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TIME THROUGH SPACE****CHRONOTOP POWROTU: PRÓBA ODZYSKANIA CZASU PRZEZ PRZESTRZEŃ****Key words:** exile, chronotope, irreversible return, nostalgia, time, space**Słowa kluczowe:** powrót, wygnanie, chronotop, nieodwracalny powrót, nostalgia, czas, przestrzeń

One does not have to be an exile to be in search of lost time, as Marcel Proust has confirmed, or feel estranged from one's own city, as Charles Baudelaire or Fernando Pessoa suggest. For the exile, however, time lost and feelings of alienation become particularly salient as the moment of departure from one's home provides a clear demarcation between the former life and the new one. Post-departure, home automatically becomes the origin of one's time and space and all future places become mere extensions or replications of this origin. In exile, one's former city, street corner, house, river or sea all make up one's individual space, through memory. Taking this space along, the exile creates a parallel world, with its own particular, imaginary time and space, in order to partly live at home while living elsewhere. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, in the chronotope of the Greek romance "nothing changes: the world remains as it was [...]. This empty time leaves no traces anywhere, no indications of its passing"<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, the romance between the exile and the former home is one characterized by empty time and unaltered space. The moments which the exile spends far from his home are lost, yet the exile neither accepts nor negates their loss. These moments, though real, are untranslatable in terms of real time sequences. Thusly, the former home becomes an image, frozen and preserved in time, outside of time. As Italo Calvino writes, in *Invisible Cities*, the city left in one's memory is "forced to remain motionless and always the same, in order to be more easily remembered"<sup>2</sup>. The chronotope of home does not match reality yet it supplements it

<sup>1</sup> M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, transl. by C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Austin 1982, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> I. Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, transl. by W. Weaver, New York 1972, p. 16.

and, at times, even transcends it. “On the scales of truth” the exiled author Joseph Brodsky writes, “intensity of imagination counterbalances and at times outweighs reality”<sup>3</sup>. The appeal and risk of nostalgia is that, if the exile never returns, the image of home, remaining entirely unaffected by reality and fed only by memory, may turn out to outweigh reality. This is one of the ways in which memory, to paraphrase Vladimir Jankelevitch, impoverishes the exile. By sufficiently feeding the exile without granting full satisfaction, memory or nostalgia makes the exile its prisoner. “In leaving us memories, that is to say, substitutes for a presence, passing time throws us a meager bone to gnaw on: unsatisfied, we still remain hungry. Such is the impoverishment of memory”, writes Jankelevitch. “Memories”, he continues are merely “a broken promise, a deception”<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, memories create an illusory world that is, perhaps, deceptively real. The effects of nostalgia may be likened to those of Walter Benjamin’s aura:

The trace is appearance of nearness, however far removed the thing that left it behind may be. The aura is appearance of a distance, however close the thing that calls it forth. In the trace, we gain possession of the thing; in the aura, it takes possession of us<sup>5</sup>.

Because home is physically distant, the possession of its aura takes on an even greater effect. Similar to a long-lost or unrequited love, the longing for home makes all else pale in comparison and become substitutes or echoes of the original. Exiles, like tortured lovers who are possessed by their beloved, cannot entirely break free until they fulfill their desire to possess their love: home.

Though not everyone returns, nostalgia, or the ache to return, as both the enabler and preserver of memories and an imaginary time and space, at times spurs the exile to act upon it, to seek lost time in space, to soothe the ache by fulfilling its objective. In the poem *Mr. Cogito – The return*, the Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert, recollecting his exile in the United States, Berlin and Paris, writes that Mr. Cogito will return because “he is concerned about his own wound” which cannot be entrusted to be healed with “chemical stain-remover”<sup>6</sup>. Life away from home is a wound, Herbert suggests, one which nostalgia keeps open and one which cannot be healed with superficial and artificial medications, however sophisticated they may be. “Return is the medication for nostalgia, as aspirin is the medication for migraine”<sup>7</sup> writes Vladimir Jankelevitch, suggesting that the return, while capable of healing the wound of longing by satisfying it, also leads to the latter’s utter annihilation. The return, however theoretically appealing, risks disfiguring or entirely erasing the image of home and, with it, the exiles’ former memories and feelings of nostalgia. Indeed, the return, more so than perhaps any other movement in space and time, brings on the fatal and irreversible realization that what once was, cannot be again. According to Jankelevitch, the return is not only disillusioning but entirely impossible because

<sup>3</sup> J. Brodsky, *On Grief and Reason: Essays*, London 2011, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> V. Jankelevitch, *L’Irreversible et la Nostalgie*, Paris 1974, p. 314.

