



Marcin Kafar* 

Looking for *Self* at the Intersection of “Master/master” Discourses¹

*For Andrzej,
with constant gratitude
for the ongoing CONVERSATION*

Abstract

The article discusses the problem of constructing the identity of the modern subject that appears at the intersection of lived experience and the description of it. It is treated as instrumental, a sphere of Master/master–disciple relationship, framed by the author as “existing in a Master/master universe.” The results of the author’s own research on scientific (academic) auto/biographies, as well as other resources revealing different aspects of the Master/master–disciple relationship, serve as the main point of reference for creating the *descriptive*, *interpretive*, and *analytical* layers of the article. They are presented in a mode of anthropologically-oriented text analysis supported by—located in the context of Polish educational sciences—Michel Foucault’s concept of “the hermeneutics of the subject.”

Keywords: Master/master–disciple relationship, scientific (academic) auto/biography, hermeneutics of the subject, Michel Foucault, reflexivity.

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Poszukiwanie *Siebie* w zderzeniu z dyskursami o „Mistrzu/mistrzu”

Abstrakt

Tekst jest próbą zmierzenia się z tematem konstruowania tożsamości współczesnego podmiotu, którego aktywność realizowana jest na przecięciu sfery „żywego” doświadczenia i opisu tegoż doświadczenia. Zasadniczym punktem odniesienia dla toczonych rozważań jest sfera relacji Mistrz/mistrz–uczeń, określana przez autora jako istnienie w „Mistrzowskim/mistrzowskim uniwersum”. Pojawiające się w artykule materiały z badań własnych nad auto/biografiami naukowymi (akademickimi), jak również inne auto/biograficzne zapisy dotyczące relacji Mistrz/mistrz–uczeń służą za podstawę do przygotowania jego warstwy *opisowej, interpretacyjnej i analitycznej*. Tworzone są one głównie w oparciu o antropologicznie zorientowaną analizę tekstu, a także osadzoną w polskim kontekście nauk o wychowaniu koncepcję „hermeneutyki podmiotu” Michela Foucaulta.

Słowa kluczowe: relacja Mistrz/mistrz–uczeń, auto/biografia naukowa, hermeneutyka podmiotu, Michel Foucault, refleksywność.

How are we inclined to think/talk/write *about* a “Master/master”

I am holding in my hands a special issue of “Rocznik Pedagogiczny,” published on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Summer School of Young Pedagogues, organized under the auspices of the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Science. It is entitled *In Pursuit of Mastery...* As I am turning the pages, looking for the table of contents, a postcard falls out from inside the magazine, depicting some monuments from the city of Chełm. It is dated June 14, 2013, and the postcard is signed “Darek.” It consists of the following entry: “Dear Marcin, I’m sending you an issue of ‘RP’ with my autograph as a thank you for our excellent debates in Łódź (both official and unofficial)—I hope that you’ll find it interesting☺ Best regards from Chełm, where I live.” Of course “Darek” is professor Dariusz Kubinowski, a well-known Polish ethno-choreologist and ethno-pedagogue.² The article, characterized in a rather humorous tone as something I might like, is entitled *Rygor czy sztuka badań naukowych w pedagogice [Rigor or Art of Scientific Research in Pedagogy]* (2012), a text I have since then returned to on many occasion, often recommending it to my students. I am wondering if it is a good idea to use this paper once again, when writing *this* article. Naturally, even looking at the title that I chose for my text, my decision to consider the motif of “pursuing

² In using these labels I remain faithful to Kubinowski’s sense of identity (see Kubinowski 2017).

a master” should not come as a surprise. However—and what is indeed rather surprising—I have never before connected the “significant” act of receiving *this* article with the fact that it came from *this* person—Dariusz Kubinowski. As I recall, the “excellent debates” he is kindly recollecting in his postcard began somewhere between the years 2010 and 2011, and later intensified in 2012 and 2013 after we had met during the first and second TSBJ (Transdisciplinary Symposium on Qualitative Research) organized in Kazimierz and Lodz. It was an initiative started by none other than the author of *Rigor or Art...* . Why am I writing about this? The reason seems to be quite considerable—Dariusz Kubinowski is one of the most important teachers who accompanied me on the difficult, meandering path towards discovering my own “pedagogical hearing.”³ I am especially grateful for having read many of his articles which discuss “humanistic-oriented pedagogy”⁴—read and debated them both virtually and face to face with the author, without doubt a milestone on this path.

I believe that a properly prepared reader of this briefly presented autobiographical story will have no trouble in finding similar narratives in *In Pursuit of Mastery...* . For example, in *Transkrypcja panelu dyskusyjnego “Miałem Mistrzów—staram się podążać ich tropem(?)”* [*The Transcript of a Panel Discussion “I Had Masters—I Am Trying to Follow in Their Footsteps(?)”*],⁵ a distinguished Polish linguist, professor Jerzy Bartmiński—also employing an autobiographical tenor—says: “My profession, my profession as a Polish language scholar, since I’m

³ I created the term “pedagogical hearing” based on an analogy with the term “philosophical hearing” introduced by Marek Rembierz in his lecture entitled *O relacjach między filozofią a pedagogiką — uwagi metodologiczne i próba systematyzacji* [*On the Relations Between Philosophy and Pedagogy —Some Methodological Remarks and an Attempt at Classification*], presented at the sixth meeting of the Methodology of Pedagogical Research Team working at the Pedagogical Sciences Committee of the Polish Academy of Science (Łódź, July 1, 2019). It refers to persons representing pedagogy who are not educated as philosophers, but who nonetheless use—mostly intuitively—philosophical ways of thinking. My own meandering scientific (academic) biography is connected with an institutional and disciplinary transfer from the world of cultural anthropology to the world of pedagogy, which happened ten years ago when I started work at the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the University of Łódź, previously associated with the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology which was incorporated into the Faculty of Philosophy and History at the same university.

⁴ A concise, but clear definition of a “humanistic-oriented pedagogy” is presented in the introduction to the monograph *Metodologia pedagogiki zorientowanej humanistycznie* [*Methodology of Humanistic-Oriented Pedagogy*] (2006). Together with Marian Nowak, Kubinowski presents an empirical approach, based on the canons of thinking obligatory in the natural sciences, which they call “a new type of humanistic-oriented pedagogy.” Arguing against directly applying “the research methods of the natural sciences to the field of education and pedagogy,” at the same time they advocate for developing the foundation of thinking practice and research that take into account the communicative and relational dimensions of education. The main role of a humanistic-oriented pedagogy is therefore a focus on the categories of “*sense and meaning*, perceived as everything that can be understood about education, however, it should not be understood only in quantitative or analytical terms and always should indicate its embedding in human life” (Kubinowski, Nowak 2006: 8–9; italics in original).

