

**“THIS WAS THE BOOK [...] THE UNOFFICIAL SUPPLEMENT”
MILTON’S TRUTH AND BRUNO SCHULZ’S “MYTHOLOGIC”**

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But the official history remains incomplete.

(Bruno Schulz)

In a review of Kristeva’s, intertextuality’s mother’s, early work whose title – *L’étrangère* (I am saying this because origin is one of the problematics to be traced in this text) – alludes to her Bulgarian origin Roland Barthes says that “Julia Kristeva changes the place of things ... she subverts authority, the authority of monolithic science”.¹ A movement from text to intertext, from meaning to the semiotic *chora* also displaces such ideas and authorities as truth, origin and the book. This last idea, and authority, the book, is the theme I would like to enlarge upon considering at least two seemingly unrelated and distant – both chronologically and topographically – texts about books: Milton’s *Areopagitica* (1644) and Schulz’s *The Messiah*. I do not date the latter text because one of its problematics (one more to be traced in this text) is that it does not quite exist, a fact which will complicate our history, however unofficial it is. Both texts are, I think, important writings about books. The first one, *Areopagitica*, is about the choice between pre-publication and post-publication censorship while the other one seems to be (about) its abolition. The “about” must remain parenthetical because not really existing *The Messiah* cannot really be *about* something, it will always evade censorship and without proclaiming its abolition will in a sense *be* its abolition. Supplementing these two texts (but it does not mean that the supplements are in any sense inferior or less important) I shall also talk about other texts by Bruno Schulz, and also about yet another important book about books and origins – Cynthia Ozick’s *The Messiah of Stockholm* (1988), a book about the lost manuscript of Schulz’s *The Messiah*. Supplementing these texts there are

¹ Barthes, R., “L’étrangère”, *La quinzaine littéraire*, No 94, 1970, p. 19. Quoted in Moi, T., *Sexual/Textual Politics. Feminist Literary Theory*, Methuen, London and New York 1985, p. 150.

other important texts about books, texts by Derrida and Blanchot, by Barthes and Foucault; there is, say, an "intertextuality" of texts whose origin really needn't be recovered.

Let us begin with Derrida's now quite well known idea of the book as the idea of a totality of the signifier. In order for the signifier – spoken or written – to be a totality, in order that it is full and complete it must be pre-existed by an equally total signified, by a signified independent of either speaking or writing. Derrida also talks about the *supervision* of the signifier by the signified and thus about the authority of the signified which, as it were, governs or dictates the inscriptions of the signifier. First there is an authoritative *presence*, to which a signifier is only *added* as a supplement.² By itself the signifier has nothing of the authority of the present, it does not even partake of it but only supplements it. The total presence of the signified does not need any supplements and the very idea of supplementarity is disruptive for this sphere. Supplement is a mark and proof of incompleteness, of omissions and errors – and these are to be found only on the surface, in what comes later in the signifier. A supplement added to a book proves the completeness of the book's signified and the deficiency of writing, of being written. Since all written books are bound to be incomplete because of writing's supplementarity why should not one, like Rousseau, shut all books and read Nature? "Only one book is open to all eyes", says Rousseau, "It is the book of Nature. In his great and sublime book I learn to serve and adore its author".³

Very little seems to be left to human agency in Rousseau's idea of the book. He actually renders all books as supplements, as incomplete additions to the book of Nature whose author, as it were, speaks to our eyes without any recourse to the imperfect writing of man. Rousseau wants to read the signified whose authenticity is granted by the authority of its author and to simultaneously censor out all inferior writing and writers. Unlike the book of Nature, books do not have the authorizing signature (the autograph) of the Author and thus they might be rightly called unofficial supplements, unauthorized, because written, versions of truth.

The book of Nature is also an idea dear to Milton. One of his arguments against pre-publication censorship in *Areopagitica* is that this kind of censorship "is far insufficient to the end it intends"⁴ because books are but a small part of what one can read:

And albeit what ever thing we hear or see, sitting, walking, travelling, or conversing may be fitly call'd our book.⁵

² Derrida, J., *Of Grammatology*, transl. G. Spivak, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London 1976, p. 18.

³ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴ Milton, J., *Areopagitica*, Oxford 1917, p. 27.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

It does not mean that this version of the book of Nature is a good book for Milton, as it includes human language which might always blindly repeat the hissings of Satan. Even the Book, "the Bible itself" is not quite good "for that oftentimes relates blasphemy not nicely, it describes the carnall sense of wicked men not unelegantly [...]".⁶ There seem to be no good books for Milton. Paradoxically, however, he clearly distinguishes between good and bad books:

... who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, God's Image; but hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills reason itselfe, kills the Image of God as it were in the eye.⁷

It is not just homicide that is at stake in killing a good book. Rather, killing a good book is comparable to an attempt to kill God whom Milton clearly identifies with reason here. Good books are thus supplementary to truth, but they are, as it were, official supplements, they are God's writings dictated to men by reason itself and it is not really the "body" of this book, its textuality, that matters here but its content, the signified. Writing gives shape to "reason it selfe" but it simultaneously must be ignored in the way the "carnall" fragments from the *Bible* are to be ignored (or censored), reasonably abstained from. Upon the transparently written body of reason's signified all other kind of writing will be easily discernable as alien, as erroneous and unofficial, as something imposed upon reason's naturally transparent writing without God's authorization. Milton really does not need any specialized censors to tell good books from bad ones because those which "demeane themselves", as he puts it, do not mean anything to the reasonable reader and thus this "demeaning" will inevitably be detected and then banned. Preventive censorship which Milton attacks in *Areopagitica* deprives the reasonable – British?⁸ – subject of the independence of judgement and of the gift of reason whose authority was assigned to few inquisitors. Milton's subject is left to himself and the role of the censor is assigned to his reason. He who decides to write to the world judges himself reasonable and his text is simultaneously his own *imprimatur*. If the "vigilant eye" of society sees his text as transgressive, the authority of reason is put in question and the text does not even have to be burnt as it is as mad as its author. It only communicates the fact of its being written, its lack of authoritative content, as unofficial supplementarity which does not supplement anything.

For a reasonable creature the temptation to write something against his reason, to write a bad book can thus only come from the devil. Bad books are both mad and evil, pathologically monstrous. Since monsters are probably the

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸ "And that wise and civill Roman, *Julius Agricola*, who govern'd once here for *Caesar*, preferred the naturall wits of Britain before the labour'd studies of the French". *Ibid.*, p. 45.

kind of creature everybody sees as monstrous it is no good preventing them from being born. Books are not really dead things for Milton, and they come into the world as naturally as babies. Before the Inquisition, says Milton,

Books were ever as freely admitted into the World as any other birth; the issue of the brain was no more stiff'd than the issue of the womb [...] but if it prov'd a Monster, who denies but that it was justly burnt, or sunk into the sea.⁹

Milton's good books, the true ones, are thus not something than can be written. Books either *naturally* belong to the world or expose their monstrosity, their otherness. The division of books into good and bad ones is true quite misleading in Milton because they are all in fact bad, and they function in this world as the "provoking object" which God set "ever almost in [Adam's] eyes"¹⁰ in order that he would abstain from it. We are bound, after the fall, to know "good by evil", and books can still be the source of *knowledge*, but not the source of truth. "Knowledge" is not an innocent and pure thing for Milton:

And perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say of knowing good by evil.¹¹

"Adam knew Eve his wife" says the *Bible*. "Adam knew 'evil'" Milton echoes. In this predicament the truth we know or learn through writing and the Truth must be two different things. Milton's Truth, unlike knowledge, remains beyond the grasp of writing, at a distance, always delayed.

See the ingenuity of Truth, who when she gets a free and willing hand, opens herself faster than the pace of method and discours can overtake.¹²

Truth cannot be censored because it cannot be written. As in Derrida's essay on truth in Nietzsche¹³, Milton's Truth is a woman who cannot be "appropriated" or mastered, and what happens to a woman when her master goes to sleep is one of the lessons of *Paradise Lost*. In *Areopagitica* she, the Truth, is also masterless in this world. She once "came into the World with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on", says Milton, and it was only after "he ascended, and his Apostles after him were laid asleep, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers", who, like in the legend of Osiris, "hew'd her lovely form into a thousand peeces, and scatter'd them to the four winds".¹⁴ All that man can do now is to take up those pieces and put them back into the glorious shape. We have already started the work, but, says

⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 18.

