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Synecotics by Kornel Makuszyński (*Satan from the 7th grade*)

Following the specific features of creative thinking could have been observed for a long time. That is why one can look at creativity from various angles, due to the fact that it has many meanings. The two basic approaches relate to research on creativity as a process or a creativity considered in terms of creative abilities¹. As Dorota Kubicka states, “in research on creativity, there is now a more synthesizing, comprehensive approach, directed not at the search for differences and definitional differences between the ‘creative’ and ‘non-creative’ mental process, but rather at creation of complex models of psychological mechanisms, of which ‘resultant’ are the creative activities”². She also emphasizes the fact that apart from the disposable and processual approach, the functional paradigm of creativity is increasingly recognized.

Besides, the forms of creative activity differ not only on the structural level, but also on the functional level. At least three varieties of the creativity can be pointed out here: universal, instrumental (task-based) and creativity as the fulfillment of values³. The latter applies primarily to literature (including art, science, inventiveness), due to the fact that it implies the transformation of the world that results from the hubristic need to realize or multiply values in a specific area of life and the need to expose one’s personality. It also involves self-development, that is, activation and reproduction of personal resources. And that aspect will be of particular interest to us⁴.

¹ See: C. Nosal, *Różnorodność twórczych umysłów – ujęcie holistyczne* [w:] *Twórcze przetwarzanie informacji*, red. C. Nosal, Wrocław 1992, pp. 11–25.

² D. Kubicka, *Twórcze działanie dziecka w sytuacji zabawowo-zadaniowej*, Kraków 2003, p. 9.

³ Compare with.: L. Cohen, *A continuum of adaptive creative behaviors*, „Creativity Research Journal” 1989, No. 2, pp. 169–174.

⁴ See: D. Kubicka, *Twórcze działanie...*, p. 10.

Introduction

Raising the creative potential – for example in the work of a writer, teacher, painter – often requires reaching for various techniques or even tricks that may encourage creative activity and constant (auto) motivation to action. That acquisition of practice is often limited to mental gymnastics, which is associated in a significant way with the impact on oneself as well as the practice of exercises that shape the skills which are necessary in creative action. Edward Nęcka calls them a training in creativity⁵, indicating that one can train both intellect and other skills (e.g. social, or related to the ability to overcome obstacles in creative thinking, as well as enabling the skills to arouse motivation to create new ideas). Inventing the concept of a novel, preparing an attractive lesson, constructing a vision of a painting requires skills but also an appropriate approach, preparation and commitment, often long-lasting and even “painful”.

Creative techniques for solving problems also play an important role in the area of creativity. While training is person-oriented, these techniques focus on the task (problem). As sets of “rules for discovery”⁶ (heuristic rules) they work as divergent thinking forms. There are two basic trends of heuristics: analytical and intuitive. Techniques from the analytical trend tend to focus on “systematic pursuit of the goal by analyzing the essence of the problem, as well as analyzing the obstacles that hamper the solution. They also often require breaking up the problem into components and solving each problem separately”⁷. In the intuitive approach, what counts is pragmatism. It is about “such methods of attacking a problem that have worked in practice, regardless of whether they are grounded in theory, logical, systematised or internally consistent”⁸. As E. Nęcka points out, “their intuitiveness means – on the one hand – relying on the collective wisdom or common intuition of people who effectively and with benefit are able to use them, and on the other – the use of imagination, emotions, passions or other unproven sources of inspiration in the process of solving the problem”⁹.

What should be primarily included here is a system called brainstorming (e.g. postponing the assessment, the amount turning into quality), introduced by Alex Orborn (1959) and developed by Sidney Parnes (1963, 1967) as well as Wiliam Gordon’s synectics (1961)¹⁰. Gordon’s method was developed and modified by George Prince (1970), who acknowledged that the type and phase of the problem under analysis affect the order of activities and require the division of the synectic procedure into stages (e.g.a ‘mind tour’, a ‘closed door’, an ‘oblivion’)¹¹.

⁵ E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości*, Sopot 2003, pp. 204–208.

⁶ Quotation after E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości...*, p. 209.

⁷ E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości...*, p. 209.

⁸ E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości...*, p. 210.

⁹ E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości...*, p. 210.

¹⁰ E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości...*, p. 211.

¹¹ E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości...*, p. 212.

