

“ODD AND LUNA” – PEDAGOGICAL FAIRY TALE ABOUT OTHERNESS AND BEING DIFFERENT

ANNA SANECKA

Faculty of Applied Studies , University of Lower Silesia
Strzegomska 55, Wrocław, Poland

E-mail address: anna.sanecka@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3876-2660>

*To B. M., my pedagogical Master
– the most open to differences, otherness and dialogue man
I have ever met – with admiration and gratefulness*

ABSTRACT

Aim. The aim of the article is to present the pedagogical potential of the puppet performance “Odd and Luna” staged in Wrocław Puppet Theatre.

Methods. The plot and the main theme of the performance – the otherness, loneliness and meeting the Other as a way of overcoming one’s own lack of self-confidence and fear of being different – are described and analysed. The performance is interpreted from the philosophy of dialogue’s point of view, focused mainly on the philosophy of Polish philosopher Józef Tischner. The contents of the performance are studied in order to find in its significant categories present in the philosophy of dialogue: “the Other,” “the face,” “the meeting,” “the speech”/“the word” and “the dialogue” itself.

Results and conclusion. The article shows that such a difficult subject as otherness on the one hand, and being different on the other, can be shown and discussed within a stage performance as a relatively easy method of transferring to children the values and demands of social life like openness to differences, openness to dialogue and relations, willingness of meeting Other and building one’s own identity and self-confidence. The above mentioned characteristics seem quite important in Polish increasingly diversifying society.

Key words: philosophy of dialogue, puppet performance, otherness, relations, transferring values.

In the beginning is relation
Martin Buber

What are the wonderful mental constructs worth if they do not open the ways of understanding of a man and between man and man?

Józef Tischner



PREFACE

Today's world is becoming increasingly complicated. More and more stimuli are reaching people every day, and one is getting in touch with more and more people. Are these interactions already "contacts" or "meetings?" According to Martin Buber's words, everything begins with relation: one's own identity, acceptance of who he/she is, noticing others, observing their otherness and overcoming natural uncertainty in the face of otherness. Contemporary children are meeting not only the members of their closer or further family, not only fellow citizens from the neighbouring backyard; not only their teachers and school (pre-school) friends. They are getting in touch with many people, many "Others" of different backgrounds, different skin colour, different religions or beliefs. With many "Others" who are sometimes not only "other" (in the philosophy of dialogue meaning) but somewhat "different." And from these situations arise two questions, two problems: 1. Is it possible to somehow – in an age-appropriate way – prepare children to meet the Others? Even very different ones? 2. Is the problem of difference really so important? Or, what is a bigger problem – meeting the Other (even if he/she is quite similar to us, but he/she is "the Other" just because he/she is not I/us) or meeting somebody who is the Other because he/she differs from us in some (or many) aspects?

This article takes a closer look at a puppet performances of Wrocławski Teatr Lalek (Wrocław Puppet Theatre)¹, in which the main subjects are otherness and differences.

Otherness is one of the main terms of the philosophy of dialogue. To get into any interaction with "the Other," one has to get in contact with him/her. As the philosophers of dialogue call it – one has to "meet" the Other. Meeting the Other means, in the terms of evoked philosophy, to be open to "dialogue" with the Other. In perspective of the Dialogue philosophy, the Other does not have to be necessarily very different in the terms of race, age, religion etc. He/she is Other just because he is not "I," he is "you" or "he," "she," "they."² He/she is an individual of their own identity, different from mine. But in today's world, very complicated and differentiated, the Other gets some more characteristics which make him/her not only Other but also Different. It demands from contemporary people – children as well – not only readiness to meet and

1 Wrocławski Teatr Lalek (WTL, Wrocław Puppet Theatre) is a municipal cultural institution, established by Zenon and Elżbieta Kalinowicz in 1946. For many years the Theatre changed its name, localisation and artistic vision fairly often. Now it is located in the old building of merchants association. The Theatre has three independent inside stages and a mobile stage. Wrocławski Teatr Lalek not only offers performances for children (starting from the age of 6 month) and adults, but also holds workshops for particular performances, as well as other pedagogical activities. Since the artistic season 2012, the Theatre is led by a Polish-Czech tandem Janusz Jasiński (General Manager) - Jakub Krofta (Artistic Director). In its repertoire Wrocław Puppet Theatre appeals mainly to new Polish dramaturgy and many plays are written especially for WTL's staging.

2 Or "Thou" – as called by Martin Buber in his most meaningful and most popular work from the field of dialogue philosophy.

openness to dialogue, but also tolerance to diversity in the broadest sense. In this article, the above mentioned performance is analysed and interpreted from the perspective of the philosophy of dialogue's main terms: The Other, the meeting, the dialogue, the speech/word and the face.

