

POP CULTURE AGAINST GRAVITY. ON LIGHTNESS IN ADVERTISING

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The importance of the opposition of heaviness and lightness for the field of humanities, including reflections on various types of messages, discourses, styles or textual forms, still seems not to be fully recognized and appreciated. As one might assume, this gap has been filled to a considerable extent by the collective monograph *Ciężar i lekkość w kulturze. Estetyka, poetyka, style myślenia* [en. Heaviness and Lightness in Culture. Aesthetics, Poetics, Styles of Thought] (2016).¹ The cited publication – as extensive as it is multifaceted – does not, however, contain chapters that would directly refer to advertising messages, although it is by no means in short supply of studies on pop culture phenomena. In this sketch, I will try to fill this deficiency to a certain extent, considering, among other things, the question of the relationship between lightness and creativity, which characterizes a significant number of persuasive messages. For practical reasons, I will generally focus on examples of visual advertising,² although I am confident that the findings are more or less applicable to a broader context.

¹ *Ciężar i lekkość w kulturze. Estetyka, poetyka, style myślenia* [en. Heaviness and Lightness in Culture. Aesthetics, Poetics, Styles of Thought], ed. by B. Pawłowska-Jądrzyk, Scientific Publishers UKSW, Warsaw 2016, pp. 454.

² Visual advertising consists of still images that are usually accompanied by text (such as press advertising, advertising leaflets, posters, placards and billboards). In visual advertising, the primary meaning-making role is played by the image, which is sometimes reinterpreted by the word, situated in the background. See more in: B. Pawłowska-Jądrzyk, *Zarys poetyki uwodzenia. O strategiach perswazyjnych w reklamie wizualnej* [en. The Outline of the Poetics of Seduction. On Persuasive Strategies in Visual Advertising], Wydawnictwo Naukowe UKSW, Warsaw 2021.

The prominent Italian novelist Italo Calvino's reflections on literature and aesthetics, formulated at the end of his creative path, emphasized the anthropological conditions of writing and saw literary art as "the search for lightness in response to the weight of life".³ The author of the *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, which begins with an essay entitled *Lightness*, emphasized, above all, the existential function of literature. In his view, the art of the word contains in its richness the "styles and forms that can change our image of the world",⁴ allowing us to rise above the weight of reality – and for this reason, among others, the author believed that it should not lose its significance in the third millennium.

While recognizing that the fundamental difference between the functions of literary works and advertising texts is of such obvious nature that it requires no proof, and while approving of the intuitive yet exploratory nature of the *Memos*, I must point out that – firstly – the understandings of the category of lightness proposed by Calvino,⁵ can also be applied to other types of communication, including advertising, at least partially. Secondly, I would like to make a critical remark on what I consider to be the Italian writer's overly selective association of lightness with verbal material, i.e. his treatment of this category as an attribute specific to literature.⁶ (Reflecting on the legacy of Lucretius and Ovid, Calvino closes with the conclusion that "lightness is something that emerges during the writing process, thanks to the linguistic means of expression, the means proper to a poet (...)"⁷) It seems that other types of communication, such as visual advertising, present evidence that the aforementioned statement is without doubt excessively one-sided.

³ I. Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, transl. A. Wasilewska, Wydawnictwo Marabut, Warsaw 1996, pp. 30.

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 13.

⁵ Calvino speaks of lightness in three distinctive meanings, recognizing it: 1) "as a linguistic relief, whereby meanings lifted by a verbal material, as if stripped of their weight, take on the same diluted consistency"; 2) "as a description of a course of reasoning or of a psychological process in which various elusive subtleties play a part, or any description that brings in a fair amount of abstraction"; 3) "as a figurative image that takes on the meaning of an emblem, as in the case of Boccaccio's novella [Decameron, VI, 9], when the frail Cavalcanti leaps over a tombstone in a single move". I. Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, op. cit., pp. 20, 21, 22.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

