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AROUND THE MARGIN IN EIGHTY WORLDS AND TWENTY YEARS. REMARKS ON THE PARADOXICAL NATURE OF THE NOTION OF A MARGIN

Abstract: This article obviously aims at messing around, checking if borderlines of disciplines can be ignored, so as not to lose sight of their margins. The increase in the interest in margins may be associated with the change of the cultural paradigm at the turn of 1980s and 1990s, the so-called “spatial turn”, i.e. a rediscovery of the cognitive indispensability of spatial metaphors. This turn was also influenced by intrinsically ex-centric and centrifugal strivings of the avant-garde. However, a much greater incentive to deal with the topic is provided by the common uncertainty of our own position, role and usefulness in the global circulation of culture. A strong sense of marginalization or marginality in the culture described as global is paradoxical in the light of geometry’s “intuition-free” generalizations. There is no margin on the surface of a sphere, at most each point of the spherical space can be described as peripheral locality. And in each such locality, peripheral vicissitudes may occur and do occur, as dramatic as they are uninteresting to anyone outside the locality. It is quite a precise model – *more geometrico* – of the cultural processes which are most frequently called *alienation, defamiliarization, disillusion, enstrangement or estrangement*. Only having referred a margin to a triangle formed by the three terms *остранение, Verfremdung, dépaysement*, can we fully understand the reasons for the constant fascination with the marginal.

Keywords: alienation, disillusion, enstrangement, *остранение, Verfremdung, dépaysement*, perimeter-periphery, *das Unheimliche*/the uncanny.

Margins and marginalisation are frequently analysed in relation to modern culture and art. Those who write about margins do not usually go beyond what is considered to be the common area of cultural anthropology, sociology of space, history of ideas, and aesthetics, as well as ethnology, cultural and economic studies¹. This area is so vast that one may not even get close to its

¹ Referring to a subjective-marginalist trend in economy, developing from the 1870s, which eagerly used microeconomic research, we realize that “after a while” we find ourselves in

margins, not to mention entering them. And there stretches the equally vast area covering the history of old art, iconography, religious studies and theology.² And again, one may spend dozens of years studying iconographical details, elaborating ekphrases of artworks without using the notion of marginality. This article obviously aims at messing around, checking if borderlines of these disciplines can be ignored, so that we do not lose sight of their margins.

The increase in the interest in margins may be associated with the change of the cultural paradigm³ at the turn of 1980s and 1990s, the so-called “spatial turn” (Ger. *räumliche Wende*, *topologische Wende*, *raumkritische Wende*), i.e. a rediscovery of the cognitive indispensability of spatial metaphors.⁴ This turn was also influenced by the intrinsically ex-centric and centrifugal strivings of the avant-garde. However, a much greater incentive to deal with the topic is provided by the common uncertainty of our own place, position, role, and usefulness in the global circulation of culture. The circulation of new trends, facilitated by the Internet, shifted interest in the latest cultural affairs, often described as liquid modernity⁵, which owes its

the field of sociology, and then of political studies and cultural studies, and that above-mentioned row of disciplines spontaneously forms a circle. See: H. Przybyła, *Filozoficzne korzenie nurtu subiektywno-marginalistycznego w ekonomii*, in: *Marginalizm zachodni*, (ed.) U. Zagóry-Jonszty, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach, Katowice 2011, p. 63-66.

² The article and above-mentioned distinctions refer to the European culture and its main, Christian religious tradition.

³ A series of turns – increase in interest in particular notions and metaphors describing culture is a phenomenon which was initiated in the middle 1960s by the linguistic turn; R. Rorty (ed.), *The linguistic turn. Essays in Philosophical Method*, University of Chicago Press Chicago/London 1967; through «*ontologische Wendung*» already called for by H.-G. Gadamer (*Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophische Hermeneutik*, Mohr, Tübingen 1960); «*Kulturalistische Wendung*» in the 1990s. (D. Hartmann P. Janich, *Die Kulturalistische Wendung. Zur Orientierung des philosophische Selbstverständnisses*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a. M. 1998), after the “pictorial turn” (W.J.T. Mitchell, *The pictorial turn*, in: *Picture theory. Essays on verbal and visual representation*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1994, pp. 11-34), the “iconic turn” (G. Boehm, *Die Wiederkehr der Bilder*, in: G. Boehm (ed.), *Was ist ein Bild?* Fink, München 1994, pp. 11-38) and the “narrativist turn” (M. Kreiswirth, *Tell me a story: The narrativist turn in the human sciences*, in: M. Kreiswirth Th. Carmichael (ed.), *Constructive criticism: The human sciences in the age of theory* Toronto/Buffalo/London 1995, pp. 61-87. See: D. Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns. Nowe kierunki w naukach o kulturze*, transl. K. Krzemieniowa, Oficyna Naukowa, Warszawa 2012.

⁴ *The spatial turn*, in: *Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie*, Metzler, Stuttgart 2008, p. 664. Both linguistic expressions and those described by linguistics as metalinguistic. See: D. Piekarczyk, *Metafory metatekstowe*, UMCS Publishing House, Lublin 2013.

⁵ A great role in disseminating a metaphor of “liquidity” was played by the whole series of books by Zygmunt Bauman, which emphasized a word: liquid in a title. The most frequently repeated metaphor of culture is a metaphor of a turbulent flow and the Navier–

disorientating dynamic and chaotic nature⁶ largely to our fundamental cognitive uncertainty, lack of an explicit answer to the question which must be asked in each culture: what is the shape-form of the world we live in? Culture as a whole, as a system of symbolic connections between available facts, values, and norms behaves in a mimetic way towards what we acknowledge to be a model or image of nature⁷. We have not known it for more than a hundred years. And we do not know it not only at the metaphorical level, but also in relation to physical reality⁸. It is worth considering to what extent this vagueness or even inability to acquire a clear image of nature influences the demands for “the abolishment of the whole” and its replacement with multiplicity: “we have seen through the deception of the whole, we have learnt to recognize and acknowledge multiplicity instead.”⁹

If we do not know the form and order of the universe, the domain of human culture also reflects this vagueness. The question about the centre of the universe is, in the light of modern cosmology, a senseless question, one which cannot be answered. Culture abhors the lack of answers even more than a vacuum. Determining, defining, indicating a centre has moved from the domain of nature to the human world – *oikumene*. Consequently, various loci compete for the central position. If there is no centre, or there is no consensus on recognizing the centre, it is not possible to point to the margins. This process has been repeatedly described and recognized as the politiciza-

Stokes' equations describing its physical parameters, see: K. Cichoń, O sprytnych sposobach wypatrywania ducha. Przyczynek do ikonografii płynności, *Studia Ełckie*, 15, no. 3, 2013, pp. 369-392. Undoubtedly, contrary to the extremely “rational” and bureaucratic world from before one hundred years ago, described by Max Weber through the metaphor of a steel cage (*eisernen Käfig*), a contemporary form of culture is much freer, yet unceasing fluctuation of elements was also an obvious component of reality in the old culture.