The philosophy of dialogue is a wide stream of thoughts and was widely represented in Jewish, protestant and catholic philosophy. This paper retains the popular tendency of limiting the presented views to few representatives of this current: Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, Franz Rosenzweig and Józef Tischner, the tendency mentioned by one of Polish experts and author of many publications in the field of philosophy and pedagogy of dialogue, Bogusław Milerski rather in terms of criticism:

We usually identify the philosophy of dialogue with the activity of Jewish thinkers (...), it means Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig and their continuers, for example Emmanuel Levinas. Appreciating their undeniable contribution, contemporary interpreters and systematisers of dialogical thought often limit their dissertations to the mentioned above authors. If we are dealing with a broadening of the scope of inspiration (...), on the domestic ground the name of Józef Tischner usually appears in this context. (Milerski, 2008, p. 29-30).

The article focuses on works and thoughts of Józef Tischner³.

The reason for the privileged position of J. Tischner's thoughts among other philosophers of dialogue are the following: 1. His works were originally published in Polish and only some of them are translated into other languages, which makes them not so widely known as the works of other representatives of philosophy of dialogue, 2. J. Tischner's connections with the theatre as a kind of art were relatively close. It is not only his book of clearly "theatrical" title "Philosophy of Drama" (*Filozofia dramatu*) that proves this association, but also another one, "Outline of Philosophy of Man for Pastoralists and Artists" (*Zarys filozofii człowieka dla duszpasterzy i artystów*)⁴, as well as many years of working as a professor at the National Academy of Theatre Arts in Cracow, and references to the theatre in his other works⁵.

3 Józef Tischner (1931-2000) was a Polish catholic priest, philosopher and publicist. He was a professor of Pontifical Academy of Theology in Cracow, as well as the National Academy of Theatre Arts in Cracow. He held lectures on philosophy of man, axiology and philosophy of drama. He was one of the founders of Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna and a Fellow of Collegium Invisible. He was the Knight of the Order of White Eagle (the highest Polish order). J. Tischner published more than 600 articles and dissertations on contemporary philosophy, ethics and axiology, philosophy of dialogue and drama.

4 In both his books J. Tischner calls the human being „the dramatic being”, uses theatrical nomenclature and explains it in the following way: „By drama we would understand everything happening between man and man; the drama is first of all something „interpersonal”. This „something” is constituted by persons – drama participants” (Tischner, 1991, p. 12) and „To be a dramatic being means: to experience a given time having other people around you and the earth like a stage under your feet. The man would not be a dramatic existence if not for these three indicators: opening up to another human being, opening up for the stage of drama and passing time” (Tischner, 2012, p. 7).

5 He wrote: „The dialogicity can be hidden intentionality like the hand of live actor is hidden behind the puppet moving in the puppet theatre” (Tischner, 2017, p. 10).

THE BOOKS “ODD IS AN EGG” AND “FISH FOR LUNA” BY LISA AISATO

“Odd is an egg” (original title: *Odd er et egg*) and “Fish for Luna” (*En fisk til Luna*) were written by the acclaimed Norwegian children’s book author and illustrator, Lisa Aisato. Since her debut in 2008 she has issued six children’s books and illustrated many more for other authors (<http://www.aisato.no/lisa-aisato>). Her books were published in several countries. She was also nominated for numerous prizes like Hans Christian Andersen Award 2016 for illustrations and Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award 2015. Moreover, animated films and theatre performances were made based on Lisa Aisato’s books and “Odd and Luna,” including the performance of Wrocławski Teatr Lalek.

Although the two Aisato’s books were not translated into Polish, it is possible to get to know their plots thanks to Marta Tomczyk-Maryon, the author of the blog about Scandinavian literature for children⁶. She presents the story of Luna as follows:

The protagonist of Aisato’s book is a little girl who cannot fall asleep. The action takes place in time and in an unclear and mysterious ‘state:’ between night (during the full moon) and dawn, between daylight and dream. (...) To the girl, who bears the meaningful name Luna, flies in a big fish. This is how it arrives – flying, not inflowing. (...) Luna makes a night journey with the fish flying around the city (...) Luna tries to make contact with her night companion. The flying fish speaks all the time, but these are strange words, such as ‘kamar,’ ‘inyanga’ or ‘Maan’. Luna cannot communicate with the fish, but she feels that it wants to tell her something important. In order to tame the fish’s strangeness and introduce it to the ‘normal’ world, Luna dresses it up. The makeup and clothes, however, bring grotesque results. The fish is still different and does not fit into the normal world. It seems that nothing can be done ... And yet ... In the final scene the girl sails into the sea by boat, and the fish, still floating in the air on a string like a balloon, suddenly dives into the water and tries to catch the moonlight reflected in the water. (...) ‘It’s just moonlight! - Luna screams’ (Tomczyk-Maryon, 2015).

