

Searching for Aesthesis

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In the summer I used to walk to Eržvilkas chapel barefoot. Over a foot-bridge across Vidauja river, on a pathway through Džiugiris, on a cattle-driving path through the forest of Balandinė, on a high road through Dirvonai village, over a small ferro-concrete bridge across the river of Šaltuona by Vytautas oak tree... The morning dew would sting my soles. I saw trees, farmhouses, clouds in the far distance, desperate to reach them as soon as I could.

I would carry my shoes in a small bag. At the churchyard I was told to put them on. In the church, I was impatient to kick them off and, when the organ was playing, walk on the wooden floor barefoot again to take a closer look at and even touch a tabernacle cobbled together by Tadeusz Tolišius; and back at home I wondered why the altar sometimes seemed remarkably beautiful and fading away, slipping out of my fingers that did not reach it, and otherwhiles – just a painted decorative thing, like a commode in my parents' room.

From childhood experience

Concern about the Beginning

This essay is about meetings between a *literary work* and the *reader* which begin and end *now*. It is difficult to describe the occurrence of the eternal presence of all of them, especially the co-existence of the perceptions of a literary work called *aesthesis*. I doubt whether every reader is aware of it, or whether he at least sometimes experiences this exceptional occurrence. It is not unlikely that some of those who experience it only pretend that *they have an experience of it*, as to mention such an experience is sometimes usual or even necessary. It could be that the states of all readers are unreal to some extent, thought of by themselves, simulative, or just simulacra.

While I was thinking about them, I had no idea that when I started writing, I would have to stop a few times and then start again.

“It is difficult to find *the beginning*,”¹ as Ludwig Wittgenstein noted down. I must admit, I feel comforted by the philosopher's confession.

In this essay, I will have to go back to the motif of *the beginning* (as well as *the end*) more than once, then leave it for a new paragraph or even a section, and at the end of the essay recall it again. It seems that in a way it can be called eternal or at least recurring. Philosophers would say: essential. True, today not all of them would assert this, as some regard a *hunt for essences* as worthless. More often it is only “structures” or instances of valuation of a literary work formed from phenomenological perspectives that are investigated: a hypothetical model (usually linguistic) of the description of the structure of a literary work is built, which becomes the basis for the further analysis of a literary work, a “theory” which governs concepts, a mode of thought, principles of analysis. It becomes more obvious that the importance of any theory lies not in the fact that it pretends to help understand something about reality, but that it establishes a certain connection with the question under discussion. For example, it is appropriate to consider the problem of how to be together with a literary work created by yourself.

In light of certain theories, a variety of states² of the literary work³ and its reader can be better perceived only by an experienced reader or a critic for whom interpretations of the works of a theory is daily bread. These concepts are the main “personages” of the present essay.

Yet the question “How to start a discussion about a literary work?” would be posed by everyone, with the possible exception of a literary scholar or critic who adheres strictly to canons of literary understanding and is disinclined to examine more modern examples of literary texts. And he is right in a way: at first one can base oneself on every traditional model of a literary work, as they represent a familiar theory and practice. They affect the literary experiences of consciousness.

Of course there are numerous stereotypical conceptions of the literary work. Most of them are based on representation of or reference to its *reality*. They control us even when we seemingly do not remember them,

¹ All 1951-04-05 text (“471”): “It is so difficult to find *the beginning*. Or, better: It is difficult to begin at the beginning. And not try to go further back” (Wittgenstein L. *Apie tikrumą*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2009, p. 107).

² A state – *here*: a co-existence of two phenomena combining ontological, gnoseological, psychological and other conditions of being together. This concept will be discussed more thoroughly later.

³ The concept of the “literary work” is used generally in this essay. If it is not indicated otherwise, it signifies literary works of various kinds, genres, and different artistic standards.

perhaps even challenge them, that is, we conjure up a *different* vision of literature in our imagination and experience its effect. A different sort of literature is the reality significant to the author and the reader (a critic) which does not conform to the endless cycle of literary works. This cycle looks somewhat different when we read the classics and when we open an original work. In the former case the reader, or the critic, is more responsible for the state which we roughly call the reading of the text and its interpretation. In the latter case it is also the author who is responsible, if he wishes his pen to not become rusty.

Thus the search for the beginning can be the generation of a new signification⁴ of both a well-known and unknown literary text. The new signification would be created by overcoming / substituting the old one which, as it was mentioned above, in many cases is generally accepted and valuable. Encyclopedias and works of classical literary studies present the essentialist – spontaneous and at least relatively permanent -- ideas of literary values. Can they prove to be traditionally useful in analyzing a literary work? There is no doubt about that, as almost all of us have experienced it: sometimes it suffices to choose one of the well-known openings, like in a game of chess. Knowledge is power. Similarly, a writer can benefit from good knowledge of literary history and the appeal of individual works, and only Socrates's ironic smile reminds us that in all respects we remain between truth and obscurity.

At the outset it is not only the object of discussion – a literary work, or the work and the reader's coexistence that are important, but also the manner, or a method, that is, *how* it is going to be discussed, the way of approaching it, and a final encounter with it. It is much less significant whether this manner (method, theory) is a successful scientific step towards truth. The perception of a literary work is determined by the above-mentioned traditional forms of thought; when new (hypothetical) statements have been confirmed, or have proved to be wrong, one will not return to the same beginning of the text's perception.

Thus when the scientist René Descartes does not feel a peculiar spiritual power in an ecstasy of his mind and does not see his new and infallible method, he is made to rely on the already known or at least hypothetical – maybe not even real – theory.

If one recalls Till Eulenspiegel, every beginning, like the ashes of Klaas, always speaks not only to the heart, but also to the mind. One has to wait – even when nothing occurs – for a miracle, weave his own circle of beginnings and endings.

The author's vision of the essay begins with the title – thinking of it, articulating it, writing it down, sometimes formulating it anew. For some time it did not change and was only the axis of the text which was being rewritten and specified in various respects.

The words "Searching for Aesthesis" denote the theoretical point of view important to me – a movement of thought in *imagination* as well as more specific aspects of this movement – a look at *the aesthetic presence of the literary work*, which in our visions is integrated into the world of artifacts and has its own form or structure. In the beginning, I think, a more detailed explanation of *this* (like any other possible) *presence* is not necessary. The analysis of its form or structure can be postponed. Suffice it to say that this concept has its own structure of significations called premises which point to a *different* – peculiar and personally meaningful to everyone – structure, form of the reality phenomena.

It has been already mentioned that aesthesis, or, the aesthetic being of the literary work, may not have been experienced by the reader thus far, but only known, heard of, only played with in his imagination or at least greatly expected. And it is *expectation* which, according to some aestheticians, paves the way for the appearance and being of all that we call unique. Expectation is the source of not only art, but also of other life experiences.

And still, we start by speaking about *the state* of objects and subjects of the literary world, the name⁵ given by ancient Greeks. It could be that this is the case of our universal experience, analogous to all others, when we begin to look back to the *occurrence* which resembles birth, dying, joy, sadness, evaluation. Such occurrences were also first discussed by the Greeks.

The title word *aesthesis* is not a new concept. Some readers associate it only with the name of Algirdas Julius Greimas, others – with Aristotle. It also brings to mind other prominent authors: Martin Buber, Claude Lévi-Strauss, or Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger, or Gilles Deleuze. It is difficult to name all of them – the philosophers who have always been interested not only in a connection between the sensation and the mind, but also in the aesthetic vision of the work of art which reveals the discontinuity and continuity of its

⁴ The term *meaning* in this essay differs from the usual content of this word in logic. It is used to emphasize the content of *signification* in the subjective experience of it. *Signification* is the formation of the meaning of a phenomenon and the result of this process. The content of *meaning*, which results from experience and its description, is never fully comprehended; it is only approximately understood, as there always remains a transcendental boundary and it only partially conveys its own content.

⁵ A state which is essentially related with *aesthetic* activity (Gr. *Αἰσθητικὴ* - "sensory"), *aesthetic need*, *aesthetic experience*, *aesthetic perception*, etc.

perception, momentariness and permanence, do not lack in number. It might be that some readers will not relate the question of aesthesis with concrete authors, but it will evoke more general associations with individual experiences of a work of art (literature), especially its beauty. Many appreciate those rare occasions when they experienced the exceptionality – difference or sameness -- of a work of literature or any other work of art, depending on how it seemed to them. It becomes clearer that earlier the attention of specialists in the humanities (including literary scholars) was drawn more to similarities, today – to singularity. The reader's being together with a work of art (a book), which is the aim or purpose of reading, is very different (and similar). We do not mean those who never or hardly ever read. And others, though not all, especially the ones who are still studying the basics of literature, are exposed to a significant - deeper or peculiar - perception of a work. A virtual world, being created by computers, narrows and changes literature: one can become estranged from it and not feel it.⁶

It is possible that quite a few readers have personally experienced aesthesis but are unaware of it. Paradoxical as it may seem, *this* can be explained as the premise for the appearance of aesthesis. Especially today, when the multiplicity of literature – its interior disintegration and many oppositions – resists the idea of traditional aesthesis as the totality of the world.

Yet regardless of the history of personal experiences, from my point of view, every reader himself (or together with the author of these lines) can expect ecstasy as well as consider all questions of aesthesis in literature or search for answers. It is not the privilege of the elect readers – the literary elite. However, aesthesis, as a unique experience of the work being read, is rare. Far broader is the scope of experiences in the process of approaching it.

Various efforts or approaches provide a meaningful opportunity for a literary dispute: however popular or modern the semiotic perception of aesthesis is, the myth of stereotype compares it to other states: *catharsis* caused by tragedy, according to Aristotle, or Martin Heidegger's and Walter Benjamin's *illuminations* – the power to see through the work of art everything that is otherwise unseen, and have a momentary vision of Athena with her nine muses by the Hippocrene fountain, to believe that *in one work all works are retained, the works embrace an epoch, and the epoch presents the course of history* (Benjamin). Quite a few art consumers rightly associate aesthesis with ecstasy.⁷

The question would be rather easy to discuss if it concerned only the order of things conceived of from ancient times, or the completeness and harmony of human soul. Disorder or chaos, heterogeneity, contradictions, antinomies, historical differences, contingencies present the other side of discussions which, however, is unseen or more difficult to discern (though I understand those who do not think that to philosophize is to converse).

What would be the present-day situation of the theme? How to start discussions about the appearance of aesthesis (not only with respect to its history, but also to the present-day), its phases, multiple forms, shades of experience, surfaces, space, psychological obscurities, transcendental aspects?

The followers of Aristotle may be more persistent than today's structuralists and post-structuralists in their wish to travel to an oasis of the harmony of the world, the order of things, man's capacity to create something harmonious in our not too orderly or even chaotic world. They see mediation – a *reconciliation* between contradictory sides of the perception of a work – as an essentially clear and real solution. Contradictoriness is usually identified with the significations of a sentence or its relation with things (reality) which are important to logic. The overcoming of oppositions (material – ideal, positive – negative, beautiful - ugly, real – unreal, ontological – gnoseological, etc.) is like an erotic allurements which arises from "the lust" of bodies, the concept which acquires names by always renewed forms of language.

Yet I think that today, hardly any critic faithful to the metaphysical tradition, even when encouraged by the author of this essay, would choose Aristotle's first words in his *Poetics* for the theoretical analysis of the beginning of a literary work:

⁶ This should not be interpreted as literature's imminent death. Gilles Deleuze asserts: "If literature dies, it will be a violent death." According to him, "it's highly unlikely that audiovisual media will find the conditions for creation once they've been lost in literature" (Deleuze G. *Negotiations*, translated by Martin Joughin, Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 131).

⁷ Ecstasy [Gr. *Ekstasis*] – wonder, delight, a state of excitement, elevation of feeling, exultation characterized by uncritical valuation of oneself and the object of ecstasy (*Tarptautinių žodžių žodynas*. Vilnius: Vyriausioji enciklopedijų redakcija, 1985, p. 131). Algirdas Gaižutis states that ecstasy "means 'a purge,' the state of depersonalization, a peculiar giddiness, enthusiasm <...> the phenomenon of nature, man, contemplation of works of art as well as admiring them. It is rare and it occurs when the subject's consciousness merges with the object being contemplated and loses a sense of time. To experience ecstasy observing the beauty of nature, works of art, is one of the most intense and deepest states of the aesthetic sense" (*Estetikos enciklopedija*, p. 125-126).

Let us first speak about poetry [poetics] and its various kinds, noting the essential quality of each, then about how to construct the plot as a requisite for a good poem; about the number and nature of the parts of which a poem is composed, and similarly, about whatever else falls within the same inquiry. Following then the order of nature, let us begin with the principles which come first.⁸

It is obvious that to Aristotle himself the beginning of his *Poetics* did not raise any doubts or showed any theoretical concerns. It may seem at first glance that in the words quoted there is somewhat little generalized knowledge. To perceive, to discuss, and to reason were the general goals of his logic. In this work the object of Aristotle's investigation is the conception of literature. Today we could say it is literary theory. The philosopher does not conceal from the reader the fact that he aims at explaining the specific character of literature; he presents an outline of further discussion, and starts with what he *knows*. The alternative – *I know that I know nothing* – is refuted. He continues:

Epic poetry and Tragedy, Comedy and also Dithyrambic poetry, and the music of the flute and of the lyre in most of their forms, are all in their general conception *modes of imitation*, belong to *imitational art*. They differ, however, from one another in three respects – the medium, the objects, the manner or mode of imitation (*my italics* – V.M.).⁹

These sentences, especially the word *imitational*, prompt us to start a dialogue about the initial view of literature which could serve as a starting point for deeper discussions about it. To imitate is to seek to reach *accord, to merge, to be an entity*.

We know that Aristotle was not the first to discuss the question of art or literature as an imitation of reality; however, he was the first of ancient philosophers who undertook to examine explicitly the natural conception of literature (poetry), to find out what is distinctive about the art called poetry. He should “know” on what basis one could differentiate verbal art from other works executed in a written form. According to Plato, the poet is an “imitator of truth,” as he creates only “images but not real things,”¹⁰ whereas Aristotle regards the poet as a mediator between language and the world and empowers him *to imitate* the world in words – create *significations* of the world. Aristotle is concerned with the natural (lexical) layer of language. However, he also values the shifting layer of the meanings of language which is created by synonyms, metaphors and other possibilities of the poetics of the literary work. Imitation (*mimesis*) in this case is not only a reiteration (reflection) of reality, it is not a transference of the significations of world objects (things), but the creation of an integral signification for the poet (for us, readers), a distinctive generalization of significations, by no means only *mimetic*. It is achieved through the interconnection of the work's structural parts – their inner connection which differs fundamentally from the outer order of a literary genre.

<...> the plot, too, must center around a unified action, and a complete one as it is an imitation of an action. The structural parts of the plot must be connected with one another in such a way that if any one of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed.¹¹

Every further line of the *Poetics* looks like rational stages of the conception of literature, and their totality establishes certain rules of writing / reading the work, more broadly speaking, its explanation / understanding. For a long time no one dared question Aristotle's ideas or develop an essential argument with him. His *experience* – both philosophical and literary – seemed genuine. And this must be the truth which cannot be put into question. Is Aristotle's *experience* known to us from his reflections in *Poetics* likewise genuine? Experience is a result, therefore, it is naturally finite. It should not be even called “stagnant” or “obsolescent,” as there is no other. Thus at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries discussions about the exhaustion of the ideas of the *Poetics* are stimulated not because of the refutation of Aristotle's experience which points to the imitational (*mimesis*) content of literature (art) – our natural inclination to imitate and thus gain pleasure. One could at least partially agree that the literary work does have this kind of content. True, nowadays imitation, or *mimesis*, as a universal code of literary distinctiveness, can be called into doubt, as George Steiner does:

But even in respect of the ontologically narrative forms, which are those of the poetic and the artistic in the narrower sense, the mimetic concept, the instinctual *imitatio mundi* leaves too much unanswered. Given the world, why the second-hand of fiction, of the arts? If *mimesis* is the necessary and sufficient power, why, then, should reproductive fidelity not be the summit of aesthetic merit? Why should not all formal invention aspire to

⁸ Aristotelis. *Poetika. Rinkiniai raštai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1990, p. 277.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Platonas. *Valstybė*. Vilnius: Pradai, 2000, X, 599a.

¹¹ Aristotelis. *Poetika*, p. 288.

the condition of photographic innocence? There are, to be sure, programmatic-political codes of *verismo*, of “social realism” which, in fact, seek to dictate this aspiration. The free imagination holds them in contempt. If invocations of innate mimesis do go a long way towards the “how” of literature and of the arts, they do not tell us, except in a deterministically psychological sense, of the “why”. Again, I ask: why should there be poems (Leibniz would ask: why should there not be no poems)? The axiom that there is *poiesis* “because” there is creation is, presumably, commonplace. But it is that “because” which challenges understanding.¹²

The word “because” would raise considerable doubts about the universality of the *experience* of a literary work described by Aristotle. Where are its boundaries? Which works (their kinds) does it begin and end with? Do the boundaries mark the end? Why not the beginning? Or, according to Heidegger, where something through something concentrates on its own peculiarity (*Eigenes*) in order to appear in its completeness, come into existence (*Anwesenheit*)?¹³ Is the value of these works permanent or shifting? Do these works, in Protagoras’s words, “exist because they are, or don’t exist because they are not?” To put it differently: is there much of a *human being* there? It is not only allusions to the axiology of literature. When we speak about literature more broadly, there always arises the question of how much of “a human being” it contains, whether we view him only as a literary craftsman or whether we consider him “the measure of all things”? Steiner writes that a *human maker’s* “mimetic” act of creation is personal, competitive, directed to the unapproachable “first *fiat*”:

In all substantive art-acts there beats an angry gaiety. The source is that of loving rage. The human maker rages at his coming *after*, at being, forever, second to the original and originating mystery of the forming of form.¹⁴

“Loving rage” could probably be replaced by another similar “not deterministic” (autobiographical) concept of the creator’s personality. Steiner claims that “mimesis is repossession.”¹⁵ One could disagree with him; however, he draws attention to a man’s relatively independent being. All the differences and similarities between Aristotle’s text about literature written in times past and my text which is being written today, depend on how and how deeply rooted man’s being in literature is. They also depend on their *beginnings*. It is obvious that we speak about their integrated (metalinguistic) understanding.

Thus the *beginnings* borrowed from other authors can hardly be relied on, as no one imparts the paradigmatic orders they belonged to.

The beginning of *Poetics* was (is) only Aristotle’s. Others and I myself can only read it carefully, but one can hardly base oneself on it, imitate it. Aristotle was concerned with *knowledge*. He was searching for the general essence of literature (*poetry*) which, to his eye, did not correspond to the “truth of fact.” According to Aristotle, *literature*, as every separate word, should convey an *essence*. “All essences share a common feature – they do not reside in the subject.”¹⁶ Further on, it seems, one could discuss the question of what particular essence and its relation to a human being we reflect on, of the place of literature in the world’s structure according to Aristotle. And the thing that the distinctiveness of poetry arises from aesthetic aspirations¹⁷ allows him to affirm that aspirations can be true or false, depending on the *knowledge / ignorance* of the essence of poetry.

Thus the beginning is important to the author of this essay not as the essential knowing (of the truth) but as a multiple perception of one literature out of many possible ones: when I pronounce the word *literature* (drama, prose, poetry etc.), I try to single it out from the cultural phenomena discussed in other words, understand its significations which spring up from all significations of *literature* that I perceive or imagine. Its integral (paradigmatic) dimension is only approximately envisaged, however, it will be more important for searching the sensing of the literary work.¹⁸ The framing of its concept is not an easy task.

¹² Steiner G. *Real Presences*. The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 203.

¹³ Heideggeris M. *Meno kilmė ir mąstymo paskirtis*. A lecture delivered in 1967 in Athens (quoted according to Gabriel Licceanu’s article “Heideggeris, meno kūrinys ir riba,” translated by A. Merkevičiūtė. *Šiaurės Atėnai*, 2011-01-31).

¹⁴ Steiner G. *Real Presences*, p. 204.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

¹⁶ Aristotelis. Kategorijos. *Rinktiniai raštai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1990, p. 29.

¹⁷ Aristotelis. *Poetika*, p. 314-318.

¹⁸ Lithuanian aesthetologists’s use of the concept of *pajauta* (translated here as “sense”) has a twofold meaning. It is a synonym of “sensation,” or the concept encompassing the aesthetic experience of the work as well as the formation of significations of such experience. We find its first usage, for instance, in V. Mykolaitis-Putinas’s

Do we still think, as Aristotle did, that Homer in his *Odyssey* “created a unified action”? Possibly so, as the reader who opens the *Odyssey* or some other literary work and concerns himself with *how* it is *made*, does not usually pose the question that Aristotle did in the very beginning: does the work of art (literature) exist? If he did not have this question, he “must have known” the answer and considered it an axiom. Axioms are also stereotypes, the ones which we cannot do without, whose effect and authority over us we acknowledge.

Bearing in mind the example from *Poetics*, we discuss only a “unified action,” and not the literary work’s *presence* (existence etc.). Perhaps we believe that the work *exists* because Aristotle *knew* it? But what does the thing that *he* knew (long before us) mean to us? It is not clear. It is true that we all read Aristotle differently. We interpret his treatise and attempt to understand it. We make a difference between to *perceive* and to *know*. We do not assume that today it is possible to know or decipher the ancient meaning of *Poetics*. On the contrary, we actively intrude on the treatise, disintegrate it and construct our own – new – text, an object.

Strictly speaking, it is difficult to agree not only about one or another sentence from the treatise called classics. We disagree even about the essential concepts used by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. Their cognitive content is only *probable* and not absolutely reliable. The cumulative totality of those significations does not convey everything. The content of both *Poetics* and each literary work analyzed there have different depths of meanings: the latter depends on both the author’s and the reader’s *experiences* of the work’s language. Aristotle concerned himself with the “empirical” material of *poetry*, valued its spontaneous (contingent, undefined) content, was capable of analyzing it; however, nowadays the experience of the connection between man and language, without which literature is impossible, is wider and deeper. Its coherent description in Aristotle’s theory of essences (metaphysics) would be a difficult task, and today it would not make any sense. One has to appreciate new possibilities of the perception of literature (both theory and its works), which transcend the boundaries of Aristotle’s logic. Even Descartes was critical of Aristotle’s logic. Although he did not doubt that patterns of thought can be set and studied regardless of their content, he proposed his own method which had to conform to formal rules of thinking and address the question of the identity of thought and reality. Today we may not doubt the innovations of Descartes’ meditations, but the above mentioned concern with identity / non-identity makes one critical of the rules of Cartesian method.

When the object of considerations changes, instruments of our consciousness also change, even when they are created by it.