⁶ An inability to capture a rule, an algorithm, a formula describing the principles which govern this chaotic movement of culture poses a challenge to technologically oriented culture. It is proved by fast developing attempts to analyze and shape the history of culture with statistics and IT tools. An example of such an attitude, described as big data mining, may be a net map, and metaphors as “HCI” (human-computer interaction); see: L. Manovicz, *The Language of New Media*, The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts 2001.

⁷ Of course the influence is mutual. Principles determining *oikumene* were being used at explaining the nature. An example is Heraclitus thesis: “War is the father of all and king of all”; *πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστιν, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς* (Herakleitos, D: 53; see: H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker. Griechisch und deutsch*, hg. W. Kranz, Vandermannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Berlin 1954, Bd. I, p.16.

⁸ N. Afshordi, R.B. Mann, R. Pourhasan, Czarna dziura u początku czasu, *Świat Nauki*, 9 (277), September 2014, pp. 29-30.

⁹ W. Welsch, *Nasza postmodernistyczna moderna*, transl. R. Kubicki A. Zeidler-Janiszewska, Oficyna Naukowa, Warszawa 1998, p. 238.

tion of culture¹⁰. The term “functionary” (Fr. *fonctionnaire*; Ger. *Funktionär*)¹¹ explains to what extent it is politically necessary to precede each common human activity with a “critical” and “democratic” argument (discourse) on reference points, criteria, canons, centres and margins. The expression *fonctionnaires publics* was used in 1770 by A.R.J. Turgot¹². It is hard to imagine any element – Paradise, Hell – of the old world, rooted in religion, described with this term. Symptomatically, Turgot was one of the authors of the Enlightenment theory of progress, breaking the static vision of the social world and the philosophy of history. As early as in the 19th century, the term “functionary” was used in political context, and after the Springtime of the Peoples in 1848, it frequently described a revolutionary way of acting.¹³ Today it seems natural to us that certain areas of reality either function or do not function (are switched on or off). The meaning of this word conveys a belief about impermanence and changeability. There is nothing surprising in the statement that “the centre does not hold”, unless we recall the Cartesian coordinates and the geometric image of the world. In geometry (or at least in its European version of Greek origins), a centre, like an edge, perimeter, etc. cannot alternately function and not function. If they are once determined, they just exist. They may only be taken or not be taken into consideration. Under the influence of pragmatism, the opposition of “functions/does not function” has become synonymous to “is/is not”. This aporia between the static-geometric language and the progressive-revolutionary one reveals a conflict between the poetics or metaphors describing reality. The margins or marginalia in question also sometimes “function” better and sometimes worse.

A characteristic feature of contemporary and modern maps and descriptions of *oikumene* is the fact that they are unprecedentedly dominated by science treated as the only authoritative cognitive tool. On the one hand, science is unable to explicitly recognize the forms of nature against which *oikumene* positions itself and which it unwillingly imitates; on the other hand, for the last two hundred years, the standards of scientific cognition have greatly influenced the structure of the imagination or at least intersubjectively communicated its visions and schemes. The especially noticeable standards, which are most frequently called for include the Cartesian demand for clarity and explicitness of knowledge, and an inclination towards treating the *more*

¹⁰ A recent example is a series of lectures by Andrzej Turowski, *Politozy sztuki współczesnej* presented in 2013 in the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

¹¹ See: G. Schlünder, *Funktionär*, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. J. Ritter, Schwabe Verlag, Basel 1972, vol. 2, pp. 1145-1146.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 1145.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1146.

geometrico method as a universal one, justified not only in relation to Nature, but also to the world of human experiences¹⁴. It is worth noting the consequences of the well-known distinction made by Mircea Eliade between the “secular space” and the space in traditional cultures, the “sacred space” in which the *sacrum* is located.¹⁵ For these reasons, the homogenous secular space, striving for the elimination of discontinuities, localities, heterotopias, including a scientific model of space, does not provide for anything like a margin. “For a secular person (...) space is homogenous and neutral, without any discontinuities between qualitatively varying elements. Geometric space may be divided and limited in any direction, yet its structure does not create any qualitative diversity and, consequently, any orientation”¹⁶ It is difficult to talk about a margin, either in relation to Newton’s absolute, indefinite space or to Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizome¹⁷ growing in different directions, if they do not contain any privileged, characteristic points. The strong sense of marginalization or marginality in the culture described as global is paradoxical in the light of geometry’s “intuition-free” generalizations. There is no margin one could point to on the surface of a sphere, at most each point of the spherical space can be described as peripheral locality. And in each such locality, peripheral vicissitudes may and do occur¹⁸, as dramatic as they are uninteresting to anyone outside the locality. It is quite a precise model – *more geometrico* – of the cultural processes which are most frequently called *alienation*, *defamiliarization*, *disillusion*, or *estrangement* (*Fr. aliénation, étrangeté, éloignement, dépaysement, distanciation*). *Verfremdung* (alienation) is frequently acknowledged as a source term for numerous similar descriptions of presence in the form of Leibniz’s cluster of monads linked in the global (certainly rhizomatic) network, and, despite that, unwilling to take an interest in what is beyond them. It was used by Bertold Brecht after he watched a performance of the Beijing opera in Moscow (*Verfremdungseffekt in der chinesischen Schauspielkunst*, 1936), as an opposite to

¹⁴ However, under the influence of the interest in irrational and unaware elements of human psyche started by Freud, extreme epistemological scientism lost its position dominating in the late 19th century.

¹⁵ M. Eliade, *Sacrum i profanum. O istocie sfery religijnej*, transl. B. Baran, Aletheia, Warszawa 2008, pp. 18-19; [Das heilige und das Profane. Vom Wesen des Religiösen].