The plot of the story about Odd, M. Tomczyk-Maryon presents in the following way:

The title character is seven years old and goes to school where he feels lonely and rejected by his peers. The reason for this is his unusual appearance. Well, Odd’s head is... an egg. The head has a thin shell, which can crash at any time, as Odd’s mother constantly reminds him. All of Odd’s activities are focused on protecting his head – an egg, which he must keep warm and wrap up in a towel. He always goes to the forest with an umbrella, in fear of falling cones. At school and in the backyard, he constantly thinks about how fragile his head is and what can happen to it. He spends most of his gym classes in the toilet. He does not play with his peers and is considered strange by them. For 12 pages, the reader experiences the fears of the title character. (...) The extraordinary head of Odd is a clear symbol of sensitivity, immaturity and difference. (...) On page 13, the book begins to take on new colours, literally and figuratively. Literally, because so far dominating colours - grey, blue and pale green - are broken

⁶ <http://trolleimisie.blogspot.com/>.

by a huge yellow spot. This yellow spot is Gunn, a girl in bee dress. Gunn is happy, she loves to laugh, jump on trees, imagining she is a real bee. The meeting with Gunn is a turning point in Odd's life. Gunn is pure joy and love. When Gunn disappears for a moment, Odd looks for her like a madman and misses her (...). Ultimately, however, he finds her, and then Odd's face burns with the wonderful colours of yellow and orange. Then there is an accident with the boy's head, which makes him throw away all the towels that were wrapped around, and in the last sentence of the book he screams: (...) 'Let the cones fall, here I'm coming!' (Tomczyk-Maryon, 2016).

PERFORMANCE AND THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOKS

Lacking any published translation of Aisato's books, the director was also the author of the adaptation – a translator in a sense. As the books themselves have not much text, the adaptation was based equally on the text and on illustrations from the books. It may be more legitimate to say that the performance is inspired by Aisato's books than based on them, or that it is a stage adaptation of the books. However, it appears that the performance's contents, theme and message get along well with the essence of the original books.

The website of Wrocławski Teatr Lalek provides some information about the main characters of the performance "Odd and Luna," which is not very different from what is on M. Tomczyk-Maryon's blog site:

Odd is almost seven years old. Seven years since his head has been... an egg. Odd is very worried about it. Because what if a lamp falls on him? Or if he will trip when going to the toilet at night? His life is difficult - he still has to take care of himself. One day he meets a strange girl in the woods, in a bee costume. From now on, his life will change completely. (https://teatrlalek.wroclaw.pl/pl/index.php?option=com_sppagebuilder&view=page&id=163).

And Luna is characterised in the following way:

Dark-skinned Luna is very shy. She feels that she looks different from the people around her. She is afraid that the children will point fingers at her and therefore rarely leaves the house. One night she sees a flying fish outside the window. The girl guesses that the mysterious guest has lost its way home. She would like to help the fish, but how can she do it when it says only single, incomprehensible words? (https://teatrlalek.wroclaw.pl/pl/index.php?option=com_sppagebuilder&view=page&id=163).

The special case of Wrocław Puppet Theatre's performance is that it combines the stories of the two Aisato's books, which are organised around the common themes – loneliness caused by being different, otherness and unexpected meeting with somebody (who is also different and strange) as ways of accepting one's own otherness. Although the title of the show suggests that it would be the story about common adventures of Odd and Luna, the characters meet only in the final scene of the performance. Some parts of Aisato's story concerning Odd are separated by parts of the story about Luna.

As the subject of this article is the performance, not the books, in the following chapters only the performance's content is analysed. It means that not only the plot, the presented story, or verbal layer would be taken into consideration,

but also set design, costumes and gestures. It lets us avoid the difficulty of twofold interpretation⁷ and allows us to understand only the performance and staging as the materials to be interpreted.