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In the Polish language, *ciężki* and *lekki* [en. heavy and light] are ambiguous adjectives, a pair of antonyms, which “in their grammatical characteristics are somehow predestined to be a carrier of evaluation, and thus of valuation”.⁸ The frequency with which they appear in advertising slogans is not surprising; this also applies to the corresponding nouns – *ciężkość* and *lekkość* [en. heaviness and lightness]. These words – somewhat paradoxically – generally appear in adverts for easily digestible food products (Almette cream cheese – “Tak lekko i przyjemnie” [en. So light and pleasant]), weight-loss products or products designed to counter gastric problems (“Wspomaga trawienie i uwalnia od uczucia ciężkości, dając radość z każdego posiłku. Verdin. Poczuj lekkość po jedzeniu” [en. Helps with digestion and relieves the feeling of heaviness, giving joy with every meal. Verdin. Feel the after-meal lightness]), as well as chocolate sweets (Wedel Royal Milk – “Lekkość na okrągło” [en. Lightness all round]). It is also not unusual to come across them in advertisements for cosmetics, which are sometimes praised for their “rozkoszna lekkość konsystencji” [en. delightful lightness of texture] (Biodermic face cream), hair care products that – as the manufacturers even routinely assure us – “nie obciążają włosów” [do not weigh hair down], or various dietary supplements designed to improve our wellbeing and support our health (“Wystarczy jedna saszetka dziennie, by poczuć lekkość w każdym ruchu. Flexistav. Zdrowe i mocne stawy” [en. Just one sachet a day is enough to feel the lightness in every movement. Flexistav. Healthy and strong joints]). What is symptomatic is that in all the cited examples of advertising, lightness and what is light is valued unequivocally positively,⁹ pointing to the most desirable features or effects of a product, deluding us with the promise of easy satisfaction, the prospect of making dreams come true, relaxation, a carefree escape from the “constraints of the body”, and often also the possibility of immersing ourselves in a world of fantasy and fairy tales.

⁸ M. Rogalska, *Opozycja ciężki – lekki w polszczyźnie* [en. The Opposition of Heavy and Light in Polish Language], in: *Ciężar i lekkość w kulturze* [en. Heaviness and Lightness in Culture], op. cit. p. 20.

⁹ In contexts other than advertising, this is not always the case. In the Polish language, in the case of the adjective *lekki* [en. light], one can speak of an internal differentiation of valuation: next to the meaning “subtle, delicate”, which has positive connotations, there is a negative one – “unstable, light-hearted, flighty”. M. Rogalska, op. cit., p. 29.



Fig. 1-6. Top: stills from a spot advertising Almette cream cheese; a poster encouraging participation in the *Piórko* competition, 2020. (Children’s book competition organized by Biedronka retail chain); Red Bull energy drink advert. Bottom: magazine advertisement for Samsung Galaxy in the Orange Love service package (high-speed mobile internet); leaflet advertising LUXMED hospital (Hernia Treatment Centre); magazine advertisement for Lipton tea

Symbolism researcher Juan Eduardo Cirlot points out that the sensation of lightness, to which “in the first order corresponds to the element of air”, is associated with “the trinity of sonority – transparency – mobility”.¹⁰ In visual advertising, lightness “enters” not only through slogans or other linguistic texts (product descriptions), but also – or even primarily – through images. Of fundamental importance in this respect are certainly the depictions of specific subject motifs (such as feathery clouds, airy, often transparent fabric, flying carpets, balloons, kites, birds, wings, feathers, down, etc.) and situational

¹⁰ J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, transl. I. Kania, Wydawnictwo Znak, Cracow 2007, p. 222; emphasis – B.P.J.

motifs (such as flight, levitation, floating, etc.), as well as certain poses, gestures or activities, which are traditionally associated with a feeling of absolute freedom, relaxation, joy (such as jumping, dancing, inhaling air with facial expressions that indicate relief, pleasure, satisfaction).

