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Entering the World of the Sacred: Memory, Time and Space in John Paul II's „Roman Triptych"

ABSRACT

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The paper addresses the role of memory in sustaining the continuity of culture. While culture is seen as an idealised cognitive system, comprising the knowledge, values, and beliefs of members of a community, language is viewed as a cognitive tool that functions an aid to cultural transmission.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: We underscore the fundamental importance of memory as a cornerstone of the correlation between the axiological and pedagogical aspects of the transfer of knowledge across generations of community members. The paper adopts a cognitive-cultural viewpoint on the phenomenon of memory and its grounding in culture. We employ the cognitive-linguistic methodology of converging evidence, including selected insights from cognitive psychology. In our study, we investigate this issue by exploring the imagery of religious language, the Bible being the ultimate source of Christian ideas on how to represent abstract notions concerning religious truths.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: Specifically, we analyse the use of linguistic imagery in John Paul II's *Roman Triptych*. Since the Author's speculative thought encourages meditation on the human condition in the world and their relationship with God, a substantial amount of imagery is Biblical in nature.

RESEARCH RESULTS: We underscore the creativity of Wojtyła's linguistic choices that reveal a specific conceptualisation of time and space, which derives from the Author's sociocultural situatedness.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: In conclusion, we account for the role of spatial thought and external representations in shaping the unique space-time of the *Triptych*. We suggest that the results of the linguistic-cultural analysis may foster the dialogue between science and religion by offering our own interpretation of panchrony, which we show to be derivative of human situated cognition, rather than a label applicable to a perspective onto the language-time relation within the domain of linguistic study (vis-à-vis the dichotomy of synchrony and diachrony).

STRESZCZENIE

Pamięć, czas i przestrzeń w „Tryptyku rzymskim" Jana Pawła II

CEL NAUKOWY: Artykuł omawia kwestię znaczenia pamięci dla podtrzymywania ciągłości kultury. Poprzez termin kultura rozumiemy wyidealizowany system poznawczy, obejmujący wiedzę, wartości i przekonania członków danej wspólnoty, zaś język postrzegany jest poprzez pryzmat swojej roli w transmisji kulturowej.

PROBLEM I METODY BADAWCZE: W naszym ujęciu pamięć stanowi punkt zbieżności dla rozważań dotyczących aksjologicznych i pedagogicznych aspektów międzypokoleniowego transferu wiedzy. Stosując metodologię językoznawstwa kognitywnego, polegającą na uwzględnieniu wyników badań z pokrewnych dziedzin w ramach kognitywistyki, odwołujemy się m.in. do prac z dziedziny psychologii poznawczej. W artykule koncentrujemy się na badaniu obrazowania w języku religijnym, przy czym Biblię postrzegamy jako repozytorium bogatej metaforyki religijnej, będące źródłem domen pojęciowych pozwalających na wyrażanie abstrakcyjnych pojęć, związanych z prawdami wiary chrześcijańskiej.

PROCES WYWODU: W artykule analizujemy obrazowanie językowe w *Tryptyku rzymskim* Jana Pawła II. Zwracamy szczególną uwagę na fakt, iż Autor wykorzystuje ideę tryptyku jako przedstawienia wizualnego w celu nadania swoim medytacjom uporządkowanej struktury.

WYNIKI ANALIZY NAUKOWEJ: We wnioskach analizy podkreślamy niezwykłą kreatywność, jaką wykazał się Jan Paweł II w językowym kształtowaniu pojęcia czasu i przestrzeni. Wykazujemy, iż dane językowe zaświadczają o tym, że konstrukcja czasu i przestrzeni w utworze wynika z połączenia uwarunkowań społeczno-kulturowych oraz doświadczeń osobistych Karola Wojtyły.

WNIOSKI, INNOWACJE, REKOMENDACJE: W podsumowaniu artykułu zwracamy uwagę na rolę poznania przestrzennego i reprezentacji zewnętrznych, takich jak idea malarskiego tryptyku, których wpływ widoczny jest w sposobie przedstawienia czasu i przestrzeni w *Tryptyku rzymskim*. Odwołując się do zaproponowanej przez autorkę artykułu koncepcji panchronii, sugerujemy, że pojęcie to można rozumieć w odniesieniu do usytuowanej natury ludzkich procesów poznawczych, nie zaś jedynie w stosunku do synchronii i diachronii, tj. językoznawczych perspektyw badawczych, dotyczących relacji język a czas. Wskazujemy, że tak rozumiana koncepcji panchronii może stanowić przyczynek do rozwoju dialogu pomiędzy nauką i wiarą.