In the subsequent sections of this essay, drawing on the 20th century authors and Greimas’s conception of aesthesis, we will attempt to pose the question about whether we can combine the epistemological and empirical contents of literature today. Why aesthesis was and still remains in the realm of transcendence? Reflecting on the literary works we will have to regard them as the object of cognition. This is a twofold task, so is the state of mind. Aristotle was one of the first to have encountered with the tasks of such a “double” thinking / seeing / sensing. Is being on this side or beyond it possible for aesthesis without a movement characteristic of transcendence?

In the course of two millennia the level of human consciousness was changing and many things began to be viewed differently than in ancient times. I believe Aristotle grounded his (reading) experience not only on the actual rules of literariness (poetry) presented in the work as his own experience. He also considered the vaguely seen inner layers of meta-personal significations of the text – ontic dimensions of literature, which every historical epoch must verify and revise.

We have never had a better beginning than starting with an image of the existence of a literary work in our imagination, as if its disappearance, nonexistence, confluence with what is not literature.

Today Aristotle’s *Poetics*, which is *disintegrating* of its own accord or is being purposely *undermined* by literary scholars, does not pass into oblivion, - it provides a premise for a new poetics. Or, according to Deleuze, it serves as an expression of a possible world. Had I started this essay with, for instance, Greimas’s concept of aesthesis rather than with that of the *Poetics*, I could not have avoided allusions and even concrete references to Aristotle’s works.

It is always worthwhile to search for an answer about the *beginnings* of a posed question in the *history* of literary theory. The appearance of aesthesis may have no beginning (and no end), historical explanations may not always survive the test of time, but they all remain significant. Thus only we ourselves have to pose new challenges to Aristotle’s *Poetics*.

New Old Theories

And yet what is the real question of searching for aesthesis and its related forms of sensing, or how does it arise?

There are more questions, and the main one should be called multiple. In clarifying the latter, Gilles Deleuze's term might be of great use. However, Deleuze's conception of thinking (as *the logic of sense*)¹⁹ attempts to reject both *structures* and traditional and untraditional *metaphysics*, suggesting the distinctive conception of *subjectivity*. Therefore we will ignore the impact of such a mode of thinking for a while, at least until we provide one or another traditional, though still hypothetical, explanation of the question of aesthesis.

A search for aesthesis involves paying heed to its approaches or theoretical premises and the ability to discuss (relate, write down) the *significance* that has been experienced through the text's significations. The total and momentary experience of a literary work is the primary insight into aesthesis that only helps to disclose some of its *structure* and understand its *movement* – a coexistence of subjective and objective, surface and interior, temporal and timeless aspects of experience.

We often associate the being of the literary work, earlier formulated as a question, with a book that can be opened, its material form. Things (bodies) seem a reliable form of reality, but one can also believe in the new reality created from or through them and experienced by the reader. Its mental shapes are all evasive, contradictory, random. All the same, they are explained by concepts of *the aesthetic presence of the literary work* and *the aesthetic experience of the literary work*.²⁰

They both, especially the latter, are not (should not be) something fixed, completed, something from the past. Their material (ontological) layer is more superficial than deep. Experience, like the idealness asserted (created) by the subject, is a constantly changing reality. Thus nowadays, the experience of Aristotle and other Greeks' times should be discussed only as an individual occurrence of the continual (historical) return of experience.

What is it? How does such an experience begin and how (when) does it end? (And again, we do not think about the phases of its process at this time).

Why or how new is this question?

Literary critics of all times have discussed it. However, it seems to be timeless, since no answer has been provided yet.

Aristotle's *Poetics* reminds us that there are no questions of literary aesthetics which could be called old or new. The outline map of such questions was drawn in ancient times. One can only choose more relevant ones or those which are more significant to the author of this essay. The question of the being of literature can be simplified: what is the literary work? At first glance, Aristotle already provides an answer to this question presenting tragedy as a complex construct. Having discussed the six component parts of tragedy (plot, characters, thinking, stage requisites, language, and composition), he regards "the plot as the basis of tragedy and as its soul," moves characters to the background; he puts thinking in third place, and language only in the fourth.²¹ Having briefly characterized language as the "ability to express a thought in words," the philosopher returns to eidetic thinking ("the ability to speak in essence").²² However, today this subordination of component parts raises doubts and prompts a very important question: do we know / understand language and its relation to literature in the same way as the ancient Greeks?

Language contexts and intertexts pose even more questions. How do we attribute truth, meaning, or sense to the literary aesthetic presence or simply to beauty? What is a written narrative? How similar and different are oral and written works? Is it only the literary work that gives aesthetic experience? Can a philosophical text also

¹⁹ Deleuze G. *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester, Charles Stival, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, London-New York: Continuum, 2004 (transl. into Russian: *Logika Smysla*, trans. J. I. Svirskij, Moskva: Raritet, 1998); Deleuze G. *Difference and Repetition*. New York: Continuum, 2004; Žukauskaitė A. *Gilles'io ir Felixo Guattari filosofija: daugialypumo logika*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2011.

²⁰ *Estetikos enciklopedija (Encyclopedia of Aesthetics)* (Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos centras, 2010) provides a general definition of aesthetic experience: "*The aesthetic experience* is a sense of the significance, harmony, and plenitude of life originating from the aesthetic activity, committed to individual's and cultural memory, and affecting the formation of meanings in the present" (p. 165). Further it states that "it is wrong to identify the aesthetic experience with the experience of the perception of the work of art" (*Ibid.*). In agreement with the ideas of this section, it has to be stressed that in literature the aesthetic experience is a particularly significant source of the experience of the work therefore, in this essay both concepts will sometimes be used as synonyms.

²¹ Aristotelis. *Poetika*, op. cit., p. 284-286.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 286.

provide it? Does literature represent speaking that reflects on itself and expresses itself through language? How are questions about language and literature (literariness) related?

The modern-day neopositivism, phenomenology, and a history of philosophy can modify the posing of such questions and the implicit answers considerably.

If the conception of at least one of these questions changes, we are made to ask again: What is literature / a literary work / their existence etc.? The very concept of *literature* or its *idea* can become dubious, - and we often face this fact today. We hear statements that until now there have been discussions only about a history of literary genres or styles, deterministic way of description of social (or “class,” political, cultural, religious etc.) life, self-consciousness of individual’s existence, literary imitation of reality. In short, about many things except literature as a structure of significations. It was semiology which focused its attention on the latter. At the beginning of the 20th c. Ferdinand de Saussure formulates the principle of the semiotic (“sign”) nature of language: language is a system of interrelated signs, logically independent of its form (phonic, graphic etc.) of realization. However, semiologists can effectively explore only individual literary works (partly – the present form of their linguistic meanings), whereas the historical existence of literature is testified to only by this old and still viable concept – the word *literature*. Beyond this word, which may be *eternal*, there remain more and more ephemeral, mythologized narratives and other play on words that were called literary works.

Undoubtedly, the posing of old as well as new questions is related to new research methods, which were devised not only in the epoch of René Descartes or Immanuel Kant, but also later – from the times of Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche up to the present day – the art avant-garde at the confluence of the 20th and 21st centuries which became famous as, for example, the *Fluxus* movement, and transversion of political realities – “relational aesthetics” (Nicolas Bourriard).

The historical retrospective of philosophical questions of literature shows that they recurred in discussing the different conceptions of the world’s unity. The disintegration of unity and its completeness was not always the most important (most acute) problem. However, the individuation of literary artifacts always retained linguistic features of homogeneity and heterogeneity of such formation.

Different problems and methods of their explanation were relatively determined by new visions²³ of the space, both common and different, of individual and language. Their epistemological and aesthetic aspects were very closely interconnected, and often – hard to distinguish. Literature’s “empiricism,” that is, the growing role of the individual’s experience in the epistemological (communicational) functions of literature makes one change a theoretical attitude to the relations between the reader and the literary work, sometimes called a text, specify their autonomy and effects on each other. In more modern times, the traditional question “What is literature?” is repeated not only in considering literariness / aestheticism.²⁴ It is important to the problematics of the author / reader and that of the individual’s freedom: the individual’s “subjectivity” is integrated into a literary work. However, at the same time it is detached from the literary work as a *text* (*écriture* etc.). “Structural linguistics” (Roman Jakobson) became the basis for linguists and structuralists, among them – semioticians, for raising issues about the ties between language and literature. It had an influence on all human sciences. The fundamental principle of the structuralist mindset – the primacy of the interrelationships between elements with respect to separate elements – explains (suggests this understanding) language, literature, and the individual not in isolation but through the analysis of the relations between them. However, it is always worth asking what changes when we stop viewing language, a literary work, or the individual as mere signifiers, that is, sides of the *sign* perceived sensually. Or creating new structures with its elements of concern. The mind should not forget that it perceives the “partly obscure reality” only through certain “gratings”²⁵ and should make occasional attempts to “reforge” them.

In all respects, the effect of the power of structures is almost inevitable. In the 20th C. language became the paradoxical image of the individual’s freedom as his confinement when language assumed authority over the individual. Literature is inside and outside the restricted freedom. The author and the reader have to meet staying on different sides though, - inside and outside the literary work’s being. The encounter – a line being drawn between this and the other side, in which case literature has no words (or according to Vanda Juknaitė, they are “uttered from the darkness”). In other words, a literary work as a dotted line between the insufficient image of man’s existence and its superfluity. Literature is grounded on particular relations between the world

²³ An especially strong connection of philosophical explanation of being and language is emphasized by the phenomenological existential trend in philosophy.

²⁴ Sartre J. P. *Situations II: What is Literature? / Qu’est que la littérature?* 1947; Sartre J.P. *Les mots* (1964), translation into Lithuanian: *Žodžiai*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1966. Also see Kristeva J. *Kaip kalbėti apie literatūrą?* (“Comment parler à la littérature”, in *Tel Quel*, 1971, 47); Barthes R. *Literatūra šiandien* (“La littérature aujourd’hui”, in *Tel Quel*, 1961, 7).

²⁵ Lévi-Strauss C., Eribon D. *Iš arti ir iš toli*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2002, p. 125.

and language, when they seem only to obstruct or restrict literature transcendently - where there is a need for language, its words and their meanings. However, material significations appear and their meanings begin to work. It is a certain immanence, a vertical.

For example, in considering the general principles of semiology, Roland Barthes interpreted the problem of freedom as the question of the relation between the individual and language and sought an answer to it in literature:

If we call freedom not only the capacity to escape power but also and especially the capacity to subjugate no one, the freedom can exist only outside language. Unfortunately, human language has no exterior: there is no exit. <...> But for us, who are neither knights of faith nor supermen, the only remaining alternative is, <...>, to cheat with speech, to cheat speech. This salutary trickery, this evasion, this grand imposture which allows us to understand speech outside the bounds of power, in the splendor of a permanent revolution of language. and for one I call literature.²⁶

Barthes perceives literature as being “made” of language whose functions are at least twofold – instrumental (essential for communication) and aesthetic (partly concurring with literariness stressed by the formalists). Literary language functions on the side of the signifier of the sign: a certain new (textual) value is added to language functioning. Thus there appears a (logical) premise to speak about literature as linguistic tautology, “intentional cacography” etc. In this way, Barthes semiotics, which is becoming more complex, comes into contact with literature with regard to the aesthetic linguistic significations that are important to it.

One might say that the first condition of literature is, paradoxically, to produce an indirect language: to name things in detail in order not to name their ultimate meaning, and yet to retain this threatening meaning, to designate the world as a repertoire of signs without saying what they signify.²⁷

Paradoxical as it may seem, the conception of language is becoming more puzzling and complex every day, which affects the conception of a literary work. According to Deleuze, this must be the reason why a science of language tends towards pragmatics (circumstances, events, facts), although “initially it was phonological, then it was semantic and syntactic”²⁸? Today the anonymous language “attacks” every individual, imposes its will or power on him, waits to see how he will act, what his attitude to language will be.

Thus in considering the question of the relation between the individual and language today, as in the times of Aristotle, the role of language in literature is obvious. However, it is not clear what objects and in particular, what methods of research could be helpful in finding the “essence” of this relation, or at least the way to describe the change of its forms.

This essay is an attempt at a paradoxical and concise rather than exhaustive introduction of the problem of the historical change of literature and language, and I find it hard to choose the authors or literary works that would *briefly* explain to the reader how the form and content of the aforementioned questions have been changing. There would not be many of them, and they would differ in opinion about the issue. Thus (only) as an example I would mention Michel Foucault – a cultural analyst who described thoroughly and in depth the changes of the place and role of language in modern man’s life. This popular and controversial author of the end of the 20th c. stands out among other theorists of post-structuralism because of his consideration for history – historical cultural “orders” – epistemological fields. Their description in the work *Words and Things (Les Mots et les choses, 1966)* is not brief therefore, in the context of the theme under consideration I will recall only the author’s main theses.²⁹

Foucault discusses historical types of knowledge (epistemes³⁰) – their origin, functioning and change. He does not characterize his investigation as “the history of ideas or science” and maintains that his concern is to

²⁶ Barthes R. *Inaugural Lecture, College de France*, translated by Richard Howard, 1977.

²⁷ Barthes R. La Bruyere. *The Pleasure of the Text*, p. 231-232.

²⁸ Deleuze G. *Negotiations*, p.28.

²⁹ I have not read an apter description of Foucault’s book than that by Deleuze: “Breaking things open, breaking words open.”

³⁰ *Episteme* – Gr. “science,” “knowledge, which is justified true belief,” in contrast to *opinion (doxa)*. The term *episteme* used by Foucault has links with an analogous concept used in semiology which means an “in-depth connection of various semiotic systems within one culture” (see Greimas A. J. *Is arti ir iš toli*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1991, p. 507). Due to the apriority of the term *episteme*, Foucault’s critics observed his following Immanuel Kant. In his later works (*The Archaeology of Knowledge* and others) Foucault hardly ever used this concept.

“bring to light the epistemological field, the episteme in which knowledge grounds its positivity.”³¹ (A similar question about the verisimilitude of literature as poetics was posed at the beginning of this essay.)

In discussing the transformations of knowledge (its culture), Foucault indicates its three turning-points. However, the main one is the present mode of human existence which started in the 19th C. when psychology, sociology, and linguistics began to solve problems that empowered one to speak about their scientific knowledge.

In his explanation of the historical stages of Western culture (Foucault characterizes them as changing structures which determine opinions, theories, and even sciences), the author bases himself on the change of the relation between „words“ and „things“ and points out its three forms (“epistemes”): the *Renaissance* (16th C.), *Classicism* (17-18th centuries), and the *modern* form (since the beginning of the 19th C.).

According to Foucault, in the episteme of the *Renaissance*, or humanism, the word and thing are „identical, immediately linked and even interchangeable, they form one *text*. This is a *word – symbol*. It itself can be interpreted like all other phenomena of the same (one) world.

In the *Classical* (rationalistic) stage, the word and thing become separate, their immediate similarity disappears, and it is thinking and imagination that intervene. This is a *word image*. Differences as well as identities of the word and thing are now perceived. Language plays a special role in the explanations of the world: it has an exceptional place and function, it introduces things and analyzes this introduction (thinking about them). All (world) objects are described in *language space* according to system characteristics – form, quantity, size, spatial relations among elements. To explain the universal order of things, science opts for artificial rather than natural signs which are the only instruments in conceiving of and discussing the aforementioned order. A human being is visualized in the image of God, his powers merge with those of the infinite. There arise questions of the borders of rational knowledge (in Immanuel Kant’s gnoseology) which indicate the beginning of a new Western cultural episteme: subjective transcendentalism restricts links among images, and the phenomena unreachable to transcendence – life, work, language – are the prerequisite for the cognition of new objects.

According to Foucault, in the 19th c. the West attempts to perceive Kant’s triangle of knowledge issues “critique – metaphysics – positivism.” It is the axes of the present-day *modern cultural episteme*. Whereas the two earlier epistemes did not require man’s exceptional activity, now, without a man as a biological creature (without life), without things produced by man, as without his language, the interrelation of being and thinking is inconceivable. New objects of research – life, work (biology, political economy, production) and language – are now investigated by new sciences (biology, political economy, and linguistics). Thus, all this complex triad (life, work, and language) is the mediator between the word and the thing. In the newest episteme it is no longer space but *time* which is the main form of being of world objects therefore, the condition of their knowledge is *history*. This is evident in new investigations of language. The focus of attention is theories of flexion rather than the significance of the semantics of names: it is not names as images of the world, but grammatical structures that determine / create language meanings. The word (language) is autonomous and has its own being and history. It opens the world to a human being at the same time that it encloses him within itself. The great problem of cognition, or its main question, is knowledge³² of *oneself* – man’s biological nature, everyday work and everyday language. (The construct (structure) *man* encompasses his own relation to life and language.) In Foucault’s view, language is a system without balance.

Foucault’s analysis of *epistemes* shows that knowledge is determined by a certain power (dominance of institutions); and, on the contrary, knowledge exerts influence on power.³³ Literature and language also play an immanent role in this connection. The presence of literature in epistemes (of knowledge or culture) most likely permeates the cells of power – different “techniques,” among which are language discourses as well as the *scientific* knowledge of man, as Foucault calls it. Every epoch speaks for itself. In his works that followed *Words and Things*, in all three cases Foucault speaks about the style (mode) of existence which is shaped by its three different sides – ideas of knowledge, power, and subjectivization.

As has been noted, there are some other apt examples. In my view, however, most of them (in one or another aspect) would emphasize Foucault’s idea about the change and meaning of the role of language in culture and an ever different (new) attitude to language. Therefore let us return to tendencies of epistemology which are only illustrated by Foucault’s example.

³¹Foucault M. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Translation of *Les Mots et les choses*), New York: Vintage Books, 1973, p. Xxii.

³² Foucault M. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Translation of *Les Mots et les choses*), New York: Vintage Books, 1973, p. 250-302.

³³ Foucault’s more exhaustive description of the relation between power and knowledge can be found in his works *The Order of Discourse, Discipline and Punish*.

To sum up, one can assert that since the Renaissance literature has been drawing closer to the explanation of *man's world*. At the end of the 19th c. all – ethical, ethnic, political and other – values are gradually losing their relation to religion and becoming subject only to literature. Friedrich Nietzsche's challenge to God not only directed Western Europe towards secularism, but also gave life to its reviving literature. Dante, Shakespeare, Adomas Mickevičius, Honoré de Balzac and others gave way, maybe only temporarily, to James Joyce, Marcel Proust, and William Faulkner. Greek and Roman, Judaic, Christian, Northern mythological roots intertwined to nourish the modern literature of both the Old Continent and the New World. New theories had to be developed in order to conceptualize it. It became the problem of all world literature.

It is obvious that 20th C. literary theory is not a "closed and academic esoteric discipline <...>, and critique found itself in a state of shock³⁴ due to the loss of preconceived values and criteria, traditional authorities, transcendental cause (genre, autonomous beauty, authorial meaning and the like)." This shock therapy is efficient, as it seems that every few decades literary theories grow in number. As a matter of fact, it was phenomenological and structural linguistic interpretations (wide and deep) of literary works which became distinct after literature's shocking losses.

Questions of the 20th c. ties between literature and linguistics were developed by Ferdinand de Saussure, Russian formalists (Roman Jakobson, Viktor Shlovsky), semioticians (Jurij Lotman, A.J. Greimas). Analytical philosophy was developed; it became popular, and the object of its analysis was language. Other philosophers' concern with language does not grow weaker either. And it is the present-day linguistic and anthropological theories that make one raise the issue which was understandable to Aristotle that is, ones which reflect on the preconditions of the literary work's presence and only then explain its inner structure and outer conditions. It is no wonder we are strongly advised to supplement the Aristotelian literary aesthetics with a new content (Gérard Dessons),³⁵ or we hear demands to forget it altogether (Jacques Derrida).³⁶

Among these alternatives there remained almost no place for the category of a classical literary work. The latter was replaced by a *probable* - loosely defined - conception of modern / postmodern literature. It has no opposition between object and subject, it is without beginning and end, without co-ordinates of time and space. Today, the philosophical (abstract) literary insight and sensory experiences of a literary work are not (should not be) opposed or radically separated.

Contrary to literary scholars' expectations, literary theory seems unusual: it doubles, trebles... It is multiple. There are many theories which are contradictory, they supplement and transform into one another. In addition, they are simultaneous. Attempts to classify, distinguish between them and join them into "classes" are pretentious, however, they are futile. One can only indicate tendencies of such classification the names of which are relative.

For instance, in the second half of the 20th C. *interpretational*, or *conceptual*, criticism develops and becomes popular. Its variety is rather wide³⁷, as every major 20th C. philosophical trend can (and does) create its concept of the literary work. And there are quite a few of them.

Every philosophical trend first elucidates the epistemological insights which become significant with regard to a literary work's place and role in culture. Philosophy (its direction) influences a further, more specific, interpretation of the aesthetic presence of the literary work. The latter traditionally depends on knowledge of reality and man's self-awareness. However, there appears an alternative in interpreting the work itself as an object of analysis: an integral system / structure of the literary work's significations can be discussed through its relation to the philosophical concept of reality, or it can be explained and perceived in terms of its own (system / structure) relations of significations – ties, oppositions, coincidence, differences, etc.

Thus the philosophical literary concept, as in the case when one grounds oneself on the undefined ("evident") concepts called "axioms," makes criticism set certain aims and devise the appropriate methods. This is not a simple and an easy task. In this case criticism can be compared to a lonely scout who is sent to the rear

³⁴ Jurgutienė A. Įvadas: konceptualioji kritika. *XX amžiaus literatūros teorijos. Konceptualioji kritika*. Vilnius: Literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2010, p. 7-8.

³⁵ See Dessons G. *Poetikos įvadas*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2005.

³⁶ In Derrida's view, truth resides not in speech but in writing, and this changes the imitational conception of art and truth important in literature and aesthetics: "*the history of metaphysics, which has, in spite of all differences, not only from Plato to Hegel (even including Leibniz) but also, beyond these apparent limits, from the pre-Socratics to Heidegger, always assigned the origin of truth in general to the logos: the history of truth, of the truth of truth, <...> has always been the debasement of writing, and its repression outside "full" speech*" (Derrida J. *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997, p. 75-76).

³⁷ See *XX amžiaus literatūros teorijos: vadovėlis aukštųjų mokyklų filologijos specialybės studentams*. Ed. Aušra Jurgutienė, Vilnius: Vilniaus pedagoginio universiteto leidykla, 2006.

of the enemy by military leaders who have just begun a battle. The military leaders would not be able to rescue the scout who was caught in ambush or ensnared in any other way a great distance away. Likewise, philosophers would not be the best advisors to the reader who experiences the effect of a concrete literary work upon his soul. In both cases one should trust his own courage, greater than a fear of world phenomena, and in our case – literature, that he has never experienced.

In addition to this, individual experiences, as a result (gained experience), have to be described; however, a great number of authors feel fear of a white blank sheet of paper.

The author of this essay is not daring either.

I also found it hard to begin discussions that in my mind I call a talk about the aesthetic *presence* and *absence* of a literary work, a certain mental condition for the visual sensing of it, but also one that is beyond my field of vision thus far.

