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“TURN BACK IF POSSIBLE!”
On Fears Related to the “End” and Hopes for a “Continuation”
in Plays by Jarosław Jakubowski

According to Jakubowski, only a new insight into the fundamental philosophical issues can become a source of hope for the humanity. And hope, for its part, is always related to the actual experience of a given person and invokes the view of a human life as an existence turned towards the future, as well as the vision of the human being as ‘homo viator’ awaiting fulfillment at the end of his, or her, path.

THE PLAYWRIGHT

Jarosław Jakubowski (born in 1974), a valued Polish poet, novelist, journalist, and contributor to the nationwide bi-monthly literary magazine *Topos*, is also among the most interesting Polish playwrights of recent years. Jakubowski made his début in this profession with an on-stage reading of his play “Dom matki” [Mother’s House] in the Laboratorium Dramatu Theatre in Warsaw in 2007. He published two collections of plays,¹ some of which were also contributions to journals²; others proved themselves worthy the stage. Among the latter, the particularly successful premiere of “Generał” [The General],³ a story about the life of Wojciech Jaruzelski,⁴ is considered as one of the most

¹ See Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, “*Generał*” i inne dramaty polityczne (Warszawa: Agencja Dramatu i Teatru AdiT, 2014); Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, “*Prawda*” i inne dramaty (Warszawa: Agencja Dramatu i Teatru AdiT, 2017).

² See Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, “Generał,” *Dialog*, no. 12 (2010): 28–80; Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, “Magik: dwuosobowy utwór sceniczny,” *Dialog*, no. 10 (2012): 142–63; Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, “Kucharz,” *Dialog*, no. 10 (2015): 215–37; Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, “Dożynki: nie-komedia,” *Dialog*, no. 6 (2017): 125–55; Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, “Viva Violetta!” *Frona Lux*, no. 84–85 (2017): 84–139; Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, “Wielka podróż Malinowego Królika,” *Nowe Sztuki dla Dzieci i Młodzieży*, no. 32 (2011): 285–325; Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, “Opowieść o Dziewczynce-Wiewiórcie,” *Nowe Sztuki dla Dzieci i Młodzieży*, no. 42 (2017): 161–91; Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, “Buława,” *Nowy Napis: Liryka, Epika, Dramat*, no. 1 (2019): 201–47.

³ The play was directed by Aleksandra Popławska and Marek Kalita, and its premiere took place on April 21, 2011, at the IMKA Theatre in Warsaw.

⁴ General Wojciech Jaruzelski (1923–2014) was a Polish military officer and a communist politician. He was the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers’ Party from 1981 to 1989 and served as Prime Minister from 1981 to 1985. He was personally responsible for the decision to impose martial law in Poland in 1981, which helped him crush the democratic opposition. The period of martial law affected negatively both the political and the economic situation of Poland: nevertheless there have been claims that it was owing to Jaruzelski’s brave rule that the Soviet plans to invade Poland were

important and most highly rated performances in the recent years in Poland.⁵ It is worth noting, though, that the name of the main character, a historically dubious personage, is not mentioned throughout the play and no unequivocal judgment of his political career is offered. Another play by Jakubowski, *Życie: komedia dla dorosłych* [Life: A Comedy for Adults],⁶ was awarded the prize for the best comedy in the Playwright Competition for Comedy Writers ‘Komediopisanie,’ a contest promoting Polish comedy plays which was held by the Polish Center for Comedy at Teatr Powszechny (Powszechny Theatre) in Łódź in 2010. *Wieczny kwiecień* [Eternal April],⁷ in turn, won another edition of ‘Metaphors of Reality,’ earning not only the jury prize but also the audience award. *Wieczny kwiecień* is a metaphorical reference to the political climate in Poland after the fatal air crash in Smolensk, Russia, of the Polish Air Force plane carrying President Jarosław Kaczyński and 95 other passengers, most of whom represented the Polish political scene.⁸ The play unveiled a deep division among the Polish people and the destructive consequences of the continuous confrontation between the main two

abandoned. After the breakthrough of 1989, Jaruzelski served, among others, as the President of Poland. Up to this day, his public activity has been praised by some and condemned by others.

⁵ In 2011, the play was awarded the main prize at the R@port Polish Contemporary Plays Festival; in 2010, the same play also reached the finals of the Polish drama competition ‘Metaphors of Reality’ held by Teatr Polski (Polish Theatre) in Poznań. In 2012, Marek Kalita, playing the role of the General, was among actors awarded the prize for best acting at the Competition for Staging a Polish Contemporary Play, which aims to popularize modern Polish drama and to support theatres staging plays written by Polish playwrights. At the same competition, directors Aleksandra Popławska and Marek Kalita earned an honorable mention. In the annual contest held by the journal *Teatr* [Theatre], Marek Kalita won the prestigious Aleksander Zelwerowicz Award for the best actor in the 2010–2011 theatrical season (for the role of the General, among others).

⁶ The play was directed by Paweł Aigner, and its premiere took place at Teatr Powszechny in Łódź on October 22, 2011. See Jarosław Jakubowski, “Życie: Komedia dla dorosłych,” in *Antologia współczesnej polskiej komedii*, ed. Anna Maria Dolińska (Łódź: Teatr Powszechny, 2010).

⁷ The play was directed by Agnieszka Korytkowska-Mazur and its preview took place on October 10, 2011, at Teatr Polski in Poznań.

⁸ The Polish Airforce TU-154 crashed near Smolensk on April 10, 2010, and none of the 96 passengers on board survived the disaster. The plane was carrying the Polish president, his wife, the former President of Poland in exile, Deputy Marshals of the Polish Parliament and Senate, representatives of the Polish Armed Forces, as well as Polish government officials and members of Parliament. The group were to attend an event commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Katyn massacre (a series of mass executions of about 22,000 Polish military officers and intelligentsia carried out by the Soviet Union in April and May 1940). Following the air crash, national mourning was held in Poland from April 10 to April 18th, with people leaving flowers and lights outside the Presidential Palace in Warsaw and praying. All across the country remembrance marches were held and masses for the victims prayed in churches. On April 18, over 150 thousand people participated in the funeral of President Lech Kaczyński and his wife in Cracow, with millions of viewers watching the ceremony on television. The Smolensk air disaster became an important element of the Polish public debate. Investigation into the causes of the crash was undertaken and widely discussed, and marches of remembrance to commemorate the victims were held in Warsaw on every 10th day of each month.

political groupings in Poland: the one following a narrowly conceived national-Catholic tradition (caricatured in the play) and the one contesting the tradition and making a blind turn towards modernity.

One might say that, as a playwright, Jarosław Jakubowski remains a traditionalist. He keeps to his attitude in spite of the ongoing transformations of the Polish theatre, which began in the 1990s and are focused, on the one hand, on the abandonment of the “safe space of play-staging,” and, on the other, on efforts to create a theatre “producing plays at its own risk,”⁹ which, “due to the worldviews of its creators, breaks the existing narrative structures or even questions the mere possibility of working them out, thus creating, more intensely than ever before, room for controversy, conflict, and antagonism.”¹⁰ In an era of new ways of doing stage-work (e.g., on stage workshop-style composition), and with the profession of the dramatist slowly emerging to replace that of the playwright,¹¹ Jakubowski prefers to remain the latter. Speaking of his potential audience, Jakubowski emphasizes that he would like them not to expect the theatre to break the taboos or to lean towards performance art; rather, he wishes they would need to believe “that they are not all alone going through life with the mental or emotional weight they carry around.”¹²

As a playwright, Jakubowski is perceived through the prism of the politically conservative (‘rightist’) message his plays apparently convey. Indeed, they are ‘political,’ the Jakubowski has acknowledged, having entitled the first collection of his works “*General” i inne dramaty polityczne* [“The General” and Other Political Plays], and confirmed by his conservative non-involvement in the current controversies which mark the Polish public square.¹³ His traditionalist approach does not add to his popularity as a playwright in Poland, but, on the other hand, his stance cannot be taken for granted,¹⁴ and approaching Jakubowski’s output solely as traditionalist, conservative or politically rightist would amount to bias and simplification.

The presentation of Jakubowski’s plays in the current paper is aimed at acquainting international readers with an output of universal appeal. Jakubowski

⁹ Joanna K r a k o w s k a, “Przesiedleni: Wstęp”. In *Transfer! Teksty dla teatru*, ed. Joanna Krakowska (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2015), 5. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

¹⁰ Ibidem, 9.

¹¹ Unlike the playwright, the dramatist does not end their work, having finished writing the play, but cooperates with the director and the other members of the team during the rehearsals up to the premiere.

¹² J a k u b o w s k i, “Posłowie, czyli o końcu,” in Jakubowski, “*Prawda*” i inne dramaty, 459.

¹³ See Jarosław C y m e r m a n, “Empatia, czyli uwolnienie głosów,” *Teatr*, no. 11 (2017): 81. *Teatr* [The Theatre] is one of the oldest Polish cultural journals covering the most important events of Polish theatrical life.