<sup>5</sup> W. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, Cambridge 2002, p. 447.

<sup>6</sup> Z. Herbert, *Mr. Cogito – The Return* (1985), transl. by J. Carpenter and B. Carpenter, <http://www.ronnowpoetry.com/contents/herbertz/MrCogito.html> [21.02.2017].

<sup>7</sup> V. Jankelevitch, *L’Irreversible...*, p. 340.

what it claims to achieve, it cannot: time is irreversible and the past unrepeatable. As the poet Rainer Maria Rilke suggests in his ninth *Duino elegy*, it is the idea of irreversibility that is difficult to accept, not the knowledge that life only happens once. “Everyone once, once only. Just once and no more. And we also once, Never again. But this having been once, although only once, to have been of the earth, seems irrevocable”<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, for some reason, these two seemingly equivalent truths do not represent the same idea for the émigré. The émigré continues to think that the potential return may hold the secret to regaining time. “Ithaca is, for Ulysses, the name of this remedy”, Jankelevitch writes, or “at least that is what one believes”<sup>9</sup>. The return challenges the idea that life happens once and, somewhat disregarding time, attempts a repetition, a way to claim a period of time that has already passed. As such, the return can be seen as an attempt to cheat time and, in this, it predictably fails. In attempting to capture time through space, the exile commits an error. Time cannot be captured, much less through space, because, as Brodsky suggests, space is inferior to time. The latter “is indeed both lesser and less clear than time”<sup>10</sup>. Thus, space cannot have claims or influence over time. Though the two are infinitely connected, to the returned exile’s disappointment, time and space cannot be used interchangeably.

One returns home to find it as it was, to find oneself as one was, not only to make up for lost time but also for a lost, former identity, attached to the specific chronotope of home. However, upon return, the former exile finds that home is not as it once was: “The return of the native, the romance of the past, the redemption of time. All of it followed by predictable letdowns: the streets always much narrower than before, buildings grown smaller with time, everything in tatters, the city dirty, in ruins”<sup>11</sup> writes Andre Aciman of his return to Alexandria following ten years of exile, echoing Odysseus on his return to Ithaca after twenty years, failing “to know the land”<sup>12</sup>, seeking his “sunny Ithaca” in a place which, upon his return, seemed to him a “no man’s land”<sup>13</sup>. Ithaca, more than a no-man’s land, was no longer Odysseus’ land. Indeed, after returning home, rather than meeting his former self, the exile confronts his former absence along with his current self, yet to be recognized by the individual himself/herself. Failure to recognize home is, perhaps indistinguishably, tied to failure in recognizing oneself in one’s former home. Home promises a mirror which will reflect precisely what one has longed for: one’s true, identifiable self. Similar to Fernando Pessoa and his native city of Lisbon or Charles Baudelaire and his Paris, cities they never left but felt nonetheless estranged from, the exile’s home reveals a different reflection than anticipated. Namely, that neither the person nor the space recognize one another. “Once more I see you”, writes Pessoa of his native city, “But, oh, I cannot see myself! The magic mirror where I always looked the same has shattered/And in each fateful fragment I see only a piece of me – / A piece of you and of me!”<sup>14</sup> These

<sup>8</sup> R.M. Rilke, *The Duino Elegies*, transl. by A.S. Kline, <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/German/Rilke.php>. [21.02.2017].

<sup>9</sup> V. Jankelevitch, *L’Irreversible et la Nostalgie*, p. 340.

<sup>10</sup> J. Brodsky, *Less Than One*, New York 1986, p. 435.

<sup>11</sup> A. Aciman, *False Papers*, New York 2001, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, transl. by E. Vieu, New York 1996, p. 292.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 293.

