there it is swarming with quick and voracious ants, that take to pieces and carry away the remnants of the substance of things, gnawing them down to their white bones, to their skeletons and ribs, phosphorescing deliriously on this sad battlefield)

We can picture people seen from a distance looking like ants, and the image of things being carried away might stand for the encroaching darkness, but why should the skeletons phosphoresce deliriously?

"Sklepy cynamonowe" describes the familiar streets of the narrator's hometown in terms of a labyrinth, a metaphor which occurs often in Schulz's fiction. At first the reader accepts the story as metaphorical: obviously the streets were not really re-arranged while the family was in the theatre. The narrator is simply lost. This in turn may be read as a metaphor for his confusion in life – perhaps he is going through puberty. When the narrator finds his bearings again, there seems to be a return to concrete reality as he takes a ride in a cab. Then, however, the driver abandons him, and the horse

³² Jerzy Jarzębski, "Brunona Schulza malowanie słowem," in Małgorzata Kitowska-Łysiak, ed., *Bruno*

continues on its way, before shrinking to the size of a toy. The narrator learns how to ski without skis and thus returns to town. The initially familiar labyrinth metaphor has turned into pure fantasy. What could the skiing be a metaphor for? If, as seems likely, it is the literal truth of the story, at what point did the story pass from metaphor to literal truth?³³

In "Nawiedzenie" the question of whether we are reading a metaphor or the literal truth is also raised. When Father argues with God we are tempted to treat this as a metaphorical description of his madness. Then, however, Schulz reveals that this argument was really his father going to the toilet. Part two of the story opens with a statement that, if it is literally true, places the story in the realms of fantasy: "Mój ojciec powoli zanikał, wiądl w oczach" (18) ("My father was slowly fading away, withering before our eyes"). This could be a metaphor for various things: Father's ill health, his retirement from the business of the shop, the failing of the shop's interests, or the maturing of the son (i.e., as he grows older and more independent, not to mention physically larger, his father plays a smaller role in his life). Each metaphorical reading is contradicted, though hardly refuted, by some detail. For example, it is not just the narrator who observes the decline of his father. Everyone notices it, so that would seem to count against the last interpretation. It does not seem to be a metaphor for ill-health either, as his health, humour and mobility all improve, and there is no other evidence that the shop's fortunes are declining – on the contrary, we later see the shop swamped by customers in "Noc wielkiego sezonu," though it is typical of Schulz to sever normal temporal links between events. The information which would help the reader decide on a metaphorical interpretation is not given immediately. The result is that we remain uncertain of Father's status. Is this pure fantasy, in which it is possible for people to shrink away to nothing, or is it a metaphor? When we read that Father flaps his arms and crows like a cock on someone's entry we do not know if this is fantasy, reality, madness or metaphor. This holds true of all of Father's transformations and strange behaviour. When he turns into a fly in "Martwy sezon" this could be a metaphor for his anger, or it may really have happened. Schulz offers a carefully non-committal explanation:

Należało zresztą ten krok ojca wziąć *cum grano salis*. Był to raczej gest wewnętrzny, demonstracja gwałtowna i rozpaczliwa, operująca jednak minimalną dawką rzeczywistości. Nie trzeba zapominać: większość tego, co tu opowiadamy, położyć można na karb tych aberracji letnich, tej kanikularnej półrzeczywistości, tych nieodpowiedzialnych marginaliów

Schulz in memoriam: 1892-1942, Lublin 1992, pp. 43-58, (51).

³³ Jarzębski maintains it is impossible to pinpoint where the visit to the theatre becomes not a metaphor, but a dream: Jerzy Jarzębski, "Zwiedzanie *Sklepów cynamonowych*," in *NaGłos*, 1992, no. 7, pp. 119-132, (120).

przebiegających bez żadnej gwarancji na rubieżach martwego sezonu (252-3) (Yet one should take this step of Father's *cum grano salis*. It was more an internal gesture, a violent and desperate demonstration, which, however, made use of a minimal dose of reality. One should not forget: the majority of what we are recounting here can be put down to those summer aberrations, that canicular half-reality, those irresponsible marginalia running without any guarantee along the borders of the dead season)

If we are to take it *cum grano salis* then this implies it is indeed a metaphor, but the following sentences suggest that it did happen, that it is the literal – if surreal – truth. Father's final transformation, in "Ostatnia ucieczka ojca," takes place in a depressing atmosphere of failure and bankruptcy: the shop is being liquidated and Adela has emigrated, replaced by the anaemic and boneless Genia. In these circumstances, the suggestion that Father's death might be a metaphor for the passing of an age of respectable merchantship is stronger than usual, but because of all the previous metamorphoses and our uncertainty as to whether they really happened or not, we cannot easily accept this as a metaphor.

Occasionally Schulz bares this device. For example, in "Sklepy cynamonowe" there is a long description of a blue curtain in terms of the sky, but Schulz takes the trouble to tell us that it is not the sky: "Dreszcz płynący przez wielkie oblicze tego nieba, oddech ogromnego płótna, od którego rosły i ożywały maski, zdradzał iluzoryczność tego firmamentu..." (63) ("The tremor sailing across the surface of that sky, the breath of the vast canvas, which revives and swells the masks, revealed the illusory character of that firmament...") This can also be seen in "Wiosna" when he and Rudolf visit the waxwork dummies show.

Wśród nich [ludzi i manekinów] poznałem bez trudu tamtych, którzy już tylko pozornie należeli do tego samego świata, w istocie zaś prowadzili oddzielone, reprezentatywne i zbalsamowane życie na piedestale, życie wystawione na pokaz i odświętnie puste (194) (From among them [people and dummies] I recognised without difficulty those who only formally belonged to this world, while in fact leading a separate, dignified and embalmed life on the pedestal, a life exposed to view and ceremoniously empty)

Apart from the comic effect of assuring us of his expertise in distinguishing between human and dummy, this has the effect of further blurring the line between metaphor and literal truth. Ordinarily, there would be no need to say which are the dummies and which are the people. Telling us which is which just confuses the issue more.

Schulz mocks his own technique in "Jesień," which consists of an invocation to summer, framed by the narrator's leaving his holiday home and arriving back at home. Speaking to summer he says: "Twoje noce były ogromne i nieskończone, jak megalomaniacznе natchnienia zakochanych, albo

były rojowiskami widziadeł, jak bredzenia halucynujących” (337) (“Your nights were gigantic and infinite, like the megalomaniac inspirations of lovers, or they were throngs of apparitions, like hallucinatory maunderings”). This can be read as a description of Schulz’s own technique, and seems in particular to refer to “Noc lipcowa.” This story contains a long chain of comparisons with a July night: “Czy porównam ją do czarnego firmamentu naszych przymkniętych powiek...?” (225) (“Shall I compare it to the black firmament of our half-closed eyelids...?”) In “Jesień” he writes: “Każda rzecz odsyłała do innej rzeczy” (337) (“Every thing referred to another thing”) and “twoja swada nużyła w końcu” (337) (“Your glibness became boring in the end”). In “Noc lipcowa” every thing refers to another thing; no sooner has he tried out one comparison, than he tries another.³⁴

The technique of mixing metaphor with literal truth is common in Schulz, but not present in every story. “Nemrod,” for example, presents no such questions as to the metaphorical or literal nature of the tale. While it may be that the feelings Schulz attributes to Nimrod are the feelings of a human being, we do not begin to question the dog’s existence in the story. Also, for some readers the question will not arise. If we are ready to accept everything at face value, there is no question of metaphor: “Wiosna” is simply the tale of some animated waxwork dummies, Father turns into various different creatures, time has illegal branches and so on. Schulz plays on the tendency of most adults to rationalise what they read.³⁵ Piotr Madejski writes: “But the absurdness of Father’s metamorphoses in Schulz’s prose is born directly out of the automatism of our aesthetic reactions, engrained in us by traditional ‘art of illusion’, whose principle remains that of Greek mimesis.”³⁶ Schulz himself is always hinting that there are deeper meanings behind everyday things. In chapter 10 of “Wiosna” he deduces that God is uncountable (“nieprzeliczony”) from watching a magician’s act. In chapter 23 he declares that a butterfly is “one more piece of evidence,” “jeden dowód więcej” (183). Of what it is evidence we do not learn. Bianca penetrates “the hidden intention” (“ukryta intencja,” 210) of Joseph’s words in chapter 39 of “Wiosna.” “Druga jesień” traces a connection between museums and

³⁴ Panas interprets the speech to summer as a polemic with poetic language and the entire philosophy of the narrator. Władysław Panas, “‘Zstąpienie w esencjonalność’: O kształtach słowa w prozie Brunona Schulza,” in Czaplowska, *Studia*, pp. 75-90, (87). Stala also interprets the speech to summer as “quasi-self-commentary,” in Krzysztof Stala, “Architektura Schulzowskiej wyobraźni,” in Jarzębski, *Czytanie Schulza*, p. 201.

³⁵ This is essentially what Władysław Panas does in “Apologia i destrukcja: (‘Noc wielkiego sezonu’ Brunona Schulza).” His interpretation of the story assumes, not unreasonably, that the events depicted in it are metaphors for something else. Panas, in Kazimierz Bartoszyński, Maria Jasińska-Wojtkowska, Stefan Sawicki, eds. *Nowela Opowiadanie Gawęda: Interpretacje małych form narracyjnych*, Warsaw, 1974, pp. 191-205.

³⁶ Piotr Madejski, “Słowo i byt w prozie Bruno Schulza,” *Twórczość*, no. 7, 1982, pp. 140-143, (142).

weather. Father reads into Adela's every movement a deeper meaning in "Ptaki." When the reader yields to the temptation to try to discover these deeper meanings by decoding the stories in terms of metaphor, Schulz makes it as difficult as possible for him. The following quotation from the preface to the Classics of Western Spirituality edition of *Zohar*, an important kabbalistic text, could be applied to Schulz:

Such was the fate of this work [*Zohar*, or *The Book of Light*], however, that it came to be increasingly venerated by generations of devotees who sought to make its poetry transparent, to see beyond the imagery into the 'true' religious meaning of the text, exegeting it much as the early rabbis had the Bible, to find in each word or phrase previously unseen layers of sacred meaning.³⁷

Just as exegetes try to penetrate the *Zohar*, so do characters in Schulz try to penetrate various texts. What is to be found behind their poetry and imagery will be discussed in chapter 5.

II. Syuzhet

The highly descriptive nature of Schulz's writing renders the question of the order of the introduction of motifs less relevant than it might otherwise be: "Nemrod," "Pan," "Edzio" among others are almost entirely descriptive.³⁸ In the case of pure description, the order of the introduction of various motifs is not related to time, but may be dictated by similarities suggested by the phonic properties of words, or by metaphor.³⁹ Jarzębski shows how coincidences of sound can lead to a chain of motifs, giving the example "swarliwy odwar, jadowity derywat," (250) ("quarrelsome decoction, poisonous derivative": "derywat" is a linguistic term).⁴⁰ Another example may be the scene in which Bianca's room turns into a train ("pociąg" (211)). This, the narrator tells us, explains why there is a draught ("przeciąg"). It may be going too far to suggest that this is also linked to the Polish for "attraction" ("pociąg"), which the narrator clearly feels for Bianca, but Jerzy Paszek goes even further, claiming that plot in Schulz is formed by phono-stylistic figures.⁴¹ The next section looks at the structure of Schulz's stories, noting that parallels and analogies play a stronger role in the construction than does causality. The pushing of

³⁷ Arthur Green, Preface to: *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, The Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. and introduction by Daniel Chanan Matt, Ramsey, New Jersey, Paulist Press, 1983, pp. xiii-xiv, (xiii).

³⁸ Bolecki discusses the encroachment of description on narration in *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 295.

³⁹ Jarzębski, "Brunona Schulza malowanie słowem," *Bruno Schulz in memoriam*, p. 54.

⁴⁰ Jarzębski, "Brunona Schulza malowanie słowem," *Bruno Schulz in memoriam*, p. 47.

⁴¹ Jerzy Paszek, "Anagramy Schulza," *Kresy*, 1993, no. 14, pp. 72-77, (76).

causality to the background, in turn, makes for a looser structure, in which it is possible for chains of motifs to be assembled as in Jarzębski's example.

In terms of the order in which the reader learns of the events making up the *fabula*, Schulz uses fairly conventional devices. The motifs in "Wiosna" are arranged in the order in which they happened, with a number of exceptions, none of which sharply departs from standard literary practice. For example, the early background of Franz Joseph I and his brother, the Archduke Maximilian, which is probably the first thing to happen, is told in a flashback, as late as chapter 29 (Franz Joseph first appears in chapter 6). While the events depicted in the flashback precede the events recounted in "Wiosna," it is by no means unusual for writers to adopt this technique. The flashback, and the brief recapitulation of events prior to the events of the story proper are familiar conventions. With the possible exception of creation myths and eschatological tales, any chain of events can be preceded and succeeded by causes and effects, respectively. Every story must choose a place to begin and a place to end, and decide which parts to leave out. It would be a dull story that started literally "at the very beginning" and told absolutely everything – if indeed this is possible at all. On the contrary, a story which did begin at the very beginning would itself be a departure from the norm. A similar technique is adopted in *Tristram Shandy*, which in its efforts to be complete never properly gets started in its description of the "life and opinions" of its main character. It is a widely accepted literary convention that much of the minutiae be omitted in the recounting of events, and that, therefore, the time it takes to read what happened and the real time those events would actually take to happen do not coincide: *Buddenbrooks* is a history of three generations of a family, but it does not take three generations to read. A Formalist would predict that this convention at some stage be broken, and Naturalism tried to do so by giving very detailed descriptions of routine events, while Germany saw the development of the *Sekundenstil*, which attempted to mimic the actual time passing in the text.⁴² Notwithstanding such exceptions, the convention is for stories to be selective both as to the beginning and end-points and to the amount of detail in between.

An outline of selected motifs in "Wiosna," in strict chronological order, follows:

Bianca is born to a Creole, Conchita, and makes her way to Europe (Chapter 32).

⁴² Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie: Ansätze-Personen-Grundbegriffe, ed., Ansgar

Joseph goes to a restaurant with his father and meets the photographer. On the way home he sees Bianca for the first time. (Chapter 2).

Joseph leads his guard to Bianca's villa. Mr. de V. is shot. Rudolf and Bianca run away together. Joseph is arrested. (Chapter 40).

Joseph goes with Bianca to a park where they meet Bianca's dead mother (Chapter 27; a special case).

It is clear from the above that Schulz manipulates the order of the presentation of *fabula*, but the type of manipulation shown above is not generally perceptible. Schulz's interference in the order of events does not draw attention to itself, or to the conventions of plot construction in the adventure story. The type of very long digressions that enchanted Shklovsky in his study of *Eugene Onegin* are not so much in evidence here, although there is a notable example of Schulz deliberately digressing after building up the reader's expectations. This is in chapter 28, which starts with the words: "Wypadki przeganiają się w oszalałym tempie" (185) ("Events succeed each other at a frantic tempo"). The narrator sees Mr. de V., but immediately after this short episode comes the longish chapter 29, which, as we have seen, consists of a backtrack to the history of Franz Joseph and his brother.

As well as the digression represented by chapter 29, the orderly recounting of *fabula* is interrupted by a number of chapters which are not thematically linked with the rest of "Wiosna." They are composed of "free" motifs. The converse of this is ellipsis, where Schulz deliberately holds back information which in the conventions of the adventure story would normally be considered "bound motifs" (that is, necessary for the coherence of the story).⁴³ Examples of the former include chapter 10, which is an account of a magician's act the narrator once saw, and chapter 18, which begins "A gdy późną nocą wracają cicho do rozległej willi..." (174) ("And when they return quietly, late at night to their roomy villa...") No hint is given as to who "they" are. The villa might be Bianca's, but the reader learns of the existence of Bianca's villa only in chapter 22, and even at that, it is only in chapter 23 that her ownership is confirmed. The omission of information essential to understanding the

Nünning, Verlag J. B. Metzler, Stuttgart and Weimar, 1998, p. 393.

⁴³ Boris Tomashevsky, "Thematics," in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, ed. and trans., *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1965, pp. 62-95, (68).

motivations of various characters and actions (e.g. why does Joseph assemble a guard of dummies to attack Bianca's villa?) is a defining characteristic of "Wiosna," which will be examined in more detail in chapter 5.

The fourth motif, above, is a special case. Ordinarily, there would be no question of considering it as having happened after the end of the story: it is a vision, not necessarily of the future, even if the narrator does use the future tense. In Schulz, however, the reader cannot be so sure, due to the author's continual defamiliarisation of time itself (see below).

Ellipsis is used in "Ostatnia ucieczka ojca." Here it is motivated by a literary convention: the desire to maintain suspense and keep the reader reading out of a desire to know what happened next. The narrative proceeds in chronological order. The first block of narrative sets the scene for the story of Father's last escape: the shop is being liquidated. The narrative then moves back in time, as Schulz tells the reader of Father's previous pseudo-deaths. As in "Wiosna," this is a standard device of recapitulation, this time of events which the reader already knows about. Father's latest metamorphosis is into a crab, which Mother finds on the stairs one day. There follows a description of Father's behaviour in his crab-form, interrupted by a return to discussing the shop's affairs, and the arrival of Uncle Karol, who takes to his room to study old price lists. The ellipsis is signalled by the narrative's jump forward to the present with the words:

Z przykrością muszę się przezwyciężyć, ażeby opowiedzieć zgodnie z prawdą niepojęty fakt, przed którego rzeczywistością wzdraga się cała moja istota. Do dziś dnia nie mogę pojąć, że byliśmy w całej rozciągłości świadomymi sprawcami tego faktu (332) (With regret I must master myself to tell truthfully the incomprehensible fact from whose reality my entire being recoils. To this day I cannot understand that we were the fully conscious perpetrators of this act)

This is a classic device of withholding information from the reader for longer than is strictly necessary – there is no reason why the soul-searching could not follow the revelation of what actually happened, which seems to be that Mother has cooked Father (Schulz only shows the results of the deed, this "incomprehensible fact"). Schulz repeats this device later in the same story, this time baring its conventionality by introducing it as a "prolongation of the story beyond, it seems, the final and permissible boundaries" ("przedłużenie historii poza, zda się, już ostateczne i dopuszczalne granice" (333)). Again there is a lack of understanding, signalled by the rhetorical questions: "Czemuż nie dał wreszcie za wygraną, czemuż nie uznał się w końcu za pokonanego...?" (333) ("Why couldn't he have thrown in the towel, why couldn't he accept defeat in the end...?") delaying the revelation that

Father's death, announced earlier on as "definitive" ("umarł był już definitywnie" (328)), was not in fact complete. He has escaped once more, never to be seen again.

The device of withholding information is a well-known one and there is something melodramatic in Schulz's use of it, which, coupled with the bizarre circumstances of the story, suggests a desire to send up the convention. In both cases the ellipsis is closely connected with causality. The narrator professes not to know why or understand how Mother could have cooked Father, or why Father could not surrender himself to fate. "W tym oświetleniu nabiera to zdarzenie cech jakiejś dziwnej fatalności" (332) ("In this light the event acquires the characteristic of a certain strange fatality"). Cause and effect are explicitly ruled out of the question.

It can also be seen from this story what an unreliable memoirist Schulz is. He writes towards the beginning of the story that Father was definitively deceased, but by the end it is clear that Father is as alive as ever. Rather than return and revise or justify the earlier opinion, as a real biographer might do, Schulz leaves it. This gives the impression that the story does not tell about fixed events that have occurred once and for all, but rather that the events were "occurring" at the time of writing.⁴⁴ Earlier on, in "Księga," the Book is described so: "I tu wskazujemy na dziwną cechę Szpargału, już teraz jasną czytelnikowi, że rozwija się on podczas czytania, że ma granice ze wszech stron otwarte dla wszystkich fluktuacyj i przepływów" (127) ("And here we indicate a strange characteristic of the scrap of paper, clear by now to the reader, that it develops during reading, that its borders are open on every side to all fluctuations and flows"). By substituting "writing" for "reading" we have, Irena Skwarek points out, a model for Schulz's own technique, as shown in "Ostatnia ucieczka ojca."⁴⁵

Delaying tactics can be seen in "Martwy sezon." When Father turns into a fly, the chain of events is interrupted by an explanation not of how it happened, but of how the other people present could have let it happen, whetting the reader's appetite for the event itself: "Wtedy to zaszedł ten godny pożałowania incydent, który nas wszystkich nappełnił smutkiem i wstydem" (251) ("Then there took place that regrettable incident, which filled us all with sadness and shame"). Only after this discussion of their culpability is it revealed that Father turned into a fly.

"Sanatorium pod klepsydrą" hints at "even stranger things ... things which I hide from my own self, fantastic things..." ("dziwniejsze rzeczy, rzeczy, które zatajam przed samym sobą" (284)),

⁴⁴ "The world presented in Schulz's prose turns out also to be a result of linguistic operations, and not just a record of autobiographical memories." Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 301.

⁴⁵ Irena Skwarek, "Archetypiczny walor motywu Księgi," in Czapłowa, *Studia*, pp. 125-133, (131).

but "Ojczyzna" makes still greater use of ellipsis. This story describes the narrator's life in his town, where he is first violin in the local orchestra. There are many hints at some kind of a troubled past before the writer came to this town, beginning with the first sentence: "Po wielu perypetiach i zmiennych kolejach losu, których nie zamierzam tu opisywać, znalazłem się wreszcie za granicą, w kraju w marzeniach mej młodości gorąco utęsknionym" (372) ("After many vicissitudes and changing turns of fate, which I do not intend to describe here, I found myself at last abroad, in the land avidly longed for in the dreams of my youth"). The narrator continues to hint at dark secrets at various points in the text:

...ja, który przebywałem dotychczas na wpół w podziemnym świecie egzystencyj zdeklasowanych, pasażerów na gapię, pod pokładem nawy społecznej (373) (...I, who had until now been half in the underground world of existence of the declassé, the freeloaders, below decks on the ship of society)

Cała moja przeszłość tułacza i bezdomna, podziemna nędza mojej przeszłej egzystencji... (374) (All my wandering and homeless past, the underground meanness of my past existence...)

As a consequence of this hinting, when he describes how from time to time he leaves the assembled company to go into the neighbouring room to think, the reader assumes it is to turn over in his mind the twists and turns of fate that brought him to this place: in this way Schulz builds up an image of a Romantic hero with a troubled past without ever actually mentioning what happened in the past. It is a play of pure form, such as Pushkin engaged in (in real life) when he encouraged rumours about an unhappy love in his past. Discussing this, Tomashevsky writes: "the poetic legend of 'concealed love' was created with its ostentatious devices used for concealing love, when it would have been much simpler to keep silent."⁴⁶ Schulz also speaks when keeping silent would have better served the ostensible purpose of not attaching any significance to the event or thing described. An example from "Traktat o manekinach" is given below. The narrator's discussion of his "condition" in "Emeryt" (see below) also falls into this category. A result of these dark hints in "Ojczyzna" is that the line "Stało się jednak inaczej" (372) ("But things turned out differently") leads us to expect that the narrator's past will catch up on him. In fact, when Schulz writes that things turned out differently he means it quite literally: "Ojczyzna" develops in a direction entirely contradictory to these hints.

⁴⁶ Boris Tomashevsky, "Literature and Biography," trans. Herbert Eagle, in Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska, eds., *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT, 1971, pp. 47-55, (50).

“Ojczyzna” illustrates Schulz’s technique of writing stories which seem to be unfolding as we read them, rather than referring to a fixed stock of events. At the outset we learn that this place he has come to is the land he dreamed off in his youth, but that it is in fact now no more than “a land of mean, inglorious, small defeats” (“teren nędznych, niesławnych, małych klęsk” (372)). Yet by the end of the story it seems not to be such a bad place after all: “czuję i wiem: nic złego nie może mi się już przydarzyć, znalazłem przystań i spokój... pierś moja napelnia się po brzegi szczęściem” (378) (“I feel and I know: nothing bad can happen to me now; I have found refuge and peace... my breast fills with happiness”).

A reconstruction of the *fabula* of “Emeryt” is made difficult by Schulz’s mysterious allusions to his “state” (“stan”). This state is simply that of being a pensioner, but the narrator seems to understand the term differently to most readers: “Mój stan! Być może, że nie jest on całkiem poprawny. Może jest w nim pewien nieznaczný mankament zasadniczej natury! Mój Boże! Cóż z tego?” (310) (“My state! Maybe it is not quite correct. Maybe there is in it a certain insignificant flaw of a fundamental nature! My God! What of it?”) Even within this defence there is planted a seed of doubt: the failing is small, but of a fundamental nature. Just as the reader is accepting that this is typical Schulzean overstatement, and that this “state” really is simply that of being a pensioner (“nothing more banal in the world” (“nic banalniejszego na świecie” (311))), the narrator reveals that he is in the thrall of music, and cannot help but start to dance when he hears a barrel organ. And yet he insists that this is perfectly normal: “Tylko żadnej romantyki. Jest to kondycja jak każda inna” (311) (“Only no romanticism. It is a condition like any other”). Schulz seems to be making it up as he goes along. What is a fact at the beginning of the story is called into question by the end.

The same is true of “Samotność,” where the narrator, full of regret, is walled in to his room for “bitter months and years” (“gorzkie miesiące i lata” (325)), but at the end of the story claims he could leave whenever he wanted: all he has to do is imagine a door, and one will appear. A switch in the facts of the matter occurs in the same story in a shorter space where he talks about the cornice: “Na tym karniszu *móglbym* się gimnastykować. Doskonały rek. Jak lekko koziółkuje się...” (327) (“On that cornice I *could* do gymnastics. It makes an excellent horizontal bars. How lightly one turns somersaults...” (my italics)). In the space of three sentences the narrative moves from the conditional mood to the indicative. When it comes to explanations for this state of affairs, the narrator simply says

that he cannot explain or remember how it came about. This vagueness leaves the way clear for him to contradict himself.

This failure or refusal to revise earlier opinion is also in evidence in "Martwy sezon," when the narrator writes: "Ta noc nie prowadziła nigdzie.... Wszystkie ścieżki w nią prowadzące wracały do sklepu z powrotem. Wszystkie eskapady w głąb jej przestworów przedsięwzięte miały od początku złamane skrzydła" (259) ("this night lead nowhere... All paths leading into her returned back to the shop. All escapades undertaken into the depths of her space had broken wings from the start"). And yet in this story the night does lead somewhere. Father's encounter with the visitor has a very definite outcome: seven years of plenty begin after their wrestling match of that night.

Schulz uses mock ellipsis in "Mój ojciec wstępuje do strażaków." He motivates any gaps in the story by saying he is not sure if the events took place in his dreams or perhaps on another occasional altogether (see section 1, above). However, there are no serious gaps in the story, which is no less coherent than many a Schulz story. On the contrary, Schulz obeys the story-telling convention that permits narrators to remember and reproduce conversations word for word. Each link in the chain of argument about the firemen, which is the subject of that part of the story allegedly marked by "gaps in my memory, the blind spots of my dream" ("luki mej pamięci, ślepe plamy snu" (232)), springs from the previous link.

Digression occurs in Schulz, frequently taking the form of descriptions of nature, though so many of the stories are purely descriptive, that it is not always possible to identify a description as a digression from the unfolding of the material. In "Martwy sezon" a digression occurs immediately before the arrival of the visitor: "Noc za drzwiami była jak z ołowiu..." (257) ("The night beyond the door was like lead...") The story as a whole is more concerned with Father and the shop than with nature. Immediately after the arrival of the visitor there is a digression into a fruitless discussion of his identity, from which the only conclusion to be drawn is that he is a "powerful demon" ("potężny demon" (258)). This is not exactly a digression, but it does delay the further development of the material, and leads away from the obvious metaphorical identification of the visitor with the angel that Jacob wrestled in the Bible.

"Manekiny" uses ellipsis to particular effect. The text of the treatise itself begins in "Manekiny" and continues in the following three parts of the story: "Traktat o manekinach albo Wtóra Księga Rodzaju," "Traktat o manekinach (Ciąg dalszy)" and "Traktat o manekinach (Dokończenie)."

However, the division of the treatise into "Ciąg dalszy" ("continued") and "Dokończenie" ("conclusion") results from the actions of Adela, not the cogitations of Father. "Manekiny" proper is ended simply by her appearance; "Traktat o manekinach" is ended by the "trivial incident" ("błahy incydent"(38)) of Adela's outstretched leg; "Ciąg dalszy" ends mysteriously with Adela's distinctly spoken words omitted; and "Dokończenie" ends with Polda and Paulina impatiently asking Adela to stop Father. Not only is the division of Father's treatise quite arbitrary, but at a crucial moment the narrator simply refuses to say what happened, offering no excuses like "I forget" or "I cannot understand." The reader is left to wonder what the *fabula* might have been. The description of the trivial incident which brings Father's treatise to a halt is an example of speaking when keeping silent would be a better way to draw a veil over the events. For a trivial incident the narrator pays a great deal of attention to it; his entreaty to "ignore it with the same lightness that we do" ("zignorować go z równą lekkością, jak my to czynimy" (38)) intrigues the reader all the more. "Manekiny" weaves two stories together: one is a description of Father and Adela's relationship; the other is Father's views on creation.

"Sanatorium pod klepsydrą" begins in the middle of the action. Only after the narrator has reached the sanatorium do we learn the purpose of the visit. The story is not, then, recounted in chronological order, but once again this is a standard device of story telling. Likewise, the first the reader learns of the package of pornographic books is when it (or rather, its replacement) has already arrived, not when the narrator sends away for it. Teresa Kostkiewiczowa has shown how the tense changes through the story to follow the actions of the narrator. Chapters 1 and 2 are written in the past tense, and show a progression from one event to the next. By chapter 3 the narrator is more used to the conditions in the sanatorium and switches to the present tense. She writes: "The narrator cannot find the temporal links between individual events; he cannot determine their chronological order."⁴⁷ However, this is apparent mainly in chapter 3, which consists mostly of examples of the unreliability of time in the sanatorium. Once again we see Schulz unwilling to rewrite contradictory statements: chapter 4 begins with a statement which presupposes linear progression of time: "Stosunki w Sanatorium stają się z dniem każdym nieznośniejsze" (281) ("Conditions in the sanatorium are becoming more unbearable every day"). Although portions of time seem to be lost to narcolepsy, the

⁴⁷ Teresa Kostkiewiczowa, "Bruno Schulz: 'Sanatorium pod klepsydrą'," in Teresa Kostkiewiczowa, Aleksandra Okopień-Sławińska, Janusz Sławiński, *Czytamy utwory współczesne: Analizy*, Warsaw, 1967, pp. 192-204, (196).

story in "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą" is not noticeably less coherent than most of Schulz's stories. Rather than experiment with the disposition of episodes, Schulz experiments with something more fundamental still: time itself.