1. Introduction

Our article pertains to the broadly defined problem of time and temporality. Although the effects of the passage of time can be experienced directly, time itself remains an elusive notion. In this sense, time is hardly amenable to any unequivocal representation or expression in absolute terms due to the existence of a plethora of potentially relevant viewpoints from which temporality may be constructed. The expression of time and time categories in language and other cultural resources helps establish the patterns of time conceptualisations within a given community. The human mind imposes a conceptual order onto the experience of time. One possible way of capturing the passage of time may be the chunking experience into units such as different types of events. Temporal cognition also facilitates the ordering of events into causally related sequences. Overall, time and temporal categories are framed relative to our physical and sociocultural experience. The linguistic expression of various time conceptualisations, as well as the manifestation of time categories in material culture aids the negotiation of a shared system of temporal reference. While cultural resources such as language and material artefacts facilitate the emergence of shared temporal viewpoints, they also sustain certain patterns of time conceptualisation specific to a particular group/ community. Due to the materiality of cultural artefacts (e.g., written records, calendars) the discussion of the role of culture in temporal cognition entails the significance of space for the mental construction of time, and the contribution of spatialised information-bearing carriers to the community's framework for shared temporal orientation.

While everyday events might not problematic for linguistic accounts of time and temporality, the realm of religious experience seems to constitute a true challenge due to a highly idiosyncratic character of such conceptualisations. The paper explores the issue of how memory carriers such as language and visual resources allow humans to share minds and communicate time conceptualisations of religious nature. In such cases, is the linguistic expression of time and related temporal categories equally idiosyncratic, or is it shaped, at least in part, by the language user's sociocultural situatedness in a given cultural community, and thus familiarity with the group's time conceptualisation patterns? We thus tackle the

more general question of how the community's knowledge accumulated in language (and possibly other cultural resources) influences and is influenced by the contents of an individual's memory.

The analysis concerns the construal of space-time in John Paul II's *Roman Triptych*,[1] an imagistic meditation on the ideas comprised in the Christian Bible. Viewed as a meditative narrative in a poetic form, the *Triptych* provides linguistic material for the investigation of the pivotal role of spatial thought in the tacit co-ordination of idiosyncratic viewpoints of interacting community members. Spatial cognition enables to smooth out differences in the knowledge each of the participants of interaction has by fostering the establishment of shared spatial-temporal framework of co-operation. The fundamental importance of spatial thought for memory arises from the fact that space offers a natural support for the practice of remembrance. The space-time of the *Triptych* narrative derives from the Author's own experience and his use of poetic imagery that draws on the Bible and Western culture. Due to the spatial-temporal imagery of the narrative, the interaction remains based on the culturally-shared system of cognitive representations of SPACE and TIME in Polish culture, which, because of historical reasons, may be viewed as integral to the sphere of Western culture.[2]

2. Cultural Linguistics and the study of Biblical imagery

The paper takes a Cultural Linguistic (henceforth CultL)[3] perspective on memory and its role in cultural transmission. The relation between language and culture can be theorised in many different ways. What distinguishes

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[1] We indicate the need to retain the Author's uniform and coherent identity throughout the article. Thus, we refer to the Author interchangeably as 'Karol Wojtyła', 'John Paul II', and the pope. It seems artificial to refer to the pope as either 'John Paul II' when discussing the *Triptych*, or 'Karol Wojtyła' when discussing the earlier poems. We must also avoid unnecessary repetition of either of the proper names for stylistic reasons.

[2] The scope of the paper does not allow us to discuss this issue. John Paul II's book *Pamięć i tożsamość* [Memory and identity, my transl.] offers many revealing insights into the problem.

[3] For the economy of space, we refer to the two related research strains of Cultural Linguistics and Cognitive Linguistics as CultL and CL, respectively. The disciplines are viewed as separate, yet coming from a shared set of assumptions concerning the relation between language, culture, and the mind. Naturally, the former adopts a cultural slant on the cognitive underpinnings of language, while simultaneously relying on the Cognitive Linguistic methodological principles and conceptual tools. Overall, in the paper, we undertake a Cultural Linguistic study, and use selected Cognitive Linguistic analytical tools, where necessary.

our research strain from other potentially relevant academic viewpoints is that it originates from the domain of Cognitive Linguistic (henceforth CL) study (cf. Sharifian, 2013). This caveat has important implications for our exploration into the role of language as an aid to cultural transmission in that we adopt the CL methodology of converging evidence, aimed at validating the proposed models of language by founding them on empirical data and/or insights from research in cognitive science (cf. Evans & Green, 2006).

Attempts have been made to apply a CL perspective to Biblical research. For instance, its conceptual tools have been used in the domain of the figurative language of the Scripture (cf. Sweetser & DesCamp, 2014). However, it seems that an analysis focused on the conceptual underpinnings behind linguistic usage may be expanded by adopting a more culturally-oriented approach to religious texts so as to show their sociocultural grounding.

This problem entails the issue of language viewed as a memory carrier and an aid to cultural transmission. Before being transferred, the conceptual content to be conveyed via linguistic and other channels must be construed in a particular way, which ultimately affects how it is (to be) remembered both by the individual and the community. Memory entails not only what is retained, but also how it is retained. Whether linguistic or otherwise, the construal of conceptual content is not culture-neutral, because community members' beliefs and values may bias their selection of the content to be remembered and the mode of remembrance. Thus, the conceptual content deemed irrelevant and/ or undesirable relative to the specific circumstances may be omitted in the transfer of knowledge.