¹⁴ See ibidem: 80.

shows a deep awareness of the decline of the modern world, which is marked by crises of realities such as fatherhood, the family, traditional values, social roles, and religious faith. As a result, the modern world—a world devoid of transcendence—manifests the consequences the current erosion of the Christian tradition has for culture. However, Jakubowski does not stop at describing manifestations of the decline but provokes his readers and his audience so that they will reflect on things “they do not want (or are scared) to speak about aloud.”¹⁵ He wants to create his own textual worlds which do not necessarily follow the rules of a specific performance or of a vision of a chosen director. Rather, he offers his audience a dialogue on the unchangeability of human nature and on issues transcending the horizons set by the contingency of life. Interestingly, at the same time, he does not usurp for himself the role of a judge or a moralist¹⁶. In it, Jakubowski is unlike numerous contemporary authors whose “texts for the theatre,”¹⁷ reflecting their *Weltanschauung*, “demonstrate that they have abandoned what they call an illusion that there still might be a genuine idea worth articulating in their own words, and who believe that the world resembles a box of scattered puzzles which may be assembled according to one’s needs.”¹⁸

By pointing in his plays to the epistemological and axiological crisis of the modern world and to the anthropological consequences of this crisis, apparent today in the proliferation of reductionist attitudes which disregard certain inalienable human needs and question the non-negotiability of the status of the human being as person,¹⁹ Jakubowski warns his audience that the dangers of the reductionist approach are even greater once they remain unnoticed. Jakubowski’s plays, both the futuristic ones and those with plots set in the present day, might be disturbing in that they suggest that the dystopian visions created decades ago can still be applied to today’s reality. Against such a background, Jakubowski outlines his understanding of hope as a sentiment inherent to human life, yet one inextricably tied to the personal rather than objective dimension of human existence. As such, hope is rooted in the transcendent reality outside the ‘here and now,’ on the one hand, and, on the other, in the openness to a personal relationship with another human being, built on the

¹⁵ J a k u b o w s k i, “Poślowie, czyli o końcu,” 459.

¹⁶ Ibidem, 460.

¹⁷ Joanna Krakowska writes that the so-called ‘texts for the theatre’ represent a new literary genre. Having been created specifically for the theatre, it is only when used on stage that they assume their final shape. As such, they represent a hybrid genre, ‘parasitizing’ on original works. See K r a k o w s k a, “Przesiedleni: Wstęp,” 10. See also Jacek K o p c i ń s k i, *Wybudzanie: Dramat polski / Interpretacje* (Warsaw: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2018), 10–1.

¹⁸ K r a k o w s k a, “Przesiedleni: Wstęp,” 8–9.

¹⁹ See Danuta R a d z i s z e w s k a - S z c z e p a n i a k, “Redukcjonizm antropologiczny i jego konsekwencje,” *Nurt SVD: Półrocznik Misjologiczno-Religioznawczy* 50, no. 2 (2006): 378–95.

foundation of lasting values. A chance for hope to become the reality is forever inscribed in the human life conceived as ‘something more’ than a continuity of metabolic processes.

A brief analysis of selected plays by Jakubowski will demonstrate that his goal is not merely a ‘defense’ of traditional values. Rather, he suggests that without them as the foundation the truly human element in modern culture is subject to gradual demise, which in turn leaves an apocalyptic mark on modernity, much as contemporary culture might seem to affirm the human being and grant her the greatest possible power.

THE INCONSPICUOUSNESS OF THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN MODERNITY

Jagoda Hernik Spalińska observes that, in his plays, Jakubowski examines the postmodern condition of an individual, as it is manifested in the reality of contemporary Poland.²⁰ While creating his capacious metaphors of modern social life, he stands out against a majority of authors describing the transformations in Poland at the turn of the new century and does not follow the tendency to pose “diagnoses filled with oikophobic obsessions”²¹ or ridicule his compatriots, thus labelling those describing the reality as the good ones and those who are being described as bad.²² The image of the Polish society we find in Jakubowski’s plays is never presented from the position of a ruthless and mocking critic exaggerating the vices of the society in which he lives. Rather, his attitude is that of an attentive observer who “sees and describes things, but also loves what he describes.”²³ Hernik Spalińska also emphasizes that the literary synthesis we find in Jakubowski’s plays shows that he is as if “a step ahead” of those advancing the generally accepted views of modern social reality, in particular the opinions regarding Polish identity and the condition of European societies.²⁴ Jakubowski believes that an artist has the duty to be honest towards his audience,²⁵ but he does not want to destroy their

²⁰ See Jagoda H e r n i k S p a l i Ń s k a, “Jakubowski, czyli Polska ponowoczesna,” in *Ikony, pseudoherosi i zwykli śmiertelnicy: Antologia najnowszego dramatu polskiego*, ed. Elżbieta Manthey, Kamila Paprocka, and Piotr Grzymisławski (Warszawa: Agencja Dramatu i Teatru ADiT, 2015), 92–3.

²¹ Jagoda H e r n i k S p a l i Ń s k a, “Pytania i znaki,” in Jakubowski, “*Prawda*” i inne dramaty, 6.

²² See *ibidem*.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ See *ibidem*, 7. See also H e r n i k S p a l i Ń s k a, “Jakubowski, czyli Polska ponowoczesna,” 96.

²⁵ See J a k u b o w s k i, “Posłowie, czyli o końcu,” 461.

world. There are already too many “fans of destruction,”²⁶ he says. Instead, he describes himself as a “herald of the end”²⁷ and wishes to focus the attention of his audience on the consequences of the tendencies, characteristic of the modern demo-liberal (or post-Christian) Western civilization, to “set the human being free from any restrictions arising from religion.”²⁸ His image of man is that of the Nietzschean “last man,” the one that survived the “battle for modernity,”²⁹ the man Witkacy³⁰ warned about and ridiculed, the one satisfied with his present condition and no longer motivated to seek a betterment of his inner being: the one whose only life goal is survival and lasting comfort.³¹ However, Jakubowski believes in the significance of the social aspect of literature and of the theatre. In his view, the reader, having made a mental journey—together with literary protagonists—into the abyss of anguish and pain, or even into the one of effectively repressed emotions, may return “somewhat smarter, perhaps even somewhat better.”³²

THE CHARACTERS

In his play “Znaki” [The Characters],³³ Jakubowski discusses the predicament of a modern writer in a time of the subordination of culture to the dictates of the market. Referring in a way of to his own situation of a playwright, Jakubowski denounces the tendency, common today, to simplify the meaning of words and to degrade them. The propensity in question has developed—in his view—as a result of immediate and unrestricted access to electronic communication, which is a mark of the present time. The main protagonist of the play, who serves as an allegory of the modern creator of culture, is a successful middle-aged writer subjected to pressures limiting his artistic freedom. Challenged by demands to compromise in areas crucial to his profession, he feels degraded not only as an artist, but also as a person. “In order to be recognized by a large publishing house, one needs to meet a number of conditions, many of them strictly commercial ... to bear in mind the so-called target,” the author of

²⁶ Ibidem, 460.

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ H e r n i k S p a l i ń s k a, “Pytania i znaki,” 7.

³⁰ Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885–1939), commonly known as Witkacy, was a Polish writer, painter, and philosopher, as well as theorist of catastrophism. He committed suicide after having heard the news of the Soviet invasion of Poland in September 1939.

³¹ Ibidem.

³² J a k u b o w s k i, “Posłowie, czyli o końcu,” 459.

³³ Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, “Znaki,” in Jakubowski, *“Prawda” i inne dramaty*, 25–79.

“Znaki” confesses. “Books are nowadays published as merchandise. The same happens with theatrical plays: they are created for a specific need.... Many people allow this system to absorb them. Many do not accept compromise, but the price is non-existence.”³⁴ The protagonist of Jakubowski’s play, a traditionalist and an individualist who detests “generalizations of any kind”³⁵ is faced with a new regulation prohibiting the use of native Polish characters, allegedly for the sake of the convenience of language users. The regulation is a response to the need for a maximum simplification and efficiency of the language used in communication. Moreover, the decree is supposed to foster the economy of time, as well as that of the means of communication. On top of it, the move will be good for the environment. However, the writer believes that the ridiculous administrative decision will result in ‘harm’ done to the language³⁶ and that it will turn out destructive not only for literary works as such, but also for humanity itself. After all, it is ‘humanity’ that literary works express, among others, by describing the identity of the nation and the specificity of its culture. In the face of the oppression he experiences, though, the writer’s initial protest against the ridiculous administrative decision fades. His struggle to save his mother tongue³⁷ gradually disappears and is replaced with his acknowledgement of the idea of a ‘cleansed’ and more logical language, although he finds it monstrous in its denial of the transcendent roots of all speech.³⁸ The new idea, however, corresponds to the image of a cleansed and dreary world bereft of any irregularities and of the beauty of the irrational.³⁹ Having surrendered to the pressure the rationalizers of the language exert on him, the protagonist finds himself unable to withdraw his consent to their idea and becomes a passive tool of the new social system. The helplessness of the writer is an allusion to the helplessness of the language reflecting the epistemological and axiological crises of the present time. The words can no longer “give everything its fitting name,”⁴⁰ because the language can no longer “introduce order into anything,”

³⁴ Michał Żarski, “Bezsilność: Z Jarosławem Jakubowskim rozmawia Michał Żarski,” *Teatr* 72, no. 11 (2017): 78.

³⁵ Jakubowski, “Znaki,” 40.

³⁶ See *ibidem*.

³⁷ In the writer’s heroic attempts to ‘save’ his language, one can trace a reference to poet Cyprian Norwid (1821–1883) with his typical emphasis on the ethical dimension of language and the sacred foundation of words.

³⁸ Jakubowski, “Znaki,” 48.

³⁹ See *ibidem*, 50.

