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**ATTRACTION OF UGLINESS. A GROTESQUE BODY
IN THE POETRY OF JAN ANDRZEJ MORSZTYN**

The history of research dealing with the poetry of Jan Andrzej Morsztyn is very extensive, and it might seem that we have been given a complete picture of his works. However, all these studies are locked in the sphere drawn from research on such categories and phenomena as conceits, intertextuality or libertinism, and the poetics of lyric love poetry and the research on relationships between categories of ugliness and beauty, so valid in the macrocosm of Morsztyn's poetry, have been dealt with only occasionally, and have not been properly explained.¹

¹ The first, not very extensive remarks on ugliness in the poetry of Morsztyn can be found in the classic work of (E. Porębowicz, *Andrzej Morsztyn. Przedstawiciel baroku w poezji polskiej*, Kraków 1893). Porębowicz pointed to, among other things „nieokiełznana wyobraźnia poety” (“the unlimited imagination of the poet”) (34) – the force which was to drive his predilections to represent ugliness (37-38), the grounds for which, according to the researcher, were Morsztyn's preferences to use antithesis and contrast (38-43), and which was the result of his literary upbringing, the drive towards the miraculous and the magic, even „za cenę wykrzywienia natury, zdziwaczenia fantazyi, sfalszowania uczuć” (“at the price of distorting nature, estranged phantasies and falsifying of emotions”) (56). Jadwiga Kotarska's study can be regarded as the most important text dealing with the issue of tension between the category of beauty (the exquisite) and ugliness (plebeian-Sarmatian poetics). (J. Kotarska, *Jedna czy dwie poetyki Jana Andrzeja Morsztyna*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Prace Historycznoliterackie” 1974, no. 3, 113-134). Kotarska showed there the connections between Morsztyn's courtly poetry and picaresque and plebeian literature. (118-119), and stressed the relationship between two styles of Morsztyn (high and low) and

One of the reasons for this is the very character of ugliness itself, which, defined as the lack of beauty, is characterized by a particular kind of mystery determined by its inferior status in relation to the assumptions of the Grand Theory of Beauty.² This deprives ugliness of independence and sentences it to a form of non-existence, “lack projecting existence”; in other words it can be recognized as a deficit of beauty, which distributes aesthetic satisfaction. Aristotle had similar intuitions in *Poetics*. He interpreted the category of ugliness as a source which gives sensual pleasure to a recipient:

the important role of descriptions of defects of beauty in his lyric poetry (123). She also recognized sources of his representations of ugliness: traditions of epigrams and „sarmacka rubasznosc” (“Sarmatian ribaldry”) (140), and the special affection of the people of the Baroque for conceits, vulgarity and obscenity” (141). In another text J. Kotarska commented on the ways in which Morsztyn coped with “standard fossilizations” of literary conventions, and how he disintegrated and broke them, in his way towards independence, including independence from beauty understood in an orthodox manner. (See, Eadem „Kastalskie zdroje Muz”. *Z dziejów topiki Apollińskiej*, in: Eadem, *Theatrum mundi. Ze studiów nad poezją staropolską*, Gdańsk 1998, 179-196). There were also other researchers who at least touched upon issues of ugliness or even the Grotesque in Morsztyn’s poetry. For example, Barbara Fałęcka noted that in his drive towards the ocular he kept on appealing to the sense of sight, which she did not consider identical with imitation of tangible reality. On the contrary, according to Fałęcka, Morsztyn was running away from realism and he treated ocularity as a certain emphatic construct and a pose. (B. Fałęcka, *Jan Andrzej Morsztyn – poeta wirtuoz*, „Pamiętnik Literacki” 1977, no. 3, 147-165; Eadem, *Sztuka tworzenia: podmiot autorski w poezji kunsztownej polskiego baroku*, Wrocław 1983, passim). Alina Nowicka-Jeżowa stressed the fact that the conceit was used by Morsztyn to create ugliness and the Grotesque (A. Nowicka-Jeżowa, *Jan Andrzej Morsztyn i Giambattista Marino. Dialog poetów europejskiego baroku*, Warszawa 2000). The observations of Mirosława Hanusiewicz, should also be foregrounded. She stated *expressis verbis*, that Morsztyn’s aesthetic sensitivity was leaning, in its trend towards the ocular, in the direction of the Grotesque. (M. Hanusiewicz, *O poincie, Marcjalisie i tajemnicach wrażliwości estetycznej Morsztyna*, in *Czytanie Jana Andrzeja Morsztyna*, ed. by D. Gostyńska and A. Karpiński, Wrocław 2000, 12).