Recently, it has been argued that human cognitive processes should be seen as grounded, which underscores the need for a fully contextualised view of linguistic usage that does not omit the significance of the interaction between individuals, the physical environment in which they are embedded, and the sociocultural situation in which their cognitive activity occurs. Although there is no integrated theory of grounded cognition, the cornerstone of this approach to the human mind is "understanding how the modalities, the physical environment, the social environment, *and* the body *contribute* to cognition, playing central roles in the diverse forms it takes" (Barsalou, 2016a; original italics). As Barsalou (2016b) explains,

> referring to this perspective as "embodied cognition" is relatively narrow (…). Certainly, cognition depends on the body in critical ways. Nevertheless, it also depends on sensory-motor systems, the physical environment, and the social environment. The classic way of describing this perspective as "grounded cognition" acknowledges all the domains in which cognition is grounded and from which it emerges (p. 14).

The current state of research in cognitive science enables us to offer a consistent approach to the cognitive-cultural aspects of linguistic usage. The use of language can be regarded as deriving from the sociocultural situatedness of the language user, "the specific, concrete sociocultural situation in which the individual's cognitive activity is to take place" (Bernárdez, 2008, p. 150).

Since memory is fragile, humans can use

cognitive tools [that] augment cognition in myriad ways, among them: they expand memory, both long- term and working, they facilitate information processing, they depict ideas so others can understand them and collaborate in their revision (…), they abstract thought in much the way that internal mental representations do (Tversky, 2015, p. 218).

Examples of external tools for thought that enable to "offload memory, freeing the mind to do other things, providing a concrete platform for considering possibilities" (p. 220) include maps, sketches, and diagrams. As memory carriers that store information relevant for individuals and/ or community, external vehicles for thought share some features with mental representations and language in that they abstract, simplify, and/ or distort the information they convey.

Human memory is not a mere wax tablet on which imprints can be made or erased. Its conceptual contents can be shaped via language and visual resources. Linguistic and visual tools for thought can store relevant information in a manner indicative of how the human mind organises the representation of the world with which the human interacts.

One important area of human existence in which memory plays a pivotal role is the domain of religious beliefs. It is based on shared practices of remembrance. We thus pose the question concerning the role of memory in the life of a given cultural community, exemplifying this point with a discussion of Christian meditative practices. In Christianity practices based on recollection underlie various forms of meditation on and through the image. Western Christianity integrates visual imagery in worship and piety (Miles, 1985). In the Middle Ages religious images were integral to the community's iconosphere. For instance, "Saint-Denis and Westminster are both examples of great churches (…) which still retain powerful material and visual reminders of their medieval users, humans actions embodied in stone" (West, 2012, p. 89). Religious images could be a mnemonic aid that facilitated the recollection and consolidation of Christian truths in the worshipper's mind as well. This is attested by many illuminated manuscripts, including private prayer books such as the St. Albans Psalter (Collins, Kidd, & Turner, 2014). Overall, religious

imagery permeated the lives of the faithful. Such visualisations involved the spatialisation of memory, whether in the diagrammatic form of medieval miniatures or the vast spaces of Gothic cathedrals.

According to the cognitive-cultural paradigm, for humans the world is a "projected reality" that they create in imaginative ways (Kövesces, 2006, p. 10). The categories we carve out in the world are the outcome of our own idiosyncratic, human-specific experience of the interaction with the world. Hence, language and visualisations are as idiosyncratic, limited in their cognitive capacity, as humans who use them. It can also be argued that to some extent language users can be as creative in their use of such cognitive tools as the cognitive constraints inherent in their minds allow them to be. Furthermore, although the Second Commandment forbids to worship the image of God, Christianity underlies the significance of imagery and artistic creativity in communicating the ideas of the Scripture. On the whole, Christians recognise the dangers of simplistic worship, in which the Sacred is materialised (cf. Ravasi, 2013).

Importantly, it seems necessary to account for the misrepresentation of the Divine Word, regardless of the medium used for its expression. The lens through which we interpret the Biblical texts can be both distorted and distorting, permitting the biased interpretation of the words from the Scripture by occluding some aspects of Biblical stories, and highlighting other (p. 143-144). For instance, many linguistic and visual images promoted the view of Job as *admirandae patientiae vir*, which contrasts with the Biblical passages indicating his impatient behaviour and violent outbursts of protest against God (p. 144). Hence, the risk of oversimplification, bias, or distortion of the original Biblical message concerns various representational formats, including the works of visual art and literature inspired by the Scripture (cf. Pope Francis's commentary on Holbein the Younger's painting *Dead Christ* in the encyclical *Lumen fidei,* Chapter 1, par. 16).