⁴⁰ See Cyprian Norwid, “Za wstęp (Ogólniki).” In Cyprian Norwid, *Vade-mecum*, ed. Józef Fert (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990), 14. The line in question is quoted in Patrick Corness’s translation. Quoted after Agata Brajerska-Mazur, “‘Rzeczy – słowo’ Norwida w przekładzie na język angielski,” *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 66, no. 8 (2018): 89.

or “communicate anything.”⁴¹ Instead, it becomes a tool of pressure and manipulation, a mechanism of oppression and enslavement. The imposed ‘purity’ of language has its dreadful moral consequences in that it makes the language inhuman and paralyzing the consciousness. A similar case is described in George Orwell’s 1984: “It’s a beautiful thing, the destruction of words.... The whole aim of Newspeak is to narrow the range of thought.... Orthodoxy means not thinking—not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness.”⁴²

In “Znaki,” Jakubowski elaborates on the analogy between the situation of ideological pressure characteristic of a totalitarian system, which resulted in the degradation of official discourse to ‘badspeak’⁴³ in the Poland of the communist period, on the one hand, and, on the other, the degradation of language characteristic of the modern times. He draws a parallel between the restrictions of the freedom of speech introduced in the totalitarian past and the compromises writers, in particular playwrights, have to make, should they wish their works to be published or have their plays staged.⁴⁴ “The power is in the hands of those who control the language. We live in an age of fake news and we are constantly ‘bombarded’ with media reports, which are mostly fabricated. Nevertheless many people believe what they hear,”⁴⁵ says Jakubowski, and he emphasizes the danger inherent in using the language as a tool to manipulate people’s value perception. Strategies serving this purpose are universally—and not infrequently thoughtlessly—employed today, which is alarming. Destruction of the language in the name of a particular vision of ‘linguistic perfection’ is still a burning issue in Poland, although the communist system was replaced by a democratic one almost three decades ago. Michał Głowiński notes: “Today, ‘badspeak’ (not only in Poland) assumes various forms and is related to diverse social phenomena; it manifests various ideologies as well as various pathologies.”⁴⁶

NOWHERE-MAN AND THE CHEF

In Jakubowski’s plays, the danger inherent in modern anthropological conceptions and in their implications is analyzed in reference to ideas which reduce the human being either to *res cogitans* or to *res extensa*. While in the

⁴¹ Jakubowski, “Znaki,” 76.

⁴² George Orwell, 1984, <https://archive.org/details/NINETEENEIGHTY-FOUR1984ByGeorgeOrwellPDFAudioBook>, 65–8.

⁴³ See Michał Głowiński, *Zła mowa: Jak nie dać się propagandzie?* (Warszawa: Wielka Litera, 2016).

⁴⁴ See Hernik Spalińska, “Pytania i znaki,” 22.

⁴⁵ Żarski, “Bezsilność: Z Jarosławem Jakubowskim rozmawia Michał Żarski”: 77.

⁴⁶ Michał Głowiński, *Zła mowa: Jak nie dać się propagandzie?*, 10.

former case the person is identified with her mind, and her body perceived as an impersonal reality which can be freely manipulated,⁴⁷ in the latter, the human being as a whole is seen as a set of material structures.⁴⁸ Jakubowski addresses the dangers of anthropological reductionism in his plays “Beatlesi / Zaginiona piosenka” [The Beatles / The Lost Song]⁴⁹ and “Kucharz” [The Chef].⁵⁰ In the former, the world of popular culture icons who, due to their popularity and recognition, fill in the (real or imaginary) deficits of their admirers,⁵¹ is contrasted with the world of an average, unrecognized person, called Nowhere-Man. By creating the character of Nowhere-Man, Jakubowski addresses the issue of stereotypical depreciation of what is native, which is very typical of the Polish mentality. Thus he refers to the fundamental problem of cultural uprootedness, addressed already by Simone Weil, who observed that a person without roots will never be fully a person.⁵² Nowhere-Man, who cuts his roots and deprives himself of home, builds his own vision of the world, and of himself in it, on the denial of what he knows and of what has shaped him. “He wants to live a borrowed life; since he does not have a sense of the significance of his own existence, he needs to take over the biography of someone else so that he might feel alive”⁵³. Nowhere-Man wants one thing only: to be like his idols, The Beatles. The mentality of the frustrated protagonist, desperate for a success in life, reflects modern transformations of Western culture which lead to an erosion of traditional values established within the Judeo-Christian culture and to their replacement by random values. Thus Jakubowski addresses the issues of relegating the spiritual aspect of life from the public sphere and of pragmatizing the sacred by treating it as if it was “an element of a therapeutic game, based on the need for full satisfaction.”⁵⁴ He examines the results of the modern dictate of pop culture, which goes as far as determining the shape of religious worship, or even creating religion.⁵⁵ In the reality described by Jakubowski,

⁴⁷ See R a d z i s z e w s k a - S z c z e p a n i a k, “Redukcjonizm antropologiczny i jego konsekwencje,” 386.

⁴⁸ See *ibidem*, 386n.

⁴⁹ See J a k u b o w s k i, “Beatlesi/ Zaginiona piosenka,” in Jakubowski, “*Prawda*” i inne dramaty, 81–125.

⁵⁰ See J a k u b o w s k i, “Kucharz,” in Jakubowski, “*Prawda*” i inne dramaty, 227–64.

⁵¹ See, e.g., Dariusz S k ó r c z e w s k i, “Hegemon jako idol: Zachód jako hegemon wyobrażony.” In *Idol w kulturze*, ed. Edward Fiała, Adam Fitas, and Dariusz Skórczewski (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2017), 100–1.

⁵² See Simone W e i l, *The Need for Roots*, trans. Arthur Wills (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1952).

⁵³ Ż a r s k i, “Bezsilność: Z Jarosławem Jakubowskim rozmawia Michał Żarski”: 78.

⁵⁴ Agata B i e l i k - R o b s o n, *Inna nowoczesność: Pytania o współczesną formułę duchowości* (Kraków: Universitas, 2000), 256.

⁵⁵ See Joanna M i c h a l c z u k, *Między zwątpieniem a nadzieją: Wokół problematyki sakralnej w dramacie polskim po roku 1989* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2018), 103–4. See also *Religijność*

the God of the Bible is replaced by divinized man. “There is no Poland, there is no God; there is you,” says a member of The Beatles to Nowhere-Man, who yields to the illusory vision of himself as an absolutely free, autonomous and autotelic being, capable of exercising his unbound will in any area of life.⁵⁶ While discussing the spiritual void of his protagonists, on the one hand, and divinization of idols as a way to fill in the void, Jakubowski unveils the consequences of “secular idolatrous faith,”⁵⁷ involving appropriation, enslavement and destruction of the uniqueness of a human being by an idol from outside religion, which is—paradoxically—accomplished at the request of the individual in question.⁵⁸ The blurred identity of modern man, lost among the simulacra, obliterates the border between what is true (and real) and what is false (and merely imagined).⁵⁹ Identity destruction affects Nowhere-Man, a representative of billions of “nowhere-men”⁶⁰ populating the whole world (“like billions of mirrors which only reflect each other”⁶¹), as much as it affects those who are made idols and those who create idols: the image builders and image makers who sustain the illusion that the existence of idols is an important value, or even a source of meaning.

Umberto Eco writes that it is in the myth-creating potential of mass culture and in the symbolic images it generates that an average individual finds an embodiment of power which he desires and which he cannot reach.⁶² The billions of “nowhere-men” from Jakubowski’s play follow a “beautiful lie”⁶³ which confirms their illusory freedom, encouraging them to believe that everything is allowed and that they can ‘make themselves,’ since the human nature, despite all its complexity, is a morally neutral material one can shape in any way one wishes⁶⁴. As a result, each of them wastes his or her life by ruining the unique chance to fulfill their humanity they have received.

w *dobie popkultury*, ed. Tomasz Chachulski, Jerzy Snopek, and Magdalena Ślusarska (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW, 2014); Mariusz Czuba, *Biodra Elvisa Presleya: Od paleoherosów do neofanów* (Warszawa: WAiP, 2007).

⁵⁶ See Radziszewska-Szczepaniak, “Redukcjonizm antropologiczny i jego konsekwencje,” 384.

⁵⁷ Edward Fiałła, Adam Fitaś, and Dariusz Skórczewski, “Idol w kulturze—zarys problematyki,” in *Idol w kulturze*, 10.

⁵⁸ See *ibidem*, 11. See also Erich Fromm, *The Revision of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 2019).

⁵⁹ See Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, transl. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1–42.

⁶⁰ Jakubowski, “Beatles / Zaginiona piosenka,” 121.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 121.

⁶² See Umberto Eco, *Apocalypse Postponed* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994).

⁶³ Jakubowski, “Beatles / Zaginiona piosenka,” 117.

⁶⁴ See Radziszewska-Szczepaniak, “Redukcjonizm antropologiczny i jego konsekwencje,” 384.