² E. Szczęsna, *Perswazyjność piękna*, in *Wielka księga estetyki w Polsce. Wizje i re-wizje*, ed. by K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków 2007, .266.

Są przecież takie rzeczy, jak np. wygląd najbardziej nieprzyjemnych zwierząt czy trupów, na które patrzymy z uczuciem przykrości, z przyjemnością natomiast oglądamy ich szczególnie wiernie wykonane podobizny. A wynika to stąd, że poznanie sprawia najwyższą przyjemność nie tylko filozofom, lecz również wszystkim ludziom³.

So it is aporia which is striking here: the object of judgement, which at first causes unpleasantness, may lead to overcoming of repulsion, and thanks to the cognitive value, may lead to pleasure.⁴ We see here symptoms of problems which the notion of ugliness brings to aesthetics—the imperative, according to Mieczysław Wallis, “not to identify what is not beautiful with what is ugly, or even more so, with what is not aesthetic.”⁵

Reflections over aesthetic categories can be found in Horace and Seneca, whose writings Morsztyn knew well, but also in his own *Lutnia* (*A Lute*), where the leading strategy of description is the correlation of ugliness with comic elements.⁶ Ugliness neutralized in this way does not cause aversion, similarly to the Aristotelian cognition; it places the estimated object in the sphere of the grotesque.⁷ The misshapen and almost monstrous body of Falstaff is closer to farce than tragedy, while Hugo's Hunchback—not presented in a comic way—awakens remorse and compassion. Therefore, connections of comic and ugly elements lead to abomination being replaced by laughter. Of course, this is a banal act, well known in the classical literary tradition. It is

³ Arystoteles, *Poetyka*, tłum. H. Podbielski, Wrocław 1983, s.10.

⁴ P. Jaroszyński, *Spór o piękno*, Kraków 2002, 261. See also S. Ossowski, *Dwie koncepcje wartości* in Idem, *Wybór pism estetycznych*, ed. by B. Dziemidok, Kraków 2004, 92-95.

⁵ M. Wallis, *O przedmiotach estetycznie brzydkich*, in Idem *Wybór pism estetycznych*, ed. by T. Pękała, Kraków 2004, s. 28.

⁶ See, for example Horacy, *In anum libidinosam*, in Idem, *Dzieła wszystkie*, vol. 1, ed. and transl. by O. Jurewicz, Wrocław 1986, s. 409; Seneka, *Apocolocyntosis*, w: R. Graves, *Klaudiusz i Messalina*, tłum., L. Joachimowicz, Katowice 2004, s. 562-579. Cf. arguments of E. Porębowicz on Morsztyn's literary education: E. Porębowicz, *Andrzej Morsztyn*, 56.

⁷ Cf. L. Golden, *Comic Pleasure*, „Hermes” 1987, no. 2, 174.

no wonder, therefore, that we can find it in Morsztyn's paraphrase of Martial's epigram:

Paweł się kocha w Zośce, a niech mi odpuści,
 Nie masz w czym, nos ma krzywy, zęby jak czeluści,
 Łeb goły, dłuższa łokciem jedna drugiej nogi,
 Pazury jak do lutnie, na grzbiecie garb srogi;
 Jeszcze oko niedawno straciła w chorobie
 Ona na jedno oko ślepa, on na obie.⁸