Schulz frequently confounds ideas of *fabula* and *syuzhet* by interfering with time. There is little to be gained from considering the events as they occurred in their chronological order when it is impossible to decide if and when the events happened in the first place. Schulz presents the would-be reconstructor of *fabula* with his "illegal time" and time running on branch lines, parallel to real time, all serving to muddy the question of what happened and when. There are frequent references to freak days and questions are raised as to whether the events of the stories happened in "real" time. In addition, time is spatialised. The treatment of time in Schulz's stories is informed by a keen interest in Einstein's theories of relativity.⁴⁸

Korecki distinguishes between five different categories of time in Schulz, one of them being oniric time. In this oniric time events interpenetrate, the laws of cause and effect break down, and things appear and disappear for no reason. He points out that while dreams normally form stories within stories, this is not the case with Schulz, where the dream/reality divide is ignored. Temporal anarchy rules in dreams, and not even death is final.⁴⁹ It is usual for commentators to attribute the all-pervading strangeness and illogical nature of Schulz's fictional world to the influence of dreams.⁵⁰ This is not to be wondered at, given Schulz's own occasional references to dreams: in chapter 17 of "Wiosna," for example, Schulz compares the Underworld of the spring dusk to dreams. However, there is a strong case to be made for the view that we are dealing with relativity, rather than dreams. Panas draws attention to modern scientific concepts of time in "Apologia i destrukcja," interpreting Schulz's description of ordinary time, in which facts are laid out one after the other, as a depiction of mimetic poetics, with Schulz's "illegal" time representing anti-mimetic poetics.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Sandauer describes Schulz's vision of time as clearly "post-Einsteinian" in "Rzeczywistość zdegradowana (Rzecz o Brunonie Schulzu)," in Bruno Schulz, *Proza*, Cracow, 1964, pp. 5-43, (37).

⁴⁹ Grzegorz Korecki, "Kategorie czasu w *Prozie* Brunona Schulza," *Przegląd humanistyczny*, 1981, no. 1/2, pp. 139-159. See especially pp. 149-152.

⁵⁰ Jerzy Jarzębski, "Sen o 'złotym wieku'," *Teksty*, 1973, no. 2, pp. 104-121, especially pp. 115-116; Sandauer, "Rzeczywistość zdegradowana," p. 37. For a different view see Józef Czechowicz, "Truchanowski i towarzysze: Uwagi marginesowe," *Pion*, 1938, no. 35, p. 2.

⁵¹ Panas, "Apologia i destrukcja," in Bartoszyński et al., eds. *Nowela Opowiadanie Gawęda*, pp. 192-195.

Contemporary readers may be familiar with Einstein's theory of relativity, and used to the concept that time is relative, but Schulz gives a hint of the dismay felt by some at the apparent overturning of age old certainties by Einstein:

Niekiedy chciałoby się uderzyć w stół i zawołać na całe gardło:– Dość tego, wara wam od czasu, czas jest nietykalny, czasu nie wolno prowokować! Czy nie dość wam przestrzeni? Przestrzeń jest dla człowieka, w przestrzeni możecie bujać do woli, koziołkować, przewracać się, skakać z gwiazdy na gwiazdę. Ale przez miłość boską nie tykać czasu! (283) (Sometimes one wants to pound the table and cry out at the top of one's voice: 'That's enough, hands off time, time is untouchable, you cannot provoke time! Is space not enough for you? Space is for man, in space you can gad about at will, turn somersaults, roll over, jump from star to star. But for the love of God, don't touch time!')

Schulz's references to "twin track time" ("czas dwutorowy" (130)) and "illegal time" ("czas nielegalny"(210)) become less mysterious if we read them as reflections of the suspicion people felt about the new order of things heralded by Einstein. A concept introduced by Einstein was the twins paradox, which predicts that a twin living at the top of a mountain will age faster than his or her twin living at the bottom.⁵² Schulz's version of this is the two Fathers in "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą." The narrator misunderstands Dr. Gotard's explanation of Father's condition. He looks for the certainty of knowing whether Father is dead or alive, when all that Dr. Gotard can give him is relativity: "Rzecz sprowadza się do prostego relatywizmu. Tu po prostu jeszcze śmierć ojca nie doszła do skutku, ta śmierć, która go w pańskiej ojczyźnie już dosięgła" (267) ("It boils down to simple relativism. Here your Father's death simply has not yet reached its course, that death which has already reached him in your homeland"). Father has been moved to a place where time passes at a different pace. This is not to argue that all the events of "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą" can be explained away by relativity, only that the atmosphere is influenced by it.

The action of "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą" takes place in a time and space separate from the real world. The opening image of a long journey on a forgotten sideline in antiquated passenger wagons signals entry into this special time and place. It is a repetition of the images developed in "Sklepy cynamonowe" (see below) and "Genialna epoka," which also sets itself apart from the ordinary run of events with the image of a train journey: "Na miłość boską, czyżby nie istniał tu pewnego rodzaju ażytoż biletów na czas? ... Panie konduktorze!" (130) ("For the love of God, could there be some kind of agiotage in tickets for time? ... Conductor!"). In both cases temporal concepts are

⁵² "This is known as the twins paradox, but it is a paradox only if one has the idea of absolute time at the back of one's mind." Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black*

conflated with spatial imagery (i.e. train journeys). In “Noc lipcowa” time is described metaphorically as a space: “Czasem zamyka mnie noc, jakby w ciasnym pokoju bez wyjścia” (226) (“Sometimes night would close me in, as if in a narrow room with no exit”). The events of the story take place in a different space/time to everyday reality. This also is true of “Genialna epoka,” in which a place, Trinity Square, is compared to a time, the new year (138). Similarly, in “Sklepy cynamonowe” the streets that the narrator walks along are not the ones he is familiar with. The treachery of space (“ulice podwójne, ulice sobowtóry, ulice kłamliwe i zwodne” (63-4) (“double streets, doppelganger streets deceitful and deceptive streets”)) is matched by a treachery of time: it is a December night, but warm, touched by a “false spring” (“falszywa wiosna” (64)). Time flows unevenly, and as well as a false spring, there is a false day. Schulz uses metaphors – not necessarily striking in their originality – to describe time in terms of space. For example Dodo’s future is likened to a flat and unchanging road (293). In “Mój ojciec wstępuje do strażaków” the narrator and his mother drive into autumn (230) and in “Sierpień,” time is described as having a margin (see section 1, above), while chapter 16 of “Wiosna” contains the lines: “Tak błądząc po omacku...[ludzie w parku] spotykają się wreszcie... gdzieś na rubieży czasu, u tylnej furtki świata odnajdują się z powrotem w jakimś dawno minionym życiu, w dalekiej preegzystencji...” (167) (“So, groping their way around... they [people in the park] meet at last... somewhere on the outskirts of time, at the back gate they find themselves back in some long past life, in a distant pre-existence”).

Schulz’s tendency to spatialise time mirrors relativity’s view of space and time as an indissoluble whole. In physics this is referred to as “space-time.”⁵³ (In this thesis the term “space/time” is used to distinguish between the strictly defined scientific term, and the loose literary reworking of the concept.) Schulz relocates many episodes not only in time, but in space. For example, the garden in “Pan” is in a world outside ours, where it is possible for a garden in a small town to have different climatic zones. The tramp is seen at a moment when time has broken free of its usual “treadmill of events” (“kierat zdarzeń” (56)) and is running wild.

Ironically, despite the negative connotations attached to relativist time (in “Noc wielkiego sezonu” the extra time is described as “zdziwaczały czas... lata wyrodne... fałszywy miesiąc” (97) (“weird time... degenerate summers...false month”)) it gives Schulz considerable scope for

Holes, Toronto, Bantam, 1988, pp. 37-38.

⁵³ “In relativity, there is no real distinction between the space and time coordinates,” Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, p. 27. The term “space-time” is used in Hawking’s book.

developing his short stories free of the restrictions faced by the nineteenth-century realist approach.⁵⁴ Perhaps the most striking example of this is the licence Schulz takes with Father's various transformations and pseudo-deaths. This is combined with a tendency toward vagueness: in "Nawiedzenie" Father shrinks away not to anything so definite as "nothing" or to "his death" but to a heap of senseless absurdities, which *might* disappear, as unnoticed as the rubbish Adela throws out every day. It is very difficult to say where or when – or if – the events of "Karakony" take place: Father has become a cockroach, though Joseph suspects he is a condor, while Mother says he is a commercial traveller. We are told that the story takes place in the grey days after Father's "age of genius" but that does not mean it unfolds in "ordinary" time: the weeks are devoid of Sundays and holidays. Ordinarily, this might be taken for a metaphor – as in "grey days," but the parallels with "illegal" times in other stories, and the uncertainty as to what actually happened, give it more than usual literal force. In "Martwy sezon" Father turns into a fly, but recovers again the same day; in "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą" we are told that he has died, as is true of "Ostatnia ucieczka ojca."

In chapter 39 of "Wiosna" Schulz writes: "W taką noc zamarginesową, nie znającą granic, przestrzeń traci swój sens.... robię parę kroków w nieokreślonym kierunku, w ślepy zaułek nocy..." (208) ("On such an off-margins night, knowing no boundaries, space loses its sense.... I take a few steps in an undetermined direction, into the blind alley of night...") This sets the tone of indeterminacy throughout the chapter: the room Bianca and the narrator are in imperceptibly becomes a forest, and "...beginning at a certain time we cross into illegal time, into a night out of control..." ("Począwszy od pewnej pory wkraczamy w czas nielegalny, w noc pozbawioną kontroli..."(210)). It is during this out of control time that Bianca reveals to Joseph that she used to be a boy when the narrator knew her earlier as the washerwoman's daughter.⁵⁵

As well as the manipulation of motifs in individual stories, the stories can be considered as a whole. Taken together they make up a sort of biography of the narrator, with the events of his life

⁵⁴ Jane Harris writes of Schulz that he creates a timeless world, in which temporal experiences are omitted or undifferentiated. Time perspectives are merged, creating an ambiguous but essentially static state of existence. Jane Gary Harris, "An Inquiry into the Function of the Autobiographical Mode: Joyce, Mandelstam, Schulz," in Paul Debreczeny, ed., *Literature, Poetics, History, Kiev, September 1983*, vol. 2 of *American Contributions to the Ninth International Congress of Slavists*, Columbus Ohio, Slavica, 1983, pp. 201-221, (216).

⁵⁵ A further point to consider is the possibility that Schulz's extreme relativisation of time could be rooted in the Jewish understanding of the Aggadah, a part of the Talmud consisting in interpretations of the Bible (see section 3, below). A property of the Aggadah is that: "In its continuum, time has no meaning: rabbis knew private thoughts of snake [sic] in Eden; Moses could visit the classroom of Rabbi Akiba; Elijah was an every day guest." S. G. F. Brandon, ed., *A Dictionary of Comparative*

being the *fabula*, and the ordering and presentation of those events being the *syuzhet*. Schulz frustrates the reader's expectation of "the natural order of things" at the level of the narrative voice. In Formalist terms, the background against which we perceive the language of the stories is the language of the memoirist. This is its "speech orientation."⁵⁶ Ostensibly, these are the stories of the narrator's childhood.

Two things will be noticed: firstly, in this biography it is impossible to say which events precede which. While authors are not obliged to be scrupulous as to details of what age they were when *x* happened, and what age when *y* happened, in Schulz's case vagueness is taken still further, aided by his arbitrary treatment of time. In "Księga" the narrator is small enough to stand between his father's legs, but such signposts are rare in the stories, and it is difficult to speak of the narrator's age at all in, for example, "Emeryt." Schulz is not concerned with presenting a logical progression of events, or drawing conclusions as to the formative influences on his life. The statement "To było bardzo dawno. Matki jeszcze wówczas nie było" (114) ("It was a very long time ago. Mother did not yet exist") may be intriguing from a psychoanalytic or Freudian point of view, but Schulz does not follow it up, or draw any conclusions from it, at least not explicitly. There is no attempt to see any one event of his childhood as a result of his upbringing, or any previous events.

Secondly, Schulz also departs from the biographical project at various points. An example is "Pan Karol," which is effectively told in the third person omniscient mode.⁵⁷ The narrator does not seem to be a character in the story, as is the case in most of the stories. The first sentence introduces Pan Karol as Joseph's uncle, but there is no attempt made to motivate realistically the narrator's intimate knowledge of Pan Karol's morning routine. It is presented simply as it is. In this story the narrator has access to facts about his uncle over and above what a genuine memoirist could have known.⁵⁸ "Emeryt" in *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą* also departs from the general scheme of Joseph's childhood. This story, with its internal, first person narrator, concerns someone the reader presumes to be Joseph, but is in fact called Szymcio (Szymon) at the very end of the story by his classmates.

It is apparent that the narrator of "Emeryt" is not to be trusted in his description of the antics of the people in the office he visits. While Szymon describes their attitude to him approvingly, it is

Religion, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970, p. 381.

⁵⁶ Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History - Doctrine*, 2nd edn., Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 4, London, Mouton, 1965, p. 235.

⁵⁷ Speina, *Bankructwo realności*, p. 34.

⁵⁸ In *Sklepy cynamonowe* "...memory and imagination are completely undifferentiated..." (Harris,

clear to most readers that they are treating him with shocking disrespect – if he is in fact a grown man. The chief toys with him, pretending he cannot see him. All of this the narrator interprets as just the right kind of approach to someone in his “condition.”

Incorrect, or at least questionable interpretation of other characters is also used in “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą.” A passage describes the narrator walking behind a chambermaid, who “sure of the magnetism exerted by the play of her hips, did not turn around at all” (“pewna magnetyzmu, jaki wywierało granie jej bioder, nie odwracała się wcale” (265)). The narrator seems to be reading a lot into the back of a woman’s head, interpreting her walk almost as a provocation. The impression that it is only the narrator who is sure of the magnetism of the chambermaid is strengthened by the reference later in the story to the strange gait of the women of the town: “Jest to chód w nieubłaganie prostej linii, nie liczący się z żadnymi przeszkodami...” (279) (“It is a walk in an unswervingly straight line, not counting on any obstacles...”) To find one chamber maid walking in such a way might be an accident; to find all the women in town walking with such self-assurance suggests a lack of self-assurance on the part of the narrator. However, this walk is presented as entirely independent of the narrator’s point of view. Schulz again avoids using a phrase such as “it seemed to me.”⁵⁹ In “Wiosna” one suspects that the narrator constantly misreads Bianca’s actions. In chapter 14 he describes how he sees Bianca in the park every day. They make eye contact once and the narrator writes: “Od tej chwili oddałem się jej do dyspozycji, bez granic i niepodzielnie. Przyjęła ledwo widocznym skinieniem powiek. Stało się to bez słowa ... w jednym spojrzeniu” (164) (“From that moment I put myself entirely at her disposition, indivisibly and without limits. She accepted it with a barely perceptible lowering of her eyelids. It happened without a word ... in one glance”). Reading between the lines, it is reasonable to guess that Bianca has hardly noticed Joseph, much less has she given him any signal. It is hardly a coincidence that only *after* this “exchange” does Joseph discover that all the lines in the stamp album lead to Bianca (chapter 15). The wordless exchange with Bianca is repeated in chapter 21: in one short glance she accepts and returns Joseph’s ardent greeting. Again, one suspects the Joseph did not in fact greet her at all. When the narrator explains the correct way to read the stamp album’s references to psychology in chapter 21, there is again a difference between what the narrator says and what the reader understands. According to Joseph one should be

“An Inquiry into the Function of the Autobiographical Mode,” p. 219.)

⁵⁹ Schulz’s graphic art frequently depicts women walking haughtily past men debasing themselves. See, for example, Bruno Schulz, *The Booke of Idolatry*, trans., Bogna Piotrowska, ed., Jerzy Ficowski,

receptive to the allusions of the text, and keep an open mind, but the reader understands this as an admission of the inadequacies of the stamp album. It seems likely the stamp album does not, after all, deal with psychology.

Shifts in narrative point of view also occur within stories, defamiliarising the narrative voice. In "Nawiedzenie" the reader is prevented from automatising the narrator's point of view by the sudden leaps the narrative makes into the mind of the narrator's father. In describing his father's behaviour, Schulz frequently comes close to and occasionally oversteps the border between internal third person narrative, i.e. that which Joseph knows, and external omniscient narrative, i.e. that which Bruno Schulz knows. When Joseph describes his father, "swaying in silent meditation" ("kiwającego się w bezgłośnej medytacji" (15)) he cannot really know whether his father is meditating, but the reader easily ascribes this to poetic license: it *looks* as if he is meditating. But in the next sentence we are told that his (Father's) tongue was dry and bitter. How could the "memoirist" know this? The device recurs several times in "Nawiedzenie" in order to jolt us out of the belief that the story is simply conveying childhood impressions:

"Słyszał, nie patrząc, tę zmoję" (15)

"He heard, without looking, that plot"

"Nie wierzył jeszcze i odrzucał, jak absurd..." (16)

"He did not yet believe and rejected them as absurd..."

These, however, are punctuated by the mock-serious detached tone of such phrases as:

"zdawał się być pogrążonym w zawiłych konto-korrentach" (16)

"he seemed to be engrossed in complex current accounts"

"Z Bogiem, zdaje się, pogodził się zupełnie" (19)

"With God, it seemed, he had become completely reconciled"

"Zdawać się mogło, że osobowość jego rozpadła się" (18)

"It might have seemed as if his personality had split"

Schulz will not allow the narrative to settle into one mode or the other. The effect of the sudden, unannounced intrusions of information about Father that only Father or an omniscient narrator could know into what is supposed to be the son's story about him is to highlight the artifice of the story. Bolecki says of this oscillation of narratorial role that it also appears in Schulz's mixing together

the child's and the adult's points of view.⁶⁰ Wyskiel has also observed that, in "Wiosna," the narrator combines both childlike imagination and the adult's scepticism and knowledge.⁶¹

The shift in point of view is not always as abrupt as in "Nawiedzenie." In "Druga jesień" there is a smooth progression from the son's point of view to the father's. This is achieved by means of syntax, and is examined in chapter 3, section 4. In "Mój ojciec wstępuje do strażaków" the shift in point of view (which determines how the reader learns of the *fabula*) is clearly motivated. The behaviour and characteristics of the town's firemen are described by alternating sympathetic and unsympathetic speakers, in a rare display of dialogue in Schulz. Father speaks first, Adela answers and begins a diatribe against the firemen, Father counters with a defence of them, Mother also defends them, but with some reservations ("choć nicponie" (235) ("although they are good for nothings")), Teodor speaks out against them, and finally Adela gets the last word in. The see-saw motion continues beyond its natural conclusion at the end of the dialogue when Father (and by extension the firemen with whom he is allied) impresses even Adela with his daring leap out of the window.

In "Martwy sezon" the shifts in point of view are quite subtle, but by the end of the story it is clear that the narrator has access to information about his father not normally available to a third person. Such statements about Father as "czuł jak ręce..." (244) ("he felt as his hands") earlier in the story can be read as poetic license, which might be encountered in the driest of non-fiction memoirs. The same applies when Schulz tells us that Father is looking for the perfect "device" ("chwyt" (246)) to finish his letter to Seipel and Sons. This is "privileged" information, which only Father could really know. When the narrator writes: "Czuł kształt tej pointy" (247) ("he felt the shape of that point [of the letter]") this, again, can be read as poetic license. However, it is more difficult to rationalise the narrator's apparent knowledge of the taste in Father's mouth: "W ustach miał smak bardziej gorzki od piołunu" (248) ("In his mouth was a taste bitterer than wormwood"). Even before the narrative comes to dealing with the climax of Father's wrestling match with the mysterious visitor the narrator has become omniscient, appearing to have access to Father's dreams and childhood experiences: "Już na szkolnej ławie napelniał go [ojca] wstrętem ten opasły egoista" (255) ("While still at school that bloated egotist had filled him [Father] with repulsion"). And yet, Schulz mocks the reader by affecting not to know why they were wrestling. The narrator also knows more than Joseph realistically could about Adela. When Father and the visitor try to catch a look at her, they cannot see her, but the

⁶⁰ Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 253.

narrator is able to tell us that she lay on her bed spasming “spazmując” (260) unconsciously in the grip of dreams.

In “Ostatnia ucieczka ojca,” Joseph also appears to have access to Father’s senses, writing: “Poznawał jakoby na nowo mieszkanie z tej nowej krabiej perspektywy...” (330) (“He came to know as if afresh the flat from this new crab perspective...”) The switch in point of view here is not so sharp as in other stories, as it can easily be rationalised as a supposition made by the narrator (that is, it *appears* to the observer that Father in his new guise as a crab is exploring the flat). At other times the narrator adopts a tone in relation to his Father somewhat more detached than is normally found when writing about family members: “Pewne objawy rozumu, a nawet pewnej figlarnej swawolności nie dawały się przeoczyć” (330) (“Certain signs of intelligence and even of a certain playful wilfulness could not be overlooked”). The narrator writes like a scientist describing an experiment rather than a son describing his father’s demise.

The reader of Schulz is presented with a highly unstable *fabula*. The order in which motifs are introduced to readers in Schulz is complicated not so much by unusual devices as by the instability of time in the stories and the large amount of purely descriptive writing. Schulz slows down stories, “brakes” the action, maintains suspense by use of ellipsis, flashbacks and flash-forwards but does not as a rule use these devices in very new or innovative ways. Instead he takes advantage of the looseness of temporality as permitted by relativism to present indeterminate and vague collections of motifs. This allows the stories to be constructed loosely, by means of allusions and parallels rather than cause-and-effect relationships. The loosening of temporal strictures also permits Schulz to write his stories “as he goes along” without having to refer back to what he has already said. If Father has died in “Nawiedzenie” this is no reason for him not to be alive in “Martwy sezon.” In “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą” the narrator writes: “rezygnujemy bez żalu ze szkieletu nieprzerwanej chronologii, do której baczego nadzorowania przywykliśmy ongiś z nałogu i z troskliwej dyscypliny codziennej” (277) (“we have resigned without regret from the skeleton of uninterrupted chronology, to whose careful observance we had once become accustomed from habit and careful daily discipline”). This is a comment not just on the narrator’s experience in the sanatorium, but of Schulz’s writing technique, which allows him great flexibility in constructing his stories. Schulz dispenses with the realistic motivation felt necessary by more traditional writers.

⁶¹ Wyskiel, “Zagubiona Księga,” in Czapłowa, *Studia*, p. 119.

The events which make up the *fabula* are related in the first person by the father's son, Joseph, in most cases. "Emeryt," narrated by Szymon is a notable exception. However, this narrator frequently tells us more than he realistically could know. This is also related to Schulz's technique of not re-writing his stories. Carefully constructed as the stories are, they do not in fact make sense from a narrowly realist point of view. The narrator appears to know things which he could not know and be ignorant of things which he does know.

III. Parallels and Repetition

Certain motifs recur often in Schulz, creating parallel situations between stories and within stories. This has the effect of giving a thematic unity to stories which often abandon traditional cause and effect relationships. It counteracts the plotlessness imposed on the stories by the lack of logical progression, which may be likened to the logic of dreams. The parallel situations and descriptions also suggest connections between things which, outside Schulz's prose, are not normally associated with each other. Miklaszewski speaks of situational rhyme, which he defines as the juxtaposition of two dependent but non-identical situations, which act on each other. The example he gives is the tramp and the garden in "Pan." Both are described as mad, equating the two in the reader's eyes.⁶² Schulz uses similar and sometimes identical words or groups of words to establish these parallels.⁶³ An example of this is his use of the foreign-sounding "dymensja" instead of the more native "wymiar" ("dimension") in "Pan" and "Pan Karol." In "Pan Karol" Pan Karol's future grows up inside him "like a monstrous growth, growing fantastically into an unknown dimension" ("niby potworna narośl, wyrastająca fantastycznie w nieznaną *dymensję*" (60; my italics)). In "Pan" the summer also grows into an unknown dimension: "Wtedy lato, pozbawione kontroli, rośnie bez miary i rachuby na całej przestrzeni, rośnie z dzikim impetem na wszystkich punktach, w dwójnasób, w trójnasób, w inny jakiś wyrodny czas, w nieznaną *dymensję*, w obłąd" (56; my italics) ("Then [the] summer, deprived of control, grows without measure or reckoning all over space, grows with a wild impetus over all points, twice over, three times over, into a degenerate time, into an unknown dimension, into lunacy").

⁶² Miklaszewski, "Cena świadomości," pp. 285-6. Miklaszewski borrows the term "situational rhyme" from the work of the Russian Formalists such as Eichenbaum, Brik and Polivanov in Krzysztof Miklaszewski, "O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości prozy Brunona Schulza (na przykładzie *Sklepów cynamonowych*)," *Zeszyty naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Prace historycznoliterackie*, no. 21, 1971, pp. 49-66, (51, fn. 4).

⁶³ Bolecki comments on the role of lexical repetition in giving the prose rhythm in *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 261.

The vocabulary could be applied to the character of Father (lunacy), or Edzio (time is “wyrodny” (“degenerate”); his legs are “zwyrodniałe” (“degenerate, degraded”). Also, Schulz blends time and space into one (summer, a period of time, extends over space). Not only are these parallels visible, but the same type of words are used in describing plants and vegetation in “Sierpień”; “rozrosła się głupota zidiociałych chwastów” (7) (“the stupidity of idiotic weeds ran wild”) and in the story “Pan” itself: “Ogród ... wpadał w szal. Tam to nie był już sad, tylko paroksyzm szaleństwa...” (55-6) (“The garden ... descended into madness. There it was no longer an orchard, but a paroxysm of madness”).

Schulz uses the same or closely related words to describe widely varying phenomena. Bolecki identifies one such word group as “wegetacyjno-rozwojowe,” or “vegetative-developmental.”⁶⁴ As examples of such words he gives the frequently recurring verbs: “rosnąć” (“to grow”), “puchnąć” (“swell”), “rozprzestrzeniać się” (“spread, expand, propagate”), “rozrastać” (“grow, run wild”) and “pączkować” (“bud, burgeon”). Words from this semantic field are used throughout Schulz’s stories, and not only in connection with plant life. Another favourite word of Schulz’s is “arabesque,” which is applied to Tłuja’s face, wallpaper, ceilings, lamps, the horns of animals, people walking in a park, dusk and Father’s face, setting up parallels between the various objects. Bolecki finds repetition operating on all levels of organisation in Schulz’s prose, but sometimes errs on the side of over-sensitivity to patterning in his definition of repetition, which is so wide that it includes “the enumeration of elements belonging to a common object-domain: ... old and young, women and children.”⁶⁵

A full account of all the parallels set up by Schulz would be almost as long as the short stories themselves.⁶⁶ Instead I will look at the matter from two points of view to illustrate how densely tangled the web of parallels and repetitions is in Schulz. The first approach is to see how parallels are used within one story and then see how they relate to other stories. The story I will examine here is “Nawiedzenie.” The second is to take one theme and trace its development through various stories.

On the compositional level, “Nawiedzenie” makes heavy use of parallelism, which operates within the story itself and within *Sklepy cynamonowe*. An example of the first type of parallel is that

⁶⁴ Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 265.

⁶⁵ Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 261, 262.

⁶⁶ Some “recurring situations”, for example the hero venturing into out of the way places (“Pan,” “Noc lipcowa”), and the elements attacking or penetrating the family house (“Wichura,” “Sierpień”), are enumerated by Jerzy Jarzębski in “Schulz: spojrzenie w przeszłość,” p. 312.

of the sales assistants yawning: “ziewanie przeciągnięte aż do lubieżności, do bolesnego skurczu podniebienia, jak przy tęgich wymiotach” (14) (“yawning stretched to lasciviousness, to a painful contraction of the palate, as when vomiting powerfully”). This parallels Father’s use of what seems to be an enema (itself defamiliarised by the device of not naming it as such, but merely describing it): “oczy jego ciemniały, zaś na twarz przybladłą występował wyraz cierpienia czy jakiejś występnej rozkoszy” (15) (“his eyes darkened, while on his pale face there appeared an expression of suffering, or perhaps of some illicit rapture”). In both of these situational rhymes, to use the Formalist term, is contained the idea of pain and pleasure’s interrelatedness, and of expelling something from the body. In the first member of the parallel, this is stated as a comparison (“jak przy tęgich wymiotach”) while in the second part it is unstated but implicit. Father’s use of the enema sets up another parallel, that between the “shoots and branches from the maternal navel of darkness” (“pędy i odnogi z macierzystego pępka ciemności” (16)) and “a long rubber hose [...] a winding, aching umbilical chord” (“długa kiszka gumowa, [...] kręta bolesna pępowina” (15)). Navel and umbilical chord sound similar in Polish, while “kiszka” (“hose”) also means intestine or gut.

The effect of these parallels and others like them is to give the story a unity it might otherwise lack, composed as it is of more or less disjointed descriptions of Father and his behaviour at various stages of a rather mysterious illness. Any idea of a progression in Father’s decline is thwarted by the narrator, who comments: “Zanikowi temu nie towarzyszył bynajmniej upadek sił. Przeciwnie, stan jego zdrowia, humor, ruchliwość zdawały się poprawiać” (19) (“This decline was by no means accompanied by any loss of strength. On the contrary: his state of health, his humour, and his mobility seemed to improve”).