⁵ The panel consisted of Jerzy Bartmiński, Tadeusz Lewowicki, Tadeusz W. Nowacki, Andrzej Szostek and Elżbieta Tarkowska.

a scholar of Polish, an ethno-linguist, dialectologist, folklorist, was decided by my school teacher. His name was Wiktor Wlazły, at a high school in Przemyśl. He had learned Polish late in life, being a child of a French emigrant... and he was fascinated with the phonetics of Polish. In high school he would write down strange words on the board, using phonetic language... Everyone liked it! He would also read us fragments, for example Sienkiewicz, about how maces slammed on the floor... and so on. He read us a text—a fascinating teacher of Polish. And he influenced me to study Polish language, although I was supposed to study at the university of technology, since I was good at math. Indeed he was my first Master” (*Transkrypcja...* 2012: 11).

What connects, or rather makes common professor Bartmiński’s story and my own, as well as other semi-private, semi-professional narratives that are included in the book I received from Dariusz Kubinowski, is that they belong to a particular genre (they are “small autobiographies presented either orally or on paper” (Wejland 2013: 10)). However, what in a sense makes them universal is the hidden pattern of *engaged* narrativizing, thematically oriented at the Master/master-disciple motif. The most important distinguishing feature of these *idiosyncratic* stories is the transfer of real, unique individualized structures of experience onto the sphere of adequately constructed narrative forms. Indeed, the encounter between *what is told* and *what is experienced* would finally become a guiding force for what I have called—I will use an abbreviation for stylistic reasons—an “engaged” narrativization of “Master/master.”

If one wished to find a more general rule for contemporary academic discourses about the “Master/master,” perhaps a good idea is to make use of the rule of opposition. In that case, if the generic multitude of existing “engaged” autobiographical stories were placed on one of the opposing poles together with other “engaged” narratives about the “Master/master,” then on the other pole we would find different types of stories. The space between the two opposing poles would reveal the existence of *distanced* forms of thinking/talking/writing about a “Master/master” (indeed, characterized by a multitude of genre forms similar to the “engaged” types of stories). The promoters of this well-known solution are researchers who consider legitimate those points of view which give them a chance to move through “abstract domains of discourse,” to use the words of Olaf Jäkel (2003). To put it simply, the figure of the “Master/master” which appears in their statements can be characterized by persistently *transforming* into a socio-cultural figure, a disembodied problem, a philosophical riddle *etc.*

Looking for *Self*⁶ against the “Master/master” discourses—in the circle of the phenomenology of a “Master’s/master’s universe”⁷

The proposed opposite-polar comparison allows me to “think through” my own positioning *against* the “Master/master” discourses. In this case “to think through” means to ascend to a level from which I am able to see the coils of paths entwining me, leading me to where I find myself now. At first—built only in my imagination—these paths seemed to be interwoven, crossing and imposing on each other. Sometimes they end, as though they lead to nowhere. However, when inspected more closely, this feeling is replaced with another—the emergence of a pattern, at first only vaguely outlined in retrospective, and becoming more pronounced with time.

What does this pattern look like? It refers to a particular movement of “thought” and its conditioning “actions,” manifestations of specific activity. This activity can be reconstructed as focusing on a base word: “Master/master.” I look to the past to see that this word was completely transparent for me, or—devoid of significance, a word that I simply knew, nothing more. It was identical to hundreds or thousands of other words we blankly speak each day—academics who worry about the number of everyday tasks and responsibilities; it crossed the street like a cat, disappearing from view as quickly as it came into sight. Next came a moment which resulted in a precipitation of a peculiar horizon. It was **a turn**: the word “Master/master” suddenly began to detach itself from its linguistic passivity, and successively gained considerable semantic weight. This way a seemingly ordinary word, making itself present in the course of action, had transformed into an unordinary word, taking on the measure—depending on the perspective from which I looked/look at it—of a significant “concept,” “notion,” “analytical category” *etc.* The word, once distant-indifferent, serving the aforementioned or similar roles, now became a constantly returning word, accompanying me in my textual

⁶ I return to the issue of how I employ reflexive pronouns and their meaning in the section *Instead of a Conclusion*, discussing it in the context of contemporary identity which interests me most.

⁷ When writing the main body of the text I relied on a “meta-recursive” strategy which—when applying the memory-associative principle of returning to what is in the past but has not yet passed—is supposed to serve the role of “creating” a separate discursive space more than “representing” something by it. By employing this procedure, I am both profiting from it while also being forced to deal with a certain loss. This loss is connected with a reshaping of reality to fit its “coded” image, and as a result the text ends up being very “non-transparent,” to use Joanna Tokarska-Bakir’s vocabulary (1995). However, I also gain something significant: a possibility to practice a mechanism identified by Michel Foucault in reference to Epictetus as a way of turning myself into “an outside observer of one’s own internal processes” (Sendyka 2015: 257). The achieved result produces a description in which an experience becomes more condensed through “a self-reflexive action,” as Roma Sendyka characterizes reflexive work (*ibidem*). The stakes of this game are very high—it is the titular “searching for *Self* at the intersection of ‘Master/master’ discourses.” In order to illustrate, as much as possible, this “non-transparency” of the text, I will “decode” it in the parallel layer of the footnotes where I will explain the most important meta-recursive semantic implantations, and as a result—I hope—make my argument more understandable to readers.

excursions, inner dialogues I had with the authors of these texts, and also—sometimes for the most part—it presented itself as a word which characterizes specific social situations (and is also characterized by them). The discursive particle “Master/master” served/serves the function of an operator who not only allows us to model the world, but also to actively *participate* in it. The process of re-remembering based on associations offers a metaphor of the “Master’s/master’s universe”; in the discussed example it is a systematic construction, throughout the years, of an idiomatic system which consists of concrete events and its forming elements, appearing in more or less obvious correlations. This system is very capacious, flexible, adaptable—some changes have already taken place, some are happening, others will happen in the future.⁸

