

“THE FRACTION MAN”:  
ANTHROPOLOGY OF *THE CYCLOPS*

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Le Roman est une Mort (...). Toute la Littérature peut dire: *Larvatus prodeo*, je m'avance en désignant mon masque du doigt.  
Roland Barthes, *Le degré zéro de l'écriture*.

*The Cyclops*, the novel by Ranko Marinković published in 1965, is regularly accorded a distinguished place in critical and historical surveys of Croatian literary modernism, but this claim is supported by a somewhat tautological argumentation. Namely, in spite of insisting on the stylistic excellence of Marinković's writing and the vivid elaboration of the characters, Croatian criticism hardly ever moves beyond discussing the plot, which, for that matter, is exiguous: in late 1940 and early 1941, Melchior Tresić, a young theatre critic with a double degree in philosophy and psychology, walks down the streets of Zagreb and occasionally enjoys the company of a goliardic band of intellectuals and assorted bohemians, regulars of a pub which is also frequented by the beautiful blonde the protagonist is in love with. His jealousy at seeing her whispering sweet nothings with her lover of the moment, the actor Freddie, is undeterred by the fact that he is himself entertaining an adulterous relationship with the sensual Enka. As he does not know the name of his beloved, he calls her Vivien. The major concern of the protagonist is to concoct a way to avoid being called-up into the ranks of army of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and sent to the front. Therefore he fasts, hoping to lose weight in order to make himself unfit for military service. The narration follows the meanderings of his delicate psyche, relating his dreams, interior monologues and various judgements and comments on the people around him, always in the third person, but it is clearly focalised by his partial consciousness. His fellow rambles include Ugo, an idle intellectual wont to boast of his success with women; Maestro, a

journalist and failed novelist (partly based on the Croatian poet Tin Ujević), an expert on Dostoevsky, indefinitely disappointed in life and love, hostile to technology, progress, books and the theatre, who, by the end of the novel, will arrange to be murdered by the alleged “enemy” of the natural man, the electric power, represented, like poison, by a skull and cross-bones, while urinating from his balcony on the wires of a high-tension tower in front of his house; Don Fernando, a journalist and an ostensibly serious gentleman, promulgator of the ideas of the so-called “preventive dehumanisation” (a project aiming at eliminating all the “cross-eyed” individuals, whose physical disabilities are symptomatic of the danger they constitute for society), but in search of mediators who would enable the execution of that task; ATMA, a chiromant, Melchior’s neighbour, whom the protagonists feels is continuously spying on him, whose artistic name (the same as the one of the Great Spirit in Brahmanic religion, also borne by Schopenhauer’s dog) was given to him by Melchior himself for the motives that he cannot remember, is the anagram of the Croatian word *tama* (darkness; obscurity); Kurt, a young German who keeps the tavern where the protagonist now and then comes to break his fasting, suspected of espionage; Pupo and the Unknown, the heroes of underground resistance, who invite Melchior to take part and to engage for goals which remain unclear for him.

In spite of all his efforts, Melchior is recruited; after an incident in the barracks, he winds up in the military hospital diagnosed with pneumonia (where he becomes infatuated with an angel-like nurse, soon to be married), is then transferred to the psychiatric department, and finally discharged. Upon his return to Zagreb, suddenly pricked by his conscience, he intends to volunteer, but changes his mind in the last moment, frightened by the disorder of the military headquarters, and escapes. Meanwhile, ATMA and Kurt have disappeared, Vivien does not show herself in public any more, Maestro commits suicide in the presence of the protagonist. Melchior has not reached any moral nor ideological foothold. On the last page we find him crouched in the grass in the country-side; as he tries to hide from the shooting and cannon fire that he can hear in the distance, an enormous insect, become gigantic because of its position, looms in front of his eyes. Finally, crawling on all fours he heads backwards, toward the city, or Zoopolis, as it is designated on various occasions in the text of the novel.

As a whole, the novel has been described as an impressive picture of Zagreb in the last months before the outbreak of WW2, permeated by the atmosphere of a life suspended in impotent waiting, full of decadent leisure, neurotic worries, general feeling of futility fostered by disorientation and lack of coherence. The critics often repeat Ivo Frangeš's formula according to which in this novel the forces of Eros and Thanatos are joined by that of Phobos, and on the basis of this label, the novel is interpreted as a sort of an epic saga of fear and moral confusion. It is indeed true that as far as plot is concerned, nothing much happens in Marinković's novel; but, as Roland Barthes put it, whatever happens in a literary text, takes place at the level of discourse, and not at the level of referentiality.

#### MAN IS WORD IS FOOD

“Uninteresting, commonplace!” complains the intradiegetic writer in Marinković's short story *The Embrace*, despairing over the paucity of props for mimesis to be found in “reality”:

If only someone shouted *Fire!*, or broke a window! Perhaps something dramatic, alive, worth attending to would happen. Something worth unscrewing one's Parker for. (...) I need a subject so terrible... What is it, now? You interrupt yourself? “A subject so terrible”? Shakespearean? Policing? Crocodilian! Oh, oh! A crocodilian subject, isn't that terrible indeed! (Marinković 1982: 132-133 and 152).

A subject at once terrible, crocodilian, Cyclopean, cannibalistic, with spectacular fireworks, “Shakespearean”, Homeric, Joycean, Dostoevskian, is indeed bestowed on the author of *The Cyclops* – nevertheless, nothing happens in his novel.

You want something to happen, and nothing happens; because *what happens to language, does not happen to discourse*: what ‘happens’, (...) takes place (...) in uttering, not in the sequence of utterances (Barthes 1973: 23).

That which happens in the text always happens somewhere else,

the “scene of writing” never takes place in one place: its locus (corpus) is always also “ein anderer Schauplatz”, as Freud put it (Hartman 1982: 104);

the signifying bodies always signify still other signifying bodies, and so on, in the abysmal recursive series. Taking his cue from the Pythian meta-textual spokesman of *The Embrace*, the gendarme Ilija<sup>1</sup>, a drunken Ugo (being preoccupied, moreover, by the uncertainty of his own identity: “‘I? And what am I?’ [...] ‘I? What am I?’” C 410-411) voices one such warning in *The Cyclops* while addressing the bronze statue of the nineteenth-century poet Petar Preradović<sup>2</sup> (who is, of course, unable to hear him) in order to explain a multilingual syllepsis:

And can you, Master Peter, pray tell me what tartalom means... in the Hungarian language? (...) You cannot, can you? You think it’s some kind of Greek inferno, ha-ha... Well, it means – contents (C 410).

To seek intellectual nourishment in the contents of fictional plots is like reaching, in the manner of Tantalus, for the food withheld from the hungry mouth; the text is not supposed to be “devoured, gorged, but browsed, cropped meticulously” (Barthes 1973: 23-24), for it is meant to supply something else, something quite opposite from what resembles so much the infernal plot of empirical life and its contents (these are “something merely formal”<sup>3</sup>), and where the characters can quench the thirst of the

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1 “A word must be turned over twice if you want to find out what it is” (Marinković 1995: 161). The poetical implication of the fictional gendarme’s utterance has been pointed out by Frangeš (1992: 348). The technique of “representation by the opposite” poses the “problem of what determines the truth. The joke (...) is pointing to a problem and is making use of the uncertainty of one of our commonest concepts. (...) What they [i.e. jokes or utterances shaped on the principle of representation by the opposite] are attacking is not a person or an institution but the certainty of our knowledge itself, one of our speculative possessions” (Freud 1991c: 161).

2 For the Croatian reader, this generally invokes the text-book figure of the author of patriotic verse, e.g. “Hail, be thyself”.

3 On the relation between form and contents being from the point of view of the artist the exact opposite of what it means to non-artists, see *The Will to Power*: “Man ist um den Preis Künstler, daß man das, was alle Nichtkünstler “Form” nennen, als *Inhalt*, als “die Sache selbst” empfindet. Damit gehört man freilich in eine *verkehrte* Welt: denn nunmehr wird einem der Inhalt zu

question “I? And what am I?” (C 410) no more than can Ugo. The only answer his inebriation offers Ugo is “an insect”. For, being a literary character, Ugo is in fact not a man. He cannot know, any more than can the poet’s bronze statue, that he is a mere insect caught in the web of the text which uses him to speak of itself before the plot-spinning spider swallows him up. Likewise, he can have no intimation of his entomological intertextual twins, including a specular reflection of the author himself<sup>4</sup>. On another drunken occasion, however, when asked “Are you a man?” Ugo replies without hesitation: “Yes, I am a man” (C 281). Was it alcohol speaking or was he, as he is wont to do, performing the part of the jester and teasing his fellow textual creature about the elusive ontic status of their shared narrative being-there in the text? Was he staging yet another *acte gratuit*, or did he sincerely believe that he was truly a man? Really, what might Ugo be: a man, a textual function or something completely different?

Really, what is he? (...) And what else might he be? Caution is advised! Because, later, if he becomes a He, what are we left with? (C 411).

Does man exist in writing? For if the man in writing is not a *true* man, but a body made out of words which play the role of the human body and the human mind, how can you recognise yourself in it? “Are you a man” (C 281), to begin with?

#### CREATING MAN OUT OF WORDS

Insofar as the “problem of writing” is a godlike activity – it consists, namely, in “creating man out of words” (Marinković 1988: 126) – it is problematic in many ways. The matter handled

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etwas bloß Formalem, – unser Leben eingerechnet” (Nietzsche 1948: 487, § 368).