“Nawiedzenie” is generally symmetrical about the axis of the end of part one: events which occur in the first half are repeated with variations or in reverse in part two. The story opens with the setting of the scene. The subject of Father’s failing health is raised. But it is from here that the story starts to build to a climax of activity, culminating in the image of Father using and then emptying a chamber pot during a storm. The anti-climax is announced in part two with the words: “Mój ojciec powoli zanikał, więdł w oczach” (18) (“My father was slowly fading away, withering before our eyes”). The arguments he conducts with himself (introduced early in part two) are a mirror image of the argument with Jehovah, described in the closing paragraphs of part one. In part two we are told that Father’s mobility increases, yet he spends long periods sitting motionless on the pelmet:

“przybierał nieruchomą pozę symetrycznie do wielkiego wypchanego sępa” (20) (“he would assume a motionless pose, symmetrical to the large stuffed vulture”).⁶⁷ In part one we are led to expect a decrease in his mobility and he does spend days in bed, but we are often confronted with images of a very mobile old man, for example, running up and down a leather couch, or metaphorically wrestling the angel (Father’s name is Jacob). In both part one and two reference is made to mother’s evening visits. In part one she finds Father “podniecony i skłonny do sprzeczek” (14) (“excited and inclined to quarrel”) while in part two he is calmer, and shows her his handiwork with pride. In part two, we see in Father a man retreating from the reality shared by the people around him: “Węzeł po węźle odluźniał się od nas, punkt po punkcie gubił związki, łączące go ze wspólnotą ludzką” (20) (“Knot by knot, he loosened himself from us; point by point, he lost the ties joining him to the human community”). There is a sharp contrast between this and our first encounter with him in part one when we see him waking the sales assistants. Again, Adela is first seen in part one neglecting the house in favour of doing her make-up, while at the end of the story she is cleaning the house with enough zeal to sweep away Father. Her engagement in the running of the house is a mirror image of Father’s.

Apart from giving unity to the material presented, the use of parallelism also serves to defamiliarise it by imposing a bizarre order on things. In “Nawiedzenie,” by means of the parallels and contrasts, associations are made in the reader’s mind between storms, enemas and old-testament prophets. All of these recur in *Sklepy cynamonowe*: storms in “Wichura,” enemas in “Manekiny” (Father tells of a cousin turned into a length of rubber tubing) and old-testament prophets in “Noc wielkiego sezonu.” Parallels are used to transpose relationships from one sphere to another. An example in “Nawiedzenie” is the indeterminacy which runs throughout the story. This is first seen in the spatial relations of the house to the other houses on the market square. Together they form a labyrinth. This is paralleled inside the house, which has an unspecified number of rooms. The imprecision in the boundaries of the house is in turn matched by mother’s imprecisions (“niedokładności”) (14) in keeping the accounts. The motif of the labyrinth, meanwhile, is developed by the image of Father “zabłąkany głęboko w labiryntach zawiłych obliczeń” (15) (“lost deep in labyrinths of complicated calculations”); also: “his thoughts had been secretly plumbing the labyrinths of his own innards” (“myśl jego zapuszczała się tajnie w labirynty własnych wnętrzości” (16)).

⁶⁷ The awareness of form shown by the choice of the word symmetrical in a story which itself is symmetrically constructed is not untypical of Schulz, and will be discussed in chapter 5.

The strength of the parallels lies in their lack of realistic motivation. It seems as if Father “dives” into his books only because in paragraph one the town is “plunged” into dusk. Great use is made by Schulz of downward motion in the story:

“miasto nasze *popadało* coraz bardziej w chroniczną szarość zmierzchu” (13)

“our town had been falling ever further into the chronic greyness of dusk”

“mieszkanie nasze coraz bardziej *popadało* w stan zaniedbania” (13)

“our apartment fell ever deeper into a state of neglect”

“ojciec mój zaczął *zapadać* na zdrowiu” (14)

“my father’s health started to decline”

“*pogrązał się* zupełnie w swych księgach” (15)

“lost himself completely in his books”

“*pogrązał się* pozornie jeszcze bardziej w pracy” (16)

“he apparently plunged even deeper into his work”

“ojciec mój *zapadał* od czasu do czasu na całe godziny w gęsto zostawione gratami zakamarki” (19)

“from time to time my father would hide for whole hours in corners full of abandoned old junk”

“*pogrążonym* w zawilych, a jemu tylko wiadomych sprawach” (19)

“plunged in complicated matters, known only to himself”

“*pogrązał się* z dniem każdym głębiej w zawile i dziwaczne afery” (20)

“with every day he plunged deeper into complicated and bizarre affairs”

“*podziewał się* gdzieś w *zapadłych* zakamarkach” (20)

“he used to disappear somewhere in out of the way corners”

(my italics)

The interaction between different elements of the text can be seen quite clearly here. It is not so much a case of “x motivates y,” as of “x, y and z motivate each other.” The house is not in a state of neglect because Adela is too busy doing her make-up; rather Adela is doing her make-up to motivate the use of the words “mieszkanie nasze coraz bardziej *popadało* w stan zaniedbania,” which in turn are called for by the opening sentence of the story: “Już wówczas miasto nasze *popadało* coraz bardziej...” Adela’s neglect in part one also sets up a symmetry with her activeness in part two. Her behaviour is largely artistically motivated. The realistic motivation (if any) of various devices often seems to be tacked on as an afterthought to give at least some vague semblance of cause and effect. For example,

in "Wichura," Teodor and the narrator's brother launch their expedition into the gale because they remember that Father had not been seen since early morning, but when they return, no mention is made of Father's fate.

Parallels extend outside "Nawiedzenie" as well. Some have already been mentioned. Father's shrinking away to nothing is paralleled by Aunt Perazja's in "Wichura." In "Nawiedzenie," the enormous shadow Father casts on the wall parallels the enormous shadows of the cockroaches, while in "Karakony" we are told that he had become a cockroach, although the narrator suspects he may have become a condor (opposite which Father perches in "Nawiedzenie"). The climax of "Nawiedzenie" – the wind whistling in the chimneys – parallels "Wichura," in which one of the sales assistants goes out into the night to fetch Father, a reversal of their roles in "Nawiedzenie." The highly defamiliarised image of going to the toilet is paralleled in "Pan": in both cases a simple bodily function is treated as if it were a mystical, almost religious experience: "Były to [oczy] pękające gałki, wytężone najwyższym uniesieniem bólu, albo dziką rozkoszą natchnienia." (57) ("They [his eyes] were bursting spheres, strained in the highest exultation of pain, or the wild delight of inspiration").

The main device used in "Nawiedzenie" to force the reader to attend to the word rather than to the thing it represents, is to deprive things of their normal, real world relationships – in particular that of cause and effect. According to Czesław Karkowski, for a work to be in agreement with Schulz's postulates the chief principle in organising the structure should be the dominance of an irrational element: links which appear to be essential are in fact arbitrary and artificial.⁶⁸ The reader quickly realises that these stories are unlikely to have a "point" or a message to which style is subordinate, or, as Karkowski puts it, the transformations that Father and other characters undergo ensure that the stories do not deliver socially acceptable knowledge; they do not imitate or follow life.⁶⁹ The stories are largely descriptive, and commentators have pointed out that narrative passages often turn out to be pretexts for description.⁷⁰ Presenting a fictional world which bears little or no relation to the real world is a dangerous policy. Following it through to its logical conclusion leads, Madejski points out, to Dada, which is a vicious circle, as it reduces literature to the level of undefined

⁶⁸ Czesław Karkowski, *Kultura i krytyka inteligencji w twórczości Brunona Schulza*, Wrocław, 1979, p. 131.

⁶⁹ Karkowski, *Kultura i krytyka inteligencji*, p. 143.

⁷⁰ Jerzy Jarzębski, "Brunona Schulza malowanie słowem," in *Bruno Schulz in memoriam*, pp. 43-58, (44).

sounds, from which language starts in the first place.⁷¹ That Schulz avoids this trap is testified to by the amount of critical writing that seeks to explain and interpret his work.⁷² Schulz replaces cause and effect with bizarre linguistic parallels. Many of the parallels discussed exist due to the nature of their verbal components: night falling on the town is associated with Father's poor health not so much because they are similar phenomena, as because the same root word ("padać," to fall) is used to describe both.

The second approach to the question of parallels in Schulz is to examine the progression of one theme as it passes through various stories. For the purposes of this study I will take the example of patterns of lines, which form on surfaces such as skin, walls, furniture, paper, and the night sky to produce maps and diagrams. For convenience, I will refer to them in this section as "lineature," or the "lineature motif." Schulz himself uses the word "lineatura," which is taken from the Latin, in "Traktat o manekinach" (39) and "Martwy sezon" (243). There are other, perhaps more obvious recurring themes, such as the metaphor of the book, the labyrinth, the breath of life and Father's and others' metamorphoses, but I will avoid them precisely because they are so central. The point is not that, for example, "the Book" is central to Schulz, but that parallelism is at work all the time in Schulz, even with secondary motifs. To be sure, "Wiosna" is linked to "Genialna epoka" by repeated references to the Book, but they are also linked by the recurrence of the lineature motif.

Panas, in his article "Apologia i destrukcja," writes that it is not possible to fully understand the stories in isolation from each other. To interpret "Noc wielkiego sezonu" one must continually refer to other stories in *Sklepy cynamonowe*. His article goes on to give an account of motifs which are central to Schulz's stories, such as the poetry of rebellion and heresy, biblical references, birds, and Father as old testament prophet.⁷³

Lineature appears early in "Sierpień," when reference is made to "cisza drgających stojów powietrznych" (4) ("the silence of twitching veins of air"). Over the course of the stories this image is repeated in varying contexts with the result that it is steadily expanded, until veins come to be equated in the reader's mind with lines on maps and diagrams, patterns on walls, and astronomical diagrams of

⁷¹ Piotr Madejski, "Słowo i byt w prozie Bruno Schulza," *Twórczość*, no. 7, 1982, p. 142.

⁷² See, for example: Marek Kujawski, "Znaczenie barw w prozie Brunona Schulza," *Słupskie Prace Humanistyczne*, no. 10a, Słupsk, 1990, pp. 47-68; Wojciech Wyskiel, "Adela czyli Minotaur," *Teksty*, 1974, no. 1, pp. 128-135; Wiesław Paweł Szymański, "Wyznawca Absolutu i Materii – Bruno Schulz," in Bolesław Faron, ed., *Prozaicy dwudziestolecia międzywojennego: Sylwetki*, Warsaw 1972, pp. 593-615; Andreas Schönle, "Sklepy cynamonowe Brunona Schulza: Apologia tandety," trans. Jolanta Szpyra, in Kitowska-Łysiak, *Bruno Schulz in memoriam*, pp. 59-77.

the stars. We read that the glaze on the walls of the house has been chipped away by successive summer days, revealing “the true faces of the houses, the physiognomy of fate and life” (“prawdziwe oblicze domów, fizjonomię losu i życia” (5)). The idea of the lines on a wall hiding a secret is carried on in the next sentence but one: the wall against which the ragamuffins throw coins is characterised by “hieroglyphics of cracks and fissures” (“hieroglifami rys i pęknięć” (5)). They throw their coins against the wall as if in the hope of learning the secrets of the wall. Lines are sometimes conspicuous by their absence in “Sierpień.” We read of paving stones worn smooth by passing feet and of cousin Emil’s face, “from which life seemed to have washed away all expression” (“z której życie zmyło jakby wszelki wyraz” (11)). Schulz continues with a key image:

Jego twarz zwiędła i zmętniała zdawała się z dnia na dzień zapominać o sobie, stawać się białą pustą ścianą z bladą siecią żyłek, w których, jak linie na zatartej mapie, plątały się gasnące wspomnienia tego burzliwego i zmarnowanego życia (11) (His face, faded and blurred, seemed from day to day to forget about itself, to become an empty white wall with a pale network of veins, in which, like lines on a worn out map, were entangled the dying memories of that stormy and wasted life)

This brings together the idea of veins, faces, maps and walls. A parallel is set up with the wall map which we encounter later on in “Ulica Krokodyli”: “Na tym planie, wykonanym w stylu barokowych prospektów, okolica ulicy Krokodylej świeciła pustą bielą,” (75) (“On that map, made in the style of baroque panoramas, the Crocodile Street area shone with empty whiteness”). In “Ptaki” we find Father on top of a ladder, close to the arabesques of the ceiling – an image of cracks in plaster. In “Manekiny” when the narrator reminisces about the appearance of the sky during the days of Father’s brilliance he asks where are the birds who drew in the air “lines and arabesques, flickering traces of flights and circles” (“linie i arabeski, migotliwe ślady lotów i kołowań” (28)). By contrast, now the air is marked by “faded veins” (“zmętniałe słoje” (28)). Father’s face is described in terms of lineature: “W jednej chwili lineatura jego twarzy, dopiero co tak rozwichrzona i pełna wibracji, zamknęła się na spokojniejszych rysach” (39) (“In a moment the lineature of his face, so recently disordered and full of vibration, closed itself into humbler features”). Somewhat later his face is described as a vortex of wrinkles at whose centre lies the eye of a prophet. Veins return in the concluding part of the treatise on tailors’ dummies: “Ile starej, mądrej męki jest w bejcowanych słojach, żyłach, i fladrach naszych starych zaufanych szaf. Kto rozpozna w nich stare, zheblowane, wypolerowane do niepoznaki rysy, uśmiechy, spojrzenia!” (47) (“How much wise, old suffering there is in the stained grain, veins and

⁷³ Panas, “Apologia i destrukcja,” in Bartoszyński et al., eds. *Nowela Opowiadanie Gawęda*, p. 197.

strata of our old, trusted cupboards. Who will recognise their smiles and looks in their old, planed features, polished beyond all recognition!") This passage echoes the description of cousin Emil's weak and ineffectual face. Schulz appears to compare smooth, featureless surfaces unfavourably with those surfaces that have rich patterns of criss-crossing lines – be they wrinkles, cracks in plaster, or streets on a map. He is not, however, fully consistent in this. In "Noc wielkiego sezonu" he compares the supernumerary days of autumn with blank, unwritten pages. Here the implication is that these pages are superior, because we are free to fill them in ourselves as our imagination dictates. Pages that have already been written upon are too restrictive.

The image of the arabesque recurs, in the description of the walls and ceilings of the narrator's school, in "Sklepy cynamonowe." This story introduces to the idea of lineature the suggestion of scientific explanation. The sky is described as a gigantic diagram exposing the workings of its own cogs and wheels: "Niebo obnażało tego dnia wewnętrzną swą konstrukcję w wielu jakby anatomicznych preparatach, pokazujących spirale i słoje światła, przekroje seledynowych brył nocy, plazmę przestworzy, tkanę rojeń nocnych" (64) ("The sky that day bared its internal construction in, as it were, many anatomical specimens, showing the spirals and veins of light, cross-sections of celadon blocks of night, the plasma of space, the tissue of night dreams").

The comparison of the sky with a drawn representation of itself is made more explicit several pages on: "Kolorowa mapa niebios wyogromniała w kopułę niezmierną, na której spiętrzyły się fantastyczne lądy, oceany i morza, porysowane liniami wirów i prądów gwiazdnych, świetlistymi liniami geografii niebieskiej" (72) ("The coloured map of the heavens expanded into an immeasurable dome, on which fantastic lands, oceans and seas heaped up, drawn by the lines of stellar eddies and currents, by the luminous lines of celestial geography").

This is taken up in "Wichura," where the sky is also described as a diagram of its own workings: "Rysowały się w nim [tzn. w niebie] diagramy wichury, która, sama niewidoczna i nieuchwytna, ładowała krajobraz potęgą" (92) ("The diagrams of the gale, itself unseen and intangible, which loaded the landscape with power, were traced on it [the sky]"). Here, as in "Sierpień" it is suggested that these diagrams can be used to discover secrets about reality. The same is true of "Noc wielkiego sezonu," in which the sky is also opened up to inspection. Here, though, the language is taken from agriculture: "ciężkie i ciemne niebo, sfałdowane i chmurne, poorane w długie równoległe bruzdy, w srebrne i białe skiby, ukazujące w głębi coraz dalsze pokłady swego

uwarstwienia” (109) (“a heavy and dark sky, wrinkled and cloudy, ploughed into long parallel furrows, into silver and white ridges, showing in its depth ever more layers of its stratification”).

“Ulica Krokodyli,” as we have seen, takes a map of the area as its point of departure, but this is not the only occurrence of the lineature theme. The trains of the area run on “barely drawn traces of railway lines” (“ledwo zarysowane ślady torów” (82)). “Karakony” also sees the repetition of the lineature theme. The wild madness of panic is drawn in a glittering black line on the floor by the zig-zagging cockroaches. When Father lies on the floor, his anatomy is outlined on his skin in a fantastic drawing.

This is one of the few instances where lineature is used with negative connotations. Usually, as we have seen, maps and diagrams are associated with wonderful things, such as, for example, colourful summer nights, while the absence of lineature is associated with, for example, the imprisonment of old suffering in planed and over-polished furniture.

Lineature is also a recurring theme in the stories that make up “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą.” It is first met in “Księga,” in a description of faces whose tracery of spider’s web-like lines have become faded and worn by the passing of time (121). These people set up their barrel organs “under the yellow streak of sky cut by telegraph wires” (“pod żółtą smugą nieba, przekreśloną drutem telegraficznym” (122)). The central theme of “Genialna epoka” is the drawing of lines on paper and so it is no surprise to find repeated references to lineature: “Rysowałem w pośpiechu, w panice, na poprzek, na ukos...” (133) (“I drew in a hurry, in a panic, slantwise and across...”) ⁷⁴ At the end of the story, Szloma’s face has grown to resemble Emil’s at the end of “Sierpień”: it is grey and quite indistinct.

In “Wiosna” the sky is likened to a chessboard: “Siedząc tak, obliczali w duchu ciągi i posunięcia na wielkiej czarnej szachownicy nieba, widzieli w duchu wśród gwiazd przeskakujące konie i stracone figury i konstelacje wstępujące natychmiast na ich miejsce” (146) (“Sitting thus, they secretly calculated their paths and manoeuvres on the great chessboard of the sky; they saw in their mind’s eye the jumping knights and lost pieces among the stars, and the constellations that immediately took their places”).

Shortly afterwards, the narrator describes seeing Bianca indistinctly, because the criss-crossing lines of the stars have been inscribed in his vision (148). This idea is repeated in the episode

⁷⁴ This fondness for lineature may stem from Schulz’s *cliché verre* graphic technique, which consisted of scratching lines on a layer of black gelatine covering a glass plate. In an open letter to Witkacy, Schulz claimed that his art and his stories present the same reality (*Opowiadania, Wybór esejów i*

with the photographer: "...miałem już pod powiekami całą fosforescencję nieba pełną świetlistych znaków, sygnałów i gwiazdnych fenomenów" (150) ("...under my eyelids I already had the whole phosphorescence of the sky, full of luminous signs, signals and starry phenomena").

The sky once again opens up its workings in a celestial diagram in chapter 18 of "Wiosna." Here, in a by now familiar image, the sky is criss-crossed with bright lines, zigzags and spirals of stars. When spying on Bianca's villa the narrator pretends to be drawing. The walls he pretends to be sketching speak to him voicelessly through their architectural lines. In chapter 24 he plumbs the secrets of that architectural style. This is expressed in terms of lines ("tak długo linie tej architektury...", "wyszukane i ruchliwe linie" (183) ("for so long the lines of its architecture...", "elaborate and mobile lines")) and is in part a good description of Schulz's own literary style: the architecture repeats one phrase in many different variations (also alluded to in chapter 23) and consists in "ticklish mystification" ("łaskotliwa mistyfikacja" (183)).⁷⁵ Further examples of maps and diagrams occur throughout "Wiosna," for example in chapter 29 (a map of the world threatens to fly away), chapter 39 (insects made by the night of pure arabesques and calligraphy settle on the narrator's papers) chapter 40 (on the fateful night of the dénouement the world displays its innards), and in the narrator's closing speech (also chapter 40) he refers to his attempts to read from the stamp album the paths and contours of divine will and to read from the features ("rysy") of spring its deepest intentions.

The descriptions of the night sky in "Noc lipcowa" are good examples of Schulz's use of the lineature image. One short quotation should illustrate this: "Nikt jeszcze nie napisał topografii nocy lipowej. W geografii wewnętrznego kosmosu te karty są nie zapisane" (225) ("No one has ever written the topography of a July night. In the geography of the internal cosmos those pages have not been written on"). The sky, like the wall in "Sierpień," is compared to a face, lined in this case not by wrinkles but by the paths of stars. Walls reappear in "Martwy sezon," where the lines of Father's face become merged with the lines of the house's façade. The stars which we have seen tracing lines in the heavens come down to earth in "Martwy sezon," when Father sees them on a sheet of paper: "the white of the paper, through which flowed those dark galaxies of black stars and specks of dust" ("biel papieru, przez którą płynęły te ciemne galaktyki czarnych gwiazd i pyłów" (255)). Dodo's face is described in terms of the lines which have been etched upon it despite the fact that the rigours of life have passed him by. In "Edzio" the maps and diagrams are transferred onto human skin again, this

listów, ed., Jerzy Jarzębski, 2nd edn., Biblioteka Narodowa, I, 264, Wrocław, 1998, p. 475).

time in a description of the sleeping mothers: their babies wander “like scenting little animals over the azure map of veins on the white plains of their breasts” (“jak węszące zwierzątka po błękitnej mapie żyłek na białych równinach tych piersi” (305)).

The description of the town as viewed from the narrator’s window in “Emeryt” is very like the description of the map of the town in “Ulica Krokodyli,” emphasising the links between one story and another by repetition. Also in “Emeryt” is a description of wood which equates the rings in wood to the lines on peoples faces: “W każdym świeżym przełomie rozłupanego polana ukazuje się twarz nowa, a wciąż ta sama, uśmiechnięta i złota” (314) (“In each fresh fissure of cut log a new face appears, always the same, smiling and golden”). The parallel between this and the faces in wooden furniture mentioned by Father in his treatise on tailors’ dummies is unmistakable, even if the faces in “Emeryt” are smiling and golden rather than tortured and imprisoned. In “Samotność” the narrator again returns to a position near the roof where he can observe the cracks in the plaster mentioned before in “Ptaki”: “Czasem na białym suficie wystrzeli kurza łapka pęknięcia...” (327) (“Sometimes on the white ceiling a hen’s claw of a crack shoots out...”) Lastly, in “Ostatnia ucieczka ojca,” the overturned Father/crab displays on his bare stomach “that too clear, too well articulated, almost shameless mechanism of his anatomy” (“ta zbyt wyraźna i artykułowana, bezwstydną nieomal mechanika jego anatomii” (332)). This echoes the scene in “Karakony,” mentioned above.

It will be seen from this survey of the image of lineature, that repetition is a central device in Schulz’s prose. It binds together strands of the story which have little or no logical link, compensating for the lack of cause and effect links.⁷⁶

Shklovsky discusses parallels in “Parallels in Tolstoy,” pointing out that in the young Tolstoy’s stories the two (or more) members of a parallel are usually mentioned in the text. This is in contrast with Maupassant, who could give just one member of the parallel. For example, when Tolstoy wishes to establish a parallel between the deaths of a peasant, a noble, and a tree, he must include all three in the story. Maupassant could describe the death of the peasant alone, safe in the knowledge that his readers would be well enough aware of the literary conventions for treating death among the richer members of society to notice the contrast between the simple, unadorned language used in describing the peasant’s death and the language normally reserved for describing the death of rich people. Shklovsky attributes this to the fact that the French reading public were better acquainted with

⁷⁵ Schulz’s commentaries on his own style are explored in chapter 5.

literary conventions than the Russian public.⁷⁷

It is evident that Schulz used certain well-known literary conventions as an invisible, implied member of parallels in his stories. Schulz used the conventions of the Bible, the Kabbalah, the adventure story, cheap advertising and scholarly discourse to construct his own stories.

“Manekiny” and “Druga jesień” both gain much of their comic effect from the reader’s knowledge of the conventions of the language of academic or scientific discourse. Schulz mimics this style of language, but turns it to his own ends. The titles of the treatises (“Traktat o manekinach” (“Treatise on Tailors’ Dummies”) and “Zarys ogólnej systematyki jesieni” (“An Outline of the General Systematics of Autumn”)) lead us to expect lectures, and Schulz uses vocabulary such as “nauczać” (36) (“teach”), and “ciągnął dalej swą prelekcję” (43) (“continued his lecture”) to reinforce the parallel. However, the learned style of Father’s treatises is at odds with the conclusions he reaches. We read a treatise or lecture with the expectation of a logical chain of arguments and supporting evidence leading to a conclusion. Father’s logic is so strange and surrealistic that thanks to our natural need to understand a text, we read more carefully. Throughout the treatise Schulz uses this need to force us to concentrate on the words and forms. Father does reach conclusions – and Schulz uses the foreign-sounding “konkludować” (38) for emphasis – but they are hardly the result of careful reasoning on the basis of empirical evidence. Father’s lectures are so far removed from normal academic discourse, resembling lyrical poetry at times (see chapter 3, section 4) and being highly illogical, that Schulz sometimes has to take pains to make apparent the second member of the parallel. He is careful to label the treatises as such, and have Father sprinkle his disquisitions with Greek and Latin words and phrases, such as “*panta rei*” and “*principium individuationis*” (“Kometa,” 356), “*genus avium*” (“Manekiny,” 32) and “*generatio aequivoca*” (“Manekiny,” 43), the last of which, according to Jarzębski, was used by Schopenhauer in *The World as Will and Idea*.⁷⁸ Panas comments that normally scientific terms are used to achieve precision in language. In Schulz, however, quasi-scientific terms have the opposite effect: they “thicken” the language, make it less transparent, and draw attention to themselves.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ For further discussion of this, see Speina, *Bankructwo realności*, p. 35.

⁷⁷ Viktor Shklovsky, “Parallels in Tolstoy,” in Victor Erlich, ed. and trans., *Twentieth Century Russian Literary Criticism*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1975, pp. 81-85, (83-84). Originally printed in *Knight’s Move*, Moscow-Berlin, 1923, pp. 115-125.

⁷⁸ Schulz, *Proza*, p. 43, fn. 1.

⁷⁹ Panas, “Zstąpienie w esencjonalność,” in Czapłowa, *Studia*, p. 86.

The sub-title of the treatise on tailors' dummies, "Wtóra Księga Rodzaju" ("The Second Book of Genesis"), brings us to the subject of the Bible, one of the most important and most obvious reference points outside the text in Schulz. The choice of the word "wtóry" is interesting. In the context of the Bible it is what we would expect: official, church, literary language. In other words, the word in that context has been automatised. When we read "wtóry" in the Bible we realise that it is a "literary" word and means "second." We simply accept that this is not everyday language. By taking the word "wtóry" from a context in which it has long been an accepted conventional usage and putting it in a new context, Schulz strengthens the effect of the word and the treatise. Comparing Father's views to the Bible underlines the profanity of the treatise, which permits murder.⁸⁰

Władysław Panas has explored the biblical references in "Noc wielkiego sezonu" in some detail. He finds the following parallels: Father-prophet, sales assistants-angels, customers-Israeli people. These parallels are brought out by direct comparison and the biblical stylisation of the language. For example: "Szukał subiektów. Ale ci ciemni i rudzi aniołowie dokądś odlecieli" (104) ("He looked for the sales assistants. But those dark and red-haired angels had flown away somewhere") and "...grzeszą gdzieś w głębi domu z córami ludzi" (104) ("...sinning somewhere in the depths of the house with the daughters of men").⁸¹ Biblical references come up repeatedly in Schulz's stories. We have seen in chapter 3, section 4 how Schulz uses biblical stylisation. Father's name is Jacob, the son's is Joseph. The dream for which Joseph is arrested at the end of "Wiosna" is the "standard dream of the biblical Joseph" (206) ("sen standardowy Józefa biblijnego" (222)). In "Martwy sezon" Father walks with a limp after wrestling a visitor, in a parallel with the biblical story of Jacob wrestling the angel. This marks the beginning of seven years of plenty in the shop, which has already (in "Noc wielkiego sezonu") been likened to Canaan. Schulz compares the flow of cloth from the shop to the biblical tale of Moses striking water from a rock (106). Father is often compared to an old-testament prophet (for example in "Nawiedzenie," where his broken hip is again a reference to Jacob wrestling the angel), but he is also a heretic.

Not all of the material used by Schulz is as well known to the modern reader as the numerous biblical references. There are specifically Jewish elements which may be less recognisable. For the gentile, works such as "Wielki Teatr Paschy" by Robert Kaśków can be helpful, casting light on parts

⁸⁰ Karkowski holds the view that the use of biblical metaphor in the treatise is an attempt to stylise it on an apocryphal text. Karkowski, *Kultura i krytyka inteligencji*, p. 146.

⁸¹ Panas, "Apologia i destrukcja," in Bartoszyński et al., *Nowela Opowiadanie Gawęda*, pp. 202-204.

of the text and opening up new possibilities of interpretation. Kaśków points out, for example, that the Jewish calendar, being lunar, occasionally requires a thirteenth month to take up the slack – providing an explanation of sorts for the thirteenth month referred to in the first line of “Noc wielkiego sezonu.” He also suggests that the action of “Sierpień” takes place on the Sabbath. The incident in “Wichura” when Aunt Perazja becomes enraged at Adela over the plucking of the hen is explained by the fact that it took place on the day before Yom Kippur – the Last Day – on which Jews pray for forgiveness. (This would also account for the threatening atmosphere of the story and the apocalyptic fury of the gale.) On this day Jews kill a hen while repeating a prayer. Kaśków supposes, after Sandauer, that Adela got the ritual (called “Kapparot”) wrong.⁸² Still less accessible to the average reader are the parallels with Jewish mysticism. Władysław Panas’s *Księga blasku* should be mentioned in this connection here. In this work, Panas draws parallels between Schulz’s work and Lurianic Kabbalah with its three phases – tsimtsum, shevirat ha-kelim and tikkun (self limitation, breaking of vessels and restoration). This is a complex subject concerned with cosmogony, eschatology, the coming of the messiah, and the individual’s role in bringing about salvation.⁸³ The parallels with the Kabbalah are there for the initiated to appreciate. For the uninitiated, what Schulz borrows from the Kabbalah is the ascribing of deeper, symbolic meanings to texts (see below).