The play entitled “Kucharz,” in turn, shows a world in which “cooking becomes a religion.”⁶⁵ We are constantly being told, says Jakubowski, “that we are what we eat, which in a way reduces us to bodies which digest.”⁶⁶ Eating is no longer considered merely as an activity which serves survival; rather, it is conceived as the true contents of life, having the power to stigmatize a person and to determine, among others, the person’s social status.⁶⁷ While writing “Kucharz,” Jakubowski was undoubtedly inspired by Sławomir Mrożek’s play “Krawiec” [The Tailor],⁶⁸ where the social standing of a person is determined by her attire and, consequently, the person’s identity comes into being in a sartorial workshop. However, one can think also of other contexts, such as, for instance, a play “Odejście Głodomora” [The Passing of a Hunger Artist]⁶⁹ by Tadeusz Różewicz, inspired in turn by Franz Kafka’s short story “A Hunger Artist.”⁷⁰ The main protagonist of Różewicz’s play consents to being locked up in a cage, which he considers the sanctuary of his freedom, and, by his voluntary self-starvation, wishes to make those looking at him realize their lack of freedom, as well as inspire them to change their tedious existence, of which they are unaware.⁷¹ The main protagonist of Jakubowski’s play *Rozmaryn*, a master chef and culinary trend setter (thus also a variety of idol), exercises power over his admirers, frustrated people whose lives have no axiological foundation and who desperately crave for happiness and success. Aware of the social need for new role models and for new ‘masters of life,’ *Rozmaryn* manipulates the masses fascinated by him and by his culinary art, which they conceive as the way and purpose of life. However, the media-created attractive image of a master chef and a master of life is absolutely incompatible with the actual psychological profile of the protagonist, who, as a person, evokes “a mixture of pity and disgust”⁷² in his student. The latter stays by his side motivated by mere calculation, hoping to take his master’s position soon. The

⁶⁵ Żarski, “Bezsilność: Z Jarosławem Jakubowskim rozmawia Michał Żarski”: 79.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, 79. Jakubowski refers to a famous quote by the German materialist philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, “Man is what he eats.” See Ludwig Feuerbach, *Das Geheimnis des Opfers oder der Mensch ist, was er isst. The Mystery of Sacrifice, or Man Is What He Eats* (1862), <https://pdfslide.net/documents/ludwig-feuerbach-the-mystery-of-sacrifice-or-man-is-what-he-eats.html>.

⁶⁷ See Żarski, “Bezsilność: Z Jarosławem Jakubowskim rozmawia Michał Żarski”: 79.

⁶⁸ See Sławomir Mrożek, “Krawiec,” in Sławomir Mrożek, *Wybór dramatów* (Warszawa: Noir sur Blanc, 2000), 7–103.

⁶⁹ See Tadeusz Różewicz, “Odejście Głodomora,” in Tadeusz Różewicz, *Teatr* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1988), vol. 2, 289–330.

⁷⁰ See Franz Kafka, “A Hunger Artist,” <https://www.kafka-online.info/a-hunger-artist.html>.

⁷¹ See Różewicz, “Odejście Głodomora,” 292. However, according to Jakubowski, “apparently, there are no hunger artists among us any more.” See “Prawdziwych głodomorów już nie ma: Rozmawia Dorota Jovanka Ćirilć,” *Dialog* 60, no. 10 (2015): 240.

⁷² Jakubowski, “Kucharz,” 237.

third character appearing in the play is a female who is supposed to be 'material' for Rozmaryn, the demiurge, to work with. She believes Rozmaryn will newly create her and give her a more perfect shape, preserving her youth and beauty. She says, "You will be able to nourish me, you will create me anew; each cell of my body will be replaced by a new one you shall design."⁷³ The shocking plot we follow in the course of the play is Jakubowski's way to address the reductionist tendencies in philosophical anthropology, which question the subjectivity of the human being and her personhood, as well as the spiritual dimension of her existence. Although the female character in the play is called "a femme fatale, a woman of an extraordinary beauty,"⁷⁴ the motif in question is not used in a standard way. Paradoxically, Jakubowski's 'femme fatale,' rather than using men for her own goals, destroys herself, which she accomplishes in the name of a peculiar self-love: her love of her body. Her decision to starve herself to death is verbalized, "I will eat myself, this is what we both want: you want it in the name of your art, and I want it in the name of my self-love. Can there be a higher form of self-loyalty than eating oneself?"⁷⁵ However, what the woman's decision expresses is actually a hatred of herself, and of life as such, which she perceives as meaningless. Indeed, she takes her decision after a period of following the dietary recommendations made for her by Rozmaryn. Confirmed in her belief that she is an exclusively biological creation, she confesses, "I can finally feel there is no crack between myself and my body."⁷⁶ Food, which she has grown to detest, is perceived by her merely as means to continue her unnecessary existence, marked by fatigue, fear, and loneliness. An escape into nonexistence renders a certain happiness for her, which is the only kind of happiness she can imagine. "I shall not be happy as long as I am,"⁷⁷ confesses the woman. By means of his description of the disastrous consequences of a false image of the human person which undermines the very essence of humanity, Jakubowski conveys the message that reductionist tendencies in philosophical anthropology usually lack a proper insight: those who yield to them, do so unconsciously. In the play, the slow death of what is human is the object of a media spectacle. Digital media, which give celebrities fame and technological immortality, continue their widespread coverage of the shocking performance in which Rozmaryn concludes the dramatic act of the woman, who tells him, "You are going to help me with it; you will eat what I won't be able to." The grotesque distortion of human relationships in the play helps Jakubowski unravel the absurd consequences of a mindless absorption of

⁷³ Ibidem, 244.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, 228.

⁷⁵ Ibidem, 260.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, 253.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, 254.

reductionist and deterministic concepts in anthropology, which, despite their noble goals, annihilate the humanity of the human being rather than restore it. Jakubowski exposes the falsehood on which the life of the master chef is built. Rozmaryn praises a materialistic vision of the human being, and of human life in general, seeking for the essence of existence in taste. The lie Rozmaryn lives is rooted in his uncontrollable egoism, in his contempt for others and in his lack of moral integrity. Addressing the issue of the 'theatre of cooking,' which lulls the vigilance of modern man (or the modern consumer) with an illusion of satisfaction, Jakubowski inspires reflection on the most elementary hunger: the one for humanity, for a meaningful life, for values, and for spirituality.

THE MAN WHO WAS UNABLE TO GO

Reductionist approaches in anthropology frequently result in questioning the human nature and deny the normativity of the rights inscribed in it.⁷⁸ As a result, human existence is perceived only 'horizontally,' so to speak, and the possibility of a transcendent relationship with God is excluded. Transcendent reality as such is questioned and reduced to a fact of culture.⁷⁹ Jakubowski addresses these issues in his one actor play entitled "Człowiek, który nie umiał odejść" [The Man Who Was Unable to Go], which comprises the protagonist's confession of his entire life; it is a confession, though, deprived of hope for purification or absolution, and resulting in his self-condemnation. The play demonstrates a tragic image of the loneliness of a human being in a world devoid of (T)transcendence. The loneliness the protagonist experiences is total, resembling that described in Louis-Ferdinand Céline's nihilistic novel of destruction *Journey to the End of the Night*, where the reality is depressing and overwhelming to the extent that "the best thing to do when you're in this world ... is to get out of it. Crazy or not, scared or not."⁸⁰ Thus Jakubowski takes up the theme of 'trap,' developed by Kafka and Różewicz, among others, and shows his protagonist 'thrown' into existence which turns out a trap; he manages to break free only to find himself in a pitfall of his own consciousness. Jakubowski's protagonist says, "If you constantly think about escaping, you will ultimately try to escape. Or you will hide inside your head and never come

⁷⁸ See Radziszewska - Szczepaniak, "Redukcjonizm antropologiczny i jego konsekwencje," 390–1.

⁷⁹ See ibidem, 392–3.

⁸⁰ Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Journey to the End of the Night*, transl. by Ralph Manheim (New York: New Directions, 1983), <https://neoalchemist.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/louis-ferdinand-ce-line-journey-to-the-end-of-the-night.pdf>.

out.”⁸¹ He resembles the motionless protagonists of the Theatre of the Absurd, frozen in the metaphysical void which surrounds them. As he has courage neither to live nor to die, the protagonist’s existence becomes mere vegetation. He is a ‘leftover’ of what he used to be, a ‘dismembered trunk’⁸² having lost the power of speech as a result of a prolonged “simulation of silence,”⁸³ and expressing its existence only by eating and excreting. Paralyzed by a fear of life, the protagonist cannot find his happiness. He is as if poisoned by his hatred of the world, which he perceives through the prism of decay, hypocrisy, wickedness, falsehood, and cruelty, himself also being part of this reality. His hatred of everything around him is fueled by modern artistic creativity, of which he speaks as a member of the audience. As it is the case in “Znaki,” artistic creation is no longer a source of hope; rather, it strengthens the belief in the overwhelming power of evil, which gets dangerously trivialized in the reality of today. Jakubowski suggests that what is ‘human’ dies slowly and that it dies unnoticeably. The catastrophe the human world is in for has been forecast by apparently insignificant events which neither the world itself, nor the artists who debate on it in their work, wish to see. The protagonist of the play sees the inevitability of the disaster in the death of a young tree, “a most innocent being,”⁸⁴ which comes as a result of a mindless act of vandalism performed by a young man no less than as a consequence of human consent to evil. In a self-referential scene, Jakubowski shows his readers the literary image of a young tree crushed to the ground, with its trunk smashed. The protagonist of the play is the only one to notice the significance of the tree and, through his mouth, Jakubowski speaks in favor of what has been considered as meaningless, having not fit the arbitrary interpretation of the world imposed as a fashion. “No one will make a movie about my young broken maple tree; no one will give a penny for such a project. The young maple tree does not fit any of the fashionable ideologies and it is not photogenic; moreover, it fell victim to a cruelty which was banal rather than modern, let alone postmodern.”⁸⁵

AROUND DYSTOPIA AND POSTAPOCALYPTIC MOTIFS

Problems and anxieties resulting from the reductionist anthropological approaches in philosophy are unraveled also in Jakubowski’s plays set in the future and drawing on plot schemes characteristic of popular culture. The plays

⁸¹ J a k u b o w s k i, *Człowiek, który nie umiał odejść*, 181.

