

ER(R)GO

| summaries

## Summaries in English

---

Karolina Lebek

Immaterial Objects in Hidden Interiors:  
Sir Thomas Browne's *Musaeum Clausum*  
and the Early Modern Cataloguing Convention

The article reads the short, jocular text by Sir Thomas Browne *Musaeum Clausum* or *Bibliotheca Abscondita* (1684) in the context of its dialogue with the cataloguing convention in the seventeenth-century culture of curiosity. The first part of “Immaterial Objects” discusses the cultural significance of museum catalogues in their double function: firstly, to represent the collected objects by endowing them with “a story” and fashioning them as curiosities and, secondly, to represent the social network build around the collection. Two printed catalogues serve as examples here: Robert Hubert's catalogue of his own private collection printed in 1664 and the catalogue of the Repository of the Royal Society, *Musaeum Regalis Societatis*, written by Nehemiah Grew and published in 1681. The second part of the article shows how Browne in *Musaeum Clausum* worked from within this convention of cataloguing undermining, and thus exposing, its principles in order to reflect (auto)ironically on the culture of collecting to which he belonged. Such a reading of Browne's text also helps to reveal the changes in textual attention given to curious objects in seventeenth-century England.

Anna Antonowicz

A Victorian Cathedral of Art

The Victorian epoch was a period of great admiration for- and revival of medieval, particularly gothic, design. Although the Victorian South Kensington Museum (today Victoria and Albert Museum) did not replicate gothic architecture, the objectives and character of its interiors show significant parallels to it in terms of the impact which the gothic cathedral would exert on its visitors. The gothic cathedral would appeal to the eye by its grand scale, majestic beauty and opulent decoration. These three features constituted an impressive—and effective—instrument in the diffusion of Christian dogmas and teachings to all classes of the medieval feudal society. A similar mechanism pertaining to the treatment of the interior as a didactic iconographic text was made use of in the case of South Kensington Museum in the mid-Victorian period. The application of such a mechanism helped emphasise the authoritative character of the Museum as an institution responsible for the reform of British decorative art and art education, as well as for the improvement of artistic tastes of all classes of the Victorian society in Britain. In other words, the interior iconographic programme transformed the South Kensington Museum into an institution of an exceptional public missionary role, a cathedral among other Victorian temples of art.

Paweł Jędrzejko

Locked in the Library:  
Reflections on Metanarratives and Academic Weltanschauungs

The main idea underlying the article is that of the interdependence between the essential notions of the central metanarratives of logocentric cultures and the inventory of concepts

available as keywords for academic research. In other words, the argument of this paper is designed to draw the attention of the reader to the fact of the interdependency between the language used to describe the world and the existence (or inconceivability of existence) of entities inhabiting it. The starting point for the musings collected here is Ludwig Wittgenstein's famous adage, which provided the motto for the present observations. Departing from there, the argument develops into a deepened reflection concerning the limitations of the development of knowledge in a logocentric world. Eventually, it leads to the question of discourses which dictate the characteristics of everyday strategies of library and Internet research, as employed by students and scholars alike. The final part of the text is dedicated to the potential of figurative language in the search for possible solutions to the menace of the vicious circle of recognized methodologies. First and foremost, however, the present musings provide a point of departure for further philosophical and philological debate on the state of knowledge and of its development.

Zbigniew Białas

The Mummified Voice:

Texans Bring the Phonograph to the "Bushmen"

In 1925 an expedition was sent out by the University of Denver with a view to making a cinematographic record of nomadic reality. Apart from filming, the expedition members took exhaustive notes concerning the life of the "Bushmen." Because the expedition explored the Kalahari Desert when America and Europe was enjoying the phonographically-crazed ragtime era, the new set of beads to impress the natives, the icon of the civilized world was the phonograph. In confrontation with the phonograph, which functioned as "portable Unheimlichkeit," the "Bushmen" localized and territorialized the voice on the strength of synecdochical strategy: the voice evokes the head. It does not matter whether the synecdochical potential was stressed to the limit. This essay deals with the confrontation between the temporary voiceless body of the traveler, the temporarily voiceless body of the "Bushman" and the enigmatic bodiless voice. The overall aim is to disclose how both the "Bushmen" and the travelers regulate their interpretations and while doing so in equal measure suffer from interpretosis.

Sonia Front

Trapped in the Interiors:

Julian Schnabel's *The Diving-Bell and the Butterfly*  
and Umberto Eco's *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana*

Both Jean-Dominique Baube, the protagonist of *The Diving-Bell and the Butterfly* (2007), and Yambo, the protagonist of Umberto Eco's *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* (2004), have become imprisoned in their bodies as a result of accidents. What a viewer and the reader are presented with is the view from the interiors of the subjects suspended from their sensory-motor continuity. Both attempting to put their past in order, they experience a kind of immeasurable subjective time; a perpetual present. The paper explores the significance of the dislocation from the linear continuity of spatialized time to the characters and its influence on their selves by means of Gilles Deleuze's theory of time-image.

Monika Kowalczyk

A Travel into the Interior of The Empire:  
“The Nearest East” through Ryszard Kapuściński’s Eyes

The essay aims at illustrating the process of an absorption of an individual into the expanse of the external world. Such a process is perhaps most clearly manifest in the context of travel, in which the self becomes estranged in the “alien” space. The article attempts to present some of the “alterations” of the explored space and transformations of the traveler’s *Weltanschauung* resulting from such an internalization. Ryszard Kapuściński’s *The Empire (Imperium)* serves as an example of a travel narrative, whose discourse embodies mutual dependency between the internal and the external reality, discernible as soon as the explorer enters an unknown territory. The hereby presented analysis focuses upon somatic and empirical aspects of travel and the role their interaction plays in the revision of rational perceptions in the context of the discourse of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Polish reportage.