Such a perspective onto linguistic meaning has important implications for Biblical imagery. Throughout the centuries of Christian theological thought, Biblical images have acquired palimpsests of, frequently conflicting, interpretations. One might pose the question of how various sociocultural contexts affect the way in which the older layers of conceptual knowledge retained in a given Biblical text are constructed. The issue of *mysterium iniquitatis,* the co-existence of good and evil, is one such problem. The *Book of Job* that addresses the question of evil has been debated from various philosophical perspectives (cf. Kołakowski, 2009), and has attracted the attention of writers and artists across centuries. Interestingly, in their discussions concerning the figure of Job, both

Kołakowski (2009) and Ravasi (2004) refer to Robert Frost's *Masque of reason*. Together with Zbigniew Herbert's *Mr. Cogito tells of the temptation of Spinoza*, the two poems indicate the fragility of the human mind, the power of which is circumscribed by the limits of human cognition. In Christianity, God's answer to the human plea concerning the necessity of innocent suffering is given in the form of Jesus' death and resurrection. In his book on memory and identity, Wojtyła (John Paul II, 2011) addresses the problem of evil by using Jesus' explanation from the Parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13: 24-30). The two Biblical narratives are replete with evocative images with great explanatory potential. Both the *Book of Job* and the parable derived from sociocultural situatedness of their Authors.

3. John Paul II's Roman Triptych: Between faith and reason

It may be claimed that a cognitive-cultural approach to the study of language can inform analyses of various texts considered as religious *sensu stricto*. In accordance with the typology of religious utterances presented by Grzegorczykowa (2012), as a meditation, a literary genre of reflective poetry (Głowiński, Kostkiewiczowa, Okopień-Sławińska & Sławiński, 2008), Wojtyła's *Triptych* may be counted among texts in which the cognitive function of linguistic usage prevails. This function of Wojtyła's text can be substantiated, for instance, by the reference to the linguistic modality of the *Triptych.* Notable is the weakening of assertions (e.g., the use of Polish *może* 'perhaps'), posing questions that reveal the Author's uncertainty (e.g., the repeated use of *Kim jest On?* 'Who is He?'; *Czy to możliwe?* 'Could it be?', etc.).[4] Overall, the aim of such linguistic texts is the quest for understanding the transcendent reality of the Sacred. Unique in the *Triptych* is the intimate link between the poetic and the religious (Pociej, 2003). The imagistic language of the poem facilitates the quest for a better understanding of the divine reality beyond the human reach.

The fact that the metaphorical language of the poem is used to capture abstract truths that pertain to the domain of human beliefs does not preclude the application of reason to achieve a better understanding of the Divine). Nor does it exclude the possibility of a principled analysis, based on scientific methodology. We underscore the axiological and

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[4] The Polish and English quotations of the *Roman Triptych* are taken from Wojtyła (2003), the bilingual (Polish-English) edition of Wojtyła's work, translated by J. Peterkiewicz.

pedagogical aspects of culture. Values and beliefs of community members affect not only what the community's collective memory retains and/ or what deserves remembrance, but also the ways in which the community negotiates its past: how it remembers and forgets the past. Since homo sapiens is also *homo artifex* (Kowalczyk, 2005), the idealised cognitive system of a specific culture inheres in the conceptual content that the culture retains. To some extent, the culture's conceptual order results from the value system of the community members that affects the construal of the conceptual content transferred across generations. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the language user's sociocultural situatedness.

An account of Wojtyła's sociocultural situatedness should embrace the Author's faith and his intellectual background. In our analysis, Wojtyła's linguistic usage is viewed as shaped by the assumption that "[f]aith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth" (John Paul II, 1998). While one important aim of the *Triptych* is the cognitive function it serves, it is not unreasonable to argue that the text serves pedagogical purposes as well. While Wojtyła's use of vivid imagery entices the reader to follow the meditative path set by the Author, it also instructs how to discern traces of the transcendent reality in God's creation. In this respect, the appeal to nature (*Stream*), human creativity (*Image and likeness*), and the vast spaces traversed by Abraham and his clan members (*A Hill in the Land of Moriah*) are particularly revealing. In all of these meditative parts, the Author's individual practices of remembrance entail the recollection of Biblical imagery, the ultimate source of the *Triptych*'s images. Since the transfer of knowledge and the negotiation of meaning take place in the sphere of shared memory, the construction of linguistic images in the poem should be contextualised relative to the dominant cultural practices of remembrance in a given period.

In the case of the *Triptych*, the shared practice is that of meditation, a form of contemplation, which in Christian communities may concern divine truths. The practice could entail the use of images. It seems that the structure of such visualisations aided in guiding the worshipper's attention to the relations holding between various aspects of such representations. For instance, medieval diagrams such as the *Tower of Wisdom* or the *Trees of Vices* and *Virtues* in the Psalter of Robert de Lisle (cf. Sandler, 1983) were designed to help represent abstract concepts by means of their spatial organisation that revealed the metaphorical links between the notions (e.g., virtues as the fruits of the Tree of Life). Such visualisations were intended to aid the integration and consolidation of Christian ideas in the practitioner's mind. Although Wojtyła's *Triptych* does not include

any visualisations of this sort, it is nevertheless clear that the very idea of the triptych has been adapted from the visual arts (cf. Garbol, 2003). Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* (*c.* 1505-1510; the Prado, Madrid) is one such notable example. The axiological and pedagogical aspects of this work seem clear insofar as the artist shows a false paradise in which beauty leads to sin and damnation (Bosing, 2010). The triptych has a unique structure: the conceptual content conveyed on the three major panels is complemented by the image of a Biblical account of the creation of the world presented on the exterior panels. The earth is shown devoid of human beings, which marks a contrast with the interior panels. The tripartite division of Wojtyła's text derives from the structure of a triptych composed of three panels. Therefore, the three major sections of the poem have complementary contribution to the overall meaning of the visualisation (cf. Tomaszewski, 2003).