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ G. Deleuze, F. Guattari: *Kłaczce*, transl. Bogdan Banasik. “Colloquia Communia”, 1988, no. 1-3 [*Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, vol. 2, Mille plateaux, 1980].

¹⁸ Apart from “sudden change of fate” (Aristotle, Poetics VI, 1450 a 34f.) περιπέτεια created from πτπειν – fall, sudden turn, which is associated with a drama, it has a meaning which describes a physical movement, a sudden turn, turning up which leads to a fall (μεταβολή; see Aristotle, Poetics XI, 1452 a 23f), appearing where we did not intend.

Aristotle's category of "empathy" (συμπάθεια; Lat. *sympathia*)¹⁹. According to Brecht, *Verfremdung* produces the desired effect of surprise and curiosity instead of traditional clarity, obviousness and comprehensibility (*Über experimentelles Theater*, 1939). We may also mention the twenty-year-long attempts to find or rather construct a category describing a similar way of acting postulated for art, within the circle of the Russian avant-garde. In 1916, Viktor Borisovich Shklovsky, a member of the avant-garde group OPOYAZ (Obshchestvo izucheniya Poeticheskogo YAZyka – Society for the Study of Poetic Language), analysing literary language, used the neologism *остранение* (translated as "defamiliarization" or "estrangement") in his essay "Art as Technique". Writing about the ability of literature to produce an effect of oddity, which helps us to avoid everyday linguistic automatism, Shklovsky associated defamiliarization with literary images²⁰, in order to describe them as "presenting an object outside the usual order".²¹ The third term is *dépaysement* (change of scenery) used by the Surrealists, which described the state of disorientation, something which we did not expect²². A belief about the need for such aesthetic activity informs vast areas of avant-garde art, searching for unconventionality, strangeness, eccentricity. Eccentricity as a synonym of *Verfremdung*, and at the same time a comprehensible term, explains the relations between the avant-garde and the margin²³, similarly to the literary meaning of *dépaysement* – alienation, seclusion, disorientation, exile (here – exile to the margin). Only having referred the margin to a triangle formed by the three terms: *остранение*, *Verfremdung*, *dépaysement*, can we fully understand the reasons for the constant fascination with the marginal. The margin is a term describing particularly

¹⁹ T. Weber, *Verfremdung*, in: *Historische Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. K. Gründer, Schwabe Verlag, Basel 2001, vol. 11, p. 653; see: J.J. White, *Bertolt Brecht's Dramatic Theory*, Camden House, Rochester, N.Y. 2004, p. 107. Aristotle is putting together in one fragment notions of empathy and catharsis (κάθαρσις), see: *Politics* 1340a-b, 1341b.

²⁰ („Я лично считаю, что остранение есть почти везде, где есть образ"). In В. Шкловский, *Искусство как прием*, <http://www.opozaz.ru/manifests/kakpriem.html> (29.08.2014).

²¹ Е. Перемышлев, *Шкловский, Виктор Борисович*, in: *Энциклопедия Кругосвет*, Универсальная научно-популярная онлайн-энциклопедия; http://www.krugosvet.ru/enc/kultura_i_obrazovanie/literatura/SHKLOVSKI_VIKTOR_BORISOVICH.html, (accessed 29.08.2014); В. Шкловский, *Собрание сочинений в трех томах*, Художественная литература, Москва 1973-1974, vol. 1-3.

²² J. Engelhardt, *Gestus und Verfremdung: Studien zum Musiktheater bei Strawinsky und Brecht/Weill*, Emil Katzwichler, München-Salzburg 1984, p. 73.

²³ Contrary to the intention of Brecht, who emphasized (*Der Verfremdungseffekt in anderen Künsten*, 1936) that his understanding of *Verfremdung* has nothing in common with the Surrealists' search for impressive strangeness, based on mesmerizing, suggestive experiences, so referring to traditional aesthetic requiring empathy (*Einfühlungsästhetik*); see: Th. Weber, *Verfremdung* in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 11, p. 654.

interesting locations for the avant-garde's desire to arouse interest and cause surprise. However, the medieval inscriptions *ubi sunt leones* in the margins of maps are much older than the avant-garde belief that margins are a natural location for "enormous miracles" and monsters²⁴. The concept of the avant-garde as a form of culture having self-awareness of its own identity, its own alienation or its own unavoidable centrifugal marginality is making a comeback. Thanks to the terms *Verfremdung*, *dépaysement* and *осмпаненue* we can more easily understand what connects such phenomena as collage, montage, or deformation, which are so typical of 20th- and 21st-century art, with margins and marginality.

In order to better determine the character of contemporary margins, we should add one more term in two language variants: *das Unheimliche/the uncanny*. The German term, used as a synonym of what fills us with terror (*das Schreckliche*), made a glittering career in Romanticism thanks to psychiatry and psychoanalysis. Used by Ernst Jentsch in 1906²⁵, it became one of the crucial notions of the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud, who described states of anxiety, fear and terror (*Schreckhaften, Angst- und Grauerregenden*)²⁶. In 20th-century humanities, it was employed in aesthetics as *Unheimliche*, the *uncanny* (Fr. *inquiétant, l'inquiétante, étrangeté*). The synonymy of *Unheimliche* and *Verfremdung* naming the same state of strangeness, separation from what is familiar and understood, does not herald the vast and unclear, incoherent, chaotic spaces which open when we realise that every local marginality may be treated and described as "uncanny".

What is local, marginal is perceived as strange, incomprehensible, odd. We are dealing with the kind of perception differing from the previously discussed one, which focused on the centre; this perception concentrates on the margin of the observation field, on what disrupts our perceptual habits. A margin, a borderline, an edge is often a place which attracts curiosity (*curiosité*), recognized by Krzysztof Pomian as an important driving mechanism of modern European culture.²⁷ The European passion for collect-

²⁴ Intuition for indispensabilities of it what bizarre and marginal for full understanding (*miraculous revelation*) we can read in the Aby Warburg's note: *per monstra ad spheram*; see: J. Szczuka, *Per monstra ad sphaeram. Aby Warburg i jego biblioteka, Polska Sztuka Ludowa – Konteksty*, 1999, vol. 53, no. 1-2, pp. 25-28.

²⁵ E. Jentsch, *Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen*, "Psychiatr.-neurologische Wochenschrift", 22 (1906), pp. 195, 198.