4 In *The Embrace* and in another short story by Marinković, *This Lonesome Life of Yours*, the metaphor of an ant trying desperately “to break off a small piece of crude reality and run into his literary den holding the meagre booty in his teeth” (Marinković 1982: 132) refers almost explicitly to the condition of the author of a mimetically conceived literary text (cf. Frangeš 1992: 352, Čale 2001: 146-151).

by the creator of a literary text resembles only superficially – *per speculum, in aenigmate*<sup>5</sup> – the matter which has served, according to John the Evangelist (1: 1-3) for one, the original Creator in his Old Testament enterprise. The phrase “creating man out of words”, i.e. by means of writing, announces the hieratic intention redolent of the ordinary paternal act and seeking likewise to circumvent biology and genetics, but it can only compete with the Scripture in a mimetic way. Finally, is this “man of words” supposed to be thoroughly unique, as befits an act of original creation, or is he to be the adequate representative of some pre-existing model? Is it necessary to *know* the man, or perhaps only to know how to *look at* him?<sup>6</sup> Does the “man of words” have to be a man who can be ta-

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- 5 “For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians, 13: 12). In Marinković’s novel, Maestro speaks to Melchior in similar words (“I saw myself there, to a certain extent, in the looking glass [of the shop window]”, C 422), immediately after he has asserted that, although he had had his back to him, he has also seen Melchior seeing him – that is, he also saw him “to a certain extent, in the looking glass”.
- 6 In *The Embrace*, the apparently insignificant character of a petit-bourgeois, Mr Bepo, gives the contrary anthropological advice, that can be read as a metatextual litotes: “Well, don’t, don’t look at him. You know, I never look at anyone. I don’t even look at myself in the mirror. And I don’t know anyone. They are all the same to me. Too much looking, you know, consumes one’s eyes. And in the end, what is there to be looked at? If you’ve seen a man once, that is enough for you: you’ve seen all the people. Because they all have a nose, a pair of eyes and all the rest. And what else is there to be seen? – Ah, and the females? – (...) Same thing. A nose and eyes and the rest of it. I mean the ears, the mouth, the head, the arms, the legs” (Marinković 1982: 152). As is typical of Marinković’s highly ambiguous writing, his character’s utterance can be interpreted in at least two (opposed) senses: 1) Bepo is the spokesman for blindness, schematism, anti-empirical generalisations, he is a non-reflexive advocate of the metaphysics of the “universal” man, which does not invite attempts at self-definition and reduces every difference, including gender, to sameness; 2) no matter how much he “looks”, man sees always and exclusively through the lens of the pattern that he has mastered by drill; “looking at” the man does not mean seeing or knowing either the universal or a particular “man”, not even one’s own self, the difference itself is but a pattern of delusion constructed by desire (always in the same way: “They are all the same to me”). There is, in the gaze itself – for Oedipus (“the brother of his own children”, C 292) as for Narcissus – an inherent necessity for blindness, which Melchior experiences in front of a mirror: “The Gaze seeks itself, its very self, it wants to see itself. And it wants to be liked by itself, narcissistically, stupidly, myopically, blind to all that is not It, that is

ken at his word, a role model of ethical behaviour? “What is man, then?” (C 155). Of which sex must (s)he be? Is it sufficient for him to differ in some respect from the animal species, even though he is being called an insect (C 29, *passim*), a monkey (C 51, 93, 103, 106, 166, 168, 246, *passim*), a parrot (C 169, *passim*), a “Super-swine” (C 247)? What parts of his person need to be represented in words? How much of a man must he be, i.e. must he, like “every normal male”, belong to the “upright, whole people” (C 193, 191) – i.e. to the erect, those walking on two legs, as in the central part of the riddle propounded to Oedipus by the Sphinx<sup>7</sup> – or can he be crippled or blind, does it count if he is only “half a man” (C 190)<sup>8</sup>, or is it preferable if he be “not a man, but a man and a half” (C 281)<sup>9</sup>, or is being simply “a man” enough? If half a man is also a

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not the striking gaze, *the pure, eighteen-c(h)ara(c)t(er) Gaze*. (...) Perhaps it is the entrance into a quite new, undiscovered inferno from which there is no return. The disappearance into one’s own eyes” (C 202, emphases in the original).

- 7 The question the answer to which is “man” involves a creature that moves first on four, then on two, and finally on three legs. The one but last sentence of *The Cyclops* inverts the sequence and puts the protagonist “on all fours” (C 492).
- 8 “Half man, that is my first name and my family name... and the whole of my biography. (...) I have no legs” (C 190). Maestro too feels himself to be half a man, although, unlike the “man with no legs”, the lower part of his body is whole, and thus should enable him to follow his ideal (“I respect uprightness, human dignity”, C 455): “Sometimes I happen to think, for that is how my life is, that I was born joined with a twin brother. They separated us, but one of us had to die. It was him who died. And so, you see, he interferes with me all my life. Right there, close to me, dead, he keeps telling me: bah, you are but half a man” (C 443). Maestro is also called “Poldi” (C 106) and “Polda” (C 106, 477), a name which not only refers to his incompleteness (the Croatian word “pol” meaning “half”), but also implies a literary allusion: apart from the twins he chooses for himself explicitly or implicitly (Vergil, Socrates, Prometheus-Epimetheus, Hephaestus, Dionysius, Christ), his contempt for books notwithstanding, one of the possible brothers, whose split uncanny double he certainly is, is Leopold (Poldy) Bloom.
- 9 This is the expression used about the late Maestro by the “little man”, the door-keeper with a phallic-vegetable name, Carrot, another possible “half” with respect to Maestro as a man split off from his twin brother: “Polda? He was quite a man! – exclaimed Carrot with reverence. – How many times has he told me, in confidence, You, Carrot, are the only man around here! And was I his equal, well, you can see for yourself, an ordinary door-keeper. He

man, which half must it be – the soul or the body; above or beneath the waist; the consciousness or that which remains hidden from it; the three-dimensional person or the specular image; the inside (*Innenwelt*) or the outside (*Umwelt*); the indivisible core of the “sensorial being” radically different from all others<sup>10</sup> or the “inter-individual” (Girard 1987: 281 ff.) being, i.e. the one determined socially, culturally and historically? If this partial man (the “man made of words”, i.e. the human body made of words, ever since “the Word was made flesh”, John 1: 14) lacks something essential, can he be completed by a word, such as leg, arm, ear, nose, or some other body part, a skull perhaps (cf. C 56, 205, 406, 413, 443, 445, 477)? Is man – whether made of words or of flesh and blood uncorrupted by words – able to be, does he have to be an integral body?

#### HUMAN FLESH CHOPPED TO PIECES

Eyes, ears, arms, legs, shoulders, noses, teeth, chests, hips, thighs, bowels, intestines, belly-buttons, kidneys, livers, hearts, breasts, nipples, penises, torsos, heads, present or absent, still attached to the body as almost autonomous synecdoches or metonymies, imaginarily removed in castration fantasies, torn to pieces (cf. C 111, 113, 275, 306, 456), sold off, sacrificed, mutilated, “literally” devoured in oneiric fictions about cannibals, or metaphorically swallowed up during “real” meals, exchanged for alcohol today (cf. C 433), to be soaking in formaldehyde tomorrow (cf. C 299) – are scattered all over the text of *The Cyclops*. Words-bodies are being metonymised through words-fragments of bodies; and if various methods of annihilating the body, of disembodiment through the words indicating torn human flesh (*čovjetina* in the original, derived from Croatian for man, *čovjek*; C 68) that hardly ever manages to form itself into the consistent integrity of the

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knew everybody’s soul, and there was always a gentle word for the little man on his lips...” (C 477).

10 Maestro says to Melchior: “(...) just let them be (...). You are an outstanding man” (C 110). Don Fernando says to Melchior: “You are a sensitive entity (...), I know it and I appreciate it greatly, because not everyone could do it, especially not *in such a way* as you do it, and those drunken idiots poke fun at you for that” (C 221-222).

body, i.e. of “man”, are, in the final analysis, nothing but words, their conjunction suggests that the anthropo-genetic “problem” of writing – the hypotyposis of bodily image in verbal discourse – ranks man with his body and text with its body (at least in one respect, i.e. when observed *per speculum, in aenigmate*, permitting thus the bracketing of the differentiating feeling of pain) not only as analogous, but as belonging to the same order of phenomena, the “problem of writing” being simultaneously the problem of reading both verbal and human bodies: “The text has a human shape, it is an anagram of the body” (Barthes 1973: 30).

Not only does the text at the material beginning of the body of *The Cyclops* have the shape of a human body (cut into halves and chopped), the human body also has the halved form of a fraction that resembles the diagrammatic model of the linguistic sign that Lacan took from de Saussure and adapted in the “algorithm” representing the “topography of the unconscious” (1977: 163):

MAAR... MAAR... a voice from a roof shouted. Melchior found himself standing close to the railing of the stairs leading into the underground; a small sign GENTLEMEN glittering above. Coming from the opposite side, another flight of stairs under the heading LADIES. An  $\times$  composed of stairs, he thought, reciprocal values, the numerators GENTLEMEN and the numerators LADIES (vulgar fraction), and the denominators coming down in majolica and porcelain, where the denominators keep respectfully silent: only the hushed whisper of water, the fizzling of valves and the murmur of ventilation can be heard. Like in the bowels of a transatlantic. Smooth sailing. Passengers descend cheerfully and noisily, as if going to the bar to have a glass of whiskey. Then they turn back, keen and satisfied, sipping with joy the fresh evening drink of MAAR air. MAAR has conquered everything. (...) (C 7).