The most explicit application of this category in visual advertising is the use of the “figurative image”, which connotes lightness and, as Calvino puts it, “acquires the meaning of an emblem” (cf. figures 1-6). It is also quite common for ad designers to choose to suggest arbitrary (based on a surprising ground of comparison) analogies to the recipient of the message, or to try to evoke content that refers to more specialized (non-literal) meanings of lightness.

Figures 7-9 represent messages thematically related to the aviation industry, i.e. those that refer to floating in the air, flying. In the Soviet airline advertisement (fig. 7), the slogan, accompanied by a multicolored drawing alluding to folklore, is both simple and direct (“Latajcie samolotami Aeroflotu” [en. Fly Aeroflot planes]). Let us recall that Russian fairy tales abound with magical objects and magical helpers, such as horses, wolves, seven-mile shoes or flying carpets, which effortlessly carry the hero “beyond the ninth river”, helping to overcome obstacles and reach the desired goal.¹¹ The featured Aeroflot advertisement seduces the addressee by means of the suggested analogy between the flying carpet and the carrier’s air fleet, while directly appealing to the lightness (ease) embedded in the wonder of fairy tales and to the common nostalgia for childhood.¹² The image of the significance of the lightness emblem was also used in an advertisement for LOT Polish Airlines (fig. 9), representing employer branding aimed at shaping a positive image of the employer in a “creative and innovative”¹³ way. This objective is served by two complementary images of a stewardess (private and professional), including a photograph that expresses a passion, enthusiasm, and freedom of a young woman, shown in an acrobatic-dance hop, and an advertising slogan

¹¹ W. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, transl. S. Balbus, “Pamiętnik Literacki [en. Literary Memoirs]” 1968, v. 4, p. 213. See also: idem, *Historical Roots of Fairy-Tale*, transl. J. Chmielewski, Warsaw 2003, pp. 207-219.

¹² Robert Greene, *The Art of Seduction. A practical guide to the secrets of manipulation*, transl. P. Luboński, Warsaw 2019, pp. 44-45.

¹³ <https://marianchrzan.pl/project/lot-reklama-employer-branding/> [accessed on 8.02.2024]



Fig. 7-9. Soviet postcard advertising Aeroflot airline; Saudi Arabian Airlines magazine advertisement (2008); contemporary LOT advertisement (employer branding)

interpreting this photograph: “Praca, która pozwoli robić to, co kochasz” [en. A job that lets you do what you love].

In contrast, the Saudi Arabian Airlines ad (fig. 8) is based on a more sophisticated, though already conventionalized concept of an icon. It involves the use of two related semantic transformations – a hyperbola¹⁴ and a synecdoche (in a variant of *pars pro toto* – part instead of whole). The airline encourages people to take advantage of the numerous flights between London and Saudi Arabia, using photography that presents an imaginative cityscape in which buildings that are iconic in Asian cities (including the Burj al-Arab in Dubai, the Kingdom Centre in Riyadh) and European ones (the Palace of Westminster in the UK capital) stand side by side. This concept, using the imaginative effect of “connected cities/shrunken space/shortened time”, actually serves to suggest the extraordinary speed and ease of traveling with a particular carrier (thus tempting with the hope of making an air journey that is light – in the sense of “not heavy, free of obstacles, easy to bear”).

¹⁴ Hyperbola (exaggeration) is considered to be “the effect of the interaction of various clues and figures”. M. Głowiński, T. Kostkiewiczowa, A. Okopień-Sławińska, J. Sławiński, *Słownik terminów literackich* [en. A Dictionary of Literary Terms], ed. J. Sławiński, Cracow 1998, p. 197.