The adventure story forms the second member of a parallel in “Wiosna.” “Wiosna” is full of the traditional requisites of the adventure story: betrayal, heroic gestures, stirring speeches and rescues. Schulz does not stop short of using clichés. At one point Joseph turns to his volunteers and cries: “Do koni! Musimy odciąć im drogę” (216) (“Mount horses! We must head them off”). In particular, the story is reminiscent of *The Prisoner of Zenda*; Schulz even gives one of the main characters in “Wiosna” the same name as the King’s double in Hope’s novel, which tells the tale of

⁸² Robert Kaśków, “Wielki Teatr Paschy: O akcentach żydowskich w twórczości Brunona Schulza,” *NaGłos*, 1992, no. 7, pp. 34-47, (39). There is further information on Jewish elements in Schulz (in particular the cyclical passing of time, marked by feast days) in Artur Sandauer, *Trójca nowoczesnych*, Cracow, [1992?], especially parts two and three of chapter 1, while Jan Błoński, in “Autoportret żydowski,” *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 1982, no. 51, pp. 1, 4, states categorically: “What is definitely Jewish in Schulz is the cult of the Book and the authority of the father as a source of knowledge,” (p. 1 of an abbreviated version of a lecture delivered at the Martin Buber Institute, University of Brussels, November 1981). Andrzej Ossowski explores the significance of the animals into which Father changes in terms of their cleanliness or uncleanness under Jewish law. (“Drohobyckie Bestiarium,” in Kitowska-Łysiak, *Bruno Schulz in memoriam*, pp. 79-99.) See also Shalom Lindenbaum, “Wizja mesjanistyczna Schulza a jej podłoże mistyczne,” in Jarzębski, *Czytanie Schulza*, pp. 33-67.

⁸³ Władysław Panas, *Księga blasku: Traktat o kabale w prozie Brunona Schulza*, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Literatura Współczesna – Pisarze i Problemy, 3, Lublin, 1997. See also Bożena Shallcross, “‘Fragments of a Broken Mirror’: Bruno Schulz’s Retextualisation of the Kabbalah,” in *East European Politics and Societies*, 1997, vol. 11, no. 2, pp.

“the great adventure of Rudolf Rassendyll, the king’s double who can take the king’s place to rescue the last of the Elphburgs [*sic*] and foil the traitors who would destroy him; who wins the love of Princess Flavia, the king’s bride-to-be, and yet offers all ‘for our love and her honour’ and in the end gives his life to save both...”⁸⁴ *The Prisoner of Zenda* is told in chapters with titles like “If love were all!” and contains exchanges like the following: “‘My queen and my beauty!’ said I. ‘My lover and true knight!’ she said.”⁸⁵ In “Wiosna,” chapter 28, we read: “I cried out: ‘Count on me!’ and ‘until the last drop of my blood...’ and shot into the air from a pistol produced from my breast” (“zawołałem: -- licz na mnie!... -- i -- do ostatniej kropli krwi... -- i wypaliłem w powietrze z pistoletu dobytego z zanadruza...” (186)).⁸⁶ Motifs from the adventure novel are also borrowed in “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą,” (there is a *coup d’etat*) and in “Noc lipcowa”: the narrator describes a cane in which “long thin swords are often hidden” (“bywają ukryte długie cienkie szpady” (227)). Schulz borrows the conventions of the adventure story and refreshes them by mixing them in with his own highly poeticised childhood memoir.

Schulz does not just use literature for the second member of parallels. “Księga,” and in particular chapter 4, ironically parallels the language used in advertising. Chapter 3 introduces us to Anna Csillag and her hair restorer. This advertisement is paraphrased by Schulz in biblical terms: in his words she becomes an “apostle of hairiness” (“apostołka włochatości” (119)). Although we are told in chapter 4 that the next few pages of the Book rose “beyond the sphere of daily affairs into regions of pure poetry” (“ponad sferę spraw codziennych w regiony czystej poezji” (121)), the language comes closer still to that of everyday advertising copy. This mock serious, even exalted treatment of the outrageous claims made by advertisers defamiliarises their language:

Były tam harmonie, cytry i harfy, ongi instrumenty chórów anielskich, dziś dzięki postępowi przemysłu udostępnione po popularnych cenach prostemu człowiekowi, bogobojnemu ludowi dla pokrzepienia serc i godziwej rozrywki (121) (There were accordions, zithers and harps, once the instruments of angelic choirs; now, thanks to the progress of industry, made accessible at popular prices to the common man, to all God-fearing people for the reinvigoration of their hearts and their appropriate entertainment)

270-281.

⁸⁴ >From the introduction, by Roger Lancelyn Green, to Anthony Hope, *The Prisoner of Zenda, Rupert of Hentzau*, London, Dent, 1966, pp. vii-xiii, (xii). Originally published 1894.

⁸⁵ Hope, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, p. 133.

⁸⁶ George Hyde describes this episode as Pure Form in the Witkacian sense, because “it is pastiche, and a typical lateral movement of ideas links it closely with Section XXIX, a back-handed encomium of Franz Joseph...” (George Hyde, “State of Arrest: The Short Stories of Bruno Schulz,” in Stanislaw Eile and Ursula Phillips, eds., *New Perspectives in Twentieth Century Polish Literature: Flight from Martyrology*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1992, pp. 47-67, (59). See chapter 5 for further discussion of Pure Form.)

This quotation also sends up the moralising language (“God-fearing people,” “appropriate entertainment”) of the advertisement. It is as if the advertisers want to stay on the right side of the authorities by assuring one and all that the entertainment they have to offer is moral and inoffensive. The contrast between the mealy-mouthed advertising language of mass-produced entertainment, and Father’s poetry of heresy is brought out sharply here. The words “godziwy” (“appropriate, suitable”) and “bogobojny” (“God-fearing”) recur in a reference to Franz Joseph I in chapter 29 of “Wiosna”: “Franciszek Józef I nie był nieprzyjacielem godziwej i bogobojnej radości” (187) (“Franz Joseph I was not the enemy of appropriate and God-fearing joy”). Franz Joseph represents the sterile boredom against which Father, the heretic, rebels. Schulz damns him with faint praise (“nie był nieprzyjacielem”) in a double-negative construction.

Part 5 of “Księga” is mostly given over to a mock-serious explanation of the Book, emphasising the disharmony between the language of advertising, in which the Book is written, and the solemn nature of the Book itself. The explanation of the nature of the Book is tortuous to say the least; so much so, that Schulz himself gives up before he has properly begun, with the excuse that he does not want to bore the reader with doctrine. Here Schulz is relying on the reader’s familiarity with mystical texts, in particular the Kabbalah, though this is not to say that we must be intimately familiar with the conventions of mystical exegesis to appreciate the humour of the piece. Schulz degrades this whole process by stooping to the sinister practices of Bosco of Milan, invoking at this point the well-known tale of the Emperor’s new clothes: “Nie nasza wina, jeżeli czasami będziemy mieli wygląd tych sprzedawców niewidzialnych tkanin, demonstrujących w wyszukanych gestach oszukańczy swój towar” (128) (“It is not our fault if sometimes we will have the appearance of those sellers of invisible fabrics, demonstrating with elaborate gestures their fraudulent wares”). Schulz’s use of the word “those” (“those sellers”) implies that he is talking about someone with whom we are all familiar and invites the reader to compare his story with the fairy tale. Without the existence, independently of the text, of this second member of the parallel, the emphasis would change. For exegetes, deeply engrossed in a close reading of the text there is a danger of losing sight of this parallel, and as a result producing skewed analyses of Schulz’s prose, which try to incorporate every mocking, ironic word into one coherent world view that can then be called Schulz’s.

If what academics write may be seen metaphorically as notes in the margin of primary texts,

then it would appear that Schulz is mocking scholarly texts nearly all the way through his stories. For example, there is his interest in off-cuts and marginalia, which are equated with trash. Father studies the ledgers and accounts of the shop, but what he produces are merely inconsequential scribbles in the margins: “siedział ojciec w pozornym skupieniu i znaczył marginesy listów dotknięciami pióra w czarne latające gwiazdki, diabliki atramentu, puszki kosmate wirujące błędnie w polu widzenia” (254) (“Father sat in apparent concentration and with touches of the pen marked the margins of letters with black flying asterisks, little ink devils, shaggy hairs whirling madly in the field of vision”). In “Noc wielkiego sezonu,” Schulz reveals that he is writing these stories in the margin of a calendar or almanac (“kalendarz”) characterised by “gadulstwo,” “blaga,” “bajanie” and “majaczenie” (98) (“verbiage,” “bluster,” “nonsense” and “raving”). Despite this the narrator nurses the secret hope that one day his marginal stories will themselves grow to be part of the main body of the text: a description of the relationship between the Torah and the rabbinic texts which spring from it and are collected in the Mishnah (oral Torah) and Gemara (which means “completion”). All parts of scripture came to be called Torah although the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) remained pre-eminent. Modern standard editions of the Talmud run to 19 volumes and usually include the Mishnah and Gemara as well as later commentaries.⁸⁷ The Gemara includes works of the Halakah, legalistic documents laying down rules for every day conduct, as well as the Aggadah (“lore”), or homiletic interpretations of the Bible.⁸⁸ In “Nawiedzenie” Father busies himself adorning the pages of the ledger, but not with anything useful: “he would show her with pride the wonderful colourful transfers which he had diligently glued to the pages of the main ledger” (“... z dumą pokazywał jej świetne kolorowe odbijanki, którymi skrzętnie wylepił stronicę książki głównej” (18-19)).

“Wiosna” describes another exegete’s misadventures. This time it is the son, Joseph, not the father, who interprets a text, of spring, with the help of a commentary: the stamp album. His interpretation is a disaster. He misreads Rudolph and Bianca entirely and ends up apologising to the waxwork dummies which he has pressed into service:

Nie wiem do jakiego stopnia pojęliście ideę, w służbę której was zaprząłem... Ta idea, jak widzicie, bankrutuje, bankrutuje na całej linii... nadużyłem waszej nieodporności na idee, waszej szlachetnej bezkrytyczności, ażeby wam zaszczerpić fałszywą i światoburczą doktrynę... (217-218) (I do not know to what extent you understood the idea in whose service I have harnessed you... That idea, as you can see, is bankrupt, bankrupt right down

⁸⁷ Robert Banks, “Torah and Mishnah,” in *A Lion Handbook: The World’s Religions*, Oxford, Lion, 1991, pp. 289-90.

⁸⁸ Brandon, *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, pp. 380-381.

the line.... I have abused your lack of resistance to ideas, your noble gullibility, in order to instil in you a false and world-destroying doctrine)

This could equally well be addressed directly to the reader. In "Wiosna" Schulz has abused our understanding that a coherent tale of adventure be told. He has given us to believe that we are in story-telling territory by borrowing the techniques of high adventure, mixed in mystical hints and allusions to hidden depths (chapter 17, for example), only to pull off the biggest story-writing cheat of all: "Wiosna" is revealed in the end to have been a dream. To those who would plumb "Wiosna" looking for a meaning Schulz says, through the voice of the narrator: "Nikt nigdy nie zgłębił zamysłów wiosny. *Ignorabimus, moi panowie, ignorabimus!*" (222) ("No one has ever fathomed the designs of spring. *Ignorabimus, gentlemen, ignorabimus!*")

It is difficult to examine each parallel in isolation from the other, as Schulz's technique is to mix them all together. There is no clear division between his treatment of scholarly discourse, biblical language, Jewish mystical language, the conventions of the adventure story, and even the language of advertising. The main effect is usually comical, as particular styles are applied to subjects not normally considered worthy of the given style. Father's going to the toilet is described with old testament imagery. The scraps of cheap advertisements for huckster products in "Księga" are treated with an awe worthy of religious revelation. The scribbles of a young child on a book are treated like the inspired visions of a mystic in "Genialna epoka." This is no dry, biblical exegesis, but mystical inspiration, that is to say, Joseph has a direct awareness of the divine, which by-passes the normal processes of learning:

Moje kolorowe ołówki latały w natchnieniu przez kolumny nieczytelnych tekstów, biegly w genialnych gryzmołach, w karkołomnych zygzakach, zwężlając się raptownie w anagramy wizyj, w rebusy świetlistych objawień, i znów rozwiązując się w puste i ślepe błyskawice, szukające tropu natchnienia (133) (My coloured pencils flew in inspiration across columns of illegible texts, they ran in masterly scribbles, in breakneck zig-zags, knotting themselves abruptly in anagrams of visions, in rebuses of luminous revelations, and again unknotting themselves into empty and blind lightning flashes, searching the trail of inspiration)

Schulz replaces cause and effect relationships with analogies suggested by parallels and repetitions within stories, between stories and outside his prose altogether.⁸⁹ In "Theory of Prose," Shklovsky writes: "In the complex novelistic schemata of our new age, the relationship between

⁸⁹ Wyskiel writes: "The intentional world of Schulz is ruled by the universal principle of analogy, thanks to which all beings as it were exist only in order to cast light on each other," Wojciech Wyskiel, *Inna twarz Hioba: Problematyka alienacyjna w dziele Brunona Schulza*, Cracow, 1980, p.

kindred episodes is achieved by the repetition of certain words, very much in the manner of Wagnerian leitmotifs...⁹⁰ Similarly, in his neo-Formalist study of Babel's "My First Goose," Joseph Andrew examines the distribution of adjectives:

A closely connected level of analysis is the use of recurrent 'key-words'. This at first may seem merely a repetition to leitmotifs, [sic] but it does seem that they also play an important structural role. For example, if the same adjective is used to describe two characters, it seems that some thematic link is being made between them; the same is true, of course, if contrasting adjectives are used. Pushkin, for example, in *Boris Godunov* reinforces the basic conflicts of the play by using contrasting epithets for the two main characters.⁹¹

This is especially true of Schulz, who does not so much reinforce thematic unity, as create it by means of key words. An example is Aunt Perazja's fit of fury in "Wichura," which is linked to the rest of the story by very tenuous causal or thematic links, but by pointed linguistic parallels. In the examples which follow, "part three" is taken to begin at the point where Aunt Perazja makes her appearance. "Part one" is marked off from the rest of the story typographically.

Part 3: "ciotka Perazja zaczęła się kłócić, kłać i złorzeczyć" (95) ("Aunt Perazja began to argue, curse and swear")

Part 1: "bluźniąc błotem na całej przestrzeni nocy. Aż dobluźniły się, doklęły swego" (91) ("blaspheming mud throughout the whole space of the night. Until they blasphemed enough, they cursed their bit")

Part 3: "w paroksyzmie złości" (95) ("in a paroxysm of anger")

Part 2: "w paroksyzmie jasnowidzenia" (92) ("in a paroxysm of clairvoyance")

Part 3: "by wreszcie gdzieś szernieć," (96) ("in the end to turn black somewhere")

Part 1: "czarne sejmy" (90) ("black parliaments")

Part 3: "zetlić się w płatek popiołu" (96) ("smouldered into a petal of ash")

51.

⁹⁰ Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, p. 74.

⁹¹ J. M. Andrew, "Structure and Style in the Short Story: Babel's 'My First Goose,'" *Modern Language Review*, 1975, vol. 70, pp. 366-379, (370-371).

Part 2: “przez drzwiczki dmuchalo popiołem i sadzą” (94) (“through the open door blew ashes and soot”)

We have seen how “Nawiedzenie” is structured by the use of linguistic parallels. The recurring use of “wegetacyjno-rozwojowe” (“vegetative-developmental”) vocabulary, and words like “arabesque” has also been examined. This use of repetition and parallels gives the stories a thematic unity they might otherwise lack. Schulz must anchor his dream-like world in the reader’s mind. He does this by using language to suggest all kinds of strange parallels and contrasts, which link together elements of what would otherwise, like most real, non-literary dreams, be a disjointed set of images. Schulz’s way of tying together disparate stories and sketches can be seen in his liking for story-pairs.⁹² For example, “Sklepy cynamonowe” pairs off with “Ulica Krokodyli.” The narrator’s approval of the cinnamon shops with their exotic wares is contrasted with his disapproval of the shabby and cheap modern Crocodile Street district. This contrast is also present in the time of the action: the narrator looks for and fails to find the cinnamon shops at night; he looks for and finds the tailor’s shop on Crocodile Street by day – although he never succeeds in finding it again. “Dodo” and “Edzio,” each deal with a handicapped character, who in each case is a recognisable result of putting into practice the directions of Father in “Manekiny” (see chapter 5). Similarly, the birds of “Ptaki” fly back onto the pages of “Noc wielkiego sezonu.” Schulz’s stories are disjointed, but by no means unconnected. Rather than using cause and effect as the connective tissue of events, Schulz uses analogy and allusion.

⁹² This has been commented on by German Ritz in “Die Fahrt in die Krokodilstraße als ein Verlassen des mythischen Raums: Zu einer Erzählung von Bruno Schulz,” *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, 1993, Band 38, no. 2, pp. 207-216, (209).

This chapter aims to show that Schulz's work can be read as a parody of the Russian Formalist programme. The chapter begins with the question of whether Schulz knew of the existence of Formalism, in order to determine how far Schulz consciously parodied Russian Formalism. There is no concrete evidence to prove Schulz knew of Russian Formalism. Bolecki refers to the richness of his theoretical terminology, but in none of his extra-literary writings (essays, reviews) does he refer to Formalism.¹ But while Schulz is often portrayed as a provincial, cut off from literary life (i.e. Warsaw) he was by no means unaware of developments outside his hometown of Drohobycz.²

Formalism in Poland

Russian Formalism, Henryk Markiewicz writes, came late to Poland, which he attributes to Polish antipathy to things Russian/Soviet and the fact that those scholars with a theoretical bent, such as Kleiner, Kridl and Ingarden, being in the majority from Galicia, had poor or no Russian. Also, it was difficult to get books published in Russia.³ Russian theories started trickling west to Poland around 1924. Thus, reference is made in *Wiadomości Literackie*, (1924, no. 21) to Viktor Shklovsky (but

¹ Włodzimierz Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym: Witkacy, Gombrowicz, Schulz i inni. Studium z poetyki historycznej*, 2nd edn., Cracow, 1996, p. 244.

² "His biography was monotonous and largely unvaried – as grey as the life of a provincial drawing teacher can be..." Jerzy Jarzębski, Introduction to Bruno Schulz, *Opowiadania, Wybór esejów i listów*, ed., Jerzy Jarzębski, 2nd edn., Biblioteka Narodowa, I, 264, Wrocław, 1998, pp. v-cxxviii, (vi). Elsewhere, Jarzębski describes Schulz's hometown (albeit only in 1892, the year of Schulz's birth) as "a hole" (Jerzy Jarzębski, *Schulz*, Series: A to Polska właśnie, Wrocław, 1999, p. 7). Ficowski refers to Schulz's three-week trip to Paris as his only international excursion, although in the earlier *Regiony wielkiej herezji: Szkice o życiu i twórczości Brunona Schulza*, Cracow, 1967 he writes that Schulz spent several months studying in Vienna – then, like Galicia, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to be sure, but by most people's reckoning, a foreign country. (Jerzy Ficowski, "O Exposé Brunona Schulza," *Odra*, 1974, no. 1, pp. 37-39, (38).) Schulz also visited Stockholm, in 1936. Artur Sandauer describes *Sklepy cynamonowe* as fragments of an autobiography written "in provincial solitude for the exclusive use of a couple of friends," ("Rzeczywistość zdegradowana (Rzecz o Brunonie Schulzu)," in Bruno Schulz, *Proza*, Cracow, 1964, pp. 5-43, (21)). Szymański wonders "from what source in the nineteen thirties could Bruno Schulz, stuck in the deepest provinces have derived his lively interest in the question of myth?" supposing that even from Drohobycz it may have been possible to order in books. (Quoted in Jerzy Speina, *Bankructwo rzeczywistości: Proza Brunona Schulza*, Towarzystwo Naukowe w Toruniu: Prace wydziału filologiczno-filozoficznego, vol. 24, no. 1, Warsaw-Poznań, 1974, p. 41.) It is true that in a letter to Tadeusz Breza (Bruno Schulz, *Księga listów*, ed., Jerzy Ficowski, Cracow, 1975, p. 30) Schulz complains of the scarcity of literary periodicals, but the list of his correspondents gives the lie to the image of a sleepy provincial. They include Breza (author of *Adam Grywald*), Julian Tuwim, leading Skamander poet, Witkacy and Gombrowicz.

³ Henryk Markiewicz, "Recepcja formalizmu rosyjskiego w Polsce," in Alina Brodzka, Maryla Hopfinger, Janusz Lalewicz, eds., *Problemy wiedzy o kulturze: Prace dedykowane Stefanowi*

mainly his novels), and an article by Waław Lednicki in *Kultura Słowiańska* (1924, no. 4-5, reprinted in 1926) refers to Formalism, contrasting Polish criticism's nationalist-patriotic concerns with the Russian way. However, he is dismissive of the Formalists' mechanical approach and still sees a place for biography and psychology. An article on Shklovsky appeared in *Miesięcznik literacki*, in 1929 (no. 1), the same year that Józef Gołębek gave a talk on the latest Russian literary theories in Warsaw. Earlier still, Leonard Podhorski-Okołów, in an article entitled "W obronie 'nowych rymów'" in *Skamander* (1926, no. 44-6), refers to works by Tynyanov, Zhirmunsky, Tomashevsky and Jakobson ("The Newest Russian Poetry").

Podhorski-Okołów himself may be called a Polish Formalist. His poetry criticism has a distinct mechanical/statistical – not to mention prescriptive – slant. For example, in "O rymowaniu," he tabulates the line-ends of a selection of his own poems and those of Słonimski, Tuwim and Wierzyński, divides them into grammatical, masculine, and exotic rhymes, unrhymed and "consonne d'appui" rhymes, and gives the percentage of each type found in each author's poetry. Poetry, he writes, should avoid banal rhymes, minimise grammatical rhymes (see chapter 3, section 1), increase masculine rhymes, and maximise "consonne d'appui" rhymes. Podhorski-Okołów also quotes Aleksander Veselovsky on the subject of folk poetry: "In rhyme, sound dominates content.... Often it is not the poet but the word which is the author of the line."⁴ A second article by Podhorski-Okołów, "Mechanizm twórczości poetyckiej w świetle danych budowy przysłów," holds that the discovery of the laws which govern and decide the shape of verse should be one of the most important tasks of contemporary poetics. His treatment of Mickiewicz's Crimean sonnets also shows his Formalist inclination: he notes that 42.7% of all words in the sonnets are nouns, but 76.6% of rhyming words are nouns.⁵

In "O rymowaniu" Podhorski-Okołów refers to "Forma dźwiękowa prozy polskiej i wiersza polskiego" (1912) by Kazimierz Wóycicki, who came to be known as the John the Baptist of Polish Formalism by the end of the inter-war period.⁶ Manfred Kridl later wrote: "The beginning of the twentieth century was a time of change both in European literature and in that which was called the

Żółkiewskiemu, Wrocław, 1986, pp. 491-508, (491).

⁴ Leonard Podhorski-Okołów, "O rymowaniu," *Skamander*, 1925, no. 37, pp. 26-39, (32).

⁵ Leonard Podhorski-Okołów, "Mechanizm twórczości poetyckiej w świetle danych budowy przysłów," *Skamander*, 1925, no. 39, pp. 184-192, (187).

⁶ Konrad Górski, *Z historii i teorii literatury*, Seria druga, Warsaw 1964, p. 50.

history of literature.”⁷ Wóycicki was a part of this change, belonging among those who were discontented with the genetic, biographical approach to the study of literature. He was born in 1876 and worked as a secondary school teacher and inspector, and as a teacher of poetics in Warsaw University, and after 1925 directed the Literature Department at the Ministry of Religion and Public Education – coinciding with Schulz’s career, begun in 1924, as a school teacher (albeit of drawing).⁸

Wóycicki also wanted to set the study of literature apart from other considerations: explaining the genesis of a work and its artistry are two separate tasks. He warns against allowing the history of literature to become the history of poets’ experiences. The study of aesthetic contents (“zawartości”) must be held separate from the study of social, patriotic and religious contents.⁹ He also develops the idea of artistic device, though stopping short of making it the hero of study: “The specific artistic means (‘środki artystyczne’), composition, and fundamental forms are elements of the organism distinguished by cognitive thought, which, along with their organic connection should be the subject of study.”¹⁰ Further on he defines the student’s task as explaining what gives the verbal expression its poetic value. This, written in 1914, could almost be a paraphrase of Jakobson’s definition of literariness – that which makes a given work literary.¹¹

Elsewhere Wóycicki uses the word “dominanta.” “Jedność stylowa utworu poetyckiego” begins with the words: “A work of art is a separate, self-contained unit comprised of a set of elements linked by certain relationships.”¹² Each element functions with the others and to change one is to change them all. Usually one element comes to the fore, pushing others aside into supporting roles. This element he calls the dominant (“dominanta”).¹³ Rather than talking of the stylistic demands made by the theme of a work, we should instead talk of the demands made by the dominant. Jakobson defines the dominant as “the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines and transforms

⁷ Manfred Kridl, “Boje Wilna i Warszawy o nową naukę o literaturze,” *Pamiętnik literacki*, 1957, no. 2, pp. 297-307, (297).

⁸ Andrzej Karcz, “Kazimierz Wóycicki: The Founder of Polish Formalism.” *The Polish Review*, 1997, no. 2, pp. 155-165.

⁹ Kazimierz Wóycicki, “Historia literatury i poetyka,” in *Prace Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego*, Wydział I: językoznawstwa i literatury, no. 4, Warsaw, 1914, pp. 1-3, 6-8, 47-54, 56-65; reprinted in Henryk Markiewicz, ed., *Teoria badań literackich w Polsce: Wypisy*, vol. 1, Cracow, 1960, pp. 224-244, (234-236).

¹⁰ Wóycicki, “Historia literatury,” in Markiewicz, *Teoria badań literackich*, p. 241.

¹¹ Roman Jakobson, “The Newest Russian Poetry,” Prague 1921, p. 11; quoted in Boris Eichenbaum, “The Theory of the ‘Formal Method’,” in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, ed. and trans., *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1965, pp. 102-139, (107).

¹² Kazimierz Wóycicki, “Jedność stylowa utworu poetyckiego: Sprawozdania z posiedzeń Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego,” Wydział I i II, Warsaw, 1914, Rok VII, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 5-36, reprinted in Markiewicz, *Teoria badań literackich*, pp. 245-274, (245).

the remaining components.”¹⁴ Wóycicki’s Formalist credentials seem beyond question; he lacked only Shklovsky’s boldness and Jakobson’s taste for Futurist art, which he regarded as a “misunderstanding.”¹⁵

In academic circles, Markiewicz tells us, little was known of Russian Formalism during the 1920s.¹⁶ Its first wide-ranging characterisation appeared in 1933 under the authorship of Tadeusz Grabowski, and according to Markiewicz left much to be desired. Grabowski had been teaching Russian Formalism in Poznań since 1930 and members of the Poznań University Circle of Polish Students (Cezary Gołkowski, Tamara Kowalska and Irena Szczygielska) translated Tomashevsky’s “Theory of Literature” in 1935.¹⁷ By the early 1930s it was possible to distinguish, apart from the Poznań group, two different schools of Formalism in Poland. These were in Warsaw and Vilnius, but they did not know of the existence of each other.¹⁸ Kazimierz Budzyk remembers that the publication of Manfred Kridl’s “Wstęp do badań nad dziełem literackim” (Vilnius, 1936) took the Siedlecki group in Warsaw by surprise.¹⁹

The Vilnius school was gathered around Manfred Kridl who became professor of Polish literary history in 1932 and was strongly influenced by Roman Ingarden’s *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, which had appeared in 1931.²⁰ Kridl may have discovered Russian Formalism only after his approach to literature had evolved into something recognisably Formalist – Putrament claims to have acquainted him with Russian Formalism. His students included Czesław Zgorzelski, Jerzy Putrament and Eugenia Krassowska, who gave Schulz a favourable review, which concentrated on his language.²¹ His “Przełom w metodyce badań literackich,” published in *Przegląd Współczesny* in 1933 comes out in

¹³ Wóycicki, “Jedność stylowa,” in Markiewicz, *Teoria badań literackich*, p. 251.

¹⁴ Roman Jakobson, “The Dominant,” trans. Herbert Eagle, in Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy, eds., *Language in Literature*, Cambridge Mass. - London, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 41-46, (41).

¹⁵ Wóycicki, “Jedność stylowa,” in Markiewicz, *Teoria badań literackich*, p. 271. Erlich describes the fact that Jakobson’s “The Newest Russian Poetry” was sympathetic to Futurism as no accident. The Futurist poet, Mayakovsky, was a friend of Jakobson’s. (Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History - Doctrine*, 2nd edn., Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 4, London, Mouton, 1965, p. 65.)

¹⁶ Markiewicz, “Recepcja formalizmu rosyjskiego w Polsce,” Brodzka et al., *Problemy wiedzy o kulturze*, p. 493.

¹⁷ Markiewicz, “Recepcja formalizmu rosyjskiego w Polsce,” Brodzka et al., *Problemy wiedzy o kulturze*, p. 494.

¹⁸ Markiewicz, “Recepcja formalizmu rosyjskiego w Polsce,” Brodzka et al., *Problemy wiedzy o kulturze*, p. 494.

¹⁹ Kazimierz Budzyk, “O Franciszku Siedleckim wspomnienie,” *Pamiętnik literacki*, 1946, no. 3-4, pp. 375-386, (381-2).

²⁰ Tadeusz Bujnicki, “Manfred Kridl i rosyjska ‘szkoła formalna,’” *Pamiętnik literacki*, 1996, no. 1, pp. 111-126, (111, 115).

²¹ Markiewicz, “Recepcja formalizmu rosyjskiego w Polsce,” Brodzka et al., *Problemy wiedzy o*

favour of concentrating on the specific nature of literary works and not on genetic, psychological or ideological aspects.²² Kridl's "integral method" drew on Zhirmunsky ("Wstęp do poetyki"), Eichenbaum's "Theory of the Formal Method," Tynyanov, Shklovsky, Tomashevsky, Jakobson, Brik and others, but he was not uncritical of Russian Formalists, maintaining that "Art as Technique" was an oversimplification.²³ By 1933 Kridl was teaching Formalism at university seminars.²⁴ According to Kridl, their (by which he seems to mean the Vilnius group of Polish scholars) first public appearance was at a conference in Lwów, where their views met with opposition. Karol Irzykowski, Witkacy's adversary (see, for example, "Beznadziejne porachunki z niepowrotnej przeszłości: Wstęp do krytyki *Walki o treść* Karola Irzykowskiego" in *Czysta Forma w teatrze*) attended this conference,²⁵ but elsewhere accused them of not loving literature.²⁶

The Warsaw circle, which included Franciszek Siedlecki, Kazimierz Budzyk and Stefan Żółkiewski, did not, as in Vilnius, have a leader. This group brought out translations of Russian Formalist texts, including Zhirmunsky's *Introduction to Poetics (Wstęp do poetyki, Warsaw, 1934)*. As well as translations, the 1930s saw a larger number of articles and reviews on the subject of Russian Formalism than the isolated mentions of the 1920s. Such articles appeared in, for example, *Wiadomości Literackie* (Kridl, Siedlecki), *Skamander* (Siedlecki), *Rocznik literacki*, (Kridl) *Przegląd Powszechny* (Zgorzelski) and the communist *Miesięcznik literacki*. This last publication was edited by Aleksander Wat, and was very positive about Russian Formalism.²⁷

By the late 1930s Formalism was a force to be reckoned with but by no means dominated the literary studies landscape. This can be seen in the fact that the Vilnius and Warsaw groups had only recently learned of each other's existence, and is also reflected in the nature of reviews of, among others, Bruno Schulz (see chapter 2). Also, in 1936 it was still possible for the influential academic Ignacy Chrzanowski to define the history of literature as "the history of the verbal embodiment of

kulturze, p. 496.