From behind the railing of the “stairs leading into the underground” – into the (dark) space below the visible surface, the textual Tartarus where the “tartalom” of the signifier (its contents, its signified) will be situated – the gaze focalised by the narration sees two signifiers differentiated with respect to gender/sex, precisely the two signifiers by means of which Lacan tries to

show how in fact the signifier enters the signified, namely, in a form which, not being immaterial, raises the question of its place in reality (1977: 151).

In Lacan, the place of the signified is taken by

the image of twin doors symbolizing (...) the imperative (...) by which the public life [of the Western Man] is subjected to the laws of urinary segregation (*ibid.*).

However, the “formalisation” is not conducted in linguistic, but in mathematical terms (in favour of which, incidentally, Lacan argued, because of their marked abstraction and fictive character, and the absence of a fathomable signified, cf. Borch-Jacobsen 1991: 162), by means of a formula for multiplication of “reciprocal values” (“an  $\times$  composed of stairs”). For “Melchior’s” formalising gaze, the “signifiers” of both sexes become “numerators”, to whom the role of quantifying units in the lower part of the fraction is assigned implicitly, which parts in mathematics are also called “rational numbers”. No matter what the signifying/numeration values were, signifiers/numerators glitter “above” or *over* them:

This algorithm is the following:  $S/s$ , which is read as: the signifier over the signified, ‘over’ corresponding to the bar separating the two stages (Lacan 1977: 149).

On the other hand, it is as if the “denominators” – that occupy the lower position in the formula, just like Lacan’s little  $s$  (the signified, contents) – were being mocked by their “title”: the only name they have is expressed by the numerator/signifier “GENTLEMEN” or “LADIES”. In the play orchestrated by the hypotyposis of the diagram, what becomes the semantic contents (*tartalom*) of “gentlemen” and “ladies” are the effects (“the effects of a signified” [*effets de signifié*], Lacan 1975: 57, reminiscent of Barthes’s *effet de réel* [Barthes 1989: 141-148]) of their “natural needs” (Lacan 1977: 151), i.e. their own excrements – nameless, chiasmatically interchangeable, reciprocally indistinct, subordinate and excluded from writing and from discourse (they “keep respectfully silent”) – destined for the sewerage, dependent, through the bar of the “rational number” (or Lacan’s “algorithm”), on their “sources”, which are their numerators/signifiers. The nameless and silent *na-*

ture of the excremental “denominators”, denominated and signified only by “superior” *cultural* and *civilisational* symbols that they literally flow out of, under the auspices of “the whisper of water” and accessory acoustic manifestations, evoke the image of a transatlantic, on board of which “keen” and “satisfied” passengers-signifiers, the honourable originators of “the whispering of water”, sail “the floodwaters of the signified” (Borch-Jacobsen 1991: 178) along the surface of the fraction bar, under which the “contents”, the “referents”, the “reality” of signifiers – i.e. of the male, female, plural “half-men” (C 443) – are being drained away<sup>11</sup>.

The signifiers’ descent in the underground, below the “line”, where they produce their “real” coprophagic waste, i.e. under the discursive-symbolic level of thought, where the meaning truly *is* (“I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think”, Lacan 1977: 166), and their return back to their superior level of floating:

the S and the s of the Saussurian algorithm are not on the same level, and man only deludes himself when he believes his true place is at their axis, which is nowhere, (*ibid.*, 166)

are framed by another signifier resisting the production of meaning, by the nonsense-sign “MAAR”. This meaningless signifier is also the paradigm of all signifiers: the “pure signifier” which, according to Lacan, makes us the happier “the less it signifies” (*Le séminaire III*, quoted in Borch-Jacobsen 1991: 162), for “the signifier represents a subject (...) for another signifier” (Lacan 1966:

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11 Melchior’s daydreams begin with the shipwreck that stroke the “navigating signifier” which is the transatlantic “Menelaus”. The signifier “Menelaus” is a metonymic “subject for another signifier” (Lacan 1966: 819) – or other signifiers – akin to “Othello”, “Samson”, “Adam” and all the “signifiers” of *The Cyclops* which equally become a “subject for another signifier”, and to which only in the framework that they form can be ascribed the common “propriety” of the *topos* of “betrayed lover”, i.e. of the subject whose object of desire is the desire of the Other (their rival), leading towards death as eternalised (i.e. perpetually insatiable) desire. The destiny of the sailors on the “Menelaus” – to become a meal for cannibals, and consequently the “denominator” of their “natural needs” – repeats, for that matter, the image-formula from the beginning of the novel, according to which the “denominator/signified” “man” (allowed no more to pursue his navigation of the signifier) is brought into line with faecal waste.

819; *Radiophonie*, quoted in Borch-Jacobsen 1991: 185), a relation that can obviously be reversed. In this case, it is the signifier of a subject whose mysterious Name of the Father is spelled out and inhaled by the signifier “gentlemen” and “ladies” while floating along the surface of their fraction bar:

MAAR has conquered everything. High up, on the roof of the palace, it unfolded a screen after the dark has fallen and started to shout – MAAR-ADVERTISING CENTER! Having written its powerful name across the screen by means of the mysterious light, MAAR’s letters performed a silly divertissement singing in unison a ditty in praise of their master. Then they tripped away into the darkened sky, while it shouted out once more to the amazed world: MAAR-SOUNDFILM-PUBLICITY! (C 7-8).

As an exemplary signifier endowed with a vacant signified, MAAR<sup>12</sup> – the umbrella “numerator”, the big S of advertising messages in which the strolling subjects are immersed, which they inhale, and on which they feed, just like Joyce’s *flâneur* (cf. Duffy 1994: 61-62; Eco 1982: 99-100) – performs in the text of *The Cyclops* the function that Lacan exemplifies by the case of the nonsense term Booz (a signifier without a signified, using the same distribution of vocals and consonants as in MAAR): a demonstration

of the radical superfluosity of all signification in a perfectly convincing representation of a bourgeois comedy (Lacan 1977: 157)<sup>13</sup>.

The nonsense “signifier” does not produce any semantic result but a void, an absence of meaning, and as such it invites us to substitute “something else”, another signifier, for it, the two having “in common that they have no meaning *in themselves*” (Borch-Jacobsen 1991: 184) and that they are not “predestined by anything for that function” (Lacan 1966: 890, quoted in Borch-Jacobsen, *ibid.*) – so that the sense is produced by the substitution itself, by means of which “sense arises from nonsense” (Borch-Jacobsen,

12 Its void is not abolished by the fact that the word is reminiscent of an advertising agency that did exist in Zagreb before ww2, named after its owner, Stjepan Maar.

13 In Lacan’s text, the quotation refers to Jean Tardieu’s dialogue *Un mot pour un autre*, which Lacan chooses as the appropriate “formula of the metaphor” (*ibid.*).

*ibid.*). It is the very question *what might the nonsensical signifier MAAR be the metaphor or metonymy of* that produces the multifarious sense, floating from the self-concealment through which a *phainomenon* reveals itself precisely by hiding itself behind the appearance (cf. Heidegger 1996: 73-77), through Joyce’s disseminations of advertising signifiers, to the portraits in which Picasso renders the eye of his model Dora Maar similar to that of the Cyclops, or to that of another character in the novel, the chiromant ATMA (“Is he tall, bony? With eyes as if painted by Picasso?”, *C* 309), by displacing it in the middle of the face, monstrously metamorphosed or shaped into a phallus or an insect (cf. Horvat-Pintarić 1998-1999: 167-168)<sup>14</sup>.

#### THE CONTENTS OF THE MAN MADE OF WORDS

So “creating man out of words” (Marinković 1988: 126), i.e. creating a textual human body by means of inscribing, is not,

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14 *The Cyclops* includes allusions to these portraits in the hypotyposis of the attempt made by the gaze to see itself in a mirror during Melchior’s dream: “The gaze (...) looks at the nose, squinting from both profiles, like Picasso” (*C* 202). As Vera Horvat-Pintarić has argued, the allegorical part of Dora Maar as the model for one of the female figures of *Guernica* offers an associative connection with the chain of motifs “woman-fire-light”: “The light-bearing women, in order to reveal the truth in a symbolic form, are assigned Dora Maar’s features” (Horvat-Pintarić, *ibid.*, 164). With respect to Vivien’s specular image, the text of *The Cyclops* states that “she was bringing light” (*C* 234); this light, however, instead of conferring a brighter vision, had the power to blind the one who was looking at her, i.e. made it impossible for him to see *her*, thus inducing him to replace her with his own construction of her identity and figure (cf. Manguel 2002: 181). After she had broken her relationship with Picasso, Dora Maar, a painter of Croatian origin, was treated by their common friend, Jacques Lacan (cf. Horvat-Pintarić, *ibid.*, 171). But a far more significant seems to be the metapoetical association with Picasso’s revolutionary work which Marinković’s text implicitly comments upon in its technique of the construction of the main character, predicated upon the incongruence between the eye and the gaze, the precedence of the signifier over “*tartalom*” (contents), the all-encompassing projection of Melchior’s focalisation, beyond which no anthropomorphic fiction of the novel is available to the readers. In addition, Dora Maar’s pseudonym, derived from her family name of Marković, recalls the first word of the novel “*maar*”, and evokes the name of the author, Marinković.

ultimately, such a “Promethean”, “o-ri-ginal” (C 193; cf. also 61, 116, 430) act of aesthetic fiction, for man – in the text and “outside the text” – actually *is* made out of words, created by the implacable paternal Law mythically inscribed in language, which is not spoken by man, but which speaks and produces him:

Indeed, man speaks, but only because he has been made a man by the symbol (Lacan 1966: 276; cf. Lacan 1979: 20-21; 1966: 493-598; Goodheart 1991: 130; Bowie 1990: 109-111; Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 128);

“human condition” is subjected (*subjićio 3. subjeći, subjectum*) passively and medially to the signifier, entitled to be defined as the signifier at least as much as man,

in that it is not only man speaks, but in man and through man *it* speaks (*ća parle*), that his nature is woven by effects in which is to be found the structure of language, of which he becomes the material (Lacan 1966: 688-689; the English translation quoted from Barzilai 1999: 99).