<sup>14</sup> F. Pessoa, *Lisbon, revisited* (1926), transl. by E. Honig and S.M. Brown, <http://www.jorge>

fragments and pieces echo Aciman's tatters and ruins but, while Aciman attributes these to the city, Pessoa understands that these fragments are also a reflection of him. Both the person and the city have changed but, while the changes of the person have no influence over the city, the changes in the city can be heartbreaking for the person. "The form of the city changes more quickly, alas, than the heart of man" laments Baudelaire about Paris, a city where his memories have become "heavier than rocks"<sup>15</sup>, a city whose new facades no longer return the poet's former reflection. The bitterness both Pessoa and Baudelaire feel towards their cities is not triggered by the changes in the cities' physical appearance more than by how those changes reveal, ever so cruelly, the passage of time. Indeed, how the passage of time is reflected onto the cities and, then, on to the identities of the poets. Similarly, Aciman is not disappointed to find Alexandria smaller and in ruins but to realize that his nostalgia has both glorified the city and ignored the passage of time. "Have I really reached the land I love?"<sup>16</sup> cries Odysseus and, were it not for the help of the goddess Athena, he would be unable to recognize his own home. His refusal does not stem from the changes in Ithaca – as, shortly after, Athena re-familiarizes him with Ithaca's old streets and corners – but from the inability to match the image in his mind to the one facing him. Indeed, Odysseus does not recognize Ithaca because he does not recognize himself in Ithaca. His insistence on being the same man he was before he embarked on his twenty-year long journey confirms this: "No other Odysseus will ever return to you. That man and I are one" he tells his son, Telemachus<sup>17</sup>, blaming the mask that Athena has placed on him for his son's reluctance to believe that the man standing in front of him is indeed Odysseus. Indeed, Athena's insistence on preserving Odysseus' anonymity upon his return emphasizes how he has changed. Instead of masking his true identity from the people, as Odysseus believes, the mask does the opposite. It reflects Odysseus' new, unrecognizable identity, the one he has not yet accepted. Indeed, it is not Athena who conceals Odysseus' real identity from others. Odysseus is already unrecognizable to others. Thus, the mask is not intended for others but for Odysseus himself. Athena, by making him believe that he needs the mask to become unrecognizable, helps him believe that he would be recognizable without the mask. The mask, then, is more truthful in reflecting Odysseus' new, estranged identity than his actual face would be. As such, the mask helps Odysseus himself make the transition from a stranger to a recognizable Odysseus more than revealing his "true" identity would have.

The disappointment or disillusionment associated with the return home is caused by what Sigmund Freud calls an "attempt to repudiate a piece of reality"<sup>18</sup>, namely the unwillingness to recognize home as it is, oneself as one is, and time as it has elapsed. The response of the returned exile mimics what Freud terms *derealization*:<sup>19</sup> the wish that one finally sees what one has longed to see, yet, upon seeing it,

colombo.com/lr/lr\_poems.htm [21.02.2017]

<sup>15</sup> C. Baudelaire, *Flowers of Evil and Other Works*, transl. by W. Fowlie, New York, 1963, p. 75.

<sup>16</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*..., p. 297.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem.*, p. 345.

<sup>18</sup> S. Freud, *A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis*. In: *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XXII (1932-1936): *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis and Other Works*, London 2001, p. 241.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem.*, p. 243.

does not believe its realness. As he stands in front of the Acropolis, Freud is astounded by the fact that he simply cannot take the pleasure that he thought he would in experiencing it. In a letter to his friend, the author Romain Rolland, he attributes this incredulity to many factors, among them the guilt arising from actually realizing one's dream<sup>20</sup>. When faced with feelings of *derealization*, the individual cannot further distinguish whether these are caused by the lack of recognition of reality or of oneself. "The subject", Freud writes in his letter, "feels either that a piece of reality or that a piece of his own self is strange to him"<sup>21</sup>, the latter he terms *depersonalization*, a feeling so "intimately connected"<sup>22</sup> to *derealization* that one may be indistinguishable from the other. *Derealization* and *depersonalization* depend "upon the past" and "the ego's store of memories"<sup>23</sup> making the exile, this careful guardian of the past and memories, a potential victim of both of these conditions. Indeed, the interconnectedness between the processes of *derealization* and *depersonalization* suggests the strong relationship between the self and one's desired destination. Though Freud does not experience *derealization* on his return home but on a journey which he had never thought possible, the feelings roused are similar to the ones that the émigré experiences on his return home after many years in exile. Similar to Freud's case with the Acropolis, Zbigniew Herbert, when he first encounters Doric temples in Naples, writes: "The first impression borders on disappointment: the Greek temples are smaller, lower than I expected"<sup>24</sup>, also recalling the narrower streets and smaller buildings of Aciman's Alexandria. Like Freud, Herbert also questions what he sees, a moment which Freud describes as the culmination "in a disturbance of memory and a falsification of the past"<sup>25</sup>. To see a place as it is, Herbert writes, "one must be free: forget the photographs, diagrams, guides, and lectures"<sup>26</sup>, thus, free of memory. Memories, like photographs, are one's mental images of a place one longs to see, images that are enlarged perhaps to accommodate the magnitude of the desire, yet not reflecting their real size. In this case, Herbert, having less of an attachment to Naples than he would to his native city of Lvov, can be reasonable in his appreciation of the place, regardless of the initial disappointment. Indeed, a similarly detached perspective is not feasible when one returns home. For Freud and Herbert, the moment of *derealization* in Naples is not the same as Aciman's *derealization* in Alexandria. A touristic visit, however significant, cannot hold equal influence over one's identity as one's home and origin. Yet, if memory presents somewhat of a challenge in touristic visits, as Herbert suggests, the return home promises a harsher confrontation.