¹² Ibid., p. 22.

¹³ Cf. Derrida, J., *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. B. Harlow, Chicago 1979.

¹⁴ Milton, J., *Areopagitica...*, p. 43.

Milton, "we have not found them all, Lords and Commons, nor even shall doe, till her Master's second coming".¹⁵

Man is no master of Truth and its *beatific* vision is not for him. He may only collect the fallen fragments and unite them. Milton compares this process of unification to the building of the Temple of the Lord by king Solomon. Books are but bricks in this building, and the builders' task is first of all to find those in which truth is contained, to be "still searching what we know not by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it".¹⁶ Good books contain the scattered fragments, the signifieds, to which writing is only added as a supplement. And it is by means of such books that we gradually *re-store* Truth in the library of knowledge. This library is actually a collection of signifieds, of the lost fragments, with books serving us as *containers* or caskets to keep the fragments safe. Some of the containers to be found in the world are empty, some of them are bad books, signifiers without signifieds, and these will be thrown away from the library, burnt or at least marked as empty, confined to the margin of an index. But before that is done it is necessary for Milton to check the content of any writing and see whether some small fragment of truth glitters there. The text, the writing is supplementary in any case, and it simultaneously allows for Milton's problematic classification of books. There may be a truth *in* writing, but writing has nothing to do with it. A good book gives shelter to some fragment of truth while the bad one contains nothing but writing. For a reasonable man this signifier without the signified serves as an example of visible monstrosity: it is as easy to tell an empty container from a full one as it is easy to tell a healthy baby from a monster. If writing gives form to truth in Milton, it also deforms the truth, it adds the surplus of a supplement to it, a mark of what it is not.

Writing deforms truth in so far as it is responsible for the deformation of speech in Rousseau and Saussure, two figures Derrida associates with what he calls "The Linguistic Circle of Geneva". For Rousseau and Saussure, and they literally resemble each other, voice and truth are almost synonymous terms. Interestingly enough, the rhetoric of pathology and monstrosity Milton applies to bad books is also the rhetoric Rousseau and Saussure use to describe writing.¹⁷ In Chapter IV of his *Course*, for instance, Saussure writes:

But the tyranny of writing goes even further. By imposing itself upon the masses, spelling influences and modifies language [...] The visual images lead to wrong [*viscieuses*] pronunciations; such mistakes are really pathological.¹⁸

Both good and bad books are species of the same kind of writing, of the supplement of speech and truth, and it is the authority of the contents which enables the division into good and bad writing in Milton. Even good books are

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁷ Cf. Derrida, J., "The Linguistic Circle of Geneva", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, Summer 1982.

¹⁸ Quoted in Derrida, J., *Of Grammatology*, p. 41.

bound to be incomplete as regards Truth. In Milton's model of censorship the book's completeness is produced by the requirement to carry either the author's or the publisher's name.

The object of this easily discoverable authorship is clearly punitive in Milton, but it also clearly defines the author as the owner of the text he wrote. For books "demeane themselves as well as men"¹⁹, says Milton, and this de-meaning of books is the lack of the property of meaning or reason both in the author and in the book. Milton's reasonable author does not write in the sense of producing a meaning. He actually spots the fragments of Truth and exposes them proudly to the public as discovery rather than invention. With author's name signed under this discovery it may now be nicely catalogued and put on the shelf of the library awaiting other discoveries, other books. The author of such a book represents Truth in the sense of its representative, that is to say as the one who shares some authority with the Truth's maker, with her Master who is absent. What the author wrote does not wholly belong to him, but as a representative he has a right, or a copyright, to what he signed with his name. His name marks the *source* and origin, and whatever is taken from that treasury must now carry his name.

What is now called "source" studies, says Barbara Johnson in her book *A World of Difference*, "can be distinguished from discussions of intertextuality in that [the former] speak in terms of a transfer of property (borrowing) [while the latter] tend to in terms of misreading or infiltration, that is, of violations of property".²⁰ Already the title of her book "disappropriates" the world, makes it one of many, and, moreover, the one where instead of positive categories one will rather talk about differences. The violations of property Barbara Johnson talks about are not so much illegal acts of theft as they are acts of writing in which the idea of property, of being proper (not different from itself) is questioned, disseminated and disappropriated without actually taking anything, without making intertextuality into a proper field or discipline of studies. Intertextuality is interdisciplinary not because it takes something from other disciplines, from their insides, but because it remains between them (inter), on their margins. Intertextuality as such has no identity.