The blankness of a white sheet, the state of beginning which should give rise to the beginning of this talk, and later – to the literary work's being, seems both real and unreal. For example, the poet Gintautas Dabrišius admits he has tried to draw but while looking at a white sheet of design paper, he used to feel as if he had fallen into a pit.³⁸

Even so, neither a diversity of philosophical assumptions nor a fear of the pit of a white sheet, or eager anticipation of intuitive insights, would change anything. Wittgenstein, whom I quoted at the beginning of this essay, provokes – he proposes not to give prominence to what we start with. It seems to me that one should subscribe to this view. Later, when we attempt to find the distinguishing lines between what we call subjectivized structure (which has the center chosen by the subject) and what resists the subject's imposed order, we may find more arguments not to regard the beginning and the end as highly significant fixed points.

The essay, or even a systemic (epistemic, paradigmatic) discussion of questions, can have many beginnings, and they all wait for the author. It is true that we can start drawing a tree from any part of its structure – roots, top, branches, trunk. The drawing, as an analogue of structure, is not the same as the growing of a tree according to certain inner stages of its development.

If we perceive a literary work as our (first of all, readers') experience of ties and convergences of the signification and meaning of the world, text, language, writing and reading, we have to admit the contingent and universal character of every (chosen) beginning. One can start several times. When there is more than one beginning, not any of them can be singled out as the main one. The beginning is multiple: one turns back to what has already happened, sees what has been experienced, the beginning points to what is already here.

Having perceived what is present and what is absent, let us write down as our own the following words and questions, at first glance – remote from a literary theory:

To see and to touch. To sense and to imagine. To understand.

What and how?

Who senses and imagines? Or merely understands?

Why?

The questions complement one another. They create a mental space of literature's "physicality." Being metaphorical, they resemble a (mathematical) equation in which there are many unknown quantities (too). How to find them? Probably as always: to single out each unknown quantity and characterize it by the known ones. But can it be an equation when we discuss an experience rather than knowledge? According to Aristotle's principle of mimesis, it is the aesthetic function of the thing – the act of recognizing the represented thing that is more important than its image. And this is the one that gives pleasure. What is this unknown quantity from knowledge equation? And could such an equation be solved?

The sign nature or function of literature, which has already been mentioned, is very important. Under what conditions is the literary work, as a social phenomenon (a fact, a system of facts), both a *thing* and a *sign*? Or maybe something else? If the thing does not correspond to a physical body, there opens a metaphysical chronotope of events, among them – linguistic. It could also have a (metaphysical) surface which can be conceived of as a logical body, as the surface and depth of words. The works of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, or Felix Guattari both affirm and negate the sign nature of literature, actualize it as a "virtual" reality.

Paradoxically, to *see, touch, feel, imagine, understand* do not require to *know*. Knowledge is gained later due to its nature – to arise from the borders of transcendentality that one does not go to but returns to. This is most daringly advocated by adherents of phenomenological thinking. It will be possible to know later, when you *already* see, touch, sense, imagine, understand something.

What do you get to know in this case?

³⁸ Žmogus – kito dangaus kiaušinis: Poetas Gintautas Dabrišius atsako į Romo Daugirdo klausimus. *Metai*, 2013, nr. 3, p. 102.

It is not easy to answer. Aristotle's idea of poetry as being more "philosophical" than history because it "reveals general laws whereas history shows³⁹ isolated events," should not be understood as merely epistemological. It is not simple to keep an appropriate distance from the general questions of literature which is called knowledge, or transform them into the perception of presences of literature characteristic to it:

What is needed is not a "question and answer" but something more. Namely, if we want to discuss about the borders of *art*, first we have to clarify how we should understand what *art* is, and only then we could discuss its *borders* (frontiers). We have to start the analysis of the problem not with the question about *what* are the borders of art but with the question about *how to explain* the borders of art.⁴⁰

At the beginning of a discussion about a literary work, no one is confident that he knows what the *literary work* is. He does not know whether it really is. The literary work does not resemble natural phenomena, for example rain, a rainbow, a tree. It is unlike things produced by ourselves, for example an axe, a chair, a computer. It is different from our spiritual phenomena – dreams or other images, daydreams, thoughts, theories. One can only believe that since Homer's times we have been reading literature and know what it is that we call a literary work. Or maybe we are mistaken? Maybe we do not know it but still call it a literary work? It has already been observed that some social cultural phenomena are dissociated, "hidden" from consciousness. Events are never only (a literary work's) body, merely a "firm" structure but something different, something that emerges in a meeting between the work and the reader. Thus, from the blankness of a sheet of paper there emerge quite obscure things so far. It is not the first time I receive this impression. I have written about similar questions of the *beginning* in the book *Estetinė literatūros gyvybė (The Aesthetic Vitality of Literature: The Axiological Spectrum of Contemporary Lithuanian Prose)*.⁴¹ However, I would not urge one to leaf through it, as the reader himself chooses what he should read first and what book not to open at all.

To my mind, imagination⁴² already *sees* ties between the mentioned and unmentioned questions. It finds it easy. The role of imagination in thinking was discussed already by Epicurus and Aristotle. Imagination was important to René Descartes who searched for the origins of intellectual intuition, as well as to Immanuel Kant who attempted to systematize discussions of knowledge and beauty. In structuralism it helps create units of semiotic organization and form their logical ties. Further in the essay imagination will be more thoroughly discussed, and now let us remember that the initial sensory perception essential for literature is not its sole or all its content.

Wouldn't it be easier to *reflect upon* the posed questions, wouldn't they become clearer if I narrowed them down, and added that in asking them I intended to speak about the sensing of a poem, novella, novel, or drama – about seeing, hearing, imagining? There would probably arise new questions. Sensory perception is an encounter with things that are detected by our senses, and the literary work, as has been mentioned, belongs to the world of language, which is not material in a usual sense.

It is only phonemes and graphemes.

Are they equivalent? Or do they only point to each other? Can we view them as structures of significations (according to semioticians, sememes) that are generated or as references (of lexemes) to things of the reality? In structuralist analysis, the representatives (supplements) can be usually replaced by other representatives. Barthes stressed that the function of literature is to "make the reader the producer of a literary work" and observed the following:

Our evaluation can be linked only to a practice, and this practice is that of writing. On the one hand, there is what it is possible to write, and on the other, what it is no longer possible to write: what is within the practice of the writer and what has left it; what texts would I consent to write (to re-write – *ré-écrire*), to desire, to put

³⁹ Aristotelis. *Poetika*, op. cit., p. 289.

⁴⁰ Katalynas A. Meno ribų problema. *Athena*, 2006, nr. 1, p. 181.

⁴¹ Martinkus V. *Estetinė literatūros gyvybė: aksiologinis šiuolaikinės lietuvių prozos spektras*. Vilnius: Vilniaus pedagoginio universiteto leidykla, 2010.

⁴² The traditional conception of imagination was narrower and more rigid, *see.*: "Imagination is the faculty of the mind to recreate the image of a sensory object even when the object is not directly present to the senses (e.g. when we remember something) as well as form new images" (Holder A. *Filosofijos žodynas*. Vilnius: Alma litera, 2002, p.225). Aristotle explained imagination as the "ability to form images. "It is not identical with other abilities or states of mind (sensory perception, assumption, knowing and thinking) which "allow us to decide, assert the truth, or to err. "To sum up, according to the philosopher, it is a "movement engendered by actual sensing" (Aristotelis. *Apie sielą. Rinkiniai raštai*, p. 385-388).

forth as a force in this world of mine? What evaluation finds is precisely this value: what can be written (re-written – *ré-écrit*) today: the *writerly* (*le scriptable*).⁴³

For all that, the sounding of words (phonetics) has retained some of the initial experience of the world; however, we can expect much less of it from writing. Unlike pictographic signs in a hieroglyphic culture, our writing does not have etymological prototypes. Visualness of literature is undoubtedly related to more complex forms of image, imagination and modes of its experience, and it is not easy to think and write about them. The phenomenological view of literature is complex – it doubles, trebles, and depends on the *one* who sees.

If the *eye* is also viewed as thinking, reason, soul, a human being etc., seeing can be perceived as a primary and lasting experience of all that there is. Maurice Merleau Ponty who analyzed a *glance* as a phenomenon of double sensation, claims that seeing is “touching with a glance,” and the aroused thinking intensifies the “inner glance.”⁴⁴

Thus both oral and written forms of the literary work make it possible to hear or see with the senses, the significance of which was discussed already by Plato and Aristotle. Again, or in a somewhat different way, there emerges the image of its *materiality*. Not all kinds of art are being affected by metaphysical, that is, thing-less, centers. The literary work can be partly compared to a painting, to any other world phenomenon whose sensorial nature does not raise any doubts, and its abstract thematic content emerges next to it and through it. A literary work can be seen, heard, in some cases even touched, it can be a different *trace* not only on paper or ox hide, but elsewhere – in a tree, clay, lead slab, on the computer or some other screen. A literary work is written down, it is the script of the work’s text which every reader decodes in his own way. The act of writing down is complex, and the difference between ideography and the trace of letters in literature should be noted. The alphabetic writing is signs of signs, as it contains sounds which are also signs.

What is written down? It could be a literary work’s *contemplated* being which we discuss in this essay. It was also Friedrich Nietzsche who thought that writing is not originally linked with “being” which makes the being of the words possible.

Here one should bear in mind one more premise of the questions under discussion: everything that of old was called the peculiarity of literature is not the primary material entity. As a thing – a book or any other copyholder, it belongs to culture – artefacts. For example, how do *parallelism*, *repetition*, *rhythm*, *a poetical function* and other poetic principles, which were pointed out by Russian formalists, operate in a literary work? They are most likely singled out or noticed not only by seeing and hearing. Only in the complex structure of consciousness the *word* can be experienced “as the word” and not as a simple naming of the thing; it is only in imagination, which generates significations of “poetical discourse,” that the literary value of words and syntax is possible. A poetic value, literariness, artistry, aestheticism and differently defined peculiarities of literary works are characterized only in the act of speaking or thinking, that is, in the participation of consciousness. Their speechless experience comes with intuition, feeling, instinct. It is no wonder that literary theories and criticism pay heed to the psychology of the literary work’s perception and the psychology of literary creation which is broadly interpreted.

When we start speaking about mental experience - gained by thinking - in the process of speaking (telling) or writing down, we lose touch with a concrete (material) reality, withdraw from its individual forms towards universality and find ourselves in complex structures of significations created by a domineering consciousness. It is no wonder that in the newest linguistic considerations both the integral image of *thing – word – writing* and their arbitrary links with reality, are becoming stronger. True, the latter is also more often interpretational, symbolic, it bears little resemblance to its forms – things or metaphysical being (ideas) - described in traditional philosophy, and language, with an ever growing force, pervades all spheres of intense human activity (creation).

For this reason, all the questions posed in this essay begin to sound differently. Convergences of being and man’s being become the axis of literary discussions, that is, the asking of questions and the possibility of answers. According to Foucault, one can ask, as Nietzsche did: “Who is speaking?,” and the answer, as Stephan Mallarmé⁴⁵ observed, can be heard (seen) in the very word. It is a matter of fact that linguistic analysis constructs its objects of investigation as structures, but do human sciences and mathematics deal with the same structures? How are empirical language components and finite / open human experience related?

In the case of the thematics of our essay, a question arises: what – linguistic, psychoanalytic, ethnological, or perhaps anthropological conception of the sensing of a literary work is / will be kept in mind? Will we narrow it to the congruence of culture and literary semiotics? Will we search for the general aesthetic

⁴³ Barthes R. *S/Z*, translated by Richard Miller, Blackwell Publishing, 1974, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Merleau-Ponty. *Akis ir dvasia*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2005, p. 64-76.

⁴⁵ Foucault M., *The Order of Things*, p. 382.

presence of the literary work and that of all artefacts? Will we differentiate fiction from kinds of literature akin to it? Will links between psychology, sociology, economics as well as other sciences and the literary work be acceptable to us in place of literary aesthetics? What will be the place of language and the human being in literature?

Language is important to literature not only as its material or instrument; it determines the author's and the reader's directions of gaze, governs forms of states of writing and reading, raises questions of the place and role of literature in man's communication with other people and in his knowledge of the world.

Literature does not only gain a lot *from* language and *through* language, it itself returns to language.

The semantic content of literature does not usually raise any doubts. Arguments arise only with regard to its form and meaning: a literary work can give (foster, stimulate etc.) aesthetic experience (pleasure, admiration, joy etc.). In addition, it can teach one to think, feel, become more honorable, raise existential and other questions of life. Therefore it belongs not only to literature but also to the field of knowledge (science), faith, politics or ideology as well as to language as communication.

Communication as well as sensory references do not allow the work of literature to close within itself, it brings it to the world and life again. According to Greimas, the "sphere of beauty" in the objects created by artists "forces its way into the world which becomes a place of aesthetic encounters and events."⁴⁶

The individual experience of a literary work is based not so much (not only) on theories as on a visualized, cognitively imperceptible state – a confluence of language, senses, values, faith, hope, and many other components of this state.

What is its *manifestation*? We all have our own examples. They should be closely observed and at least some of them should be included into the general – philosophical explanation or understanding of experiences.

Maironis. "The Heart and Reason"

Shouldn't the essay have started with an example? All the more so that it was at hand, waiting on the work desk.

A literary work (selected by ourselves or the one which finds or chooses us) does not reveal its aesthetic value all at once. The reader resists until he finds it interesting and aesthetically valuable. The literary work and the reader's meeting is like that of scouts: the possibility of a deeper relationship is being explored. And only when the reader accepts this possibility, the literary work's internal structure (the manifestation of its various significations) begins to function. This possibility is opened up to the reader through the phenomenological – existing on the surface and called an appearance – manifestations of the literary work.

Therefore, without considering the theories that seem insufficient and not well known to us yet, let us revert to the beginning – of both the essay and its main motif – the aesthetic presence and the sensing of it.

Let it be as always – *in the beginning is the word (of literature)*. Heard and perceived individually and experienced differently by me (us).

It might be somewhat unusual when the search for the beginning of the essay continues almost until the middle of the text. This is not the way it is, however. I do not think that Wittgenstein would contend that his *Logico-Philosophical Treatise* starts in the middle – with the fourth proposition ("The thought is a proposition with a sense"). There is also the first proposition of the treatise ("The world is everything that is the case"). They are not that simply interchangeable.

Let the poem be an example of the *word*. (To fulfill the objectives of this essay, the novella, play, essay, or even the novel would also be relevant; of course, their longer texts may broaden the discussions). Moreover, there will be a clear priority of the poem's form; perception or reception are secondary, as they cannot be based on the assumption that "in the beginning there was *nothing*."

Let there also be a chance occurrence, when lists of authors / literary works have neither beginning nor end.

These lines were written in the year of Maironis's anniversary. The entire year I kept his collection of poems *Pavasario balsai (Voices of Spring)* at hand on my work desk. Sometimes I reread the poem *Evening*, without any analytical considerations, but now, for the purpose of the questions posed in this essay, I open the poem "The Heart and Reason," a romantic confrontation between the poet's dreams and reality, feeling and reason. Does anyone still take an interest in this? I hope so. The reason is that a while ago I was reminded of this poem by both an actor in a public literary evening and the performer of the song based on the lines of this poem by Maironis.⁴⁷ Its title reminds one of a handbook of empathy, and its text's attraction seemed to me hedonistic

⁴⁶ Greimas A. J. *Apie netobulumą*, p. 204.

⁴⁷ In a song contest "Boldly and high voices will rise," held in commemoration of Maironis's 150 year birth anniversary, it was performed by Gabrielė Griciūtė and others. The music was written by Tautrimas Rupulevičius-Onsa.

– the glowing faces of both the actor and the singer were radiating the sheer bliss of their *bodies* – their performance was accompanied by the sense of pleasure of the words and melody of the song. The poem merged with sounds of another world of music and there appeared more traces of it outside itself.

Thus let this poem assist us in starting to concretize rather than conceptualize discussions on the reading of the *literary work* as its *sensing*. Since the poem was read earlier, a question will arise about how the previous experiences (not only the aesthetic experience) blend with its text that is being read *now*. We will not evade them as traces of the experiences of consciousness, and we should not even try; on the contrary – we should combine them with all that we experience *now*. The relation between the poem's lyrical subject and its reader, as their state of being, will have to be defined anew. As always, there can also be questions concerning the mentioned or unmentioned aesthetic principles and literary (*poetical*) theories.

Their traces in consciousness are probable; however, having apologized to the theorists with whom we have agreed upon the poetics of an *open literary work*,⁴⁸ let us forget their insights and disputes. These traces are *referential*, they are linguistic signs (in essence, their only one side – signifiers), the function of which is to narrate the story, to communicate something, to inform. It is probable that something else exists – the poem as an object, the poem as a *body*, the poem as the exterior of its inner world. It was the actor and the singer who made me feel it, when the *familiar unfamiliar* poem intrigued me with all the words of (Lithuanian) language written and spoken through the poem, with its all ethnic, genetic, and structural – arbitrary – relations.

Let us open *Voices of Spring* and read it together. The way we can, have learnt or are used to. Reading is always democratic - at least in the beginning everyone can read as well as search (wait) for aesthesis (catharsis, epiphany, ecstasy etc.).

The Heart and Reason

*So many times my experienced reason
Advised me to silence the heart,
And it relishes self-delusion,
As it arcs for eternal love.*

*But the blossoming of love
Is so brief and deceptive!
Jealousy wreathed in briar roses follows it,
And the bells ring about mourning,*

*And on its withered leaf
The fallen dew of tear
Will not revive the grave that's cold
By miracles that are.*

*It won't revive what once died away,
Offended by the morning frost?
Relations having broken off,
Won't be renewed anon?..*

*Pain and anguish are what remain
The wound that won't heal up
The broken heart complains
With a prayer of blood-stained heart!..*

*My little heart, that's been tempted
And cried not once,
Just hear the word of common sense at last
And listen to its advice?*

(translated by Daina Miniotaitė)

Thus Maironis's poem is *accidental* (both to me, the author of this essay, and its reader). It is also accidental with regard to Maironis, as it may not have been written at all.⁴⁹ The first publication was in the fifth

⁴⁸ Umberto Eco's concept, *open literary work*, will be elaborated upon further in the essay.

⁴⁹ I was not concerned about the circumstances of the poem's birth (composition). Yet one should agree with those who might say that the poet was free, that is, free not to write it at all. The poem may not have been

“Voices of Spring” of 1920. It is one of 32 new works of the author. It is not the author’s most appreciated or best known poem; however, I think it may have been read / heard not for the first time, but only *revised, remembered, expected* by many readers of this essay. They may know, as I do, that in Vanda Zaborskaitė’s opinion, “The Heart and Reason” is part of a triptych which includes two more poems (“Nutrūko – nesumegsi” and “Paskutinis akordas”), where there is an emotional “reaction to one thing: broken love the reason for which was the beloved’s unfaithfulness.”⁵⁰

It is highly probable that the reader of “The Heart and Reason” has also read / heard one or two poems / songs by Maironis. Thus the reader as well as the author of this essay can compare or complement the experience of readings: perhaps they are not the poet’s most remarkable verses, however, being melodic and elegiac, they reflect Maironis’s spirit. Its importance will come to light at the end of the section.

The experience of re-reading for comparative purposes differs from the one which is gained after it is read or heard for the first time. In all cases this experience is generalized in a similar way: “Nice” / “Appealing” / “Exciting” / “Delightful.” Or the antonyms of these evaluative words are uttered. As if we have touched the skin of the poem’s body and felt its warmth or coldness.

We can recall here Barthes’s phrase (its “non-adjectival evaluation” used in explaining the phenomenon of the *pleasure of the text*): *that’s it for me!*⁵¹

Personally, I might choose the word *exciting* which has retained a shade of valuation.

How could I (we) comment on this word as an *expression* of the poem’s valuation?

Does it convey the total and instantaneous sensing of the literary work?

It is credible. The poem has been read from beginning to end. It is unlikely, however, that the structures of its significations and meaning are somewhat clarified – decoded and re-encoded, if they should be re-encoded. However, the verbal expression itself is short, and with its arbitrary or valuational content it is complete, as it conforms to the same complete, indivisible artefact – the poem.

Undoubtedly, we could easily specify the valuational statement: “To my eyes, it is a remarkable poem” / “It appeals to me” / “It seems that the poem is deep in my heart” / “I appreciate it, I can’t help being moved by it” etc. In other words, we trust our taste, its integral power to respond and act in describing orders and disorders of the world (things, objects) that we find relevant one way or another. While uttering it, we are not bothered by the fact that to some extent we all have taken part in the creation of this order / disorder.

Having called to mind what Immanuel Kant wrote about *judgments of taste* in his *Critique of Judgment* (1790), such specification would be sensible – it would bring to mind and correspond to *disinterested interest* in the intentional approaches of the perception of a literary work. We would not trust concepts that are not easily “coined” more than they can be supportive. It would deepen the relationship between the reader and the poet. The “harmonious play” of imagination and intellect (Kant) would be receptive and active – creative. An attempt would be made to cross the borderline (that enters his consciousness) between a person – reader and a thing – poem. The uttered / written words have significations which are *indivisible*, like the poem, its authorial form or the already mentioned *sense*. This indivisible world of significations in the poem “The Heart and Reason” – the semantic multiplicity of our utterance – is supplemented by other of Maironis’s poems (not necessarily only those that we have read) as well as by works of other poets.

Let us try to ask both the *heart* and *reason*. Both symbols have been following us since the epoch of Romanticism and are the first to let us know that we are not in a surgeon’s or psychiatrist’s consulting room but in the relative *home of the language of poetry*.

We have the usual “aesthetic situation” *poet – poem – reader*. The utterance “excites” requires a wide-ranging and an in-depth discussion; however, it is not necessary to start it now. The poem’s “rationalization” can heighten and undermine the first aesthetic impression of reading – the reader’s encounter with the poem. However, the axiom which can be traced back to the time of Aristotle’s *Poetics* claims that this impression can also be described.

Thinking always has its own methods to “hunt” for significations. Most likely the poem could become the object of systemic analysis. “Exciting” are its parts: “The Heart and Reason” presents complex systems of significations and images which can become separate or draw closer to one another, gain affinity. Let us suppose that we could “construct” their meanings as a psychological theme characteristic of all of Maironis’s

written down, as well as nobody made me experience it, - I was free not to open it. According to Steiner, “the experiencing of created form is a meeting between freedoms” (Steiner, *Real Presences*, p. 152).

⁵⁰ Zaborskaitė V. *Maironis*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1968, p. 423.

