



Роман «Зибенкэз» Жан-Поля как эксплицитный и имплицитный интертекст в прозе Т. Бернхарда

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Jean Paul's "Siebenkäs" as an explicit and implicit intertext in Thomas Bernhard's fiction

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Аннотация

В статье сопоставляется поэтика Т. Бернхарда и Жан-Поля с точки зрения эксплицитных и имплицитных интертекстуальных связей. На материале произведений «Изничтожение: Распад» и «Зибенкэз» анализируется модель жизни как письма.

Abstract

The paper offers a comparative study of Th. Bernhard's and Jean Paul's poetics focused on both explicit and implicit intertextual links. The authors' "Auslöschung: Ein Zerfall" and "Siebenkäs" are analysed in view of life performed as if it is a writing.

Ключевые слова: модернизм, Томас Бернхард, Жан-Поль, интертекстуальность.

Keywords: modernism, Thomas Bernhard, Jean Paul, intertextuality.

Intertextuality in meta-fiction of Jean Paul and Thomas Bernhard

History of literature contains precedents for the poststructuralist declaration of a world as a text, and a text as intertext; the idea that has defined the vector of postmodern art practice. One cannot deny the notion of self-reflection in literature as a common characteristic of transitional cultural periods. In the modern era there emerged a special type of author whose writing is borne of ironic self-exposure and who explore the world within the texts of "others" through dialogical gestures. German writers Jean Paul (1763-1825) and Thomas Bernhard (1931-1989) belong to this particular group. Long before Borges and Umberto Eco, Jean Paul contrives the idea of "Kopfbibliothek", the imaginary "head"



library wherein the reader endlessly rewrites everything they've ever read. Both Jean-Paul and Bernhard fully engage the distinctly modern self-referential novel form, metafiction – “a novel about a writer and the process of writing, about text and reading” [Schmitz-Emans 2010: 167].

Explicit and implicit intertext

Bernhard and Jean Paul create intertextual connections in two ways: explicit (quoting and paraphrasing) and implicit (“mirroring” literary devices). Jean Paul’s intertext is evident across Bernhard’s oeuvre, including “Amras”, “Auslöschung. Ein Zerfall”, “Korrektur”, “Der Untergeher”, etc. The following literary devices were identified by M. Schmitz-Emans in the fiction of Jean Paul: showing “the narrative and the writing itself”, contemplating the notion of genius, engaging with fictional authors, auto-intertextuality, pondering “the material and physical, somatic and psychological conditions of literary text production”, “doppelganger” as a sign “of unity and division within the writing self”, “losing identity and self-control”, and finally, “a compulsive need to actualize oneself in the text (selbstverschriftlichen)” [Schmitz-Emans, 2008: 141-145]. All of these can be found in Bernhard’s fiction as well. Bernhard’s last novel “Auslöschung. Ein Zerfall” (1986) becomes the focal point of this research due to both implicit and explicit (a quote from “Siebenkäs”, 1796/1817) intertextual presence of Jean Paul’s work therein. This novel also contains an auto-intertextual reference to an earlier story “Amras” (1964), which too includes Jean Paul’s intertext.

“Siebenkäs” and “Auslöschung. Ein Zerfall”: intertextual dialogue

Bernhard’s meta-novel “Auslöschung. Ein Zerfall” is densely packed with intertextual references (49 authors and 22 works) [Hoell 2014: 434]. It also contains a kind of poetics manifesto by Bernhard assigned as a reading list to Gambetti, a young Italian man under the private tutorage of writer Josef Murau, the book’s protagonist and narrator who teaches German literature. It includes Jean Paul’s “Siebenkäs”, Bernhard’s own “Amras” (sic!), Kafka’s “Der Prozess”, Musil’s “Die Portugiesin” and Broch’s “Esch, oder Die Anarchie”. The protagonist’s occupational mode mirrors that of Jean Paul’s characters: the writers or teachers of literature. While mentorship is a recurring theme in Bernhard’s work (see: “Frost”, “Gehen”, “Der Atem”, “Die Kälte”, “Korrektur”, “Alte Meister”), herein for the first time it serves as impetus for professional motivation. Also of note is the connection between early entry into literature and domestic abuse (the narrator ironically refers to perpetrators as “mine”). Reading a book by Jean Paul confirms this traumatic experience. Josef Murau’s path to writing appears as “thorny” as that of Firmian Stanislaus Siebenkäs, “the advocate for the poor”. Thorns is one of key images in the novel “Siebenkäs”.