⁸² Ibidem, 196.

⁸³ Ibidem.

⁸⁴ Ibidem, 186.

⁸⁵ Ibidem, 188.

in question, however, are not meant to appeal to the readers with their glamor; rather, they provide an opportunity for the author to develop his futurological visions. His numerous references to classical dystopias and (post)apocalyptic motifs are supposed to inspire the readers' reflection on what makes their world truly 'human.'⁸⁶

LUNA

The events described in the plays "Luna: Romans futurologiczny" [Luna: A Futurological Romance]⁸⁷ and "Kosmonauci" [The Astronauts]⁸⁸ are set in the future, when the speed of the degeneration of human activity is a corollary of the rate of the technological progress, which results in a cultural and moral decline. Both plots draw on catastrophic, apocalyptic, and postapocalyptic fiction⁸⁹ which is a continuous focus of attention in an era of worldwide prevalence of popular culture. "Luna...", a piece of political fiction, vividly reminds the reader of Aldous Huxley's and George Orwell's classic dystopias.⁹⁰ It is a well-known fact that both novels turned out to be prophetic to a greater extent than it was initially assumed, for they foretold the IT and biotechnological revolutions.⁹¹

Modern dystopian projects, which frequently draw on classic dystopias, are considered as manifestations of various conditions of fear, analogous to those of the early 20th century.⁹² Jakubowski's plays, in which catastrophic

⁸⁶ See J a k u b o w s k i, "Posłowie, czyli o końcu," 460.

⁸⁷ See Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, "Luna: Romans futurologiczny," in Jakubowski, "General" i inne dramaty polityczne (Warszawa: Agencja Dramatu i Teatru AdiT, 2014), 343–76.

⁸⁸ See Jarosław J a k u b o w s k i, "Kosmonauci," in Jarosław Jakubowski, "Prawda" i inne dramaty, 383–409.

⁸⁹ I mean the texts of culture which forecast and describe an imminent disaster, as well as those considered as postapocalyptic, which tend to depict the results of the destruction and distortion of the world both for the human being and for the human community, the borderline between the two types of fiction being rather fluid. See Lech M. N i j a k o w s k i, *Świat po apokalipsie: Społeczeństwo w świetle postapokaliptycznych tekstów kultury popularnej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2018), 30.

⁹⁰ See Aldous H u x l e y, *Brave New World* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932); George O r w e l l, 1984.

⁹¹ See Francis F u k u y a m a, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 3.

⁹² See Anna B o g u s k a, "Nowoczesność i zagłada w filmowej dystopii Brunona Gamulina *Sedma kronika*," in *Narracje fantastyczne*, ed. by Ksenia Olkusz and Krzysztof M. Maj (Kraków: Ośrodek Badawczy Facta Ficta, 2017), 317 (<https://factaficta.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/narracje-fantastyczne-red-ksenia-olkusz-krzysztof-m-maj.pdf>). Referring to Gregory Claeys's psychological approach, which "relates the concept of dystopia to a permanent and unavoidable condition of fear for the humanity," Boguska observes that "the condition of fear as such is subject to a certain

and (post-)apocalyptic motifs become pretexts for metaphorical constructs, vividly depict the problem of modern societies’ breaking away from their past, as well as that of their corruption and degeneration, seen as consequences of the civilizational processes. Last but not least, the plays in question point to the implications of a passive acceptance of the direction the current social transformations have assumed. While prompting reflection on the fears of the modern society, Jakubowski actually poses the question whether the vision of the world presented in his plays might be a source of hope. The question about hope is always justified, since hope is a sentiment without which truly human existence would not be possible. However, the question about hope turns out particularly significant and urgent in our times, when the world, suffering from an anthropological and cultural crisis, begins heading towards an inevitable disaster.

“Luna...” is a story about the “world in which memory as such is prohibited.”⁹³ It is a world in which the postulates “to choose freedom and to split away the history of the past with a thick line”⁹⁴ are effectively put into practice. A Polish reader will identify these postulates with the slogans popular in the public discourse at the turn of the 21st century. Thus “Luna...” belongs among various texts of culture which serve as a warning against the catastrophic consequences of a cultural amnesia and contrast “the category of memory, which has a positive value ... with its conceptual antonym (or, its reverse side), namely, ‘nonmemory,’ which is evaluated negatively. Nonmemory is the condition of intellectual and emotional void which changes individuals and entire nations into passive tools used to satisfy someone else’s will.”⁹⁵

Other motifs characteristic of Jakubowski’s plays, such as his diagnosis of the condition of the Western societies and of the Polish identity, also recur in “Luna...” Its plot is set in 2084, in an unspecified city covered in red mist, out of which “giant geometric shapes with countless lights spring up.”⁹⁶ The ‘Statue of Humanity,’ resembling the one of Christ the Redeemer, soars above the place, yet its elements which might indeed refer one to Christ have been

regularity and progresses from natural fears to those socially constructed and socially triggered. See B o g u s k a, “Nowoczesność i zagłada w filmowej dystopii Brunona Gamulina *Sedma kronika*,” 316. See also Gregory C l a e y s, *Dystopia: A Natural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). Thus the fear attributed to modernity results from its “project of oppressive and total ordering and improving the world, which involves various forms of violence, not infrequently encouraging despotic attitudes and leading ... up to a loss of freedom.” B o g u s k a, “Nowoczesność i zagłada w filmowej dystopii Brunona Gamulina *Sedma kronika*,” 316.

⁹³ J a k u b o w s k i, *Posłowie*, 377.

⁹⁴ Ibidem.

⁹⁵ Mateusz B o r o w s k i and Małgorzata S u g i e r a, “Pochwała zapomnienia.” In Zyta Rudzka, *Zimny bufet* (Kraków: Panga Pang, 2012), 12.

⁹⁶ J a k u b o w s k i, “Luna: Romans futurologiczny,” 345.

removed: only the shape has remained.”⁹⁷ Visible from every location, the statue luminously radiates “colorful advertising slogans,”⁹⁸ thus becoming an emblem of the modern mediatized world of consumerism, as well as a symbol of the new humanism which “rejects all coercion and violence.”⁹⁹ Just as it is the case in Orwell’s *1984* and in Huxley’s *Brave New World*, Christianity and family values are considered as things of the past, the traces of which are obliterated. In the *Brave New World*, the emblem of the new era—one of the universal happiness accomplished—is T-shaped and a product of removing the top part of the cross. The values of the past are replaced by new ideas, concisely grasped in the motto, “Community, Identity, Stability.”¹⁰⁰ Huxley’s protagonists take soma tablets: the perfect pleasure drug which reconciles them with their enemies and makes them more patient and capable of perseverance. The condition soma induces is comparable to that resulting from the possession of moral virtues, but—unlike them—is accomplished effortlessly. In Jakubowski’s play, likewise, the passive and happy consumers are fully dedicated to the system and readily accept the “painless”¹⁰¹ procedure of having their memories erased and, afterwards, are happy to take special red tablets so that their amnesia should be sustained. Just as it is the case in Huxley’s novel, both spiritual values and those the culture embodies are destroyed, and there is no place for feelings or passions any more. Weakness, illness, old age, and death, are removed from the horizon of a human life (“There are no cemeteries in the city”¹⁰²), while “pure pleasure,”¹⁰³ comfort, prosperity, and financial security become the basic values. Human relations are supplanted by cyberreality, and emotional bonds are replaced by machines which attend to human needs following a mathematically established algorithm. Adam, the protagonist of the play, who is regularly visited by a “female robot for sex tasks”¹⁰⁴ (with a fifty-year warranty), himself becomes an ‘artificial’ being, fully subdued to the totalitarian authorities. The symbolism of the protagonist’s name suggests a clash between the biblical anthropology (which has been questioned and rejected) and its antithesis in the form of the new anthropological conception. By his reference to the Huxleyan vision of the world—one free from violence, harm, conflicts, sadness and illnesses, yet also one in which the human being is deprived of the family, its values, the values culture used to

⁹⁷ Ibidem.

⁹⁸ Ibidem, 348.

⁹⁹ Ibidem, 375.

¹⁰⁰ H u x l e y, *Brave New World*, 16.

¹⁰¹ J a k u b o w s k i, “Luna: Romans futurologiczny,” 345.

¹⁰² Ibidem, 346.

¹⁰³ Ibidem, 345.