⁵¹ Barthes lays emphasis on the nonvaluational content of this phrase: “If I agree to judge a text according to pleasure, I cannot go on to say: this one is good, that bad. <...> This “for me” is neither subjective nor existential, but Nietzschean (...basically, it is always the same question: What is it *for me?*). Barthes R. *The Pleasure of the Text*, p. 13.

poetry – feelings and their rational perception never overlap. Or as the interweaving of poetic images: the space of two traditional images – heart and reason. Or as an emotional, highly individual, related neither to historical Lithuania nor to a wider cultural experience, contradictory and yet the deep and sincere feeling of the literary subject. Or as a linguistic sign of transcendental reality: from eternity to momentariness, when the present action joins the past and the future, as the growing, blossoming, and dying of the “tree of the heart.”

Thus there are different variants of “systemic” seeing / thinking about the poem. All are subjective, and in this case, they are fruits of my mind. All of us together can change them, choose other ones, agree on them. No matter how we view the strategy and tactics of the possible analysis / interpretation, it is only relatively complex, for it is feasible as an endless decomposition of the object into its simpler parts – elements. In the meantime let us not ask ourselves where the object’s decomposition “leads.” Let us adhere to the phenomenological approach to the literary work’s being – everything that it contains is only what there is in it, though, as it has already been mentioned, it has various external traces. For instance, the rare book of Maironis’s “Selected Works” that accompanied me from my childhood (there should be 131 poems without the covers, the last four are missing, a torn out page with the beginning of the poem “Kai kam” (“To Someone”), -- the 1930 publication of *Voices of Spring*), the tumult of the anniversary in 2012, conferences, literary evenings, old and new songs based on the poet’s words, etc.

On the yellowish paper of the book the eyes see six stanzas of quatrains, which could be felt only with the help of structuralist devices – split not only into the *heart* and *reason* opposition, but further decomposed into binaries in order to perceive the inner contradiction and ways of its mediation. The first stanza – a classical explication of the heart and reason opposition, the last one is the end returning to the beginning, a mythical circle of mediation. It embraces the contrasts characteristic of a literary work, the culmination and resolution of their development. It is deep, though unseen, structures of significations whose perception and clarification require methods other than structuralist. Structuralism, like all neopositivism, explains events as physical objects combined into structures, a certain processuality. A state or an event by which I defined aesthesis is traditionally perceived as having a metaphysical (linguistic, logical, spiritual) nature and purpose. Moreover, as has been mentioned, it aspires to the “eternal present.”

In the meantime let us “bracket” the latter interpretation and consider only the state called a process. The depth of the poem, the sensing and experience of it as well as other forms of its aesthetic perception do not allow one to discuss many things without a certain sequence. The interaction between the aesthetic object and the subject can be described in its parts, observing or choosing its new aspects, and each of them can also be decomposed into its own elements. The whole of their interrelations is becoming wider and deeper due to the possible ways of its explanation – theories as methods or methodologies.

When the reader of the poem is not aware of them and does not consciously choose modes of theoretical thinking, the theoretical constructs of a poetic work still remain in the system “man – language.” What Aristotle knew / perceived when he noted down his own experience of reading poetry / literature and what we can (still) ask Umberto Eco, Viktorija Daujotytė, or Jūratė Sprindytė, functions as the general rule of the sensing of literature. So what would the following question mean: could we term the impression of reading experience more thoroughly (not merely “liked / disliked”) without the theory of poetry? What is its sensual, sensory, conceptual, and perceptual shape? What do we perceive? What primary (and fundamental) significations does it leave in one’s consciousness? What is the origination of the meaning of the poem’s aesthetic impression (to *me*)? How does the poem ground itself?

Let us suppose the answer to the first question is the assertion that we will “do without theories,” as we always have traces of them. It is obvious that individual thinking can “rationalize” individual states of mind no matter whether the perception of a phenomenon is known to others and whether it is the right one etc. In this case, the aesthetic sensing transforms itself into the significations (often practical) of emotional experience. To give answers to the other questions, briefly and without theoretical premises, is not simple and virtually impossible. They do contain intonations of theoretical thinking. All the world of language is the “knot” of significations of these questions.

“Feeling” it as a “thing,” which I have created myself, I would try to write a few sentences. But only after having narrowed the content of all the questions, laying emphasis only on the state of the *poem* and the *self* in the act of reading and using the words which are not only everyday words, but also have defined places in systems of aesthetic concepts.

The poem’s title words *heart* and *reason* have their own connotations and are emphatically suggestive. These key words are not clearly defined, as on account of their place and function to be not only *parts of the poem*, but also a shifting *sign of the poem’s symbolical trace* on a linguistic level, they are dissociated from their material signified – a man’s body, physiology, and everything that is ontological. In all the stanzas these two words are antonymous because of their symbolical meanings, and, like magnetic poles, they attract the words related to them. They are words-images whose content / meanings cannot be well worked out in advance.

Images of “heart” and “reason” read aloud or to oneself are somewhat auto reflexive: they allow me (the reader) to develop them and create figurative meanings. Their synonyms and antonyms, the history of Lithuanian language and literature, or even all our culture enforce their independent transformations.

The semantic tension of the words both differentiates and connects them.

Through these words-images the reader’s deeper, existential experiences merge with the experience of the *Other* and the whole *world*. They are “programmed” by the poem’s time and space: past (*advised, died away*), present (*arcs for love, blossoms, follows, ring, remain, complains*), future (*will not revive, won’t be renewed*), the imperative mood (*hear, listen*), infinitives (*to silence, to love*) converge in the inner space of “heart” and “reason” and transcend it becoming metaphors of things of the world (*blossom, brier roses, bells, leaf, dew, grave, frost, wound*), and their multiplied significations return to inner experiences (*experience, self-deception, love, jealousy, mourning, miracle, relations, pain, anguish, common sense*) again, where they become the existential impulses of convergence. We do not speak not about the lyrical subject’s feelings (that he *loves, longs for, feels anguish, hopes* etc.) but about more universal (*supersensory* and *pre-sensory*) planes of the state. Feelings are absent from them, as the supersensory elements of the sensing of a literary work and their co-existence are formed.

Let us observe this meeting only as a state, that is, the poem and the reader’s being together. Being separate, they are connected. The poem itself is not the “reader,” though, according to some analysts, it “sees” him. The reader is not the poem, though he is reading it. One feels only what allows itself to be felt and gives only what is being taken. To settle contradictions between *heart* and *reason*, to obliterate the difference between *heart* and *reason*, to equate them – such is the effectualness of the state.

What could I say (what can be said) about this state in the beginning? I imagine the reader and the poem’s co-existence in the following way:

The picture is being painted with my mind, as a *soul*, – the heart telling things that it finds sweet, life springing from its unreasonable speech, love whose triumph is short-lived, a hope that cannot cheat death, the non-existent heart that still aches. It is a feeling which arises and is becoming deeper and more intense. A state of anticipation, when a way of feeling is the most important, though not its sole dimension.

Being together with the poem is a state of anticipation. An experience – a flow of concrete time in one’s consciousness. Word by word, line by line, verse by verse, image by image, metaphor by metaphor, anticipation is growing. Most significant for this state are *text* and the *Self*. It has many sources of ways of feeling (from the poem’s text) and the same multiple feeling (of my soul). The form of the state – the word as an *ante*-word and as a *supra*-word, a very thin line of the signification of every verse, every line and every word.

It is not only thin but also discontinuous, shifting in one’s consciousness. Intentional words are newly created words. A return to the old ones. Their change. There is a mountain of possible (implied) significations of this word, a wide semantic world of man’s action and feeling between the word *heart* first mentioned in the first line of the poem to the *little heart* in the last verse. Or maybe it is no longer a word. The hackneyed image of *heart*, as the *Self*, at the beginning of the poem was becoming more and more broad and complex and transformed itself into an all-embracing feeling of eternal love, illusory happiness, pain, anguish, death, mourning, and hopeful revival, whereas “experienced reason” was growing weaker, faded into insignificance, like everything that is dissociated from feeling, everything that is only pure reasoning. Indifferent to the voice of reason, the heart like a metaphysical path was running farther and farther to the deep experiences of the soul, to my vision of the words being read. Then *something different* appears. The sound of the words is pleasant: their disappearing signification, their growing meaning and, at the same time, a soporific iambus, woven out of clichéd, sentimental words that conveys nothing. Constantly returning to the “heart” and “reason,” I can relish in my imagination the new (to me) significations of these two images. There are pauses between them (reason, silence, death, emptiness), and it is semantic oppositions (heart, life, eternity) that help to wait out and skip the pauses as well as everything that remains on the other side of semantic co-existences: all decomposition and combination of significations, a resonance of the superficial and deep being of things and myself.

It is certainly possible to provide a more comprehensive improvised description of the poem’s visual semantic state. I am (we are) *on this side* of the great events, fortuities, revelations. Identification, reference, coherence. At first – the transformation of physical contact and its sensual significations into the language of the words’ symbols, the aesthetic signs of the words. Being limited in time, it continues in the spiritual world of imagination, thoughts, man’s language. In imagination. Visualization shakes off thinking. It seems that I did not remember a single 20th c. literary theory nor formulated their expectations or checked the results. And still, a discerning reader will perceive and probably remember them. The words *text, intentional, iambus*, and suchlike are not from everyday language. Emphatic suggestion has different origins, and among them are speculative

ones. Being able to term the aspects of experience, reinforcing the *here* and *now* experience with my own, even if imperfect words, I feel the joy of the present and anticipate novelty.

A further development of the poem's signification / meaning seems to be possible only when there is a gradual increase in the traces of traditional and new theories of the *aesthetic situation*. Emphatic suggestion can become more effective when I recall, for instance, the philosophical concept of intentional aesthetic being. I can base myself on the method of understanding and explaining the poem's text proposed by hermeneutics: to move on to existential aporia after a structural analysis, from the text's signification / meaning to its references, from "what it says to what it speaks about", to carry out a deeper analysis in order to deepen our understanding, as "language says something *about* something."⁵² I can choose, however, thinking "without philosophical premises", that is, to "bracket" all known theories and rely only on directly perceived forms of reality.

It is probable that the poem's form and a concrete manner of re-reading it will connect *heart* and *reason* - those rather boring and rigid symbols -- with something, put them apart from something, will raise us upwards or push downwards. The poem's form may strike us as *strange*, according to Viktor Šklovskij, everything that is felt will surprise us by everything that we haven't experienced before. Something will happen in literary imagination.

Let us trace *my own* experience of reading the poem "The Heart and Reason", a way of thinking about the state "poem – the Self." Is the feeling of catharsis, ecstasy, or any other special aesthetic appeal (delight) expected and is it probable?

It has already been stated that the very title "multiplies" reality. I see neither a living "heart" nor "reason." Lexical references to *reality* alone do not attract or give a sense to other words. What is a human heart as part of a living organism? The answers are first of all offered by anatomists, but are they relevant? What makes the heart more important than the eyes, ears, or the face? I do not suppose that Maironis had ever seen or let alone touched a man's living heart. It is hardly so. Modern-day heart surgery came into being long after the poet's death. To explain reason as an activity of the brain in terms of psycho-neurology, is not relevant either. So *what* do I see, *what* do I hear?

The poetics of "The Heart and Reason" encompasses all human nature. It has considerable depth, though there is not much tragic openness to the entire Universe, characteristic of Foucault's episteme. The Universe is closer to God who is one. Today, there is a more drastic reappearance of many-sided pantheistic mythical forms of pre-Christian gods. However, I am free to allow them to enter the poem: I can rearrange it in my own way, search for forms of cosmic harmony and chaos, pantheism, and spirituality, or let them unfold in the poem.

Reason can be quite easily replaced by other words: intellect, wisdom, sense, brains, thinking... The *heart* is a special word, it has almost no synonyms, and it is only through the spirit and the soul that its other significations, relevant to it or distant, reveal themselves. The importance of the *soul* lies in the fact that since time immemorial in Western culture a *living heart* has been a symbol of life, sensitivity, spirituality.

The image of the soul and its abode. The *self* of a thinking and feeling human being.

As always, the *Self* and the *Other* are related here. To describe my deepest experience of my *Self*, I would avoid my own words, almost all of them are in the poem: a silent aching heart – "*the broken heart complains*"; however, the poem's heart is beating like on "*its withered leave [love] / The fallen dew of tear.*"

The high figure of the poetic image: reason will never explain what this "*dew of tear*" means to the heart, however, the heart probably does not need this.

My *Self* can only feel, apprehend, sense that both the "dew of tear" and what you feel are on its other side, exist as an exceptional reality of the literary work. It is probable that here, according to Algirdas Julius Greimas, we experience a natural relation with the world, and in today's (even poetic) everyday life – a *break* or *escape* which the semiotician called "the only *esth sis* of flashing loss of sight that would not make one close his eyes."⁵³

Shall we analyze and interpret Greimas's *esth sis* and how? How can the mind comprehend what cannot be comprehended or what it conceals from itself? And who has proved that it is necessary to analyze, interpret, comprehend? It might be that the most sensible thing to do is to halt. It might be reasonable to agree that a collection of the poem's semantic significations or a hunt for them is important but not necessary when its reading is the state of the *poem* [and] the *Self*. Greimas does not say anything in essence about "loss of sight," "flash," "break," a transition to a "new state of things": it is possible to reflect on the "natural" *language* of this state only through its mediums, and the "natural" language is one of them. The *dew of tear* is not only a metaphor. It is not only a path of new significations. It is, at least to me, the aesthetic and ethical code of the poem's meaning. It stands to reason that it can also be different – lifelike in every possible way. The place of the

⁵² Ricoeur P. Mitas: filosofin  interpretacija. *Mitologija šiandien* (antologija). Vilnius: Baltos lankos, p. 222.

⁵³ Greimas A.J. Apie netobulumą. *Iš arti ir iš toli*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1991, p. 222.

transformation of significations, which alone has remained to me, and which is most clearly seen with the eyes of the soul. It overshadows the rest of its text. Otherwise it would not be the most distinct.

Incidentally, I see it as the most transparent place of the poem.

Here the *poem* and the *Self* continue as *their* state. I believe that the critic, the interpreter of the poem has nothing to do here. Their voices die away where the waiting for aesthesis belongs only to the *two* of them. The movement, the linkup of significations as important insights...

Does it happen? Do we really stand in front of each other and do not move? Did my *Self* merge with the *world*? It does not seem (at least to me) that a state is both total and instantaneous. (I have already pointed out such expectations). A state is not a circle. It is a *straight line* (that Descartes calls a blind man's walking stick), or a *labyrinth* (Deleuze).

While we are considering this, we hardly feel it all at once. The heart and reason, feelings and thinking, memory and imagination – everything is at one and the same time and everywhere, here and now, everywhere and always. This is a synthetic, and not analytical, occurrence of the state of the *poem* and the *Self*, a lightning ball which melts a blind man's walking stick, or leaves only the cracked outer walls of a labyrinth.

Lightning is a metaphor for waiting for *something*. I have to disappoint the reader and confess that unfortunately, I can say nothing about a *flash* yet (enlightenment, revelation etc.) while reading “The Heart and Reason.” *Something* did happen, however, I do not dare to use this word to describe what I experienced and wrote down. It seems I went all the way necessary to reach it. However, the anticipated flash remained only a phantasm, a fancied play of experience. The power of the creative act that transforms the text was not adequate for a *flash*. Waiting for aesthesis, as a *state of the poem and the Self*, has been only formulated, but it still remained anticipation, a wish, a desire – a moment of the state that has not come true – the *eternal present* which cannot be repeated because it has not happened and does not happen as an experience of signs or a referential experience (that points to the reality of an occurrence).

According to Greimas, *esthesis* lasts (can last) no longer than a flash.⁵⁴ It seems that in essence, the literary semiotician himself did not agree that a flash only “dazzles.” However, in his essay “Apie netobulumą” (“On Imperfection”), he did not throw light on its real content. The conjunction of “subject” and “object” is anticipation which disappears. However, one can probably anticipate it even when the conjunction does not happen. And what remains when the reader does not experience aesthesis? When *esthesis* does not occur, it is only “darkness”, “pause”, “appearance” (the opposite of being), “parapraxis of rhythm,” etc. that are left. Or lack of perfection and a desire for it.

I believe that in both cases anticipation ceases and turns into a certain difference between subject and object (and not necessarily only between them) rather than their imaginary identity (which is not always achieved). According to Gilles Deleuze, every difference appears through a *repetition* which is a peculiar and an impersonal occurrence:

If repetition exists, it expresses at once a singularity (*une singularité*) opposed to the general (*le général*), a universality opposed to the particular (*le particulier*), a distinctiveness opposed to the ordinary, an instantaneity opposed to variation, and an eternity opposed to the impermanence. In every respect, repetition is a transgression. It puts law into question, it denounces its nominal or general character in favor of a more profound and more artistic reality.⁵⁵

Thus repetition is aesthesis which has been “ceased,” a section of its inner formation.

It seems that my aesthesis does not obey the “law” of aesthetic perception – that order which allows to replace separate phenomena (the experience of the poem “The Heart and Reason”) by the readings of other poems, no matter how similar in form and content they might be.

In the case of my reading Maironis's poem, my aesthesis seems to be the reality of my (unique, “singular”) experience which has ceased, a *section* of its structural order and heterogeneous experiences. And later – a *flash* that did not happen in anticipation of a new repetition and refusing to admit that the event of the literary work has not happened, admitting only some differences. *Différance*, if you want.

It is essential. Even if the highest intensity of experience was not reached, there was a play of imagination. We do not often embrace a boundless poem with *one* glance and become *completely* identical with it, even if we admit that there is no other way to its aesthetic presence. The feeling of the *whole (beautiful) life* or *whole (happy) death* (Greimas) as the *dew of tear*, can be only probable. The meeting between language

⁵⁴ Greimas A.J. *Apie netobulumą*, p. 222.

⁵⁵ Deleuze G. *Difference et repetition*. Presses Universitaires de France, 1968, p. 3. Quoted from the translation: Žukauskaitė A. *Gilles'io Deleuze'o ir Felixo Guattari filosofija: daugialypumo logika*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 2011, p. 36.

“subjects” (“poem” vs “reader”) as a total and momentary sensing, can be (at least temporarily) deferred. Being affected by cultural epistemes, we are inclined to see things from a different angle, to read and hear them anew. To allow the *Self* to become deeper. To develop the first impression, go back to every word, every line, every image or their totality.

Once we start interpreting, we do not stand in one place. Interpretation encompasses sensing as both an occurrence and a concept. It separates the cognitive content (of the aesthetic presence of the literary work) which we interpret, compares it with the imaginary (uncompleted) aesthesis and critically evaluates it. However, it conjures up the dualistic and multiple images of sensing.

Sensing is a peculiar form of thinking, it is individually “broken,” changed, that is, it cannot and does not have to join or separate “subject” and “object,” as it contains enough referential content to start interpretation. This content replaces the former content. Then the referential content is multiplied – “simulated,” and here appears the logic of thinking about the state. Thinking itself thinks, it is both “subject” and “object”. Sensing is an absolutely individual occurrence, it contains everything what I have ever thought and written down about Maironis’s poem “The Heart and Reason.” However, sections of sensing are possible only before and after aesthesis which essentially never happens, or happens in a way that we do not learn anything about it.

Shouldn’t we stop waiting for aesthesis then, disbelieve its possibility?

By no means. One important Greimas’s sentence should be interrupted without reading it to the end: “A wish to speak the unspeakable, to draw what is invisible proves that something unique has happened <...>.”⁵⁶ The *something different* is the light (or the darkness) which represents life (or a poem), the simulacra of imagination. They were not anticipated. It seems that what matters is what is being waited for, what we expect to happen.

The reason we move again and again may be the fact that the many-faced literature teachers are hiding their true faces behind the masks of erudition and teach each of us to look for “deeper” significations of a poem. And the everyday experience of literature consists of commentaries on it, attempts to read works not as literary pieces but as communicative texts, as signs of the spirituality of our body (“heart”) etc. Let us imagine a teacher who asked a pupil to recite the poem “The Heart and Reason” or to analyze its prosody in front of the class. In all these cases, there will be only a move towards *esthesis*, however, it does not mean that it will be experienced. The hidden (aesthetic) reality is “waiting” for us, but often in vain. In the line “*The broken heart complains*” the heart does not necessarily suffer “*the wound that won’t heal up.*” The theoretical and practical perception of the poem from “*So many times*” to *listen?* can remain only an attempt to wait for and experience the *dew of tear* which is absent from the poet’s and the reader’s eyes, but is somewhere in the above-mentioned metaphorical space of everything that is *sad, good, and beautiful / pleasant*. “The knots” of significations do not tie together and do not unravel themselves. They simply do not exist. (Or they are hiding themselves in the place called *utopia*).

In both cases we feel how extensive the experience of reading this poem (as other poems of the poet) is, - - enjoyable, pleasant, playful. It can last as long as the reader likes. The reader’s aesthetic joy and spiritual bliss belong only to him. Besides, the fate of every literary work is to return to life every time it is being read or remembered.

Then shall one still wait (though it is not clear what for) or accept the power of the law of *aesthesis* as a possible concept?

Aesthesis (even as ecstasy which was not experienced through the beautiful form) gives new power to a literary work. However, this power has little in common with the poem’s cognitive (representational) structures (linguistic and nonlinguistic) of the significations of reality. Doesn’t my unique experience overcome what we are used to call identities, similarities, generalities?

I believe it does exist, though I often do not pay attention to the signs of manifestation of *esthesis* with regard to the poem and myself. I do not define “aesthesis as a section” between “until” or “after.” I do not stop and, as long as I succeed, I glean new representational manifestations of a word and always reflect on their meaning. The portraits of a novel’s characters or a poem’s lyrical subject are also created as my own structures – from my experience. In the beginning it was not the Word but something more.⁵⁷ I proposed to open Maironis’s “The Heart and Reason” rather than another poem not without reason. I had already experienced the sensory nature of its words, as of things. I had heard its recitation and a musical version, read it more than once

⁵⁶ Further we read: “<...> and that probably something different is possible” (Greimas A.J. *Apie netobulumą*, p, 222.)

⁵⁷ Cf.: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him” (*John 1-3*). The Greek word “logos” which is here translated as a “word”, means a thought that is expressed in words and other means of communication. (“Logos” is also translated as “case,” “speaking,” “science,” “matter,” “proverb”).

therefore, when I started considering the theme for the present work, I realized how symbolic it would be for the beginning of the essay. And I already heard the sounds of the first line *So many times my experienced reason / Advised me to silence the heart*. I also heard the last one *Just hear the word of common sense at last / And listen to its advice?*, the question mark leaves the poem open-ended. *Non finito*. Up to this sign the reader / listener is able to connect the different codes of the text – to free, what can be called, the beauty of the poem. A similar sign could be put at every “generative path” of language structures of consciousness, at every reality phenomenon perceived by my own Self, at the deepest significations which were being formed on the basis of traditional “similarities” and “identities” rather than postmodern “differences.”

It seemed important to me to stress the systemic nature of the binary state which can be called simple and even elementary. It indicates the fundamental and minor centers and peripheries of the system, orders of the elements of the system. And yet all structures are outer forms thought of by ourselves.