Na Pawła, Lut. 120

Martial's, in the original version, associated Quintus' love of non-beauty with stupidity, while Morsztyn associated it with inadequate seeing.⁹ The experience of ugliness destabilizes our expectations towards attraction; the resonance is here replaced by dissonance and harmony by disintegration.¹⁰ The lover is charmed by his beloved, although her look is far removed from the classical ideal of beauty, and ugliness in this presentation exceeds beyond shallow recognition of non-beauty.¹¹ The focus is put on the fact that binary reception of things aesthetic in the categories of conventional opposition beauty-ugliness distracts our attention from finesse, which is revealed

⁸ All quotations come from the edition of Leszek Kukulski *Wszystkie (J. A. Morsztyn, *Utwory zebrane*, ed. by L. Kukulski, Warszawa 1971)*. The following abbreviations are used: *Lutnia – Lut.*; *Fraszki – Fr.* "Paweł is in love with Zośka, I hope he will forgive me,/Not to worry, her nose is crooked, teeth like abysses./Head naked, one leg longer by a cubit than the other,/Harsh claws, big hunch on her back,/Moreover, she has lately lost an eye in illness,/She is blind in one eye, he in two."

⁹ Cf. Martial's epigram (III, 8): „»Thaida Quintus amat«. Quam Thaida? »Thaidam luscam«. / Unum oculum Thais non habet, ille duos". M.V. Martialis, *Epigramaton liber tertius*, ed. A. Fussi, Zürich-New York 2006, 162.

¹⁰ See, for example, G. Hagman, *On Ugliness*, „Psychoanalytic Quarterly" 2003, no. 4, 958; M. Głowiński, *Groteska jako kategoria estetyczna*, in *Groteska*, ed. by M. Głowiński, Gdańsk 2003, 13.

¹¹ Cf. E. Goble, *Facing the Ugly Face*, „Phenomenology & Practice" 2011, no. 2, 7.

in the place where these two notions meet.¹² The old "rhetoric of monstrosity" allowed writers to remain independent. This was never offered by aesthetic conservatism—it allowed for expression and "a story", while "attraction" could often limit them.¹³ When we return to the figure of Falstaff, we will not have problems with recognition of sources of his sluggishness, while when we ask questions about the source of Helen of Troy's beauty, we will not receive any answers. The grotesque allows for the same—let us keep for a while to this laconic definition of it—ugliness made functional in comic and fantastic contexts.¹⁴

At the bottom of the grotesque we have the obliteration of the border between the body and the world, claimed Mikhail Bakhtin, and the crucial functions of the grotesque body are performed by protrusions and holes, which are a transgressive medium.¹⁵ And such is also the grotesque body in the poetry of Morsztyn—a tool in a dialogue with the conventions of understanding beauty:

Jagody aż przez zęby do języka wpadły,
Oczy jak wróble gniazda łez i gnoju pełne,
Stawy porozciągane, członki niezupełne,
Boki zapadłe właśnie jak doły do rzepy,
Nogi się powłączają jak stłuczone cepy,
Pojrzenie krzywouste i nos zakrzywiony
W gębę patrzy, na straży zębom postawiony;

¹² R. Lorand, *Beauty and Its Opposites*, „The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism” 1994, no. 4, 399.

¹³ Cf. J. Ziolkowski, *Avatars of Ugliness in Medieval Literature*, “The Modern Language Review” 1984, no. 1, 10; L. Samuels, *Introduction to Poetry and the Problem of Beauty*, “Modern Language Studies” 1997, no. 27, 1.

¹⁴ “What is ugly, at times causes aesthetic satisfaction in us, if it strikes strongly at our phantasy through its peculiarity, its distortion from a norm or a type. Then we speak of things strange, queer, grotesque, sometimes of things fantastic, horrible, eerie, creepy, having in mind, in all these case, some positive aesthetic value See M. Wallis, *O przedmiotach estetycznie brzydkich*, 34.