MEETING THE OTHER AND THE EXPERIENCE OF THE OTHER AS A VALUE – THE DIALOGUE PHILOSOPHY’S PERSPECTIVE

It seems legitimate to look at the problem of being different and the theme of otherness, so very present in the discussed performance, from the perspectives of the Dialogue philosophy and pedagogy of dialogue. There are few aspects making this perspective a quite well-founded point of view when analysing the performance “Odd and Luna.” Two of the aspects of the dialogue perspective are pointed out by Natalia Witkowska when she writes about the idea of meeting between people and dialogue in the process of bringing up: the face and the meeting. However, it is important to recognise that not only these two, but some more aspects – present in Odd and Luna performance – can be treated as significant for bringing up children in the idea of the Dialogue philosophy. These aspects are going to be presented and discussed, concerning its presence in the evoked philosophy and analysed performance.

Firstly, from Dialogue philosophy’s point of view, the most important and present in the works of all representatives of Dialogue philosophy⁸ is “dialogue situation”, “dialogue principle” or “opening for dialogue” and dialogue itself. Regarding this principle, a man can become him/herself only in contact/meeting with the other human being called “you” or “thou.” It’s only in the meeting that the exceptionality of “I” and “you” manifest themselves (Gadacz, 2009, p. 507). J. Tischner defines opening for dialogue as, “opening towards another person: towards *you*, *him* or *her*, towards *us*, *you* and *them*. In this opening the other person is present for me, and I am present for the other one” (Tischner, 2012, p. 16). M. Buber creates the term “primary words” and names the pair, combination “I-Thou”. And then he very quickly moves on from the words, terms and their significance to their role in creating dialogue situation, the relation as the most important in social life: “PRIMARY WORDS DO NOT SIGNIFY THINGS, but they intimate relations. (...) When *Thou* is spoken, the speaker has no *thing*; he has indeed nothing. But he takes his stand in relation” (Buber, 1958, pp. 3-4).

⁷ Referring to Roman Ingarden’s concept of a work of art, the theatrical art (as an example of a “border case”), just like a proper literary work, is a potential entity that is realised and lives in specific concretisations. According to Roman Ingarden view’s, it is necessary to “insert them into concrete spiritual and cultural life in order to consider what new situations and problems will arise from them. (...) Concretisations are precisely what is constituted during the reading and what is, in a way, the manifestation of the work, the concrete figure under which the work itself is captured by us”. (Ingarden, 1988, pp. 409-410). In such understanding, the performance “Odd and Luna” is an example of twofold concretisation: first, the performance director’s concretisation of the books by Aisato (staging the stories from the books, combining two of them et cetera), second – when the audience of the performance concretise and interpret the performance itself.

⁸ As representatives of dialogue philosophy M. Buber, E. Levinas, F. Rosenzweig and J. Tischner would be understood.

Secondly, it is quite important from the Dialogue philosophy's point of view that the audience gets to know that "Odd's head is an egg" (it should be emphasised that the face is a part of a head) and that "Luna's face is dark." The face has a special meaning in the Dialogue philosophy, especially in philosophy of E. Levinas and his follower J. Tischner. J. Tischner, recalling the meaning of face in E. Levinas works, writes:

When we meet another, we meet him (her) »in his (her) face«. (...) It is obvious for the philosophy of drama that people have faces and things have a look. (...) Therefore, it must be said that the revelation⁹ of the face is the source of all the (...) ideas of drama. Only with this revelation a dialogue with another person can begin. (...) The face contains some reflection of an ideal beauty, an ideal good, an ideal truth. The face is superiority, it is concrete glory, unique sublimity, magnificence of the human. (...) But it is also fragility, loss, harm or poverty. There are signs of past pain, there are places for future pain. Above all, it is on a person's face that his or her beauty and life is passing away. Here tears and dying appear. The face is set on the cross of existence. (...) But the face is not a reflection of the cross, rather an embodiment of the glory flowing from the way in which human responds to his (her) cross. (Tischner, 2012, pp. 80-83).

As it is written in N. Witkowska's paper, "The face uncovers some truth about a man. A man is what his or her face is like. (...) Meeting the other person, we get in touch with his/her face. One's face reveals who the person is. (...) Face to face meeting is the meeting with the truth of another person" (Witkowska, 2003, p. 80).

Thirdly, from the perspective of philosophy and pedagogy of dialogue¹⁰, not only the Other (named "You," "Thou," "the Other") is substantially significant, but also "the meeting" itself between "I and Thou"¹¹ (the philosophy of dialogue is sometimes – especially in Polish philosophy tradition – called philosophy of meeting). As N. Witkowska writes: "Each real dialogue has to be preceded by the meeting as an episode, because it materialises only on the platform of meeting" (Witkowska, 2003, p. 79). M. Buber is very deft and accurate at the same time, claiming: "All real living is meeting" (Buber, 1958, p. 11). For J. Tischner,

Meeting means more than to realise that the other is present next to me or beside me. In a crowd on a street I do realise that other people are next to me but it does not mean I am meeting them¹². The meeting is an event. The meeting entails a significant change in the communal space. The one who meets extends – transcendent – beyond him/herself (...)" (Tischner, 2012, p. 25). And he continues his thought getting back to our previous paragraph: "Meeting the other means meeting him/her in his/her face" (Tischner, 2012, p. 80).