For this context, we should add that the airplane – that symbol of human victory over the forces of gravity and the resistance of matter – has also appeared in advertising for a long time as a component of aviatorial metaphors used to reinforce the persuasive power of the message by highlighting the category of lightness. A good example of this comes from Stéphane Pincas and Marc Loiseau's *A History of Advertising*. In the mid-1950s, the American automobile company Chrysler promoted a brand new limousine model, distinguished by its two-tone body and striking aerodynamic silhouette with distinctive wings on the sides (fig. 10). The texts advertising this model not only give hope that the '56 Plymouth provides an excellent driving experience (Driving Takes Wings), but also, in some way, prompt an imaginative re-evaluation of the car's ontic status,¹⁵ proclaiming that "Here's the Jet Age on Wheels".¹⁶ It is worth to additionally note that the upper parts of the presented poster feature a small silhouette of an aircraft and a slogan associating the promoted model with youth ('The car that's going places with the Young in Heart!'). There are grounds to believe that this further "relieved" the image of the advertised car (after all, youth is sometimes identified with an adventurous spirit, energy,

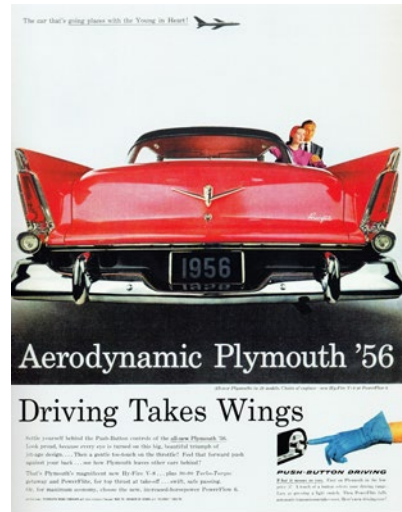


Fig. 10. Advertisement for the '56 Plymouth limousine

¹⁵ As the media text researcher argues, "in polysemiotic messages, the clear boundaries between metaphor, comparison and epithet are blurred". E. Szczęsna, *Poetyka mediów. Polisemiotyczność, digitalizacja, reklama* [en. Poetics of the Media. Polysemiotics, Digitalization, Advertising], Wydawnictwo UW, Warsaw 2007, p. 107. Thus, depending on the individual feeling of the recipient, the meaning of the juxtaposition in question can be reduced to a comparison (this car is like a jet), a metaphor (it's a car-jet), an epithet ("jet" power of the car).

¹⁶ S. Pincas, M. Loiseau, *A History of Advertising*, transl. W. Kroker, Taschen, Köln – Warsaw 2009, pp. 114-115.

freedom, and charming recklessness).¹⁷ Moreover, the fact that the poster in question was created at the time when the legend of the actor, rebel, and car enthusiast – the “eternally young” James Dean, was born¹⁸ – is probably not insignificant in this context.

The above advertisement for a ,56 Plymouth limousine is thus based on a valuational analogy between a car and an airplane – an analogy that carries connotations of lightness, desirable from the point of view of the persuasive power of the message. In structural terms, the situation is fundamentally different in the Dove confectionery advertisement (fig. 11), in which the two juxtaposed elements – the brown dress (literally) pouring down of a young woman with chestnut hair and the liquid chocolate – are linked by a relation typical of a hybrid metaphor¹⁹: they seem to be fused together, losing their independent existence and meaning (their connotations intermingle) to create an entirely new and alluring imaginary quality. The presented image – remarkably subtle and kept in subdued colors – is of such beauty and suggestiveness that it is really easy to believe that “our moment” with the Dove bar will in fact be something exciting, filled with sensations of lightness and elation.

¹⁷ I wrote about the theories connecting lightness with youth in a sketch dedicated to the works of W. Gombrowicz: B. Pawłowska-Jądrzyk, *Teoretycy i apologety lekkości w literaturze. Na marginesie „Pornografii” Witolda Gombrowicza* [en. Theorists and Apologists of Lightness in Literature. On the margin of Witold Gombrowicz’s “Pornography”, *Sztuka i Filozofia* [en. Art and Philosophy] 19-2001, pp. 164-174; also in: *Youth as “secret relieving alchemy”. W kręgu idei Witolda Gombrowicza* [en. In the circle of Witold Gombrowicz’s ideas], in: *Ciężar i lekkość w kulturze* [en. Heaviness and Lightness in Culture], op. cit. pp. 241-249.