²² Bujnicki, "Manfred Kridl i rosyjska 'szkoła formalna,'" p. 113.

²³ Bujnicki, "Manfred Kridl i rosyjska 'szkoła formalna,'" pp. 120-122.

²⁴ Markiewicz, "Recepcja formalizmu rosyjskiego w Polsce," Brodzka et al., *Problemy wiedzy o kulturze*, p. 496.

²⁵ Kridl, "Boje Wilna i Warszawy," p. 299; Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, ed., Janusz Degler, Warsaw, 1986, (henceforth *Czysta Forma w teatrze*) pp. 300-314.

²⁶ Budzyk, "O Franciszku Siedleckim wspomnienie," p. 384. According to Budzyk, Irzykowski made the comment at a meeting of the "Klub Polonistów." He does not give a date, but the "koło polonistów" which was the nucleus of the Warsaw branch of Formalism in Poland first met in the academic year 1929-1930.

²⁷ Aleksander Wat, *Mój wiek*, 2nd edn., vol. 1-2, vol. 1, London, Polonia Book Fund, 1981, p. 166.

national ideals in their gradual evolution.”²⁸ Chrzanowski saw literature in Mickiewiczian terms, as the expression of Polish patriotism. For him the most important aspect of literature was what the author had to say.²⁹ Another powerful opponent of Formalism was Julian Krzyżanowski,³⁰ whose *Dzieje literatury polskiej*, (Warsaw, 1979), is still read today.

The evidence available suggests that Schulz, while continuing to exhibit his art,³¹ and still working full-time as a teacher, considered himself primarily a writer by 1930. “Noc lipcowa” was written in 1928 and *Sklepy cynamonowe* (the collection, not the title-story) grew out of his correspondence with Debora Vogel, whom he met in 1930. It is difficult to disagree with Jerzy Jarzębski’s assessment of Schulz’s literary creativity: “it exploded suddenly, fully mature and complete.”³² *Sklepy cynamonowe* was published in late 1933 (dated 1934) and *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą* in 1937, but the latter is not a progression from the first; on the contrary many of its stories (e.g. “Noc lipcowa”³³) were written before the publication of “Sklepy cynamonowe.” In a letter to Tadeusz Breza in 1937 he refers to his forthcoming collection, *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą*, as a collection of “earlier short stories.”³⁴

During Schulz’s formative years a brand of Formalism was becoming current in Poland, but, as shown above, it really only started to make an impression in the mid 1930s, when Schulz was already an established, published writer. Unfortunately, it is precisely Schulz’s “formative years” about which least is known. Almost all his correspondence with Debora Vogel is lost, and nothing survives of his correspondence with Władysław Riff in the mid 20s. Riff, a student of Polish, died of tuberculosis and all his papers, including Schulz’s letters, were destroyed by the disinfection crew.

If Formalism in the strict sense of literary *study* was slow to penetrate Poland, art that shared the Formalist emphasis on form at the expense, if necessary, of mimesis was somewhat quicker to do so, and among the manifestos and slogans of the literary avant-garde can be seen similar concerns, which may have had some influence on Schulz (see chapter 2). A turn toward the form art takes, and

²⁸ Ignacy Chrzanowski, *Literatura i Naród*, Lvov, 1936, p. 149, quoted in Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, p. 164.

²⁹ Jan Zygmunt Jakubowski, “Słowo wstępne,” to Ignacy Chrzanowski, *Historia literatury niepodległej Polski (965-1795) (z wypisami)*, 13th edn., Warsaw, 1983, pp. 7-14, (10-11). Chrzanowski’s history was first published in 1908, and was in its tenth edition in 1930.

³⁰ Manfred Kridl, “Boje Wilna i Warszawy,” p. 304. Krzyżanowski did, he writes, acknowledge the contribution made by Kridl’s *Wstęp do badań nad dziełem literackim*, (Vilnius, 1936).

³¹ See, for example Schulz, *Księga listów*, p. 161.

³² Jarzębski, *Schulz*, p. 6.

³³ Schulz, *Księga listów*, p. 38 and 42.

³⁴ Schulz, *Księga listów*, p. 32.

away from nineteenth-century notions of the importance of a weighty subject matter was not confined to the avant-garde. As we have seen, the Skamandrites (who published Witkacy's essays on Pure Form, as well as works by the Futurist, Aleksander Wat), proclaimed that, "the greatness of art appears not in themes but in the forms in which they are expressed."³⁵ In an essay, Schulz wrote of his forthcoming book: "The subject – as always – is unimportant and difficult to report on" ("Temat – jak zawsze – nieważny i trudny do zreferowania").³⁶

Avant-garde poet Tadeusz Peiper rejects the form/content divide.

Form is delimited from content as if they were things which do not interpenetrate. The false image used to describe the relationship of form to content of a vessel and the liquid it contains confuses the issue. From this image comes the idea that – as one can pour the same liquid into different vessels – the same content can be 'dressed' in different forms. But no. 'The same' content 'in' another form is different.... In other words: *form permeates and becomes content*. Form is also content.³⁷

Peiper, editor of *Zwrotnica* from 1922-3 and 1926-7, was the leading representative of the Cracow avant-garde, whose members included Julian Przyboś, Jalu Kurek, and, though less closely associated, Adam Ważyk, whom Schulz and Władysław Riff met in 1927.³⁸ Later on *Gazeta artystów*, which was associated with Peiper, and Józef Czechowicz, another avant-garde poet, were to approach Schulz for short stories (which were not forthcoming).³⁹ All this is not to suggest that Schulz identified himself with or must be counted among the avant-garde, but it does suggest that he was aware of new developments in literature and the theory of literature. Despite living in the provinces, the channels of information were open to him.

While little is known of Schulz's interests in the inter-war period (Rilke, Mann, Kafka, probably Meyrink and Kubin, are usually mentioned⁴⁰) it seems reasonable to suppose he may have come into contact with "Formalism" of some kind. His fiancée (whom he met in 1932 or 1933) had been a student of Juliusz Kleiner, whose belief that the subject of literary study be first and foremost

³⁵ "Słowo wstępne do Skamandra," *Skamander*, 1920, no. 1, reprinted in Alicja Badowska, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, Appendix literacki, Warsaw-Wrocław, 1993, pp. 125-127, (127).

³⁶ "W pracowniach pisarzy i uczonych polskich," in *Wiadomości Literackie*, 1939, no. 17, reprinted in Schulz, *Księga listów*, p. 179.

³⁷ Tadeusz Peiper, "Poezja jako budowa," *Nowe usta*, 1925, reprinted in Badowska, *Dwudziestolecie międzywojenne*, pp. 138-140, (138).

³⁸ Adam Ważyk, "Spotkanie w Zakopanem," *Życie literackie*, 1965, no. 48, p. 8.

³⁹ Schulz, *Księga listów*, p. 48.

⁴⁰ See, for example, Schulz's letters published in Jerzy Ficowski, "W poszukiwaniu partnera kongenialnego," in Jerzy Jarzębski, ed., *Czytanie Schulza: Materiały międzynarodowej sesji naukowej 'Bruno Schulz – w stulecie urodzin i w pięćdziesięciolecie śmierci' Instytut Filologii Polskiej Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków, 8-10 czerwca 1992*, Cracow, 1994, pp. 18-32, (30-31).

the contents of the text itself, leads Bujnicki to count him among precursors of Kridl.⁴¹ In Drohobycz he was one of the intelligentsia, being a member of an art and literature-lover's circle called "Kalleia" from 1918.⁴² This was a man who was personally acquainted with writers such as Adam Ważyk, Karol Irzykowski (whom he appears to have met in 1920⁴³) and Witkacy, even before he became a public figure with the publication of *Sklepy cynamonowe*.

Pure Form and Formalism

A more direct link between Schulz and Formalism is provided in the person of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz ("Witkacy") and his theory of Pure Form, which bears many resemblances to Russian Formalism.⁴⁴ Pure Form deals with art and theatre, Formalism with the study of literature, but both approaches are text-centred; they are concerned with the techniques used by the artist, and attempt to study only those techniques. They reject the link between art and reality. The two may be related, but that is incidental to the true nature of art. Form is the only essential content of art. The similarities have been noted by a number of commentators.⁴⁵ Daniel Gerould writes that Witkacy's interest in internal logic and the autonomous life of form coincides with Clive Bell's concept of 'significant forms':

...their significance lies in the relationships and combinations of lines and colours; from here it is not far to the theories of Russian Formalism, which treated art as a technique and emphasised the dominating role of the playful ("zabawowy") element in the creative process. In addition Witkacy also shares with Formalists the conviction that it is not feeling which leads to the development of form, but rather form which gives birth to feeling⁴⁶

Stanisław Gawliński also mentions the similarity and points out that Witkacy's *Nowe formy w malarstwie* (*New Forms in Painting*) was begun in Russia in 1917.⁴⁷ The most detailed comparison of

⁴¹ Bujnicki, "Manfred Kridl i rosyjska 'szkoła formalna'," p. 114; Aleksander Bejowicz, "Zerwane zaręczyny z panną J.," in Jan Ciechowicz, Halina Kasjaniuk, eds., *Teatr pamięci Brunona Schulza*, Gdynia, 1993, pp. 94-107, (95).

⁴² Jarzębski, *Schulz*, p. 35.

⁴³ Schulz, *Księga listów*, p. 18.

⁴⁴ The relationship between Witkacy and Schulz is explored by Włodzimierz Bolecki, in part three of "Witkacy – Schulz, Schulz – Witkacy (wariacje interpretacyjne)," in Jarzębski, *Czytanie Schulza*, pp. 127-151. It is based on Ficowski's *Księga listów*.

⁴⁵ See, for example, George Hyde, "The word unheard: 'Form' in Modern Polish drama," *Word and Image*, 1988, vol. 4, no. 3-4, pp. 719-731.

⁴⁶ Daniel C. Gerould, "Witkacy jako postmodernista," *Dialog*, 1990, no. 3, pp. 60-63, (61). This is the text of a speech given at the Zakopiańskie Prezentacje Artystyczne organised by Teatr im. S. I. Witkiewicza in 1989.

⁴⁷ Stanisław Gawliński, "Teoria powieści Witkacego," in Tadeusz Bujnicki, ed., *W kręgu przemian polskiej prozy XX w.*, PAN-Oddział w Katowicach, Prace komisji historycznoliterackiej, no. 1,

Pure Form and Russian Formalism known to me is that of Anna Schmidt in *Form und Deformation*, in which she notes the similarities of Witkacy's deformations and Russian Formalism's theory of defamiliarisation.⁴⁸ In Witkacy "only through the destruction of the objective contents are the artistic contents set free."⁴⁹ Witkacy arrives at a position similar to Jakobson's, namely the "set" is on the word in itself, not the thing which, in "normal" language, it represents. In Pure Form, she writes, we are dealing with Russian Formalist defamiliarisation of form itself (as opposed to defamiliarisation of the object presented). Although deformation and defamiliarisation are not identical there seems to be "an essential, shared core of meaning."⁵⁰ Schmidt goes on to analyse Witkacy's plays from the point of view of Russian Formalism, pointing out, for example, that the lack of realistic motivation in them is a fundamental deformational device.⁵¹

Witkacy was in Russia (St. Petersburg, Moscow and the front) from late 1914 to 1918, serving as an officer in the elite Pavlovsky Guard Regiment, but little is known of what happened to him there. Although lurid stories of doubtful provenance have circulated, both Aleksander Wat and Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz confirm that Witkacy himself spoke little of his experiences in Russia.⁵² Russia and the military life was something of a turning point for Witkacy. From being almost suicidal he became filled with vigour, but as an officer of an elite regiment his life must have been in great danger after the revolution. In St. Petersburg he stayed with an aunt in the household of Władysław Żukowski, a prominent figure in Russia. Visitors to the house included Baudouin de Courtenay, Shklovsky's professor.⁵³ Also, we know he visited art galleries with Tadeusz Miciński, a close friend, who was also in contact with Valery Bryusov, Konstantin Balmont and Fyodor Sologub.⁵⁴ In short, he did not simply disappear into the barracks, but maintained contact with the arts – though he later

Wrocław, 1978, pp. 27-40, (28).

⁴⁸ Anna Schmidt compares Formalism and Pure Form in *Form und Deformation: Zum kunsttheoretischen und dramatischen Werk von Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz*, Slavistische Beiträge, Band 294, Munich, Verlag Otto Sagner, 1992.

⁴⁹ Schmidt, *Form und Deformation*, p. 73.

⁵⁰ Schmidt, *Form und Deformation*, p. 90.

⁵¹ Schmidt, *Form und Deformation*, pp. 197-199. Nearly all contemporary critics of Witkacy ("from Irzykowski to Peiper" in the words of Konstanty Puzyna, "Porachunki z Witkacym," *Twórczość* 1949, no. 7, pp. 100-108, (100)), however, accused him of not applying his own principles of Pure Form in his plays.

⁵² Wat, *Mój wiek*, p. 127; Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, *Petersburg*, 3rd edn., Warsaw, 1981, p. 58.

⁵³ Irena Spustek, *Polacy w Piotrogradzie 1914-1917*, Warsaw, 1966.

⁵⁴ Jarosław Miciński, "Na szczytu i na krańcu życia: Ze wspomnień o ojcu," *Współczesność*, 1964, no. 18, pp. 8-9; Anna Micińska, "Życie Stanisława Ignacego Witkiewicza w latach 1885-1939," *Pamiętnik teatralny*, 1985, no. 1-4, pp. 15-59.

claimed to have been to the theatre only twice between 1910 and 1918.⁵⁵ Moreover, he claimed to have been a believer in Pure Form since 1902 (when he was sixteen).⁵⁶ There are two, very faint, possible references to the influence of Russian Formalism on Witkacy in his writings. One is dismissive, and occurs in "O artystycznym teatrze" (1938) where he claims that the sources of Pure Form are within himself despite claims that his Pure Form had developed from the position of the German aesthetician, Konrad Fiedler.⁵⁷ Here it is worth bearing in mind Wat's observation that Witkacy was the type of person to sow confusion and obfuscation about himself, which may account for Rytard's claim that he spoke often of Russia, while others claim he rarely mentioned it.⁵⁸ The second possible reference to Russian Formalism is in "Krytyka artykułu Karola Irzykowskiego," where he says that *at least abroad* people understand that content does not make a work of art; nor does "content conveyed in a beautiful form", but rather Pure Form.⁵⁹

The bulk of Witkacy's theories are contained in *Nowe formy w malarstwie* (1919) and *Teatr* (1923), which consists of articles published mostly in *Skamander*. They were thus fully formed by the time he and Schulz met, in 1925. Not only that, but they were controversial views, leading him to polemicise with many critics such as Anatol Stern, Karol Irzykowski and Tadeusz "Boy" Żeleński, with articles appearing on the pages of *Zet*, *Kurier Lwowski* and *Skamander* among others. It seems highly unlikely that his friend and fellow artist, Bruno Schulz, could have been unaware of the theory of Pure Form, especially as it emerges from Witkacy's *Narkotyki* that Debora Vogel was familiar with, at the very least, that part of Witkacy's theory dealing with the historical development of artistic form.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, "W sprawie mojej tzw. 'Teorii Bezsensu' (?) w Sztuce," in *Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz: Teatr i inne pisma o teatrze*, Janusz Degler, ed., Warsaw, 1995, (henceforth *Teatr i inne pisma o teatrze*), pp. 273-278, (275). The original publication date was 1921. In all further references to Witkacy's writings, the original date of publication will be given in parentheses at the end of the reference. Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz took the name "Witkacy" to distinguish between himself and his father.

⁵⁶ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, pp. 361-2, footnote 8 to "Parę słów w kwestii 'tematów' sztuk teatralnych (A propos dyskusji Boya z Winawerem)," (1923).

⁵⁷ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 191, (1938). The claim was made by Stefan Kołaczkowski, in an article which polemicised with Manfred Kridl. "Bilans 'estetyzmu,'" *Marchoń*, 1937, no. 2, p. 154.

⁵⁸ Wat, *Mój wiek*, p. 127. Jerzy Mieczysław Rytard's reminiscences can be found in his "Witkacy, czyli O życiu po drugiej stronie rozpaczy," in Tadeusz Kotarbiński and Jerzy Eugeniusz Płomiński, eds., *Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz: Człowiek i twórca. Księga pamiątkowa*, Warsaw, 1957, pp. 267-284.

⁵⁹ Witkacy, "Krytyka artykułu Karola Irzykowskiego pt. 'Uwagi na temat tzw. upadku twórczości dramatycznej' (Z powodu artykułu Karola Irzykowskiego w 'Scenie Polskiej', zeszyt 4-5-6, 1923)" in *Teatr i inne pisma*, pp. 294-303, (298), (1924).

⁶⁰ Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, *Narkotyki – Niemyte dusze*, Warsaw, 1979, p. 66. First published in 1932, Witkacy dates the foreword Feb. 7th 1930.

Pure Form is achieved in a work of art when, through the interaction of its elements, the receiver experiences the metaphysical feeling of “unity in multiplicity.” In practice, what this means is that the work of art is an autonomous unit made up of elements which derive their significance from their relationships with each other and *not* from their relationships with anything outside the work of art. This leads Witkacy to reject the form/content division. Whether a painting represents a landscape or a person’s face is immaterial, since the real aim of art is this mysterious “unity in multiplicity.” Among primitives this metaphysical feeling could be evoked using simple forms – he gives the example of a coloured circle – but moderns suffer from “insatiability of form” (“nienasylenie formą”) and must move ever further from forms found in everyday life: Botticelli could attain pure form and thereby express the metaphysical feeling without deforming the object portrayed, but for Picasso this is no longer possible.⁶¹

Before examining the similarities between Russian Formalism and Pure Form let us look at the differences to see if they rule out a comparison. The first dissimilarity is the philosophical background to Witkacy’s theory, which has no counterpart in Russian Formalism. The philosophy of Pure Form is most fully expressed in the earlier *Nowe formy w malarstwie*. Witkacy was a working playwright and critic and in later writings there is noticeably less emphasis on metaphysics and more on the practicalities of theatre. In a later article (“Odpowiedź Anatolowi Sternowi na zarzuty co do książki pt *Teatr*”) he defines Pure Form without mentioning the “unhappily named” (his own words⁶²) metaphysical feeling: “I have already given the definition of Pure Form many times: it is the directly acting construction of any and all elements – acting independently of whether those elements create a complex close to reality or not.”⁶³ In one passage he gives a bizarre example of how a theatre of Pure Form might look, and while it may not be much help in telling us what Pure Form is, at least metaphysics do not intrude. Any attempt to describe Pure Form in terms of what the audience sees must by definition fail, as it is not the content that matters, but the feeling evoked by the interaction of the contents. The point is that in a theatre of Pure Form the audience must feel that every element is essential to every other element.⁶⁴ The artistic point of view consists in attempting “to comprehend the entirety of the individual elements as an indissoluble unity.” The multiplicity of elements should be

⁶¹ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 72, (1920).

⁶² Witkacy, *Teatr i inne pisma*, p. 247, (1923).

⁶³ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 286, (1924).

⁶⁴ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, pp. 80-82, (1920).

integrated in that unity.⁶⁵

For all Witkacy's philosophical/metaphysical side, Pure Form seems to have been born of the same impatience with old literary critical methods that led Jakobson to compare critics with policemen arresting everyone in sight at the scene of a crime.⁶⁶ He is tireless in castigating critics for judging plays not on their artistic merits but from the point of view of life. Reviewers write about their views and the author's views but on the form of the play and its execution there is usually not a word, though they often provide a plot summary.⁶⁷ In "Aleksander Wat" he again attacks critics for wallowing in the author's psychology and his world-view.⁶⁸ In "W sprawie mojej tzw. 'Teorii Bezsensu' (?) w Sztuce" he accuses critics of judging his art from the point of view of life, which makes as much sense as judging the lines of a locomotive from the point of view of its horsepower.⁶⁹ Again in "Parę słów w kwestii stosunku formy do treści" he complains of critics writing about life-related contents ("treści życiowe") instead of form.⁷⁰ For Witkacy, a play which is "about" what happened in an enchanted castle is not at all about the enchanted castle, (or even the people in it). The castle is just a pretext for a display of Pure Form. "Who cares what happened at number 38, flat 10, Wspólna Street or in an enchanted castle, or in times past?" he writes in "Wstęp do teorii Czystej Formy w teatrze."⁷¹ But, it seems, it is precisely Wspólna Street and the enchanted castle that critics write about. Zhirmunsky writes, more moderately, that such "so-called content" has no independent existence and participates in the overall aesthetic effect.⁷² Jakobson expresses his impatience with traditional criticism in terms similar to Witkacy's:

Until recently, the history of art, particularly that of literature, has had more in common with causerie than with scholarship. It obeyed all the laws of causerie, skipping blithely from topic to topic, from lyrical effusions on the elegance of forms to anecdotes from the artist's life, from psychological truisms to questions concerning philosophical significance and social environment⁷³

Equally immaterial to Witkacy is the "cursed consistency of characters and this psychological

⁶⁵ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 65, (1920).

⁶⁶ Jakobson, "The Newest Russian Poetry," quoted in Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'," in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 107.

⁶⁷ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 146, (1923).

⁶⁸ Witkacy, *Teatr i inne pisma*, p. 234, (1923).

⁶⁹ Witkacy, *Teatr i inne pisma*, p. 273, (1921).

⁷⁰ Witkacy, *Teatr i inne pisma*, p. 282, (1921).

⁷¹ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 78, (1920).

⁷² Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, p. 187.

⁷³ Roman Jakobson, "On Realism in Art," trans. Karol Magassy, in Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska, eds., *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, Cambridge, Mass.,

'truth':"⁷⁴ In works of Pure Form "meaning" is on a par with, for example, imagery and sound: it is just one of the elements which together make up the structure: "In my opinion a given poem or play is good insofar as the various elements therein form an absolute whole; insofar as *meaning* [my italics], images and sounds in poetry, for example, create in their general structure new *poetic qualities* or in connection with real action create new *theatrical qualities*, and are not just means to present life."⁷⁵ Witkacy wants, in Russian Formalist terms, a theatre which is artistically, not realistically motivated. If artistic and realistic motivation coincide, well and good, but this is less and less likely to happen due to "insatiability of form." At any rate critics must ignore realistic motivation and give all their attention to the artistry of the play. This is the true "content" of the play.

In *Nowe formy w malarstwie* he writes: "The form of the work of art is its only essential content – it does not contain a separate form and content; together they form an absolute whole."⁷⁶ Like the Formalists, Witkacy rejects the form/content division, but cannot entirely escape it, so firmly ingrained is the terminology. In "O artystycznej grze aktora" he writes: "In the sphere of art everything is composed of two elements: form and content, neither of which can be eliminated."⁷⁷ Here he maintains that content in the traditional sense (i.e. as opposed to "form") be used only as a pretext for form. Also, in "Blizsze wyjaśnienia w kwestii Czystej Formy na scenie," he writes that when theorising, the artistic process must be split in two: purely formal and life-related ("życiowe"), while in fact no such division exists.⁷⁸ It is made only for the sake of describing the phenomenon. There is little doubt, however, that in Witkacy's scheme of things, the essentially artistic thing about art is not the materials used, in whose choice he allows complete freedom even if this results in works which bear no resemblance to reality, but the sensation created by their construction. "Form, understood as construction, as the direct expression of the feeling of unity, is a goal in itself, and not a means to express any feelings..."⁷⁹ As in Russian Formalist thinking, the "raw materials" (sounds, images, ideas, "artistically insignificant life-related contents"⁸⁰) should not be seen as a counterpart of

MIT, 1971, pp. 38-46, (38).

⁷⁴ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 78, (1920).

⁷⁵ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 286, (1924).

⁷⁶ Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, *Nowe formy w malarstwie i wynikające stąd nieporozumienia*, Skierniewice, 1992, p. 14. Originally published 1919.

⁷⁷ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 176, (1927).

⁷⁸ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 86, (1921).

⁷⁹ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 96, (1921).

⁸⁰ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 142, (1923).

form.⁸¹ Form has no complement. Witkacy, like the Russian Formalists, very firmly rejects the idea of form being a decoration added to content.

Witkacy shares with Russian Formalism a concern with scientifically defining the work of art, or at least approaching it objectively, with a clear concept of what it is one is examining. "Every critic would have to give his credo: what is Art for him, what concepts does he intend to employ, and how does he define those concepts."⁸² He does not deny that a clever well-educated art critic may write an interesting review of a play without dealing with its essential form. In "O Czystej Formie," a summary of his theories which appeared in 1932, Witkacy assumes that what is essential in art is form. An object may be naturally beautiful or formally beautiful or both. When formal beauty outweighs natural beauty, we have a work of art. Formal beauty "consists only of the order itself, the form, in other words of the constructedness ["konstruktywność"] of the object or phenomenon."⁸³ Although this differs somewhat from Russian Formalist attempts to define art (see chapter 1) the emphasis in both cases is on the formal organisation of the work. Witkacy even writes of the possibility of discovering a grammar of literature. "Formulating the grammatical principles so fundamental to the sphere of literature that the construction of sentences as formal partial wholes ["jako całości formalnych częściowych"] without their observance would be impossible, would be an extremely interesting problem for the theorist of poetry. I dare say that such laws exist."⁸⁴

Like the Formalists, Witkacy wanted a criticism which would limit itself to the essential artistry of art, without digressions (however interesting or witty) into subjects outside the work of art: "If one is speaking of art one should speak of the formal construction, and not about ideas, feelings, social changes or the history of mankind."⁸⁵ Pure Form, in short, is like Russian Formalism in that it is a text-centred approach to literary/theatrical criticism. Witkacy, however, admits that an objective criticism is impossible. The best a critic can do is "conceptually justify" the subjective impression made on him or her by the formal values of the work.⁸⁶ But critics, instead prefer "those things which give them an opportunity to show of their familiarity with history, the social sciences, 'the human psyche' and life in general, because of Form (Pure Form in the sense of construction) they know

⁸¹ Boris Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method'," Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 112-113.

⁸² Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 146, (1923).

⁸³ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 39, (1932).

⁸⁴ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 154, (1923).

⁸⁵ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 108, (1921).

⁸⁶ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 164, (1923).

nothing and could say nothing about it.’⁸⁷

In the Russian Formalist view the literary use of language differs from the communicative in that it draws attention to itself more so than to the things it stands for. Words are used for their own sake. They do not refer directly to concepts from the real world.⁸⁸ Far more important than the ideas which lie behind words is the form they take. In “Bliższe wyjaśnienia” Witkacy describes how words lose their life-related meaning through their artistic use, or as a Formalist might put it, the communicative function of a word gives way to its artistic function.⁸⁹ The word (or action, in theatre) loses its real-life link with what it stands for, and instead becomes an element in a formally beautiful whole. The emphasis on the word or action in itself can be seen in Witkacy’s instructions to actors. Far from using Stanislavsky’s method to “become” the role they are playing, they should forget about real life and pay no attention to what the real life consequences of the actions their characters perform would be.⁹⁰ Throughout Witkacy’s writings, the life-related contents of words – and all other elements in a work of art – is subordinated to the formal structure created by their interaction.

Two further similarities may be noted. Witkacy rejects the notion that new forms arise in order to convey new content. He doubts we can compose sentences which will express new feelings, unknown to our forefathers. All we can do is express the metaphysical feeling in different ways.⁹¹ Elsewhere he cautions against speaking of “new elements” in theatre, claiming this makes as much sense as talking of new colours in painting.⁹² As far as he is concerned the essence of true art is to impart the metaphysical feeling of “unity in multiplicity.” The materials used in the making of the formal composition which expresses this are incidental. What happens is that old forms become too familiar and no longer convey the metaphysical feeling. As a result, new forms are created, tending toward ever more deformation. As in the Formalist view, the search for fresh forms is the real engine of literary history: “The enrichment, however, in the sphere of elements of form itself must of necessity affect the inessential elements of artistic creation: objects, feelings, the meaning of sentences

⁸⁷ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 165, (1923).

⁸⁸ In “What is Poetry?” Jakobson writes that in poetic language “the word is felt as a word and not a mere representation of the object being named or an outburst of emotion.” Roman Jakobson, “What is Poetry?” trans. Michael Heim, in *Language in Literature*, Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy, eds., Cambridge Mass. - London, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 368-378, (378). Originally a lecture published as “Co je poesie?” in *Volné smeřy*, no. 30, 1933-34, pp. 229-239.

⁸⁹ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 105, (1921).

⁹⁰ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 115, (1921).

⁹¹ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 99, (1921).