I would like to go back to forms of the poem’s main value – its words and their order created by the author (according to Barthes, the guest of the literary work). It is the “body” of the poem, its system and structure, the literary work’s inner order that is visible / audible and invisible / inaudible. The inner order means that it is peculiar, but because of its difference it is also related to other orders of culture or creation.

While reading a poem or listening to its recitation once or many times, we meet with it as with every other phenomenon of nature or culture. We feel or perceive and experience not only physical objects but also sensations. Although the “material” of the phenomena is different, they all arise in our consciousness in a similar way – through sensing their “materiality.” It is clear that the poem “The Heart and Reason” is different from a “body of nature” It can have an “idea” (content) and form (visual expression), phonic (phonocentric) or written, (graphocentric) materiality. However, it is an endless *present occurrence* that is more important for sensing it, the affirmation and waiting for conceivable aesthesis while asserting the multiple (imaginable) significations of a *present occurrence* which we reflect on and which decompose themselves and play with one another.

The same could be said about the metaphorical forms of these significations.

The state of *poem* and the *Self* is close observation or attentive listening, accurate perception and anticipation of the joy of a literary work, creation (of intentional reality) and the development of themes and images that have been perceived. While *anticipating* and *creating*, all forms of the senses are important, though they seem insignificant or accidental at first sight. Silent and oral, public and chamber⁵⁸ readings of a poem are different. There occurs metaplasia⁵⁹ (of the word), though alchemy might be a better word. The paste-up, printing trades and illustrations of the book in which it is printed change the reader’s expectations and efforts. The surface of the book is very deep, but this depth has to be perceived, felt and experienced in other ways.

And yet what makes the state “poem – reader” impossible?

Could it be that in the neoromantic poem “The Heart and Reason,” like in the epoch of classicism, the object is detached from the subject (according to Greimas), and the latter experiences *esthesis* only while observing the object, which means that the subject does not fully experience it? But aren’t the heart and object (reason) together – *two as one* in Maironis’s text?

What (and how) has to strengthen / obliterate the spacing between significations of the state and become the occurrence of my anticipation (wish, desire) without imitation (reference), and only as a special experience, as embodied language or, according to Daujotyte, experience as a *crystallized language*?⁶⁰

Greimas also wrote the following:

But we should ask ourselves whether the syncretism of language system, the intertwining of its signifiers does not result in the transformation of the aesthetic object into a peculiar Franz Lehar’s operetta. This is why since romanticism listening to music has been given more prominence by closing one’s eyes, as in this way the sensory monoisotopy increases the sound effect.⁶¹

⁵⁸ The author of this essay as well as a few hundred participants in final readings of *Spring Poetry* in St. Johns’ church were excited by the transcendence of the prayer of Sigita Geda’s poem. Attempts to describe, to “catch” the poet’s live word either by literary or even musical means (composer Algirdas Martinaitis) and turn it into a different form, though adequate to it, remains only a dream.

⁵⁹ Metaplasia [Gr. – *metaplasia* – “change”] – transformation of one kind of tissue into another.

⁶⁰ Viktorija Daujotyte has written: “<...> a literary work is the most intense experience of life with its *permeable* and *crystallized* language forms” (Daujotyte V. *Literaturos fenomenologija*. Vilnius: Vilniaus dailės akademijos leidykla, 2003, p. 38).

⁶¹ Greimas A.J. *Apie netobulumą*, p. 206.

A personal experience of the possibility of the poem "The Heart and Reason" to be / become should bring even more joy – it prompts the listener to close his eyes, isolate himself from the text of the poem, wait for something more. And again, the anticipation of aesthesis and its deferring would be augmented by the poem's transformation into a musical work.

Many of Maironis's poems have been turned into songs. In Soviet times, I witnessed the event when a prominent philosopher, a guest from St. Petersburg (former Leningrad) heard Maironis's song "Lietuva brangi" ("Dear Lithuania") for the first time. Previous to that he had heard many nice words about this impressive song, a secret anthem of the nation (according to Lithuanians) which "makes one's flesh creep" and the "hand clutches a sword." The guest, who did not know the Lithuanian language, said that the song had not surprised him at all and described it as beautiful, calm and simple. Thus it did not make his flesh creep.

While listening to the poem "The Heart and Reason" performed as a song for the first time, I was surprised, as the melody, the sounds of the music weaken the powers of the *poem's* meter, the inner rhythmic combination of its words to originate or remind one of new significations, they slow down or stop the play of signifiers, maybe even change them to vocal melodicism, an erotic combination of vowels and consonants, but they increase the pain caused by one (verbal) metaphor of the "dew of tear" in the "broken heart that complains." I thought it might have been determined by a different sequence of verses (*the fourth* was replaced by *the third*), and the melody intensified not the *dew of tear* but the words *it won't revive* which became the highest tune of the piece of music. I must admit I did not believe I gained this impression.

Could this transformation be explained by a professional comparative analysis of literary and musical texts?

Its brief exposition is as follows:

A simple melody that the many can easily memorize, though something is changed in its usual form: a refrain is related not to one verse, - two different verses are applied to its melody. A clear ostinato instrumental motif of the "heart and reason" (based on the sorrowful *m3* interval and a rhythmic march pattern) serves as an introduction and later – as a connective between the verses. The *tertia* interval conveys the image of the little *heart* that is hurt and upset. How does this *tertia* move? It moves with the step of a strict march – the "square" of the rhythmic pattern is related to the victory of reason (?). It is an apt authorial decision, even if it is modest: the poem's title has been laconically and peculiarly transformed by the instrumental motif with specific means of expression. The place of refrain in the poem is that of climax, and it should be the most attractive to the listener. In other words, the song goes straight to the heart of the listener.

The composer chose a characteristic *m6* upwards interval for the first words of refrain ("won't revive what once died away). Later the first line of the fifth verse – "*pain and anguish are what remain*" – is intoned with the same interval. The small *sexta* is intoned upwards – it is an *intonational stereotype* considered to be appropriate for expressing the *state of longing*. It is used in an important place of the poem as a sharp contrast to the preceding material. This ensures the listener's attention. The melody of the main motif (of short length and narrow space) creates the impression of rotation around an axis. This feature tends to convey a meditative, soporific, relaxing state which makes one forget himself. Another question is whether it is an attentive reading of the text. It is obvious that the monotonous melody that resembles recitative "does not follow the text" and does not strive to do it. The melody and the text rotate around their own separate axes. An ambiguous image is being created: all textual depths, turns and questions are covered by the indifferent mask of melody.

Did the composer read the text this way because he could not read it differently? Or did he purposely choose these forms which demonstrate the generalized attitude of his generation to classical literature? And what is the performer's role? Her voice and the manner of performance give the song a certain nuance chosen by the author himself. Thus in this case, we hear not a very exceptional ("gray", "dry") voice timbre which is diversified by a barely audible *vibrato*. "Gray" or "dry" timbre is not a disadvantage (the composer characterized it as "moistened with sand"). There are no bad or good timbres. There is only a right or wrong choice. Timbres can hardly be classified, as they are all unique. They are either chosen for the performers (if there are many of them, and this is what happened in this case), or the performer chooses it himself (if a piece of music is of his own choice). However, such a combination of voice timbre and a modest melody that resembles recitative does not suffice to make a suggestive and distinctive verbal text appear. The manner of performance itself – a more or less orderly though not very clearly articulated text – does not demand that everything be heard. One may hear nothing at all except one or two words which have been presented by the composer in the way that makes us hear them – a clear rising melody creates a contrast.

One could think that the composer attentively read only a few words (*the heart and reason*, also – *it won't revive, pain remains*) and gave meaning only to them.⁶² The other significations of the words were obscured by phonic music. The musicologist who has helped the author of this essay to interpret the song doubts the success of the transformation of the poem “The Heart and Reason” into a song.⁶³

And what if she is wrong?

Could it be that Greimas was right when he said that listening to music has to be made meaningful by refusing the words (when the listener does not hear them) and by “killing” the reader? However, according to the rules of reasoning in this essay, literature is immortal.

In any case the new *song* based on Maironis's *poem* loses a very big part of the words' semantics, though it partially gains *phonic* semantics, and its emotional *interpretation* is different. The initial relation of semantic content and the new interpretation with the performer and the listener requires a markedly different attention and understanding. It is not only a meeting between the performer and the listener that is *different*. Their individual experiences as well as the abstracted experience are different too.

Yet it is one more code of the poem's text and a way to *sense* it.

The individuality of this infinitive (to *sense*) could be compared with analogous infinitives which express more concrete experiences that we simulate and experiences that oppose simulation – *to rise, to go down, to fall down, to fly away, to return to life, to die*. They affect us, and we affect them.

Every reception of an infinitive is individual, unique, but also *singular* – objectively general. The reflexive form to sense *oneself* is not appropriate to it.

Towards the Concept of Sensing

When I asked the reader to open Maironis's poem, I noted down (perhaps for the first time in this essay) “the state of the *poem* and the *Self*.”

An attempt to describe it in metaphors of aesthesis which did not occur is a pleasurable free play of the observation (brought to a stop) of the poetic form. An attempt to make myself and others believe that the *total* and *instantaneous* perception of the poem is not a fiction. It can only be accorded the status of a “fiction.” Fiction which is close to reality. It is in the “hands” of every reader / listener. We only have to see clearly, hear well, and think independently – think “for ourselves.”

Bearing this in mind, it has to be admitted that the *attempt* may not have been made at all. Sometimes the question arises whether each of us can *create* his own aesthetic attitude that would be a “tool” for the perception of works of art. The answer is paradoxical: an aesthetic attitude can be created; however, it may be insufficient for something more than understanding pleasure, multiplying the significations of a work. A conscious and subconscious construction of aesthetic objects and their dissociation from practical interests is but one of the prerequisites for deep sensing called catharsis or aesthesis.

Aesthesis can occur to us in the most unexpected places of life / the world, and the better part of literary works that we have read, to paraphrase Ernest Hemingway's sentence about Paris, is “the moveable feast.” Creativity which is called an aesthetic attitude or simply -- the phenomenological wakefulness of consciousness, can always return to past experience and become the individually productive imperative to *sense* which is emphasized in the third section of this essay.

The *state* itself is the pure experience of its form – a meeting between the reader and the poem -- the mental disintegration of its various sensory aspects as well as a non material occurrence. It is unrepeatable, as it is brought to a stop.

Can we already describe -- in terms of the philosophy of literature -- that which does not coincide with an intense individual waiting for aesthesis and leads towards the concept of *aesthesis / sensing*?

Whatever we would say about the differences between a direct experience and the intellectual conceptualization of experiences, we should not question the fact that concepts are created by philosophy. In our case – the philosophy of literature. The individual reading of a poem cannot be rationalized. Totality is like an instant – it should combine a philosophical generality which is fairly dissociated from experience and the aesthetic sensing (that occurred / did not occur) of a literary work that approximates to it. The *concept of aesthesis* should indicate the *becoming* identity of the subject and object / reader.

The improvised example of the experience of reading Maironis's poem is undoubtedly a construct of consciousness, a mental *image* which seeks other images. An appropriate *theoretical* approach to it - a perspective, a reading strategy has to be found. I believe that today there are literary theories which do not

⁶² It can be justified with respect to mimesis in terms of the version that the poem was written as a hiatus of the beloved's, who was “betrayed” by his sweetheart, losses.

⁶³ For the analytical interpretation of the song “The Heart and Reason” (music by Tautrimas Rupulevičius-Onsa, performed by Gabrielė Griciūtė) my thanks are due to my daughter Lina.

contradict concepts or meanings of the two insights of aestheticism - a *state* and *sensing*, which have not been used very precisely thus far. In view of the framework they were most often discussed in, the phenomenological, hermeneutical, and psychoanalytic theories are closest to them. Theories of structuralism and socio-criticism are more remote. Language philosophy and theory of poetry are also appropriate. Speaking about structuralism, literary semiotics is both remote from and close to them: it is semiotic theory which interprets the significations of a literary work, explains only that part which is dissociated from the totality of the work, and it does not show regard for psychology and the phenomena of consciousness which are important for the perception of a literary work. However, part of them ("the semiotics of passions") and especially, Greimas's ideas in his collection of essays *Apie netobulumą (De l'imperfection)* are very important for the conceptualization of the experience under discussion. True I endorse neither the idea of semiotic opposition between "subject" and "object" nor their "convergence." Thus it is possible to define the significant "middle" theories of the exploration of these questions more strictly and broadly only after having defined their methodological role. Broadly speaking, aestheticism is interpreted by both theoretical (epistemological and scientific) and philosophical (aesthetic) and valuational (axiological) perceptions of reality. They would provide a firm basis for literary aesthetics and literary studies. Unfortunately, even today they are difficult to understand, therefore, it is not clear how to base oneself on them.

Neither a "state"⁶⁴ nor "sensing"⁶⁵ are monosemantic as concepts in the works of theorists of literary aesthetics and literary scholars. They are more often used only in the philosophy of intuitivism, psychology, expressive emotive theories of art. Certain aspects of their content express both the aesthetic experience of consciousness and its aesthetic object. Both approaches are philosophical and pose questions about the peculiarity of beauty or art.

Philosophical thinking explains a "state" as a way of existence of substances – their existence: a distinction can be made between substances and forms of consciousness which *coexist*. And this is their state. The applied scholarly thinking defines a *state* as a way of being of substance, consciousness, and phenomena.

In aesthetics the term a "state" is important in describing the intentionality of consciousness, therefore, the concept of "state of mind" is often used.

Let us go back to the traditional understanding of art (in our case – literature) and remember that according to Read, the source of every theory is the assumption that "every man reacts to the shape, surface and mass of the things accessible to his senses, and that a certain combination of shapes and surfaces of things evokes a pleasant feeling, whereas a lack of this combination arouses indifference, or even discomfort and repugnance."⁶⁶ The assumption is probably important in fine and other "spatial" arts.

It is much less acceptable to literary theories. The sensory forms of reading or listening do exist, however, a "pleasant feeling" aroused by them is much more determined by the reader's / listener's creativity as well as other factors important for the experience of the work. The side of literature perceived materially or as an object is "pleasant" to the reader only when there is its subjective expression.

Indeed, the sensing of colors and lines in painting, for example, and their meanings is probably more simply and obviously related. We could not say this about the poem without its analysis when we read its visible words and all significations of the work.

Then what can we *sense*? Is it only the physical form of a literary work? Not at all. However, we start from it, though maybe not all of us. We have met readers who call themselves bibliophiles and who, unlike the majority, scrutinize every page, line and word of a literary text.

They see more than consumers who are interested only in the semantic content of the book. They see the volume of the book, the color of the paper, the print, and illustrations. They notice the differences between editions of the same book and choose the best ones. We know that not all of them are good readers of poetry, drama, or fiction, but they sense the book and see it as an aesthetic object. The fact that in the beginning the sensing of it is close to the insights in fine or plastic arts, should not make literary phenomena less seen. On the contrary, it should help reveal these phenomena, experience them as one spiritual occurrence and not turn it into a sole collection of meanings discerned by intellect.

The abstract – conceptual -- content of the world's phenomena expressed in words is dissociated from feeling, from its primeval images. Because of the metaphorical nature of language a direct experience of creation in a literary work seems to be purely intellectual, as every interpretation is permeated with semantic meanings. Literature is the kingdom of *interpretation*. To read a literary work is to interpret it, to perceive, to

⁶⁴ *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas (A Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language)* indicates five meanings of the word *state*: 1. Being, existence, life; 2. A way of being; 3. A mental state; 4. A place of being; 5. Relation.

⁶⁵ The *Dictionary* indicates two meanings of the word *sensing*: 1. A feeling; 2. Sensation.

⁶⁶ Read H. *The Meaning of Art*. Harmondsworth, 1959, p. 16.

clarify it for oneself, to explain it to others. And yet there is some mysteriousness here: what is there to interpret? What to perceive? What to elucidate and explain? And why do it?

Out of all traditional arts literature is most removed from sensory reality. True, we could assert this if we bear in mind its traditional definition: the sensory reality is comprised of things that we experience with our senses. In today's explanations of the human body, body and mind are rarely contrasted. Their unity is unquestionable. The Cartesian tradition is not a simple detachment of the thinking subject from the object that he thinks about. A literary work – a book – is not only a physical object which affects us or our consciousness. If we remember the concept used by René Descartes, we will be able to say that the reader opens a book as *cogitatum*.

Yet there is a tendency to forget that in both cases the creative space of literature is universal, as it is related to independent forms of mental or spiritual reality of thinking, intellect, intellectual will. In our attempts to generalize them, the concepts “substance,” “ideality,” “soul,” “spirit” have been used. Unfortunately, even in the classical works of human sciences they are more often metaphors rather than rigidly defined notions. It seems to be difficult to elude concepts of metaphysical thinking even when they are vague, too broad, or simply a new form of metaphor.

Both in the poem and the novel or drama their sensory aspects conceal themselves from us. Like other arts, literature claims the right to speak not about reality, but about the impression of its effect – perception, that is, the right not to be the reflection of any possible reality but to create its own literary presence. Today it does so boldly and almost universally. However, the beginning can be traced back to antiquity when theorists of poetry (literature) tended to believe that verisimilitude was less important than the general space of reality, which does not coincide with its concrete, however, surface phenomena.

I speak not about exceptions in one kind of art but about all forms of the sensory and possibilities of sensory experience. They are impossible without the subject (the narrator, listener, writer, reader, actor, spectator etc.) who can perceive a connection between the past and the future, in other words, absence, which is important in creation. The *absent presence* is important for a creative consciousness in every sphere of art.

Unlike in other arts, in literature it is more difficult to experience a really individual *par excellence* aesthetic order of a work. Maybe it could not be called *personal* individuation. There is a connection between the author's words and the reader's insights. Its importance varies from reader to reader. The strength of the connection might depend on the reader's general and special education or profession. This might be so. However, this feeling cannot be banished by theories of literariness: it is always within us, it helps distinguish between things which are always linked to the divine (otherwise called the highest) elements and what is only a “veil of mist.”

A “good literary work” is an important notion. It is naturally related to the reader's ability to *sense* a literary work. This may suffice in the beginning, but I am more concerned about whether the semantic content of the word “sense” encompasses something that occurs in the act of reading. It seems it does, though very approximately. Dictionaries indicate that a *sense* is (pleasant or unpleasant) individual's *experience* of his relation to the surroundings, people and himself as well as (or) *feeling, understanding, perception*, or simply a *sensation*.⁶⁷ Comparing these meanings with those of to *sense* (to feel outer and inner things; to foreknow; to experience; to learn; to be awake; to hear) and a *power of sensitivity*, we can choose only those which are closer to the literary work's sensoriness. The sensory aspect of the literary work being read is different from the one which is heard or seen despite the fact that the text is pronounced orally and is visible. It is a really relative, even symbolic sensoriness. Such sensoriness should be called the *concreteness* of the literary work's aesthetic being.

The effect of the work being read is produced by the sensory experience of the second-degree reality that we create. The abstract, “invisible,” “inaudible” reality, remote from us, is encoded in the work several times. According to Immanuel Kant, who distinguished between the work's aesthetic idea and the form of the work, the aesthetic idea should be a concrete expression of what is naturally abstract.

Is this sense of the *Self*, and not only the *Self*, always and everywhere important? No. While reading nonfiction books, its role grows weaker because their evaluation is based on criteria of truth and universal good. And yet we should never refuse or forget it, as every real book or cultural phenomenon that is called a real text appears and opens to us according to the aesthetic laws of the world's order and the sensing of it. According to Albert Einstein, if there was no passion for knowledge, there would be neither mathematics nor exact sciences; likewise, if there was no passion for music, there would be no music. Therefore it is no wonder that the beauty of the stars that the poet contemplates and that of a star chart drawn by an astronomer coexist.

What we could call the order of a literary world does not disappear just because we know little about it or dimly discern it. The individual (mathematicians might say “statistic”) expression of this order is paradoxical –

⁶⁷See *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas*, t. 4. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1957, p. 316-317.

it is always experienced sensorily and mentally, however, it is hardly possible to define its significations scientifically.

If we group the similar things in these parallel worlds of fiction and nonfiction, we would notice that the sensing of a good work of nonfiction is also natural. To see (take note of) the simplicity of a brilliant formula (in physics etc.) is to perceive the links between this formula and artefacts or to participate in the creation of new artefacts. When we hear the reader saying that he *does not see* and *does not understand* what he is reading, let us pay heed to what he says; however, let us not subscribe hastily to the opinion. What does he say when he is saying it? These two questions are not identical. (In this case I would not explain them only as *enunciation* and *utterance* – the two semiotic sides of *speech*.) Let us remember that *to understand a novel* (a novella, a poem) it is not necessary to understand it as a thesis statement, mathematical formula, or even a philosophical question. The reader usually claims that he understands something what makes a novel a novel (a novella – a novella, etc.), as he has been affected by the general reading of the text and the significations it generated.

Thus it is hardly possible that he does not see and does not understand anything at all. It is more likely that his expectations, which he had before opening a book, remained unfulfilled. The novel which was not understood is the novel which was not seen. Or – the novel which did not occur. Maybe it did not occur in a particular reader's act of reading. The probability that it will occur in another reader's act of reading never allows one to speak about the zero probability of the *novel as an occurrence*.

It is always worthwhile to ask questions: Who is the reader who “does not see and does not understand”? What is the horizon of his expectations and why does he read what he reads? It could be that his other expectations came true. For example, he examined another reader's reception, read a critic's evaluation, etc. When a piece of fiction is opened only because of the managers' cleverness or the critics' laudation, it is probable that the pyramid of literary values can be leaning, crumbled, deformed in a modern way, or even overturned in a postmodern manner; however, the reader sees and understands it or at least feels that it exists.

When it is absent, the reader does not experience the aforementioned feeling. Then he can be attracted by a misleading path, the bright will-o-the-wisps of literary marshes that are pleasant to the eye. They usually lure him away to those places where there are some public or secret interests. They comprise politics, economics, even science and all culture in a broad sense of the word. Paradoxically, all these significant spheres of man's activity pretend to be something else in literary marshes in order to turn into a part of literature. Then it seems that one can hit the roots of literature with all his might but claim that it is necessary for literature itself. One can forget the taste of a good literary work, as it is possible to use its rational and irrational supplements instead. Goodness, harmony, order, beauty can only be interpreted, and these interpretations also turn into their own supplements.

In this contradictory confusion of considerations, theses and antitheses detached from a literary work itself, the sense of a good literary work is dulled. The reader finds himself in front of chaos, and in its presence he does not sense in a literary work what he could and should sense. Unarguably, that is a good literary work and this one is bad.

The natural power of a good taste is restricted when it has to stop the critique and erosion of fundamental principles of order which function both in the cosmos and in a man's soul. Literary symbolism which reflects the intellectual paradigms of order requires other powers that would make it work. However, the natural taste itself often senses a good poem, a short story, a novel, more seldom – a drama, but it alone might not suffice when we open voluminous works complex in all aspects of their content and form. I wrote “might not” because such an attitude should be explained in greater detail – it should be theoretically based and examples of the reading of specific works should be provided.