About the author

Kornel Makuszyński was born in 1884 in Stryj (the Stanisławów province at the time). He was the son of Edward, a retired colonel in the Austrian army and Julia of the Ogonowscy¹². He spent his childhood in Stryj, where he attended to the junior high's first grade. He graduated from the second grade of the junior high school in Przemyśl, then he moved to Lviv, where between the years 1898–1903 he was a student of the Jan Długosz 4th Junior High School¹³. Makuszyński's youthful debut is dated on 1902. As a seventh grade Jan Długosz's junior high school student in Lviv he occasionally wrote poems. Among them were: satire for a priest junior high school in Stryj, scribbles on historical topics, love rhymes – the latter were written to order of his schoolmates¹⁴.

After graduating from junior high school, he began studies (Polish and Roman studies) at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv. He was active in the Student Circle of Polish Studies. He also debuted as a poet in the "Polish Word". Then he went to Paris where he studied at the Sorbonne. Before 1914, he also lived in other countries of Western Europe, mainly in Italy. For the short period of time he was in Russia. He lived in Kiev for a few years. He settled in Warsaw permanently. He particularly liked Zakopane. In 1929 he was awarded the title of an honorary citizen of Zakopane. He died in the capital of the Tatra Mountains on July 31, 1953. He was buried there (Cemetery of the Merit in Pęksowy Brzyzek). In *Pages from the calendar*, we can read:

"He was a writer of a great momentum, he wandered carelessly through genres and styles, switching from lofty poetic stanzas to brilliant editorials, from a novel with a sentimental tear to comic stories, from theatrical reviews to humorals, from the tales 'of life' to fantasy fairytales – to finally – when he was already a mature and widely known writer – he chose the field of an art that henceforth became the closest for younger and older children, who soon recognized him as 'their' author"¹⁵.

Kornel Makuszyński made his debut with the collection of poems *Fishing the stars* and humorals *Humorous Things*. He collected theater reviews in *Paper Souls*. As a classic of humor and witty editorials he announced the following collections: *Arab brawls*, *Cutouts*, *Lady's life and other trinkets*, *Collected Letters*, *Pages from the calendar*¹⁶. The first book that he gave to children was *Hoof the Shoemaker (Szewc Kopytko)* and *Quack the Duck (Kaczor Kwak)*. He created memorable *The Adventures of Matolek the Billy Goats (Przygody Koziołka*

¹² Makuszyński Kornel [in:] *Polski słownik biograficzny*, Wrocław 1974, t. XIX.

¹³ J. Kowalczykówna, *Portrety literackie pisarzy dla dzieci i młodzieży. Kornel Makuszyński*, Warszawa 1989, p. 3.

¹⁴ D. Piasecka, *Proza Kornela Makuszyńskiego dla młodego odbiorcy*, Warszawa 1984, p. 10.

¹⁵ K. Makuszyński, *Kartki z kalendarza*, red. i wstęp K. Kuliczowska, Kraków 1985, pp. 5–6.

¹⁶ Makuszyński Kornel [in:] *Literatura polska. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny*, Warszawa 1984, tome I, p. 629.

Matolka) and *The Fights and Antics of Little Fiki-Miki* (*Awantury i wybryki małej malpki Fiki-Miki*) for children.

He addressed novels to the youth: *Of the two who had stolen the moon*, *A friend of a happy devil*, *A virgin with a wet head*, *A winged boy*, *A great gate*, *A trip under a dog*, *An argument about Basia*, *Satan from the 7th grade*, *A letter from that world*, *Miss Eva's madness* (*O dwóch takich co ukradli księżyc*, *Przyjaciel wesolego diabła*, *Panna z mokrą głową*, *Skrzydlaty chłopiec*, *Wielka brama*, *Wyprawa pod psem*, *Awantura o Basię*, *Szatan z siódmej klasy*, *List z tamtego świata*, *Szaleństwa panny Ewy*).

He also published novels from the bohemian life titled *Pearls and Swine* and *Through the Milky Way* as well as the memoir *Sinless Years*. Moreover, he was the author of historical legends *Of the Wawel dragon* and *Wanda lies in our land*.