⁹² Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 136, (1923).

and actions.”⁹³ It should be noted, however, that Witkacy does not favour deformation for the sake of deformation, or programmatic nonsense (“programowy bezsens”).⁹⁴ A Shakespeare could present a work of art with a minimum of deformation. Thus, deformation, as Schmidt says, is not to be equated with Shklovsky’s defamiliarisation. In Witkacy’s example of rejoicing at the death of a child, this is not a defamiliarisation of, say, “death” or “sorrow,” but an integral part of the formal whole.⁹⁵

Connected to this is the concept of deviating from a norm. Put simply, Russian Formalism places the artistic emphasis on diverging from patterns given either by colloquial speech, literary tradition, the artist him or herself or by all three. In Witkacy’s theory of Pure Form deviation is not important in itself, but (in the sense of breaking with literary or artistic tradition) has been forced upon modern artists due to the “insatiability of form.” He writes: “we must admit that individual style arises at the cost of certain deviations from laws obtaining at the given time.”⁹⁶

To sum up, both Witkacy and the Russian Formalists wanted literature to be judged on its own terms, not from the point of view of history, psychology, truth or even beauty, since a beautiful composition may arise from individually ugly elements. The only significant content of art is its form. All other elements (what Witkacy called “treści życiowe”) are simply raw materials to be organised into a formal whole. By implication, in Witkacy’s case, and more explicitly in that of Russian Formalism, it is the organisation which is the proper subject of literary study, and not any moral or message conveyed by the work of art.⁹⁷ Art evolves by replacing forms which have become too familiar, not by adapting to new circumstances in the non-artistic environment. In both conceptions of literature the importance of the object which the word represents is played down. Formalists at times implied that it is not important at all, while Witkacy says it is no more important than any other qualities which the word possesses.⁹⁸ Both theories posit an approach to art which does not simply try to decode poetry or drama, but examines how they work.

There is one more similarity of particular relevance to Schulz. This is Witkacy’s notion of a

⁹³ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, pp. 84-5, (1921).

⁹⁴ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 80, (1920).

⁹⁵ Anna Schmidt, *Form und Deformation*, p. 90.

⁹⁶ *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, p. 125, (1923).

⁹⁷ “The significant content of that part of the picture, then, is for us the relationship of those forms and colours to each other, and their relationship to the entirety of the picture enclosed in the frame,” Witkacy, *Czysta forma w teatrze*, p. 64, (1920).

⁹⁸ Over time, Russian Formalism began to value semantics as much as pure sound (Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, pp. 185-6). This is in contrast with Shklovsky’s bold statement in “Art as Technique”: “Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important” (“Art as Technique,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 5-24, (12)).

time now past when every word conveyed the sense of “unity in multiplicity,” that is, when the sensation of Pure Form inherent in everything had not yet been worn smooth by overuse. An early essay by Shklovsky contains a similar glance backward to ancient times when word and thing were united. Witkacy, Shklovsky and Schulz seem to share a nostalgia for a time when creating art must have been effortless.

Both Witkacy and Shklovsky, paradoxically, see avant-garde art not so much as a way forward, but as a return to an ideal past.⁹⁹ In “The Resurrection of the Word,” Shklovsky writes:

The most ancient poetic creation of man was the creation of words. Now words are dead, and language is like a graveyard, but an image was once alive in the newly-born word... And often enough, when you get through to the image which is now lost and effaced, but once embedded at the basis of the word, then you are struck by its beauty – by a beauty which existed once and is now gone.¹⁰⁰

Shklovsky goes on to describe how we try to revitalise words by adding epithets: “my love” becomes “my true love,” which in turn becomes over-familiar – “true” being used whether the love is true or not. The way forward, to revitalising words, is shown by Futurists. The artist “has broken it [the word] down and mangled it up.”¹⁰¹ In creating this incomprehensible language the Futurists are actually behaving like many artistic movements before them. “The religious poetry of almost all peoples is written in just such a semi-comprehensible language.”¹⁰² The history of art is a series of attempts to return to the originally perceived beauty of the word.

Witkacy says of the primitive (Shklovsky uses the word “dikiy” (rendered as “savage” in Bann and Bowlt, p. 46); Witkacy uses “dziki” (“wild person”)) that he or she was closer to perception of Pure Form. “For the savage who first cut a circle or other simple figure into the bark of a tree with something sharp and smeared it with blood or the juice of berries, it was an expression of the highest beauty, a symbol created not by nature but by himself, of the unity in multiplicity of his own existence and the world around him.”¹⁰³ “Simple figures” are no longer enough to achieve this effect; nor are more complex figures, such as realistic portraits of people. For Witkacy, as discussed above, nothing

⁹⁹ The identification of innovation with regress in Schulz has been observed by Zdzisław Hryhorowicz, “Urmuz i Schulz: Czyli o nowy wzorzec literackości,” *Studia Romanica Posnaniensia*, vol. 18, Poznań, 1993, pp. 3-10, (7).

¹⁰⁰ Viktor Shklovsky, “The Resurrection of the Word,” trans. Richard Sherwood, in Stephen Bann and John E. Bowlt, eds., *Russian Formalism: A collection of articles and texts in translation*, Twentieth Century Studies, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1973, pp. 41-47, (41).

¹⁰¹ Shklovsky, “The Resurrection of the Word,” Bann and Bowlt, *Russian Formalism*, p. 46.

¹⁰² Shklovsky, “The Resurrection of the Word,” Bann and Bowlt, *Russian Formalism*, p. 47.

¹⁰³ Witkacy, *Nowe formy w malarstwie*, p. 22.

less than extreme deformation (“breaking down and mangling up”), as practised by Picasso in art is enough to effect Pure Form. The attainment of Pure Form was a simpler matter for “savages” than for modern man, and indeed Witkacy was not optimistic about the chances for the further development of human culture or civilisation. He was a catastrophist, seeing the submergence of culture by mass stupefaction as inevitable (see, for example, “Upadek Sztuki,” in *Nowe formy w malarstwie*). Both Witkacy and Shklovsky see avant-garde art (theatre of Pure Form and Futurism respectively) as a means to achieve a perception (Witkacy’s metaphysical unease, Shklovsky’s of the word-as-word) which was once immediately available to all.

The relationship between the “original” word and poetry and myth in Schulz’s prose has been the subject of much comment.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps the most concise statement of Schulz’s position is his own “Mityzacja rzeczywistości,” an excerpt of which will illustrate the similarities with Shklovsky’s early essay:

Zapominamy o tym, operując potocznym słowem, że są to fragmenty dawnych i wiecznych historyj, że budujemy, jak barbarzyńcy, nasze domy z ułamków rzeźb i posągów bogów.... Poezja... przywraca słowom ich miejsce, łączy je według dawnych znaczeń. U poety słowo opamiętuje się niejako na swój sens istotny, rozkwita i rozwija się spontanicznie według praw własnych, odzyskuje swą integralność (384-385) (We forget, when using the colloquial word, that they are pieces of ancient and eternal stories, that we are building, like barbarians, our houses from the fragments of sculptures and statues of the Gods.... Poetry... returns to words their place, connects them according to their old meanings. In the hands of the poet, the word remembers as it were its essential sense, it blossoms and develops spontaneously according to its own laws, it regains its integrality)

It has also been noted that Schulz is concerned with the poetic word/colloquial word opposition, rather than a poetry/prose opposition.¹⁰⁵ This is common to Formalism, which uses “poetry” not in the narrow sense of verse, but in the broader sense of poetic literature.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Speina, *Bankructwo realności*, pp. 86-91; Czesław Karkowski, “System kultury Brunona Schulza,” in Kazimiera Czapłowa, ed., *Studia o prozie Brunona Schulza*, Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach, 115, Katowice, 1976, pp. 31-47; Jarzębski, Introduction to *Opowiadania*, chapter 3; Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, pp. 225-232.

¹⁰⁵ Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, pp. 225-229. Bolecki, in turn, refuses to divide Schulz’s prose into “poetic” and “prosaic” parts, maintaining that the contrast between “realistic” and “metaphorical” passages is a principle of Schulz’s poetics – one cannot be divided from the other (pp. 271-274).

¹⁰⁶ Richard Sherwood, “Viktor Shklovsky and the development of early Formalist Theory on Prose

Parody

*“Bruno Schulz’s literary work fulfils S. I. Witkiewicz’s theoretical postulates perfectly: deformation, the arrangement of elements according to artistic logic and as a goal the achievement of the impression of the Strangeness of Existence. Excellent!”*¹⁰⁷

*“Anything goes here, everything is fictitious, dazzling us with flourishes and twirls of images from a malignant fever, a complex style and an artificial tendency towards originality, like some of I. Witkiewicz’s canvases.”*¹⁰⁸

*“...I see no traces of Witkacy in his work”*¹⁰⁹

Strictly speaking, if we are to look for a parody of Russian Formalism in Schulz’s writings, we should start looking in his criticism, since most definitions of parody require that the style of the “target” text be incorporated into the body of the parodic text. Lehman’s definition of parody is “such literary products that formally imitate in toto or in part a known text, or secondarily appearances, manners and customs, events and persons.”¹¹⁰ Margaret Rose defines parody as “the critical refunctioning of preformed literary material with comic effect...” while Gilbert Highet says it is “imitation which, through distortion and exaggeration, evokes amusement, derision, and sometimes scorn.”¹¹¹ Cuddon’s dictionary of literary terms gives a slightly wider definition: “The imitative use of the words, style, attitude, tone *and ideas* of an author in such a way as to make them ridiculous.”¹¹² Even here, though, the use of “and” rather than “or” narrows the focus to the literary style – of an individual at that – rather than the ideas of a group. We might expect, then, that a parody of Russian Formalism would

Literature”, Bann and Bowlt, *Russian Formalism*, pp. 26-40, (28-29).

¹⁰⁷ Leon Piwiński, Review of *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą*, *Rocznik Literacki* 1937, 1938, p. 61.

¹⁰⁸ Stanisław Baczyński, “Powieść polska w r. 1934,” *Polonista*, 1935, no. 4, pp. 173-176, (175).

¹⁰⁹ Witold Gombrowicz, “On Bruno Schulz,” trans. Lillian Vallee, *New York Review of Books*, 1989, vol. 36, no. 6, pp. 5-7, (7). An excerpt from his diary, 1961-66.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Joseph A. Dane, *Parody: Critical Concepts Versus Literary Practices, Aristophanes to Sterne*, Norman and London, University of Oklahoma Press, 1988, p. 4.

¹¹¹ Margaret A. Rose, *Parody//Meta-fiction: An Analysis of Parody as a Critical Mirror to the Writing and Reception of Fiction*, London, Croon Helm, 1979, p. 35; Gilbert Highet, *The Anatomy of Satire*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press; London, Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 69.

¹¹² *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 4th edn., Oxford, Blackwell, 1998, J. A. Cuddon, revised by C. E. Preston, p. 640, my italics.

take the form of a mock study of a literary work, rather than a literary work itself since key Russian Formalist texts are commentaries on literary works.

However, we would seek parodies of Russian Formalism in Schulz's non-literary writings in vain. Jarzębski asserts that Schulz's reviews and criticism allows us to count him a member of the subjective, personal impression school of literary criticism. He does not give much attention to the structure of works, dealing rather with the existential situation of the heroes and the depiction of their psyche.¹¹³ So, for example, a review of Kuncewiczowa's *Cudzoziemka* ends with the words: "Kuncewiczowa's mastery of form deserves a separate chapter to itself. The culminating points of this form are the incomparably beautiful musical transpositions. Here Kuncewiczowa reaches the heights of purest lyricism; the very essence of poetry."¹¹⁴ The separate chapter on form in her novel does not materialise. It must be said, in fact, that some of Schulz's reviews are fairly hastily written. While Bartosik credits him with a broad literary critical consciousness, and a flexible outlook capable of incorporating Freudianism with personalism and mythographism, she admits his criticism is of uneven quality.¹¹⁵ One group review of three novels gives a careful plot summary of the first two, but gives no such information about the third, saying only that it is not good.¹¹⁶ A good half of another review is given over to a plot summary.¹¹⁷ Schulz gave up writing reviews for *Wiadomości Literackie* in 1938, explaining to a friend that it had ceased to be enjoyable.¹¹⁸

And yet I propose to show that Schulz – knowingly or not – wrote something that can be called a parody of Russian Formalism. What the short stories parody is the kind of literary product looked upon with favour by Russian Formalism, and, in this case, by Witkacy. The immediate objection to this is that Russian Formalism is a theory which can be applied to *any* literary work. In fact, by making literariness the proper study of literary criticism, by making the device the hero of literary criticism, Formalism tries to avoid precisely this trap – of being associated with any particular type of literature. Nevertheless, Formalism is frequently associated with modern art and in Russia became a general term of abuse, not so much for a type of critic, as for a type of art.¹¹⁹ Schulz himself,

¹¹³ Jerzy Jarzębski, *Opowiadania*, Bruno Schulz, Introduction, p. xxvi.

¹¹⁴ Schulz, "Nowa książka Kuncewiczowej," *Proza*, Cracow, 1964, pp. 451-456, (456).

¹¹⁵ Marta Bartosik, *Bruno Schulz jako krytyk*, Cracow, 2000, pp. 78, 124-125.

¹¹⁶ Schulz, "Trzy powieści tłumaczone," *Proza*, Cracow, 1964, pp. 529-533.

¹¹⁷ Schulz, "Otawa Giona," *Proza*, Cracow, 1964, pp. 527-529.

¹¹⁸ Schulz, *Księga listów*, p. 101.

¹¹⁹ Carol Any, *Boris Eichenbaum: Voices of a Russian Formalist*, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 136.

according to Sandauer, was written off as a "Formalist" after the war.¹²⁰ It is not just its opponents who made the connection with modern art. Victor Erlich writes: "...it could be plausibly argued that the early Formalist's concern with the verbal texture of poetry owed some of its single-mindedness to the non-objective tendency of modern art."¹²¹ It may be unfair to say that Formalism was geared to the needs of, say, Futurism, but a parodist does not have to be as even-handed in his treatment of his or her subject as a critic or historian. Strictly speaking, for example, defamiliarisation does not mean grotesquely deforming the material presented. In Shklovsky's understanding it is present almost everywhere form is found.¹²² But the parodist is not obliged to speak strictly. On the contrary, the target's style and ideas are distorted and exaggerated. An important role in this distortion is played by the deliberate over-simplification of concepts and the ignoring of subtleties.

For this reason, it will be seen that the following attempt at constructing the "ideal Russian Formalist" text draws most heavily on Shklovsky's early writings, in particular "Art as Technique" and "Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*: Stylistic Commentary." Claims such as Shklovsky's that literature's content is "the sum of its stylistic devices" or Brik's to the effect that *Eugene Onegin* would have been written even if Pushkin had never been born provide the parodist with much to attack.¹²³ The adaptations made by later Formalists to deal with the weaknesses of this approach to literary study will not interest a parodist, who will naturally be attracted to the more extreme position statements, the earlier manifesto-style statements of, in particular, Shklovsky. "Art as Technique" is an easier and perhaps more valid target than the more measured Jakobson/Tynyanov theses of 1928, which take into account the influence of non-literary series on literary series.¹²⁴

This discussion of parody in Schulz will begin with an attempt to construct a parodist's idea of the "ideal Russian Formalist text." It is the style of this hypothetical construction that the stories appear to parody, although the ideas, which also appear in parodic form, are by no means theoretical reconstructions of Russian Formalist positions. In terms of style, the "ideal Russian Formalist text"

¹²⁰ Artur Sandauer, "Wojna o Schulza," *Współczesność*, 1965, no. 5, p. 3.

¹²¹ Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, p. 276.

¹²² Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 18.

¹²³ Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher, Illinois, Dalkey Archive Press, 1990, p. 190, (first published in 1925, this translation is based on the Moscow edition of 1929); Osip Brik, "The So-Called 'Formal Method'," trans. Richard Sherwood, *Screen*, 1971/2, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 42-44, (43). Translation originally appeared in *Form*, no. 10, October, 1969.

¹²⁴ Anatoly Liberman writes: "When admirers of the Formalists look for particularly convincing examples of their analysis, they usually quote Jakobson, Tynyanov, and Eikhenbaum. When their opponents need easily refutable statements, they find them in Shklovsky," in "Introduction: Trubetzkoy as a Literary Scholar," N. S. Trubetzkoy, *Writings on Literature, Theory and History of*

should first and foremost be difficult and unfamiliar because, as Shklovsky writes: “The technique of art is to make objects ‘unfamiliar’, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception...”¹²⁵ The parodist will understand this literally, ignoring the quotation marks around “unfamiliar.” A hypothetical “Russian Formalist” literary text will be hard to make sense of. In a naïve understanding of the concepts of defamiliarisation and making difficult, such as a parodist will adopt, sentences might, for example, be long and complex, words recondite and perhaps even foreign – the ultimate in language “made difficult.” Simple direct statements are not “artistic” enough as they tend toward the communicative rather than the aesthetic function. The perfect “Russian Formalist writer,” a critic will say, should be wilfully obscure, with a dense, impenetrable prose style. He or she will favour the crooked path over the straight path.

Formalism sought to set literary study free from other disciplines, like history, philosophy, sociology, and psychology. It is a small step for the parodist to set literature itself free from these considerations. “*The object is not important*,” Shklovsky wrote.¹²⁶ Whether the events on the printed page concern the Napoleonic wars or the arrival in a house of a puppy, the same care must be taken by the writer to make them difficult to read. Any and all objects deserve the same type of linguistic treatment, since in literature the “how” is important, not the “what.”¹²⁷ This gives the author free reign to write about the vulgar, the trivial and the obscene if he or she so desires, as long as the object is presented in a strange and unfathomable way. Jakobson declared that: “the issue of poetic subject matter has no validity today.”¹²⁸ A writer married to more traditional ideas of what is proper and fitting material for literature, provoked by this kind of statement and wanting to attack it, would be likely to use distasteful material, perhaps stung also by Shklovsky’s repeated references to euphemism and erotic imagery in “Art as Technique,” or by Jakobson’s references to obscenities.¹²⁹ It follows also, the critic will say, that since the object is not important and anything can serve as material because it is the writer’s technique that matters, there need be no distinction within the text between weighty subject matter and incidental detail. The parodist will go a step further and insist that there

Literature, vol. 72, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1990, pp. xi-xlvi, (xxxi).

¹²⁵ “Art as Technique,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 12.

¹²⁶ “Art as Technique,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 12.

¹²⁷ See, for example, Boris Eichenbaum, “How Gogol’s ‘Overcoat’ is made,” trans. R. A. Maguire, in Robert A. Maguire, ed., *Gogol from the Twentieth Century: Eleven Essays*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1974, pp. 269-291.

¹²⁸ Jakobson, “What is Poetry?” p. 369.

¹²⁹ “Art as Technique,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 18-21; Jakobson, “On Realism in Art,” in Matejka and Pomorska, *Readings in Russian Poetics*, p. 40.

actually *be* no distinction. Insignificant incidents in the course of events will receive as much as or more attention than momentous ones. The death of a central character will not elicit much concern, while walking out of a cinema at night may occupy several pages of text.

Shklovsky speaks of slowing down action and pulling things out of proportion by giving detailed descriptions of trivial incidents.¹³⁰ These are devices used in *Tristram Shandy*, described by Shklovsky in an easily misunderstood turn of phrase as “the most typical novel in world literature.”¹³¹ For the parodist, Shklovsky’s elevation of *Tristram Shandy* to such status provides much ammunition. The “ideal Russian Formalist novel” should be characterised by those aspects of *Tristram Shandy* that Shklovsky admired. In the hands of a parodist, this means it should be technically adventurous, more concerned with manipulating language than representing reality (to paraphrase Victor Erlich, a decidedly sympathetic commentator).¹³² A “Russian Formalist” novel is more concerned with linguistic dexterity and the craft of writing than conveying any important truths. It will be technically well executed rather than profound or meaningful. A parody will gratuitously neglect meaning in favour of style. When Shklovsky analyses Tolstoy’s defamiliarisation of flogging or private property he does not discuss the social or ideological implications in any great detail, though he does briefly refer to Tolstoy’s pricking of the conscience.¹³³ He is interested only in how it is done.¹³⁴ The “message” or “moral” is irrelevant to him; only the technique of its delivery is important. It does not follow from this that Russian Formalism favours literature which is asocial, amoral or divorced from reality, but the parodist will distort the facts of the matter and remove his work from contact with a recognisable reality. The Russian Formalist parody will expound no great truths, expose no great lies, but consist only of “devices.”

The best kind of device is the “bared” device, one with no motivation.¹³⁵ Rather than masking its workings, literature should bare all, like *Don Quixote* with its “deliberately exposed structure.”¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Viktor Shklovsky, “Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*: Stylistic Commentary,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 27-57, esp. pp. 32-34.

¹³¹ Shklovsky, “Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 57. “What he means is that it is the most plotted, the least ‘storied’ of any major novel,” from the editors’ introduction, p. 26.

¹³² Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, p. 190.

¹³³ “Art as Technique,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 13-15.

¹³⁴ Mary A. Nicholas claims that Shklovsky is in fact interested in the “why” as well as the “how” of literature, but that he concentrates on the literary means in order to separate himself from previous literary criticism. “Formalist Theory Revisited: On Šklovskij ‘on Pil’njak’,” *Slavic and East European Journal*, 1992, no. 1, pp. 68-83, (69-70).

¹³⁵ See Boris Tomashevsky, “Thematics,” in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 62-95: “Thus the so-called ‘laying bare’ of a device (its use without the motivation which traditionally

Traditionally, new motifs are introduced into a text by means of cause and effect: Hamlet seeks revenge because the ghost of his father tells him he was murdered. But we can expect a Formalist parody to dispense with such linking material, instead presenting each dazzling display of linguistic skill “as is,” with no logical relationship to its neighbouring text. Or it might replace carefully thought out motivation with patently absurd pretexts. In this way it will approach Shklovsky’s ideal, *Tristram Shandy*, in which “the artistic form is presented simply as such, without any kind of motivation.”¹³⁷

The “ideal Russian Formalist text” need not worry about originality, for, as Shklovsky wrote, “images change little; from century to century, from nation to nation, from poet to poet, they flow on without changing. Images belong to no one: they are ‘the lord’s’.”¹³⁸ Jakobson, as we have seen, goes further. Not only are images “the lord’s”; artistic devices in general are common property: “Streetcar conversations are full of jokes based on the very figures found in the most subtle lyric poetry.”¹³⁹ Literary progression is seen as the reshuffling of ancient motifs. Forms change not to accommodate new content – there is no new content – but only because we have grown over-familiar with old forms. From time to time the prevailing conventions must be challenged and changed as we grow tired of them. “Lower” forms may be elevated to the dominant position, leading to the “canonisation of the junior branch.”¹⁴⁰ For example, Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* uses the conventions of a minor genre, that of the detective story. The parodist will seize on this and produce a work with strong elements of “lower” or “genre” fiction, heartened, no doubt, by the serious attention paid by Eichenbaum to O. Henry’s popular, sentimental “twist” stories of New York shop girls. He or she will recycle old stories and tales, making no attempt to disguise them or pass them off as new. In fact, the more brazen the borrowing – i.e. the barer the device – the better. The familiarity of the re-used convention should, if the parody is to work, be immediately obvious.

Pomorska writes: “Tynjanov rejects the notion of *characters* in literature as a naïve ontology.”¹⁴¹ A certain downgrading of the importance of the human character is also apparent in Shklovsky’s discussion of Le Sage’s *Gil Blas*. According to Shklovsky, critics who have seen in Gil

accompanies it) is an indication of the literariness of the literary work...” p. 84.

¹³⁶ Eichenbaum, “The Theory of the ‘Formal Method’,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 121.

¹³⁷ Shklovsky, “Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 27-57.

¹³⁸ Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 7.

¹³⁹ Jakobson, “What is Poetry?” *Language in Literature*, p. 369.

¹⁴⁰ Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, p. 260.

¹⁴¹ Krystyna Pomorska, *Russian Formalist Theory and its Poetic Ambiance*, Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 82, The Hague, Mouton, 1968, p. 22.

Blas's spinelessness the implication that he stands for everyman, are mistaken: "Gil Blas is not a human being at all. He is a *thread*, a tedious thread, by means of which all of the episodes of the novel are woven together."¹⁴² A critical approach which prioritises the device is bound to push such concerns as psychology, history and philosophy into the background. In Formalism, it is the device, not the hero of the novel, that is the hero of criticism. Consequently the parodist will be tempted to present us with one-dimensional, paper-thin characters, in order to emphasise that it is this "device" that is important, not the characters that people the pages of the novel. The less plausible characters are the better, as this serves to "bare the device." We may expect to find in the "ideal Russian Formalist novel" characters who consist of little more than collections of tics, habits and traits, thrown together in such a way as to clearly display the artist's hand in their make-up. A contemporary critic, Ignacy Fik, writes that in the avant-garde Polish literature of the day, man is interpreted as the sum of certain psychological phenomenon. "Man in this sense consists of gestures, grimaces of the mouth, foaming with saliva, stupefying smells, modish slogans, animal instincts, mystical flights of fancy, low blows and stale complexes."¹⁴³

Witkacy helpfully provides critics and parodists with a description of what "Pure Form" might look like, which is very close to self-parody:

A glass falls from the table. Everyone throws themselves on their knees and weeps. The old man changes from a mild person into an enraged *pochroń* and murders a little girl who has just crawled in from the left side. At this a handsome young man runs in and thanks the old man for the murder, while the figures in red sing and dance. After this the young man cries over the body of the little girl and says excessively cheerful things, at which the old man again changes into a good kindly person and laughs in the corner, while saying lofty and lucid sentences.¹⁴⁴

Precisely because Witkacy protested strongly against associating Pure Form with "programmatic nonsense" the parodist will strive for "programmatic nonsense." Pure Form, Witkacy maintains, is not about deformation simply for the sake of deformation. But a parodist will perversely take the opposite meaning from his words, arguing that if Pure Form were not very much about "programmatic nonsense," there would be no need for Witkacy to keep saying it was not.

¹⁴² Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, p. 66.

¹⁴³ Ignacy Fik, "Literatury choromaniaków," reprinted in Ignacy Fik, *Wybór pism krytycznych*, ed., Andrzej Chruszczyński, 2nd edn., Warsaw, 1961, pp. 125-134, (129). Originally published in *Tygodnik Artystów*, 1935, no. 15. It is clear from the context that Fik includes Schulz among offenders in this respect.

¹⁴⁴ Witkacy, *Czysta Forma w teatrze*, pp. 80-81, (1920). "Pochroń" is a neologism of Witkacy's. Anna Schmidt translates it as "Bewahrer" (from "bewahren," "to protect"). "Ochrona" means protection in

Similarly, the parodist of Pure Form will note Witkacy's abhorrence of "life-related" content, and therefore strive to remove all traces of it from the text.

For the purposes of parody, with the distortion, exaggeration, deliberate over-simplification and wilful misunderstanding that this implies a picture of a hypothetical "Russian Formalist" novel may be constructed. Schulz's parody is parody at one remove: Russian Formalism consciously or not posits a certain ideal in literature. Schulz (consciously or not) parodies that ideal. The ideal "Russian Formalist novel" will be self-contained, detached from and unconcerned with external reality. It will be a law unto itself, telling the reader nothing of the real world and much of its own world. Its hero will be the device, not any realistic, fully-rounded character. It will eagerly display its own workings. It should be a virtuoso linguistic display, dazzling the reader with its skill but not enlightening him or her with any insights into the workings of the world. It will recycle well-known artistic devices, recombining them in new and far-fetched ways and making liberal use of low-brow literary genres. The telling of a story is secondary to digressions and extended descriptions of apparently incidental details. The parodist will insist that the prose be difficult to read. The communicative function of language will be relegated to a distant second by the aesthetic function. Economy of effort is to be avoided, in accordance with the precepts of Shklovsky's "Art as Technique."¹⁴⁵ It is far more important that the reader experience the word as an object in its own right, than as a token for a real-life thing. We may expect opaque, impenetrable passages of prose which do not actually convey much information. What information is conveyed must be defamiliarised. The parodist of defamiliarisation will never call a spade a spade.

Schulz does all of the above. Finding examples is not difficult and contemporary reviewers and critics have not been slow to point out, for example, that characters in Schulz's fiction are implausible. Emil Breiter describes people in Schulz as waxwork dummies in the great theatre of the world;¹⁴⁶ Piotr Madejski, Marian Promiński and Michał Chmielowiec doubt that behind Schulz's stories there stands any truth or deeper meaning;¹⁴⁷ Eugenia Krassowska even points to Schulz's baring of the device, writing that he does not try to create an illusion of objectivity, instead constructing his reality in full view of the reader. Hence, she says, the sense of it all must be sought

Polish. Anna Schmidt, *Form und Deformation*, p. 201.

¹⁴⁵ "Art as Technique," Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁴⁶ Emil Breiter, "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą Schulza," *Wiadomości Literackie*, 1938, no. 23, p. 4.

¹⁴⁷ Piotr Madejski, "Słowo i byt w prozie Bruno Schulza," *Twórczość*, 1982, no. 7, pp. 140-143, (140); Marian Promiński, Review of *Sanatorium pod klepsydrą*, *Sygnaty*, 1938, no. 40, p. 5; Michał

within the prose, not, as in the realistic novel, within the world at large.¹⁴⁸ Gombrowicz writes: "As an artist he was completely fixed in the very material of his work, in his own game and internal arrangements; when he wrote a story he had no other law beyond the immanent law of the unfolding of form."¹⁴⁹ Korabiowski writes that Schulz creates a world according to his own laws, not those of the real world, while Broncel disapproves of the lack of a point of contact with between *Sklepy cynamonowe* and important affairs: in discussing Schulz one must cut oneself off from this world.¹⁵⁰

The example I will look at briefly is defamiliarisation, understood simply as presenting an object in such a way as to make its identification difficult. It will be remembered that Shklovsky sees defamiliarisation as an effect of all artistic devices, but in "Art as Technique" the focus narrows to making the identification of the object difficult. For the parodist, the more difficult the identification, the better. Examples of this kind of excessive defamiliarisation in Schulz include the sound of wind in the chimney, described in "Nawiedzenie" at some length as an argument between Father and God. The reader is kept guessing at what is being defamiliarised until the very end of the description, when the normal order of comparison ("the wind sounded like voices") is reversed: "Czasami głosy przycichały i zżymały się z cicha, jak gaworzenie wiatru w nocnym kominie..." (17) ("Sometimes the voices calmed down and flared up quietly, like the babble of wind in a chimney at night...") The tailor's dummy in "Manekiny" is called a "silent, motionless lady" ("mlecząca, nieruchoma pani" (30)) to lead us away from its true identity and hinder the reader in his attempts to make sense of the scene. Half of "Pan" consists of a defamiliarisation of a tramp going to the toilet in a garden. Here Schulz appears to be playing with the Formalist idea that the "how," not the "what" of literature is all that matters: as far as subject matter is concerned, anything is permissible, even a tramp going to the toilet. The same is true of "Pan Karol" which is a description of a man's morning routine made difficult by convoluted metaphor and inexplicable images of an unknown and unformulated future growing up from the depths of Karol's body like a plant into an unknown dimension. Defamiliarisation in the first paragraph of "Wiosna," chapter 18, is so excessive that it is difficult to tell what is being described. Broadly speaking, "night" is defamiliarised, but what specific aspects of night are being depicted is not such an easy question to answer. The following excerpt gives an idea of the nature of this lengthy

Chmielowiec, "Zdarzenia bezdomne," *Kultura*, 1938, no. 13, p. 5.