How peculiar is sensoriness and its experience in literature? Its peculiarity lies in the fact that it is, according to Protagoras, the *measure of man*, the given of his valuations. It is not only material, but is also created as the experience of our consciousness – the absent presence. Due to their verbal nature, concrete sensory phenomena in literature (like in philosophy) are dissociated from things which they denote only in the beginning, they take on new significations and thus become more abstract. Finally, in the individual's mind they turn into a symbolic and objective reality which can combine with subjective experience only in the act of writing or reading. It is phenomena of feeling, thinking and will which our consciousness experiences as phenomena in the act of reading.

The changing sensoriness, or the different stages of its abstraction, endows literature with a rather universal sense of reality (which is characteristic of it) and owing to the work's connection with sensoriness, the nature of literature does not change, its peculiar function in historical epochs of art does not disappear. A literary work, no matter how fairly remote it is from reality, and pure thinking are not interchangeable. For example, philosophy, which attaches greater significance to a pure concept and not a sensory image, can become similar only to certain genres of literature; however, it never becomes identical with them. Philosophy explains *all*

human experience in terms of its *most general* attitudes, interprets them semantically, whereas literature is only an integral interpretation of *partial* experience.

Sensoriness allows one to experience and reflect on very different senses of a literary work. From the individual experience of sensing a literary work to a collective, more mental than sensory, reality of the work. It is the problem of verisimilitude of the world of literary values, or returning to reality while reflecting on values: in the process of valuating experience(s) we do not only reflect on them but change the reflection into the projection of its own future – the aim, the ideality of creative consciousness which we differentiate from ontological phenomena. A value is an individual experience of cultural phenomena in an attempt to achieve the goal and give meaning to it. It opens up the possibility of experiencing absence as presence.

The naming of value is related to one question of literary axiology – the literary text's *value*, the amount of *work* (creative?) resources.

Clearly, we do not speak about economic value – about the work resources necessary for the creation of a literary text. Although one can count the quantitative parameters of a literary work – its spatial and temporal characteristics, certain of its features, the amount of time spent on writing it, the funds allocated for its publication and other expenditures, discuss its place in the sphere of consumption, it does not mean anything with regard to its *artistic value*.

The question of a literary work's value is the problem of its literary (artistic) individuation: when it becomes a literary work (experienced in the act of reading), it stands out among the others and is identical only to itself in the perspective of the most general literary guides. Certain guides of literature (genre, style, poetics etc.), which are familiar to both the author and the reader, is a common space in which the artistic experience of a literary work (which is later named as its value) is gained. They can be different – minimal and sometimes maximum. This corresponds relatively to the gradation of a literary work's value: there are some bad, poor, average, good, very good and even great works. They all are between a literary work and a non work. They all signify its value, only a different one.

The argument over the criteria of a literary work's value usually divides the researchers into supporters of its objective and subjective (again!) interpretations. In this argument value is rarely differentiated from a value. Value is interpreted as an integral totality of the literary work's valuable features.

There are frequent attempts to deconstruct these oppositions by introducing additional notions as, for instance, the concepts of a text and a literary work.

In discussing Barthes's aesthetics Antanas Andrijauskas observes that he draws a fundamental distinction between the concepts of "literature" and a "text": "Literature can no longer be *Mimesis* or *Mathesis* but only *Semiosis*, an unthinkable linguistic adventure. In other words, it is wrong to assert that the concept of a text duplicates the concept of literature. Literature reflects the completeness of the world, a text shows the infinity of language."⁶⁸ Then Andrijauskas reminds us:

"R. Barthes claims that in terms of biology the text is a living organism which can be ruined. In his aesthetics the text is not a concrete object but a paradoxical, radically symbolic, pluralist, intertextual (part of another text) substance of a special structure which is not subject to any classification and which requires to deconstruct the traditional writing / reading opposition and combine them. In this textual galaxy without any center, bottom, beginning and end where there are many entrances and exits, none of them the main one, numerous layers of culture, literature, art blend and clash. According to R. Barthes, the text is "not a structure but the creation of structures; it is not a thing but work and play."

Finally, the text in his aesthetics is known through its relation with the sign. The work has closure, it is pigeon-holed into concrete significations. Therefore the work functions as a sign and is "one of the main categories of the civilization of the Sign." In the text, signification is endless; the text avoids exact descriptions, evaluations, classification systems; it is like a fluctuating magma full of symbolic meanings which function in the sphere of significations. "At its best the work is *not very symbolic*, its symbolism quickly disappears, that is, becomes stagnant; however, the text is extremely symbolic; *the text is the composition or the meaning the reader takes from the work*. At the same time the text as if returns to the shelter of language: like language, it has a structure, however, it lacks a unifying center, closure." Therefore the text here is explained as an intertext, a "galaxy of significations," whereas the literary work – as a result of textual activity. Thus, as compared with the text, the literary work is a narrower and not that important concept in R. Barthes' aesthetics. It is characterized by linearity and irreversibility, a chronological development. His concept of the text is very similar to the peculiarities of the mysterious "Yijing" ("The Book of Changes") written in hieroglyphs, as it has

⁶⁸ Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes, p. 123. Quoted according to Andrijauskas A. *Roland'o Barthes'o tekstualumo estetika*. Access on the internet: <http://www.tekstai.lt/tekstu-naujienos/126-antanas-andrijauskas-rolando-bartheso-tekstualumo-estetika-2>.

no clearly fixed beginning, a center, it is ambiguous. *The metaphor of the literary work is an organism, whereas the metaphor of the text is a tissue or a web*; it does not grow and develop but being affected by semantics and combinations, it unfolds. The literary work is easily read, consumed, interpreted, while the text is *unreadably*.⁶⁹ (Translated by Daina Miniotaitė).

From Barthes's viewpoint, the *text* should (help?) overcome the *subject / object* dualism; however, when posing the question of a literary text's value, we cannot explain it without reservation. The semantization of the literary text, as an objective value, is based on the ontological and sociocultural explanations according to which, the literary text functions in the structure of all sociocultural values which is independent of the author and the reader and which itself is objective with almost all the main components of its value. In the case of subjectivist interpretation, there is a tendency to emphasize the relativity of the individual's consciousness and insights, psychology, emotions, intuition, taste, etc. In both cases the literary text's value is a hierarchy of different values which is subject to one of the value orientations – semantic, aesthetic, ethical, religious, political, ideological, or their combination called "life," a "live person," a "human being," the "conception of man" etc.

In my view, both of these ways of explaining a literary text's value are moving away from the aim they would like to achieve. Every critic has to get used to it and search for his own way of valuation as well as always remember a well-established concept of *life as a work of art*.⁷⁰

Albertas Zalatorius writes that "it would be good if we had the criteria which, like a test-paper, would show the real situation. You throw such a paper into a text, the paper turns blue or red, and you learn the value of the literary work. Unfortunately, there is no such paper. For this reason, one cannot trust the aesthetic criteria in all cases."⁷¹ Zalatorius himself chooses the aesthetic criteria and constructs from them his own understanding of the "consummation of expression": "Trust in the reader, intimate intonations, a play of implications and details, a gracious style, the integrity of mood and experiences, the outbursts of poetic feeling, a free interpretation of space and time."⁷² The latter can be called a cluster list of the features of a literary work: the whole of the indicated features allows one to regard a text as a literary work.⁷³ There can be no doubt that such an enumeration makes it hard to believe that "the literary work is an objective value."⁷⁴

Attempts to differentiate between the objective and other (probably subjective) values of a literary text essentially contradict the principle of individuation of the literary work which describes the above-mentioned place of the work as well as its aesthetic and all other functions.

Thus a literary work's value is its own identity as an aesthetic occurrence. This identity is always discussed on the basis of a certain conception of art. Therefore, different attitudes to a literary work's value can be singled out.

What is a *good* poem or a novel, a novella or drama, what is its literary value? These questions are first considered by the writer and the reader. Then an expert in the artistry of the literary work – a critic and an expert in the laws of literature – a theorist. And everyone who is probably more interested in a different art, as literature has an exceptional place in the development and genre structure of art: it connects the objective and subjective poles of reality which are very distant from each other.

Although this valuation might be unfruitful, there are different ways in seeking the answer(s) to this question. The clearest, though not necessarily simplest, answers are suggested by normative literary aesthetics. The *doctrine* of art of the epoch of classicism is a very well-developed and best known example of the theory of "good art." It is common sense rather than imagination or a free play of images that leads towards a perfect literary work. Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux with his work *The Art of Poetry* (1674) made the rules of classicism popular and embedded them in the critics' memory for long. However, the bulk of literary theories – from the Aristotelian conception of poetry to the diverse image of the end of the 20th c. and the beginning of the 21st c. – are not and have never been normative. On the contrary, they assert an open, complex theoretical image of the literary work, which is not easily perceived by all, and propose complex tools for its exploration and the perception of its deep experience. I do not think that Michel Foucault's "cultural epistemes" which govern the

⁶⁹ Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes, p. 123. Quoted according to Andrijauskas A. *Roland'o Barthes'o tekstualumo estetika*. Access on the internet: <http://www.tekstai.lt/tekstu-naujienos/126-antanas-andrijauskas-rolando-bartheso-tekstualumo-estetika-2>.

⁷⁰ Jacob Burckhardt's words by which he described Renaissance culture.

⁷¹ Zalatorius A. *Literatūra ir laisvė*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1998, p. 402.

⁷² Zalatorius A. *Prozos gyvybė ir negalia*. Vilnius: Vaga, 1988, p. 10.

⁷³ Supporters of *cluster* understanding of art list over 10 features (functions, criteria). Cluster theories of art are defined as non-essentialist and not connected with valuational attitude to art.

⁷⁴ Zalatorius A., *Prozos gyvybė ir negalia*, p. 113.

word or Jacques Lacan's double "reality / actuality," are simpler ways to create and break literary codes than Nicolas Boileau-Despreaux's simple and clear encouragement to "learn to tell things concisely and simply," or obey the rule of "the three units."

Nevertheless, both classical and modern theories of the literary work are based on the ontological axiom: our relation with reality is part of this reality (which enters our consciousness). The unity of sensory and rational perception of reality allows one to start an analysis of the principal questions of literary scholarship with either of its methodological aspects.

The above-mentioned sensoriness of a literary work, which is not so obvious in literature as in other arts, is not the reason to avoid it altogether, or to consider only the symbolic and essentially objectivized reality of the literary work. The multiplicity of a literary work's realities which is more and more acknowledged by critics, greatly complicates the rational image of literariness and the forms of its peculiarity. It is not only complex and multilayered, but also contradictory, arbitrary etc.

From ancient times poetry (literature) was regarded as a source of joy, pleasure, purification of the soul – catharsis. Imitation, mimesis, imitation of the forms of reality and their recognition, the inner "form," "order" of the literary work as its individuality, intuitive insight into it and other ways to experience the effect of a literary work *here* and *now* indicated by theorists in different historical epochs, allows one to draw a general conclusion that there exists the intellectual sensory experience which the author writes down and the reader reads as the reality of his own life. The sense of a *good* or *satisfactory literary work* is natural. But do all of us really have it?

Yes we do, though it is not equally strong or necessary every day. In this respect we may differ in the strength of the sense but not in its quality.

What does a certain mental state (its subjective content) of the author or the reader suggest about him? In all cases we will speak not about the theoretical reflection of a literary work but about the general impression and the sensing of it, which itself produces peace of mind, catharsis, joy, pleasure. For some, our ability to see a beautiful sunrise or distinguish a song from a conversation would seem more credible. However, the effect of all aesthetic phenomena, among them – all the arts, is not only different but also similar. Everyone can say what particular aesthetic phenomena excite and move them. They can both experience and create them. The question of such experiences and the meaning of creation (of art) is deeply rooted in human nature. One can discuss the role and function of beauty or art in concrete historical epochs; however, no discussions are possible without having acknowledged or appreciated human creativity and the deep aesthetic premises of his whole life.

The history of aesthetics and art, especially classical philosophy of art, explains the nature and cultural function of aesthetic phenomena. It is hard to say which kind or trend of modern art would be simple and easy to discuss and explain it to all. There might be none. Each of them appeared gradually and did not form their theoretical basis right away. Throughout the centuries, there have been close connections between the theoretical conception of art and artistic creation itself, and even their unity.

Today we assert that literature is the art of the word; however, at first it was blended with dance and music. The word, being affected by the rhythm, melody and image, brightened one's experience. The ancient conception of poetry combined the creator's natural talent and his artistry, unveiled secrets of artistry. The rules of verbal art in ancient times gave rise to the first theoretical discussions about the essence, forms and kinds of poetry, and the axioms of Aristotle's work *Poetics* surprise us even today. Yet literature became an independent branch of art not so long ago, and as a discipline of the humanities, it was formed only in the 19th c. Present-day literature has its beginnings in *narrative*. The thing that it is only nature or a single art form that arrests one's attention and is closer to his heart, does not deny the possibility to take a wider view of everything.

True, having distanced ourselves from a concrete literary work and "forgotten" its individuation, we can broaden our general understanding of literature; however, we should not cross the boundary beyond which both a good literary work and the sensing of it disappear. The same can happen with a more general and the most general understanding of literature: alongside good literary works there exist average and even *poor* works which gain their value as forms of literary creation, and their literary value also has limits. But again, they are not strict: they start and end as *texts* about writing or speaking about literature. These concepts reflect a new search for the peculiarity of literature. They are used instead of "imitation," "mimesis," "form," "poeticity," "literariness," and other generalizations which can be traced back to ancient times and which were important for theoretical literary considerations for some time. New concepts (they often include the already known ones) make one take a different view of traditional concepts and find their new logical explanations. According to many present-day literary scholars, the text is not identical with the literary work, which is characterized by a division into *good* and *bad* literature, it "surpasses" the work in its complexity and can change the traditional concept of "literariness." The text becomes a new form of the work, the main dimensions of which should be not its representation of reality and the way it is represented, but its *extent* or *multiplicity*. The latter is understood as a polysemous space where the initial heterogeneous power of the literary work's significations interacts and manifests itself.

The acceptance of the new and unwillingness to refuse the old theoretical tools cause not a little confusion even in the sphere of the philosophy of literature which is less concerned about the theoretical reflection of specific literary works or their practical origination. It is hard to say which of the two – traditional or the latest – theoretical thought exerts a greater influence on creative practice, that is, today's literary works. It could be that the newest theoretical insights into literary works will have a bigger influence in the future.

From a variety of all texts it is only *criticism* that remains closest to (traditionally called) meanings of "literariness" significant to literature, as its referential and reflexive functions do not allow it to distance itself from the literary work.

No matter how the philosophical conception of the origin and function of literature would change, we should not forget that while changing our viewpoints on literature, we do not refuse our attempt to describe it, to differentiate it from other forms of culture or creation. Having called to mind the first "philologists" – ancient sophists and Gorgias' statement that the word can say *everything*, we still should not regard all verbal descriptions of reality as *literature*. As a matter of fact, there are such attempts. They are based on the latest 20th c. literary theories and make one question the adequacy of the objective and the means. For example, according to Roland Barthes's semiotically developed, radical conception of the text as literature, the reading of a literary work is a recreation of the nonexistent (deconstructed) textual system, when, after the "death" of the author, the text becomes the subject and the reading of it is significantly affected by other (not necessarily literary) texts and codes of their significations. (In this context, in the eyes of semiologists the advertisement of Lithuanian beer and Vincas Mykolaitis Putinas's *Altorių šešėly (In the Shadow of Altars)* would have the same literary "value"). However, even literary semiotics is concerned about the identity of literature. Thus it is hardly possible that the critics of its "literariness" really sought its destruction: having crossed the boundaries of the identity of literature, there appears something different, something which would require new concepts, for instance, *hyperliterature*, *paraliterature* etc. Concepts of the *text* and *writing* should be discussed in the structures of the traditional and newest meanings of the term of literature.

There is no sense to speak abstractly about the conception of *good literature*, which might seem outdated in recent times, as the literary work is most often regarded as an exceptional system whose theories and facts are decreasingly rarely connected with their psychological, autobiographical or other anthropological, traditionally subjective interpretation. *The sense of the literary work* may seem no less historical. I would not assent to it either. A good literary work belongs both to the author and the reader who perceive the meaning of their life only through cultural history. Literature and history are related narratives and our ability, equally subjective and equally different, to sense both the literary work and the historical narrative can help us differentiate between them.

The principle of historicity⁷⁵ does not relate the questions of literature with the objective situation of literature in history or its interpretation as part of concrete historical systems of culture; however, today's attitude (not only mine) to the writer, the literary work and the reader is markedly different from Plato's. They are separated by a great number of specific literary works which were written and read in the course of more than two thousand years, as well as by the conception of the language in which they were written.

True, the word "sense" does not clearly designate the occurrence through which and by which the aesthetic power of the literary work as well as the reader's aesthetic experience manifest themselves. *Sense*, as a scientific concept, is used in psychology, and in other human sciences (if it is more frequently used, then apparently for other reasons) it is extremely attractive with its metaphorical and symbolic meanings, when there is a need to emphasize the subjective dimension of the interpreted phenomenon.

And yet I think that when we start speaking about the aesthetic presence of the literary work, this concept is more appropriate than others. Literature, like all the arts, have original connections with the sensing of reality, more precisely – with our eyesight or hearing. Prose works are usually read, poetry is usually listened to; however, the senses are always a prerequisite for further insights into the literary work. What the Greeks called *αισθητική*⁷⁶ and differentiated it from *noesis*,⁷⁷ at least partially, means the same both to them and to us – to reach for the world with one's senses. According to Plato, one can sense colors, sounds, scents, cold and heat, lack of something, or pleasure, joy, fear and power of other unnamed sensory forms of *αισθητική*; however, today the following question has not been answered unambiguously: is a sense as perception possible without any consciousness?

Through the senses our body meets with other bodies, and it renews itself in them. One becomes another. Everyone becomes everything, and everything becomes everyone. We should say the same about thinking. At

⁷⁵ *Ιστορικός* (Gr.) – connected with history.

⁷⁶ *Αισθητική* (Gr.) – sensory.

⁷⁷ *Νόησις* (Gr.): "conception," "idea," "mind," "perception"; from *νοεῖν* (noein, to "suppose," "sense," "see," "understand"); from *νόος* (*nous*, "reason," "thought").

the same time we admit that it is impossible to completely separate sensoriness from thinking. Our senses “think,” whereas the mind “senses.” The aesthetologists’ way of thinking about *αισθητική* is and has always been paradoxical: they speak about the *sensed thoughts* and *thoughts about sensing*. Attempts to evade or conceal this paradoxical unity of oppositions is only a temporary determination of their autonomy which has to be overcome, broken, altered. When contrasting the sensory experiences with the mental (intellectual, spiritual) ones, we only demonstrate the great extent of the complexity and diversity of both our singularity and totality. The double paradigm of *sense*, which sometimes contrasts *αισθητική* and *noesis* to the extreme, attests to our attempts to find the idea while drawing a line between the sensory and the mental experiences of the world that can hardly be separated. Similarly, literary historians find it hard to agree upon the strict order (hierarchy) of literary genres and styles, to explain which genre is more important, which style should be held “high” or “low.”

As was mentioned at the beginning of the essay, the concept of *sense* (sensing) is not new in Lithuanian aesthetics. The authors recall it or name it originally when discussing “total” cases of aesthetic activity (creation), aesthetic being and consciousness, the art work’s concretization (its “intentional” being), more precisely – the perception, experience, valuation, taste of aesthetic phenomena (objects).

This concept is not new in Lithuanian art criticism. The sensing of the works of visual (“spatial”) art seems natural to many art critics. It is more debatable in literature, music, and dance. For example, the phenomenological treatment of a work concretizes every literary work as the development of what is seen and heard. Roman Ingarden directs a meeting between the work and the reader towards the aesthetic level of the perception of the work.⁷⁸ The “immanent” concretization (interpretation, perception, explanation) of a literary work indirectly creates a (literary) reality which can be seen, heard, sensed – as any other “body” among other bodies. Thinking (in concepts and words) and imagination (receptive and active) allow one to legitimize new forms of traditional (aesthetic) sensing which conform to the complex structuralist and poststructuralist presences of the literary work.

The conceptual definition of *sense* has been proposed only by one Lithuanian author, Juozas Mureika. In the monograph *Pajaustos mintys (The Sensed Thoughts)* (2005), he introduces the paradigm of “transformation of aesthetics into aesthetology” To summarize it,⁷⁹ *aesthetology* is a science which investigates and interprets *sense* as a spiritual power and the way of origination of meanings, components of *sense* as well as connections with other spiritual powers.

Taking a broader view, the author asserts that the term of aesthetology would also be appropriate for the totality of “theories or disciplines which explore and interpret sense, its components and connections with meanings, language and thinking, valuational and cognitive activity.”⁸⁰

According to Mureika, the concept of *sense* is the Lithuanian equivalent of the Greek word for aesthesis. It is also a synonym for *aesthesis* becoming the main category of contemporary aesthetics which is the axis of the complicated aesthetic formal system of thought (*aesthetology*) and its structure – “the way of being and one of the most important of human spiritual powers.”⁸¹ It is described very differently and broadly: being of a pre-linguistic nature, it is “only partially expressed in words and logically perceived,” it is “connected with instincts, values, thinking, significations, language, and meanings,” it “shows existential states,” “enables one to distinguish values from non-values,” it is “a way of assigning meanings.”⁸² This is how the concept of *sense* has been discussed from different aspects in Lithuanian aesthetics for the first time and can be understood by others.⁸³

Mureika points out three groups of “sense components”: extrasensory, sensory, and somatic, senses of the experience of emotions, feelings, passions and moods; senses of intellectual scientific intuition, cultural conventions and philosophical insight.⁸⁴

It is obvious that this concept (which has complex contents) described by Mureika as a “category of aesthetology which denotes the semantic center of *aesthetic activity*,”⁸⁵ is not only close to or synonymous with

⁷⁸ Ingarden R. *Szkice z filozofii literatury*. Krakow, 2000, p. 71-75.

⁷⁹ Mureika J. *Pajaustos mintys. Estetikos virsmas estetologija*. Monografija. Vilnius: AB spaustuvė “Spindulys,” 2005, p. 145-170.

⁸⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁸¹ *Op. cit.* p. 30.

⁸² *Ibid.* In the monograph Mureika distinguishes between the concepts of *signification* and *meaning*. “It is an individual subject who is in control when originating meaning, whereas in the construction of meanings the communal “we” has superiority. According to him, aesthetology explains how the origin of significations is affected by sense and its different types” (*op. cit.*, p. 32).