The writer was capable of looking at people from a distance, and at the same time with admiration for their nobility and great heart. In the novel, *Satan from the 7th grade* he presented the functioning of the class in a way that testifies to the knowledge of the school environment and the youth themselves, showed the relationship between the educator and the youth, emphasized the importance of human kindness and out-of-the-box thinking both of students and teachers. Literature researchers emphasize that Makuszyński was able to create credible characters because he gave them a lively temperament and spontaneous reactions. At the same time, his prose is characterized by an extraordinary flexibility of language and colorful solutions with quite predictable (optimistic) endings.

A character in a literary work

From the dictionary definition, one can understand that a 'literary character' is a "fictional person appearing in the world of a literary work"¹⁷. Within the world of the presented work such person fulfills important structural functions: "he co-creates the network of the depicted figures, and moreover, links plot motifs to bigger clusters, especially events"¹⁸. A literary character is a whole "made up of various motifs (...)"¹⁹.

It consists of features (character and appearance), thoughts, actions, whose relationship is determined by a specific integration pattern as a resultant of the three components:

1. "a literary stereotype established in the tradition of a given genre;
2. non-literary personal model shaped in social conditions which are the subject to the observation of the writer;

¹⁷ *Postać literacka (Literary character)* [in:] *Słownik terminów literackich*, red. J. Sławiński, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1976, p. 322.

¹⁸ *Postać literacka (Literary character)*..., p. 323.

¹⁹ *Postać literacka (Literary character)*...

3. an attitude of life promoted by the creator of the ideal”²⁰.

The hierarchy of these components may differ, constituted depending on the work.

Adam Cisowski as a literary character was conceived and created as a student in the seventh grade of the Warsaw grammar school, a brother of four siblings of “different ages and genders”²¹. Father, the doctor works to support a family of several people. The mother deals with children. During plot events we learn that the family is going to spend their holidays at the seaside.

In the narrative layer of the novel, Adam is considered to be an uncommon mind and a good friend. He can solve even absurdly complicated matters, which is why students from various classes come to him to save them from numerous oppression. As an amateur detective, Adaś also solves the puzzles of everyday life at home. At the beginning of the holidays the history teacher, Paweł Gąsowski, unexpectedly reports to him because he is unable to remedy the strange and disturbing events in his family estate near Vilnius. He asks Adam to spend his holidays in Bejgole and try to explain the secrets of the family manor. Adam resigns from the seaside holidays and together with Professor Gąsowski and his niece, Wanda (with violet eyes), is planning on deciphering the mystery of the disappearing door. He is also extremely adventurous.

What is synectics?

Synectics is one of the ways to solve the problem creatively. It focuses on searching, finding and applying distant associations and developing custom (often hidden) solutions or applications. The method is based first of all on the observation and understanding of uniqueness and secondly on the use of analogies or metaphors in order to look at a problem from a different perspective, which will enable redefinition and reorganization of the problematic situation²².

Synectics in the original version by William J. J. Gordon²³ means “skillful use of analogy in the pursuit of understanding the problem and developing an effective solution”²⁴. It comes from the Greek *synektikos*, meaning “holding together, covering”, or *synektadzo*—“exploring together”. Its essence and task is to move away from the usual rules and indisputable truths in order to take on new issues, use different points of view and distant combinations.

The synectic procedure consists of several stages based on metaphorical thinking rooted in detailed heuristics called analogies. W.J.J. Gordon distinguishes four types of these stages: direct (simple), personal (private), symbolic and fantastic.

²⁰ *Postać literacka (Literary character)...*, pp. 322–323.

²¹ K. Makuszyński, *Szatan z siódmej klasy*, Warszawa 2017, p. 33.

²² W. Limont, *Uczeń zdolny. Jak go rozpoznać i jak z nim pracować*, Sopot 2012, p. 189.

²³ See: W.J.J. Gordon, *Synectics: The development of creative capacity. A new method of directing creative potential to the solution of technical and theoretical problems*, New York 1961.

²⁴ E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości...*, p. 211.

Direct analogy is about finding solutions in some respects similar to the task being solved. In other words solutions are transferred from one field to another (e.g. dematerialisation of ice cream in the home of the main character of Makuszyński's novel). The feature of personal (private) analogy is to identify with the problem, by reaching for individual experiences (including imagination and emotions) and changing the point of view. So it is about identifying with the task or its important component (e.g., the decision under the influence of Miss Wanda's violet eyes to go to Gąsowski's balcony to solve the door puzzle, to track an unknown object and to use scouting-Indian methods of stalking, to search in the attic the solution for the disappearing door and presence of the French in the manor house of the Gąsowski family).