The logic of identity which governs Milton's Truth (or Rousseau's Nature) if what Rodolphe Gasché calls the "inability of reason to understand its origin in what it is not".²¹ Reason is incapable of comprehending its origin in the supplementary, in what it announces and denounces as its other. Hence the authority of Truth is not the authority of writing in Milton. Authorship is the

¹⁹ Milton, J., *Areopagitica*, p. 5.

²⁰ Johnson, B., *A World of Difference*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London 1987, p. 116.

²¹ Gasché, R., *The Tain of the Mirror. Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*, Harvard University Press 1986, p. 210.

seal of this authority and it is through this authority that the supplement of the book is either official or unofficial. In fact there is no purely true book since even the *Bible* itself, as we have seen, is the source of evil. Lest we should fall into what Milton calls "the regions of sins"²² we must read "all manner of tractats", and yet abstain from the temptation and confine ourselves to the truth that is dictated by, or through, reason. What Ricoeur calls a hermeneutic of restoration goes hand in hand with a hermeneutic of suspicion in which all writing is to be thoroughly examined to the extent that, as regards Truth, nothing will remain of writing. The second coming in Milton will be the act of restoring the original, the authentic signified with no signifier, with no "evil" to tempt us. In this world we are bound to build "contiguous", and thus syntagmatic, constructions with the perfect "continuity", that is to say simultaneity and wholeness, always at a distance:

And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world.²³

For some Kabbalists, and this is one of the traditions to be traced in discussions of intertextuality, the second coming, the coming of the Messiah will not quite erase the existing Torah, the Book, but "will compose its letters into other words; the text itself will not materially change, but God will teach us to read it in accordance with another scriptive arrangement".²⁴ Within this tradition, says Maurice Blanchot, "what is called the 'written Torah' precede the 'oral Torah', the latter then giving rise to the edited version that alone constitutes the Book".²⁵ There is no original then. The text to read is always already mediated through oral tradition, it is an imperfect copy of writing – of writing before the letter, to use Derrida's phrase a little out of context. The "oral Torah" is thus also written, although the writing which preceded it and the edited book functions here as pure exteriority whose complete reconstruction by means of the second, visible, writing is unthinkable. What has been promised, the coming of the Messiah, is also writing, and this Messianic age is only a promise communicated by the second writing, by the writing whose origin is its inaccessible exteriority: the written Torah absent from the official book and yet constitutive of it.

The primary writing is absent from the Book, says Blanchot, but it is "the *nonabsent absence* on the basis of which the Book, having absented itself from this absence makes itself readable [...] and comments on itself by enclosing

²² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁴ Eagleton, T., *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*, London 1981, p. 116.

²⁵ Blanchot, M., "The Absence of the Book", in M. C. Taylor ed., *Deconstruction in Context*, Chicago 1986, p. 391.

history: the closing of the book, [...] the authority of knowledge".²⁶ The nonabsent absence made absent from the Book, from the official writing, gains the status of otherness, and the idea of origin, of truth, of presence is located in the sphere of the oral; writing becomes an "exteriority, alien to every relationship of presence, and to all legality".²⁷ The official book exteriorizes writing, makes it into an unofficial supplement alien to, let us repeat, every relationship of presence, and to all legality.

Writing as a nonabsent absence: the very idea of such a paradoxical category cannot be accepted by the official discourses governed by the authority of the law of presence. This writing is also alien to logic. The logic of nonabsent absence can thus only be an alien logic, as Eagleton phrases it, and its hermeneutic a "heretical hermeneutic".²⁸