¹⁸ James Dean (1931-1955) was a well-known enthusiast of fast cars, which cost him his life, which instantly turned him into an idol of American teenagers in the 1950s. A significant role in the actor’s image, apart from the jeans, was played by the red windbreaker (cf. the color of the car in the advertisement in question), interpreted by some scholars as a symbol of rebellion and youthful heroism. See P. Bellantoni, *If It’s Purple, Someone’s Gonna Die: The Power of Color in Visual Storytelling*, transl. M. Dańczyszyn, Wojciech Marzec Publishing, Warsaw 2010, p. 13; B. Pawłowska-Jądrzyk, *Szybkość wśród ideałów popkultury. O Jamesie Deanie w 60-tą rocznicę narodzin legendy aktora* [en. Speed among Pop Culture Idols. On James Dean on the 60th Anniversary of the Birth of the Actor’s Legend], in: *Szybkość w kulturze* [en. Speed in Culture], ed. by A. Smaga, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UKSW, Warsaw 2016, pp. 287-295.

¹⁹ E. Szczęsna, *Poetyka mediów* [en. Poetics of the Media], op. cit., pp. 87.

After all, beauty is a very strong “argument”,²⁰ which “grips the heart, takes the mind captive, and feeds the flames of emotion”.²¹

The advertisement for Deutsche Bank’s financial services (fig. 12) also makes use of a sophisticated hybrid metaphor, whereby the message encouraging customers to take up the Private Banking option is based on trans-semiotic relations²²: the imaginative picture of an armchair equipped with airplane engines, in the intriguing tone of “luminous black”,²³ and the accompanying words reinterpret each other. Thus, there is a reciprocal flow of meaning between the two layers of iconic and linguistic communication, which leads to a play on intellectual and sensory cognition and to a de-lexicalization of the metaphor, resulting in the figurative content inherent in the phraseology used (“jesteś wysoko” [en. You are on Top], “wznies się wyżej” [en. Get Higher], “[dwuosobowa Rada Doradców Deutsche Bank [en. Deutsche Bank’s Two-person Board of Advisors]] is the force that raises finance to a higher level”) becoming literal, while the “relieving” connotations of the representation are cleverly connected to the object of the advertisement.

Meanwhile, the Alior Bank advertisement (fig. 13) can be read as an iconic interpretation of the saying “time is money”, even though the slogan remains implicit. The visual metaphor,²⁴ based on the simple resemblance of two shapes – an organized wad of money and a wall calendar of the “rip-off” type – clearly points to this interpretation. This concept seems unusually

²⁰ “(...) Beauty is not only an object of contemplation, the goal of aesthetic experience (as in the fine arts), but it can also be, and increasingly is, a kind of application, an argument for something other than itself, a way of convincing someone of something”. E. Szczęsna, *Piękno. O sprawczości doświadczenia estetycznego* [en. Beauty. On the causality of aesthetic experience], in: *Enklawy wpływu pośredniego. O perswazji niewerbalnej w przekazach artystycznych* [en. Enclaves of Indirect Influence. On Nonverbal Persuasion in Artistic Messages], ed. B. Pawłowska-Jądrzyk, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UKSW, Warsaw 2023, p. 204.

²¹ N. Etkoff, *Survival of the Prettiest*, transl. D. Cieśla, Wydawnictwo W.A.B., Warsaw 2000, p. 7.

²² See E. Szczęsna, *Wprowadzenie do poetyki intersemiotycznej* [en. Introduction to Intersemiotic Poetics], in: *Intersemiotyczność. Literatura wobec innych sztuk (i odwrotnie)* [en. Intersemioticity. Literature Vis-à-Vis Other Arts (and Vice Versa)], ed. S. Balbus, A. Hejmej, J. Niedźwiedź, Universitas, Cracow 2004, p. 32 et seq.

²³ On the idea of black as light, read in: J. Gage, *Colour and Meaning*, transl. J. Holzman, A. Żakiewicz, Universitas, Cracow 2010, pp. 228-240 (ch. *Matisse’s Black Light*).