¹⁵ M. Bakhtin, *Twórczość Franciszka Rabelais’a a kultura ludowa średniowiecza i renesansu*, transl. by A. i A. Goreniewie, Warszawa 1975, s. 435.

Pouciekały przecię, a te, co zostały,
Color di merda barwę na się przyodziały.

w. 181-190

[...]
 Własnaś mumija żywa albo obieszony
 Ścierw i na szubienicy trzy lata wędzony.

w. 205-206

Nieobiecany kqsek, Fr. 28¹⁶

The figure of Falstaff, a prime incarnation of the grotesque body, breaks barriers of the human form, forcing an audience to consort with the figure combining the comic and the horrifying. It entertains, but if we are to give it more realism, it would be closer to horror than to comedy. Morsztyn showed in his poetry an amalgam of peculiarities, a procession of maimed, decomposing bodies. Their protrusions, just like the nose from Gogol's short story, lead to autarchy, autonomy, which can be identified with a leaving of the body, with the beginning of a new life or death beyond it. Anyway, no one has ever claimed that parts of the body must separate from the trunk in an independent manner; in an act of brutality the grotesque 'may' sever them in a violent way.¹⁷ We can see this, for example, in the epigram "O Janku" ("About Johnny") (Fr, 4), where dramatic segmentation performed in the depicted world, on the level of the narration, is not treated very seriously. Grotesque figures combine in themselves elements from different worlds, the human shape is not so much distorted as destroyed and rebuilt according to new rules. What is important is that this deformation is not final. It never stops, and one of its most important features is constant becoming.¹⁸ This

¹⁶ "Cheeks have fallen through teeth to the tongue,/Eyes like sparrows' nest full of tears and dung,/ Joints overstretched, limbs not complete,/Sides sunken as turnips' holes,/Legs struggling like broken flails,/The glance lopsided and the nose crooked,/Turned towards the mug, as a guardian of teeth,/Yet, they ran away, anyway,/These which are left have taken on *Color di merda*./[...]/You are a living mummy, or a hanged,/Carcass, Smoked for three years on a gibbet."

¹⁷ F.K. Barash, *Definitions: Renaissance and Baroque, Grotesque Construction and Deconstruction*, "Modern Language Studies" 1983, no. 2, 60.

¹⁸ An example of such a "(non)transformation" is the figure of Gregor Samsa from Kafka's famous *Metamorphosis*. The protagonist at the same time is and

unbearable mobility of bodies defines Morsztyn's grotesque: we will not find in his writings representations of ugliness *sensu stricto*. It should be pointed out here that ugliness itself is the category, the border of which could easily be drawn when it appears in a work in an autonomous way. It does not create tensions; it is a one dimensional picture, vulgar, repulsive.¹⁹ It becomes attractive aesthetically only when an author allows ugliness to be confronted with some form of beauty, when s/he places it in the sphere of either the lack of precision or the grotesque, as Morsztyn did in this poem:

Filis, ta broda, w którejnosisz zęby,
Choć ci zasiadła największą część gęby,
Przecię jest to znak twej hojnej urody:
Półtory ćwierci od ust koniec brody.

l. 1-4

[...]

I zda mi się być, pod tak kształtnym nosem,
Duży podstawek pod słabym kolosem.
Hojna natura, wymyślna mistrzyni,
Kiedy cud z ciebie, cud gładkości czyni,
Chciała-ć z potrzebnej w kształcie twym uwagi
Dać z przodku brodę, z tyłu garb dla wagi.²⁰

l. 7-12

Na brodę jednej paniej, Lut. 59

is not a worm/man, through which his daily order is in the state of suspension between "normality" and the macabre. Cf. S.-L. Chao, *Rethinking the Concept of the Grotesque*. Crashaw, Baudelaire, Magritte, Oxford 2010, 8.

¹⁹ "If [...] an object creates constant repulsion in us, it only causes aesthetic annoyance, in which case we face an object aesthetically ugly or simply non aesthetic. Cf. M. Wallis, *O przedmiotach estetycznie brzydkich*, 28.