²⁶ S. Freud, *Das Unheimliche* (1919), in: *Gesammelte Werke. Chronologisch geordnet*, ed. Anna Freud (u.a.), Fischer Taschenbuch-Verlag, Frankfurt a. Main 1999, vol. 12, pp. 227-278. See: H. Hühn, *Unheimliche das*, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 11, p. 172.

²⁷ K. Pomian, *Collectors and curiosities: Paris and Venice 1500-1800*, transl. by E. Wiles-Portier, Polity Press, Cambridge, U.K. 1990.

ing, “scoring” successive margins in the hope of discovering odd curiosities has become a common fascination for the avant-garde, then the so-called counterculture²⁸, and today, in a commercialized form, for many “alternative” groups. An accurate motto for this 20th-century cultural trend is the title of the novel by Milan Kundera *Život je jinde* (Life is elsewhere), published in 1969, the same as the predictions of Theodore Roszak for *Counter Culture*. Kundera’s continuing search for the “somewhere else”, the wonderful, interesting life, always slipping away, may be recognized as one of the metaphors for something invisible or elusive. Krzysztof Pomian, searching for an explanation of the passion for collecting new experiences associated with the curiosities not to be found anywhere else, writes about “la collection entre l’invisible et le visible”. Giving up metaphor, we must acknowledge it as a symptom of (not necessarily religious) transcendence. The human inclination towards the spatial visualization of abstract transcendence as something similar to, yet extending beyond, a margin, must be probably acknowledged as the source of both fascination with margins and marginality, and their controversiality. We should also attend to one more spatial aspect which constantly accompanies the images of these abstractions, namely, to their orientation in space, to the literarily understood mutual relation between *margin* and *transcendence*. The descriptions of culture referring to the notion of transcendence use vertical metaphors. *Top* and *bottom* are oppositional categories, typical of mythological, religious descriptions of reality, which outline the space of transcendence. Always leading outside the limits of *hic et nunc*, on the one side – downwards, towards the metaphors of the source and depth, on the other – upwards, towards the metaphors of the divine apotheosis of the Absolute. Ignoring the contrast between top and bottom was listed in 1948 by Hans Sedlmayr among the seven symptoms of contemporary culture, leading, in his opinion, to the degrading loss of the centre (*Verlust der Mitte*)²⁹. It seems that this is not about not distinguishing top and bottom, but about downgrading the vertical plane of transcendence to a marginal role in culture against the much more comfortable horizontal plane of “globality”, consisting of local-marginal viewpoints. The lack of interest in either the deep sources or soteriological heroizing apotheosis results from the “unlimited” possibilities of acting on the homogeneous plane of the global market, situated at the same level, presumably equally accessible to

²⁸ What is interesting is distinctly antireligious feature of a protest against authorities, see Th. Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition*, University of California 1969.

²⁹ “Aufhebung des Unterschieds von «Oben» und «Unten».” As cited in: H. Sedlmayr, *Verlust der Mitte. Die bildende Kunst des 19. Und 20. Jahrhunderts als Symptom und Symbol der Zeit*, EBG Verlags, 10 Auflage, Wien 1983, p. 164.

everyone. People “travel” along the vertically directed dimension of transcendence, usually carried by the narrated stories³⁰. Narration, telling, “sinking into” deeper and deeper stories always leads away from the life where action (Lat. *actio*) takes place. This difference in perpendicular dimensions, mutually crossing traditions was expressed by the distinction between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*. The pragmatic manner of acting has been always directed (at least from the beginning of the modern times), at restraining, controlling Nature. Occupying, restricting the successive points in the Universe and including them inside *oikumene* may be presented in the Cartesian order of rational and explicit geometry (more precisely, in the order of all disciplines which act in accordance with the *principia mathematica*). Soon after Descartes’ proposal, the sovereign order of a story, narration which is independent of the requirements of geometry³¹ was defended by Giambattista Vico, who accentuated the role of language as the basic dimension of the human world and activity³². Pondering over the boundaries of the notion of margin, we can use a simple model specifying the margin as each point where a diachronically perceived plane crosses the one which we recognize as the area of synchronically appearing phenomena. The former is closer to narration, language, and history as well as the flow of time, the latter – to iconicity, geometry and the expansiveness of space. In such a model, each point is a margin; the problem appears if we want to determine the position and nature of the centre. Let us refer to the words of the “classic”: “Tell me, o Muse, of that ingenious hero who travelled far and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy (...) Tell me, too, about all these things, O daughter of Jove, from whatsoever source you may know them.” That is how Homer begins the story of Odysseus. He suggests starting an epic poem from any, even marginal, point, not bothering with the rules of construction,

³⁰ See: footnote no. 27.

³¹ We must pay attention to two opposing features of narration. On the one hand, as a form of imagination, it seemingly is not subject to any laws or rules. Impossible figures feel fabulous in a geometric order as outlines of human imagination. History of literature provides numerous examples of narration liberated from requirements of *ratio* and logic. At the same time, embroidering a story, telling as acting within *vita contemplativa* – βίος γνωστικός, -θεωρητικός should be somehow similar to the sight or look of *contemplatio-θεωρία* based on a metaphor, a geometric order, allowing a listener to find a perspective from which a story becomes readable, understood.

³² In Vico’s views, Gadamer emphasizes his belief about the role of *φρόνησις* – practical knowledge which is directed at a particular situation. Thus, it has to capture «conditions» in their unending changeability”. In this perspective, Vico juxtaposes theoretical wisdom (*sophia sive sapientia*) used in natural sciences with much more practical *phronesis*. A question of where is currently the boundary between *actio-contemplatio* outreaches the margin of this article. As cited in: H.-G. Gadamer, *Prawda i metoda*, transl. B. Baran, PWN, Warsaw 2004, p. 50–51.