There are those cities that, though not home, mimic the idea of a long-lost home. These places of origin, homes to all mankind, are cities in which, in Brodsky's words, "history is inescapable"<sup>27</sup>. This history gives the traveler access, though not

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, p. 245: "It is not true that in my schooldays I ever doubted the real existence of Athens. I only doubted whether I should ever see Athens".

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 243.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 244.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, p. 245.

<sup>24</sup> Z. Herbert, *Barbarian in the Garden*, transl. by M. March and J. Anders, New York 1986, p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> S. Freud, *A Disturbance of Memory...*, p. 245.

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>27</sup> J. Brodsky, *Less Than One...*, p. 406.

to one's own transpired time, to a historical time which can, at times, help redeem one's individual time. These cities can be considered as mirrors or reflections of time; yet, what they reflect is the particular city's memory more than any particular individual's. These cities can, however, become mirrors for émigrés who visit them in lieu of their native cities. "One is what one looks at"<sup>28</sup> writes Joseph Brodsky in *Watermark*, revealing the redeeming element, perhaps, in the impossibility of his return to St. Petersburg, i.e. the chance to become someone else. As in Pessoa and Baudelaire, his native city would return Brodsky's own reflection in too severe a manner, whereas Venice does not hold the same kind of power over him. In reality, Venice, allows him to do the opposite: "precisely what I wanted to shed: myself"<sup>29</sup>. In other cities, Brodsky ultimately finds his reflection in those natural elements that remind him of home: "I felt I'd stepped into my own self-portrait in the cold air" he writes during his visit to Venice in wintertime. It is the climate that is so familiar to him that becomes his mirror, not the tangible space. Similarly, the Bosphorus in Istanbul reminds him of the Baltic – "the child of the Baltic can't fail to recognize it, can't rid himself of the old sensation that this rolling, non-stop, lapping substance itself is time"<sup>30</sup>. Water symbolizes universal time – in its eternal presence, its reflective property, its dominance in the human body – and specific time in that it places Brodsky near his native sea, the Baltic. There is, however, another, more subtle way in which Brodsky effectively returns to his native city through his visit to Istanbul, namely that of using time to conquer space, the very inverse of what the actual return home attempts to accomplish. Brodsky does this through his immersion in the historical past of Istanbul, or Byzantium, the place which has influenced and shaped his native city of St. Petersburg, by recollecting and analyzing the development of this city throughout the centuries. By capturing and understanding Istanbul through its history – in a sense, capturing Istanbul's memory – and by physically walking in its streets and surrounding himself by Istanbul's elements, people, and architecture, by understanding it better and more completely as a city, Brodsky familiarizes himself with a part of St. Petersburg and therefore draws nearer to his native city and, finally, to himself. By visiting and examining one of the origins of his native city, Brodsky succeeds in reliving his past and that of his city in the present, without entirely relinquishing his native city and without annihilating his memories, as would perhaps happen with his return. With his visit to Istanbul, Brodsky circumvents the power of his native city by submitting himself to the, albeit lesser, power of a city that is not his own. He seeks knowledge of his origins - not only of his origin or original home – and finds them in a way that is stripped of the encumbering influence of home yet, simultaneously, encircled in it.