It is clear that the “signifieds”, the septic “contents” on their way to the sewerage-underground that the beginning of the novel announces as the “true” human “reality”, will appear on the stage of discourse only through the intercession of their anthropomorphic, i.e. anthroponymic signifiers, and thus only as the (numera-ting-quantificational) actorial names signifying their bodies which in turn signify them as subjects: there will be no “natural” difference between nonsensical advertising slogans and the bodily writings of the anthropoid *acteurs* who represent certain subterranean *actants* of dubious quality, purity and plenitude. If we disregard for the moment the faecal status of the anthropomorphic referents of the fictional “subjects”<sup>15</sup>, we can perceive the analogous structure

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15 As Borch-Jacobsen (1991: 186-187) points out, Lacan initially used the term signified “provisionally confusing it with the place of the subject” (1977: 164); Borch-Jacobsen further explains that the signified is an “effect” (*ibid.* 187) which is momentary and provisional, and “the subject is now the *elusive* signified of all the signifiers” (*ibid.*). The presence/absence of the subject (“Melchior”) is represented by *all* the signifiers of *The Cyclops*, synecdochically represented by the “enigmatic” and “elusive” “scoundrel” (the Croatian word, *nitkov*, is derived from *nitko*, nobody) atma (cf. C 262), who styles his

of both categories of signifiers, a structure under erasure, void in terms of contents: the readability (i.e. the necessity of being a signifier which “represents a subject for another signifier”), and thus the ability to form association with at least some (if only faecal) kind of contents – *tartalom*, running the risk of misfiring or being immersed in sewerage (cf. Marinković’s anti-novel *Bathing Together*), is an imperative identical to the “categorical” imperative of the “natural needs”: the signifier-subject yearns for “truth”, for “recognition” (*anagnorisis*), for being recognised, while at the same time deferring that truth and discarding it among waste materials; (Lacan’s) subject longs to manifest itself, longs for itself since it does not have itself, strives to reveal its own absence under the pressure of the imperative of self-displaying (cf. Borch-Jacobsen 1991: 108).

In the light of presumable cognateness of human and textual (signifying) “nature”, the problem of the writing/reading of a text becomes identical with the problem of the writing/reading of man; the hermeneutics, semiotics and rhetoric of “humanity” and the anthropology of text become but two aspects of an homogenous activity of deciphering, (re)constructing, struggling to read the dispersed contents as a coherent message, by means of attaching semantic values, some infernally inferred *tartalom*, to signifying bodies, i.e. to their images, taking the risk of answering the inverted question of the Sphinx: whose answer is the word “man”, or who is it that answers the description of man? What is man? Is it the being who will never be spared the regular repetition of specific errors – sinning out of ignorance, parricide, identification with a dead rival, incest, the inevitable succession of enjoying regal privileges by victimisation, and a blindness which is by no means just tropological – by the generic knowledge of what “man” is?

The syntactically disconnected words produce mumbling, noise, even mooing

(I will answer the Sphinx’s question by mooing, for I do not know the answer, and it will let me pass, C 292),

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signifier-self in terms of the narcissistic projection of the protagonist’s focalised “subject”, who, in his turn, is indeed – as Odysseus introduced himself to the Cyclops Polyphemus – “Nobody” (cf. also Lacoue-Labarthe 1991).

since, although they partake of language, they do not reach the *imago* of discourse; if likening them to a dismembered human body seems to disregard, by a most appalling oversight, the pain and death which endanger the latter, it would be of use to imagine the physical consequences of agrammatical mooing in front of the Sphinx (of which the most fatal would, perhaps, be if it should let the dumb alphabet pass). By analogy, the agglomeration of separate limbs and organs of a living human body does not in itself form a human subject. The unstructured linguistic elements in pre-discursive state and the unstructured human elements in pre-subjective phase coincide in their respective pre-semiotic, non-systematised relations with other elements, in their common impossibility of being written and read, i.e., in their non-existence. As discourse, the subjective identity is not an original given bestowed onto us by some sort of preliminary human “nature” – it needs to be constructed by composing a syntactic whole from scattered, unformed psychosomatic material. It is only upon perceiving – *per speculum, in aenigmate* – the image of the integral body on the glass surface and admiring it as a miracle of functionality, integrity and structuredness, that the disordered tangle of organs and senses attributes the proprieties of its own reflection to that apparently self-sufficient figure, appropriating them from this virtual double. The moment of identification with one’s own body is described by Lacan as a flash of incommensurable joy: what was scattered and pre-semiotic gains a coherent signifier, and one can finally find the sense of one’s own consistency and repress from one’s conscious memory the chaos of which one partook.

#### THE HALVING DOUBLE

But the image of the whole recognised by the psychosomatic disorder as the image of its referential wholeness is but an inverted ghost, an inconsistent signifier that can always be swallowed up by *aphanisis* (cf. Lacan 1979: 216-229), i.e. that can always disappear, thus abolishing the signified body as a mere image, depriving the newly formed subject of its referent. The discovery of a cohesive identity results from a misrecognition, from a referential fallacy as regards identity, the latter being conceivable only by way of mediation, through the virtual other on which it depends,

through its specular twin who could die at any moment and, by his death, inform the man: “you are but a half of a man” (C 443), your wholeness is the optical effect of a signifier and can be annulled by it; since you have no “primary” identity without this image of “another” (i.e. your “real” is precisely what you cannot reach directly), your “primacy” is, in fact, brought about by, derived from an image and is therefore “secondary”, so that you are, indeed, the imaginary double of the image of another, and not the other way round – you are the signifier, and not the signified. Your body is the upper half of a sign, and you enter the symbolic circulation – the discourse in which you will be taking part as a “subject”, while for your image will be represented by the gaze of the other. From now on, you are a “signifier representing a subject for another signifier” (Lacan 1966: 819), a script to be read by the other scripts that you will be reading, a word “signifying nothing”<sup>16</sup> outside of the syntactic organisation of binary oppositions.

The imaginary double serves the “subject” as the model of identification, i.e. of shaping its identity within the symbolic order governing social communication; but the entry into the symbolic level is not irreversible. The fear of regression into the amorphous, the threat of the disappearance of the integral image of one’s own body of which that body actually consists, the horrendous possibility of disembodiment, will have to be repressed by the subject as the germ of psychosis sprouting out of the crack in the identity postulated by the double, and symbolically transformed into the obsessive fear of “castration”. But the fear of losing the privileged part of one’s body – itself nothing but a mere image – is just a metonymy of the horror of the vanishing of one’s body as the consequence of the dissolution of the imaginary double, which assumed the figure of an organ that, with its phantasmatic absences, unreliability or its capacity for being removed from the human (female or male) body represents also the metaphor of the central lack, gap, the core of nothingness inside the identity, the possibility of death at the heart of life, the menacing double and rival, the interchangeable signifier of the skull (cf. Lacan 1979: 88)<sup>17</sup>, of

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16 *Macbeth*, V., v. 28, used as the epigraph for Marinković’s *sotie The Desert* (1980).

17 In his analysis of Holbein’s painting *The Ambassadors*, Lacan ascribes a phallic meaning to the skull: “All this shows that at the very heart of the pe-

which the head, always available for beheading (cf. the “clear image of a decapitation” in Melchior’s dream, *C* 201; 438), consists. The dead man in the living body, life fostering death – these are Maestro’s recurring self-reflexive ideas, in the citation of which the zealous double Melchior goes his master one better:

I am a man who has devoured his own corpse (*C* 111);  
 You carry the abominable death within you as your native ground,  
 your sweet homeland (*C* 161);  
 I caress the death inside me (*C* 183).

Apart from Tin Ujević’s citational ingredients<sup>18</sup>, Maestro’s (and, indirectly, Melchior’s) character is made of “autothanatographic” and “necrosomatic” images from the poetry of A.B. Šimić (cf. “I live within my own corpse”, *The Body and We*, 1960: 148, translation mine), i.e. the formulas showing the subject’s relationship to its own body through the figure of the tenant of death. In Western culture the body has no essence apart from the aporetic absence of essence (cf. Nancy 2000: 16-17); “it is always something else than it is” (Merleau-Ponty 1945: 231; cf. also Nancy 2000: 29), it is simultaneously both one’s own and monstrously foreign to oneself (cf. Nancy 2000: 9), both different and identical with respect to the self, which is, therefore, its own grave<sup>19</sup>,

The imaginary integrity achieved by the body is disrupted by the psychosis of the return to the real by means of “castration” of the body-signifier, i.e. the disarray and the decapitation of Narcissus’ beloved person, should his generative image *in speculo* fail to occur. Starting from the moment of his entry in the intersubjective space – the space of reciprocal signifiers – the mirror gives way to the gaze of Others, while the founding imaginary feature of being a

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riod in which the subject emerged and geometral optics was an object of research, Holbein makes visible for us here something that is nothing simply the subject as annihilated – annihilated in the form that is, strictly speaking, the imaged embodiment of the *minus-phi* [(-φ)] of castration, which for us, centres the whole organisation of the desires through the framework of the fundamental drives” (Lacan 1979: 88-89).