⁸³ Judging from scanty and cautious reception of the book *Pajaustos mintys*, nobody finds or simply does not want to pick up the arrow shot by the philosopher, as Nietzsche would say.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

aesthesis but similarly, resists tools of systemic analysis. Aesthesis breaks structuralist tools: they are not appropriate for reference without which no communication is completed. It is difficult to define the connections between the concept and language, thinking, intellectual intuition, values, manifestations of significations and origination of meanings. And yet attempts are made to discern concrete components of sense, its aspects, forms: "Already ancient Greeks were aware of the manifestations of sensory and emotional senses. They discussed separate forms of sense and defined them by concepts of moderation, pleasure, mimesis, harmony, symmetry, beauty, ugliness, form, etc."⁸⁶

Having singled out sense as the most important in the structure of human spiritual power, Mureika attempts to substantiate the conception of a new (in his view) science. It does not conform to the traditional aesthetics (unlike a theory [philosophy] of beauty or art). According to the author, aesthetics is challenged by the "theoretical interpretation of sense." The formation of meanings by way of theory is restricted however, it can be expanded by means of sense: "The formation of meanings through sensing is closer and more adequate to the situation when a practically necessary meaning becomes valid."⁸⁷ Aesthetology is a science which explores and interprets sensing as a spiritual power and a way of origination of meanings, sense components and connections with other spiritual powers. In the author's opinion, the phenomenon of sense "attests to neither linguistic nor logical experience; it comprises a different experience, when one experiences its appropriateness, expediency, value, significance, beauty, pleasure, and other ways of reaction."⁸⁸

In his reflections on the concepts of sense and meaning, Mureika succeeds in developing the philosophical contexts of aesthetic perception, valuation, status of the work of art, and other similar questions. Aesthetology "decodes significations of sense": it goes beyond the boundaries of problems of classical aesthetics and opens out as a complex structure of interdisciplinary theories.

Thus the author does not narrow the domain of aesthetics – the 21st c. authors of works on aesthetics (or art philosophy) usually try to renew the theoretical, usually – partial, insights. Mureika rejects the idea of the transformation of aesthetics into art philosophy, an idea which is acceptable to some.⁸⁹ On the contrary, he searches for the universalities of aesthesis: heading for spirituality, spiritual powers, the meaningfulness of man's experience, Mureika logically expounds an innovative interpretation of *aesthesis* and, on the basis of aesthetology discussed in terms of this interpretation, he imagines its appropriate place between logic, philosophy, and axiology. Doesn't a search for universalities prevent the author from remaining in the analysis of a concrete phenomenon of sense? I think it does not.

In the second part of the book, the author attempts to demonstrate the practical aspects of his theoretical attitude to sense and aesthetology and introduces to the reader the essays – "verbal" portraits of six representatives of Lithuanian culture (Monsignor Kazimieras Vasiliauskas, poet Justinas Marcinkevičius, et al). Here the author also formulates and introduces the concept of a *sensing man* (*homo aestheticus*). It is another original part of Mureika's text. The essay-like style allows the author to embrace some very specific shades of the meaning of human life as well as their philosophical colors. The author admits that during the course of creating these portraits, he more fully comprehended his theoretical searches in widening and modernizing the old conception of *aesthesis*.

To art philosophers and art critics Mureika's attempt to introduce the concept of the *sensing of art* could also be valuable as an example of the conventional conception of art: art is treated as a specific aesthetic phenomenon. Decisions are made and valuations are agreed upon with regard to it. Concepts called existentialities -- individual experiences which pave the way for the individual to transcendence, that is, the fundamental interconnections of components of spirituality, could be interesting for those who study the Christian conception of spirituality (beauty, art). Mureika renders themes of sense and meaning more concrete in his new study articles.⁹⁰ The aesthetologist further attempts to disclose the peculiarities of the conception of spirituality, the development of personality and expression, tries to contribute to investigations of spirituality by forming a strategy of interpretations as well as specifying and creating methodological premises. From the unambiguous and simple ones there is a move on to phenomenological, existential, poststructuralist, and other – deeper and more complex ones. Having rejected metaphysics from the Positivist positions, the author returns again to the context of metaphysical presence of phenomena or its interpretations. Generalizing his conception of sense, Mureika looks to the future. He maintains that "aesthetics, or maybe aesthetology, will have to

⁸⁵ Mureika J. Pajauta. *Estetikos enciklopedija*. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos centras, 2010, p. 470.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁸⁹ Mureika J. Pajauta. *Estetikos enciklopedija*. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos centras, 2010, p. 145.

⁹⁰ Mureika J. Dvasingumas ir prasmė. *Dvasingumas žmogaus pasaulyje*. Compiled by J. Kievišas, R. Kondratienė. Vilnius: Vilniaus pedagoginio universiteto leidykla, 2009, p. 46-87.

consider other connections of aesthetic language with the meaning of sense as well as verbal and logical expression. It will be necessary to disclose the specifics of sense and its place in aesthetic structure which varies considerably and is subject to a nation's mentality, cultural context and traditions."⁹¹

It is a broad concept of sense comprising features of individual and abstract experiences mentioned earlier in this essay.

This essay refers partly to the aesthetological conception of *sense* introduced by Mureika in an attempt to discuss not only the unpurified individualized form of its expressions in literature, but also as one possible aspect of this concept in literary scholarship. A further or even more specific conceptualization of ways of sensing would follow from the three components (or their interconnection) of its theoretical interpretation already mentioned by the philosopher, in which a texture of sensoriness, emotional sensoriness, experiences, imagination, intuition, theoretical value insights prevails.

Such specification is not the goal of this essay. One only has to remember (know) that the philosophical conception of the aesthetic being of the literary work lies in the above-mentioned generalization of sense.

In the context of Mureika's suggested concept of sense (senses), semiotic and other contemporary approaches to Greimas's *esthesis* (discussions about it) are partial, narrower logically, however, they should be (remain) like this. By translating the ancient Greek word *aisthesis* (sensation, perception, sense) as *pajauta* (*sense*), Mureika does not only Lithuanianize the aesthetic vocabulary, -- he uses this word as a synonym of other aesthetic concepts (among them -- *aesthesis*) which are close to it.

Therefore, it is much more important to discuss the semantic complements of this concept than indicate the cases when it cannot be used at all.

It is obvious that in literary scholarship it can be constructive.

For example, the question of sense in the aesthetic perception of Maironis's poem alternated between being important and being irrelevant. The integrity of sense is not identical with its totality. When I had just started reflecting on what the poem "The Heart and Reason" means to me, more precisely -- what is the individual meaning of the poem's significations in the case of my reading, I understood that it grew clearer when *dividing* (*cutting*) it into parts. As we know, every day we have to cut solid, essentially indivisible *things*, usually -- inanimate (an apple, cheese, a log, a stone), as cutting live things (for instance, fish, a bird, a beast) would mean killing them instantaneously. However, in any case we ignore the solidity and choose to experience / perceive something different instead.

The same happens when searching for a sense. The sensing of a literary work is a specified literary concept of sense in accordance with the direction of creation.

According to general analogy (of a work of art), the concept of the *sensing of the literary work* would encompass sensory, extrasensory, somatic insights. All its significant parts are not unambiguous. It would be logical to discuss thoroughly what are belles letters, the literary work, text, reading, perception etc.

If we contend that the concept of the *experience* of a literary work traditionally directs one's consciousness to the psychological practice of the perception of literature, and that the discussion of the questions of this essay which should be very close to the experience(s) characteristic of aesthetics is more acceptable, then the *sensing of the literary work* could be shortened to *sense*. This is how the experience of the values of literary phenomena will be called further in the essay, assigning universal significations and individual meanings of beauty or the work of art to them.

Now it is easy to generalize the author's attitude to the literary work. I will call it neither a point of departure nor a final conclusion, however, it underlines what the essay started with, and it could be that it will finish with similar ideas.

The literary work is an individual origination of the meaning of its significations.

Some would say that this statement sounds tautological, however, it cannot be different. This proposition does not relate to the conception of *art for art's sake* either. (It has already been mentioned that boundaries between art [the work] and those forms of life which, at first sight, are very distant from beauty, creation, and similar phenomena are rejected by art history and its present state.) It is the characteristics of the state which has become an object of our discussions. Like in all human sciences, the phenomena of literary creation have to determine their identity. All sensory forms of the work of art are unrepeatable, but who could confirm it? If I or anyone else said this, it would mean nothing. In terms of certain viewpoints with regard to the sensing of it, a work of art can resemble another one or be even identical with it. Perhaps I do not know / have not experienced something that would allow me to question the work's unrepeatability. Only in the context of broad generalization could I decide whether a literary work is identical with itself. In essence I could not do this. Therefore, a work's individuality is always the assertion of its identity *with itself through itself*. In different cultural (creative) trends the work's individuation occurs or is created differently. Socio-culture most often

⁹¹ Mureika J. Pajauta. *Estetikos enciklopedija*, p. 472.

determines a practically important instrumental function of the works. The individuality of the work of art is different. It is connected with its aesthetic end in itself – *purposeless expediency* or practical senselessness. However, this does not change the general premises of the individuation of the work of art.

Like in all creations of man, their physical or material side cannot determine such individuation, as creation is not only a natural phenomenon. Man's *Self* – an integral power of sensations, thinking, intuition is much more important. The realities of every open work are multiple. They are created by consciousness. The co-existence of the states of all realities of humanistic sphere does not have any causal relationship and can be described only as the state of realities among which one should not see matter or other states of natural reality, for instance, solid bodies, liquids, gas. Different forms of creation form many configurations of reality.

The principle of “disinterested interest” or aestheticism allows one to say that the literary work is an exceptionally peculiar humanistic reality. It is not its shortcoming (“vice”), but a peculiar state. To be more precise, the *work of art* (literature) is an undivided occurrence in human consciousness. Its participants – the author's literary work written down (performed orally) as a text and the reader who reads or listens to it. Their meeting usually occurs as the perception of the work's textual structure – the re-encoding of significations encoded by the author and the creation of new significations. The metaphor of “significations that are slipping away” clearly shows what happens or what can happen during this meeting. It would be inappropriate to call this occurrence the “imitation,” “copy,” “image,” “conscious reflection,” “sign,” “reconstruction” etc. of the “objective,” “social,” “human” reality. All these insights interpret a work of art from the point of view of cognitivism (art as a form of the cognition of reality), stress a minor position of its reality, and this does not conform to a number of “facts” of the work of art whose inner structure and aesthetic manifestation contradict its “cognitive” function.

The inner order of the work's elements is configured by the author's *Self*, and its insight or reconstruction is provided by the reader's *Self*. Thus it is not a secondary reality. It is an individual state which opens the sensory *as* the mental experiences of a human being. It connects the author / reader with the reality which makes the sensing of the work possible. There is no reason to speak about the partiality of a work as its sense or *state*. The work does not exist without the sensing of it, as its sensory form – a text - and the author's or reader's “Self” are connected by the experience of reading the work. There is nothing else between the text and mental “Self” except this experience. The experiences of the author's “Self” and the reader's “Self” or their sensing of the work are different, however, what happens in one of them occurs in the other.

Why are they identical if they do not correspond? It is only a peculiar undivided *state*. It is not the state of *someone* or *something*, but simply a state which we will call the sensing of the literary (art) work. We will obviously not avoid obscurities as in all similar cases, for instance, individuation of the world's state to which each of us is close.

In order to understand, at least partially, why the different structures (physical, sign, or simply - the symbolic totality of the text and the reader's psychological or spiritual “Self”) can become one state and what it means to sense it, we should further on focus more on the literary (art) work's interpretations which are clearer at first sight, as up to a certain point they are logical and comprehensible.

It is obviously difficult to perceive and explain what structure(s) or anti-structure determines the sensing of the literary work. The precondition of the total and momentary perception of the work important to the latter becomes hardly possible or impossible altogether for a number of reasons. Modern and postmodern literature and its reader, that are not detached from the present-day world, do not always (or maybe never) allow one to sense the deepest significations of its state and turn them into individually valuable meanings.

Contemporary Aesthesis – Utopian Sensing?

In other words, the object of contemporary discussions are structures of significations of the constituent parts of the work's semantic content (their subordination) and the aesthetic perception and experience of the work or aesthetic delight (joy, pleasure), while rejecting the structures as insignificant, destroying their hierarchy, or discerning a different (nonstructural) basis of their co-existence.

How should this paradox be understood?

The answer is simple: it is normal to *sense* the work's form while losing it. Such is the challenge which has to be accepted in some way.

Or – how could we explain and understand the *practice of the literary work* without theories or between theories, as the sensing of literary works is also the *sensing of thoughts*, the power of the work to provoke thoughts which, in turn, arouse emotions, conjure up images, etc. Aesthetic contemplation as meditation, reflection, the “sensing of sensory and semiotically encoded objects of spiritual reality”⁹² could lead not only towards contemporary metatheories of (aesthetic) sense, but also towards the generalization of aesthetic sensing

⁹² Mureika J. Estetinė kontempliacija. *Estetikos enciklopedija*, p. 157.

of literary works. It means to try to delineate the process and a way of experience which emphasize its (literature's) *seeming* sensory connection with the *seeming* verisimilitude of reality, and not only with the sensoriness necessary for cognition or communication. The disintegration of the literary work's spiritual values into semantic, communicative, conventional, axiological, teleological, and other parts can be seen only in the context of imaginary totality.

This makes one doubt whether at the confluence of contemporary literature and life, we can expect (and experience) that state of the work and the reader which we call *aesthesis*.

Many pages of this essay have already been written. An attempt has been made to show that the totality of the work and its momentary experience is the territory of problem questions. In certain respects of the perception (explanation, understanding) of a literary work, it is not only difficult to define; it also raises doubts about its existence (reality). The totality and momentariness of the perception of a work explained in isolation by different theories can hardly be formulated into a question of one state or a momentary occurrence; it is also difficult to think of the logic which would describe them.

Nevertheless, cognitive, communicative, and aesthetic contexts of the literary work, which are becoming broader and deeper, prompt the specification of questions of the forms of the work's perception:

What to say / write? / Where / who to say / write to? / How to say / write?

Not all of these questions are of equal significance; however, they bring to mind the traditional links between *literature* and *rhetoric* and raise modern-day problems of the place and role of communication in literature, partial and full sensing of the work, transformation of its aesthetic sensing into other senses, possibilities of sensing the work, authenticity and other problems.

I wrote "modern-day," however, one has to agree that although they are called "modern-day," not all of them are really new in the context of communication.

The experience of the work, which lacks completeness, is quite acceptable to and understood by many authors and readers. For example, literature is only a messenger. The content of "letters" from God, the world or the author addressed to those who are able to read and understand them. It is the above-mentioned reference to reality. (This literary interpretation is rejected neither in school programs nor in general literary practice.)

It has already been mentioned in this essay that the modern-day network of intertexts and contexts of man and language is becoming broader and denser. The literary work is a structural part of a broader and more vital substance – culture as the whole world. The structural relations of different degree do not allow one to regard literature only as part of creation as aesthetic being. The search for definitions of literariness (language function, difference of language, figurativeness, decrease of information, auto-referentiality, the work's value, transformation of style into writing etc.) constantly cross the borders of *poetic discourse*. They are expanded only by poetic motivation, an effort to return to sources of language (for instance, the *scream* as the arbitrariness of the sign). The openness of language (according to Roland Barthes, "infiniteness") arises paradoxically from its structural nature, or inner order, which is only the outer order of the world which semioticians call a *text*. This is the paradox of an *open system* which is a *completed* world. In the 20th c. both natural scientists and specialists in the humanities assert: a physicist – a supporter of the world's relativity / arbitrariness - actually assents to the idea of the objective permanence of the world's totality (which is described by mathematical equations), whereas a literary scholar sees it in the world of literary (art) works. What *totality* ("completeness", "plenitude" etc.) of the literary work, or the work as *a whole*, can we speak about?

The totality is always partial, relative. The concrete and abstract (generalized) experiences of the work respond differently to what philosophers call *reality*, *transcendence*, or other aspects of being. An isolated experience of general existence in the literary work is individualized by both the author and the reader. Even their most elementary co-existence is a unique experience of the work which cannot be held to be an experience that ends in itself.

According to Deleuze, it is even more difficult to reflect on the whole, more precisely - the relation between "time – the whole – the open."⁹³ Waiting for *aesthesis* or the search for it should bring the transformations of "sets of things" to a halt or remain only "parts."

Umberto Eco's study *The Open Work*⁹⁴ sheds some light on this idea. Here Eco defends radically the paradoxical, though productive, *openness* of the system "author – work / text – reader." The author relates the italicized term with the "completeness" and "openness" of the work of art discussed in aesthetics (in this case we have a western invariant of the principle *non finito*, characteristic of Eastern aesthetics).

⁹³ Following Bergson, Deleuze says that "Time is the Open, is what changes – is constantly changing in nature – each moment. It's the whole, which isn't any set of things but the ceaseless passage from one set to another, the transformation of one set of things into another" (Deleuze G. *Derybos*, p. 92).

⁹⁴ *The Open Work*, translated by Anna Cancogni, Harvard University Press, 1989, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

These terms refer to a standard situation of which we are all aware in our reception of a work of art: we see it as the end product of an author's effort to arrange a sequence of communicative effects in such a way that each individual addressee can refashion the original composition devised by the author. The addressee is bound to enter into an interplay of stimulus and response which depends on his unique capacity for sensitive reception of the piece. In this sense the author presents a finished product with the intention that this particular composition should be appreciated and received in the same form as he devised it. As he reacts to the play of stimuli and his own response to their patterning, the individual addressee is bound to supply his own existential credentials, the sense conditioning which is peculiarly his own, a defined culture, a set of tastes, personal inclinations, and prejudices. Thus, his comprehension of the original artifact is always modified by his particular individual perspective. In fact, the form of the work of art gains its aesthetic validity precisely in proportion to the number of different perspectives from which it can be viewed and understood. These give it a wealth of different resonances and echoes without impairing its original essence; a road traffic sign, on the other hand, can be viewed only in only one sense, and if it is transfigured into some fantastic meaning by an imaginative driver, it merely ceases to be that particular traffic sign with that particular meaning. A work of art, therefore, is a complete and closed form in its uniqueness as a balanced organic whole, while at the same time constituting an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different situations which do not impinge on its unadulterable specificity. Hence, every reception of a work of art is both an interpretation and a performance of it, because in every reception the work takes on a fresh perspective for itself.⁹⁵

Turning over the pages of the history of music and literature, Eco confines his attention to poetics which aims to make "the work open to a free interpretation." It is the chronotope of the work's *signification*.⁹⁶ Classical and the new musical communication, in Eco's view, are highly different. According to Eco, today the underlying tendencies of the open work can be discerned in the "open form" of the baroque which is "dynamic, inclined to the vagueness of impression." This "poetics of a *miracle, invention, metaphor* seeks to establish the new man's inventive role. He is no longer to see the work of art as an object which draws on given links with experience and which demands to be enjoyed; now he sees it as a potential mystery to be solved, a role to fulfill, a stimulus to quicken his imagination. <...> In the symbolism of the late 19th c., a conscious poetics of the open work appears for the first time. And this is Paul Verlaine's poem "The Art of Poetry" (*Art poétique*).⁹⁷

Thus, the *word* becomes a "tangle of significations" which are open to new "centers of allusions", their new interpretations. The "open works", "works in movement"⁹⁸ are not contrasted with "complete" works; however, the order of parts of the work is left for the reader to decide on, or even left to chance. Eco's concept of the *open work* offers the reader / spectator a greater possibility of choice and interpretation. Following James Joyce's creation, Eco writes that "the work's suggestiveness, the power of emotional response, the constant renewal of significations present the order of *infinite* universe where "the opening and closing words merge,"⁹⁹ however, it increases the doubt about the reduction of aesthetic element *sui generis*, which "forms", "organizes," or "determines" the literary work to simpler parts. The polymorphous abundance of the work's possible elements, the possibility of its parallel interpretations strengthen paradoxically the empathy of the work, the integrational power of the experience of its different -- aesthetic and non aesthetic -- aspects.

The Open Work was published in the middle of the 20th c. (1962). Henceforth Eco's general conception of literature changed considerably, however, not in essence. He had published a great number of books on questions of cultural semiotics, wrote works of fiction¹⁰⁰ and thus, enriched the list of authors of *open* books on the top of which he had put down James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Berthold Brecht and the names of some other

⁹⁵Eco U. *The Open Work*, p. 3-4.

⁹⁶ Signification – giving sense to a phenomenon, the process of meaning.

⁹⁷ Umberto Eco, *op. cit.*, p. 8. Eco quotes this poem by Verlaine which asserts the tendency of oblique naming, guessing meanings and significations. Here is the beginning of the poem: *Music before everything else / and, to that end, prefer the uneven / more vague and more soluble in air / with nothing in it that is heavy or still* (Translated by A. Cancogni).

⁹⁸ What Eco calls "works in movement" is a smaller group of open works which have the capacity to "physically acquire different unplanned structures." Stéphane Mallarmé's *Book (Le Livre)*, which was never brought to completion, serves an example. In this book even pagination was "unplanned" (they could have been arranged in different ways). See Eco U., *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁹⁹ Eco U. *The Open Work*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Umberto Eco published seven novels: *Il nome della rosa (The Name of the Rose, 1980)*; *Il pendolo di Foucault (Foucault's Pendulum, 1988)*; *L'isola del giorno prima (The Island of the Day Before, 1994)*; *Baudolino (Baudolino, 2000)*; *La misteriosa fiamma della regina Loana (The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana, 2004)*; *Il cimitero di Praga (The Prague Cemetery, 2010)*; *Numero zero (Numero Zero, 2015)*.

writers. In his commentaries on his own literary works, Eco describes literature as a postmodern “provocation” of the reader’s consciousness. Nevertheless, the writer remained attentive to a “complete,” though always rather complicated, form of the work created by the author entrusting it (as “open”) to the reader for further development.¹⁰¹ In Eco’s view, the appeal of the conception of the border which can be, if not annihilated, then crossed, moved, expanded, arises from confronting death as an existential fact, a border insurmountable by a human being. Eco follows Charles Sanders Peirce, an American philosopher, father of semiotics and interpretation theory, who claims that facts are interpreted through signs therefore, interpretations have limits.

The concept of the open work indicates that consciousness is “responsible” (to the author and the reader) for being in one work, but it cannot fulfill this “obligation,” as it is always somewhere else and everywhere. The “complete” forms, which contain the world’s infinitude, are interpreted. The phenomenological undertaking to open the “thing” and the “world” as wide as possible has always stimulated and still stimulates one to reflect on the analogies of total, “complete” world – certain structures which, in essence, cannot remain analogous.

Questions of the “totality” and “momentariness” of the literary work’s perception are not only the inner side of its aesthetic sensing. On the contrary, owing to its natural totality and momentariness, aesthetic sensing becomes the exterior totality and momentariness which unite other forms of sensing.