An invitation to such a heretical hermeneutic comes from Bruno Schulz, a writer and a teacher, the already mentioned author of *The Messiah*, of the book whose original manuscript – lost during the war – is searched for by one Lars Andemening through the pages of Cynthia Ozick's novel *The Messiah of Stockholm* (1987). Lars Andemening – but he has no name in fact, and picks one up from a dictionary – does not know his origins and thinks he is Bruno Schulz's son. He even learns Polish in order to read Schulz in the original and thus to complete the origin, the writing from which he originates. The missing manuscript of *The Messiah* is the only thing he needs to eventually complete his identity, to authenticate himself. He waits for *The Messiah* in the hope that the book's coming will reveal the truth of his origin. "He is a priest of the original", says Cynthia Ozick²⁹, and *The Messiah* is his Messiah. Lars eventually finds the book and reads it, but the text turns out to be fake. It was forged, as it seems, by Dr. Eklund, a holographic authority who himself examines the manuscript with a magnifying glass and declares that it is authentic. Lars Andemening, "with his father out of libraries and his name out of a dictionary"³⁰, is also a forgery, a text which pretends to be authentic and simultaneously pretends that there is an Authentic. Now, forgery is illegal only if there is an innocent, pure, complete original which the fake copy pretends to be. Schulz's original, however, despite the fact that the manuscript is still being searched for, seems to be a kind of writing without the authority of the authentic. For authenticity, Schulz's father preaches in *The Street of Crocodiles*,

²⁶ Ibid., p. 391.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 392.

²⁸ Cf. Eagleton, "Psychoanalysis, the Kabbala and the Seventeenth Century", in *1642: Literature and Power in the Seventeenth Century*, Essex 1981, p. 204.

²⁹ Ozick, C., *The Messiah of Stockholm*, Vintage Books, New York 1987, p. 99.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 120.

cannot be created by any official or legal recipes but only by "illegal methods, and infinity of heretical and critical methods"³¹. Since the original is bound to be illegal, since *The Messiah* cannot have its original pure and simple, Dr. Eklund's text can only be a forgery of forgery. For Schulz's original (and his idea of the original) is, as we shall see, always already illegal; a product of illegal methods, illegal events and illegal time.

The first chapter (*The Book*) of Schulz's *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass* (hourglass" is also "obituary" in Polish), is, like Cynthia Ozick's book, about the search for the authentic. So too is Milton's *Areopagitica*. But whereas Milton's "regions of sin and falsity" were to be avoided, Schulz's text advocates what is called "regions of great heresy", the areas where the heretical and illegal methods operate, the regions, as we shall see, of writing and reading. The organizing principle of this heretical writing in Schulz is what Jerzy Ficowski calls "mythologic" (*mitologika*).³²

The problematic of the original and the authentic is the problematic of childhood and history in *Sanatorium*. Schulz's search for "The Book" is a return from the authoritarian epoch of Franz Joseph I to the heretical epoch of genius which is the epoch of illegal history³³ where time and events are also illegal:

Yes there are such branch lines of time, somewhat illegal and suspect, [...] Let us try to find at some point of history such a branch line, a blind track onto which to shunt these illegal events.³⁴

The illegal events are ahistorical events and thus they cannot be elements of historical narrative of which, says Schulz, "continuity and successiveness are the soul".³⁵ Illegal events "have no place of their own in time", they occurred "after the whole of time has been distributed, divided, allotted".³⁶ Before the distribution of time

All the set forms, having exhausted their content in endless metamorphoses, hung loosely upon things, half wilted, ready to flake off. The word was a chrysalis about to change violently, to disclose young, new, unheard-of colours and to stretch happily all its joints. It was touch and go, and the map of the world, that patchwork blanket, might float in the air, swelling like a sail.³⁷

The book of the world was rather like a map then, a patchwork upon which there were no fixed events to be included in the book of history, in the prose narrative which confines time to linearity and thus divides the world into what

³¹ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 1.

³² Cf. Ficowski, J., *Regiony wielkiej herezji*, Kraków 1975, p. 49.