In symbolic analogy, the stimulating role of a symbol, metaphor or association is used. Therefore, the emphasis is placed on opening up to poetic solutions, sudden and unexpected. The symbol can help to generate unconscious associations, it can become an intermediate link between the plane of reality and the solution one seeks. It is often a synthetic approach to the essence of the problem being solved (e.g. finding a letter to Wanda). Fantastic analogy uses the inspirational role of fantasy, wishful thinking and dreams. Thanks to them, one can accept the absurdity or the game of imagination, recognizing that they promote going beyond the current thinking pattern and allow to open up to new, non-standard solutions (e.g. searching the attic in Bejgole for a "Frenchman's traces", a lonely journey to gather information and track down traces of criminals).

The synecitic procedure includes several stages (processes), amongst them so-called mental trip that involves finding creative inspiration in areas of knowledge not primarily associated with the issue (e.g. penetrating the attic, reading dusty documents). The next phase is the principle of so-called closed doors. It means moving to the next stage of work on a given problem after completely detaching from the earlier stages (e.g. an alleged trip to Warsaw and a trip of the boy in the immediate area)²⁵.

Creative analogies in the novel

The literary character, whom Kornel Makuszyński called Adam Cisowski, contributes to the concepts of a creative problem solving by W.J.J. Gordon. The author equipped the hero with divergent (creative) thinking, associative and metaphorical thinking that he probably surrendered himself to first. For the narrator presents the special insight and abilities of the hero's reasoning:

²⁵ It is also important not to focus on the problem, because excessive focus on it makes it impossible to search for and find original solutions, distorts them even and does not favor the use of unusual associations and non-standard analogies (so-called forgetting, redirecting attention). See: E. Nęcka, *Psychologia twórczości...*, p. 212.

“He possessed the deserved fame of the smartest boy in the whole school. “And I am a master in logic”, Satan said to himself. The professor, appointing Cisowski to Satan, was very close to the truth. By reasoning with cool calm, this boy was able to solve the most difficult puzzles. He not only watched sharply, but also saw with perfect sharpness. With calm, patient passion he watched everything and everyone. He adhered the unspoken word, fractions of events, crumbs and debris with strange skill, and he knew how to assemble a probable whole from this negligible material. He had a vivid, volatile imagery and heaving huge wheels; it ran forward, it could go back into the collapsing and thickening darkness of the past and see what the ordinary myopic eyes could no longer see”²⁶.

The metaphorical thinking based on analogies is a rudimentary matter in synectics. The prediction associated with cognition in the case of constructing the character of Adaś gives concrete results and brings tangible benefits.

Referring to the direct analogy, Adaś-the character uses previously worked out and tried out ideas, in some respects similar to the task being solved. This tactic works well in deciphering the household puzzle associated with ice cream and in the school situation brought up in the classroom by Professor Gąsowski (substitution of other data for the same pattern). In a conversation with his father, the writer allows Adam to reveal the source of the idea. He explains:

“It’s not my way, it’s Arabic,said Adam, laughing. – Some wise judge in Baghdad detected a thief in such a way that he sent ten suspects to touch the muddy belly of a donkey. Every innocent did it boldly and without thinking, but he thought, “It’s a trap”– and he only pretended to touch the donkey’s belly. In this way, the one who had unclean hands – he had clean hands. He was overly seductive. Because I did not have a donkey on call, I used water. Janek also tried to be clever, so he betrayed”²⁷.

Using the fantasy analogy, the hero manages to go beyond the current thinking pattern, which results in the solution to the mystery of the list of school donations. It turns out that a colleague suspected of embezzlement (Szostak) is innocent. The author leads the plot so that Adaś would discover that a piece of a string attached itself to a piece of paper with the notes and pretended to be an additional zero.

As part of the personnel analogy, the point of view is changed. Adaś-the character, identifying with the problem by reaching for individual experiences (including imagination and emotions), associates the neighbor’s (Staś Burski) penmanship before the pen is gone missing and after its disappearance. This is how the writer manages to show how the hero “found” his friend’s lost pen. As a keen observer, Adaś-the character notices that a colleague from the bench suddenly began to write nicely and carefully, although until now his writing was difficult to decipher. When the scandal associated with the theft of a pen explodes at school, the author allows Adaś to connect the dots.