searching for the centre, or starting “from the beginning”, etc. It is as if he shared the postmodernist belief about the end of the “grand narratives”. He gives this advice in the invocation to the superhuman power – the Muse. Even if an invocation primarily takes the form of a justifying formula, which explains to the listeners why the familiar myths-plots, frequently narrated by earlier, anonymous *aoids*, are now recited in a different order, it can be also perceived as a way of expressing the belief that the freedom of moving in both dimensions of life: *πρακτικός* and *θεωρητικός* (practical and theoretical) requires something that exceeds human abilities. The subject of the Odyssey is coincidence, perceived as an act of gods’ will. The human hero, Odysseus, is extraordinarily distinguished by the gift of *fronesis* – smartness, worldly wisdom. Only due to that is he able to escape even the most marginal (treacherous, pleasurable, etc.) vicissitudes and pursue his aim. Odysseus is cut out to be a hero, since he is “very canny” and will deal with any turn in action or fate. Greek *πολύ-τροπος* may be translated as “seeing or knowing much, knowing many ways, multidirectional, multidimensional”. We are dealing with Odysseus, because the hero is nothing other than a mobile centre in a comeback tour to the starting point, Ithaca, which closes the perimeter-*periphery*. In this sense, the action-packed epic illustrates the movement characteristic of self-reflection bending towards its starting point – as is the case with every theory and numerous contemplations. The centre may appear in the place of each margin when we direct our attention there. Within the space of *vita activa*, each smallest episode which is granted reflection, turned into a story, becomes the centre of this story, standing out from the surrounding marginal actions. Within the space of *vita contemplativa*, each moment of narration, point in a story which induces someone to take action may be the most important-central point of this story. The simultaneous use of the possibilities given by these separate spaces requires the employment of a symbol. Or rather, a symbol may be understood as a result of this simultaneous activity. If it works, the outcome is art. Explaining the historical understanding of a symbol, Gadamer quotes Schelling: “Mythology in general, and any piece of mythological literature in particular is not to be perceived schematically or allegorically, but symbolically. For the demand of the absolute artistic representation is: representation with complete indifference, so that the universal is wholly the particular, and the particular at the same time wholly the universal, and does not simply mean it.”³³ Searching for the definition of a margin, we have unwillingly reached the

³³ F.W.J. Schelling, *Die Philosophie der Kunst* (1859), transl. by D. Scott as *The Philosophy of Art*, University of Minnesota Press 1989, p. 14.

definition of a symbol and the relationship between the marginal and the central as an element constructing symbolic order.

Which makes no sense (not so much from the logical as from the geometrical point of view): while searching for and discussing the margins of the global culture (adequate for a spherical model)³⁴ is a completely natural phenomenon as one of the numerous conventions of linguistic games, and does not evoke a sense of paradox, the controversiality of the concepts of margin and marginality results from their equally strong connection with what establishes a geometric-spatial metaphorical costume of all theories. In the game of narration, multiplicity of perspectives, appearances and views, which would make each image useless, “impure”, is by all means acceptable, or even expected. It is a repeatedly discovered truth: “In the introduction to his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein gave an account of his experience with holistic attempts and his transition to the alternative solution of ‘sketches of landscape’ (...) The field of Wittgenstein’s thought (...) cannot be considered from only one point of view; it must be rather ‘traversed along and across’. It can be made available via different ways and through numerous ‘landscape sketches’, whereas even at the end we will not achieve an integral image, but we are condemned to the truth of many perspectives.”³⁵ Welsch’s remarks create a territory which is accessible only to *ἀνδρα πολύτροπον*, *oikumene* as a locus of an unending game and its equally unending reporting.

Let us consider the example of a map in order to reveal the source of the controversiality of the margin in contemporary culture. The central point of the maps of the world (*mappae mundi*), or rather outlines depicting the whole in its basic structure, was Jerusalem, frequently marked in the very centre, at the meeting of the three continents known to antique and medieval geography. Jerusalem was considered to be the centre of the world not only due to its real importance, but because this was where the crucial moments of

³⁴ Sphericity is a visual equivalent of the belief about the existence of the Whole. About a consistent nature of the reality. Even if, according to Lyotard’s or Welsch’s belief we reject existence of the Whole and we acknowledge chaotic irregularity to be more compatible with the reality, there is still some place for a margin within. Even if we can point out margins in the metaphor of randomness and shapelessness of: *carchat- d’âme*, which was used by surrealists. See G. Bataille, *Informe*, in: “Documents”, 7, 1929. Topping the edifice of National Nederlanden in Prague (*Tančící dům*) designed by Frank Gehry is an excellent example of artistic using the irregularity: “The building was incorporated into an early 20th century street, and is situated next to a house crowned with an openwork globe. Gehry repeated that motif, but transformed it by attaching several steel rods that jut out of the spherical surface”; see: K. Cichoń, But Gentlemen! Globalisation (in Art) is no Longer an Issue, *Art Inquiry*, vol. IV(XIII), 2002, p. 103.

³⁵ W. Welsch, *Nasza postmodernistyczna moderna*, p. 248.

the history of salvation (*historia sacra*) took place. The centre of not only the map, but also the territory of *oikumene* is marked with the most important myths cementing the culture. The fact that it is no use searching for a centrally located capital of the world on contemporary maps results not only from a different method of visualizing space, but also from a different political situation. It is the effect of the belief defining the last stage of culture (postmodernism) that there are no longer any great narrations, no myths cementing the whole, no agreement about the common theological *historia sacra*. From Lyotard to Welsch, this belief is considered to define modernity.³⁶ According to these opinions, we live in the world without a centre, but at the same time, in the world which is interested in the nature of margins, whose outlining requires the presence of a centre.

The *mappae mundi* were not used to depict the shape of the world and the spatial relations between its parts. The illuminations usually accompanying *mappae mundi* were the representations of Adam and Eve. It was more important for a reliable representation of the world's condition to recall the original sin as something that impoverished and infected Nature than to outline the lands and the seas. *Mappae mundi* were schematic portrayals of history. Apart from the directions of the world, they revealed its beginning (*arché*), and, at the same time, its end and purpose (*telos*).