Nevertheless, writing about the “Master’s/master’s universe” helps me above all to better define my own position within it, since the act of writing translates what was previously a vague experience into an image that I can see for myself. When writing, I set off a vector directed at a dimension that previously remained inaccessible, in a way existing “behind a curtain.” It is important as far as it conceals the secret of **who I am**, or rather, **who I am becoming** when I take part in situations that activate (against) “Master/master” discourses. By pulling the curtain off, I begin to better understand the nature of my experience, as I enter it from semantic “side shadows.”⁹ For example, I notice that its morphology is conditioned by—a constantly breaking down!—“duality”; it emerges from the dialectics of *closeness* and *distance*, for which it is a natural fodder, as it fuels this dialectic—both condition *each other*. It is precisely this pulsating transcending of duality that

⁸ I consider a meeting which took place in Toruń at the beginning of 2015 as the starting point of the “Master’s/master’s universe.” Besides myself, the meeting was attended by Michał Januszkiewicz, Adam Kola, Jacek Kowalewski and Wojciech Piasek, founding members still active in the Humanistic Forum (FH), an informal transdisciplinary national research group. During the meeting we discussed the framework for further cooperation between the Members as well as the strategic research areas we intended to study. A significant part of the debate was devoted to a nodal motif of micro-history, relating to the personal and ideological background of the Forum. We had decided that for the good of the project it is necessary to conduct work that would lead to a sharpening of the inner-community awareness. We agreed that a productive solution would be an exchange of thoughts focused on the category of a (intellectual) “Master.” At the same time—and in parallel to the “micro” level—we decided on a broader discussion on the “macro” level that would refer to the contemporary socio-cultural status of this category (see Kafar, Kola 2016). The effect of these decisions was the conference *Mistrzowie—Preliminaria [Masters—Preliminaries]* (Toruń, December 12, 2015) and the seminar *Od Mistrzów do mistrzostwa [From Masters to Mastery]* (Toruń, December 7, 2016). In addition to giving us a chance to engage in “lively discussions” which activate a sphere characterized by Roch Sulima (1995) as “intensified semiotics,” both events resulted in the creation of several articles included in this issue of “NOWIS” (see Kabzińska, A. F. Kola, A. M. Kola, Piasek, Wejland in this issue), and others that will be published in the future.

⁹ The term “semantic ‘side shadows’” is based on a metaphor of “side shadows” proposed by Andrzej P. Wejland (2004a) in reference to the discourse of Catholic charismatic communities he had researched. In Wejland’s interpretation, the “side shadows” or “pattern-shadows” refer to a type of anti-narrative story that goes against the obligatory narrative pattern dominating in a given community. Through the use of this term I wished to produce an effect of a textual “opening” to ambiguous (“twisted,” “rhizomatic”) areas of experience that characterize my interaction with “Master/master” discourses.

leaves me in a state of constant “oscillation”¹⁰ between the discursive opposing poles of *engagement* and *distancing*.¹¹ I run “here” and “there,” turn back, stop, then run again, but now in a completely different direction, I move towards the end of the path, only to find myself suddenly at its beginning—and *vice versa*.¹² My movement is “pendulous and vibrant,” as I often move while breathlessly swaying between “choosing two possibilities,”¹³ treating each one—depending on current circumstances—as equal. That is why the state I am describing seems to be paradoxical, it is, to use an oxymoron, *anticipating in action* (anticipating is connected with a lack of movement, and an action should be its opposite, but not in this case). My anticipation in action is entrenched in the existing promise of exploring new cognitive lands (and it is undoubtedly conditioned by my disposition as a scholar). However, this is not what occupies me the most (I believe that would be too trivial), but rather what happens “on the way.” It is a chance to elevate our life—appearing in the form of a limitless potentiality, often overlooked in the practice of “classical” scholarship. It can be used, for example, if we attempt to give

¹⁰ By using the words “duality” and “oscillation” I reveal the intellectual influence that Lech Witkowski has had on my thinking, and from a broader perspective I connect it with scholars of pedagogical (educational) sciences who prefer a dynamic model of understanding socio-cultural reality. Among them Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka remains institutionally closest to me. She has been consistently promoting Jean-Marie Barbier’s concept of “analyzing activity” in Polish pedagogy, as well as Foucault’s writing which is equally important for my own writing (see e.g. Marynowicz-Hetka 2015; 2019). Witkowski has written several times about the “sense-making” role of the category of duality (see e.g. Witkowski 2007a, 2013, 2014), and also about the categories/notions/principles that actively “assist” it theoretically and interpretatively, such as: “paradox,” “ambivalence,” or the aforementioned “oscillation.” A particularly instructive text, closely aligned with my own thematic positioning, is his *Mistrz jako obosieczna zasada komunikacji (dylematy pedagogiczne)* [*Master as a Double-Edged Rule of Communication (Pedagogical Dilemmas)*] (Witkowski 2007b), in which the duality is demonstrated as a “double-edged rule of communication,” provoking us to look for answers to the posed question: “How to avoid Scylla’s absence and Charybda’s excess (presence) in relations with the master?” (ibidem: 268).

¹¹ This “constant ‘oscillation’” was clearly externalized first during the organization of the conference and seminar mentioned in footnote 3, and later through being attentive to their methodological background, as well as during the two-year long production of this issue of “NOWIS.” These visibly intertwined actions are a model example of the systematically-updated plan of my *polar-opposite participation* in the “Master’s/master’s universe.” They were also manifested during my own field research conducted in the United States in 2016 and 2018, during which I studied the scientific (academic) biographies of two excellent professors—Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner (in relation to the master–disciple motif present in this context see *Legacy of Masters: Honoring the Retirement of Professors Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner* in this issue).

¹² I am referring to the etymology of “discourse,” or more precisely, to the attribute that decides upon its “natural mobility.” As Andrzej P. Wejland (2013: 15) explains: “... utterances move from one place to another—between those who exchange them, or between ‘voices’ or ‘positions’ taken in dialogue or in narration, in Latin *discursus* is precisely a movement in many directions, from one place to the other, here and there.” When we reverse this situation, we can see that when “mobility” is written into the discursive sphere, it also refers to the position taken by actors who engage in a (discursive) interaction, or are confronted with the event-or-situational background, in my case the “Master’s/master’s universe.”

¹³ As a verb “oscillating” is nothing more than a “waving between two choices; deciding upon one, and later upon on the other choice,” and as a noun a “vibration, wavering, a swinging pendulum” (*Słownik...* entry: oscillating).

it some unique value. For individual subjects this activity, if based on an approach which makes one sensitive to such actions, becomes nothing more than *a call to form “oneself,” realized as part of “an ethics of good life.”*¹⁴

Finally, when *writing myself* I gain knowledge forcing me to formulate the central question: “Did I really gain the opportunity of *form “myself”* in the existing “Master’s/master’s universe,” and if so, what did this process reveal and what are its effects?”