The personal analogy is introduced by the writer when he enables the protagonist to discover the strategy of asking questions from the history of selected students according to the scheme established by Professor Paweł Gąsowski. Accepting the pedagogue’s challenge, the hero unmistakably lists the names of

²⁶ K. Makuszyński, *Szatan z siódmej...*, pp. 24–25.

²⁷ K. Makuszyński, *Szatan z siódmej...*, pp. 36–37.

the boys who were to be ‘called to answer by the board’ on Saturday. Induced, he presents a command technique. In fact he admits: “First of all, I tried to get into the professor’s skin ... (...). I mean, I started thinking the way a professor should think, in all likelihood (...)”²⁸. Presenting the reasoning of the teacher, he proves:

“(...) Cisowski will make one hundred thousand combinations in one hundred thousand ways. And I will arrange them. I will do my best, and this will be the least expected. Because on Saturday they were to be examined: Kaczanowski, Ostrowicki and Wnuk, which is the seventh, seventeenth and twenty-seventh (...). I do not think that this chink will leave the situation as it should be”²⁹. Finally, he states: “The simplest issues are the most difficult to solve. We are used to looking for far to the horizon to that what lies at our feet”³⁰.

The symbolic analogy used by Makuszyński allows the hero he created to open himself up to the unexpected, sudden solutions. The symbol helps him generate unconscious associations, it is an intermediate link between reality and the solution he seeks (including finding a letter to Wanda). In this way, he also solves the mystery of disappearing doors, at the same time using the ability to observe and connect even tiny events.

The abilities of Adam Cisowski created in the novel are also in line with the synectics, the classification of talents according to Abraham Tannenbaum and the theory regarding the potential of the unit by Kazimierz Dąbrowski, as well as the styles of work (learning) by Dawid Kolb.

Defining the ability

The unusual talent of Adam Cisowski (and Kornel Makuszyński as the creator³¹ of the character) makes it even more important to discuss the issue of ability³².

According to Wiesława Limont, “the abilities manifest themselves in the individual’s activity, in the speed of learning, in cognitive processes, in a specific field and in a specific field of action”³³. According to her, “there are numerous definitions of aptitudes whose characteristics depend on the adopted cognitive or practical goal, as well as on the theoretical perspective”³⁴. The aptitude is usually understood as general proficiency and cognitive openness. A bundle of features pertaining to a field is considered an aptitude. Outstanding aptitudes are called talent (understood as a specific complex of individual features). Krzysztof Szmidt

²⁸ K. Makuszyński, *Szatan z siódmej...*, p. 29.

²⁹ K. Makuszyński, *Szatan z siódmej...*, p. 29.

³⁰ K. Makuszyński, *Szatan z siódmej...*, p. 30.

³¹ Compare: C. Nosal, *Mechanizmy funkcjonowania intelektu. Zdolności, style poznawcze, przetwarzanie informacji*, Wrocław 1979.

³² See: „Język Polski w Szkole Podstawowej. Zeszyty Kieleckie”. *Specjalne potrzeby edukacyjne. Wokół zdolności i trudności*” 2018/2019, (ed.) M. Bolińska, No. 3.

³³ W. Limont, *Uczeń zdolny. Jak go rozpoznać i jak z nim pracować*, Sopot 2012, p. 14.

³⁴ W. Limont, *Uczeń zdolny...*, p. 14.

believes that the concept of genius is associated with the highest level of an individual and creative functioning of individual³⁵.

General abilities consist of: intelligence³⁶, imagination, perceptiveness, learning and dexterity (mobility). Complex capabilities (special) enable a person to perform activities that allow him or her to be active within a specific area. They may refer to various fields, such as literature, dance, arts, music, science, sports, culinary etc. Therefore, they are difficult to define. One of the definitions states that “special abilities is a team, a constellation of internal conditions of a given individual, determining the level and quality of achievements in specialized activity”³⁷. Special abilities, or aptitudes, are therefore understood as general and special abilities, enabling very good (efficient) performance of a specific activity (content-oriented)³⁸.