For the first time, we are reaching an interesting question of the marginal location of God in relation to the world. The extreme points of the linearly developing *historia sacra*: the creation and the Last Judgement often overlapping in the East in the example of Stoic cyclical *apokatastasis*, are distinct manifestations of the presence of God, who says about Himself: "I am Alpha and Omega" (Rev. 1, 8); "I am the First and the Last" (ἔσχατος) (Rev. 1, 18). It is hard to find more explicit, extremely marginal self-description. The apocalyptic phraseology reveals the extent to which the notions of margin and marginality are inseparable from the timeless, geometric notions of Greek origin. The *Beginning* and the *End* are not perceived as margins. When we talk about a margin, we rarely mean time and the past, and almost always – space and the presence. The maps with a distinctly marked centre in relation to which margins can be outlined are created by cultures in which the

³⁶ "To put it extremely simply, what we acknowledge to be «postmodernist» is distrust of metanarration. (...) Credibility of all stories is excluded; in order to authorize the post-modern scientific discourse, we cannot refer either to dialectics of Spirit or even to the idea of human emancipation" J.F. Lyotard, *Kondycja ponowoczesna. Raport o stanie wiedzy*, transl. M. Kowalska, J. Migasiński, Fundacja Alethea, Warszawa 1997, pp. 20, 162; "Splitting up with the past is an act of many generations. (...) Lyotard's typology seems to be acceptable: As long as we experience dissolution of the whole as a loss, we exist in modernity. Only when we start perceiving this dissolution positively, we move on to post-modernity". As quoted in: W. Welsch, *Nasza postmodernistyczna moderna*, p. 242.

flow of time, history is experienced as *historia sacra*, as a mythical world axis determining the centre. The places which differ fundamentally from the others: the centre and margins, acknowledged by Eliade to be identical to the sacral space, define the location of the cultures in which myth is still considered to be manifesting its power. It seems that in a scientific, extremely rationalized vision of the world, this type of differentiation should not exist. According to Leszek Kołakowski, “The myth of the Intellect absolves us of desperation, it is reason against randomness, yet it cannot be reasonable itself. It is, however, supported by the law originating from the equal arbitrariness of both options: for the myth or against it”.³⁷ Permanent presence and permanent interest in the margin seems to be an argument for Kołakowski’s intuition that both Intellect and Science are contemporary, special forms of myth³⁸.

Let us now move to a sketchy, brief description of the ways of perceiving a margin and its relation with the centre in the old, pre-Enlightenment culture and iconography. Let me mention three crucial factors which influenced the expression of form and the perception of content in the old culture:

- the central perspective with a meeting point located near the centre of the picture;
- a strong connection between the composition of the artwork and the rhetorical-cognitive figures of thought (*figurae mentis*), in which the content of each analysed notion existed in the centre of both the speaker’s and the listeners’ awareness;
- the placement of ornamental elements (sometimes mistakenly treated as meaningless and only decorative) on the margins (on the border or the architectural frame surrounding figural representations).

Owing to the abovementioned factors, the interest in marginalia in the painting-focused visual culture from before the 20th century was limited³⁹. The history of art most frequently illustrates this late realization of the epistemological consequences of framing pictures (both the painted ones and the related mental, internal pictures) with the interest and surprise aroused in the 1870s by the work of Edgar Degas, which accentuated “the fragmentary

³⁷ L. Kołakowski, *Obecność mitu*, Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, Wrocław 1994, p. 49.

³⁸ This is also a belief expressed by T.W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

³⁹ We cannot disregard the fact that the European culture “grew out” of the exotic focusing attention on itself relatively late. Secularisation played a significant role. Religious culture, convinced of its role as a truth depository, is much less prone to pay attention to the surroundings. In art history, appearance of parallel, comparative perspectives was strongly influenced by development of the oriental trend and interest in “primitive” art. As a result, different aesthetic canons, widening “margins of artistic freedom” for the avant-garde expansion, were accepted.

nature and seeming randomness of its layout, suggesting an objectivity and an indifferent gaze of a camera recording everything that appears in the field of vision deliberately limited by the picture frame.”⁴⁰

The most obvious reason for not paying attention to what is placed near the edge is the hierarchical structure of the image of the world in the old culture. Understood as a reflection of the order of Nature (and the supernatural, divine order), the hierarchical structure situated itself in the centre of most of the old cognitive systems. This can be very easily seen in the iconography of power. The notion of power is nothing more than one of the consequences of recognizing the hierarchical structure of the image of reality⁴¹. Locating the most important person in the centre is an almost unbreakable rule. The archaic nature of power suggests that the hierarchy formed gradually, as an optimal method of adaptation to the environment. The Stoic term *hegemonikon* (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν, Lat. *principatus, principale, principalitas*) denoting the central, deciding part of a soul is the remainder of understanding power not only as an external social structure, but also as an internal, cognitive one. Similar terms were used to describe the separate, active part of a soul by Plato (ἡγεμονουον; 1 Tim. 41 c; Men. 88 c; Leg. 963 a.) and Aristotle (ἡγούμενον; *Ethica Nicom.* 1113 a 6.).

The tendency to shape metaphysics so that it includes both abstraction and the physical world based on the question about the substance (ουσία, Lat. *essentia, substantia*), which has characterized European philosophy at least since the Enlightenment, favoured focusing attention on the nature of the centre, around which, according to the archaic sense of hierarchy, everything else gathers and organizes⁴². The image of substance was influenced by

⁴⁰ M. Porębski, *Historia sztuki w zarysie*, vol. 3. *Wiek XIX i XX*, Wydawnictwo Arkady, Warszawa 1988, p. 163.

⁴¹ A term “Image of the World” is used as a synonym of “Model of the world”, or an idea, and not in its modern meaning as a combination and listing of “all things in the world” in a schoolish order of 150 chapters initiated by the work by Jan Amos Kommeński (Comenius), *Orbis sensualium pictus hoc est omnium principalium in mundo rerum, et in vita actionum, pictura et nomenclatura* (Nürnberg 1658).

⁴² Martin Heidegger derived this constant inclination of a metaphysics language towards conciseness or good sense, inclination towards constant dealing with the “widest area”, where everything is a thing (a thing = res = ens = what exists)” from the term of ὑποκείμενον, “It may seem that everybody knows that a thing is something around which certain qualities have gathered”. Then we can speak about the core of things. Greeks used to name it τὸ ὑποκείμενον.” Ὑποκείμενον is what gathers, connects τὰ συμβεβηκότα – accidents – features. Searching “a place” for a margin, we should recall Heidegger’s questions about the difference between a language and a thing. Between essence and an accident. “Who would like to question these simple, basic relations between a thing and a sentence, between a structure of a sentence and a structure of a thing? Yet, we must ask: does a structure of a simple indicative sentence (connection of a subject and a verb) reflects

Aristotle's physics, according to which all material bodies move towards their "natural places".