This is connected with coherent correlations between language, writing, and text. Especially significant in this system is a text, of course, when we isolate it, define and understand it differently from the traditional words a *literary work*, *literature*. Only on a certain (concrete) level the experience (or its variability) of a literary work acquires the form of language and writing *as a text*. It opens new directions of the insights of the work’s significations and can become the main axis of literary theory. Structuralists formulate a systematic theoretical view of the literary work as the conception of the *text*.

Text means *Tissue*; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies, more or less hidden, meaning (truth), we are now emphasizing, in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving; lost in this tissue – this texture – the subject unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of its web. Were we fond of neologisms, we might define the theory of the text as an *hyphology* (*hyphos* is the tissue and the spider’s web).¹⁰²

A text is an “orchard of words’ paradise” (Barthes), an island of freedom. In the open system of the “text” all concepts are only metaphors and references. For this reason, language extends itself beyond the borders of the text of a literary work. The language of the literary work is controlled not by its right or wrong content, but by its own systemic power to generate new significations. This should be taken into consideration, when old terms are “attacked” and the new ones come into use.

In the works of almost all poststructuralist authors there is a strategic decision to reject a too important role of the author in the interpretation of a text. For this reason, the very concept of the *literary work* is supplanted by a text and its impersonal structure. True, the latter is paradoxically personified: the reader sees / reflects on the structure, and the structure “sees / reflects on” the reader. The initial stage of structuralist analysis is the rejection of redundant significations and the creation of the original ones. For all that, the origination of “structural” significations is not the case of *deus ex machina*. Hence, there is a need for mythical, linguistic or other culture-bound insights. It is only from them or through them that one can try to reach for beauty or the work of art (literature).

Today, classical interpretations of beauty and the work of art seem tautological or are only references, even if encoded, to the frames of interpretation. How to speak about beauty which exists only as *another* phenomenon, “unrelated” to beauty? How should one distinguish works of fiction which “introduce” themselves as documentary, journalistic, even philosophical? There is no general comprehensive explanation from the viewpoint of phenomenology or any other positivistic philosophy, whereas the structuralist (one of them – semiotic) interpretation of the work “produces” too many codes, and choosing and applying them poses a challenge to everyone and all of us. They usually offer new theoretical tools – concepts which would have to supplement or even replace the concept of the work of art.

¹⁰¹ “I think that books are read, sometimes more than once, for about 10 years. I have always been attached to erudites and philosophers and my books were regarded as difficult. Then I wrote a very simple book in very simple language – *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*. And it turned out that people wanted to read it least of all. I don’t think I write for masochists, though publishers and some journalists are always telling me that people want simple things. People have become weary of them. They want challenges.” (Eco U. Žmonės nori iššūkių. *Lietuvos žinios*, 2012 m. sausio 6 d. Access on the internet: [http://www.lzinios.lt/Prie-kavos/Umberto-Eco-zmones-nori-issukiu.](http://www.lzinios.lt/Prie-kavos/Umberto-Eco-zmones-nori-issukiu))

¹⁰² Barthes R. *The Pleasure of the Text*, p. 64.

Could an essentially (or by nature) infinite interior form (structure) of the work be substituted for a certain stage of its development (immanence)? Could we assume that any phase of the sensing of the work is close enough to the state of the work and the reader which is called aesthesis?

There are quite a few theories which suggest a heterogeneous sensing of the work. With every named or emphasized stage of the work's immanence the uncertainty about the possibilities of the reality of aesthesis (according to Greimas), catharsis (according to Aristotle), the Open, illumination (according to Heidegger) – the description of their ontological content - is increasing.

In the context of the structuralist analysis of a literary work's aesthetic perception, Roland Barthes's concept of the *pleasure of the text* seems intriguing. It reminds one of the phases of aesthetic perception pointed out by aesthetologists, during which the work's significations ("meanings"), which give a sense of *pleasure*, are created. It seems to resemble Greimas's *esthesis*. Only at first glance, however. Usually it is an occurrence of meeting with a literary work resulting from the aesthetic attitude. Yet it is remote from what could be called a peculiar sense of the value of personality's freedom and creation, *catharsis* or *aesthesis*. But maybe it is too strictly defined? Hardly so. "Too strictly" – as much as contemporary *open* structuralism allows it. Greimas is more categorical when he writes:

All the same, the so-called aesthetic values are the only ones that are pure, the only ones which, rejecting any negativity, can make us more spiritual. Then incompleteness seems like a springboard throwing us towards significance.¹⁰³

It is hard to believe that all this was written by a literary semiotician Greimas. These connections between reality and literature are not created by narrative semiotics or theories of modalities; however, they are regarded by a strict and unambiguous metaphysical viewpoint.

Barthes himself does not conceal the ambiguity and vagueness of the concept of the *pleasure of the text*. In an essay "The Pleasure of the Text" (*Le Plaisir du texte*, 1973) devoted to the explanation of the concept, we find only the endless attempts to approach it as the semantic development of co-existence of the *pleasure of the text* and the *bliss of the text*. Having started the essay with the sentence "The pleasure of the text: like Bacon's simulator, it can say: never apologize, never explain,"¹⁰⁴ he defines the concept only at the end of the text: "That is the pleasure of the text: value shifted to the sumptuous rank of the signifier"¹⁰⁵ and speaks about *writing aloud*. In this essay, alongside other considerations, Barthes reflects on a pleasant ("lively," "exciting") text about pleasure and the bliss of the text / from the text / through the text. We observe a "conflict-free," but diverse usage of both words as well as their polysemy, a wealth of significations and their playfulness, as pleasure is derived not as an absolute but only as a conditional naming of the state of the text and the reader ("I gain an enormous pleasure through it if I lend my ear to it, if while reading, I raise my head from time to time and fall to thinking about something different"), aching for the "dead author," unnecessary ideology, concealed erotics, etc.

Having explained the "pleasure of the text" in terms of the metaphor of "happy Babylon," he maintains:

Pleasure / Bliss: terminologically, there is always a vascillation – I stumble, I err. In any case, there will always be a margin of indecision: the distinction will not be the source of absolute classifications, the paradigm will falter, the meaning will be precarious, reversible, the discourse incomplete.¹⁰⁶

Barthes admits that the reader who takes *pleasure* in the text finds himself in a contradictory space of experiences ("happy Babylon"), conforms to the cultural tradition and, at the same time, goes against it, in other words – he becomes a "subject split twice over, doubly perverse." And this is how he becomes the subject of bliss:

Text of pleasure: the text that contents, fills, grants euphoria; the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, it is linked to a *comfortable* practice of reading. Text of bliss: the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain boredom), unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Greimas A. *Apie netobulumq*, p. 222.

¹⁰⁴ Barthes R. *The Pleasure of the Text*, p.3.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.65.

¹⁰⁶ Barthes R. *The Pleasure of the Text*, p.4.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

One can note ambiguity in this “definition” because the author speaks about the *text* which “the reader would be willing to write himself.” Unfortunately (or luckily), the abstract reader is essentially detached from indulgence, ecstasy, or aesthesis.

Further interpretations of this concept in the essay basically encompass more and more signification centers, the tension of the text’s semiotic layers increases and ends with a confession:

Yet the position of pleasure in a theory of the text is not certain. Simply, a day comes when we feel a certain need to *loosen* the theory a bit, to shift the discourse, the idiolect which repeats itself, becomes consistent, and to give it the shock of a question. Pleasure is this question.¹⁰⁸

Barthes’s concept, the *pleasure of the text*, is identified with “a value which has the honorary title of a signifier” and is based not on the traditional attitude of aesthetic perception, but on the premise that aesthetic phenomena emerge only through the experience of semiotically defined culture as the *reading* of a text. It has different shapes. An attempt to experience “occurrences-impulses” is made as well. To explain the aesthetics of the pleasure of the text, Barthes suggests imagining, what he calls, *writing aloud* which can be hardly carried into effect and which is only the “*texture* of the voice itself” – of phonetic rather than phonological nature. In this way, something can sound through the body – “that is bliss.”¹⁰⁹

In terms of structuralism, an object is defined by functions of its constituent elements, however, here we encounter the reader’s “taste.” True, it is transferred to a text, turned into a “possibility.” The latter can be only partially put in the frames of a function. A function aims at completeness, and the poetics of the literary work’s / text’s “openness” is an aesthetic programme according to which, an individual interpretation of the experience of the literary work *to one’s taste* is only relatively completed – it is “not accepted” by other “users,” as their experience is “parallel,” divergent, however, it does not negate any individual interpretation. The plurality unfolding through the text challenges, undermines, transforms the meanings of *the pleasure of the text / the bliss of the text* implied in the beginning. *The pleasure of the text* differs from what is called *the bliss of the text*.

In the experiences of the “pleasure” and “bliss” of the text or their codes described by Barthes, one can discern the “authority,” the structural power of the episteme which moves in all directions, which is dissolved and which has overwhelmed the author, text / literary work and the reader. Barthes writes: “The language I speak *within myself* is not of my time,”¹¹⁰ admitting that this penultimate language is a governing factor, therefore, it is usually the language of pleasure, and “bliss may come only with the *absolutely new*.”¹¹¹

One has to agree that today, reading is understood by many as a “more active” side of the literary work (its reader). However, we must defend the active powers of writing, or the author. In addition, the fact of the *number* of authors, literary works and readers is gradually losing its importance, while the importance of every literary work of great talent which is read creatively is increasing. Accordingly, the place and role of the literary work in the communities of writers, publishers and readers is changing.

A link between traditional and modern literature is contradictory. Its paradoxical forms usually do not allow the reader to understand the essence of today’s literature. For all that, this link (at least in terms of literary history) is significant - new, let us say, stylistic insights are (only) complements to the old ones. Obviously, the majority of new books often only repeat rather than extend, supplement, or change in any other way standards of the artistic perception of earlier literary works: a sudden change of artistic expressive means is always viewed critically. Taking into consideration the readers’ expectations, new books should not diminish the impression of usual literature. Modernity “wins” in a paradoxical way, when it seems that tradition is not being broken – classical images unnoticed by the readers naturally break into the new literature. The works which have already been read, that is, traditional poetics remind us: everything that comes back from the past as the present and as future expectations, is real, while everything that remains a vicarious experience, takes on the appearance of it. Only a small number of readers as well as critics confine their attention to the literary works which formally emphasize a breakthrough in poetics, and such works are viewed as symbols of changing paradigms, though the literary sensing of them is an issue of endless arguments between “theorists” and “practitioners.” The theorists have no power over the readers (“practitioners”) who discover manifestations of the new literature in places where a paradigmatic breakthrough is not naturally important or mind-blowing.

In the context of dialogue, communication, and open culture, contemporary poetics (the perception of the theory of the literary work) and rhetoric (the connections between structural elements of the work’s literariness)

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁰⁹ Barthes R. *The Pleasure of the Text*, 67.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

are an object of many human sciences. It is only through the joint efforts of linguists, literary scholars, and logicians that new interpretations of the perceptions of Aristotle's poetics and rhetoric appear.

Having recalled Foucault's triad *life, work, and language* mentioned in the previous sections of the essay, we could imagine it not as an equilateral but as a right-angled triangle whose hypotenuse symbolizes language: it is always "longer" than any other structure, it always joins both structures – divergent directions of the sensing of reality. We can think this way not only about "natural," everyday language, but also about its artificial forms, abstract linguistic structures.

Does 20th C. structuralism, which has refined linguistic structures, acknowledge the power of language to arouse feelings? The answer to the question would be another question: whose feelings? (Greimas would answer: the feelings of the subject. A certain peculiar tension between the subject and the object is built up, the pathemized ("passion") subject appears). The deconstruction of the literary work, called a text, is the text's, as it is the subject's, "manifestation" (the creation of other meanings of the text), its grappling with "meanings." However, the dissolution of such a subject in "the manifestation of the work" can be interpreted in terms of psychoanalysis, "bliss" may endow the text with eroticism, and this determines the reader's effect.

The powers of the effect of language structures appear through the text itself, however, through the reader's different attitudes to it therefore, the range of feelings which are affected and evoked is diverse. This may be the reason for the formation of new attitudes to Aristotle's *Poetics*, a return to the principle of *holism* formulated by him, which exerts an influence not only on ecology, but also on the philosophy of language, theories of economics, anthropology, education. The 20th C. holistic movement encompassed music, painting, sculpture, theatre. Personal experiences in perceiving a work of art cross the borders of *language*, bring the perceiver (the one who experiences) close to the sense of totality. For the latter all experiences are important, those which merge with totality in the experiences of the work, totality which is always bigger, broader, deeper than its parts.

In this context the Foucault's "archaeological" structures (epistemes) of cognition, mentioned above, are a complicated (both genetic and structural) power. They are described by three pairs of concepts: 1) biological *functions* and their corresponding *norms*; 2) economic *conflicts* and *rules* that establish them; 3) the *meaning* of modern man's activity and its traces as a *system of signs*.¹¹² The power of this complicated configuration affects and changes contemporary literature: the biological, economical, and linguistic *appearance of man* has been a linguistic space (of a system of meanings) already for two centuries. It should be borne in mind that power to Foucault is a shapeless element unfolding itself among forms of knowledge or beneath them. The philosopher found it important to explore the process of resistance to these "powers" and tried to understand how the borders of the relations of all possible "powers" are crossed. According to the philosopher, what comes into being is *subjectivity* – the border of reality, its curvature (its analogy – Albert Einstein's "curved space").

Historical epistemes give way to new rhetoric or poetics, but the integral new parts of Foucault's episteme remain. Hence, the new elements of poetics supplement the old traditional ones and foreground the above-mentioned openness of the literary work as a whole.

For example, "group μ "¹¹³ maintains that literature is a "peculiar use of language,"¹¹⁴ in other words – a "formal restructuring of language,"¹¹⁵ and emphasizes the linguistic content of literary theory as an object of

¹¹² Foucault M., *The Order of Things*, 357.

¹¹³ In 1970 some scientists of Liège university in Belgium, who called themselves *groupe μ* , published the conception of principles of "General Rhetoric" (Dubois J., Edeline F., Klinkenberg J.M., Minguet P., Pire F., Triron H. *Rhétorique générale par le groupe μ* . Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1970). In 1977 the second book devoted to the rhetoric of poetry came out. This is how Aelita Kensminienė describes its essence: "The main concept of *general rhetoric* is a metabole, or, a certain deviation recorded on any level, while a poet rhetorician is speaking and writing and a recipient is listening and reading. A metabole forms a dynamic opposition to the concept of zero level. The scientists of Liège differentiate between three classes of metaboles connected with a language system: metaplasm (morphological changes), metataxis (syntactical changes), and metasemes (semantic changes), and one class of metaboles of referential content – metalogisms (figures of thought). All the field of deviations from a linguistic code is represented by the first three types of metaboles. Transformations of zero level are achieved by making changes which encompass all possible operations with respect to the object: reduction, addition, reduction with addition, and reconstruction. Thus a concrete metabole results from one or two such operations. The concept of metabole in this theory is identical with the concept of figure. (Kensminienė A. Lietuvių mįslių kalbinė raiška: fonetiniai ir morfologiniai žaidimai. *Tautosakos darbai*, XXX. Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2008).

¹¹⁴ Diubua Ž. I dr. *Obščiaja retorika*. Moskva: Progress, 1986, p. 37.

¹¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, s. 47.

poetics,¹¹⁶ the effect of both oral and written *language* upon a recipient. This enables representatives of the group to describe a more complex and dynamic model of rhetorical / poetic meanings.

It is obvious that changes of linguistic methodology and methods affect, both directly and indirectly, the conception of literature. The latter becomes more open and less defined.

It can be said that the figurativeness of language, its obliqueness, deviation (from everyday use), figurative use of words “rescue” the *idea* of literature, which has not faded into oblivion since the times of Aristotle. They also provide a stimulus for ever new interpretations of language essential to literature, the work’s content and form, genres, style, etc.

Thus, one has to agree that 20th C. literature and its philosophical trends create new practical and theoretical – especially formalistic / structuralist – premises for a more complicated and comprehensive description of the experience of the literary work. Could historically older and newer concepts of aesthetics, such as catharsis, experience, perception, taste, aesthesis, remain unchanged alongside the changing metalinguistics and meta-axiology? Apparently they have to be discussed anew, and their content has to be specified from time to time.

To understand means to think, to show a literary work’s different semantic sections and its (as a phenomenon’s) openness in our consciousness, even where or when the semantic content remains obscure (incomprehensible) to our consciousness, or disappears altogether.

In terms of the concepts of literature as a messenger, communication, a source of emotional experience and similar concepts, the importance of the work is still placed on its scientific (referential) content.

Even today, when we speak about literature, Georg Hegel’s aesthetics engraved (maybe already archetypal) in our memory prompts one, first of all, to remember the literary work’s ideas, then the plot, events, personages and their characters, metaphors. The philosophical panlogism in which a historical opposition between consciousness and object results in their becoming identical, and the idea is regarded as the queen of literature. The feeling extolled by romanticists did not surpass the idea. True, the idea was given a simpler interpretation, was more often associated only with a focus on man’s thinking, and was partly deprived of transcendentalism and acquired positivity. A short outburst of theories of values at the beginning of the 20th c., which could have virtually changed the conception of connections between literature (and all art) and knowledge, was quickly forgotten by both philosophers of art and literature. The concept of value

became intermedial: every discipline of the humanities determines its content in accordance with its aims of investigation and does not take historical axiology as its methodological basis. After the changes made in 20th C. literature and its theoretical reflections, the semantic aesthetics of the work of art is still being written,¹¹⁷ and *cognitive* literary theories remain relevant.¹¹⁸ The traditional *mimetic* or *imitational* ones, whose sources are associated with Plato and Aristotle, are also valid today and stress the educational function of the work. Such literary concepts seem to be dissociated from a free creation of the possibilities of life, which had already been envisioned by the ancient Greeks and which is emphasized by more than one 20th C. philosopher.

Hence the expression of ideas in “sensory forms” remains a *multiple* world of the reality of the work, a free and individual play of imagination with forms of this reality, the play which is difficult to see, hear, or experience in a different way.

Especially – to sense the original power of the work and its direct manifestation. While searching and waiting for aesthesis, one has to encounter resistance from the power structures which reject aesthesis and dissociate us from it.

The semantic conception of the literary work stimulates one to know, perceive, understand, explain, analyze, interpret.¹¹⁹ To describe a work in terms of its respective functions – educational, emotive (expressive), formalistic, aesthetic. More than one classical or traditional 20th C. theory of art has been described

¹¹⁶ “Rhetoric is knowledge of means of language characteristic of literature. What we call *poetics* is a comprehensive knowledge of general principles of poetry bearing in mind the idea of poetry as a perfect example of literature” (*Op. cit.*, p. 58).

¹¹⁷ See Jackūnas Ž. *Estetika ir prasmė*. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos centras, 2011, p. 230.

¹¹⁸ In one of the most recent textbooks for university students of the humanities, more than ten methodological directions were introduced in Lithuania for the first time. A greater part of them connects the essence, or manifestation of the literary work with its semantic significations (See *XX amžiaus literatūros teorijos*. Sud. Aušra Jurgutienė. Vilnius: Vilniaus pedagoginio universiteto leidykla, 2006.)

¹¹⁹ This conception is reflected in the latest (2013) concepts of the *reasoning* and *literary* essay of state and school-leaving examination at schools of the Republic of Lithuania. They are differentiated on the basis of the meaning of problems (?) of life *to the one who is writing* and their *examples* from literature (in an essay of reasoning) and the raising of problems of life, as well as their expression in a literary work itself (*literary* essay).

by these concepts. Nontraditional theories of art do not attach great importance to the semantics of the work. They are based on the procedures of recognition of the artwork, common consent, therefore, they are classified as *procedural* or *conventional*.¹²⁰ They connect the work of art (literature) with history, genres, institutions. Having elucidated the procedures of recognition of the literary work's status, the consensus of experts, institutions, award committees and other evaluators on the criteria of relative and open artworks, it becomes obvious that their anti-essentiality is partial: they choose only those features of the work of art or cultural conditions of its use which are less subordinate to the search for aesthesis, but the nature of all criteria is semantic.

Thus, what are today's obstacles that have to be overcome in cases of the search for aesthesis?

First of all, the variety and arbitrariness of the concept of *literature* (or *literary work*) has to be mentioned. The formulation of concepts is not an easy task possible for every reader (even for a philosopher). Owing to the confusion of old concepts and a lack of the new ones which would overcome this confusion, the reading of a literary work is oriented more to the outside rather than the inside of the work – its perception, understanding, assigning meanings to it, etc. It could be that many works are written in a similar manner: not according to an inner "project," ignoring its immanence, relying upon its place in literature (its poetry, prose, drama), or, more broadly speaking, in the whole machinery of culture. It is difficult to indicate the "coordinates" of aesthesis in the structure of literary cultural machinery, for aesthesis is a probability of emanation and individuation.

The literary work's *referential* (mimetic) content, which conceptually renews itself in new forms and is still popular, is not that significant, though it is relevant. The search (waiting) for aesthesis is compared with the revelation of truth whose place is not (should not be) Hippocrene.

The third, almost insurmountable, obstacle to aesthesis is a confluence of literature and life. Literariness on this and the other side of literature, the simulacra of aestheticism mislead and disperse the power of the state of the *literary work* and the *reader* in all spheres of life. The multiplicity of language and man provokes the multiplicity of a person (the individual) – his intentional activity on different (heterogeneous) levels of literature and life.

All this makes one presume that this essay discussed only the utopia of *literary aesthesis*.

By Way of the End, Or, Hopes for Aesthesis

We still know a lot and very little about the literary work which *was written by the author and read by the reader*. The variety of literary theories and the semantic significance of their application suggest that this occurrence is a mystery: a totality which we only try to discuss while thinking about it, that is, we perceive it as being dissociated from consciousness – an occurrence contrasted with it, whereas we perceive the experience of our consciousness, the reader's "Self," which was something else rather than thinking. The state the "*literary work* and the *Self*," is a structure that both creates and destroys itself. It is *not a structure* but something that cannot be named.

It is obvious that as links between literature and life are becoming more complex, the sensing of the literary work is increasingly more rational. It becomes an integration of partial senses, it becomes longer, its readiness is more complicated, and the thing we call aesthesis is a rarer occurrence, because the possibilities of total and momentary sensing are becoming faint. This makes one ask and doubt whether in the case of the confluence of present-day literature and life we can anticipate and experience the state of the literary work and the reader which we call aesthesis.

While searching for and moving towards it, one sometimes stops to have a rest even before he has reached it. These are hopeful "halts" *on this side of possible* aesthesis. Usually one rests *on the other side* of it, but without having reached it either.

Nevertheless, *aesthesis*, even when it is only a *utopia*, can be imagined to be an attractive and significant set of senses – the transformation of real senses in their temporary eternity. It is meaningful to the becoming of a person, which no one in particular concerns themselves about.

Translated from Lithuanian by Daina Miniotaitė

¹²⁰ Lamarque P. *Objects of Interpretation. The Philosophy of Interpretation*. Ed. By J. Margolis, T. Rocmore. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 2000, p. 10.