18 Which make the “son of man”, Melchior (cf. *C* 276), and Maestro doubles of each other (a fact that the younger of the two tries to deny).

19 “All its life, the body is also a dead body, the body of a dead man, the dead man who I am alive. Dead or alive, neither dead nor alive, I *am* an orifice, a grave or a mouth, the one in the other” (Nancy 2000: 17).

double is repressed into oblivion once it has been exchanged for a purely symbolic subjective identity: the rivalry between the looking body and the mirror image becomes the paradigm of the rivalry between the looking body and the gaze of the Other. But the crowd of signifiers is only a veneer over the psychotic fissure that nothing will be able to fill in. It breeds paranoia, the sense of omnipresent danger to the body-signifier of identity: the permanent fear of regression towards the disintegration of the imaginary identification is further reinforced by the permanently conflicting drive for identification with the other and for the simultaneous destruction of the other, a rival that threatens the uniqueness, the diversity, the separateness of the personal body, presenting another sort of disintegration, merging thoroughly with the other in chaotic indistinctness.

The drive for identification with the other has from the moment it was discovered (or invented, cf. Freud 1990; Barzilai: 1999: 191; Borch-Jacobsen 1991: 46, 248-249) been marked by a certain ambivalence, a combination of admiration and violent hatred, linking the activity of the gaze to that of the mouth: to devour one's double combines usefully the incorporation and the appropriation of his imaginary superiority with the physical elimination of the twin contestant, bound to induce the sacralisation of the double-victim through the symbolic conciliation of anthropophagy and the ritual commemoration of the ingested and interiorised model. The other, as the double-rival residing in the subject, can now be located neither "inside" nor "outside". The body-signifier is at the time an enclosure of identity toward the Other whose image it has incorporated and the incorporated Other who destroys its self-identity by consuming it from within; it is both an "I" and the corrosive image that represents me; both the virtual object of the desire of the "individual subject's" narcissistic self-eroticism, and its adversary, the adulterer, the traitor, the murderer, the cannibal;

Heautontimoroumenos, the executioner and the victim in the same person, the knife and the wound, the vampire of his own heart, as Baudelaire said (*C* 221).

Heautontimoroumenos is a Greek translation of Melchior's pseudo-name, "Samotres" (C 18, 318)<sup>20</sup>.

#### HONOUR TO THE MEMBER WHICH IS LACKING (IT)

The organ suitable for decapitation, which resumes tropologically man's yearning for signifying solidity – "which the Ancients used to embody *Novç* and *Λογός*" (Lacan 1966: 695) – is precisely the phantasm of the most uncertain of all body parts, the one worthy of becoming the synonym of "man" as the double-rival of the penetrating royal decipherer (as his "Other", "the very place from which his [man's] message is being sent", *ibid.*, 690), destined to assume the part of the sacrificial victim in the ritual of blinding and expulsion, and thus the symbol of an unattainable (in)sight. Phallus is a phantasm, i.e. the spectre of the noble king, of the father as model and of the brother as rival, and not his body, so that its mission has metaphysical credentials, as the mischievous Ugo – whose name in Croatian evokes the word for the (virile) member, *udo* – explains to Melchior, invoking the authority of the Apostle:

Well, I despise the body also, my all-too-gracious Eustachius. "But God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked". Saint Paul. I am all spiritual today (C 162, emphasis in the original).

The New Testament text almost seems to call for Marinković's sacrilegious exegesis of the theosomatic allegory: in the divine body formed by humankind (of which the head can only be Christ), according to Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians<sup>21</sup>, man is

20 "Samotres", which would mean "self-shaking", occurs in the text as a joke at the expense of Melchior's family name, Tresić. He tries to save it (as well as his precious self) from being confused with the name of the early 20th century Croatian poet, Ante Tresić-Pavičić, whose poetics is closer to the idealistic pathos of his 19th century precursors.

21 "... but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Corinthians 12: 24-26).

a *member* honoured by the Incarnation, and he has been accorded that dignity precisely due to his complete lack of any autonomous dignity outside the divine body; man’s place is thus the vacant throne of a non-existing honour, concentrated in one inconsistent member, around which the unanimous concern of all the other members that “should have the same care one for another” (1 Corinthians 12: 25) gravitates. The somatic metaphor of the totality of believers works through a mutually synecdochical relation between the two terms (for Saint Paul, the members are the individuals composing the body of Christ, i.e. the Christian community, so that, by analogy, the human body resembles a community of members existing separately, united by a rule similar to an inter-subjective norm or the reality principle), subordinating them in both cases to the weakest member, the one which excels among “the poor in spirit” (Matthew 5: 3), and that assumes, in Marinković’s blasphemous interpretation, the “phallomorphism” that can be ascribed to “the whole of human experience” (Bowie 1991: 130).

#### THE (BLIND) GAZE FROM THE MIRROR

Since the textual “member”, the man named Melchior, can see himself only “through a glass darkly” (1 Corinthians 13: 12), i.e. as his own lack, as his own absence – precisely as a phallic lack of himself – it follows that the protagonist’s gaze obtains the phallic signifier from the place of the (multiple) Other (cf. Lacan 1977: 140; the specular

gaze [...] is, not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other. [...] The gaze in question is certainly the presence of others as such (Lacan 1979: 84),

as “its being is always somewhere else” (Lacan 1966: 633), and therefore through the textual “embodiment” of the Other/others, i.e. other “members” of the textual body, “kith and kin”<sup>22</sup>, the members of a “ramified family network” (C 184). Melchior’s castration dream (the “decapitating dream”; cf. chapter 6, paragraph

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<sup>22</sup> *Neither kith nor kin* is the title of a short story by Marinković, construed around the contradictions of the protagonist’s obsessive impulse, first to identify and subsequently to differentiate at all costs from his double.

5 of *The Interpretation of Dreams*)<sup>23</sup> unfolds precisely according to the mechanics of the circular, self-referential, narcissistic, phallic gaze and the riddle of his own making that he is, however, unable to solve:

But the Gaze seeks the head, it seeks the answer to the riddle, the answer to this night, to this dream – this decapitating dream. The Gaze seeks itself, its very self, it wants to see itself. And it wants to be liked by itself, narcissistically, stupidly, myopically, blind to all that is not It, that is not the STRIKING GAZE, *the pure, eighteenth(h)ara(c)t(er) Gaze* (C 202, *emphases* in the original).

The main features of the head (its own?) sought by the phallic (“character”) gaze<sup>24</sup> are blindness and the self-absorption that makes impossible the view of the whole, the obsession with purity, i.e. with disjunctions and dichotomies marked by the “weakest of members”, whose gaze defines the identity from the place of itself and its specular double (i.e. of the specular nose as the imaginary double of the “real” nose, and of the phallic gaze itself):

You are showing it your hands, one, than the other. The gaze looks at them unemotionally, “the hands”, it observes with indifference. It has

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23 “(...) I mean, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty points it out, that we are beings who are being looked at in the spectacle of the world. That which makes us consciousness, institutes us by the same token as *speculum mundi*. (...) in the so-called waking state, there is an elision of the gaze, and an elision of the fact that not only does it look, *it* also *shows*. In the field of the dream, on the other hand, what characterises the images, is that *it shows*. (...) Look up some description of a dream, any one (...) place it in its co-ordinates, and you will see that this *it shows* is well to the fore. So much is it to the fore (...) that, in the final resort, our position in the dream is profoundly that of someone who does not see. The subject does not see where it is leading, he follows. He may even on occasion detach himself, tell himself that it is a dream, but in no case would he be able to apprehend himself in the dream in the way in which, in the Cartesian *cogito*, he apprehends himself as thought. He may say to himself, *It is only a dream*. But he does not apprehend himself as someone who says to himself – *After all, I am the consciousness of this dream*” (Lacan 1979: 74-76).

24 The Croatian word *karakterni* combines the meanings of ‘carat’ and ‘character’ with the vulgarism *kara* referring to the “virile member”. – “... the gaze, *qua objet a*, may come to symbolise the central lack expressed in the phenomenon of castration”, in which process it “leaves the subject in ignorance as to what there is beyond the appearance” (Lacan 1979: 77).

no interest in hands. It shortens the range, looks for an aim that is nearer. It focuses on itself, cross-eyeing itself, looks at the nose, squinting from both profiles, like Picasso. That is the nearest thing it can see – the nose. It defines the nose perfunctorily: *a two-sided SOMETHING protruding into space and dividing the visible world in two, the right side and the left* (*ibid.*, emphases in the original).