An attempt to find out which term is the most suitable for the notion of margin used, say, in the culture of the European *linguae sacrae*: Hebrew, Greek and Latin led to (Deleuze would write "created") *spatial* disorientation, restarted the linguistic game of meanings and misrepresentations. We must be careful not to turn the analysed margin into the centre of our attention. Even the order of the translation becomes problematic. Let us assume that Greek is a starting point, according to the historical role of *koiné* as an intermediary between the hermetic (and initially marginal) Old Testament tradition and the mainstream of the civilization of Greek and Roman antiquity. The contemporary meaning of the word "margin" can be discerned in the word οἰσχατος, -η, -ον- "last, further, extreme", which in the language of philosophy was more frequently used to express extremities in the temporal sense, initiating various eschatologies⁴³. The concept can be then found in the distinction of whole/part (Gr. ὅλον/μέρος; Lat. totum/pars). A progenitor of the margin is μέρος – "part, section, sectioned portion". *Pars pro toto* explains the abovementioned notion of collecting viewed by K. Pomian as an activity that should yield an immaterial, "holistic" sense. Among the less spatial, yet more evaluative terms preceding "margin" were ἄσημος – "insignificant, unimportant" and obviously the antithesis of what is important (μέγας) – small (μικρός).

The most important term in Greek philosophical tradition was πεπερασμένον, meaning what is limited, and πέρας⁴⁴ (the border itself), usually in opposition to what is boundless (ἄπειρον)⁴⁵. Melissos from Samos taught that what existed consisted of ὕλη formed in such a way that it had a centre and a separated edge⁴⁶. A similar geometrical structure of an image can be found in the belief expressed by the generation-older Parmenides that what existed

a structure of a thing (concordance of substance with accidents)?; see: M. Heidegger, *Źródło dzieła sztuki*, pp. 11-12 [*Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*] in: *idem, Holzwege*, (1949), pp. 305. 306–310; cf. J. Derrida, *Parergon*, [in:] *idem, Prawda w malarstwie*, transl. M. Kwietniewska, *słowo/obraz/terytorium*, Gdańsk 2003, p. 79.

⁴³ We give up connecting contemporary margin with such words as τὸ χεῖλος, τὸ κράσπεδον, which can mean edge, rim and correspond to Latin *margo-inis* – edge, border, which is a source for the term in modern languages.

⁴⁴ Aristotle (*Metaphicis*, 1022 a 5-14) is writing about the ambiguity of πέρας.

⁴⁵ M. Gatzemeier, *Grenze*, [in:] *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. J. Ritter, vol. 3, p. 873.

⁴⁶ D: 976 A 10-13; see: H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker. Griechisch und deutsch*, hg. W. Kranz, Vandermannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Berlin 1954, Bd. I, p. 264. Theories of an organism, emphasizing an almost identical distinction between *Urmitte* and *Peripherie* see: Franz von Baaders, *Schriften zur Gesellschafts Philosophie*, hg. J. Sauter, Fischer, Jena (1925).

was “a finite, indivisible plenum, that is a motionless, finite, spherical (σφαῖρος) continuous full body (τὸ πᾶν ἔν).”⁴⁷ The motif of a ball/sphere as a perfect shape is a metaphor of the originally technical term of *periphery* – the boundary, determined not as a result of reflection, but through the mechanical motion of a compass around a stuck point (κέντρον; Lat. *centrum*). Thanks to the Pitagorean tradition, the spherical metaphor for the universe and the notion of peripheries as something located furthest away from the hegemonic centre became widespread as early as at the turn of the 5th and 6th centuries BC⁴⁸. Parmenides’ belief about the identity of what is (ἔν καὶ πᾶν), so also about the identity of the whole and its parts, which can, according to what we have established, aspire to the role of a predecessor of the margin, is a starting point for an interesting thread of paradoxical conceptions which accompany the thinking about the centre and the peripheries.⁴⁹

The spherical forms of nature quickly inspired the ideas about the whole of human knowledge. Quintilian writes about *orbis doctrine*⁵⁰, Augustine – about *circulus disciplinarum*⁵¹. The Greek term which spherically limited the scope of the abilities and knowledge accessible to a human being was ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, Latinised as *globus intellectualis*⁵².

This way of thinking about the sciences – techné/ars, formed by tracing a regular shape, was iconically expressed in the motif of the “Vitruvius’ man”, always placed inside the shape symbolizing abstract cognition. Internal divisions, boundaries between particular disciplines-arts, adding up to “the whole” of human cognition, were outlined with the use of original rational differentiation – διορισμὸς διάκρισις, *distinctio*⁵³, which structuralized emo-

⁴⁷ D: 28 B 8, 43-45; see: H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker. Griechisch und deutsch*, hg. W. Kranz, Vandermannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Berlin 1954, Bd. I, p. 238; see S. Swieżawski, *Dzieje europejskiej filozofii klasycznej*, PWN Publishing House, Warsaw–Wrocław 2000, p. 30.

⁴⁸ It seems that an environmental, geographical impulse which prompted a process of proceeding spherical geometrization of cosmographic images, not only in the Greek culture, but also earlier, e.g. in the cultures of Mesopotamia, was a spherical form of a horizon covered with a semi-dome of heaven. In Hesiod’s writings *Theogonie* 720ff) we can find a trace further and consistent complementation of the visible world through adding an underground hemisphere housing Tartar: “as far beneath the earth as Ouranos is above Gaia/so far from earth to murky Tartaros” (ὅσον οὐρανός ἐστ’ ἀπὸ γαίης: τόσον γὰρ τ’ ἀπὸ γῆς ἐς τάρταρον ἠερὸντα).

⁴⁹ It was perfectly used by a Parmenides’ disciple, Zeno.

⁵⁰ Quintilian, *Inst. or.* 1, 10, 1.

⁵¹ Augustin, *Contra academicos*, 3, 7; see: W. Kramer, *Globus intellectualis* in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 3, p. 678.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 677.