According to W. Limont, “aptitudes” should be understood as directional abilities, defined as special abilities. It is also possible to look at talent, that is, the individual’s characteristics that allows him or her to obtain high achievements in a specific field of activity, for example, mathematics, music or art³⁹. A special place amongst the talents that determine outstanding achievements in any field of activity are the so-called creative talents⁴⁰.

Models of ability

Abilities models include both general abilities (they emphasize the importance of intelligence as such) as well as specific abilities (e.g. the concept of multiple intelligence by Howard Gardner, intelligence models based on factor analysis, model of directional capabilities by Wiesława Limont).

System models, including the concept by Joseph S. Renzulli, the concept of Robert J. Sternberg (WICS) or the concept of Kazimierz Dąbrowski aim at a more global understanding and appreciation of aptitudes. Developmental aptitude models place an emphasis on the process, i.e. gradual shaping of competences in

³⁵ Compare: K.J. Szmids, *Szkice do pedagogiki twórczości*, Kraków 2001; K.J. Szmids, *Pedagogika twórczości*, Gdańsk 2007; K.J. Szmids, *Trening kreatywności. Podręcznik dla pedagogów, psychologów i trenerów grupowych*, Gliwice 2008.

³⁶ Types of talent combine with the types of intelligence. People are born with all kinds of intelligence. During life, some develop faster and stronger, others grow slower and weaker, and some not at all. It is conditioned by stimuli flowing to the brain from the outside. In the process of teaching and learning, stimulation and development of all types of intelligence allows students to diagnose and develop interests, passions and talents.

³⁷ W. Szewczuk, *Trudności myślenia i rozwijanie zdolności uczniów*, Warszawa 1983, p. 7.

³⁸ Ability is considered the result of the sum of general and special abilities; it means that in order for specific talents to develop, an individual must have so-called the congenital makings.

³⁹ W. Limont, *Uczeń zdolny...*, p. 17.

⁴⁰ Distinctive or outstanding achievements (apart from talents in a given field and creative abilities) require above all a high (above average) general intelligence and a huge amount of work.

a given area. As an example, one can include here a multifactor Model of Abilities by Franz J. Monks, Abraham J. Tannenbaum's model and the Talent Pyramid of Development by Jane Piirto, as well as the diverse Capability and Talent Model of Francoys Gagne.

As it has already been pointed out, various concepts illuminate the issue of the ability from different perspectives⁴¹. In discussing the category of aptitudes, it is worth to reach for the typology of Abraham J. Tannenbaum. He divided aptitudes into four groups (special abilities), he also assigned them a specific social value. He pointed to the so-called abilities: deficiency (lack of; *scarcity*), excess (surplus; *surplus*), further limited abilities (*quota*) and unusual (abnormal, *anomalous*)⁴². According to W. Limont, the starting point of the division are the social needs determining which of the abilities are necessary, important and which are commonly considered to be bizarre, even useless⁴³.

The so-called deficiency abilities consist of competences that help to make important discoveries, generate solutions that improve everyday life, and encourage the creation of socially useful inventions. These achievements can be measured using objectively accepted criteria. Artistic abilities (excess) concern people whose artistic preferences contribute to the creation of works of art, but of a non-fundamental value from the point of view of social needs, however additional, difficult to unequivocally assess, therefore relative and culturally and historically diversified.

Limited abilities are skills that make it possible to train in professions whose cultivation is beneficial for the proper functioning of the community⁴⁴. In the fourth group there are non-standard talents that can have a pragmatic value, although their profile is unusual (e.g. unique hearing, unusual memory, excellent sense of smell). This type of talent is called a "quirky talent" or the original one⁴⁵. However, they are used, for example, in investigative activities, in expert works, in scientific research programs.

The hero of Makuszyński was equipped with both unusual and deficient abilities. His detective inclinations, associated with the uncommon work of the mind, which looks into the various corners of reality and the social usefulness of the solutions created indicate the fact that the author created an extraordinary individual, of which he informs in many places in the novel. Makuszyński himself is also an example of a man with artistic skills (excess).

⁴¹ Compare: M. Bolińska, *Koncepcje, modele i możliwości pracy z uczniem zdolnym*, „Język Polski w Szkole Podstawowej. Zeszyty Kieleckie”. *Specjalne potrzeby edukacyjne. Wokół zdolności i trudności* 2018/2019, (ed.) M. Bolińska, No. 3, pp. 7–19.