I think about the multitude of possible answers to this question, and I think about which of them are worthy of distinction and for what reasons. In the end I decide to follow the most dominating voice, which seems—for whatever reason—more important than the other voices in my head. What makes it unique? This voice, an expression of what is *personal*, is a visible testament to the mutual permeability of *the discursive* and *non-discursive* spaces—which both bring us closer to the existential core. So what is the result?

About encounters with „Masters/masters”—*exemplum*

I open my personal archive. A thick cardboard folder labeled “Conversations with APW” lands on the desk. I unravel the string holding the transcripts of conversations grouped in smaller packages—conversations with professor Andrzej P. Wejland, my mentor whom I have known for more than a quarter of a century. They are a result of a project that was dedicated to the auto/formative aspects of scientific (academic) biographies. The first documents are from 2016, and the last

¹⁴ The last few sentences connect my work with Michel Foucault’s project of “the hermeneutics of the subject,” which is based on the principle of “a good life” (*techne tou biou*), also called “the art of life.” Shortly before his death the author of *Madness and Civilization* decided to take a step towards resurrecting the ancient idea of philosophy as a “spiritual practice,” allowing for an integral connecting of different spheres of life in order to “achieve a transformation of the world and a metamorphosis of personhood” (Davidson 1990: 476, quoted in Sendyka 2015: 266). Taking inspiration e.g. from the writing of Pierre Hadot, Foucault shifts the emphasis rather strongly from the discursive network or relations that constitute subjectivity (the discursive subjugation of *the self*) to the forms of subjective “becoming,” expressed as individual acts of “the care of *the Self*.” Foucault’s studies on modern subjectivity are founded on creative references to the ancient doctrines of *epimeleia heautou* (the care of the self) and *epimelesthai sautou* (the practice of the self), as well as the category of parrhesia, especially significant from the perspective of relational processes (see footnote 24). These and other elements of Foucault’s concept form a certain “culture of *the self*,” in which the subject is a being of dual nature—both able to act as well as being the object of action (Sendyka 2015: 263). Foucault had written about this problem several times (2000; 2010; 2012). As a side note I would also add that, contrary to some opinions which see Foucault’s thinking in his later phase as contradicting his earlier writing (see for example Heyes 2007: 13; Nussbaum 1985: 13, cited in Sendyka 2015: 252–253), it is possible to apply a different measure to this process. It becomes evident when we consider how Foucault’s biographical (personal) background may have affected his work, oriented towards a continuous process of *writing* and *reading self (Self)* (see Kafar 2014). From this perspective, the turn to “the ethics of a good life” should be considered not as a “rift” or “rupture,” but rather as an attempt to abolish the fragmentation of the author’s identity, realized both in his creative work as well as transcending it.

from 2019. They are not organized chronologically, on the contrary, they are intertwined with photocopies of the Professor's published essays, handwritten notes *etc.* On the one hand this chaos makes it more difficult to find what I am looking for, and on the other hand it perfectly encapsulates how this *silvae rerum* collection of documents is constantly working, not unlike yeast working on dough. Barbara Skarga (2004) would without doubt describe these archives as "traces of existence" ... I turn page after page, reading fragments of the dialogues while at the same time skimming through my own notes. I notice they are not all alike, since they come from different moments and serve different purposes. Some of them are enclosed in "clouds," signaling future editing comments, some were written by hand on the printouts, others were made *a vista* (during successive interviews with the Professor I always took the printouts with me so I could make notes). This atypical, even "loose" reading is quite fascinating, as it takes me back in time to the meeting; part nostalgically, part creatively, it opens the previously closed door which leads to *the relational world* of "Mr. Marcin and Mr. Andrzej."¹⁵ Finally, an hour or so later I come across fragments which had left a lasting impression on me, which I had considered as **a breakthrough**; interestingly—here I am trying to precisely recreate the process in which I took part more or less three months ago—it did not happen immediately during my first reading. I feel as though the text of the transcription wants to wait me out, like it is an "overtext" forcing me to adopt a hermeneutic attitude of "circling around the entirety and between the details which form the entirety" (Witkowski 2007c: 41).¹⁶ I read them once again, this time focusing on what had changed since the last time, especially in my own reception of both individual sentences as well as the general idea.

The change I notice is subtle, not obvious, and thus the more intriguing. It has to do with a growing sense of *the irreversibility of consciousness*. I am sure everyone can recognize this reinvigorating moment when "something" that was accidentally heard or seen suddenly directs attention¹⁷ to a new clue which completely changes the perception of reality. There is no point in trying to close your ears or eyes—I can still *see* and *hear* "it," and in that sense my fate is already sealed. These kind

¹⁵ A phrase used by Wejland in our conversation from November 2, 2017. I refer to a longer passage from that interview on page 135.

¹⁶ Once again I must express my intellectual debt to Lech Witkowski, who explains how the "overtext" attitude of "circling around the entirety and between details forming the entirety" as follows: "It is a situation in which we assume that a text ... has many dimensions that cannot be read at once, that is has a semantic surplus of potential tropes and inspirations which escape understanding, that is has difficult passages that are not easy to deal with, that it always has a convenient code, that it requires a series of horizons and perspectives that help us to understand the effect of its entirety, a challenge that returns in a pulsating sequence, an attitude of circling between an element and a whole. It requires hermeneutic understanding, exposing of the premises of our attitude, in fact obscuring the significant message of the text, at least to some extent. Exposing it gives us a chance for a critical removal of our veils, making visible that which was previously obscured in our reception. ... the premises that obscure the meaning are a deliberate attempt to emphasize the hermeneutic task of carving out on the border of understanding nuances" (Witkowski 2007c: 41–42).

¹⁷ It would be better to say—*pushes* or *pulls*, since we are dealing with an immeasurable force.

of situations are dichotomous, often even dramatic, but sometimes they are redeeming. Luckily, my situation belongs to the second category. Reading the transcript once again results in an “overlapping of change.” What initially emerged as *a revelation*, allowing me to move closer to the “significant meaning of a text” (see footnote 15), is now a final confirmation of that meaning. I am both *a participant of* and *a witness to* a second liberation—to once again use Lech Witkowski’s linguistic picklock—of the appropriate premises of my attitude. In that way the text I am reading *now* repays me with the trust I had granted it before.