²⁴ On visual metaphor read in: J. Płażewski, *Język filmu* [en. Language of Film], Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, Warsaw 1982, p. 266.



Fig. 11-12. Hybrid metaphors in advertisements for the Dove candy bar and Deutsche Bank (Private Banking/Personal Banking)

clever, as it signals in passing the need to take action to achieve a goal (it indicates the need to tear up a piece of paper/ bill), what is more – and this brings us to one of the meanings of lightness – it reassures us in an inventive yet unpretentious way that for Alior Bank’s customers money is an easily attainable good (it is literally within arm’s length).

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As I have argued in more detail elsewhere,²⁵ the world depicted in advertising – which is clearly gravitating towards fairytale-like wonder (and consequently also towards a kind of lightness/ease)²⁶ – is often characterized by surprising

²⁵ B. Pawłowska-Jądrzyk, *Zarys poetyki uwodzenia* [en. Outline of the Poetics of Seduction], op. cit. pp. 41-71.

²⁶ “About the marvelous ease of the inner world of the fairy tale” wrote Dmitry Likhachev, conceiving it as the magical facilitation of the hero’s actions and the lack of resistance of the environment. Idem, *Świat wewnętrzny dzieła literackiego* [en. The Inner World of a Literary Work], transl. J. Faryno, “Pamiętnik Literacki” [en. Literary Memoirs] 1974, z. 4, pp. 253-267.



Fig. 13-14. Representations connoting lightness as an attribute of something that seems to require no effort (Alior Bank advertisement) and lightness as an attribute of something that weighs little or appears to do so (advertising leaflet for the dietary supplement Maxi3Vena)

inventiveness and boldness of association, and in this aspect seems to come close to the universe of art. (I am referring to the formalist understanding of art as a form of communication, which makes “defamiliarization” its principle, inclines to see things and phenomena “anew”, from a different angle than previously, in a new light – from a different angle or with a new and unexpected perspective – freeing them from the “automatism of perception”).²⁷ Among visual advertisements, there is no shortage of bold, expressive and eccentric representations, shattering the rational order of reality in a manner similar to the visions of the Surrealists (see the ZEN perfume advertisement depicting a woman in the form of an unraveling ribbon, writhing upwards like a golden snake; fig. 15), there are also toned-down and aesthetically sophisticated shots, surrounding the advertised object with an aura of classical

²⁷ V.B. Shklovsky, *Sztuka jako chwyt* [en. Art as a Ploy] [1917], transl. R. Łuźny, in: *Teorie literatury XX wieku. Antologia* [en. Theories of 20th Century Literature. An Anthology], ed. A. Burzyńska, M.P. Markowski, Wydawnictwo Znak, Cracow 2006.