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem, 362.

embody, and religion—Jakubowski once again inspires reflection on the nature of humanity, on the foundation of human dignity, and on the human nature conceived as a source of values. Although neither in Huxley’s novel, nor in the play “Luna...” evil is as obvious as it appears in *1984*,¹⁰⁵ the worlds both works depict have become “unnatural in the most profound sense imaginable, because human nature has been altered.”¹⁰⁶

In “Luna...” the decline of the civilization and of the social rules is global. “There is no escape from this city, but to another one, which is almost identical; then still to another one like that, and so on.”¹⁰⁷ The play simultaneously refers, in numerous instances, to the modern history of Poland, as well as to the history of the part of Europe subdued to the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Thus “Luna...” makes numerous allusions to the emblematic images of totalitarian systems. “The Palace of Happiness,”¹⁰⁸ the name of the tallest building in the city, resembles the names of Orwellian “ministries.” In a world where words and whole concepts are destroyed, where thinking and consciousness are limited, truth as such certainly does not exist, but still there is the “Ministry of Truth.”¹⁰⁹ What becomes ‘truth’ is a constantly repeated lie. Neither do ‘love,’ ‘peace’ or ‘plenty’ exist, although they each have their respective ministries. In “Luna...,” the “Palace of Happiness” suggests the life goal generally accepted in the Huxleyan world, namely, the “faith in happiness as the Sovereign Good.”¹¹⁰ A recurring element of the scenic design in “Luna...” is a “huge screen showing a speaking Head,”¹¹¹ which reminds one of the telescreens from *1984* and of the Orwellian reality of permanent surveillance. The omnipresence of screens is a clear sign of the power of the propaganda. Moreover, the Head assumes the role of the traditional chorus as it would appear in an ancient Greek play: it introduces the audience to the context of the events, narrates their course, comments on them, expresses general reflections, sums things up, and simultaneously monitors the events, thus taking control over them and exercising power. The aforementioned problem of ‘badspcak’ recurs as the problem of language being the main tool of the propaganda used by the oppressive social system. A reading of “Luna...” as a catastrophic or (post)apocalyptic play shows that Jakubowski uses motifs on which also other

¹⁰⁵ See F u k u y a m a, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*, 7.

¹⁰⁶ Ibidem, 6. Fukuyama declares that the aim of his book is to “argue that Huxley was right, that the most significant threat posed by contemporary biotechnology is the possibility that it will alter human nature and thereby move us into a ‘posthuman’ stage of history.” Ibidem, 7.

¹⁰⁷ J a k u b o w s k i, “Luna: Romans futurologiczny,” 376.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem, 345.

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., O r w e l l, *1984*, 7.

¹¹⁰ H u x l e y, *Brave New World*, 149.

¹¹¹ J a k u b o w s k i, “Luna: Romans futurologiczny,” 345.

texts of popular culture extensively draw. However, the difference is that—while borrowing plot schemes from other literary pieces—Jakubowski finds it most important to talk to his audience about the actual problems these plots pinpoint.

The sources of apocalyptic images in modern culture which inspire Jakubowski's plays have been discussed by Lech Nijakowski. Among the playwright's inspirations are myths and religious beliefs about the end of the world (which, however, is not seen dogmatically in the religious sense), as well as biblical accounts, such as, for instance, the one about the Tower of Babel. However, Jakubowski's understanding of the speech confounded by God is very broad. "People are no longer connected by a normative axiological system or by universal images present in their culture. New barbarians appear, ones who are absolutely foreign to one another in the anthropological aspect."¹¹² The story about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and that of the Moloch (the symbol of a monstrous machine in popular culture) serve in his plays as allegories of a super modern city which limits human freedom. Among the cultural images to which Jakubowski refers are also the mythical golem, conceived as the modern man,¹¹³ the flood and Noah's arc myths, but also utopias and dystopias, urban legends, and conspiracy theories.

In the dystopian¹¹⁴ world of "Luna...", the project of those in power to take absolute control over the city is confronted with the rebellion of the main protagonist and with his attempt to reverse the dystopian social order. Adam, a namesake of the first man, the one expelled from Paradise, evolves to resist its new vision, which is imposed on him in the world without God, which has succeeded the one built on the foundation of traditional biblical values. By means of the symbolism he introduces, Jakubowski once again inspires reflection on the condition of the late postmodern society. The disturbing topicality

¹¹² N i j a k o w s k i, *Świat po apokalipsie: Społeczeństwo w świetle postapokaliptycznych tekstów kultury popularnej*, 51.

¹¹³ See *ibidem*, 52.

¹¹⁴ As Raffaella Baccolini notes, a dystopian work is constructed as the dialectic of a narration and a counter-narration. A narrative on the power dominant in an evil world is juxtaposed with one on the resistance the power encounters. The story usually begins in the 'new reality,' with the main protagonist already living there. As a result of the course of the events, the protagonist becomes aware of the inner contradictions of the dystopian universe and his sense of alienation gradually deepens. See Raffaella B a c c o l i n i, "'It's Not In the Womb the Damage Is Done': The Construction of Gender, Memory and Desire in Katharine Burdekin's *Swastika Night*," in *Le trasformazioni del narrare*, ed. by Erina Siciliani et al. (Brindisi: Schena Editore, 1996), 293–309. The new awareness of the protagonist may make him either reject the dystopian social order or try to change it. See Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan, "Introduction: Dystopia and Histories," in *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*, ed. Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan (New York: Routledge, 2003), 1–12. See also Fryderyk K w i a t k o w s k i, "Czym są gnostyckie dystopie? Refleksja nad gnostycką wizją świata w badaniach nad dystopiami," in *Narracje fantastyczne*, 254.

of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic motifs in contemporary culture makes Jakubowski's readers and his audience realize the imperative to return to the fundamental philosophical issues concerning the meaning, the ultimate goal, and the value of a human life. Only a new insight into these concepts can be helpful in overcoming the far-reaching consequences of the anthropological crises and of the crisis of culture: the prospect of an inhuman future in which the human being will no longer be considered as person, the human life will no longer be a value, and the axiological foundation of human relations will be destroyed. Thus, according to Jakubowski, only a new insight into the fundamental philosophical issues can become a source of hope for the humanity. And hope, for its part, is always related to the actual experience of a given person and invokes the view of a human life as an existence turned towards the future, as well as the vision of the human being as *homo viator* awaiting fulfillment at the end of his, or her, path.¹¹⁵ There is no room for hope in the dystopian, dehumanized universe in which Adam joins the “modern police force of the modern state.”¹¹⁶ His world is a trap and he is made to follow the course of life he cannot change or abandon. “I never believed in anything,” confesses Adam. “I was an exemplary student in school and at the university; I had the best prospects for my career. I perfectly understood that ... I must serve.... Even when I no longer knew the sense of my service. The routine is that you follow your track and you let the hours, the days, and the months pass.... I was becoming a robot.”¹¹⁷ There is no room for hope in the reality where material comfort and financial security prevail. Such a reality engenders no expectations. Hope would be about what is possible but not yet accessible, what does not yield to deterministic structures and what cannot be controlled. Thus the object of hope lies beyond human capabilities and hope implies trust that what we would welcome will actually be accomplished.¹¹⁸ Filling the void of human life with artificial contents may dull the feeling of unfulfillment. In their attempt to subdue their nature, as well as the environment in which they live, to themselves, human beings destroy themselves: by aspiring to exercise total control over every aspect of life, they actually annihilate the reality and introduce their own idea of order, simultaneously reducing themselves to this idea.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ See, e.g., Kazimierz Krąjowski, “Nadzieja,” in *Wobec nadziei: Aksjologiczne problemy dramatu i teatru XX i XXI wieku*, ed. Joanna Michalczyk and Mariusz Lach (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2018), 13–5.

¹¹⁶ Jakubowski, “Luna: Romans futurologiczny,” 354.

¹¹⁷ Ibidem, 367.

¹¹⁸ See Krąjowski, “Nadzieja,” 14–16.

¹¹⁹ See Bogdan Baran, “Opowieść o ostatnim człowieku,” In Aldous Huxley, *Nowy wszechświat*, trans. Bogdan Baran (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1988), 272.

Adam changes his life and, influenced by Luna, becomes ready for a rebellion. Luna comes from a group of “abnegates,”¹²⁰ who refuse to be subordinated to the authorities and inhabit the outskirts of the city (the world), living there in a camp. They resemble the ‘coarse’ Savages from Huxley’s *Brave New World*. While unfulfilled, the budding relationship between Adam and Luna is an attempt to bridge the two disparate worlds and thus to find the common element, which will begin the process of restoring mutual trust between them. For the time being there is no trust: the concept and value of trust have long been compromised. Yet, thanks to Luna, Adam gets acquainted with oral novels,¹²¹ by means of which the “abnegates” hand down to the new generations the memory of the past and of the traditional, then normative hierarchy of values. He also becomes familiar with an inspirational fairy-tale-like story about salvation, including freely interpreted biblical motifs (of the Incarnation, liberation, salvation, punishment for the wicked, demolition of statues of foreign gods, and the reward for the just and those who preserved moral integrity). Yet the ones who tell him this story do not have faith in its ever becoming a reality. Their world is that of the past: it is a celebration and sanctification of the past. Paradoxically, it shows no orientation towards the future, which only confirms the crisis of great narrations. Adam is the one who actively opposes the ‘design’ of the world in which human beings became slaves: he attempts to blow up the Statue of Humanity, because he believes that, “What we need is a symbol of resistance, a clear sign for others.”¹²² By “others,” he means those who have stopped looking towards the future, as well as those who have become incapable of deciding about themselves. The protagonist’s desire to awaken the slumbering spirit of the people, which only waits for the right signal, echoes the plot of *The Wedding*,¹²³ a play, of 1901, by Stanisław Wyspiański. A Polish reader will also see here an allusion to the dance of Wyspiański’s Straw-man, symbolizing the slumber of the Polish people, deeply and destructively divided about the questions of culture and politics (which Jakubowski expressively showed in the already mentioned play “Wieczny kwiecień”).