9 J. Tischner contrasts the revelation of the face with that which manifests itself and is described by phenomenology.

10 The article would not be dealing with this area of pedagogy although some of the authors publishing in the significant series of books entitled Pedagogy of dialogue (Pedagogika dialogu) would be summoned and quoted.

11 "I and Thou" is the title of Martin Buber's book. Martin Buber is recognised as one of the creators of philosophy of dialogue.

12 This understanding is close to a sociological one, when describing the aftermath of following stages in creating a social bond, the contact as "a pair of mutually-oriented social actions of a one-off, briefing nature" (Sztompka, 2004, p. 85) is followed by more complex human relationships like, for example, dialogue.

And the fourth aspect – last but not least – is a communicational understanding of dialogue as a way of communication, and the role of language, words, speech. This aspect is very differently understood by Dialogue philosophers – some consider the language and the speech¹³ very important, some can accept that dialogue and communication are possible without language, that meeting between people is more important than verbal interaction. J. Tischner devoted to speech a whole chapter “The event of speech” (*Wydarzenie mowy*) in his book “The Other. Essays about the meeting.” He emphasises the importance of speech referring to Wittgenstein and writes:

Presence is an excess of speech. But at the same time, is an aspiration to speech. It is all about getting the Other to speak. (...) in a sense that it is subordinate to what the other will say. Important is that he will speak (say something). When he speaks, he expresses himself – he expresses towards me and for me. Together with this it constitutes a platform for dialogue (Tischner, 2017, p. 45).

But regarding Dialogue philosophers’ views, not all conversations are the dialogues in terms of meeting or dialogue situation. (Gadacz, 2009, p. 507). The Dialogue philosophy authors express some views regarding speech, words, talking. For M. Buber “word” is a spirit and it’s always between I and You:

People’s world is indicated foremost by this that there between being and being happens, something that is not present anywhere else. The language is for it only a sign and medium and all the spirit creations are only inspired by it. It is making a man the man (...). Its roots are situated in this that one creature accept the other creature as the other, the defined other, to communicate with it in their common area (...)” (Buber, 1993, p. 91). Regarding the role of words and language in relationship “between I and You,” M. Buber notes that “OF THE THREE SPHERES, one, our life with men, is marked out. Here language is consummated as a sequence, in speech and counter-speech. Here alone does the word that is formed in language meet its response. Only here does the primary word go back-wards and forwards in the same form, the word of address and the word of response live in the one language, I and *Thou* take their stand not merely in relation, but also in the solid give-and-take of talk. The moments of relation are here, and only here, bound together by means of the element of speech in which they are immersed.” (Buber, 1958, pp. 102-103).

For Franz Rosenzweig speech is very important¹⁴ especially as a conversation. But it is always a conversation between I and You and I do not exist as long as You would not give an answer (Rosenzweig, 1998, pp. 292-294).

13 As J. Tischner wrote about Buber and philosophers of dialogue: “the proper homeland of the other is the world of speech. (...) it is not a natural thing to remain silent towards the other” (Tischner, 2017, p. 51).

14 In “The Star of Redemption” Rosenzweig writes about the importance of words: “And so too we will henceforth proceed from real word to real word (...) This accords with the wholly real employment of language, the centre-piece as it were of this entire book, at which we have here arrived.” (Rosenzweig, 1985, p. 174) and about the language as inseparably linked to human life and very important in it: “It would seem that the language of the peoples of the world is not bound to something lifeless, something external. It lives together with man, with the whole of man, with the unity of his bodily and spiritual life, which cannot be broken as long as he lives. So language is not bound to anything external. (...) the language participates in the ultimate experience of this (peoples – A.S.) life (...).” (Rosenzweig, 1985, p. 301).

B. Milerski also emphasises the important role of word and speech in the perspectives of dialogical thinking. He is “demanding supplementation the description of the dialogical situation by an analysis of discourse¹⁵ and peculiar communication rationality” (Milerski, 2008, p. 36). From a pedagogical point of view, B. Milerski recognises the discourse/communication aim not only as the agreeing on a common interpretation of reality but also (or even foremost) as the foundation of human existence, establishing and constituting one’s own identity and the condition of building humanity (Milerski, 2008, pp. 36-37).