⁴² A. Tannenbaum, *Nature and nurture of giftedness* [w:] *Handbook of gifted education*, red. N. Colangelo, G.A. Davis, Boston 2003, pp. 45–59.

⁴³ W. Limont, *Uczeń zdolny. Jak go rozpoznać i jak z nim pracować*, Sopot 2012, p. 22.

⁴⁴ Nevertheless, despite the need to havetrained doctors, lawyers or engineers, their number is conditioned by the limited employment.

⁴⁵ They relatively often appear as the abilities of people with autism (e.g. in the Asperger's syndrome).

Between skills and creativity

The theory of positive disintegration by Kazimierz Dąbrowski⁴⁶ allows for orientation in the components of abilities. Back in the 1930s, after thoroughly analyzing the biographies of prominent artists (including Michelangelo, Franz Kafka), Dąbrowski pointed to “a set of developmental properties and dynamisms that characterize exceptionally talented and creative people”⁴⁷. He associated them with the individual’s development potential (IDP) identified by him, which consists of three factors: increased psychological excitability (IPE), the influence of social environment on the development of the individual, internal dynamics (i.e. self-education, creative denial or confirmation of their aspirations and the impact of the environment)⁴⁸. According to the researchers, “increased mental excitability should be understood as a specific way of reacting, receiving information and processing it, strongly related to the properties of the nervous system”⁴⁹. Kazimierz Dąbrowski pointed to five types of excitability (IPE): psychomotor (excessive energy, high level of mobility and activity, and psychomotor expression of emotional tension), sensory (increased sensory and aesthetic sensitivity), intellectual (tendency for reflective thinking, mind activity, passion for research, finding problems and solving them), imaginary (fantasy, dreams, low tolerance for boredom) and emotional (deep and intense emotional life)⁵⁰.

Seventeen-year-old Adam Cisowski, a student in the seventh grade of the junior high school in Warsaw manifests first of all, psychomotor, intellectual and imaginary type of hyperactivity. The passion for solving various puzzles, intolerance of boredom, scouting experiences useful on various occasions (also during the Bejgole investigation) and school opinion about his activities (both students and teachers) seem to prove the correctness of such reasoning.

He is close to the theoretician’s and applicator’s style of work⁵¹. His activity is conducive to actions under specific conditions and to applying the methods or tools used to solve problems. Adam has a tendency to create theories but at the same time he does so in order to put them into practice and check their usefulness or effectiveness. He does it successfully.

⁴⁶ See: K. Dąbrowski, *Psychological bases of self-mutilation*, „Genetic Psychology Monographs” 1937, No. 19, pp. 1–104. And also: K. Dąbrowski, *Osobowość i jej kształtowanie poprzez dezintegrację pozytywną*, Lublin 1984.

⁴⁷ W. Limont, *Uczeń zdolny...*, p. 63.

⁴⁸ See: K. Dąbrowski, *Elementy filozofii rozwoju*, Warszawa 1989. Compare also: W. Limont, J. Dreszer, S. Bedyńska, K. Śliwińska, *Wzmoczona pobudliwość psychiczna, wybrane cechy osobowości a pleć szczególnie zdolnych uczniów* [w:] *Zdolności człowieka w perspektywie współczesnej psychologii*, (eds.) A. Sękowski, W. Klinkosz, Lublin 2010, pp. 33–62.

⁴⁹ W. Limont, *Uczeń zdolny...*, p. 65.

⁵⁰ W. Limont, *Uczeń zdolny...*, pp. 65–68.

⁵¹ See: M. Taraszkiewicz, *Jak uczyć jeszcze lepiej! Szkoła pełna ludzi*, Poznań 2011, pp. 51–52. According to styles of work (learning) Adam was created on the so-called model of theoretician and applicator. According to the assumptions presented by Dawid Kolb and described by Maria Taraszkiewicz, the following types of people (including students) can be distinguished: activists (worker), analysts (reflective), pragmatists (applicators) and theoreticians.

It seems that the shortage talent in which he is equipped works out for him in life, especially when he needs to face unexpected challenges. That is why he is accompanied by an unusual gift, thanks to which he can deal with unusual situations. The narrator informs, for example:

In science, he was also ahead of everyone, beyond his comprehension, and his memory was excellent. Slow in nature, he always thought prudently, unhurriedly, with patience, inconsistent with his age, for he was seventeen. He never lost his temper or got angry. A cheerful and cordial friend, happy and smiling, obliging and compassionate, he won love with everyone without any difficulty⁵².