³³ Cf. Schulz, B., *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass*, trans. C. Wieniewska, London 1977, p. 14.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 54 - 55.

is legally linear and historical, and into the marginal and the dispersed. No law, no authority of the legal was conceivable at that time, and the illegal had no opposition against to define itself. The illegal was also unthinkable. For Schulz the authority and the legality of history is evidently political, and it is the authority of Franz Joseph I who took the unrestrained growth and transformation of the world as "a personal insult" and tried to stop it:

His element was a world held by the rules of prose, by the pragmatism of boredom. The atmosphere of chanceries and police stations was the air he breathed. And, a strange thing, this dried up dull old man, with nothing attractive in his person, succeeded in pulling a great part of creation (*kreatury*) to his side.³⁸

The figure of Franz Joseph I is that of a demiurge whose authority represses any transgression and excess of the marginal and unofficial. There is no world outside Franz Joseph's seal or *imprimatur*, and to explore the sphere that lacks his signature is heresy and usurpation. There seems to be no margin left in the book Franz Joseph censors. He encompasses, distributes, guards and authorizes the minutest things circulating within the territory of his world which, in Schulz's rhetoric, is always the world of prison and confinement:

At that time, the world was totally encompassed by Franz Joseph I. On all horizons there loomed the omnipresent and inevitable profile, shutting the world off, like a prison.³⁹ The world at that time was circumscribed by Franz Joseph I. On each stamp, on every coin, and on every postmark his likeness confirmed its stability and the dogma of its oneness. This was the world, and there were no other worlds besides [...] Everything else was make believe, wild pretense, and usurpation. Franz Joseph I rested on top of everything and checked the world in its growth.⁴⁰

In his sleep, however, this demiurge dreams the dream of what he himself bands, the dream of the other. This other is Franz Joseph's "younger brother of an entirely different cast of mind".⁴¹ Everybody has such a brother, says Schulz, who "follows him like a shadow, an antithesis, the partner in the eternal dialogue". This strange brother is hardly present in the story, and according to one version he was only a cousin. According to another, he had never been born. "He was only suggested" by Franz Joseph's fears and ravings overheard while he was asleep.⁴² Schulz christens the brother Archduke Maximilian. Although Franz Joseph secretly, and illegally, loved his brother, his official aide "plotted his downfall".⁴³

The prosaic order of the world is undermined by the secret, unofficial world of difference. In Schulz's reading it is the repression of this other world that is

³⁸ Ibid., p. 55.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 55.

⁴² Cf. Ibid., p. 55.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 56.

the constitutive gesture of the power of order. What Henry Staten calls the law of constitutive outside in deconstruction seems to be also at work in Schulz's childhood Galicia where Franz Joseph enthroned his metaphysics of presence:

Thrones wilt when they are not fed with blood, their vitality grows with the mass of wrongs committed, with life-denials, with the crushing of all that is perpetually different and that has been ousted by them.⁴⁴

The prose of the world is a kind of writing in which words have been elegantly attached to things and ideally, so that there are no more words than things. If there is a surplus of language, a "more" which is left after the world has been organized, this "more" can only be without sense, without meaning. In one of his few critical essays (*Mityzacja rzeczywistości*, 1936) Schulz would rather have it the other way round:

We commonly regard the word as the shadow of reality, as its reflection. A reversal of this proposition would be more appropriate: reality is the shadow of the word. Philosophy is in fact philology. It is a deep and creative examination of the word.⁴⁵

As a result of this reversal the fragments of truth Milton wanted to recognize and eventually reconstruct become, for Schulz, the Word. The agency of a Franz Joseph, of the organizing principle, or power, of discourse has torn the "thousandfold and integral organism of the word into particular words [...] and its life" has been subjected to the rigors of practice and logic.⁴⁶ Thus has the word been cut off from the mythology which is recoverable only through a certain deconstruction of the "Austro-Hungarian" regime, through the illegal dreams of the emperor, through the traces of mythology still discernible upon the divided and ordered words. Milton's metaphors of the torn body of Osiris and of the building of the temple are used by Schulz to a quite different end. Where Milton's fragments are parts of the pure original, of the gloriously present body, in Schulz these fragments are parts of a construction, of yet another book. Human knowledge, according to Schulz, searches for the *ultimate* sense of the world on the top of its artificial scaffolding. Yet, the elements it uses for the building have already been used, they come from forgotten and broken histories.⁴⁷

The authentic original which Schulz's mythologic both hypothesizes and searches for will thus not be a presence in itself but a book which changes and grows, a book whose words will always mean more than what they mean. It will not even be a book but clashes of unofficial senses denied and silenced by Franz Joseph's prose. This illegal order to reading and writing is, for Schulz, God's order and thus God is also a heresiarch. When Franz Joseph's

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 55.