And finally, the aspect that exceeds widely the above presented relationship between I and You, between people. In the philosophy of dialogue – in many works of its representatives – God is present as a party of relationship, meeting and dialogue. In the performance “Odd and Luna” the God himself cannot be found, but there is a character who is over and above the presented world, to whom both Odd and Luna talk, who unifies all performance’s characters¹⁶ and is common for everybody. This character is the Moon. It seems important that the performance starts with an introduction made by “the Moon”. Starting from this introduction, the audience receives a particular perspective for the reception of “otherness”. The Moon says: “But even though I look down, I am not judging! I’m just shining.” It’s the only moment the audience hears the world “judging” - so present in people’s usual attitude towards people who are different and therefore seem to be odd or strange. Can the Moon be treated as equivalent to God? It is possible that not everybody will agree with this opinion.

THE THEME AND CONTENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE REFERRING TO PHILOSOPHY OF DIALOGUE

As it was mentioned above, this paper considers not only the plot, but also staging in some significant terms of philosophy of dialogue.

The face

Odd and Luna is not a traditional puppet performance with marionettes or hand/glove puppets on stage and actors hidden behind the curtain. Here, the small bodies of puppets are fixed to black-dressed actors, the puppets arms are fixed to actors’ hands, so the actors’ own heads and faces become the heads and faces of the puppets. People usually do not realise the fact that faces and hands are the most important parts of a human body regarding contacts between persons, but it’s hard not to notice this during the performance.¹⁷ Even the Moon, which can be called a narrator of the story, has a human face.

15 Understood by the author as an exchange of words.

16 It turns out that the incomprehensible words said by the fish are just the name of Moon in different languages.

17 It is obvious that the actor’s hands are not only the part of puppet body that participate in its contact, communication and dialogue with other characters, but they are also used to animate the puppet’s body. But this aspect is more important from the theatrical point of view which is not the subject this paper.

The role of the "face" itself, especially from the Dialogue philosophy's point of view, was explained in the previous paragraphs.

The Other and the meeting

The obvious subject and theme of Aisato books were otherness and the Other – understood both as "you/not me" as well as "an individual that differs from me." The problem of difference is introduced in one of the first sentences of the play, as the Moon starts the story about Luna as follows: "Luna is almost seven years old. Soon it would be seven years since her skin is different colour than the skin of other children." This aspect of otherness will be presented in one of the following passages. Here, the otherness as "you/not me" is going to be discussed.

As it was mentioned above, the Other is the most important term in the philosophy of dialogue. In "Odd and Luna" performance, like in the most theatrical productions (the only exception is monodrama), it is the relations that start stage activity, the action and story. The story would not start without the Moon's relation with Odd and Luna. It is the Moon, who already being in some kind of a relationship with two other characters (they are both used to talking to the Moon), is presenting them to the audience. Only then the beginning of the relations between flying fish and Luna and Odd and /Gunn can be observed – Luna and Odd meet the Others. And the Others change their lives – Odd becomes more open, less careful and less focused on himself, and Luna decides to go out of her room and take action to find real friends.

Before Odd met Gunn, he was rather avoiding any kind of relationships. There is a very moving scene with Odd's school mates playing ball, where Odd is in a sense present and absent at the same time. He is dressed in a gymnastic costume just like the other children, he even has a ball. He stands in a line with others at the sound of a whistle but he is not getting into any interactions. This scene very clearly shows Odd's lack of openness and unwillingness to dialogue relations with the Other(s).

The performance's audience is witnessing also a special kind of very close, symbiotic quasi-relation between Odd and his mother. They are so close that it is difficult to define if they already separated from one another. And it can be understood – at least from the mother's point of view – not as a meeting between "I and thou," but as a kind of union that would be more characteristic of the relation between a mother and a new-born.

The words

As explained above, speech and usage of words from the philosophy of dialogue's point of view is quite important, as a part of dialogue – although the dialogue cannot be limited to the verbal activity. In Luna's story more stress is put on this aspect, as she is not only shy and avoids contacts with her peers, but also experiences some communication problems. Luna, just like Odd, talks to Moon. She even admits: "You would always listen to me. You just never answer." It could be understood as Luna's feeling of lack of dialogue defined as a mutual contact, conversation, just openness to another person. She even

experiences problems with communicating with “her fish” caused by the lack of a common language. And in the performance, as it is very often in real life, it leads to difficult situations, like going with the fish to a sushi bar. This happened because from the incomprehensible words said by the fish, Luna deduced the name of a sushi bar she used to know.