But the phallic gaze will not be satisfied by this self-insight through its double, the specular nose, partly because the latter is debased by being defined as neuter, belonging to the non-masculine, non-phallic gender (“*SOMETHING*”) in the form of a perpendicular fraction-bar (“*two-sided*”), and partly because the gaze cannot “penetrate itself” (*ibid.*) as it would like to do, since it is “unapprehensible” and “more than any other object, misunderstood (*méconnu*)”, so that it exists as “the illusion of the consciousness of *seeing oneself see oneself*, in which the gaze is elided” (Lacan 1979: 83). Just as the phallic gaze – the gaze that wants to recognise itself in the phallus, not to obtain one, as “it is no good having this phallus, since his desire is to be it” (Lacan 1977: 268) – forms its phallomorphism by defining itself through the Other (the nose as a neutralised form of masculinity, which falls short of the desired phallus-likeness, the “something protruding”, and the eighteen-carat purity of character), so Melchior too – although he simultaneously aims at not being anything but the phallus: *melior*, better than the rest<sup>25</sup>; “Hyperion” (C 480, superior to all, refusing to be the same as the Others); “Hyperion-Phoebus, our Sun” (*ibid.*, the designation of Apollo, the god of segmentation) – constitutes his own dichotomous phallomorphism (the cut “*dividing the visible world in two, the right side and the left*”, C 202, or the fraction-bar separating it into up and down, cf. C 7., i.e. fissuring his own “scopic field”, Lacan 1979: 73, in which “for structural

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25 In a hypodiegetic “prophetic” tale, a parody of Genesis tinged with phallomorphism, on the subject of allegorical “worms” believing “they have been created in its own image by the Great Worm, whose length is so infinite it is unfathomable for them, and which encompasses the whole world”, “each of them convinced that it is longer than all the others. This is how the idea of inequality between them will arise. And a minority will succeed in convincing the majority that they are indeed longer and therefore more able to comprehend the length of the Great Worm. And they will turn interpreters and preachers, and finally rulers over their worm brethren of same length, etc” (C 181).

reasons, the fall of the subject always remains unperceived”, Lacan 1979, 76-77) through the other, by means of a mirror, albeit unbeknownst to himself.

TAKE, EAT; THIS IS THE BODY OF THE OTHER<sup>26</sup>

The individual desires the object desired by his rival (cf. Girard 1976: 88; 1987: 299): “The I is constituted by its relation to the Other” (Girard 1976: 94) and, ultimately, “desires to get rid of itself in order to become another” (*ibid.*, 113; cf. “If only I could be someone else”, Nietzsche 1956: 259/ III, § 14); “Man’s desire is the desire of the Other” (Lacan 1966: 814). In order to conceal from itself this basic desire and to affirm its alleged autonomy, the “I” insists upon its *difference* with respect to the Other and, repressing its identity to the Other, denounces and expels the Other, as if this Other which it has emulated before, were a second-rate copy of itself. But “striving toward the absolute Other (...), it irresistibly falls back upon the Same” (Girard 1976, 117); upon the Same of the phallomorphic identification with the Other whom it would like to devour, incorporate, appropriate as its own property, as that which is proper to itself – as its own proper property of otherness<sup>27</sup>. The paradoxical regression by which the attempt to avoid identification with the other turns out to coincide with what it is trying to prevent, is the infallible mechanism in operation ever since the primal horde: in order to eliminate the executed father all the more thoroughly and to take over his attributes, his body must be dismembered, distributed among the brothers and devoured, i.e. introduced into their own body, so that, from now on, the latter can

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Matthew 26: 26-30; Mark 14: 22-25; Luke 22: 14-20.

<sup>27</sup> The structure of mimetic rivalry that Girard noted and described in Dostoevsky’s work is “incorporated” into several of Marinković’s narratives, frequently being double-coded by the traces of Pirandello’s congenial readings of the Russian model (cf. Čale 2001: 131-153). In this sense, the short story *Neither kith nor kin* mentioned above can be considered paradigmatic: aghast at the possibility that someone could think he is “some kind of Smerdiakov” (Marinković 1959: 142), the intradiegetic narrator who would like to be another (i.e. both an autonomous I and the appropriated property of the Other) points towards Girard’s interpretation of Smerdiakov’s role as a bastard twin of Ivan Karamazov, whom he admires and hates, and in whose stead he commits parricide (cf. Girard 1976: 125).

belong to the one who has been devoured doubly, as the debt of guilt that can never be squared, and as the perfect symbolic match, and thus the pledge of the future repetition of one’s own dismemberment and death: “The dead father became stronger than the living one had been” (Freud 1990c: 204). Since for Melchior – who is a variant of the component of Maestro associated with Šimić’s necrosomatism (which makes him a double of the “man who has devoured his own corpse”, because their “thoughts decant from the head of one into that of another” and their “spirits fecundate each other”, C 111), Maestro being the double of a father he abhors (cf. C 119, *passim*) precisely because this father is the unwanted Other similar to himself – the ultimate mimetic rival is his own body that he both cherishes and hates, the elimination of the body assumes the explicit form of autophagy (cf. C 156, 465; 492), indeed of (auto)phallophagy<sup>28</sup> or self-castration (in a dream, cf. the passage quoted above, C 202). He enacts upon his own body, the body reluctantly emulating the body of the father, the Œdipal rite of executing, castrating and ingesting the father, of which – in contrast to the dead man in *Hamlet* – he partakes both as a meal and as a guest<sup>29</sup>, since he performs himself what he psychotically fears: in order to extinguish the disastrous agency of the originary mimesis of his own body, he tears it apart, exhausts it and devours it as his rival.

The “real” body, which man cannot possess regardless of whether he does or does not have one, but which possesses man both when he does and when he does not have one, is, then, the undecidable and inescapable inferno (the *tartalom* of Tartarus) of “betrayal”, where the “real” appears as an unreal phenomenon.

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28 According to Bowie (1991: 147), in Lacan’s model of paranoia, governed by a phalloscopic passion, the “fantastic phallophagy” is associated with the woman conceived of as a “devouring and castrating” threat.

29 As a proof of the claim that in *The Cyclops* anthropophagy is a metaphor for Western civilisation, cf. the paraphrase of Shakespeare in Melchior’s day-dream of the old sailor from the ship named after “‘Menelaus’ – the husband of the beautiful Helen”, who “arrived just in time to witness the cooking of the chef from ‘Menelaus.’ But – as Hamlet would say – he did not cook himself, he was being cooked by the merry cannibals amid the folkloristic dancing that *conquered Europe* via America, and, *as a form of cannibal-culture hellenisation, became more universal and more exciting than Æschylus and Sophocles*” (C 70; emphasis added).

But, the body is no less treacherous, nor is it any less the victim of betrayal, at the level of the imaginary:

He went to the mirror and was horrified by the one in there: why does he stare so strangely? Look, what stubbornness! He would like to scare... But he noticed that the other one was frightened himself, that he was looking with distrust... Nay, man doesn't trust another man even in the mirror! (C 204).

As the signifying representation of the "subject", the body is unreliable since in signifying its "owner" it either denounces him or is representing him "falsely", i.e. presenting him in the way that its possessor/he-who-is-possessed-by-it would not want to present himself, either revealing in him or attributing to him, without his consent or control, the "properties" that the subject does not admit as his own, but wants to expel them as someone else's through the persistent work of repression. The "real" body, made unreal by hunger, the self-destroyed imaginary self-identity of the body denounced as a false double, an evil rival, becomes both the perpetrator of high treason and the victim at the symbolic level – for, being insufficiently legible since Genesis, "the Word was made [Christ's] flesh" (John 1: 14) and has transferred to his "members", i.e. the individual bodies, the signifying tasks of the Scripture (cf. also Brooks 1993: 21).

#### PHALLOPHANIES

Melchior's role-model and rival in matters erotic, the performative incarnation of the Other as the producer of desire for a mutually projected delusion (the *objet petit a*, cf. Lacan 1966: 429-430), Ugo resembles mimologically the dishonourable "member" (in Croatian, *udo*) no less than "courteous Kurt" (cf. e.g. C 250), another in a series of names and nicknames engaged in the play of assonance, alliteration or rhyme<sup>30</sup>. This always in some way refers

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30 Attracting semantic associations untranslatable into English, these "effects of signifiers" form a virtual signifying chain of what I shall call phallic *mimologies*, the words supposed to imitate the "properties" of their contents in their formal features (cf. Genette 1976), implying common properties or pretensions.

to the phallic myth and involves almost all male characters, whose model and tutor seems to be their senior, Maestro, a devotee of "verticality, human dignity" (C 455), who, despite the disgust he causes in Melchior, manages to persuade him to "decide in favour of the stake" for it is "at least some kind of authority, that proud virile vertical" (C 490). The anthropoid "phallophanies" (Lacan 1982: 39), joined in the text of *The Cyclops* by "phalломorphic" (Bowie 1991: 130) objects, i.e. "real" or phantasmatic objects transformed by the phallic gaze, represent the thoroughly "spiritual", bodiless, even anti-corporeal qualities. The ethos of the revelation of incarnation performed by the Son of God and Man through the intermediary of the Spirit has been replaced by a coded revelation of an entirely different object of worship, the transcendental Phallus, to which Melchior (and the other doubles of the Magi) pays homage:

There were three Magi from the East. Following the star, they came to Bethlehem to pay homage to little Jesus. One of them was called Melchior... (...) – I noticed at once there was something regal about him (C 336).

Since he cannot be aware of his own phallophanic role, corroborated by "the special sausage" (C 65) that he serves to Melchior, "courteous Kurt" probably wouldn't like the blasphemy of these apocryphal comments on the Scriptures, were he able to understand them:

– And they are supposed to be intellectuals, oh, my goodness! (...) Nothing but obscenities. One can't talk to those people at all. As if they came from another planet. (...) Nothing but obscenities (C 175-176).