⁴⁵ Schulz, B., "Mityzacja rzeczywistości", in *Bruno Schulz. Proza*, Kraków 1973, p. 336.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 335.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 335.

prison seemed to be irrevocably shut, when [...] everything had conspired to keep silent about You [...] You, God, took upon yourself the odium of heresy and revealed this enormous, magnificent, colourful blasphemy to the world. Oh splendid Heresiarch!⁴⁸

God comes and reveals this heretical truth not through the Book, not through the *Bible* but through “the authentic” which can be anything – a letter, a scrap of paper. In the chapter *Spring* the authentic is Rudolph’s stamp album through which Schulz reads a world radically different from Franz Joseph’s dogma of oneness:

Canada, Honduras, Nicaragua, Abracadabra, Hipporabundia [...] I at last understood you, Oh God [...] You did not attempt to be precise; you said whatever came to your mind [*co Ci ślina na język przyniosła*]. You may have equally well have said Pamphibrass and Halleleevah.⁴⁹

The idea of God talking nonsense is not biblical, it seems, and in the beginning of *Sanatorium* we learn that the *Bible* is in fact “a fake copy, that reproduction, a clumsy falsification”.⁵⁰ The original, The Book Schulz searches for in *The Book* (the chapter) cannot be contained in the officially accepted and sealed version of the *Bible*. Schulz’s Authentic “lives and grows”.⁵¹ And this authentic cannot be a something, an identifiable book or text. If anything, it is a “scrap”, something which the official discourse denounces as the outside of the book:

We must stress a strange character of the script [*szpargalu*], which by now no doubt has become clear to the reader: it unfolds while being read, its boundaries open to all currents and fluctuations.⁵²

Schulz’s original turns out to be a scrap of paper (which either the editor or the translator corrects into “script”) with a strange story of Anna Csillag. Schulz reads this story by chance, over the arm of the servant Adela, and is blinded by the discovery:

This was The Book, its last pages, the unofficial supplement, the tradesmen’s entrance full of refuse and trash.⁵³

This “book” was lying there all the time, and Adela tells him that they “tear a few pages from it every day and take them to the butcher’s for packing meat or your father’s lunch [...]”⁵⁴

The way to the age of genius, to the unofficial supplement leads through the back-door and it does not really lead anywhere. The answer Schulz gives to the question of whether the age of genius ever occurred is quite deconstructive:

⁴⁸ Schulz, B., *Sanatorium...*, p. 34.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

“Yes and no. There are things that cannot occur with any precision”.⁵⁵ And so Lars Andemening’s search for the authentic manuscript of *The Messiah* in Cynthia Ozick’s story is undermined by the inevitable contamination of the origin which, like Schulz’s Book and his age of genius, is a text without any totality, something which cannot occur with any precision. The Messiah about whom Lars reads in the fake copy of *The Messiah* “resembled a book – The Book, in fact, that [appeared in] one of the tales in *Sanatorium pod Klepsydrą*”, writes Cynthia Ozick.⁵⁶

Milton’s Truth was a purity. Schulz’s truth is The Book, the unofficial supplement which contaminates the idea of purity, of things given once and for all. There are in fact so many ideals of purity, says Hartman, “– anthropological, religious, racial, scientific, literary – that they tend to cross each other and create a purity perplex impossible to disentangle completely. One can only show its power, its persistence”.⁵⁷ Schulz does not only show it, but in the chapter *Spring* he announces his victory over Franz Joseph’s prison house of language:

How greatly diminished you have become, Franz Joseph, and your gospel of prose! I looked for you in vain. At last I found you. You were among the crowd, but how small, unimportant, grey. You were marching with some others in the dust of the highway, immediately following South America, but preceding Australia, and singing together with others: Hosanna!⁵⁸

Franz Joseph is gone. But from near Vienna there later came an even better keeper of purity. Bruno Schulz was shot in the Jewish ghetto in Drohobycz on 19th November 1942 by a Nazi officer.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵⁶ Ozick, C., *The Messiah...*, p. 10.

⁵⁷ Hartman, G., *Criticism in the Wilderness. The Study of Literature Today*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1980, pp. 146-147.

⁵⁸ Schulz, B., *Sanatorium...*, p. 35.