"To get a good picture of one's native realm" Brodsky writes, "one needs either to get outside its walls or to spread out a map"<sup>31</sup>. Here, along with possibly excusing the impossibility of his return or somehow alleviating the pain it may cause, Brodsky reveals the necessity of understanding one's home through departure rather than return, similarly to the hero in Virgil's works, who as Brodsky mentions, "never re-

<sup>28</sup> J. Brodsky, *Watermark*, New York 1993, p. 23.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem

<sup>30</sup> J. Brodsky, *Less Than One...*p. 441.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, p. 436.

turns” and “always departs”<sup>32</sup>. Indeed, Brodsky visits places which are located in the same meridian and parallel to St. Petersburg as a way of returning while also departing. Marco Polo in Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities* similarly travels to numerous cities except one: Venice, his home. When asked by the emperor Kublai Khan why he cannot bring himself to mention Venice, Marco Polo answers “What else do you believe I have been talking to you about? [...] Every time I describe a city I am saying something about Venice. [...] To distinguish the other cities’ qualities, I must speak of a first city that remains implicit. For me it is Venice”<sup>33</sup>. To know Venice, he must know other cities. Yet, the only reason to venture out and know other cities, at all, is Venice, the implicit city. Indeed, one’s native realm is the only one that can be implicit. This implicitness, however, Calvino seems to suggest, can only be preserved in memory, and would be risked in the event of a return. Were one to live in a city, Marco Polo implies, that city would begin fading<sup>34</sup> in front of one’s eyes and, thus, perhaps lose the superior position it holds in one’s mind. Yet, as a form of return, this particular kind, where one does not return in order to preserve one’s home, may fail or bring about a more tragic loss, that of forgetting. “Perhaps I am afraid of losing Venice all at once, if I speak of it” says Marco Polo to the emperor, “or perhaps, speaking of other cities, I have already lost it”<sup>35</sup>. While there is something to be said of the attempt of returning without returning, of recapturing one’s native city through elements, history and, ultimately, storytelling – wherein Brodsky resembles Marco Polo – and of accepting that the return is impossible – as Jankelevitch proposes – the consequences may be more tragic than those of the return, the loss more substantial than the return would cause. The city of one’s memory, like the city of Zora in *Invisible Cities*, “has languished, disintegrated, disappeared. The earth has forgotten her”<sup>36</sup>. The city continues to exist in the individual’s fantasy and the attempts to keep it there indefinitely can turn out to be the ones that ultimately destroy it.

Not returning allows the exile to never close the circle and, thus, continue in the “linear model of existence” as Brodsky suggests, referencing Virgil, in contrast to the Alexandrian tradition of “symmetry and the closed circle, of return to the origin”<sup>37</sup>. While with the return to one’s native realm, the individual rediscovers that the past he had has, indeed, passed, never to return, the traveler who never returns home is capable of finding “a past of his that he did not know he had”<sup>38</sup> in each new city. Thus, venturing further out without turning back seems like an opportunity or an opening while the return, an ending or closing. However, this linear principle<sup>39</sup> keeps the exile in a state of perpetual exile and, though it grants the individual opportunities which the return ultimately takes away, it also allows for “a certain irre-

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, p. 402.

<sup>33</sup> I. Calvino, *Invisible Cities...*, p. 86.

<sup>34</sup> “‘Happy the man who has Phyllis before his eyes each day and who never ceases seeing the things it contains’, you cry, with regret at having to leave the city when you can barely graze it with your glance. But it so happens that, instead, you must stay in Phyllis and spend the rest of your days there. Soon the city fades before your eyes”. Ibidem, p. 90.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, p. 87.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem

<sup>37</sup> J. Brodsky, *Less Than One...*, p. 398.

<sup>38</sup> I. Calvino, *Invisible Cities...*, p. 29.

<sup>39</sup> J. Brodsky, *Less Than One...*, p. 402.

sponsibility vis-à-vis the past”<sup>40</sup>. In this, the exile who never returns may pay his due as well. Herbert, familiar with exilic existence and with return, claims that the émigré’s wound must not be left “behind in waiting-rooms of immense airports”, but must be transported back home. Unlike Brodsky’s visit to Istanbul, which was not “a genuine one”<sup>41</sup> and which, because of its lack of genuine desire, “makes final disappointment so much easier to bear”<sup>42</sup>, the desire to return, being the most genuine of all for an exile, is proportional to the level of disappointment it can produce. The return may leave the exile, once again exiled, a stranger in his own land. The decision to return for Herbert’s Mr. Cogito, “is dramatic/he will regret it bitterly” yet “he has made up his mind to return/to the stony bosom/of his homeland”. According to Herbert, the more classic approach of return to one’s origin, the closing of the circle, is a necessary step, though it infallibly leads to bitterness and regret.