#### THE TREACHEROUS BODY

In the Tartarus of the novelistic contents, the syntagm "treacherous body" (C 23, 245) can be explained away by the protagonist's simple pragmatic attempt to withhold, by means of treachery, his own body from the people – i.e. from "the Cyclops". He acts out of cowardice, fearing his corporeal integrity would be destroyed in the virile combat imposed on the body by war, and from the mo-

tives tacitly justified (with the benefit of hindsight available in 1965) by the argument of the colonised position of Croatian conscripts in pre-war Yugoslavia and the rotten disciplinary apparatus of the state about to capitulate. But even the interpreter reaching for the food of semantic contents like Tantalus, will not grab hold of a fruit that could soothe his hunger for understanding, first of all because it is not clear whether the body in this phrase is the subject or the object of betrayal: a body can be treacherous in the sense of the body belonging to a traitor and deserter of the “fatherland” (C 134)<sup>31</sup>, but also as a body that betrays its owner, of whom it is the signifier, and thus the true owner. The body, which is in itself a semiotic mechanism, assumes the paternal name in order to enter the intersubjective order of language, thus by definition smuggling in the inscription of the Other, of the unwanted but inevitable similarity to the Father (according to Freud)/the Brother (according to Lacan) or simply to the Rival (Girard). This constitutes its debt to the Law of the Father and to the “fatherland”, that he tries to avoid paying back (“to steal [...] his treacherous body”, C 23): whether it obeyed them or avoided its obligation, the body as the signifier always already betrays the spirit that it should signify, in so far as it only represents it without being identical to it (cf. Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 120); it is only a word, and not the sense (cf. Nancy 2000: 61).

Is it an accident that the question of mimetism *also* arises as that of parricide and castration? (Lacoue-Labarthe 1989: 130, emphasis in the original).

Melchior is betrayed by his body insofar as it refuses to abandon him, to perish from hunger and exempt from obedience to his father/mother – to his “fatherland”. The priest don Cosmo, one of Melchior’s spiritual fathers, by contrast, is betrayed by his body precisely for the opposite reason, because it abandons him progressively by losing weight uncontrollably. But the betrayal is reci-

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31 I will put the word in quotation marks from now on, although it is impossible to render in English its historical and political connotative charge it has in the original: the Serbian word *otadžbina* (fatherland) is actually contrasted to the Croatian word *domovina* (homeland) in terms of being markedly linked to the regime of the first Yugoslavia (1918-1941) and its dominant bureaucratic rhetoric.

procal: Melchior betrays his body by starving it to death, but in order to stay alive himself, as if it were possible to destroy some presumed outside of the representation-signifier while preserving the “internal” signified of the self, endowed with substance and sense (cf. Nancy 2000: 28, 60). The progressive loss in bodily weight is don Cosmo’s manner of paying for his own betrayal of his body at the time of his “Trappist” asceticism; in any case, “the body always gets sacrificed” according to the pattern of “communion wafer” (Nancy 2000: 60), as a mimetic transcription of Christ’s body in which the Son of God was incarnated for the sake of the sacrificial rite in which he was the sacrificial victim, i.e. he was embodied in order to be disembodied (cf. Nancy 2000: 61).

Understood in this sense, the “treacherous body” – as the signifier of the Other, of the unwanted double whom one would like to get rid of, the twin that the imaginarily self-owning subject believes is holding him captive – is one of the most prominent traits of the “Dostoevskyanism” of *The Cyclops*, aggravating in its own way the complex of mimetic rivalry that René Girard reads as a constant feature of Dostoevsky’s work:

the individual existence stays essentially imitative even and perhaps especially then when the idea of imitation is rejected with revulsion (Girard 1976: 64),

which makes “the underground hero” a combination of “imaginary grandeur and actual inferiority” (*ibid.*). When the position of the double-rival is taken by his own body as a permanent threat to the imaginary superiority of his identity, Melchior – who is either Melior, better, or Hyperion, superior (cf. *C* 479), who is allegedly “something else” (cf. *C* 182; 221) in comparison with the rest whose ability to be(come) his doubles he would like to deny, who does not want to be “the fourth jerk” (*C* 103) – faces the paradox of the impossibility of eliminating the double-rival as such, not in spite of but precisely because of his being identical to the dead twin he had been “joined to at birth” (*C* 443), i.e. his non-difference from himself: if the double is to be expelled, destroyed and sacrificed, the expulsion, the destruction and the sacrificial rite refer precisely to one’s own “proper” identity.

What is preferable then, to lose the body or remain within it, i.e. to be owned by the body, to be identical to one's own body? How is this doubt to be resolved, except by legerdemain?

The quack – the magician – the conjuror is called man. What is man, then? Man is the *Terminus Medius* (...) in the syllogism of death (C 155).

That is the manner of reasoning adopted by the “theoretical awareness” of the shipwrecked officer in Melchior's fantasy about cannibals, who has stuffed himself with phallic bananas in order to give the cannibals a more substantial meal:

He felt his body in his stomach with a Puritan wish to vomit. Autophagy – a perfectly adequate term (...). (...) Everyone (...) would like to drink up their own fat, bite through their own flesh, devour all that is bodily, all that is phenomenal about themselves and stay a pure SELF *an sich* with no mouth nor pharynx (having devoured themselves), an elusive, inedible, conscious Monad (...). And then, will you pray give me back my body, my mouth and my intestines and all that has to do with the intestines and is intestine-pleasing (...) will you please give it all back to me (C 156).

You carry the abominable death within you as your native ground, your sweet homeland (C 161).

What is more convenient for the subject, to devour (or, like Maestro, drink up) his body so that it disappears, or to eat metaphorically (really-imaginarily-symbolically) the bodies of others (those of the fathers or of the models-rivals) so that he may keep his own body by means of identification through incorporation, or even make it become the mimesis of the father's body, of the body of the Father who is being nailed to the cross of the same question? At the heart of the need to transform oneself into “a pure SELF *an sich* with no mouth nor pharynx” (C 156), to disembodiment oneself, lies, paradoxically, the secret and repressed desire to accomplish the mission of the Father's Ghost, to displace the desire of being the Pure Ghost of the Father, the incarnation of disembodiment (cf. Nancy 2000: 61), a gaze that cannot see itself, the ideally erect phallus symbolising its own absence. The free, metaphysical soul – the female variant of the Phallus as a thoroughly spiritual category

– is the favourite subject in the poetry of yet another of Melchior’s unwanted spiritual fathers, Ante Tresić-Pavičić, under the Name of the Father from whose onomastic legislation the protagonist’s cuts itself loose, suffering another wound (“Samotres”, without “ić-Pavičić”).

#### PHALLIC INSTRUMENTALISTS

Among fraternal and paternal role-models/rivals in disembodiment, who imperceptibly hold sway over the narcissistic “sensitive entity” that is the protagonist, the spiritual father Maestro, *magister*, tutor and master of disembodiment – the uncanny point of attraction and repulsion for Melchior – imposes himself as a *ça parle* in a manner more insidious and more tenacious than that of the crippled “ić-Pavičić”, not letting his paternal name call attention to the force of the inexorable Law (cf. the references to him as the “poor [father’s] ghost”, C 113, 115, 459, 465, 477, 492). The anatomist, vivisector, retailer of his own organism, Maestro is the Teacher of spiritual-ghostly phallic values (“let only Spirit remain [...] as in the beginning of Genesis”, C, 440). Even when he tells of the sweet revenge wreaked upon the (mistaken) rival of his youth, he admits that he “laughed (...) like a spectre from hell” (C 453). The perfidious laughter of the spectre from hell is accompanied by the fatal indirect rhetorical question whereby he states and affirms the inevitability of the testamentary web of phallic values in which he had caught his spiritual son: “But we are not going to conceal the truth on account of our unruly sympathies” (C 439); yet it is precisely his speech from behind the “mask of a mystagogue” that conceals the truth (cf. C 422, 423).

What is then the allegedly unveiled truth sought by the spiritual father and tutor, the self-proclaimed Vergil (C 428) and Socrates (C 108, 457), the lover of “the perpendicular” and of “human dignity” (cf. C 455), who is, nevertheless, so upset by such a (non-human) rival and enemy as the perpendicular high-tension tower? As his broken nose, the double of the inconsistent phallus<sup>32</sup>, “concealed half of the world from [him]”

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32 In the pages preceding and following the passage referred to above, the nose is alternately an unambiguous synonym of virile penetration (“a protrusion

(I see only what is *above, below*, I don't see anything. But there is only the umbrella above now anyway, and as for below... what is there to be seen?, *C 425*),

cleaving apart the masculine and the feminine, above and below, inside and outside, body and spirit, the spiritual father strives for nothing else but to cross swords with his rival, to use the phallic means against the phallic symbol, and finally – his rival being none other than himself in the mirror – to perform self-castration: his project – not only for himself, but for humankind – is a “universal enlistment into the ranks of eunuchs” (*C 440*), and thus a return to the pre-sexed, pre-phallic, indistinct unity (“let only the Spirit remain [...] as in the beginning of Genesis”, *ibid.*). The Law of the Father's phallic name rests upon a paradox, insofar as it is at the same time the law of return to the origin and to purity (Maestro: “I love purity”, *C 442*): by separating the value from its opposite, it fosters desire to eradicate the non-value and to re-establish the absolute reign of (its) value, which is again, in its turn, separating, circularly regressive and self-devouring.