So, what have I *seen, heard* and *understood* in my version of the hermeneutics of “circling around the entirety and between the details which form the entirety”?

The oscillating pendulum active in the field of “Master’s/master’s universe” is now turning to the opposing pole of *engagement*, in order to find the keyword: “CONVERSATION.”

“Marcin: Andrzej, I would like us to talk about how we both became researchers of academic biographies.

Andrzej [*Glancing at a piece of paper*]: And this ‘became’ is...

Marcin [*Nodding affirmatively*]: Yes, yes, how ‘we became’...

Andrzej [*Curiously*]: Plural.

Marcin: Yes.

Andrzej [*Giving Marcin a questioning look*]: ...or are you thinking about others, who have...

Marcin [*Firmly*]: No, I wasn’t thinking about others.

Andrzej [*Making sure*]: Only about you and me?

Marcin: Yes, only you and me, only about us.

Andrzej: You’ve counted that we have been on this horizon for twenty-one years...

Marcin: Yes.

Andrzej [*After some consideration*]: We’ve known each other a bit longer, since the time you started writing your master’s degree under my supervision...

Marcin: Yes, that’s true.

Andrzej [*Continuing his thought, expressing astonishment*]: ...but that’s a quarter...

Marcin [*Clearly excited*]: ...of a century...

Andrzej: ...a quarter of a century of interaction, and that is a very long period of time, but at the same time, please notice that even if there were any breaks, we always returned to it as though these breaks never happened, since we were still pushing the same trolley up the hill. It’s hard as is it, but there were always the same threads coming in our conversations, always the same issues, always. And what is most important here, it was always the issue of Mr. Marcin and Mr. Andrzej. That’s the important thing, isn’t it? I mean, we weren’t only talking about science, look, it was like that from the beginning. So if there was any kind of biographical thinking, or autobiographical, then it was there from the very beginning, from the time you introduced yourself to me. When you talked about who you are. Do you

remember? It isn't described in any of my texts, or yours, but I remember it, I see a scene in which we are talking in a classroom, you're approaching me and holding one of my buttons, because you want to TALK TO ME about something. That's how it happened.

Marcin [*In a quiet, breaking voice*]: That was very moving.

Andrzej [*After a longer pause*]: But that's the way it is, dear Marcin, I can see it before my eyes. And it was this way, there was nothing beyond you, beyond your person, there was nothing beyond your biography and it wasn't, it's still not beyond my biography. This interweaving, you could, I know it, someone said: 'This Kafar fellow is always visiting you.' Right? Kafar wasn't visiting me constantly, but when he did, he always had some fundamental questions to ask. Yes, yes, but, well, that's how it was. So I said: 'Give Kafar a break. Kafar has problems, he has to solve them, and I have identical problems, so he's only encouraging me to start thinking about myself.' So that's life, you're asking me: 'How did we become?'—life in a certain coupling. Inspirations, one word that would encourage or discourage one to do something. Notice this, all right? *Tematy, których mi nie odradzano...*¹⁸ [*Topics That I Have Not Been Advised Against*—this "not advising against" was an encouragement. Right? But at the same time there must have been many places, moments, when I would say: 'Not this way, Mr. Marcin,' or later, 'Marcin.' Right? Indeed, notice this breakthrough in how we addressed each other. A long, long, long time ago I already thought of us as partners in conversations, so we should talk on a first name basis, but at the same time I knew that this might in a way disturb your, so to say, your desire to take from me. Do you understand? Sometimes it's a kind of fatherly desire of remaining in these father-son relations. And that's how it was, regardless of your travels, your leaving and coming back, we always remained in these types of relations, so: 'How did we become researchers of biographies?' I don't know. It started momentarily, what I remember is an image, a kind of memory trace, very strong. And it remained this way ... There had to be a suitable atmosphere, for us to want to follow this clue, the choice of a seminar is not random, a choice is never random, the choice of a topic is not random."¹⁹

I allow myself a moment of contemplative suspension, succumbing to the subtle charm of this multidimensional, spontaneously recreated "founding tale"²⁰ about the extraordinary case of "Mr. Marcin and Mr. Andrzej," continuing for over "a quarter of a century" regardless of life's turmoil. Finally, the interpretative and analytical thought begins to slowly dominate over silenced emotions. The paths that I move through are—another oxymoron comes to mind!—separate-and-

¹⁸ It is a reference to master's dissertation entitled *Tematy, których mi nie odradzano. Szkice z antropologii współczesności* [*Topics That I Have Not Been Advised Against: Sketches From Current Anthropology*], Łódź 1997.

¹⁹ Transcript of a conversation between Marcin Kafar and Andrzej P. Wejland, Łódź, November 2, 2017.

²⁰ The metaphor of "founding tale" comes from Bolesław Leśmian. Andrzej P. Wejland (2014: 37–40) presented it in a context interesting for me when he used it to describe the moment when new research communities are formed.

converging, since they lead to different aspects that are however part of the same problem. I am certain that, relying on the richness of content the Professor had equipped me with, I could present a solid analysis, acting just like a seasoned analyst of narrative similar to, for example, William Labov, probably arriving at an interesting conclusion. An alternative solution would be thinking *with* the story, as I had done previously when I experienced *a revelation* about “the appropriate premises of my attitude.” The choice of this interpretative strategy is based on an unconstrained need for examining the story in its entirety and moving with it in the direction of other stories and connecting experiences.²¹ A *humanistic* critical instrument created according to this rule turned out to be perfectly applicable in a situation in which I suddenly understood what the substance of the Master-disciple relationship means **for me**, what *essentially conditions it*, what factor is *inalienable* for its productivity, or even *generally* for it to continue, and first *come into existence*. For me it is—what a banality?!—a CONVERSATION. It would seem to be the simplest of all, it would seem...

I think *with* the story, this beautiful gift I had received from my Master, and I continue my journey through textual hedges until I arrive at a fragment which *in connection with* the passage quoted above—which is, *nomen est omen*, a CONVERSATION—had *then* awakened the right string of *understanding* in me.

“Andrzej [*Interrupting Marcin*]: ...but you mentioned some people. Well then, these people you’ve chosen to talk to, in my opinion, well, they are quite rebellious personalities, curious about something, the world, moving beyond the world ...

Marcin [*Interrupting Andrzej*]: This is what connects us.