In the fictional world of Huxley’s *Brave New World*, a crucial role is played by Shakespeare’s poetry and its power of appeal. Discovered by the

¹²⁰ Jakubowski, “Luna: Romans futurologiczny,” 363.

¹²¹ The return to the oral tradition is characteristic of popular postapocalyptic fiction. See Nijakowski, *Świat po apokalipsie: Społeczeństwo w świetle postapokaliptycznych tekstów kultury popularnej*. See also *Narracje fantastyczne*, ed. Ksenia Olkusz and Krzysztof M. Maj (Kraków: Ośrodek Badawczy Facta Ficta, 2017), <https://factaficta.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/narracje-fantastyczne-red-ksenia-olkusz-krzysztof-m-maj.pdf>.

¹²² Jakubowski, “Luna: Romans futurologiczny,” 371.

¹²³ See Stanisław Wyspiański, *The Wedding*, transl. by Noel Clark (Oberon Books, London, 1998).

Savage, it renders the brave new world infinitely primitive, shallow, and fake. In “Luna...,” despite all the differences, a similar significance is given to the poetic text “Zgaśnij księżycu” [Fade Out, Moon]¹²⁴ by Andrzej Bursa, a Polish poet of the so-called 1956 generation.¹²⁵ Against the background of modern (post)apocalyptic culture texts, it is perhaps not an original idea to grant a special role to poetry, which ‘awakens’ the main protagonist of “Luna...,” who has so far obediently continued his ‘automatized’ life.¹²⁶ However, what matters to Jakubowski—a playwright and a poet particularly sensitive to the way words are used in the language—is his poetic vision of the world. By his reference to the poetry of Bursa, Jakubowski reactivates, in his readers’ minds, the context of the rebellion of Bursa’s generation, marked by the clash between the universe of values and emotions, on the one hand, and the after-war Polish reality which challenged the existing moral order. At the same time, though, the playwright evokes the stable and uncompromising attitude of Bursa, who would openly speak the truth about human existence. The title of Bursa’s poem Jakubowski introduced into his play corresponds to the name of its female protagonist Luna. In the high-tech, dehumanized world of the future, the Moon (Luna) seems “tiny”¹²⁷ and it looks a relic of the past, but it nevertheless remains outside the control exercised by the human authority, thus being a sign of the latter’s only short-term, limited, and merely apparent supremacy.

The main protagonist of the play is executed, which is the punishment for his rebellion, and things seem to be returning to their original state. In the Epilogue of “Luna...,” the omnipresent Head (a symbol of political surveillance) assures the citizens about the efficiency of the system,¹²⁸ as it did before, in the Prologue of the play. A representative of the government questions the sense of Adam’s rebellion, “You came to believe that you can see more than others and that your horizons are broader; you came to believe that you would be able to provide the world with a symbol. The symbol of the beginning and of the end. It was a beautiful idea.... The destruction of the Statue of Humanity would have been like the September 11 attacks *à rebours*. It was then that the

¹²⁴ See Andrzej Bursa, “Zgaśnij księżycu,” in Andrzej Bursa, *Dziela (prawie) wszystkie*, ed. Wojciech Bonowicz (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2018), 8.

¹²⁵ The name “1956 generation of Polish poets” is used to describe the poets whose childhood was marked by the Second World War, who grew up during the time of the Thaw after the death of Stalin in 1953, and for whom the most important experience was the Polish October 1956, with the cultural, as well as political, transformations it brought, among them a return of artistic freedom. The most important poets of the generation were Stanisław Grochowiak, Jerzy Harasymowicz, and Władysław Terlecki.

¹²⁶ See, e.g., Monika Rawska, “Miasta-światy: Analiza przestrzeni miejskiej w *Equilibrium* Kurta Wimmera i *Incepcji* Christophera Nolana,” in *Narracje fantastyczne*, 363–4.

¹²⁷ Jakubowski, “Luna: Romans futurologiczny,” 365.

¹²⁸ See *ibidem*, 375–6.

security system in which and owing to which we live began to be forged.... You did not anticipate one thing, though. Namely, the power of habit which is stronger than that of resentment. But we have decided to meet your expectations halfway and we will make your execution a symbol. You know. (*laughing*) ‘The dawning of eternal victory.’ (*stops laughing*) Your solitary death will let us sustain peace among our ranks for a few years.”¹²⁹ While Jakubowski’s direct reference to the terrorist attacks on the United States of America, a symbol of the global power, may prompt critical reflection upon the processes of globalization,¹³⁰ the piece actually evokes the Polish context¹³¹ and addresses the post-war moral dilemmas, the question whether the opposition against the new political situation and the communist government should be continued, as well as those about the price of ‘survival’ and the responsibility for one’s attitudes towards the oppressive reality, and—last but not least—about the freedom of describing this reality and about the ideological pressure it exerted. The confidence with which the representative of the authorities speaks about the stability of the government is based on his belief in the power of habit which translates into a prevalence of passive attitudes among the society and an acceptance of some form of oppression. Stanisław Lem was saying, “Humanity always suffers from some form of poverty and faces danger which continually changes its shape.”¹³² Each and every implementation of a technological innovation generates new ones and there “emerge profitable production

¹²⁹ Ibidem, 373.

¹³⁰ Such reflection can be found, for instance, in the radical approach of Jean Baudrillard. See e.g. Szymon Kostek, “Bezwydarzeniowość i wydarzeniowość: Jean Baudrillard wobec wydarzeń z 11 września 2001 roku,” *Anthropos?*, no. 8–9, 2007, <http://www.anthropos.us.edu.pl/anthropos/5/texty/kostek.htm>. Kostek reads Baudrillard in the context of the thought of Zygmunt Bauman. Unlike Bauman, Baudrillard considers globalization as a process negatively affecting culture. In his opinion, globalization is a way towards the ultimate decline of culture, since it washes away the differences between cultures and values. See Jean Baudrillard, *Paroxysm: Interviews with Philippe Petit*, trans. Chris Turner (London and New York: Verso, 1998). However, Kostek observes that despite the radical character of Baudrillard’s pessimistic visions of the future they involve hope and moralizing, which are inherent in any variety of intellectual radicalism.

¹³¹ Jakubowski directly refers to Cyprian Norwid’s “Tyrtej.” See Cyprian Norwid, “Tyrtej—Prolog,” in Cyprian Norwid, *Dramaty*, vol. 2, ed. Julian Maślanka (Lublin: Instytut Badań nad Twórczością Cypriana Norwida KUL, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, and Biblioteka Narodowa, 2013), 17. Indirectly, though, the playwright alludes to Jerzy Andrzejewski’s novel *Ashes and Diamonds*, which was first published in 1948, at the turning point of Polish after-war history. The title of the book, which posed the question about the future of Poland, draws on Norwid’s “Tyrtej.” In the succeeding editions of his novel, Andrzejewski made its political appeal increasingly radical. See Jerzy Andrzejewski, *Ashes and Diamonds*, transl. by D. J. Welsh (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997).

¹³² “Nieludzkie przyspieszenie: Rozmowa ze Stanisławem Lemem,” in Stanisław Beres, *Historia literatury polskiej w rozmowach: XX–XXI wiek*, vol. 1 (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2002), 109.

pools,”¹³³ followed by their monopolization, which is “a new form of political totalitarianism.”¹³⁴ Adam’s rebellion, which is the first and indispensable step towards changing the Statue of Humanity (the distorted version of the figure of Christ the Redeemer) back into one depicting a man (Man), expresses the hope inscribed in the human nature and specific to the human being, as well as the ability of man to rebel against what limits him, degrades him, and destroys him, against any form of evil, also, and perhaps in particular, when it is no longer certain whether any traces of human sacrifice will prove more lasting than “ashes only and confusion,”¹³⁵ as Norwid put it.

THE ASTRONAUTS

In Jakubowski’s latest play “Kosmonauci,” another futurological vision drawing on science fiction and postapocalyptic fiction conventions, the motifs we already know from “Luna...” recur. The metaphorical depiction of the decline of the world based on the traditional values serves the author as a pretext to elaborate on the issue of the new beginning, while simultaneously reactivating the motif of the “eternal return to the roots of humanity.”¹³⁶ The reader is confronted with an image showing four passengers of a space vehicle facing a dangerous situation: a huge asteroid is headed at a vast speed in the way of the spaceship, while its navigability has been compromised. The journey to “the edge of the universe,”¹³⁷ reflecting a fascination with the technological progress, was to prove the “unlimited capabilities of the humankind,”¹³⁸ while the passengers were to become “hope and inspiration” for others.¹³⁹ Now, with the disaster approaching and no one in the position to prevent it, they turn out helpless victims of insufficient control over the effects of the technological progress. The asteroid passes the spaceship without colliding with it, but the technical defect makes it impossible for the vehicle to continue the flight as planned. One of the passengers believes it was God’s intervention that the asteroid did not hit the spaceship, but another says the human factor and a calculation error were responsible. Drifting in the space, the vehicle becomes an apt metaphor of the postmodern world, while the voice of the autopilot,

¹³³ Ibidem.

¹³⁴ Ibidem.

¹³⁵ Norwid, „Tyrtęj—Prolog,” 17.

¹³⁶ H e r n i k S p a l i Ń s k a, *Pytania i znaki*, 13.