Maciej Nowak

“Perchance to dream?” On the Void Interior of Ego.  
A Prolegomenon to a Cynical Critique  
of a Contemporary Model of Subjectivity

The text discusses interiority as the epistemic and ethical dimension of individual choices and responsibilities, possibly, the only bastion of subjective freedom in today’s furious reality (Salman Rushdie, *Fury*) in which contemporary models of life monitored by schematized, often televised, patterns of behaviour (Jerzy Kosinski, *Being There*) turn what once was called existence into an illusory idyll of consumerist vegetation. Following the reflexive path of psychoanalysis, the article reads the interiority of Hamlet and his quest for being (“to be”) as one of options which could be considered to be an indirect apology for empiricism and spiritual realisation in an environment, in which humanism and its values were appropriated by globalised, “cynical” ideology.

Sławomir Masłoń

The Loom of the Land

The essay endeavours to show that the problems encountered while attempting to determine the ontological status of The Manuscript Found in Saragossa (the original text does not exist; what is taken for it is a compilation of fragments in various languages) have a wider significance than merely a textological one. The way the fragments of the text reflect each other making the position of an interpreter very uncomfortable is reflected in the problems the main protagonist of the novel has with ascertaining the nature of reality he encounters in Sierra Morena, which is being constructed for him by means of multiple stories he is told during his journey and of which the novel mainly consists. Because these narrations cannot be classified as either cunning fictions or true renditions of reality, the status of the experience taking place becomes ever more problematic. Taking into account the structural impossibility of the all-encompassing perspective inscribed the novel, the essay tries to show that the status of the reality and the narratives presented in the text is very different from what is finally

presented to the protagonist as the true interpretation of the events. Relying on “truths” whose origin is the discourse of the King and the Church, the interpretation attempts to “explain” the space which extends beyond such authority using categories which are not applicable to it. This space is also the space of narration as literary practice.

Marta Paluch

The Flesh of the Message or the Bodily Shell:  
Dilemmas of the Recipient of Contemporary Audiovisual Culture

The point of departure for the present article is a debate around the image of Izabelle Caro, which has proven to be received as shocking not because it transgresses the taboo of nudity, but because it violates the taboo of the ideal body. The model’s body has been presented to the broad audience in its “raw,” unbeautified state, thus forcing the viewers to acknowledge the existence of an ill body, a body remote from the preferred ideal, and—most importantly—a body which has become ill as a result of the strife to live up to the ubiquitous template of perfection. In the case discussed by the author of the article, the result which such a struggle yields stands in direct opposition to its goals. Pretending to be natural, the fully digitized—or, in fact, digitally generated—body of the model is painfully confronted with what apparently is *the same* body, yet a body entirely natural, although degraded and exhausted by the destructive power of the former. The viewer facing the image, in which the body is central and its background reduced to a blur beyond signification, confronts the exposed and emphasized discrepancy: its immediacy does not allow him or her to remain indifferent. However, the lack of background results in the model’s suspension in vacuum: her body fails to harmonize with its surrounding, as is the case with bodies functioning as empty or void indices. It is for this reason that an average “consumer of the image,” lacking proper interpretive tools, is likely to fail to tame such an image or to acknowledge its authenticity. Rather than that, he or she may be inclined to reduce the final outcome of the photographer’s work to computer manipulation.

Paweł Jędrzejko

Amiri Baraka: A Poet Fighter  
(Two Interviews)

The tripartite “Dialogues and Polemics” section of the present issue consist of Christopher Bigsby’s interview with Amiri Baraka (originally published in the *Theatre Quarterly* in 1978), the latter’s controversial poem “Somebody Blew Up America” and a conversation with the poet recorded in the artist’s backstage room of the Hipnoza Jazz Club in Katowice, Poland, immediately after a moving performance of the Amiri Baraka Speech Quartet during the *Ars Cameralis Silesiae Superioris* Festival in 2009. The interlocutors were accompanied by a leading jazz pianist, Dave Burrell, and an excellent double bass player, William Parker. Attempting to illustrate the metamorphoses of Amiri Baraka’s artistic and political *Weltanschauung* over the past three decades, the juxtaposition of the two interviews demonstrates both its continuity and its evolution. On the one hand, artistic attempts to contrast the current discourse of Americanness with the ideological basis of the American project seem to be constant in Baraka’s work: the artist employs “Americanness” to criticize Americanness, as is the case in his unsettling interpretation of Melville’s *Moby-Dick*, entitled “Re: Port” (1996) — or in his

“Somebody Blew Up America” of 2001, the publication of which cost him the title of Poet Laureate of the State of New Jersey. On the other hand, his concept of People’s Revolution undergoes change, reflecting the artist’s ideological evolution in the light of the transformations of social, political and economic realities of America in the past thirty years.

## David Punter

### Gothic Interiors: Questions of Design and Perspective

The article offers a reflection on Gothic fiction in the context of enigmatic interiors of inhabitable spaces and literary dreams. Analyses of selected texts by Charles Dickens, H.P. Lovecraft, Edgar Allan Poe, Algernon Blackwood, M.R. James, Mervyn Peake, Stephen King and Poppy Z. Brite, who may be regarded as representatives of the genre, offers the reader an insightful overview of a whole range of approaches towards the issues of perspective and spatial-temporal relations. It also inquires into the arcanae of Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis and examines particular insights into the mysterious depths of the human psyche the fathers of the depth psychology have sounded. These ponderings, in turn, aim at exposing the fear, which one’s isolation from external reality and withdrawal into the complex interiors of one’s own mind may activate.