Andrzej [*Clearly excited*]: Yes, but you’re the same. This is what I wanted to tell you: you’re the same! That’s why it’s so easy to talk to you, we can have a scientific argument, but at the same time it’s not an argument in the worst sense of the word, it’s a beautiful debate, no, not a beautiful debate, but a beautiful CONVERSATION, a search for something, right? You’re here, I’m here to look for something all the time.

Marcin [*Flipping copies of different articles, in search for the right text*]: I’m assuming that this is the way you talked with [Jan] Lutyński²², and that’s where this dedication came from...²³

²¹ The hermeneutic formula of “thinking with a story” was popularized by the Canadian sociologist of medicine, Arthur W. Frank. He had employed it with great success for the first time in the book *The Wounded Storyteller: Body Illness, and Ethics* (1995), now a classic position for humanistic-oriented narrativists. Basing his reflection on the anthropological heritage of Julia Cruikshank, Frank (1995: 23) explained: “To think about a story is to reduce it to content and then analyze that content. Thinking with stories takes the story as already complete; there is no going beyond it. To think with a story is to experience it affecting one’s own life and to find in that effect a certain truth of one’s life.”

²² Jan Lutyński was a Polish sociologist and political scientist who is widely considered the father of the so-called “Łódź methodological school.” During World War II he was a soldier in the Home Army (AK). He was a co-founder of the Polish Sociological Association and a recipient of a Ford Foundation scholarship.

²³ Andrzej P. Wejland’s article *Jak zażegnać lokalne paradygmaty. O metodologii wywiadu i naukowych wspólnotach dyskursu* [*How to Say Goodbye to Local Paradigms: On Methodology of Interview and Scientific Communities of Discourse*] (2004b) begins with the following dedication: “Fifteen years after the death of Jan Lutyński, always with memory and gratitude.”

Andrzej: Yes, yes, but, he was, you have to believe me, he really enjoyed these types of conversations. Contrary ... contrary to his late wife, who was afraid of such conversations, she feared them. She often told me: 'Because, Mr. Andrzej, my husband has a good opinion of you,' not to say something nice to me, but to convince herself that these conversations are not dangerous. That they're not a danger to her world. Her well-organized world. She wasn't even aware of many things which Lutyński did in his methodology, how he crossed the old Rubicon. That's how it was. Few people even dreamed of the things Lutyński came up with. So now following Lutyński's path, a path meaning 'I accept this man next to me'—he accepts me, I accept him, it was undertaking a quite serious CONVERSATION. We would stay behind after seminars, I remember him standing next to the blackboard, he liked to write something on it, I liked to write something on the board and we would then write and: 'Excuse me, Mr. Andrzej, could you write using formulas?,' I answered: 'No, I won't tire you, professor.' What was the point of this? The CONVERSATION. The fact that something was happening. Others, others were not so interested in a CONVERSATION ... I was waiting for these conversations with Lutyński, and Lutyński for talks with me. So what do you say, Mr. Andrzej? Let's stay for another quarter?"²⁴

A story interlocks with another story, as does experience, creating a well-oiled ontological and hermeneutic mechanism at the core of which lies a CONVERSATION. In a CONVERSATION conducted in a master-disciple style, or to be precise—in its countless many realizations, *conversations*—the same behavioral matrix is present. It constantly *formats* relational actions whose primary objective is **transgression**—a constant transgressing of *yourself* as "disciple" and "Master," *thanks to* and *through* the disciple's engagement *with* the "Master," and the "Master" *with* the "disciple." An effect of this process is a constantly changing knowledge about *yourself*, one who *is ready* to perfect *oneself* ("to train *oneself*," as Michel Foucault would put it (2000)) in the *art of thinking*. In order to arrive at these ultimately simple conclusions, I had to "surrender *myself*" to master-disciple conversations, I had to meet them head on, but also oppose them symbolically, encountering *Myself* on the trail of succession of the CONVERSATION, discovered *differently* in the act of reading which requires "circling around the entirety and between the details which form the entirety."

***Interlude* – Wiktor Osiatyński in conversation with Wladimir S. Bibler**

"Wiktor Osiatyński: *Professor, your interests include the history of human creativity and theoretical problems of thinking. Is thinking and creating the same thing? Does the history of thinking overlap with the history of creativity? And finally—does the creative work entirely fit into the history of thinking?*

²⁴ Transcript of a conversation between Marcin Kafar and Andrzej P. Wejland, Łódź, November 2, 2017.

Wladimir S. Bibler: Let us begin with understanding what we both mean by the notion thinking. It is the human brain overcoming various difficulties and solving problems. It is what happens inside human intellect—either an artist’s or a scholar’s: a sculptor’s or a philosopher’s—until the moment when the work is finished (academic treatise, novel, sculpture etc.). During the period in which the creator is creating something, complicated processes occur in his mind, and this is precisely that—thinking. So, to answer your question, I believe that the history of thinking is the history of creativity, but locked inside a person...

– *If I understand correctly, we could say that creative work is a product of thinking?*

– Not only a product. I believe that creative work, even when it is turned into a product, should always incorporate some elements of the artist’s inner thinking process. For example, a sculpture should contain in itself the thinking process of the artist that accompanied its creation. So that when we are looking at a sculpture we are not forced to rely on our own thought apparatus; but that we somehow participate in what the creator felt and experienced himself.

– *Does this relate only to art, or to any type of creative work and thinking?*

– Not only to art. Every creative text—both artistic as well as scientific—should in some way incorporate the process of its creation. I get the impression that this tendency is more visible in modern science than in art. What did Niels Bohr and other physicists do when they worked out the principles of the transition of Newtonian mechanics into modern quantum physics? They were doing something which seemed very peculiar in the 19th century. Not only were they thinking about natural subjects, how they are built, but also about the process of scientific thinking: about that critical moment when one theory transitions into another. In our own century even the process of creating theory has become one of the most important subjects of that theory” (Osiatyński 1980: 347–348; italics in original).

Instead of a *Conclusion*—about the *Self*’s struggles with language

At ten o’clock we landed by the river Odra, contrary to my theory that we should go to the apartment, it was going to be a cold and dark outdoor. We rolled down the embankment, stuck leaves like sand from the seashore, we yelled from the weir, surrounded by the wild, sharp smell of falling cascades of water, we kissed on the Opatowiska Island, hearing the distant sounds of sirens, and I was insatiable like fatty acid and generally everything was happening by “itself” [orig. “się”], everything by itself, and itself, itself. There was a book by Stachura entitled *Się* and really, there’s something in it, you’re by yourself, and then suddenly you become “itself” and everything is connected, everything against each other. We

were arm wrestling, we were chasing each other, we pulled each other up on metal, surreal constructions taken from Fellini, we were listening to the ships' sirens.