In one of the final scenes Luna sings a song about communication problems with her friend – the fish: “How to understand so many words? How to get to know you without them? Each of them sounds like a labyrinth – you can get lost. I don’t know what you are saying to me, I can see the glow in your eyes. They reflect the light of the moon giving me some sign.”

Odd’s problems with dialogue is connected with his lack of openness towards others - until he meets Gunn. Luckily, he is not meeting anybody speaking another language, which could further increase his problems with establishing a relationship. Luna’s problem is different: she can create some kind of relationship with the fish (Luna is wondering whether the fish will come back some day and the fish comes to visit Luna’s room after returning to the moon), although she cannot find a common language with it.

The loneliness as opposition to relation

The most exposed subject and theme of Aisato books are otherness and loneliness. And they are also the main content of the performance. From the perspective of philosophy of dialogue the loneliness should be understood as an opposite to the meeting. One is lonely when there is no “you” or “he/she” next to him/her. Odd openly tells about his loneliness and even singing “My Friend, I would like to meet you”. And Luna asks a rhetorical question: “and what if I would never have a real friend?” “Having a friend,” after all, presupposes noticing the other one, meet him/her and bond with him/her, and, so called by J. Tischner, “the answer to the question, or reciprocity” (Tischner, 2012, p. 85). Opposite to being lonely, is to be together with other people. In Odd’s and Luna’s stories (and their common story, united in the last scene) the meeting – of Gunn, of the fish – is the factor that changes everything. And “the meeting” is one of the essential words for the philosophy of dialogue, as presented in the previous parts of the paper.

The otherness as difference

The classmates think that Odd is strange. And even Odd himself affirms their opinion, considering himself as strange. He sings a song about his oddity: “I like playing hide and seek, especially when nobody seeks for me. I like plying tag, especially alone. Because I am different, similar to others but different. I would like to be myself for example with you. My friend I want to get to know you (...) my Friend I would like to meet you.” Not only the song’s lyrics are very sad, but music as well. Actually, the whole story about Odd is, just like in Aisato book, presented in blue (like the twofold meaning of the English word “blue”: it’s a designation of a colour but can be also understood as “upset”).

The otherness of Luna, as described above, is different. She just has dark skin, which is quite understandable from the real world's point of view. She is not strange or odd – just different. But being different makes her shy and uncertain. As the Moon describes her, after school she stays in her room because “then she does not have to talk to anyone.” She spends her life in her room, she does not go out much, she even explains to the fish: “I do not like going out of here, but I will go with you.” And it is her mum who is worried about Luna being solitary. When she persuades Luna to go out and play with kids, Luna comes up with strange explanations like “I have a hear-ache” or “eyelash-ache.”

And last but not least – Gunn. She is unusually happy, she flies, jumps, pretending to be a bee. She even has artificial wings. Being so unusual, she differs – even physically – very much from Odd, her future friend: Odd and his world are blue, while Gunn is yellow. Meeting somebody so different makes “the meeting situation” not only more difficult, but also more exciting.

Even though the otherness understood as being different in other terms than “not being me” is not essential for the philosophy of dialogue, it seems important to notice that these kind of differences are very present in today's social life, as it was mentioned above. In approach to different Others there are two possible ways: multiculturalism and interculturalism. As Jerzy Nikitorowicz briefly concludes: “Multiculturalism is a fact and interculturalism is a mission and educational challenge” (Nikitorowicz, 1999, p. 25). Although multiculturalism and interculturalism are two concepts of meeting the Other, two approaches to the Other, they are not connected – in their basic ideas – to the philosophy of dialogue (although the intercultural communication is focused on meeting, creating relations and dialogue). Trying to stick to the philosophy's of dialogue perspective we have to state, that the Dialogue philosophy is closer to intercultural approach with its looking for similarities (people are similar and equal just because of their humanity which is their main characteristic) despite differences (in philosophy of dialogue you/he/she/they is different from “I” just because of “not being me”).

DISTINCT REASONS FOR ODD AND LUNA “BEING DIFFERENT”

Wrocław Puppet Theatre characterises the main problem of Odd's and Luna's lives as follows: “Odd and Luna feel lonely and unaccepted by their surroundings. Every day they talk to the Moon and wait for something to change in their lives.” (https://teatrlalek.wroclaw.pl/pl/index.php?option=com_sppagebuilder&view=page&id=163). It seems that the characters have one, common problem, but if it is analysed carefully and deeply, it turns out that the loneliness is not the reason – rather an implication of their otherness. And they are different in different ways.