²⁰ "Filis, this beard in which you have your teeth,/Although it has taken the biggest part of your mug,/Yet it is a sign of your generous beauty,/One and a half quarter of the beard to your mouth,/And it seems to me that under this shapely nose,/a large foundation under a weak colossus,/Generous nature, exquisite master,/When it makes you into a miracle of beauty,/Wanted in this manner,/To give you a beard up front and a hump at the back".

Ugliness articulated through protractions of a chin and a hump dominates over beauty articulated in epideictic rhetoric, refined hendecasyllable poem and the tradition of *le blason*. However, the transformation is not complete. After all, remnants of attraction keep on fighting with the forces of the monster. And although this “fight” creates a new, grotesque order, it is beauty which seems to be winning. Let us admit it, this is a Pyrrhic victory, but it is still decisive in the situation where the interest of the audience is at stake. The representation of ugliness draws attention because it is explicated by the putative beauty of an unseen bosom and a shapely nose. The dissonance which is created in this way makes it more difficult to decide what sort of notion/picture we are dealing with. The transformation has stopped, and the protrusion—although it has grown metaphorically and literally above “attraction”—is still far away from the ultimate entrapment.

However, from the perspective of the “stopped transformation” it is the famous “Niestatek” (“Inconstancy”) which is most interesting as it clearly shows the ambivalence of aesthetic categories:

Your eyes are fire, your brow a looking glass,
 Hair – gold, teeth – pearls, skin – buttermilk surpass,
 Mouth is a coral, cheeks are lavender,
 While you, my young lady, with me concur.
 But when we quarrel, your cheeks turn leprous,
 Mouth – a pit, cheeks – pale white lead in excess,
 Teeth – a nag’s bone, hair – web of a spider,
 Your brow – a mangle, eyes – ashy powder.

“Inconstancy”²¹

Beauty was described here according to old rhetorical norms, which can be found, for example, in the writings of Godfried de Vinsauf

²¹ Transl. by Michael Mikoś, http://staropolska.pl/ang/baroque/JA_Morsztyn/Inconstancy_01.php3

or *Meteo de Vednome*.²² The most striking element of the poem's structure is not, as might seem, divergence of aesthetic categories, but the very representation of ugliness.²³ According to the convention of *descriptio corporis*, which ordered to start a description of a woman's beauty from the upper parts of the body, the poem "Inconstancy" begins with compliments on the eyes, and then, with the application of chiasmus, the constituents of beauty are reversed.²⁴ Antithetical lists are an impulse which creates tension, an attempt to impress a reader with a conceit.²⁵

The grotesque elements in Morsztyn's writing point to chaos. They distort reality, drawing our imagination into the horrible world of deformation in which laughter is no longer natural; it is devoid of joy and becomes part of the defensive stance.²⁶ The grotesque pictures merge and push a reader in the direction of madness—this inhuman element implicated by the grotesque.²⁷ According to Wolfgang Kayser, it is always connected with fear, but it is not fear of death but fear of life that is the most human of all fears. Being exposed to the grotesque, we realize that there is no escape from

²² Cf. R. Pernoud, *Kobieta w czasach katedr*, transl. by I. Badowska, Warszawa 1990, 100-103; Godfryd z Vinsauf, *Nowa poetyka*, transl. by D. Gacka, Warszawa 2007, s. 56-57.

²³ D. Gostyńska, *Poeta, paradoksy i panny*, w: *Czytanie Jana Andrzeja Morsztyna*, 83.

²⁴ J. Kotarska, *Erotyk staropolski. Inspiracje i odmiany*, Wrocław 1980, 195.; M. Hanusiewicz, *Pięć stopni miłości. O wyobraźni erotycznej polskiej poezji barokowej*, Warszawa 2004, . 85. On *descriptio corporis* see R. Grześkowiak, *Gry wyobraźni: piersi uciśnione*, in *Idem, Amor curiosus. Studia o osobliwych tematach dawnej poezji erotycznej*, Warszawa 2013, 15.