Michał Witkowski, *Zbrodniarz i dziewczyna* [*The Criminal and the Girl*] (2014: 85)

I would like to end by writing about the troubles and hopes that were part of the process of thinking *about* and writing this article. These troubles are clearly revealed by the language you had to deal with, dear Reader. However, it is not even about the style I am writing in, but only (or "as much") about the derivative of this style, about what *forced* me to employ *this kind of writing*. Why use italics so much, why do I need so many neologisms, emboldened fonts, capital letters, what is the purpose of the metaphors, analogies, oxymorons? And finally, why am I adding stage directions to simple written dialogues? Why, why?!—I can perfectly understand these questions since, and you may or may not believe me, dear Reader, they have been bothering me as much as they have been bothering You. Indeed, *my me* is not only *me-the reader*, but also *me-the author*, I read *and* write what You are only experiencing thorough reading. This way, in the case of the position occupied by *my me*, the scale of linguistic challenges increases its volume. By doing this I have in a way acted against myself, breaking with the philosophy which normally guides me, borrowed from Czesław Miłosz who wrote in such a way as to not tire either himself, or the reader.²⁵ Once again I throw myself into the arms of a paradox, since this act against myself—this particular case—was justified by a higher value which cannot be better understood than with the phrase: "to save *Self*." How is this possible? I am acting against myself, to save *Self*? Is this not a tautology in its purest form? No, at least if we explain what this—I confess—otherwise bizarre sounding phrase means. I will therefore return to the question "Why, why?!" and provide the simplest of answers: "To write *Self* out." To save *Self* means to *write oneself out*? What is the relation between "self" written without quotation marks and italics, and with "Self" written without quotations marks, but in italics? Is this multiplication of entities necessary? Would it not be safer to apply a radical cut here, use Ockham's razor to simplify the logic of the utterance? The answer is no, because that way I would be acting against the intuition present in language itself. I wanted to say precisely that: "I would act against the intuition present in language itself." I would perform a *verbal assault* on it, transforming myself into a linguistic logger, no longer an engraver. My memory about writing this article is that of *a constant struggle with words*, looking for a compromise

²⁵ I refer to the idea which the author of *Ziemia Urlo* [*The Land of Urlo*] explains in his poem *Ars poetica*?: "I have always aspired to a more spacious form/ that would be free from the claims of poetry or prose/ and would let us understand each other without exposing/ the author or reader to sublime agonies" (Miłosz 1976: 316; translated by Miłosz and Lillian Vallee).

together *with them* and *in them*, a compromise which would allow me—here I emphasize—to *write self out* in order *to save Self*. No more, no less. This action resembles the act of sewing a tongue on its left side. As was the case—to give an example—when I was changing the title of one of the sections: “Looking for *self* in ‘Master/master’ discourses—about the phenomenology of the ‘Master’s/master’s universe,’” or “Looking for *myself* in discourses...,” or “Looking for *Self* against discourses...”; or also “to *be* perfected” [orig. “doskonalić *się*”], “to perfect *self*” [orig. “doskonalić *siebie*”], or perhaps “to *be*’ perfected” [orig. “doskonalić *’się*”], but certainly **not** “to be perfected” [orig. “doskonalić *się*”]. Why have I decided upon such a categorical use of the word “not”? Because the subject matter I am writing about demanded it. At times it seems almost *unspeakable*, which means that it demanded *distinct* linguistic instruments. However, this “almost” made enough of a difference to become a point of reference, creating a possibility, despite existing adversities, for *expressing “self” through writing* (and *thinking about it*). I was able to come out victorious from my struggles thanks to a relentless *careful listening to language*, while considering its limitations. Language was, therefore, both a curse and my salvation. I knew that there was nothing else to do but to form a pact with it. Language would alternate between allowing me to move closer to it and restraining me from it, by erecting phraseological causeways. When grammar and syntax were kind to me, certain phrases would come out from under my fingers quite “naturally,” as “natural” were the stupors I experienced in opposite situations, when the grammatical and syntactic barriers would manifest themselves. I believe that in moments like these my **transgressive inclinations/abilities/personal conditioning**, which I would gladly explain by the heritage I share *with* and *because of* my “Master of parrhesia,” who was able to skillfully—that is, like a master!—extract it in our conversations: “Andrzej [*interrupting Marcin*]: ...but you mentioned some people. Well then, these people ... in my opinion, well, they are quite rebellious personalities, curious about something, the world, moving beyond the world ...

Marcin [*interrupting Andrzej*]: This is what connects us.

Andrzej [*clearly excited*]: Yes, but you’re the same. This is what I wanted to tell you: you’re the same!”²⁶ The most rational solution would be to stop further

²⁶ Using the term “Master of parrhesia,” I consistently find myself aligned with Foucault’s way of perceiving the subject as caring for *self* (*Self*). “Parrhesia” is the foundation of a principle—which I consider as one of the crucial interpretative clues—characterizing life as a deeply ethical project. For the author of *The Order of Things* parrhesia—a concept which originates from Euripides—became a nodal category paramount to others, allowing the subject to find himself within a never-ending plan of *self*-determination. In an etymological and definitional sense parrhesia means “to say everything” and is based on a principle of frankness. Roma Sendyka points out that Foucault distinguishes and emphasizes not the technical use of parrhesia, but its interactive aspect, “parrhesia as *ethos*” —a specific type of relation between the speaker and the enunciation, between a teacher and a student” (Sendyka 2015: 277). When translated into the language I proposed in the earlier parts of this text, we may view parrhesia as standing guard and maintaining the vitality of the horizon of a CON-

pursuits and simply silence myself. In moments when others, as I believe, would most certainly abandon their attempts at writing, I found myself intrigued by what I may find if I follow another forgotten path in the thick forest of things, and each time I would chose a different solution, attaining to the rule of *an unfinishable*, in the spirit of Gabriel Marcel (1987: 15), “dealing” with the matter.

The essence of this volubility—which You, the Reader, must have already realized, if you have reached this point in the text—was/is the personal pronoun “I” which remains in a specific relation with its reflexive forms and their aesthetical reshaping I have been applying throughout the entire text. I am therefore thinking about the Polish words for “self:” “*się*,” “*siebie*,” “*Się*,” and finally “*Siebie*.”