¹³⁷ J a k u b o w s k i, “Kosmonauci,” 405.

¹³⁸ Ibidem, 396.

¹³⁹ Ibidem, 406.

commanding, “Turn back if possible!”¹⁴⁰ clearly issues a warning against the impending disaster. Although the plot of the play is set in the future, the images which appear on the screen, showing all kinds of evil done by people—the evil that is commonplace, universal, anonymous, and exempt from punishment—prove that the reality has already surpassed all futurological visions.¹⁴¹ The image of the humanity experiencing its decline—similar to the one we already know from “Luna...”—is implied by the chorus, which provides a commentary on the actions of the protagonists. The actions of the two couples who are the astronauts (cosmonauts)—Aleks and Cecylia, and Bruno and Diana—fill in the time before the disaster strikes and reflect the human condition in the postmodern era, marked by an absence of respected authority, traditional role models and a stable normative value hierarchy. There is no hope or transcendence any more and human beings do not even realize how deeply they need them. Again, Jakubowski refers to the dystopian reality of Huxley’s *Brave New World* and to postapocalyptic movies, and his “marriage comedy,”¹⁴² as he has called it himself, engenders the conclusion that “actually, everything has ended and has lost its momentum. The interpersonal church has frozen and we are still desperately trying to rekindle its fire, as well as our passions. Hence the attempts to create new relationships, triangles or new couples, as well as marriage tragedies involving infidelity and abandonment.”¹⁴³ However, also this time Jakubowski gives his readers a glimmer of hope for “a continuation.”¹⁴⁴ The hope is inherent in the protagonists’ longing for a safe world. It is a hope for a stable ground under their feet in the literal, as well as metaphorical, senses, conceived also as an axiological foundation, and a hope for an openness to and a bond with another human being. They manifest this hope with what they say and with their gestures expressing compassion and consolation, thus restoring the foundation of humanity. There is hope in their experience of togetherness as they face their difficult situation, strive to repair the spacecraft and find a way to return to the earth in their struggle to survive. Yet the images of a metaphysical void in which the absent meaning is compensated with its imitation, of an apotheosis of civilizational and technological progress which rejects the existing knowledge as anachronism, of uprootedness which results in being cut off from the source of life, prompt something important. By means of these images, Jakubowski persuades his readers that what has been rejected or denied, or consigned to oblivion and nonexistence, actually lives as long

¹⁴⁰ Ibidem, 385.

¹⁴¹ See B e r e ś, “Nieludzkie przyspieszenie: Rozmowa ze Stanisławem Lemem,” 103–6.

¹⁴² Ż a r s k i, “Bezsilność: Z Jarosławem Jakubowskim rozmawia Michał Żarski”: 79.

¹⁴³ Ibidem, 79.

¹⁴⁴ J a k u b o w s k i, “Kosmonauci,” 408.

as man lives. It is like the “Labyrinth”¹⁴⁵ in the play, which continues, forks, and branches infinitely, its reality annexing the present moment. The reality of the Labyrinth may ultimately turn out more powerful than any attempt at destroying it.¹⁴⁶

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As a playwright who ascertains his rights to create his own textual worlds, to his own style, and to ‘his’ themes, Jakubowski always puts the human being in the center of his works. If he refers to popular motifs or images, he treats them merely as pretexts to address the issues he finds truly significant. If he describes the decline of the postmodern world, his intention is by no means to shock his readers with apocalyptic visions. Rather, by still believing in the value of words, literary (also theatrical) works, and in their social significance, as well as in the value of dialogue, he speaks about the hope inscribed in a human life: the hope that restores the meaning of things and is far from naive optimism; the hope that is a chance for one to change one’s erroneous decisions and for turning back once the chosen path leads to nowhere, the hope which lasts as long as the human life continues and the world exists, as long as the voice saying, “Turn back, if possible!,” can still be heard.

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¹⁴⁵ See *ibidem*, 385–6.

¹⁴⁶ The reality of Labyrinth symbolizes the reality of the rights and truths which have been rejected and dismissed. The Labyrinth grows and becomes increasingly powerful, just as memory does in Tadeusz Kantor’s “Theatre of Death.” See H e r n i k S p a l i ń s k a, “Pytania i znaki,” 10. In Kantor’s theatre, the memory born of death develops into a power capable of both creation and destruction, thus making the past the only real time. By existing on a par with the actual events, it questions their being real.

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ABSTRACT / ABSTRAKT

Joanna MICHALCZUK, “Turn back if possible!” On Fears Related to the “End” and Hopes for a “Continuation” in Plays by Jarosław Jakubowski
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The article comprises an analysis of selected plays by Jarosław Jakubowski, one of the most interesting Polish playwrights of the recent years. The analyzed plays were published in two collections of, respectively, 2014 and 2017. Jakubowski's works address the questions of the foundation of the humanity and of the actual meaning of a human life. In his plays, he unveils the consequences of the cultural transformations of modernity. His special focus is the results of the erosion of traditional values (shaped within the Judeo-Christian culture) and he investigates in particular the implications of replacing them with ones that are merely contingent and short-term. Among others, he issues a warning against the destructive tendency to rid the area of public discourse of the spiritual element. His plays are literary exemplifications of the prevalence of anthropological reductionism in the ideational realm, triggered by modern day philosophy. The insights into the social reality of today he offers describe the process of the gradual passing of what is ‘human’ in our world and are contrasted with the popular view that humankind has power and dominion over everything. Jakubowski's futurological dramas make use of catastrophic and postapocalyptic motifs, which he turns into metaphors. The quotations used in the title of this article come from the play entitled “Kosmonauci” [The Astronauts], in which a severely damaged spaceship with its crew on board drifting in the space becomes a metaphor of the postmodern world. In the wobbly reality that leads to nowhere, Jakubowski's protagonists long for a stable and certain element in their lives and start an unequal fight so as to save both their lives and their humanity. Although the disaster seems unavoidable, Jakubowski leaves his readers with a hope for a “continuation” which is far from naive optimism. It is a hope for the return of what has been rejected and rendered no longer valid by the modern world: the spiritual dimension of human existence and a stable value hierarchy which can become a reliable foundation of human relations.

Keywords: Jarosław Jakubowski, the Polish theatre after 1989, the anthropological perspective in literary studies, (post)apocalyptic fiction, hope

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Joanna MICHALCZUK, „Zawróć, jeśli to możliwe!” O lękach związanych z „końcem” i nadziejach na „dalszy ciąg” w dramatach Jarosława Jakubowskiego

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Artykuł przybliży twórczość dramatyczną Jarosława Jakubowskiego, jednego z najciekawszych polskich dramatopisarzy ostatnich lat, na przykładzie kilku wybranych sztuk pochodzących z dwóch wydanych w Polsce antologii dramatów tego autora: *General i inne dramaty polityczne* (2014) oraz *Prawda i inne dramaty* (2017). Odślaniając w swoich dramatach skutki współczesnych przeobrażeń kulturowych świata Zachodu – skutki erozji tradycyjnych wartości ukształtowanych w obrębie kultury judeochrześcijańskiej i zastępowania ich wartościami przygodnymi, spychania duchowego wymiaru istnienia człowieka poza margines życia społecznego – Jakubowski prowokuje do refleksji nad tym, co stanowi fundament człowieczeństwa, i nad rzeczywistym znaczeniem ludzkiego istnienia. Jego dramaty stają się literacką egzemplifikacją rozmaitych przejawów antropologicznego redukcjonizmu we współczesnej rzeczywistości, uświadamiającą odbiorcy, jak powoli umiera w niej to, co „ludzkie”, choć wszystko zdaje się dziś należeć do człowieka i od niego zależeć. Frapujące twórcę problemy i niepokoje związane ze skutkami degeneracyjnych procesów cywilizacyjnych, odcinania się od przeszłości, redukcjonistycznego postrzegania człowieka i biernej akceptacji kierunku dokonujących się zmian znajdują też swoje odzwierciedlenie w przywoływanych w artykule futurologicznych dramatach Jakubowskiego, w których wątki katastroficzne i (post)apokaliptyczne stają się pretekstem do zbudowania konstrukcji metaforycznej. Zamieszczone w tytule artykułu cytaty pochodzą z jednego z nich, ze sztuki zatytułowanej *Kosmonauci*, w której dryfujący w przestrzeni kosmicznej uszkodzony statek z kosmonautami staje się czytelną metaforą ponowoczesnego świata. W chybotliwej, zmierzającej donikąd rzeczywistości bohaterowie Jakubowskiego tęsknią za tym, co stabilne i pewne – za dosłownie i metaforycznie pojętym twardym gruntem pod nogami – i podejmują nierówną walkę o ocalenie własnego życia, ale też własnego człowieczeństwa. Choć katastrofa wydaje się nieunikniona, Jakubowski zostawia odbiorcy daleką od naiwnego optymizmu nadzieję na „dalszy ciąg”. Ściśle wiąże się ona z tym, co na skutek redukcjonistycznych zapędów współczesnego świata zostało zdegradowane, unieważnione, odrzucone – z duchowym wymiarem ludzkiego istnienia i stabilnym fundamentem wartości, na którym oprzeć można rzeczywistość międzyludzkich relacji.

Słowa kluczowe: Jarosław Jakubowski, dramat polski po 1989, perspektywa antropologiczna w literaturze, motywy (post)apokaliptyczne, nadzieja

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