⁵³ O. Muck, 1972, *Distinktion*, in: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 2 p. 271.

tional experience. In this model there are no marginal places. Thus, it is difficult to tell how a discipline should analyse the prolem of the margin using its own methods. We have imperceptibly, unthinkingly come full circle and we are again at the first paragraph of this text. “In the Humboldt university model each discipline has its own place in the system, which is crowned by speculation. When one discipline enters the field of another one, it causes confusion, ‘noise’ in the system”⁵⁴. There is nothing left to do but introduce disorder, increase the amount of “noise” as long as there is separate space for a margin⁵⁵. It will not be difficult if we consider the apparently paradoxical features of the margin and marginality. Let us begin by recalling a myth, the myth of rational science and of the obviousness of the accurate distinctions introduced *per ratios*. We can use the figure of doctor Rama, mentioned by Leszek Kołakowski: “Dr Rama is numbered among the disciples of Levi-Strauss, who created the unique kind of trousers worn by both men and women, and who, on that basis, stated that everything could be treated as a structure built on even oppositions, in such a way that a single notion was deprived of its meaning without its oppositional pair; indeed, if we cut one trouser leg, the other leg had no sense.”⁵⁶

From the point of view of the common sense which still, in spite of the subsequent “turns” of culture seems to be located near the centre of the human *oikumene*, one-leg trouser very much resembles that “monstrous” nonsense – an *object d’art*. Ineffaceable marginality, thanks to which – paradoxically – art is gaining the privileged status of a special, unique space, paid exceptional attention; the space breaking the continuity of the secular space⁵⁷, and hence gaining the status of the “sacred-mythical” of uniqueness.

The relation between the local margin and the constantly shifting centre is the basis of the attempts to mythologize art, still undertaken in contemporary culture. It is a constant process of myth creation. In the myth every local *bagatelle* grows to the size guaranteeing autonomy, and with time even the rule over its environment (*hegemonikon – principalitas*)⁵⁸.

⁵⁴ J.-F. Lyotard, *Kondycja ponowoczesna*, p. 146.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114: “Classical divisions within a scientific field are therefore questioned; certain disciplines disappear, boundaries of some others start to intermesh, which gives rise to new disciplines. (...) Old faculties break into diverse institutes and foundations, universities lose functions of speculative legitimisation (...)”.

⁵⁶ L. Kołakowski, *Legenda o cesarzu Kennedym*, in: *idem, Cywilizacja na ławie oskarżonych*, Res publica, Warszawa 1990, p. 328.

⁵⁷ Contradictory with scientific axiom of *Einheit der Wissenschaft*; see: R. Carnap, *Logical foundations of the unity of science*, in: *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science* (IEUS) 1(1938), no. 1.

⁵⁸ In the Anglophone world this happened when the marginal colonies assumed the proportions of the New World. Perhaps that is why they are inventing and observing ever more

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new “glocalizations”; see: K. Cichoń, *But Gentlemen! Globalisation (in Art) is no Longer an Issue*, *Art Inquiry*, vol. IV(XIII), 2002, p. 103.

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**DOKOŁA MARGINESU W OSIEMDZIESIĄT ŚWIATÓW I DWADZIEŚCIA LAT.
UWAGI NA TEMAT PARADOKSALNEJ NATURY MARGINALNOŚCI
(streszczenie)**

Celem artykułu jest oczywiście wprowadzenie bałaganu, sprawdzenie, czy możliwe jest ignorowanie granic dyscyplin choćby po to, by ani na moment nie tracić z oczu marginesu. Wzrost zainteresowania marginesami, marginaliami da się powiązać z kolejną zmianą paradygmatu kultury na przełomie lat osiemdziesiątych i dziewięćdziesiątych XX wieku, tzw. zwrotem przestrzennym, czyli (ponownym) odkryciem dogodności poznawczej metafor przestrzennych. Rola w przygotowaniu tego zwrotu odegrały też z natury eks-centryczne, odśrodkowe dążenia Awangardy. Choć o wiele silniej działającym bodźcem skłaniającym do zajmowania się tym tematem jest powszechna niepewność własnego usytuowania, własnej pozycji, roli i przydatności w globalnej cyrkulacji kultury. Silne poczucie marginalizacji czy marginalności w kulturze określanej jako globalna jest – gdybyśmy chcieli konsekwentnie posługiwać się „wolną od intuicji” zdolnością geometrii do uogólniania – paradoksalne. Na powierzchni sfery nie jest możliwe wskazanie żadnego marginesu, co najwyżej da się każdy punkt kulistej powierzchni opisywać jako peryferyjną lokalność. I w każdej takiej lokalności mogą rozgrywać się i rozgrywają peryferyjne perypetie. Równie dramatyczne co nikogo spoza obrębu lokalności nieobchodzące. Jest to dość dokładny model – *more geometrico* – procesów kulturowych, jakie najczęściej nazywa się alienacją czy atomizacją.

Dopiero odniesienie marginesu do trójkąta utworzonego z tych trzech terminów: *отстранение* *Verfremdung*, *dépaysement*, pozwala w pełni zrozumieć przyczyny ciągłej fascynacji tym, co marginalne. Margines to nazwa opisująca miejsca szczególnie atrakcyjne dla awangardowej chęci wzbudzania zaciekawienia i zdumienia. Powraca zagadnienie Awangardy jako formy kultury mającej samoświadomość własnego wyobcowania, czy własnej nieuniknionej odśrodkowej marginalności. Pojęcia *Verfremdung*, *dépaysement* i *отстранение* ułatwiają zrozumienie, co łączy tak typowe dla sztuki XX i XXI wieku zjawiska jak kolaż, montaż, deformacja z marginesem i marginalnością. Dla lepszego określenia, jakie są dzisiejsze kulturowe kontury marginesu warto dodać jeden jeszcze termin w dwóch wariantach językowych: *das Unheimliche/uncanny*.

Ludzką skłonność do przestrzennego wyobrażenia sobie abstrakcyjnej transcendencji jako czegoś podobnego, ale „sięgającego dalej” niż margines, wykraczającego poza marginalność, trzeba uznać za przyczynę z jednej strony fascynacji, z drugiej problematyczności marginesu i marginalności.

Zastanawiając się nad granicami pojęcia margines można posłużyć się prostym modelem, w którym margines jest każdym miejscem przecięcia płaszczyzny postrzeganej diachronicznie z drugą, jaką odbieramy jako obszar synchronicznie pojawiających się zjawisk. Pierwsza z nich bliższa jest narracji, językowi, historii i upływowi czasu, druga ikoniczności, geometrii i rozległości przestrzeni. W takim modelu każdy punkt jest marginesem, kłopot pojawia się, gdy chcemy określić, czym jest w nim centrum.

Słowa kluczowe: alienacja, marginalizacja, *отстранение*, *Verfremdung*, *dépaysement*, peryferium, *das Unheimliche/uncanny*, paradoks.