Adaś also seems to be characterized by an imaginative hypersensitivity (including slow, unhurried peeking to his own interior, listening to his inner voice). The way it works can be understood by referring to synectics. It also connects the various motifs of the novel (it concerns the author's construction of the remaining characters and their actions, such as a false painter who is looking for a door in the Bejgola manor and then he imprisons Adam and both Gąsowski brothers, impractical dreamers).

To sum up – autothematic accents

Autothematic literature (autothematism) is, as the dictionary of literary terms provides, reflections regarding the goals and ways of constructing a work, artistic conventions and methods of building a given work⁵³. Autothematic accents may be revealed in the form of disclosing the secrets of the writing workshop, in the commentaries on the art of writing or in the use of artistic approaches and solutions, in the discovery of ideas for the concept of the hero, story or composition, etc.

In his novel *Satan from the 7th grade*, Makuszyński reaches for autothematic elements, including when his hero, Adaś, talking to Professor Gąsowski, signals his doubts about the effect of searching for the disappearing door. We can read:

“Only in romances, such genius psychologists like those of French novels, a youthful journalist, who found a criminal in their own father or a high school student, who was discovered the storage of French kings lost by the sophisticated burglar. I read books about it with the same passion with which Professor Dumas reads. An ingenious author works wonders, but the same author cannot usually find a lost cuff, according to his unsurpassed method⁵⁴.”

Or when he refers to his novel *Broken sword*⁵⁵. With some irony and reflection (pointing to the topos of modesty), it reveals not only the secrets of the workshop and the art of creation, but also allows the attentive reader to notice that synectics also concerns himself, that is – the writer. After all, inventing the plot of the novel,

⁵² K. Makuszyński, *Szatan z siódmej...*, p. 25.

⁵³ Autotematyczna literatura (Autothematic literature) [in:] *Słownik terminów literackich*, red. J. Sławiński, Wrocław 1988, p. 48.

⁵⁴ K. Makuszyński, *Szatan z siódmej...*, p. 77.

⁵⁵ K. Makuszyński, *Szatan z siódmej...*, p.166.

constructing characters, conducting threads, knowledge within various fields (e.g. history, mathematics, geography, literature) is a clear example of using divergent and associative thinking and going beyond standard paths and schemes of epic solutions. Tracking and finding one's own creative path is surely a proof of the existence of a spark of talent. Recognition from the literary critics and readers is the crowning achievement of the search (Makuszyński's excess talent).

It is worth to remember that not always literary genius must go hand in hand with life's resourcefulness in a realistic world. Kornel Makuszyński's life line is a significant example of this.

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Synektyka Kornela Makuszyńskiego

Streszczenie

Synektyka według jej twórcy, Williama J.J. Gordona, oznacza posługiwanie się analogią w dążeniu do zrozumienia problemu i wypracowania skutecznego (twórczego, często też oryginalnego) rozwiązania. U jej podstaw tkwi zrozumienie inności, niezwykłości oraz zastosowanie metafory opartej

na analogii po to, by spojrzeć na problem z innej perspektywy. Procedura synektyczna składa się z kilku etapów, których podstawą jest myślenie metaforyczne oparte na szczegółowych heurystykach zwanych analogiami. W.J.J. Gordon wyróżnia cztery ich rodzaje: bezpośrednią (prosta), personalną (osobista), symboliczną i fantastyczną. Wszystkie można znaleźć w powieści *Szatan z siódmej klasy* (1937) Kornela Makuszyńskiego. Skonstruowana przez niego postać literacka, detektyw-amator (Adam Cisowski), stosując różne techniki rozwiązywania problemów, korzysta z palety możliwości, które „podpowiada” synektyka. Pisarz wyposaża również swojego bohatera w cechy, które charakteryzują tzw. ucznia zdolnego (talent detektywistyczny oparty jednocześnie na logicznym rozumowaniu i wychodzeniu poza schemat myślenia konwergencyjnego). Przy okazji sam autor odśladania własny talent epicki (m.in. oryginalność w prowadzeniu bohatera i kształtowaniu fabuły).

Słowa kluczowe: synektyka, twórczość, zdolności, Adam Cisowski, Kornel Makuszyński