We underscore the significance of the poem's title as a point of departure for further exploration of individual texts-panels (cf. Ratzinger, 2003). In line with the Conceptual Blending Theory,[5] on the basis of the linguistic prompts provided by the title, *Roman Triptych. Meditations*, it seems possible to discern two basic input spaces from which the general conceptual framework of the poem emerges. One concerns the idea of the physical vehicle for thought (triptych) and the other pertains to the sociocultural practice of contemplation based on image-based recollection (meditations). "The overarching goal and primary motivation for the process of conceptual integration is to achieve human scale" (Evans, 2007, p. 91). The idea of the triptych enhances the illustrative power of the imagery used in the *Triptych*, allowing the Author to clarify the relations between various aspects of the conceptual content conveyed in the poem.

In particular, the creative element inherent in the blending of the two input spaces involves spatial thinking. Tversky (2016) comments on how cognitive tools, external vehicles for thought such as sketches, can foster creativity, facilitating the search for conceptual relations that might not be otherwise noticeable. The scholar explains that

> [f]luidity in finding new interpretations depends on both perceptual re-organization and on divergent thinking. These skills work together through a process we called constructive perception (…). Constructive perception means actively using perception in the service of some end (…) finding

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[5] It is beyond the scope of this paper to present an overview of basic assumptions and processes occurring in conceptual blending. See Nielsen (2014) for this kind of analysis used in Biblical studies.

new meanings, new interpretations. Because constructive perception entails decomposing and recomposing parts and wholes, arranging and re-arranging them, finding new relationships, taking new perspectives, and connecting those to interpretations, functions, or goals, constructive perception should be a general skill set or mind set for innovative thinking, not just for design of tangible objects and buildings but for design in any domain (p. 237).

It follows that, depending on the specific arrangement in which we consider particular linguistic images provided by the textual panels, different interpretations (blends) may arise on the basis of the different input spaces included in the analysis. Linearity of language may limit the range of interpretations, because the order in which such information is retrieved from the reader's memory affects the meaning that emerges during online comprehension. However, the use of the idea of the triptych as a structuring device helps overcome this constrains, encouraging the reader to seek out various configurations of images to be found in the text-panels. For instance, the *Triptych* can be read as a poem about the Holy Trinity as well as the cardinal virtues of faith, hope, and love, which corresponds to the arrangement of the text-panels read from the left-wing (the Holy Ghost – the *Stream*), the central (the Father – the *Sistine Chapel*) to the right-wing (the Son – *Hill*) panel, respectively (Garbol, 2003).

On the whole, the idea of the physical vehicle for thought (triptych) structures the knowledge transferred via language by organising it accordingly to spatial criteria. For Christians religious texts such as *Roman Triptych* can be regarded as a doorway to the transcendent reality, while, for cognitive-cultural researchers, the contemplation or meditation on the truths contained therein might be a window onto the conceptual organisation of this intricate aspect of human thought.

4. The analysis of the construal of SPACE-TIME in John Paul II's *Roman Triptych*

Our participation in the practice of remembrance via the *Triptych* narrative involves spatial thinking, because during the transfer of knowledge the Author has construed the conceptual content in a manner that interweaves the concepts of SPACE, TIME, and MEMORY. By means of linguistic prompts Wojtyła evokes in the reader's mind specific memoryscapes (memorial landscapes), imagined spaces in which the collective memory encapsulated in the Bible is spatialised (cf. Muzaini & Yeoh, 2005). The figurative language used by Wojtyła in his poem prompts for the mental

construction of a palimpsest of multifarious spaces contained within the bounds of the imagined triptych. We highlight the component of the Author's individual experience that permeates the text (cf. e.g., the memorable conclave, or Wojtyła's recollection of Wadowice, his native town).

For instance, in the *Stream* text-panel, the image of the mountain stream opens up an intricate palimpsest of vistas that complement one another. Since the *Triptych* is written in Polish, and Wojtyła's penchant for mountain hiking seems a well-known fact, one layer of conceptualisation seems to have derived from the Author's own experience (cf. Seweryniak, 2010). However, the image of a mountain stream evokes the intricate Biblical imagery connected with WATER. To illustrate its complexity and palimpsest-like nature, it suffices to mention the image the woman of Samaria in the New Testament, or the image of the Holy Spirit viewed in terms of the LIVING-WATER metaphor. In the latter case, the source domain of the physical movement of water helps structure the target domain of the Holy Spirit (cf. Ryken, Wilhoit, & Longman III, 1998). What starts as a private recollection offers a point of access to the sphere of the Sacred.[6]

So far, a lot of CL research has been devoted to the study of conceptualisation patterns concerning TIME. The attention of scholars has been devoted particularly to the conceptual metaphor view of TIME viewed in terms of SPACE. For instance, Evans (2013) mentions the two versions of the TIME IS SPACE metaphor: the Moving Ego and Moving Time accounts (cf. Grzegorczykowa, 2012 on conceptualisations of CZAS 'time' and PRZESTRZEŃ 'space' in Polish). Evans (2013) further observes that manifestation of time "is often independent of our experience of motion events in space" (p. 396).