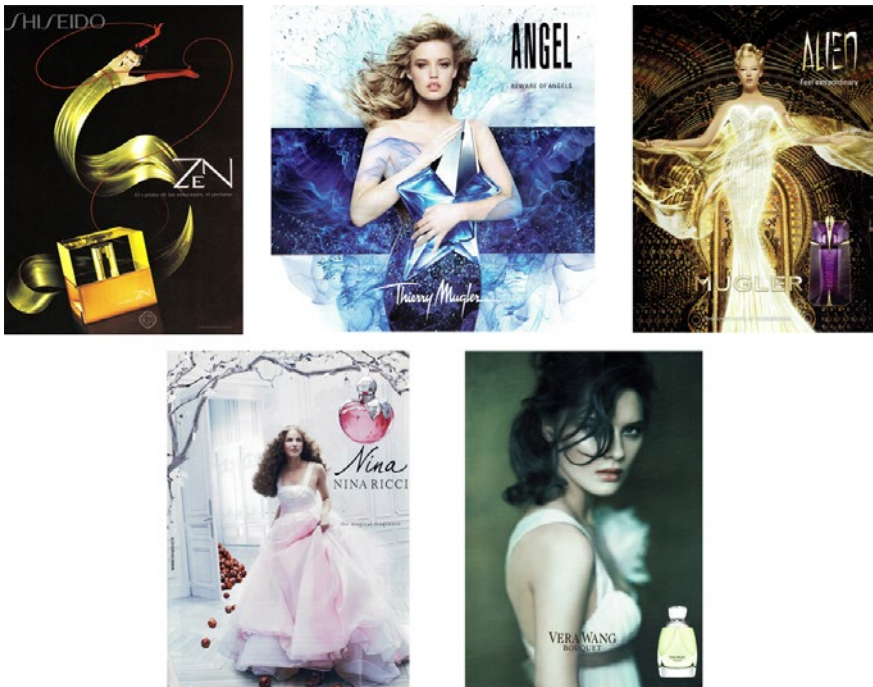


Fig. 15-19. Magazine advertisements for fragrances for women: Shiseido – Zen (“El camino de las emociones”); Thierry Mugler – Angel (“Beware of Angels”); Thierry Mugler – Alien (“Feel extraordinary”); Nina Ricci -Nina (“The magical fragrance”); Vera Wang – Bouquet

beauty, subtlety, and charm (see the Bouquet fragrance advert, which uses decidedly “soft” means of expression). It appears that in both types of communication described above, it is possible – even if only on the basis of Calvino’s concept – to find (various) manifestations of lightness.

The *Memos* author’s reflections regarding lightness in literature also include themes that I have not developed in my analysis of advertising message,²⁸ although I see the possibility of doing so, thus I would like to at least briefly outline them. In a nutshell, this would be lightness understood as: 1 – a “relief” of the material’s weight (Calvino speaks of linguistic material, but there is

²⁸ Neither do I elaborate in this sketch on the relationship of advertising lightness to comedy or self-irony.

nothing to prevent us from taking this issue further and relating the category of lightness also to characteristics of the image or – in the case of advertising spots – to music)²⁹; 2 – an openness to abstraction and the “various ungraspable subtleties” of description.³⁰

The correlation between the examples of visual advertisements referred to in this sketch and the category in question is more or less obvious, while the tone of these messages must be considered identical in terms of the value attributed to lightness (which, unlike in the Polish language³¹ – is unambiguously positive), whereas they differ in terms of its range of meanings. The creators of today’s advertising messages are undoubtedly particularly fond of selected meanings of lightness. In the area of “standard” content, lightness means first and foremost that which is “not heavy, easy to handle/do”; “weighing little or making such an impression”, “agile, mobile, not sluggish”. Besides, in persuasive messages, it is not uncommon to find more specialized content, oriented towards the emphasis of the association of lightness with the spheres of freedom, liberty, dreams, and fantasies, as well as with certain (invariably positive and directed at evoking a positive reaction) sensations, emotional states or states of mind. I believe that – given the extraordinarily broad spectrum of contextualization of lightness in texts representing the popular circulation of culture, its persuasively charged meanings and creative potential³² that is associated with it – it would be worth to further consider

²⁹ Cf. L. Masi, Co to jest „muzyka lekka” i „muzyka ciężka”? [en. What is “Light Music” and “Heavy Music”?, in: Ciężar i lekkość w kulturze [en. Heaviness and Lightness in Culture], op. cit. pp. 35-57.

³⁰ I. Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, op. cit., p. 21.

³¹ “Heavy admittedly has negative connotations attached to it in most cases (...), but negative valuation is also attached to the word light, as evidenced by such synonymous terms as vanity, unreasonable, frivolous, unworthy. What comes easily is usually considered unimportant, valueless, unreasonable or even undignified – e.g. in such Polish idioms as “spending money with a light hand (easily, without much thought)” or a “light piece of bread (easily earned)” [which can mean, among other things, “earning money through sex” (hence the former “lekka kobieta” [lit. “light woman”] and the contemporary “kobieta lekkich obyczajów” which means “prostitute, woman of loose morals”)]. M. Rogalska, *Opozycja ciężki – lekki w polszczyźnie* [en. The Opposition of Heavy and Light in Polish Language], in: Ciężar i lekkość w kulturze [en. Heaviness and Lightness in Culture], op. cit. p. 31.