“Because of our unruly sympathies” (*C 239*), because of the law that causes universal mutual attraction of rivals in the same way that Narcissus is attracted to the mirror, be they fathers and sons, twin brothers or wooers in an amorous triangle patterned after Othello – Desdemona – Iago (*C 422*), God – Adam – Eve (*C 13-14*), Samson – Delilah – the Philistines (*C 14*), Menelaus – Helen – Paris, Hephaestus – Aphrodite – Ares, the spiritual communion spinning from the mysterious vacant vanishing centre, forms a “ramified [spiritual] family” (*C 184*) of “phallic instrumentalists” (*C 163*), i.e. both the instrumental embodiments of the metaphysical phallus and the self-proclaimed subjects who use phallus as a yardstick, tool, means of cognition and, more generally, of splitting “the visible space in two” (*C 202*), drawing fraction bars or other dividing lines, positing Apollonian distinctions, taxonomies and classifications. Brothers and fathers reproduce themselves in a pu-

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(...) into nature”, *C 426*) and of the wish to castrate one's rival (“let me chop off his nose”, *C 427*); a whole nose is “regal” (*C 434*), while a broken nose is “clownish” (*C 435*) and uncanny like all familiar things seen as strange and horrible (“I scare a little, just a little, bugaboo...”, *C 435*): in short, the nose is always an opaque metaphor for something else, something pernicious (the “mask of the mystagogue of cannibalistic religion”, *C 422*).

rely spiritual way, by means of the symbolic blood pouring out of their phallic noses, broken “for our common cause” (C 425), of telepathic chemistry and mental transmission:

Maestro knows the exact ratio of ingredients. (...) A mysterious generic force, spiritual fecundating, poetic flourish: Ugo, ATMA, Maestro, I, and probably Freddie – the Pleiade of passionate Vivienist poets (C 172).

To me, you see, everything is... simple. (...) I think this, you think that; our thoughts, who knows, may even be talking to each other as soon as they are out of our heads, and we remain ignorant of it. What do we know about our thoughts, anyway? We know that they mean this or that, but how do they arise, how they move from one head into another, how they find their way (...) into books, into machines... It therefore seems to me it is not really necessary to batter the thought with the tongue... The main thing is for the two heads to be in the same sack... my wise Eustachius, and by *sack* I refer to a certain relation of sympathy... or antipathy, as you prefer (C 425).

The spiritual energy by which the thoughts of another/the rival/the Other are being introjected is characterised by resistance to anagnorisis, i.e. to recognition of one’s own thoughts as those of the Other, because the latter are only accessible to consciousness through the signifying surface, which is forever spreading without ever revealing the signified spiritual “contents” (*tartalom*, Tartarus, inferno, hell):

Melchior was silent. He was looking at Maestro’s pallid skull moving up there, over his head, and, odd... “in there” some thoughts are occurring, words are coming out, spreading through the space and sounding in my ears, but my brain does not hear them any more (C 443).

His eyes are closing, there is nothing to look at any more, they would like to sleep. But the head does not sleep... he repeats to himself mechanically, but the words remain without meaning, in-dif-fe-rent (C 458).

Here is a simple, precise, infallible formula (“ratio of ingredients”) that Maestro knows: that is

my formula that the unconscious is ‘*discours de l’Autre*’ (discourse of the Other), in which the *de* is to be understood in the sense of the Latin *de* (objective denomination): *de Alio in oratione* (completed by: *tua res agitur*) (Lacan 1977: 312)

so that “man’s desire is [*le*] *désir de l’Autre* (the desire of the Other)” (*ibid.*):

That it speaks (*ça parle*) in the Other, regardless of whether the subject hears it himself or not, follows, since it logically need must be anterior to any awakening of the signified, from the fact that it is precisely there that the subject finds its signifying place (Lacan 1966: 689).

The “originary” novelistic pattern, to which every member of civilisation is connected by innumerable threads (cf. the lost “thread”, C 438; “Everything moves and travels on an assembly line”, C 378; “strings”, C 382; “tiny strings for regular stitches”, C 428; “wires”, C 444, 455, 456; cf. “thread” as a metaphor for the link between the repressed pathogenic idea and the symptom in hysteria, Breuer-Freud 1991: 356, 376, 379, *passim*), has its own pattern in the theses propounded in Freud’s *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* and reworked by Lacan: Freud postulates the primacy of the process of “successive assimilations of other people’s attributes” (Bowie 1991: 30-31) during which the mental object of desire is introjected as a “prototype (or *imago*)” (Freud 1985: 171). As Bowie points out, Lacanian psychoanalysis takes the metaphor of “*imago*” (the representational pattern of desire) from biology: it is an entomological term referring to a stage of insect development (cf. 1966: 190-191), remarkably well suited to the self-definition of Marinković’s fictional characters such as Ugo (“And what am I? [...] I am an insect”, C 410), Maestro (cf. C 29, 119), Melchior

(he thought that she had spotted him, so he played dead, like an insect [...] and she discovered him like a frightened cricket in the grass [C 234. 35; cf. implicitly 119; 492])

and finally Vivien ("She fluttered to the shop window like a butterfly", *C* 234)<sup>33</sup>. In contrast to Freud's theory, which maintains that the object of the ambivalent identification is the father, Lacan posits Freud's earlier thesis on the phase of "primary narcissism" as the central site of desire (cf. Lacan 1966: 188; Bowie 1991: 32-33; Ragland 1995: 153) and makes the subject's specular double the constitutive element of the ego. Due to the most powerful of drives, the drive for returning to previous condition and the repetition of the Same, i.e. the death drive (cf. Freud 1991a; Ragland 1995: 151), it therefore also becomes the only object of desire, determining the rival relationship to the Other as "narcissistic suicidal aggression" (Lacan 1966: 174; quoted in Bowie 1991: 34)<sup>34</sup> and constituting the "original timeless knot" (Bowie, *ibid.*).

Melchior's rivals – kith and kin, brothers and relatives, fathers and future sons – are interwoven, because of their unruly sym/anti-pathies, into a timeless mimetic knot; of their genealogical position, their place in the mechanism of phallic identifications, the involuntary harmonies played on their bodies, as if they were instruments, by the law of the reproduction of father's Ghost, of all this, protected by the banality of communication, they can but inadvertently pronounce an occasional insight that has "some blind-sight meaning" (*C* 36), which remains beyond their grasp:

I will answer the Sphinx's question by mooing, for I do not know the answer, and it will let me pass (*C* 292).

In spite of the gift of speech, man cannot fathom the human condition any better than the animals can fathom their animality. Blind to "itself", Melchior's "treacherous body" (the body that betrays the man Melchior by not being a human body at all, but a body made of words of the novelistic text, the body that betrays the so-called "man" by being made of the Other's words rather than of

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33 The subject mistakenly derives its condition of being seen by the Other from the narcissism they both share.

34 The "mechanism" (cf. Lacan 1966: 174) is explained by Lacan using the example of Molière's *Alceste*, a relentless persecutor of "all words that do not come from the heart" (quoted *ibid.*), governed by "the passion of demonstrating to everyone his uniqueness, even if it is in the isolation of the victim, where in the last act [of *Le Misanthrope*] he finds his bitter-sweet satisfaction" (*ibid.*).

“flesh and blood”) observes the “others” by means of the only gaze that gives us, as readers, access to those “others”. The “others” – or more accurately: the bodies of “others” – display themselves for the gaze like signifying dummies in the shop windows (cf. C 233), even as the derived specular reflections of their signifying corporeal images (cf. C 234); the bodies see each others “to a certain extent, in the looking glass [of the shop window]” (C 422). Do they really see each other?

He was looking at the shop windows. But he saw nothing but himself in them. A narcissistic projection, he thought (C 233).

The I-gaze sees those around itself as a projection of itself, but fails to recognise or own that they are its doubles. Since the reader has no access to any “plastic” and “full-blooded” characters of the novel, one can assume that the ones we call “Maestro”, “ATMA”, “Ugo”, “Kurt” and “Vivien” are no more than specular projections of the one called “Melchior”. If this is indeed so, then all the feelings of repulsion and fear, or of being endangered by others, all the endeavours of the “self” to establish itself by means of a difference that would cut off all the rest, can only have one target: the “other” that is the very narcissistic “self”. A “self” lacking all “proper” contents – an Odysseus-Nobody (cf. Lacoue-Labarthe 1991) – except the contents of mimetic rivalry with respect to the infernally monstrous others. The protagonist “I” may in the end be but the specular projection of its adversary with whom it yearns to identify in death: the father, the twin-brother, Polyphemus.

(Translated by Tomislav Brlek)

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## SAŽETAK

Čitanje pripovjednog teksta postavlja problem konstrukcije “čovjeka od riječi” kao verbalno-antropološkog reprezentacijskog sklopa, koji tvori neodlučivu granicu između poimanja književnog lika, s jedne strane, kao retoričke funkcije diskursa odnosno iskazivanja, a s druge, kao predmeta referencijalne iluzije utemeljene na postupku apstrahiranju diskurzivnog tkiva u korist semantičkog “sadržaja” iskaza. U članku ponudeno tumačenje romana *Kiklop* (1965) Ranka Marinkovića razmatra mogućnost da se tekst analizira tragom Barthesove teze prema kojoj “tekst ima ljudski oblik, on je obličje, anagram tijela” metodologijom Lacanove psihoanalitičke semiotike koja usvaja de Saussureov strukturalistički model znaka, sjedinjujući u pojmu označitelja pitanje vizualno-mimetičke, dvojničko-zrcalne konstitucije i problematične očitljivosti slike tijela, odnosno identiteta, s jedne strane teksta i intertekstualnosti, a s druge, ljudskog subjekta i intersubjektivnosti, odnosno, Girardovim terminima, individue i “interdividualnosti”, te s njime skopčane metafore antropofagije, sljepila/slabovidnosti i diobenog falomornog pogleda.