We do concur that human experience of time is not a monolith (cf. Evans, 2013). However, we suggest that human understanding of time might transcend the said traditional division based on conceptual

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[6] In the above extract, the translator renders the Polish źródło as 'source', but it may be possible to translate it as 'fountain', since one of the senses of the English *fountain* is 'source'. This choice could trigger the activation of the biblical imagery of GOD AS THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE. Ryken, Wilhoit, and Longman III (1998, p. 307) explain that "[a] *fountain* is a stream of water; it is specifically a source of water. (…) The word *fountain* (…) is associated with the general biblical image of water as life. Since the fountain more precisely indicates the source of origin of water, its figurative use often means source of life. As such, it is not at all surprising that Psalm 36:9 refers to God as the «fountain of life». (…) Proverbs 13:14 specifies the «teaching of the wise» as a fountain of life, and Proverbs 18:4 has an interesting twist on this theme when it describes not the fountain of life but the «fountain of wisdom» as a «bubbling book.» Elsewhere phenomena associated with wisdom, for instance (…) «understanding» (Prov 16:22 NIV), are called a «fountain of life»". This compatibility of the images of FOUNTAIN OF LIFE and FOUNTAIN OF WISDOM might underscore the cognitive function of the *Triptych* as a meditation based on recollection.

metaphors. With respect to the sphere of the Sacred, one must never forget that, although conceptual metaphor accounts may be useful, they are always constrained in their explanatory potential due to the inherently limited nature of human cognition. This aspect is particularly relevant to the *Triptych* insofar as Wojtyła sees God as "The Ineffable." Hence, whatever is said in the poem about God, it cannot fully capture the essence of the Divine. We thus point out that discussions of the conceptualisations of TIME such as Evans (2013) may omit the fact that the metaphor of TIME IS SPACE entails the issue of the continuity of culture, hence, the identity of the place, which, in turn, depends on memory. The problem we point out is that some conceptualisations of time from the domain of religious experiences are simply ineffable, a point that relates directly to human attempts to understand transcendent reality. One notable examples is the *Book of Revelation*. It seems that the images evoked in this text help the reader overcome the constraints on the conceptualisation of TIME in the *Revelation* imposed by the linearity of language (cf. e.g., *Revelation* 12: 1-18). What calls for consideration is the cultural grounding of human memory systems. On our account, this concerns the issue of why Wojtyła's meditation on the passage of time (cf. e.g., *Fulfilment – Apocalypsis,* and *A Hill…* in the *Triptych*) draws on spatial thought at all.

It is suggested that the axiological and pedagogical aspects of the *Triptych* should be considered. The Author's meditation on divine truths can be seen as an attempt of adopting a God's perspective (cf. Król, 2016) on the human condition in the world so as to help the reader grasp the correlation between their life and their religious experience of the Divine (cf. e.g., the appeals to the reader scattered throughout the text). The attempt involves the endeavour to impart a sense of meaningfulness to the lives of individual readers, who are encouraged to see their existence as integral to the history of God's Creation. The axiological and the pedagogical aspects of the meditation conflate to give both consolation and admonition in the eschatological perspective.

We also resume the point made in relation to the division of Bosch's *Garden* into exterior and interior panels, indicating that the structure of Wojtyła's poem seems to reflect a similar organisation of the space-time of the narrative about the history of the humankind told by the Author. What may conceptually motivate the *Triptych*'s spatial-temporal organisation is the CONTAINER image schema.[7] Naturally, there is no external-internal

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[7] An overview of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory and the conception of image schemas exceeds the limits of the paper. See Howe and Green, Eds., 2014 for how the notions can be applied in Biblical studies.

division of the texts-panels in the poem. However, it seems striking that the time-space of the *Triptych* is organised by the idea of THRESHOLD that imparts a unique perspective from which the spatial-temporal organisation of the poem's conceptual content can be viewed. Among the many metaphorical meanings mentioned (cf. e.g., Bieńkowska 2004), we select the idea of GOD'S COVENANT WITH PEOPLE IS A THRESHOLD. This threshold indicates the establishment of two time-scales.