³² On creative advertising and creativity in advertising see: R. Zimny, *Kreowanie obrazów świata w tekstach reklamowych* [en. Creating Images of the wWorld in Advertising Texts],

the role of this category in the process of the displacement of the traditional “culture of needs” by the “culture of desires”³³

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³³ Cf. *Kultura pragnień i horyzonty neoliberalizmu* [en. *Desire Culture and the Horizons of Neoliberalism*], eds W.J. Burszta, A. Kisielewski, Wydawnictwo Nauka i Innowacje, Poznań 2015.

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Sources of illustrations

Fig. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 – author’s archive

Fig. 1. <https://www.facebook.com/Almette.ser/videos/tak-lekko-i-przyjemnie-/512233429905188/> [accessed on 14.02.2024]

Fig. 2. https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=8b0fobb61a9c22c4&sxsrf=ACQVno_KrRzQYANU-W2hK3xwjt8i1ipsow:1707498757134&q=reklama+biedronka+dosi%C4%99gnij+marze%C5%84&tbm=isch&source=lnms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiy4P3G4j6EAxW3XfEDHRnbA6wQopQJegQIDBAB&biw=1366&bih=607&dpr=1 [accessed on 14.02.2024]

Fig. 3. https://www.google.com/search?q=red+bull+doda+ci+skrzyde%C5%82&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwiX9dzmn6uEAxXamfoHHSxxDcoQ2=-cCegQIABAA&oq=red+bull+doda+ci+skrzyde%C5%82&gs_l=lp=EgNpbWciGnJlZCBidWxsIGrvZGEgY-2kgc2tyenlkZcWCMgQQIqgnMgUQAiABEi2M1DwBlj3MHAAeACQAQGYAZg-CoAH7GqoBBzIwLjEwLjK4AQPIAQD4AQGKAgtnd3Mtd2l6LWltZ8ICBhAAGAcYHsICBBAAGB7CAGsQABiABBiXAxIDAcICBBAAGAPCAggQAiABBiX8A8ICBhAAGAGYHsICBxAAGIAEGBiIBgE&client=img&ei=8-nMZdevPnqz9u8PrOK1oAw&bih=607&biw=1366 [accessed on 14.02.2024]

Fig. 9. <https://marianchrzan.pl/project/lot-reklama-employer-branding/> [accessed on 14.02.2024]

Fig. 10. S. Pincas, M. Loiseau, *A History of Advertising*, transl. W. Kroker, Taschen, Köln – Warsaw 2009, p. 115.

Pop Culture against Gravity. On Lightness in Advertising

The author of the article (starting with the concept formulated by Italo Cavino in the *American Lectures*, which she reads critically) examines the manifestations and use of the category of lightness in persuasive messages. The analyzes of visual advertisements prove, among other things, that the creators of today's adverts saw various manifestations of lightness (both in terms of content and form) as a skillful way to express valuations and a convenient tool for creation. The study provides grounds for the recognition that not only literary works have the means to allow the viewer to "rise above the weight of reality" and enjoy "direct existence". The author suggests that – taking into account the extremely wide spectrum of contextualization of lightness in texts representing popular culture, its persuasive meanings and the creative potential associated with it – what would be worth to consider in more detail, is the role of this category in the process of replacing the traditional "culture of needs" by the "culture of desires".

Keywords: visual advertising, persuasive message, persuasion, heaviness and lightness, creativity in advertising, polysemiotics, iconic signs, Italo Calvino, category of lightness

Słowa kluczowe: reklama wizualna, przekaz perswazyjny, perswazja, ciężkość i lekkość, kreatywność w reklamie, polisemiotyczność, znaki ikoniczne, Italo Calvino, kategoria lekkości

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