“Siebenkäs-Szene”: the artist’s Self among one’s own and the others

Josef Murau’s childhood is spent in the ancestral castle Wolfsegg. One day, the boy arrives late for an appointment with his mother to go through her correspondence and again for a family dinner. He had begun reading a Jean Paul novel and forgot about everything else. As punishment, the mother slaps his face in front of the whole family and sentences him to a three-day foodless confinement in his bedroom. He suffers rejection from his parents due to his preoccupation with



reading; his sisters make fun of him with malicious taunts: “Siebenkäs, Siebenkäs, Siebenkäs” [Bernhard 1986: 268]. Bernhard portrays family in a sorely negative light. “Siebenkäs” is considered to be one of the first German “family novels” (Eheroman). However, the description of “family” (Firmian and Lenetta) serves to support the idea of liberating the writer’s Self through rejection of family as an obstacle to creativity. While the book remains open-ended, the image of the new bride Natalie is significantly idealized and hardly could support development a traditional family fable. Jean Paul and Bernhard compensate familial estrangement with relationships with “others”. Friendship becomes an alternative to family. Jean Paul portrays sworn brothers Siebenkäs and Leibgeber as nearly identical (‘Ebenbilder’, ‘Gebrüder’). Besides the friendship of Josef and Gambetti, Bernhard highlights the relationship between Josef and Uncle Georg who resembles Bernhard’s grandfather Johannes Freumbichler, his primary “teacher” in life and literature. There are plot twist similarities between the two novels with regard to female characters as well. The figure of a rejected woman who does not share the protagonist’s interests is replaced by an ideal heroine. Jean Paul substitutes the poeticized bride Natalie for Lenetta, the ex-spouse. In lieu of the cold mother and sisters, Bernhard introduces the writer Maria. Joseph’s spiritual counterpart (who carries the Roman theme throughout the novel) is based on Ingeborg Bachmann.

Another “Self” in the poetics of Jean Paul and Bernhard

Thus, both authors base the idea of another “self” on spiritual symbiosis, and, evidently, the impossibility of achieving wholeness since one’s spiritual twin is

embodied in another person. Case in point, the aforementioned connection between “Auslöschung. Ein Zerfall” with Bernhard’s earlier work “Amras”. Not only the excruciating loneliness of the protagonist cannot be resolved, it is grotesquely emphasized in two young brothers who have lost their parents in a double suicide. The subsequent suicide of one of these boys, Walter M., highlights the self-destructive trajectory of this “family” parable. One of the key explicit intertextual references to “Siebenkäs” in the “Amras” novel is a line: “Rede des toten Christus vom Weltgebäude herab, dass kein Gott sei.” This visionary passage connects the metaphysical and personified notions of Christ as “an orphan” who has risen to witness that “there is no God.” It is voiced in a cry of despair: “Wir sind alle Waisen, ich und ihr, wir sind ohne Vater. <...> Wie ist jeder so allein in der weiten Leichengruft des All! Ich bin nur neben mir” [Jean Paul 1986: 643-644].

Life as writing

When Siebenkäs bequeaths Leibgeber his manuscripts, the theme of testament takes on a modernist interpretation: the text preserves a self that evades formulaic solutions. The reader becomes the heir. In “Auslöschung. Ein Zerfall” it is Gambetti, the young foreigner. The alterity of the reader and the author is expressed through dual distancing: they belong to different generations and linguistic cultures. However, the author bestows his trust onto “the other” in the same spirit that he sees creation in “extinction” (Auslöschung) and “decay” (Zerfall) of the ties that bind an individual to the body of familial and tribal traditions. Josef Murau’s “manuscript” can be considered a verbalized and symbolic act of “des Theaters seines Sterbens” [Jean Paul 1986: 785] given



the circumstances of its creation (death of the family in a car accident, the funeral) and the bequest of the Wolfsegg castle to the Jewish community (retribution for the family's "Nazi" past). Nevertheless, dying of the profane life sets up the stage for re-birth of a new "self" – that of a writer. (Jean Paul infuses death and resurrection themes with Christian motifs.) Thus, reminiscent of Jean Paul, Bernhard fulfills in his novel "Auslöschung. Ein Zerfall" the concept of *living as writing*. The identicalness of their artistic and biographical models is expressed therein in explicit and implicit forms of intertextual dialogue.

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