Specifically, the Covenant God made with Abraham prefigures the New Covenant established by Christ (cf. e.g., *Hebrews* 8: 6-13 and *Luke* 22: 20). Importantly, the idea of the Covenant entails the notion of remembrance (cf. *Luke* 22: 19: "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me"). Thus, from a Christian perspective, TIME can be conceptualised as divided into two opposing aeons: "this present evil aeon" and "the new creation" (Nielsen, 2014, p. 149). What marks this contrast is Jesus' voluntary death. It was because of the Incarnation that God could die a human death. In Christianity, INCARNATION can be viewed in terms of transcendent reality entering the spatial-temporal constraints of the human world. What seems to interconnect the two otherwise distinct spheres is the notion of SPACE, rather than the concept of TIME. God's temporal viewpoint is inaccessible to humans. What the faithful can do is to endeavour to achieve a rough approximation of what it means to be "him which is, and which was, and which is to come" (*Revelation* 1: 4).[8] Given a plethora of temporal experiences humans may have (cf. Duffy & Evans, 2016), SPACE seems a concept enabling humans to share representation of the Sacred beyond the limits of the present moment of a given generation. Due to the physical persistence of various spaces in time, for humans the experience of space offers a more reliable frame of reference not only when trying to understand the divine reality, but also when transferring knowledge on a cross-generational basis. In the New Testament it is possible to discern the conceptual metaphor GOD IS SPACE. In the words of St. Paul: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being" (*Acts* 17: 28). As we read in the *Triptych*, "He is like an ineffable space embracing all things" (Wojtyła, 2003, p. 15).

In this light, the memory of Biblical events taking place on the earth's surface accumulates in the spaces in which they occur. This generates

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[8] The quote may be seen as diverging from the present-day grammar of standard British English. It thus seems vital to recall that in the paper the Biblical quotations come from the King James version of the Scripture, available online at http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/

a palimpsest of memoryscapes that the Bible contains in its texts. As best explained by Wojtyła (2011) in his *Journey to the Holy Places*:

> (…) the identity of a place is what fills it. (…) The identity of places is not just the identity of the stones which form the corner of a house, a hearth or a well (oh! the well at Sichar-from Job's days, the   Samaritan woman, to this very day)-the identity of a view that sight opens up for itself. The act of seeing is also a place of meeting. (…) Man is the land. I am on a pilgrimage to identity (p. 168).[9]

Therefore, "[t]he places we have in common are more in us than in the earth" (p. 170). Biblical memoryscapes may or may not be found in the physical spaces on the earth. One such memoryscape is that of a hill in the land of Moriah, which in Christian tradition prefigures Golgotha, the place of Jesus' death. Seen as superimposed onto each other within the container of spatialised memory, the two events not only complement each other, but they are also framed within the broader background of God's sight that embraces everything, including the beginning of the world and beyond the end of the present evil aeon. Whatever happens occurs within this space of Divine transcendence.

Our analysis is aimed particularly at the exploration of the construal of the space-time of the third panel in the *Triptych* that tells the story of Abraham, including the narrative account of Isaac's sacrifice: "Remember this place when you go away from here, this place will await its day" (Wojtyła, 2003, p. 55). We recall that the three text-panels may be read against the spatial-temporal framework of the history of the humankind. Wojtyła's poem allows us to understand what it might be like to have access to God's perspective: to be within and beyond the container of the space-time of the history of the world's creation. The idea of the triptych draws on a visualisation that facilitates our understanding of how this space may operate. The mental images of the mountain stream, the Sistine Chapel, and the hill evoked in the reader's mind on the basis of linguistic prompts in the poem help us enter a four-dimensional world of Biblical memoryscapes, in which the identity of the places derives from the integration of time and space. Both are combined into the time-space of God's Creation. In this respect, the *Hill* section is particularly revealing, because we witness events not in an orderly arrangement, but simultaneously from many spatiotemporal viewpoints.

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[9] The quotations of the English version of *Journey to the Holy Places* are taken from the bilingual (Polish-English) edition of Wojtyła's work, translated by J. Peterkiewicz.

In particular, we highlight the use of the imperfective forms of the Polish tenses, e.g., *Oto wzgórze, na którym mam złożyć Bogu ofiarę* 'Here is the hill where I shall offer the sacrifice to God', *widzi siebie już ojcem martwego syna…?* 'Does he already see himself as the father of a dead son', *za chwilę zbuduje stos ofiarny* 'in a moment he will build a sacrificial pile', as well as alternations of imperfective and perfective forms as in *On sam nie dopuści, aby spełniła twa ręka to, co już spełniło sie w sercu* 'He himself will not permit your hand to carry out what has already been carried out in your heart'. We also indicate the use of pronouns and temporal deixis to signal shifts in spatiotemporal perspectives, e.g., *Jeśli dziś wędrujemy do tych miejsc,* 'If today we go to these places', *dzisiaj my* 'today we', *Zapamiętaj to miejsce, kiedy stąd odejdziesz* 'Remember this place once you go forth from here'.[10]

Overall, in the reader's mind the triptych-meditation blend evokes the image of a three-panel visual resource, the structure of which helps organise the conceptual content by assigning specific aspects of metaphorical imagery to respective panels. In the Middle Ages this method was called the memory palace (method of *loci*). Wojtyła reuses this ancient idea in an ingenious way: he frames abstract notions (e.g., TIME) by locating relevant metaphorical images (e.g., a mountain stream) in the imagined places (*loci* – panels) conjured up in the reader's mind.