Repossessing space through a physical return implies the re-entrance of that particular space from Bakhtin’s empty time into real time. The time, no longer static, becomes movable and changeable and the space of home becomes “responsive to the movements of time”<sup>43</sup>. This is the precise moment that the chronotope of home transforms. When one finally returns, the time that has elapsed since departure becomes suddenly measurable, impossible to ignore, and, though carefully conserved by the individual during exile, it begins slipping away. Thus, that which the exile has hoped to redeem, i.e. lost time, is precisely what he irretrievably loses at the moment of return. This loss of time becomes clear to the exile as he walks and interacts with the changes of his native land. Confronted with reality, nostalgia and feelings of longing begin fading and, with them, “stuff to romanticize or to fantasize about”<sup>44</sup>. The bitterness of return can be attributed to the final loss of a fantasy, an ideal place, a muse. Italo Calvino captures, in a few lines, the realizations that may ensue after a return, the loss of time, of desire, and the aging, whether real or mental, that takes place. The idealized, “the dreamed-of city contained him as a young man; he arrives at Isidora in his old age” when “desires are already memories”<sup>45</sup>. The returned exile finds himself/herself among memories once again. Not the memories of home, this time, but, more specifically, of years lost away from it. “So why is he returning/–to the water of childhood/–to entangled roots/–to the clasp of memory/–to the hand the face/seared on the grill of time”, asks Herbert. The return, though it promises a return to childhood or innocence, cannot keep this promise. “Probably Mr. Cogito returns/to give a reply/to the whisperings of fear/to impossible happiness/to the blow given from behind/to the deadly question”<sup>46</sup>, Herbert answers. The return is indeed a kind of death – of an era, of the past, of an identity – and, as such, allows for new life to take shape, through the certain conclusion it brings about, the return encourages a beginning. An exile, a former prisoner of nostalgia, is finally freed. The return’s redeeming quality lies in the fact that it confronts the former exile with his identity, an iden-

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, p. 402.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, p. 393.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p. 394.

<sup>43</sup> M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination...*, p. 84.

<sup>44</sup> J. Brodsky, *On Grief and Reason...*, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> I. Calvino, *Invisible Cities...*, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> Z. Herbert, *Mr. Cogito – The Return...*

tity that up to this point had been filled with the homeland, attached to a chronotope of home, perhaps demanding no more of the individual. Once the space has been regained, the exile can begin filling the now-emptied space, once consumed by the homeland, with him/herself. The returned exile, once home, is reintroduced to actual time, to the present. On the most legendary return of all, that of Odysseus to Ithaca, the poet Constantine Cavafy writes: "Ithaca gave you the marvelous journey./ Without her you would not have set out./She has nothing left to give you now"<sup>47</sup>. Upon return, home becomes once again the origin from where one sets out to know oneself as a free individual, no longer a voluntary captive of nostalgia.

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### Summary

A person does not have to be an exile in order to be in search of lost time as Marcel Proust has famously confirmed. However, for the exile, lost time is more salient because it is demarcated by the particular moment of departure from a specific place: home. While nostalgia of home seeks to conserve a place in time, the return attempts to recap-

<sup>47</sup> C.P. Cavafy, *Ithaca*. In: idem, *Collected Poems*, transl. by E. Keeley and P. Sherrard, Princeton 1992, <http://www.cavafy.com/poems/content.asp?id=74> [24.01.2017].

ture time through regaining space. The exile returns home in order to, once and for all, anchor a wandering identity to a particular place and time or, in other words, to recapture the former self attached to the exile's chronotope of home. The traces that the native space has left on the exile are imprinted as memory, gradually amplified to what Walter Benjamin refers to as aura: "In the trace, we gain possession of the thing; in the aura, it takes possession of us". However, with the loss of distance, imaginary or physical, the aura of home may be lost. It is precisely this aura that is tested upon the exile's return. The return may reveal a different reflection than anticipated: neither the person nor the space recognize one another. Though infinitely connected, time and space cannot be regained interchangeably.

### **Biogram**

**Jora Vaso** – a Doctoral Student in Literary Studies at the Pomeranian University in Slupsk and has published on her main research topics of return, nostalgia, and language in local and international conferences and journals. Having earned two Bachelor's degrees in Comparative Literature and Advertising and a Master's in International Business from University of Georgia and Georgia State University, respectively, Jora Vaso's background is multi-disciplinary. After residing in the United States for sixteen years, Jora Vaso returned to her homeland and is currently residing in Poland.

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