²⁵ J. Kotarska, *Erotyk staropolski*, 199.

²⁶ Cf. On theoretical aspects of the Grotesque: E. Rosen, *Innovation and Its Reception: The Grotesque in Aesthetic Thought*, "SubStance" 1990, no. 2/3, . 127; L. B. Jennings, *Termin „groteska”*, 47; J. Onimus, *Groteskowość a doświadczenie świadomości*, transl. by K. Falicka, w: *Groteska*, 75.

²⁷ W. Kayser, *Próba określenia istoty groteskowości*, trans. by R. Handke, in *Groteska*, 23.

the absurd: horror and fear are poignant.²⁸ Both comic elements and not-beautiful objects (destruction, chaos, decomposition, old age) are natural and unconstrained elements of grotesque reality. In the case of Morsztyn's grotesque, it is made functional mostly by deformed bodies and by the very attitude of the poet to reality, in which doubts, lack of certainty, madness, inertia and coincidence are founded on comic elements. The claim by Onimus could offer an intriguing context to it: the grotesque is to appear when laughter is the only reaction to reality.²⁹ Maybe this "guffaw" is the result of man's challenge to fear. At the end of anger, helplessness and fear there comes black humour, "terrorizing laughter", full of cynicism and which "does not exclude poetry and pathos."³⁰ If we follow this path, we will see that the grotesque may be treated as a crossroads, where two main roads converge: of disorientation and acceptance.³¹

It is often claimed—and this influences the way in which Morsztyn's writings are treated in this text—that Kayser's and Bakhtin's views on the grotesque are mutually exclusive and that attempts to reconcile them would lead to logical contradictions.³² Let us briefly summarize these two positions: Kayser associated the grotesque with such reactions of a recipient as laughter laced with fear, sense of danger, alienation, disorientation, while Bakhtin stressed its cathartic character. For Kayser the grotesque meant exorcising gloomy reality; for Bakhtin it meant disinterested laughter. They focused on different aspects of the grotesque because they used different research material. Kayser analysed it through the poetry of German Romantics and Modernists, while Bakhtin used Rabelais' prose and old folk culture. After all, it

²⁸ Ibid., 24;

²⁹ G. Harpham, *The Grotesque: First Principles*, "The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism" 1976, no. 4, 463-464.

³⁰ J. Onimus, *Groteskowość*, 75-76.

³¹ J. Speina, *Groteska literacka*, in Idem, *Typy świata przedstawionego w literaturze*, Toruń 2009, 45.

³² Cf. *Groteska, Groteskowość*, in *Słownik literatury polskiej XX wieku*, ed. by A. Brodyka et al., Wrocław 1993, = 345-361; M. Wołk, *Groteska i pierwsza osoba*, „Ruch Literacki” 2014, no. 2, 141.

cannot be denied that the Grotesque can take on different forms, that it is not only that the probable sources of the Grotesque can change or stimuli to its formation, but also its relations with attitudes and ideals of writers and the function prescribed to it by an author. The same is true for a recipient. One reader may treat Kafka's *Metamorphosis* as the frivolous story of a man transformed into a bug, while it may cause deep fear in another reader, either because of the possible entomophobia, or because of a deep conviction about the fragility of human nature, etc.³³ Therefore, I would not call Bakhtin's and Kayser's positions mutually exclusive. On the contrary, I think they are complementary, exposing two different faces of the Grotesque, which were created in different stages of the evolution of this notion.