¹⁴⁸ Eugenia Krassowska, "O twórczości Brunona Schulza," *Sygnaty*, 1938, no. 51, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ Witold Gombrowicz, "On Bruno Schulz," p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ Wilhelm Korabiowski in: "Spóźniona recenzja: Jeszcze o *Sklepiach cynamonowych* Schulza," *Nowe Czasy*, 1935, no. 23, p. 4; Zdzisław Broncel, "Literatury maligny: O *Sklepiach cynamonowych*

passage: "...ale z tej bladej nocy bez końca wciąż nowa noc się wyprzestrzenia, coraz bledsza i bardziej bezcielesna..." (174) ("...but from that pale, endless night, a new night constantly spreads out, ever paler and less corporeal...") This linguistic extravagance is entirely characteristic of Schulz. The beginning of "Jesień" gives a description of that time of year when summer gives way to autumn. This is clear enough, but the description of the shame people feel, and the practice of rapping on the wall of summer in out of the way corners is exaggeratedly defamiliarising. Also in "Jesień" the coaches they travel in seems to break apart like crabs. In "Kometa," Father looks through his telescope and sees a lump of Swiss cheese. This is supposedly a star, brother of the moon, but it turns out to be a human brain – and a chloroformed one, with writing on it, at that. Chapter 33 in "Wiosna" treats spring, history, grammar, birds, and the stamp album in a highly concentrated dose of defamiliarisation. Defamiliarisation in Schulz's fiction is so acute, often bordering on fantasy, that one suspects the concept of making strange is being lampooned.

The Formalist prioritisation of form at the cost of content can be seen in Schulz's use of meaningless or self-contradictory word combinations, such as the following:

"Strychy, wystrychnięte ze strychów..." (90) ("Attics, cheated out of attics...")¹⁵¹

"zielenie zieleńsze od zdziwienia" (133) ("greens greener than astonishment")

"zielenie zbłąkane aż na kraniec zdziwienia" (137) ("greens strayed to the extremes of astonishment")

"Tam te wylupiaсте pałuby łopuchów wybałuszyły się..." (7) ("There the goggling hags of burdocks goggled...")

"Dni stały w kałużach i w żarach i miały podniebienie pełne ognia i pieprzu" (131) ("The days stood in puddles and flames and had a palate full of fire and pepper")

"zapach zimowych płomieni" (21) ("the smell of wintry flames")

That Schulz is engaging in word play, in manipulating language rather than representing reality, is shown by the difficulty of extracting meaning from the words. In Formalist terms, the poetic function

Brunona Schulza," *ABC literacko-artystyczne*, 1934, no. 6, p. 1.

¹⁵¹ Not that one cannot or should not try to read meaning into such words: Stefan Chwin interprets this line as an expression of the desire of the attics to be something else, though why this should involve cheating oneself, he does not say. Stefan Chwin, "Schulz a Leśmian," in Jarzębski, *Czytanie Schulza*, pp. 108-126, (114). Wróblewski describes it simply as "tautological repetition" in Piotr Wróblewski, "Stylistyczne wykorzystanie brzmieniowej warstwy leksyki (na przykładzie prozy Brunona Schulza)," in *Prace filologiczne*, vol. 33, Warsaw, 1986, pp. 433-440, (439).

has pushed the communicative function into the background. Wojciech Wyskiel writes of metaphor in Schulz that it is revealed as linguistic manipulation, carried on and judged by its own rules. There are utterances in Schulz which are not explained by their function in telling the story or the circumstances of the narration. The result is what Wyskiel calls “autonomous discourse” (“dyskurs samoistny”).¹⁵² Chapters 3 and 4 have looked at some of the characteristics of Schulz’s prose. The sections on vocabulary and euphony, in particular, examined the difficulty of referring some of Schulz’s words to a concrete meaning outside of the text, but it was also seen how the desire to achieve an aesthetic effect sometimes deformed the semantics of sentences. In addition, contemporary reviews of Schulz often drew attention to his apparent neglect of meaning for the sake of his prose style.

So far in this thesis the stylistic devices employed by Schulz have been examined, but the mere presence of defamiliarisation – even if bordering on fantasy – or form made difficult is not enough to allow us to call Schulz’s prose parody. Good parody is often very difficult to tell from the real thing.¹⁵³ This is a difficulty compounded by the fact that the “real thing” in this case is a hypothetical construction. Witkacy, for example, hailed *Sklepy cynamonowe* as a work bordering in parts on Pure Form without seeing (or at least without admitting) that it might be a parody of his own principles.¹⁵⁴ For parody to exist, the stylistic devices must be exaggerated or distorted in some way. The difficulty lies in trying to determine how far these features present in Schulz’s prose are distorted or exaggerated. Is, for example, Schulz’s undoubtedly defamiliarising description of Father using an enema parodied to the point of ridicule?

Schulz, however, does not just provide us with a parody of Russian Formalist stylistics; he also parodies their concepts and theories. This he does by means of “Traktat o manekinach,” which also serves to make us familiar with the model that is being parodied.

Father’s treatise is a parody of the ideas of Formalism as opposed to the style favoured by Formalism.¹⁵⁵ I understand Father’s second order creation as a metaphor for art, and in particular

¹⁵² Wojciech Wyskiel, *Inna twarz Hioba: Problematyka alienacyjna w dziele Brunona Schulza*, Cracow, 1980, pp. 93-94.

¹⁵³ This may explain why well-established writers sometimes appear to lapse into self-parody: “The thing that happens to senior novelists as they speed towards their threescore years and ten (and the rule applies to Iris Murdoch and Anthony Powell as much to Frederick Forsyth and Jack Higgins) is that they start becoming even more like themselves as writers than they were to begin with,” *Private Eye*, 12 Jan 2001, p. 25. Shklovsky writes that the canonised novel lends itself to self-parody and modification “perhaps more than any other genre” (*Theory of Prose*, p. 192).

¹⁵⁴ Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, “Twórczość literacka Brunona Schulza,” in *Bez kompromisu: Pisma krytyczne i publicystyczne*, ed., Janusz Degler, Warsaw, 1976, pp. 184-196, (184).

¹⁵⁵ See chapter 5, pp. 145-150, of Czesław Karkowski, *Kultura i krytyka inteligencji w twórczości*

literature: Father himself uses the metaphor of literature when he says that his creations will not be the “heroes of romances in many volumes” (“bohaterowie romansów w wielu tomach” (37)). The precepts which Father applies to his secondary creation are a distorted version of those that Formalism applies to literary creation. Formalist concern with form at the expense of content (although Eichenbaum officially rejected the division¹⁵⁶) is parodied by Father’s call for “less content, more form!” (“mniej treści, więcej formy!” (33)). This misunderstanding of the Formalist position on form and content shows the distortion typical of parody. Formalism does not in fact call for “less” content (since it is maintained that form and content are an indissoluble whole¹⁵⁷), but does pay less attention to what non-Formalists usually call content. Father proposes a second order creation (in my reading: literature), in which appearance and superficial effect is more important than substance. For Father the substance of his creations is not important. Although he glorifies matter, it is infinitely malleable and can be pressed into any form that is desired. Matter is “feminine in its plasticity” (“po kobiecemu plastyczna” (35)). Creativity is manifested in the shapes into which it is moulded:

Każdy może ją ugniatać, formować, każdemu jest posłuszna. Wszystkie organizacje materii są nietrwałe i luźne, łatwe do uwstecznienia i rozwiązania. Nie ma żadnego zła w redukcji życia do form innych i nowych. Zabójstwo nie jest grzechem. Jest ono nieraz koniecznym gwałtem wobec opornych i skostniałych form bytu, które przestały być zajmujące (35) (Anyone can knead it, shape it; it is obedient to everyone. All organisations of matter are impermanent and loose, easy to reverse and dissolve. There is no evil in the reduction of life to other, new forms. Murder is not a sin. It is an often necessary violence against refractory, ossified forms of being which have ceased to be diverting)

This is a grotesque version of the Russian Formalist concept of literary history, which has it that rather than adapting new forms to deal with new material, literature progresses by rebelling against old forms which have become over-familiar. Defamiliarisation is a never-ending process of shrugging off old forms which no longer refresh our perceptions and replacing them with unfamiliar forms which do. Even the language used by Father is close to that of Formalism, with its “controlled violence” and the “automatisation” of forms.¹⁵⁸ In the heartlessness of Father’s progression of forms there is something of Russian Formalism’s mechanical approach to literature. Several times in the story Father is

Brunona Schulza, Wrocław, 1979, which reads the treatise as a statement of (Schulz’s) literary theory. According to Karkowski, it is a polemic with the current practice of psychological realism.

¹⁵⁶ In “The Theory of the ‘Formal Method’” Eichenbaum writes that form has no correlative (Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 112).

¹⁵⁷ Cf. “A literary work is pure form,” Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, p. 189.

¹⁵⁸ This is a term used by Jan Mukařovský. See, for example, his “Standard Language and Poetic Language,” in *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style*, ed. and trans. Paul L. Garvin, Georgetown University Press, Washington DC, 1964, pp. 17-30.

compared to a machine: “Mój ojciec... postąpił krok naprzód jak automat” (39) (“My Father...took a step forward like an automaton”); “Tak stał drętwy ... jak automat” (42) (“He stood so, numb... like an automaton”); and once to a mill (26). The accusation that Formalists do not love literature, made by Irzykowski to the Kridl circle (see section 1, above) can be levelled against Father with reference to his creations. Father’s attitude to his creations is detached to say the least. When a particular form has ceased to amuse him, he can simply kill it off and substitute a new one for it. Creation becomes a process of destroying the previous generation.

How might the parodist satirise the criticism made by Medvedev and Bakhtin that “essentially, every motivation is equally good. In order to motivate a digression, it is possible to put the hero in prison or lay him down to sleep, to make him eat breakfast or simply blow his nose.”¹⁵⁹ Russian Formalism’s perceived cavalier treatment of motivation is satirised by Father’s proud declaration:

Nasze kreatury nie będą bohaterami romansów w wielu tomach. Ich role będą krótkie, lapidarne, ich charaktery – bez dalszych planów. Często dla jednego gestu, dla jednego słowa, podejmiemy się trudu powołania ich do życia na tę jedną chwilę (37) (Our creatures will not be the heroes of romances in many volumes. Their roles will be short, concise – their characters without backgrounds. Often for one gesture, for one word, we will take the trouble to call them to life for that one moment)

Father’s creations have no past or future, which might require careful motivation. This also satirises Russian Formalism’s elevation of the device to the position of hero of the text, rather than the human character. In Father’s analogy the device is represented by “one gesture,” and no thought is given to properly motivating it: the character who must make that gesture is created and then disposed of immediately afterwards. Literary characters are created, in other words, merely to display artistic devices. There is no serious attempt at motivation: “Przyznajemy otwarcie: nie będziemy kładli nacisku na trwałość ani solidność wykonania, twory nasze będą jak gdybyby prowizoryczne, na jeden raz zrobione” (37) (“We admit it openly: we will not place emphasis on the durability or soundness of the work; our creatures will be as it were provisional, made for once-off use”). Witkacy, as we have seen, abhorred adherence to psychological “truth.” Shklovsky is dismissive of psychology in *Don Quixote*. He does not explore the knight’s insanity in any great depth, seeing Don Quixote only as a vehicle for introducing devices: “The Don Quixote type made famous by Heine and gushed over by

¹⁵⁹ P. N. Medvedev and M. M. Bakhtin, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*, trans. Albert J. Wehre, The Goucher College Series, Baltimore

Turgenev was not the author's original plan. This type appeared as a result of the novel's structure, just as a change in the mode of execution often created new forms in poetry."¹⁶⁰ Father carries this neglect of human psychology even further, proposing that characters only be given half a face, or one leg – whichever is necessary for the role to be played. He has made physical the psychological deficiencies of Russian Formalism. Shklovsky points out that Don Diego has a son who is a poet in order to explain why he (Diego) is able to converse so knowledgeably about literature with Don Quixote.¹⁶¹ In other words, Russian Formalism seems to imply that the creation of the poet's son as merely a means to another end. Father's grotesque version of this is "dla każdego gestu inny aktor. Do obsługi każdego słowa, każdego czynu powołamy do życia osobnego człowieka" (37) ("for every gesture a different actor. For the service of every word, every action, we will call to life a different person").

The world envisaged by Father is independent from the real world. If Russian Formalism, and Witkacy's Pure Form, see literary laws as laws unto themselves, with no obligation to correspond to reality, Father goes even further. The second-order world that he proposes will stand "in open opposition to the prevailing epoch" ("w otwartej opozycji do panującej epoki" (37)). Not only will its laws be opposed to those of reality, they will be made up ad hoc: "Taki jest nasz smak, to będzie świat według naszego gustu" (37) ("Such is our taste, it will be a world dictated by our likings"). This is an imitation of the kind of capriciousness that appears to characterise *Tristram Shandy*. Schulz appears to be satirising Russian Formalism's and Witkacy's insistence on the independence of the laws of literary production from reality. The detachment of art from life will in the hands of a parodist become the removal of life from art. This will give rise to the kind of world presented by Father in his treatise: a world of unmotivated devices showing no regard for the *realia* of life. A parody of Pure Form will positively flaunt its independence of the real, objective world.

Father's treatise does not neglect the Formalist concern with "baring the device." The absence of motivation discussed above bares devices, but Father, as parodists must, goes still further. He abandons the classical ideal of *ars celare artem* in favour of displaying its inner workings.¹⁶²

and London, John Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 107. Originally published 1928 in Leningrad.

¹⁶⁰ Viktor Shklovsky, "The Making of *Don Quixote*," *Theory of Prose*, pp. 72-100, (80).

¹⁶¹ Shklovsky, "The Making of *Don Quixote*," *Theory of Prose*, pp. 77-8.

¹⁶² Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson, Peter Brooker, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, 4th edn., London, Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997, p. 35: "The classical ideal that art should *conceal* its own processes (*ars celare artem*) was directly challenged by the Formalists and by Brecht."

Demiurgos, ten wielki mistrz i artysta, czyni ją [materię] niewidzialną, każe jej zniknąć pod grą życia. My, przeciwnie, kochamy jej zgrzyt, jej oporność, jej pałubiącą niezgrabność. Lubimy pod każdym gestem, pod każdym ruchem widzieć jej ociężały wysiłek, jej bezwład, słodką niedźwiedziowatość (38) (The Demiurge, that great master and artist makes it [matter] invisible, orders it to disappear beneath the play of life. We, on the contrary, love its rasping sound [or “discord, dissonance”], its recalcitrance, its puppet-like clumsiness. We like to see beneath every gesture, beneath every movement its ponderous effort, its torpor, its sweet bearishness)

Father presents a second creation which can be read as a parody of the Russian Formalist view of literary practice. In this world, form takes precedence over content. Characters, so long privileged in discussions of literature, are called into being merely to display formal devices. They have no further importance and are not even fully developed. Motivation is unimportant, as this will be a world governed not by logic, or by correspondences with the real world, but by the whim of the creator (for which we can read author). When a given form is no longer desired it can simply be killed off, and a new one created. Finally, Father’s world (“Russian Formalist literature”) must display its workings. The observer must at all times be aware of the creator’s hand at work. That Schulz does not favour such a vision is shown by his use of words such as “tandeta” (“trash, rubbish”): “my dajemy pierwszeństwo tandecie”(37) (“we will give priority to rubbish”). Father has a weakness for “motley tissue paper, for *papier-mâché*” (“do pstrej bibułki, do *papier-mâché*” (38)). This is not a very comforting or reassuring vision. The concluding words of part one of the treatise, “we want to create man for the second time, in the image and likeness of a mannequin” (“chcemy stworzyć po raz wtóry człowieka, na obraz i podobieństwo manekina” (38)), present a nightmarish scenario.

This reading of Father’s treatise throws new light on many aspects of Schulz’s prose. One of these is the visible, clumsy functioning of the world presented. Time and again in Schulz we see the inner workings of things exposed. Chapter 4, section 3 has looked at the recurrence of the image of lineature, which, as we have seen, is often closely connected with diagrams describing the workings of, in particular, the night sky. The exaggeration so typical of parody is provided by Schulz in the form of diagrams. It would be difficult to conceive of a more pointedly “bared” device, short, perhaps, of an actual diagram, such as Sterne attaches to *Tristram Shandy*, and which Shklovsky reproduces in his essay on Sterne.¹⁶³

An example of the creaky workings of nature laid bare occurs in “Wichura,” when the narrator begins to suspect that not all is as it seems with the gale:

A może naprawdę nie było już miasta i rynku, a wicher i noc otaczały nasz dom tylko ciemnymi kulisami, pełnymi wycia, świstu i jęków... Coraz bardziej umacniało się w nas przekonanie, że cała ta burza była tylko donkiszoterią nocną, imitującą na wąskiej przestrzeni kulis tragiczne bezmiary, kosmiczną bezdomność i sieroctwo wichury (94-5) (And maybe the town and the market square were really no longer there, and the wind and the night were only surrounding our house with dark curtains, full of screams, whistles and moans... The conviction grew stronger in us that this whole storm was no more than a *Don Quixoteria* of the night, imitating in the narrow space of the stage the tragic measurelessness, cosmic homelessness and the orphanhood of the gale)

The suggestion is that nature itself may be no more than a theatrical display, which the inhabitants of the house are starting to see through. When, in "Kometa," the narrator's brother brings home an electromagnet from school, rather than marvel at this natural wonder, the narrator wonders if Father "feels the clumsy trick, the vulgar intrigue, the transparent machinations behind the marvellous appearances of hidden power" ("czy przeczuwał grubą trick, ordynarną intrygę, przejrzystą machinację poza zdumiewającymi objawieniami tajemnej siły" (355-356)). "Kometa" also parodies reductive approaches to studying creation: Uncle Edward is mechanically reduced to an electric doorbell, exposing the workings of things in the world. His value as a human being is subordinated to scientific exposition.¹⁶⁴

In "Noc lipcowa" the workings of the night are also displayed (see chapter 4, section 3). In "Jesień" the workings of autumn stand exposed as theatre: "Jesień ta jest wielkim, wędrownym teatrem kłamiącym poezją, ogromną kolorową cebulą łuszczącą się płatek po płatku coraz nową panoramą" (241) ("This autumn is a great wandering theatre lying through poetry, an enormous colourful onion, husking itself layer by layer in an ever newer panorama").

Schulz also bares his devices in the form of passages which can be read as more or less indirect comments on his own literary style.¹⁶⁵ The opening sentence of "Księga" is self-mocking: "Nazywam ją po prostu Księgą..." (113) ("I am simply calling it the Book...") Schulz uses the contrast between this and the second part of the sentence to comment on his own style, which is anything but simple:

¹⁶³ Shklovsky, "Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*," Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, p. 56.

¹⁶⁴ Jerzy Speina sees this episode as a parody of psychoanalysis in his "Bruno Schulz wobec psychoanalizy," in Kazimiera Czapłowa, ed., *Studia o prozie Brunona Schulza*, Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach 115, Katowice, 1976, pp. 17-30, (25).

¹⁶⁵ See: Władysław Panas, "'Zstąpienie w esencjonalność': O kształtach słowa w prozie Brunona Schulza," in Czapłowa, *Studia*, pp. 75-90, (82-83). In this essay Panas discusses Schulz's "revealing of his literariness" by means of, for example, addressing remarks to the reader and commenting on his language.

...bez żadnych określeń i epitetów, i jest w tej abstynencji i ograniczeniu bezradne westchnienie, cicha kapitulacja przed nieobjętością transcendentu, gdyż żadne słowo, żadna aluzja nie potrafi załśnić, zapachnieć, spłynąć tym dreszczem przestachu, przecuciem tej rzeczy bez nazwy, której sam pierwszy posmak na końcu języku przekracza pojemność naszego zachwytu (113) (...without any qualifications or epithets, and there is in this abstinence and limitation a helpless sigh, a quiet capitulation before the inconceivable enormity of the transcendent, for no word, no allusion can capture the glitter, the scent, the flow of this shiver of fear, the presentiment of this thing with no name, the first taste of which on the tip of the tongue exceeds the capacity of our delight)

Schulz's literary style resembles Father's signature, which is characterised by complex flourishes, "like the trills of a coloratura singer" ("jak trele koloraturowego śpiewaka" (114)).

The first half of "Wichura" presents the power of the elements surrounding the house, nearly all from the narrator's point of view, with almost no direct speech. The neighbours appear only after the force of the gale has been well established, and the narrator tells us that *their* words "deceitfully exaggerated the boundlessness of the night" ("kłamliwie przesadzały bezmiar nocy" (95)), when it is obvious that the exaggeration of the "boundlessness of the night" is very much a Schulz speciality.

In "Nawiedzenie" the labyrinth formed by the houses on the market square is a metaphor for Schulz's own stories: the reader goes in one door and, passing through a series of rooms, ends up somewhere after unexpected adventures, (see chapter 4, section 3). This is somewhat like the maze of associations thrown up in, for example, "Noc lipcowa," or in a shorter passage from "Edzio," describing bedbugs:

Te lekkie i cienkie listki-kadłuby biegną przez nią... Biegną od nóg krociami, niezliczoną promenadą, coraz większy, tak wielkie, jak ćmy, jak płaskie pugilaresy, jak wielkie czerwone wampiry bez głowy, lekkie i papierowe na nóżkach subtelniejszych od pajęczyny (307) (These light and thin leaf-torsos, run across her... They run up from her legs in great numbers, a countless promenade, ever larger, as big as moths, like flat wallets, like great red headless vampires, light and paper-thin on legs finer than spider webs)

A further example of Schulz displaying the workings of his own prose is the description of the secret of Crocodile Street: the fact that "nothing ... is ever carried into effect, nothing runs to its *definitivum*..." ("nic ... nie dochodzi do skutku, nic nie dobiega do swego *definitivum*..." (84)). This can be interpreted as a comment on Schulz's own handling of Father's death, which never finally and definitively occurs.¹⁶⁶ In "Sanatorium pod klepsydrą" Father hovers in a different time zone, where the

¹⁶⁶ This is also a comment on the narrator's behaviour, according to German Ritz, "Die Fahrt in die Krokodilstraße als ein Verlassen des mythischen Raums: Zu einer Erzählung von Bruno Schulz," *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, 1993, Band 38, no. 2, pp. 207-216, (214).

death has not yet taken place. Early in “Ostatnia ucieczka ojca” we are told that Father is definitely dead only for the story to end with him escaping and running away, never to be seen again.

The description in “Jesień” of summer’s “swada” (“fluency, glibness”) which bores in the end is a criticism of Schulz’s own style, and in particular of his description of a July night in “Noc lipcowa” (discussed in chapter 4, section 1). The word “swada” recurs in chapter 23 of “Wiosna,” whose description of Bianca’s villa could, with few modifications, be applied to Schulz’s literary style: “Jej [tzn. architektura willi] lekka swada rozchodziła się w pleonazmach, w tysiącnych wariantach tego samego motywu” (181) (“Its [the architecture of the villa] easy glibness scattered into pleonasm, into thousands of variations of the same motif”).¹⁶⁷ In chapter 3, section 2 it was seen how Miklaszewski has maintained that at times it seems as if Schulz himself wrote “two or three sentences, which he repeated in different variants and pitches [“tonacje”], that he created only a few images, which return obsessively in his work, reflected each time in another of the author’s mirrors.”¹⁶⁸ This was also taken up by Piwiński, who wrote: “Fundamental themes return in different variations, in different workings and lights.”¹⁶⁹ Also in “Wiosna,” the presentation of a conjuror in chapter 10 (see chapter 3, section 5) may be read as self-mockery: Schulz as a writer is a thimble-rigger who still manages to hint at some deeper meaning about God. These are textbook examples of the baring of devices so prized by Russian Formalism.

A world governed by the principles expounded by Father is presented in “Ulica Krokodyli.” Reality on the Street of Crocodiles is paper-thin – so much so, in fact, that Schulz uses the phrase “one has the impression” rather than “it is” to describe the area. The observer, as in the “ideal Russian Formalist text,” is aware of its artificiality:

Ta rzeczywistość jest cienka jak papier i wszystkimi szparami zdradza swą imitacyjność. Chwilami ma się wrażenie, że tylko na małym skrawku przed nami układa się wszystko przykładnie w ten pointowany obraz bulwaru wielkomińskiego, gdy tymczasem już na bokach rozwiązuje się i rozprzega ta zaimprovizowana maskarada i, niezdolna wytrwać w swej roli, rozpada się za nami w gips i pakuły, w rupieciarnię jakiegoś ogromnego, pustego teatru (80-81) (That reality is as thin as paper and in all its cracks betrays its imitative nature. Sometimes one has the impression that only on the small patch directly in front is everything arranged properly in this pointillist picture of a metropolitan boulevard, while at the edges this improvised masquerade is already dissolving and going to pieces; unable to

¹⁶⁷ This has been pointed out by Anna Czabanowska-Wróbel in “Fantazmaty dzieciństwa: Głosa do ‘Wiosny’ Brunona Schulza,” *Ruch literacki*, 2001, no. 1, pp. 57-66, (64).

¹⁶⁸ Krzysztof Miklaszewski, “O pewnej modernistycznej właściwości prozy Brunona Schulza (na przykładzie *Sklepów cynamonowych*),” in *Zeszyty naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Prace historycznoliterackie*, no. 21, 1971, pp. 49-66, (49). See also Bolecki, *Poetycki model prozy*, p. 263.

¹⁶⁹ Leon Piwiński, “*Sklepy cynamonowe*,” *Wiadomości Literackie*, 1934, no. 6, p. 3.

endure in its role it is falling apart behind us into plaster and oakum, into the scrap heap of some great, empty theatre)

Here too, sham is equated with literature, specifically, with Witkacy's speciality, theatre. Also, the theatre of Crocodile Street is empty of any substance. Only the outward forms are present, and even they are disintegrating. The inhabitants of the Crocodile Street area of town also correspond to Father's instructions. Rather than fully developed, autonomous characters, they are puppets. Moreover, they are indistinct and there is a strong suggestion that, like Father's creatures, they consist only of the body parts necessary to fulfil their role in the scheme of things:

ma się wrażenie błędnej, monotonnej, bezcelowej wędrówki, jakiegoś sennego korowodu marionetek ... Czasem tylko wyławiamy z tego gwaru wielu głów jakieś ciemne, żywe spojrzenie, jakiś czarny melonik nasunięty głęboko na głowę, jakieś pół twarzy rozdarte uśmiechem (81) (one has the impression of a straying, monotonous, aimless wandering, some kind of sleepy procession of marionettes.... Only sometimes can we hunt from that hubbub of many heads a dark, lively look, a black bowler hat pushed far back on the head, half a face rent by a smile)

The trams on Crocodile Street are only half formed, and are made of the *papier-mâché* whose praises Father sings in the treatise.

It is not just the inhabitants of the Crocodile Street who are created according to Father's recipe. Piwiński compares the characters of Agata and Karol to mannequins – they are carefully described and then forgotten about (although Karol was to reappear in the second collection of stories).¹⁷⁰ More alarming examples of characters called to life at the author's whim come in the form of Edzio and Dodo.

These two characters show the results of the new apology for sadism announced by Father in the treatise: "Tu jest punkt wyjścia dla nowej apologii sadyzmu" (35) ("Here is the point of departure for a new apology for sadism"). In this case they are the victims of Schulz's sadism directed at his own literary creations. Dodo is given an abnormally large head. He has no memory, and Schulz does not grant him the ability to sleep. To underline his (Schulz's) power over his creation, we are told that Dodo's face is lined and wrinkled, although all the cares of life have passed him by. The air of wisdom that his worn features give him is an illusion created by Schulz, who also robs him of any active part in life, reducing him to "the passive role of an extra" ("bierna rola statysty" (291)) and not allowing him to participate meaningfully in conversation. Nor is he allowed to develop – his life

¹⁷⁰ Piwiński, "Sklepy cynamonowe," *Wiadomości Literackie*, 1934, no. 6, p. 3.

passes in “undifferentiated monotony” (“niezróżniczkowana monotonia” (293)). This is the embodiment of Father’s harsh view of humans, and his obsession with outward appearance at the expense of the human within: “W ciele Doda, w tym ciele półgłówka ktoś starzał się bez przeżyć, ktoś dojrzał do śmierci bez okruszyny treści” (299) (“In Dodo’s body, in that halfwit’s body, someone was aging without experiences, someone was maturing towards death without a crumb of content”).

Edzio is also a painful example of the application of Father’s precepts. His disability is in his legs, which are “degenerate” (“zwyrodniałe” (300)), with feet like horses hooves. The degeneracy of the legs is in contrast with the “excellent workmanship” (“doskonała robota” (301)) of his crutches. It makes no difference to the parodist whether the legs or the crutches are of good workmanship, as we are not interested in the object to which the skilled workmanship has been applied. Edzio’s family place the crutches under lock and key at night, forcing him to crawl on all fours. Why his family should do this is left unexplained, or to use a Formalist term – unmotivated. This truly is the sadism which Father anticipates in his treatise. Like Dodo, Edzio does not play a real part in life, his only diversions being reading the newspaper, shaving every three days, and exercising. There is no real motivation for the indignities Edzio is made to suffer. There is no reason why he should be without “profession or occupation” (“zawód ani zajęcie” (301)). Schulz’s explanation that it is “as if” fate had spared him the curse of work is pointedly unsatisfactory. He has been spared the necessity of an occupation only because Schulz said so. Every character in fiction is the author’s creation, but Schulz goes to unusual lengths to avoid creating realistic or lifelike characters who could be imagined existing outside the pages of a book.