As a result, the reader experiences what Barsalou (2016-b) describes as the subjective experience of "being there conceptually": "people have the sense of «being there,» as they experience being at a time and place other than their current setting" (p. 20). While reading, we experience being inside the container of God's space-time that holds the history of His Creation, and simultaneously seeing the history of the humankind in a temporal perspective that entails time compression, as if we were outside the container, sharing God's point of view. We can thus discern the beginning (fleshed out by the images of Michelangelo's *Genesis* frescoes) and the end of the world (materialised in the form of the *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel). Thus, the linguistic and visual prompts stored in the reader's memory give rise to what we call panchrony: the spatial-temporal continuity of the human mind. TIME is conceptualised as neither linear/ cyclical or compressed, but all possible temporal viewpoints seem to be activated at once. If it seems hardly imaginable, this is so because the Author helps us transcend the threshold of the Sacred.

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[10] All of the quotations of the *Triptych* in Polish and their translation into English are taken from Wojtyła, 2003, pp. 48-55.

5. Conclusion

One interesting feature that can be identified in the *Triptych* pertains to the conceptual organisation of the whole text. It seems reasonable to suggest that, religious in nature as it is, the *Triptych* reveals the underlying motivation behind its structure: human thought in action. In terms of research into human cognition, we discern traces of the cognitive cycle leading from perception to action. There seems to be an iconic correspondence between the order of meditation on each of the panels and human cognitive activity situated in a specific sociocultural context. The poem starts with perception (wonderment) in the *Stream* panel, the *Sistine Chapel* entails reasoning on the nature of God, whereas the *Hill* panel involves recollection of Abraham's choice culminating in the attempt to offer Isaac's life as a sacrifice to God. In short, the narrative construction seems to be based on the progression from perception, conception to action. For us, the most valuable ingredient of the *Triptych* consists in the fact that the poem affords a possibility to follow the path with the Author, who helps us understand how the construction of meaning leads to action, and how this understanding is motivated by axiological choices of the human.

We highlight the creativity Wojtyła demonstrated in his selection of the triptych as a vehicle for thought that organises the conceptual content the Author conveys linguistically. He relied on the socioculturally shared practice of meditation that consists in the recollection of divine truth supported by visualisations. The resulting construal of the time-space of the *Triptych* draws on the interplay of the Author's creativity and his sociocultural situatedness. What this means is that the construal of the *Triptych* space-time also arises from the said interplay. We have underscored the fact that a triptych does not necessarily consists of three panels. What also contributes to the spatial organisation of the conceptual content is the division into exterior and interior panels. This division dovetails with the idea of time-space seen as a CONTAINER for the palimpsest of Biblical memoryscapes. The conceptualisation of TIME as SPACE in the *Triptych* embraces not only the recollection of selected past events, but also what Pope Francis refers to as *memoria futuri*, "remembrance of the future" (Pope Francis, 2013). John Paul II's *Triptych* reveals a specific conceptualisation pattern of time that arises from Wojtyła's idiosyncrasy on the one hand, and the Author's sociocultural situatedness, hence his knowledge of the geography of faith contained in the Bible, on the other. That is, the Author's mental construction of time revealed in the text draws not only on the Scripture's imagery, but also on his personal, idiosyncratic

experience. Thus, while conventional linguistic tools (e.g., grammatical tenses) are used, the resulting image of the Sacred space-time is far from the conventional. On the contrary, the visualisation evoked in the reader's mind on the basis of the linguistic prompts is extremely dynamic, giving the impression of the transcendent space-time bustling with Divine activity that circumscribes everything but is not circumscribed by anything. In the *Triptych,* the space-time inhabited by humans is captured by the CON-TAINER metaphor, while the ultimate realm within which it is inscribed is God's panchrony that has no limits whatsoever. It is the brilliance of the Author, and his profound understanding of Christian truths that seem to have enabled achieving this effect. The pope's *Triptych* offers an intriguing perspective on the transcendent reality such that entering the world of the Sacred means entering God's panchrony.

We are aware of the fact that any theological analysis of the *Triptych*, and, possibly, other poems of John Paul, may help discover many fundamental, religious truths implicit in the text that our linguistic-cultural analysis has not addressed at all. However, our aim has been different. Our study of the *Triptych* has served as a pretext to discuss the problem of how human memory, in its idiosyncratic and intersubjective dimensions, shapes the expression of time and temporality in language. In so doing, we have sought to identify the traces of John Paul's sociocultural situatedness in the *Triptych* so as to uncover how he constructs time in the poem. Therefore, our analysis should be seen as a contribution to the scholarly debate on how the sociocultural situatedness of the language user influences the mental construction of time and its expression in language.

In view of this, we suggest that our analysis corroborates the potential usefulness of the idea of panchrony in promoting the dialogue between science and religion. The question of fostering this dialogue concerns the bounds of human knowledge. It is a challenge to seek the certainty of faith while attempting to accept the uncertainty of scientific knowledge. Yet, what the perspectives have in common is that both science and faith arise from the same cognitive fundament of the human mind.

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