The problem I discovered while writing is not in any way new. Many writers, poets, literary scholars, as well as broadly defined scholars of culture, people and societies have written literary and critical texts about it, approaching it from the point of view of philosophy, psychology or from other perspectives not listed by me. In her monograph entitled *Od kultury ja do kultury siebie. O zwrotnych formach w projektach tożsamościowych* [From a Culture of Me To a Culture of Self: On Reflexive Forms in Identity Projects] Roma Sendyka (2015) informs us about the seriousness of this problem. It appears clearly at the intersection of linguistic multiplications and the central axis which is the challenge of translation. Let me quote a passage from her book: “The issue of Me is a much more difficult, and not only terminological problem. Why should we use this pronoun if it immediately refers us to grammar? But there are indeed other terminologies which seem more suitable for our purpose. Subject, being, individual, character, person—are we not looking for one of these concepts? But these terms do not seem appropriate.’

VERSATION. Strengthening the relation between a student and a Master, parrhesia is “a kind of generous sharing of (knowledge, examples),” “it therefore allows one to realize in the present ‘the care of the self’ at the same time as ‘the care for others,’ in a situation of constant change as well as ontological and epistemological uncertainty, against the need to construct rules of conduct in the absence of a finished code and with only one ethical founding principle—honesty towards the partner in the relationship. It would be an alternative model of the philosophy of the subject, a type of critical philosophy that does not define either the conditions or the limits of cognition, but instead opens the space for observation that allows one to study unidentified ‘conditions and possibilities of subjective transformation’” (ibidem: 279–280). A parrhesiastic “practice of *the self*” through relationships requires, as Foucault emphasizes, a continuous immersion in *logoi*, understood as “true and rational discourses” (Foucault 2012: 552; see also Sendyka 2015: 280) (with such forms as inner mediation, listening and conversing), where the reiterating fulfilling of *the ethos* takes place each time. That is why in this context’s enunciation “... you’re the same!” opens a transformative door to treating *self* as one who belongs to a group of scholars who are *in some way* different from other scholars. What does it mean for me and ? How does it influence the mode in which we continue to talk with each other? How does this strikingly categorizing utterance influence my/our way of seeing *self* and the practice of acting against *self*? These types of questions would certainly never appear if not for the reflexive-parrhesiastic attitude resulting from the relational dynamic. It is also possible that if not for these words (“... you’re the same!”), I would have never written the part of the text which this footnotes refers to. Indeed, it is also the kind of *Self* I am looking for and finding “at the intersection of Master/master discourses.”

When searching for a substitute for the French personal pronoun *moi*, Barbara Skarga wrote that ‘it is better to talk about *sobość*,’ if we are referring to the issue of being yourself, me being identical with myself.

‘Writing self? Writing oneself? Writing about oneself’—asks Michał Paweł Markowski, when translating Michel Foucault’s essay *L’écriture de soi*. The decision to create a Polish neologism ‘sobapisanie’ was validated by the English translation: ‘self-writing,’ although similar intuitions were also available—four years earlier the problem of how to characterize the process of shaping identity during writing was discussed by Ryszard Nycz, who, citing Gombrowicz, had called it ‘writing with self.’ To remain within the works of the author of *The Order of Things*—the third part of *The History of Sexuality*, entitled *Souci de soi*, was translated as *The Care of the Self*. The famous 1982 lecture from the University of Vermont, *Technologies of the Self*, was translated as *Techniki siebie*.

One among the many translators of *Sources of the Self. The Making of Modern Identity* ... when attempting to translate one of Charles Taylor’s crucial terms, explained his choices with the following: ‘There is no equivalent for the noun *self* in the Polish language. It would require the creation of the neologism «sobość» or, as in Polish translations of Nietzsche [W. Berent, L. Staff], «samość».’

The construction of pronouns has a much longer history. When translating *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Waław Berent decided upon translating ‘the Self’ as ‘samość.’ ... Leopold Staff did the same in his translation of *Untimely Meditations*. ...

Sobość, samość, sobie, siebie, or perhaps simply—*Się*? It is easy to check that this option was already employed in some Polish translations, for example in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, in which it replaced the original *Das Man* from the 27 paragraph. *Das Man* referred to a state of being influenced by others, what was turned into ‘impersonal and average’” (Sendyka 2015: 27–30).

The passage quoted *in extenso* is very insightful for several reasons, but what I consider most significant in the context of my own considerations, and what I would like You to notice, dear Reader, is the issue of linguistic deficiencies. They are ruthlessly brought to light when confronted with the experience which *the practice of language* attempts to live up to. Perhaps this poses the biggest challenge for both translators and those who are translated—the necessity of trying to manage the rift between the reality outside of language and the lived language. For example, why does Barbara Skarga question the adequacy (which is: inexhaustibility) of the word “me,” in situations when one attempts to use it to describe those dimensions of existence which would have to encompass functions of subjectivity other than those “static” (essentialist)? My guess—for the same reason as I was not able to fit in the traditional Cartesian convention of thinking and writing about the subject (which defines its freedom, as Agata Bielik-Robson (2002: 26) writes, “in clear opposition to any conditioning”). The situation I had found myself in (but did not create myself!) required a consideration of an entirely different understanding of

the subject, one that is characterized by a seemingly insatiable desire for defining *self* (still as a reflexive pronoun).

Furthermore, it is the subject which appears as *self* (sometimes also *Self*, when emphasizing it as an ethical instance—once again Foucault comes to mind), that is—and it is a very significant shift—a grammatical noun form, a response to the experiential necessity. Since *self* (being, *selbst*), as Sendyka notices, following Agata Bielik-Robson (ibidem: 58), “is represented by a creative part of the psyche, for which the world seems to be open and undetermined, susceptible to fantasies and creative interpretations,” it places *self* and not “an escape from conditioning” as “an affirmation of dependency” (Sendyka 2015: 15).

I therefore consider my chosen solution as an attempt (whether successful or not, I leave it up to You, dear Reader) to find *self* in a “reflexive” way of thinking, which is deeply reflective. This increasingly popular way of thinking is a reflection of much wider changes: “It is a movement from “a culture of *me*” to “a culture of *self*”; from (illusory) autonomy to affirming relationality; from the concept of a human as an individual to a ‘networking’ human. It would be a sort of Copernican turn—*me* from the center of the universe becomes one of many elements (as Walter Benjamin wanted it, and as Rosi Braidotti wants it today) of a tangled constellation (ibidem: 16).

It turns out that looking for *Self* at the intersection of “Master/master” discourses also belongs to this constellation.

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