The birds which Father breeds in “Ptaki” also provide an example of the results of Father’s methods. In “Ptaki” itself no clue is given as to the artificial nature of the birds Father breeds. As far as the reader knows they are exotic birds, hatched from real eggs. Only later, when they return in “Noc wielkiego sezonu,” is it revealed that they are made of some kind of coloured paper or peacock feathers. These birds are Father’s creations, made according to the rules laid out in his treatise, so it should come as no surprise that some of them have only one wing. (In his treatise Father suggests giving his creatures only one leg.) He also gives priority to trash, and these birds are palpably trashy: “Teraz dopiero, z bliska, mógł ojciec obserwować całą lichotę tej zubożalej generacji, całą śmieszność jej tandetnej anatomii” (110) (“Only now, up close, could Father observe all the rubbishiness of that impoverished generation, all the ridiculousness of their trashy anatomy”). Although Father is seen

sometimes very positively, as a hero fighting against the boredom of the small town, there is no mistaking the low opinion the narrator has of his birds. Keeping in mind Witkacy's abhorrence of consistency in characters, it should be no surprise that Father is portrayed sometimes positively, sometimes negatively.

Elsewhere we find humans – in this case Aunt Agata's children – described as “an ephemeral generation of phantoms without blood or faces” (“efemeryczna generacja fantomów bez krwi i twarzy” (11)). Also in “Sierpień,” Maryśka is likened to a glove from which the hand has been withdrawn – in other words to an empty form. One is reminded here of one critic's comment: “there is not a single real person in the volume.”¹⁷¹ In “Wiosna,” chapter 14, people walking in the park are reduced to unwitting extras in the theatre of spring. Karkowski points out that the girl leaving the shop in “Sanatorium pod klepsydrą” has a face rubbed out by dusk. She therefore embodies Father's desire for half-formed people.¹⁷² Nearly all characters in Schulz's prose are paper thin, like the “row of pale masks” (“szereg bladych masek” (82)) which he uses to describe the railway passengers on Crocodile Street. Their lack of autonomy is brought out early in *Sklepy cynamonowe*: all the people the narrator meets on the street in “Sierpień” seem to have the same golden mask forced on their faces by the sun.

“Księga” highlights the negative side effects of jettisoning motivation and presenting merely a series of devices with no attempt to link them together meaningfully. The Book itself is no more than a random collection of advertisements. The only link between the advertisements is the desire to make money by selling the goods and services. But in Formalism, “essentially, every motivation is equally good.”¹⁷³ The results of such unmotivated texts, deprived of the continuity normally given to literary works by the cause and effect relationship, are not encouraging:

Ale w dalszym ciągu staczał się ten skrypt żaloszny w coraz głębszy upadek... Na tych ostatnich stronicach, które w sposób widoczny popadały w majaczkliwe bredzenie, w jawny bezsens... Ale wystarczyło tylko obrócić stronicę, ażeby być zupełnie zdezorientowanym w rzeczach stanowczości i zasad (123-124) (But further on, the wretched textbook slid into ever deeper decline.... On those last pages, which visibly fell into raving gibberish, into obvious nonsense.... But it was enough just to turn the page to become entirely disoriented in matters of resoluteness and principles)

¹⁷¹ Adam Grzymała-Siedlecki, “Etiudy planetnicze,” *Kurier Warszawski*, 1934, no. 11, evening edition, p. 4.

¹⁷² Karkowski, *Kultura i krytyka inteligencji*, p. 150.

¹⁷³ Medvedev and Bakhtin, *The Formal Method and Literary Scholarship*, p. 107.

“Księga” also satirises Russian Formalism’s lack of evaluative criteria, which Wellek criticises.¹⁷⁴ “Księga” presents the trashy scraps of advertising as if they were a sacred text, not just on a par with, but even superior to the Bible. Anna Csillag’s story is formally the same as that of the biblical figure, Job, but the newer version has been emptied of any deeper meaning. In addition, Schulz bares his story-telling device by openly stating that it is a re-working of a biblical tale. The juxtaposition of biblical tales, which have a deeper, spiritual meaning with shallow, inconsequential advertising exposes the invalidity of judging literature purely in terms of how it is made. What the text says must also count for something. Otherwise trashy advertisements become as important as holy texts.

The theme carries over into “Genialna epoka,” where Joseph’s scribblings are also treated, at least by the narrator, with a reverence not normally accorded to a child’s attempts at art. Joseph is so carried away that he doubts if he himself drew the pictures. One is reminded of Veselovsky’s comment on poetry, quoted by Podhorski-Okolów: “Often it is not the poet but the word which is the author of the line.”¹⁷⁵ The idea that a greater power is guiding the hand of Joseph also parodies Formalist views such as Brik’s belief that without Pushkin *Eugene Onegin* would still have been written. Szloma takes advantage of this exaltation to steal Adela’s belongings, bringing a touch of reality to the scene.

“Wiosna” illustrates many of Father’s tenets, among them the idea that creation is no more than a craft, or mechanical trickery. The word “trick” is used in “Wiosna,” when the waxwork dummy of Maximilian seems to come to life. “Nie był to cud, był to zwykły trick mechaniczny. Nakręcony odpowiednio, odbywał arcyksiążę *cercle* według zasad mechanizmu...” (196) (“It was not a miracle; it was an ordinary mechanical trick. Wound up correctly, the archduke executed a *cercle* according to the principles of the mechanism...”) This is a parody of Russian Formalist attempts to reduce art from the inspired, unknowable work of genius, to banal craftwork. The Formalist creation is no inspired mystery, but rather dull hackwork, which betrays its inferiority at every step. Again in “Wiosna,” on the fateful night described in the last chapter, the night sky is torn open again and again by lightning and “its glaring interior” (“swe wnętrze jaskrawe” (215)) is exposed. The workings that the sky shows are also the literary workings of the text: Schulz is pointedly sending up the device of pathetic fallacy

¹⁷⁴ René Wellek, *German, Russian, and East European Criticism, 1900-1950*, vol. 7 of *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1991, p. 326.

¹⁷⁵ Leonard Podhorski-Okolów, “O rymowaniu,” *Skamander*, 1925, no. 37, pp. 26-39, (32).

at the climax of a story which consists largely of recycled literary forms, which will be dealt with at greater length below.

Schulz gives more direct expression to the alleged superiority of form over content in various places, especially in "Wiosna." A hint of the role played by form is given in chapter 29, where Schulz writes: "Formy wszystkie, wyczerpawszy swą treść w nieskończonych metamorfozach, wisiały już luźno na rzeczach..." (186) ("All forms, having worn out their content in infinitely many metamorphoses, now hung loosely on things...") His lack of concern with content is shown in the treatment of the countries whose stamps he and Rudolph study. It is quite irrelevant whether the stamps come from Nicaragua, Canada or Hipporabundia: "Mogłeś tak samo powiedzieć: Panfibras i Haleliwa..." (157) ("You could just as well have said: Panphibrass or Halleleevah...") What matters is the representation of those countries: their stamps. Elsewhere he writes: "Roślinność będzie tam spalona jak tytoń, jak preria w późne lato indiańskie. Będzie to może w stanie New Orleans albo Luisiana – kraje wszak są tylko pretekstami" (185) ("The vegetation there will be charred like tobacco, like prairies in a late, Indian summer. It will be in New Orleans, or Louisiana, perhaps – countries are only pretexts after all"). This can also be seen as a sly attack on Russian Formalism's downgrading of motivation. Much of what had been the subject of literary studies is seen by Formalism as merely motivation, or pretexts, for the presentation of devices. The Russian Formalist, with his or her uncritical prioritisation of form over content, might happily study the stamps without ever knowing their countries of origin. Worse, he or she may be fooled into studying the stamps of non-existent countries.

Stamps are also used to satirise Russian Formalism's unconcern with motivation in chapter 19 of "Wiosna," which presents a sequence of events motivated largely by the pages of a stamp album. Cuba (spelt with a "K" in Polish), Haiti and Jamaica are lumped together almost, but not quite, in the alphabetical order in which they would appear in a stamp album, although as it happens, they are neighbouring countries. The motivation offered here – stamps – is deliberately flimsy, but, as Medvedev and Bakhtin would argue, as good as any for the Russian Formalist. Here we see the absolute freedom of choice in pretexts for which Wyka condemned Schulz, never realising that Schulz himself might have been condemning the same thing.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Kazimierz Wyka and Stefan Napierski, "Dwugłos o Schulzu," reprinted in Kazimierz Wyka, *Stara szuflada*, Cracow, 1967, pp. 259-271, (263). First published in *Ateneum*, 1939, no. 1, pp. 156-163.

Father's stated intention is to remake man in the image and likeness of tailors' dummies. In "Wiosna" we meet Schulz's parodic versions of these Formalist creations. Their inadequacies are made abundantly clear. Although Joseph boasts of their genius, they are a sorry lot: "inwalidzi wprawdzie tylko, lecz jakże genialni! ... Szedłem na czele tej natchnionej kohorty, posuwającej się wśród gwałtownych utykań, zamachów, klekotu szczudeł i drewna" (215) ("cripples, to be sure, but what geniuses! ... I walked at the head of that inspired cohort, making its way forward amongst violent hobbling, jerking, and the clattering of crutches and wood"). As seen above, they are powered not by any mystic process of life giving, but by mechanical trickery. The dummies are empty shells, which have been designed for "pure representation" ("czysta reprezentacja" (221)). When Maximilian reacts to the mention of the Franz Joseph's name it is "pure reflex action, no longer having any counterpart in his soul" ("czysty odruch, nie mający już odpowiednika w jego duszy" (214)). They represent the triumph of form over content and of mechanism over soul, serving only as devices to propel the action of the story of spring, which Joseph has written and directed in his head.¹⁷⁷

"Wiosna" shows Schulz taking Russian Formalist ideas on literary history to grotesque lengths. The "law of the canonisation of the junior branch" is lampooned here by Schulz's pointed use of the most hackneyed of literary conventions. Chapter 17 explores the idea of there being a common, fixed stock of material for stories, which is used and re-used by poets over and over. Jefferson describes the Formalist concept of literary creation as follows: "The poet is no longer regarded as a visionary or a genius; he becomes a skilled worker who arranges, or rather, rearranges the material that he happens to find at his disposal."¹⁷⁸ Schulz speaks of the existence of "te wielkie wylęgarnie historii, te fabryki fabulistyczne, mgliste fajczarnie fabuł i bajek" (171) ("those great hatcheries of stories, those confabulation factories, misty *fajczarnie* of plots and fairy tales"). Ironically, here at the very roots of creation Schulz coins a new word, ("fajczarnia") precisely where we would expect not to find one, and giving the lie to the whole concept of creation as the discovery of old legends. The authenticity of this vision of a poet's "reserve fund" ("żelazny kapitał," an expression Schulz uses in a letter to Witkacy¹⁷⁹) is called into question by the inclusion of the Ossianic myths of James Macpherson. The inclusion of a hoax harks back to Father's words in the treatise: matter is "open to

¹⁷⁷ Karkowski describes the dummies as the concrete realisation of Father's theoretical programme, in *Kultura i krytyka inteligencji*, p. 150.

¹⁷⁸ Ann Jefferson, "Russian Formalism," Ann Jefferson and David Robey, eds., *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction*, 2nd edn., London, B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1986, pp. 24-45, (32).

¹⁷⁹ Schulz, *Opowiadania*, pp. 474-479, (474).

every kind of charlatanry and dilettantism” (“otwarty dla wszelkiego rodzaju szarlatanerii i dyletantyzmów...” (35)). Schulz’s extra-literary writings (e.g. “Mityzacja rzeczywistości,” and his open letter to Witkacy¹⁸⁰) suggest that the view of literary creation expressed in chapter 17 was his own. However, the deliberately banal final sentence of chapter 17 gives a strong element of parody to the literary expression of that view: “To jest historia o porwanej i zamienionej księżniczce” (174) (“This is the story of a princess kidnapped and exchanged for someone else”). Not only that, but this line comes directly after an image borrowed from Goethe’s *Erkönig* and used in Andrei Bely’s *Petersburg* (1913-14) of a man travelling through the night with his child in his arms. “To jest historia o...” gives the reader to expect a re-working of a venerable literary motif, used by Goethe and Bely. Instead Schulz promises a fairy tale of kidnapped princesses.

No attempt is made to hide the derivative quality of the story in “Wiosna.” Instead, Schulz positively glories in it, as seen in chapter 4, section 3. Schulz’s potted history of Maximilian (188-189) is described in the footnotes to the Biblioteka Narodowa edition of his prose as a mixture of facts and romantic fiction (189, fn. 73), while his description of Bianca’s genealogy (198-9) the Biblioteka Narodowa describes as “an example of the sensational plot in the style of historical romances popular in the nineteenth century” (199, fn. 87). At another juncture the narrator asks: “Czy w gruncie rzeczy nie znamy już z góry wszystkich krajobrazów, które napotkamy w naszym życiu?” (184) (“Do we not in fact already know in advance all the landscapes we meet in our lives?”), echoing Nimrod’s experiences as a puppy: “Nimrod zaczyna rozumieć, że to, co mu się tu podsuwa, mimo pozorów nowości jest w gruncie rzeczy czymś, co już było – było wiele razy – nieskończenie wiele razy” (52) (“Nimrod began to understand that what was coming his way was despite the appearance of novelty something which had already been – been many times – infinitely many times”).

When the narrator in “Wiosna,” chapter 38, goes to confront M. de V. he finds himself in a room in the silence of whose interiors “foredoomed and lost history is always trying to stage itself again, the same situations arrange themselves in infinite variations” (“wciąż próbują się inscenizować na nowo przesądzone i przypadłe dzieje, układają się te same sytuacje w nieskończonych wariantach” (205)). The suggestion that all of this has happened before in other variations is borne out by the clichéd nature of the whole confrontation scene. There is almost no dialogue, apart from when M. de V. asks the narrator what he wants. We do not learn what it is the narrator wants, or what, in fact, is

¹⁸⁰ Schulz, *Opowiadania*, pp. 383-386, and pp. 474-479 respectively.

going on in this scene. It is enough that the requisites of the popular adventure novel are present without going into the core of meaning. The “barbaric” halberd, the smell of curare, Joseph’s warning against sudden movements, backed up with a drawn pistol, the offer of a cigar as M. de V. begins to respect his adversary – these are all the forms of a recognisable type of story. The content or substance of the scene – what they are talking about, what, if any, bargain has been struck, the relationship of the characters to each other and to Bianca – is conspicuously absent, and I am only assuming here that Joseph is dealing with M. de V. for the sake of convenience, because in fact even this detail is missing. This indeterminacy runs throughout all of “Wiosna,” which as a result, is a largely formal construction, self-consciously playing with pre-existing literary conventions.¹⁸¹

Not every parodist is motivated by scorn or contempt for the thing he or she satirises. He or she may write in a spirit of constructive criticism. Schulz belongs among those who have higher motives. He seems to sympathise with large parts of Wikacy’s and Russian Formalism’s programmes, but cannot help realise what the logical consequences of blind devotion to their most crudely formed principles. In particular he attacks Formalism and Witkacy for neglecting the subject matter and themes of literature. The object, he believes, *is* important. Literature which recognises no hierarchy of themes, which treats war and peace and crime and punishment on a level with stamp albums, advertisements and simple derring-do is no literature. There must, as his own critics said of him, be a “problematic.”¹⁸² Literature must deal with important subjects to be important. On the other hand the idea of literature regenerating itself by constantly revisiting its roots was one that appealed to Schulz. This results in an ambivalence in “Wiosna.” The author’s fondness for the motifs and stories he is recycling in “Wiosna” is unmistakable but at its heart the story is empty. When the narrator is arrested at the end for dreaming the dream of the Biblical Joseph, he is being punished for taking a great and important text and emptying it of meaning. “Wiosna,” as directed by Schulz’s Joseph, is a trivial version of an important text, and for this the director must go to jail.

¹⁸¹ Wojciech Wyskiel draws attention to the recurring motif of existence deprived of essence, giving as an example the image of Emil resembling an empty suit of clothes. *Inna twarz Hioba: Problematyka alienacyjna w dziele Brunona Schulza*, Cracow, 1980, p. 102.

¹⁸² Michał Chmielowiec, “Zdarzenia bezdomne,” *Kultura*, 1938, no. 13, p. 5. Chmielowiec suggests that the lack of a problematic in Schulz might itself be the problematic.

CONCLUSION

A Formalist approach has the advantage of allowing Schulz's prose to be studied on its own merits, without the results being distorted by preconceptions of Bruno Schulz. Formalism does not of course magically bestow pure objectivity, but by limiting the field of study it does cut out some of the unknown quantities of historical or genetic approaches. We may argue, for example, about the depth of Schulz's Jewish faith, but what he actually wrote is not in any serious doubt.

Chapter 2 examined the literary background against which Schulz was perceived. The tendency was for prose to be concise and simple, concerned with tangible problems of relevance to everyday life. The literature of the period has been described as neo-realist, a pattern from which Schulz, as well as Witkacy and Gombrowicz, departed sharply. Chapter 2 ended with a study of the practical effects of this overall tendency. Schulz's texts were pruned by the establishment periodical editors, with a view to making them more "readable" or "transparent" in their style.

Chapters 3 and 4 studied the text of Schulz's prose, starting with minimal units of text and moving up towards larger elements of the whole. In the overall organisation of the prose morphemes in Schulz are generally acted upon rather than actors. They are subordinate to rhythm, for example, often coming in threes to build up rhythm either within a sentence or across a number of sentences. Because Schulz so rarely uses a noun on its own, epithets tend to build up. Rather than risk monotonous chains of grammatical rhymes, Schulz reconfigures the syntax of sentences to avoid an over-dependence on simple adjectives modifying one noun. He also avoids monotonous repetition of adjectival case endings by making descriptions dynamic. For example, when he describes the room in which the narrator and Bianca sit as a forest, he goes on to say what the forest is doing: "jesteśmy właściwie w lesie, kępy paproci zarastają wszystkie kąty, tuż za łóżkiem przesuwają się ściana zarośli ruchliwa i pełna splątania" (210) ("we are actually in a forest; tussocks of ferns overgrow all the corners, just behind the bed a mobile wall of scrub, full of entanglement moves"). The case of morphemes illustrates the interconnectedness of all the elements of the prose. To change one is to change, however subtly, all the others.

In Schulz's use of vocabulary there is little evidence of the modest schoolteacher, isolated from the main trends of literary life. To a modern reader it may seem that it was Schulz's critics who

were narrow-minded provincials in their demands for simplicity, for an easily understood prose style without complicated or exotic words and that Schulz himself – if we try to read directly from his vocabulary to the man – was something of a sophisticate. Schulz’s use of foreign words in homely contexts has the effect of loosening these words from their normal connotations. Learned Latinate and Greek terms are used in describing Father’s bizarre experiments and studies. The at times quite excessive use of foreign words in prosaic contexts suggests a desire to expose the practice of reserving exotic words for high brow subjects for the convention that it is. In “Nemrod,” for example, the story of the arrival of a puppy into a young boy’s life, we find the following words on a single page: “transpozycja,” “egzemplifikacje,” “komplikacja,” “emanacja,” “sensacje posiłków” (“the sensations of mealtimes”) “irracjonalne napady nostalgii” (“irrational attacks of nostalgia”) and “dominanta.” They appear alongside such diminutives as “piesek,” “łapki,” “pyszczyk,” “języczek,” “mordka” (“little dog,” “little paws,” “little muzzle/face,” “little tongue,” “little muzzle” (50)). Here Schulz combines the perspective of the child in the story with the adult writing about the events much later. This dual perspective is brought out by the choice of vocabulary from two different registers. In this story of a puppy, the morning hour is transcendental (49) the puppy apostrophises (54) and no less a power than the gods are invoked in the description of the dog, “ten ulubieniec bogów” (49) (“that favourite of the gods”). This defamiliarises both the dog, named after a biblical hero, and the language used. Schulz accomplishes a semantic shift in the words, moving them from their normal context of “serious literature” into his world of cinnamon shops. What contemporary critics took to be pretentiousness may also be seen as a mockery of the language of intellectuals.

Schulz also defamiliarises less high brow words by detaching them from the objects to which they normally refer. They occur in many different contexts. The following items are all referred to as colourful in *Sklepy cynamonowe*: weather, (5) night, (13) the murmur of birds’ voices, (23) fluttering, (24) flights, (27) applause, (27) snowstorms, (31) Father’s age of genius, (86) an alphabet, (87) the sound of wheels, (102) the pulp of words (107) and ellipses in the sky traced by the flight of birds (109). Similarly, carpets, (15) sleep, (16) darkness, (28) and gates (69) all have thickness or are tangled thickets, in *Sklepy cynamonowe*. These word combinations give rise to strange metaphors, in which a literal truth is often difficult to detect. The profusion of words to describe what in the hands of a more realist writer could be dealt with in one well-chosen adjective leads to the separation of word from thing. Each time Schulz supplies yet another descriptive word or phrase for something, the

identification of the previous word with the thing being described becomes weaker. In this way the word gains a measure of independence from the object, in accordance with the Formalist view that in poetry the word is felt as an object in its own right, and not merely a token for some more important thing.

As well as this, links between the most disparate objects are created by the recurrence of words in varied contexts and with various meanings. For example, darkness spins, but so does danger. Emil's face, the town square, winter, hours, days and nights, cockleburs, chairs, the looks on the faces of the plaster busts, Crocodile Street, Mother's eyes, and the descendants of Father's birds are all empty. Reasons for what happens in the stories may be hard to find, but emptiness is everywhere. Schulz's stories do not have the tight logical unity typical of realist prose. The looseness of the structure allows him to suggest thematic unity by means of repeated words and word groups.

An important role in the choice of words is played by their sound properties. Schulz is prepared to produce an unusual or even absurd visual image if assonance or alliteration require it. Meaning is deformed by sound. Once again, the relaxing of the bonds of cause and effect allow the text to incorporate such oddities with ease. A more realistic novelist might worry that in his or her eagerness to create an alliterative sentence he or she may be left with a fact that takes some explaining. How, for example, would the story be modified to explain that Bianca's room had become a forest? A realist might say that it "seemed to me" that the room was a forest and while Schulz does use such explanatory phrases, he does not feel obliged to use them to explain away eccentricities in the world depicted. Bianca's room does not "seem to be" a forest: it *is* a forest, and also a train. Schulz explains this strangeness by saying that it is happening in illegal time: he is not unwilling to offer explanations, but from the point of view of plausibility they are highly unsatisfactory, and rely on the reader's willingness to suspend belief in cause and effect. However, although meaning is frequently deformed for the sake of sound effects, the sound properties of words alone do not create the strangeness of Schulz's fictional world. For one thing, it is often possible to create a striking sound effect without deforming meaning greatly or at all. For another, bizarre or grotesque sentences often arise out of no obvious desire to create alliteration, rhythm or assonance. Euphony does not force the strangeness of the world presented and the abandonment or relaxing of causality. Rather, these things give the author a freer hand in the creation of euphony. Another factor permitting the free flow of euphonious sentences is the large amount of description in Schulz. A description which as a result of

the desire for euphony wanders into the bizarre or grotesque is less likely to leave the writer with loose ends which then have to be incorporated into a plot than similarly deformed descriptions of actions.

Schulz's syntax is characterised by some of the devices examined by Shklovsky with reference to *syuzhet*. We find in the sentences three step retardation and digression. Sentences tend to be very long, swelled by extra information and near-synonyms: "Przypominałem kasztany, te politurowane modele owoców, bilboklety stworzone do zabawy dla dzieci, jabłka jesienne, czerwieniejące dobrą, domową, prozaiczną czerwienią na oknach mieszkań" (338-339) ("I brought to mind chestnuts, those polished models of fruit, *bilboklets*, created for the amusement of children, autumnal apples, reddening a good, homely, prosaic red in the windows of apartments"). The syntax and subject matter are often incongruous. This is especially so in Father's speeches, but is also true of the narrative voice in general. The syntax is more sophisticated than the youth of the narrator would suggest. It can also be seen how the syntactic devices of the author overlap with those of characters in the stories. When Father is lecturing on mannequins he uses the first person plural: "my dajemy pierwszeństwo tandecie" (37) ("we will give priority to rubbish"). A few sentences later his son, the narrator, is adapting the same didactic style: "Radzimy czytelnikowi zignorować go z równą lekkością, jak my to czynimy" (38) ("we advise the reader to ignore it with the same lightness that we do"). Syntax serves to unify styles across different voices within the text, but also to establish parallels with other texts – chiefly the Bible. The complex syntax in the prose is often used to build up rhythm, which is typically punctured with the introduction of a short, abrupt sentence usually communicating some fairly banal information. It is with these short sentences, disrupting the flow of the text, that Schulz reminds us not to lose sight of what is being said here. However beautifully written the prose is, it must refer to something if it is to be more than pure sound. Schulz demonstrates the danger of focussing all one's attention on the word instead of on the thing: one can get carried away, forgetting that the subject matter here is a mad man and his family.

Metaphor in Schulz is so all-pervading that it is often impossible to tell metaphorical descriptions apart from literal truth or dreams in his stories. The signals which would tell the reader whether he or she was dealing with figurative or non-figurative language are usually absent, leaving each reader to decide for him or herself as to the reality of the scenes presented. Did Father's fantastic transformations take place within the reality of the stories, or are they metaphors for something else, and if so, what? Schulz takes advantage of the strong natural desire of people to understand what they

read, and to look for rational explanations of fantastic events. Schulz draws metaphors from a wide variety of fields, with personifying and animating metaphors a favourite, followed by book metaphors. Also very common are references to time in terms of space. This is another example of the difficulty of separating metaphor from literal truth. As the following section, on *syuzhet*, shows, it is possible that time and space are essentially the one, and that to refer to the “edge” of time is not metaphorical after all.

Again and again the reader is confronted with the image of time as a somewhat free agent, which has broken free of the treadmill of linearity, and is capable of turning somersaults and looping back on itself. Time is variously used up, divided up and shared out; different people have different times, some of it illegal, and so on. It is a highly unstable element of Schulz’s world, allowing him great flexibility in constructing the short stories. Schulz’s use of devices of *syuzhet* construction is not unconventional, but the foundation on which the events of the stories lie is. A consequence of the instability of time is that in relating the stories the narrator is not bound by what has gone before. If the story of one night begins in December, there is nothing to prevent it from ending in spring. Perhaps the clearest example is Father’s pseudo-deaths and transformations.

Stories in Schulz use flashbacks to recapitulate events from before the time of the story proper, as well as digressions, the occasional *non-sequitur*, and the suspense-building devices of starting the story in the middle of the action and of withholding information for longer than is strictly necessary, but there is nothing unusual in this. The same devices may be found in any retelling of a story. What is more interesting is how some stories, in particular “Wiosna,” omit information which would normally be considered essential to the plot. “Wiosna” has a complicated explanation of Bianca’s background and a biographical sketch of the Habsburgs, but no information to explain the narrator’s part in all this.

The point of view from which Schulz tells the stories is a double one. The fantastic exaggeration of trivial events suggests a child’s imagination, but he often adopts an adult’s scepticism and vocabulary, with tones of mock detachment as he pretends to try to understand how this event or the other could have happened. Both these voices belong to a narrator within the text, someone who witnessed the events first hand and have limited knowledge of what happened. As well as these there is a third voice, outside the text and belonging to an omniscient narrator. Schulz’s shifts from an internal narrator to an external are sometimes obvious, sometimes less so.

With causality played down in Schulz, parallels and repetitions play a greater role in structuring the stories. Certain situations, vocabulary items and images occur over and again in the collections of stories, tying together episodes which do not always follow logically from each other. Repetition is central to Schulz, and to illustrate this, the thesis followed the recurrence not of an obvious point of reference such as the Book, but a secondary one, the motif of lineature. As well as parallels within the stories, Schulz makes use of parallels with sources existing outside the stories. The style resembles variously that of the Bible, mysticism, academic discourse, adventure novels and cheap advertising. One does not by any means need to be an expert on any of the above to appreciate the humour of Schulz's often parodic stylisation, though references to elements of Jewish practice may well escape non-Jewish readers. Schulz's interest in myth means that he often openly states what the second member of the parallel is. It may be of historical interest that an Anna Csillag really did advertise hair restorer but Schulz provides the reader with enough background information for the parallel to be discernible fifty years on: the narrator frankly admits that the Book is composed of the scraps of advertisements and that Anna Csillag's story is a similar in construction to the Biblical tale of Job.

Chapter 5 tries to ascertain the extent of Schulz's awareness of Russian Formalism. On the evidence available, it seems unlikely that he was aware, although it was finding its way into Polish universities around the time he was writing *Sklepy cynamonowe*. However, if we resist the traditional interpretation of Schulz as being a lonely introvert from the provinces, out of touch with the vibrancy of metropolitan life, a case can certainly be made, on purely historical grounds, that he was well aware of general developments in art and literature between the wars. There is every chance that he was familiar with Witkacy's theory of Pure Form, whose resemblances to Russian Formalism the second section of chapter 5 sketches. The rest of the chapter seeks to find evidence from within the stories that they may reasonably be understood as a parody of Russian Formalism. The conclusion reached is that they may.

Father's treatise on tailors' dummies parodies Russian Formalist ideals of literary art. He has created a literary world which is exaggeratedly independent of the real world and the rules governing it. Characters in this second-order world are subordinate to artistic device – thus we see Uncle Jerome speaking just like the narrator in order not to spoil the effect of repetition in the line: "...robiąc rękami ruch, jak gdyby nas rozdzielał, mówił: – A teraz błagam was, tak jak tu jesteście, rozejdźcie się,

rozbiegnijcie chyłkiem, cichaczem. i niepostrzeżenie...” (“Dodo,” 298, my italics) (“...making a motion with his hands as if he were separating us, he would say: ‘And now, I beg you, as you are here, disperse, run along, stealthily, quietly, imperceptibly...’”) The workings of this world are repeatedly displayed to the reader often in the form of diagrams in the night sky, but also in the way that Schulz refuses to re-write passages which contradict earlier statements, and in his veiled, and often critical references to his own literary style. The stories make liberal use of second hand conventions, as seen in the section on parallels, taking no pains to hide their derivative nature and even flaunting it. Schulz’s dense style achieves the “difficulty” that Formalists claimed to be a hallmark of literariness, and his use of so many foreign and exotic words is a parody of the belief that literature should be difficult to read. What better way to make difficult a text than by writing it in a foreign language?

In “Wiosna” the borrowed forms and conventions as well as dazzling displays of verbal dexterity are used to cover up the lack of motivation of all these people and events, the coups, the fateful nights, and the smoking pistols. If this is indeed parodic in intention, Schulz appears to be attacking unmotivated shows of pure form.

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