Morsztyn's versions of the Grotesque can be situated in the period of the stylistic and functional "reorientation" of this phenomenon. For obvious reasons it is more similar to the ancient tradition and the tradition of Rabelais (which Bakhtin wrote about), but it is a step ahead of them, and it heralds a lack of order and fear typical of "the mature Grotesque".³⁴ To a certain extent these versions support Geoffrey Harpham's theory, according to which each Grotesque is a structure built on the foundation of polarisation.³⁵ Harpham

³³ Cf. P. Fingesten, *Delimitating the Concept of the Grotesque*, "The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism" 1982, no. 4, 425. Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, which I have recalled many times, is an excellent example of the polysemy/ambiguity/nebulosity of the category of the grotesque. S.-L. Chao (see footnote number 20) reads it as one more example of "monstrous" imagination, the merging of the fantastic with the real, while for Deleuze and Guattari "Gregor, sentenced to becoming-an-animal undergoes secondary 'oedepalization' (caused by his family) which leads to his death." Cf. S.-L. Chao, *Rethinking the Concept of the Grotesque*, 10; G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Kafka. Ku literaturze mniejszej*, transl. by A.Z. Jaskander and K.M. Jaskander, Kraków 2016.

³⁴ Each revolution in perception of aesthetic notion is in fact a story about man removing himself from the classical tradition. See more on this in A. Zeidler, *O reinterpretacji tradycji estetycznej – na przykładzie koncepcji Gadamera*, in *Reinterpretacja klasyki*, ed. by K. Wilkoszewska i B. Żmudziński, Kraków 1990, 49-57.

³⁵ G. Harpham, *The Grotesque*, 462.

claimed that *Death in Venice* is a grotesque text, because it is based, to the smallest detail, on dissonance, and that Gustav von Aschenbach's perception shows the distortion of the world typical of the Grotesque.³⁶ Yet, not each type of contrast serves the Grotesque in a direct way, and that is why it is difficult to regard it as an independent criterion. It should, however, be stressed that to a certain extent, according to the intuitions of Edward Porębowicz, these "relations of contrasts" should be taken into account while analyzing the grotesque character of Morsztyn's poetry, if we were to take the example of the sonnet "Do Trupa" ("To a Corpse"), made notorious thanks to school textbooks. Parallel descriptions of the poem's protagonists and attempts to enliven the vision of decomposition could be treated as a barely audible accent, an afterimage of this category, not as its explication, as Harpham might have seen it.

Although these interpretations concern the most characteristic features of the Grotesque, accepting it as a tool-category to analyse Morsztyn's poetry might enrich the research perspectives from which it has been perceived. The most promising fields of possible research seem to be, with the application of Kayser's distinctions, the search for relations between representations of the Grotesque and madness in "Kanikuła" ("Holidays"), and also perspective analysis of these relationships with the poetics of conceits, an aesthetics of the miraculous and the category of *ingenium* in the writings of other poets of this period. It is a fact that Morsztyn's poetry creates an unreal universe, in which what is real is merged with what is fantastic, and grotesque situations merge with everyday life. Morsztyn treated both conventions and aesthetic categories in a very offhand way. Thanks to transgression, the world of his poetry is similar to a stronghold, the walls of which cannot be crushed, either by monotony or by mediocrity. This world is ruled by an unstoppable invention which creates artificial beings just as easily as it creates tough reality. Morsztyn touched the gestures of every-day life. The lyrical situations in his poetry are connected with this kind of life, revealing

³⁶ Ibidem.

themselves in conversations, meetings, sexual acts and reflections on the reality around. The conventions introducing the Grotesque and tension do not make this world less real; phantasms and creeps are motivated as strongly as descriptions of the kisses or physical aspects of protagonists. It is interesting that both these aspects can be questioned, because his poetry is a game, a mosaic of the real and the marvellous, a game so interesting because even descriptions of madness, after all a state which cannot be comprehended by reason, are intellectual constructs; conceits. Therefore, it is quite apt to recall a synecdoche of Jean Onimus, a poet, which can be aptly used to summarize Morszytn's inclinations to make aesthetic categories topical: "a clown can make everyday gestures look surprising, new, incredible – is not it also a proper function of a poet?"³⁷.

Is not it also yet another function of the Grotesque?

³⁷ J. Onimus, *Groteskowość*, 84.