As it was pointed out above, Luna just has dark skin. She knows that she is different from the other people in her town. She even admits that “the people in

our town don't like otherness." For contemporary young audiences the dark face of Luna probably would not be a problem, even in Poland which is still a fairly monocultural and mono-racial society. Yet, Luna's otherness would be spotted and noticed. In Poland, as it was mentioned in the preface, the country that for many years had been rather homogenous in terms of race, religion, language, ethnics and nationality, an increasing diversity in these areas can be observed for the last two-three decades. More and more kids are growing up in bilingual and binational families, they have – in preschools and schools – friends of different skin colours, different religions and coming from different countries. The youngest generation of Poles meets Others in their everyday lives. But are the children ready to meet with the Others without judging and discriminating?

The above question becomes more crucial when considering Odd's story. Odd not only just looks different, but he also acts in a way that can be confusing. The difference between him and Luna involves, for example, not having friends because of not going out (in Luna's case) and not having or losing friends because of strange, not understandable behaviour – Odd's case (Odd's classmates used to try to draw him into their common games but as he constantly refused, they even stopped asking). Odd with his egg head not only looks strange, but also he has to be very careful, which his mother keeps reminding him. Taking care of his egg head means avoiding unsafe behaviour, like plying ball with his schoolmates or cycling. He has a bicycle, which he had never used as it is too dangerous for his head.

One of the reasons of Odd's oddity can be his mother – a character looking (and behaving) as a big, blue, strange bird, taking too much care about Odd's head, limiting him in every action and singing (together with Odd) a horrifying song: "Your mummy will find you a friend and a girl-friend (...) do not touch anything by yourself. For you, your mummy will do this (...) stay at home with mummy because there's evil lurking around. Mummy is like a helmet for your head. Mummy is like a frostbite cream. Mummy is like a warm blanket; mummy would wing you around." And the fellows, who at first perceived Odd as the Other in the sense of "you" – "not me," changed their attitude and started to treat Odd as the Other in a different sense: a "bizarre," "odd," "different," "strange" person.

MEETING "THE OTHER" AS WAY OF ACCEPTING ONE'S OWN OTHERNESS

Regarding people's attitude towards disabled children, Teresa Wajner-Jaworska admits that:

Everybody is different, regarding his/her appearance, attributes of character, but just because of these characteristics, everybody is exceptional. Uniqueness of every person is based on the fact that everybody is different. Has different interests, hobbies et cetera. (...) when our child reacts spontaneously when noticing differences, we teach him/her to behave like us and we make him/her quiet; we are move him/her away and whisper "do not look at him, you are not allowed to look." That

way the child learns that being different is: shameful? dangerous? No matter what kind the otherness is, it's better to pretend we do not notice. The child who is not used to otherness can start to brutally exterminate it when he/she meets somebody different/other in his/her pre-school group" (Wejner-Jaworska, 2013).

It seems to be true according to all differences and otherness. Maria Szyszkowska adds to this opinion her very harsh judgment regarding today's social life: "As long as recommended value would be adapting to what is average, the Other would have difficulties to his/her living and meeting his/her demands, including the biological ones" (Szyszkowska, 2013, p. 52).

To understand that somebody is different and it doesn't make him or her worse, one has to understand his/her own identity, one has to understand who he or she is. Only in some kind of comparison one can distinguish his/her own characteristics and notice that somebody else has some other attributes, that he or she is different. As Wrocław Puppet Theatre states on its website: "Only when they meet the Other, they will be able to believe in themselves and open up to the world. And it will not be a matter of magic or witchcraft, but only of the heart." (https://teatrlalek.wroclaw.pl/pl/index.php?option=com_sppagebuilder&view=page&id=163).

The fish that visited Luna is different and unusual – after all, it is a flying fish. Luna addresses it with the following opinion: "You are quite strange. People in our city do not like otherness or things they do not understand." Therefore, Luna wants to make the fish look more ordinary and is dressing it up with a jacket and sun glasses. Then she realises that the masquerade is rather pathetic. As it was mentioned above, Gunn is quite different from Odd. Meeting Gunn and following her, even against the perceived danger, changes Odd's life and makes him become friends and even fall in love with Gunn. Gunn accepts Odd's oddity without any problems; she is so open to other people that only once is she surprised by Odd's strange behaviour – when he says he had never ridden his bike, he used just to walk with it and treat it as a kind of support to avoid falling on "slippery roots and hard rocks". She asks Odd: "What do you need the umbrella for, though it is not raining?" and does not comment on Odd's answer: "It protects me from the falling pinecones". Gunn laughs when she falls herself, she jumps down from trees because "it is like she is flying". Her behaviour can be also seen as strange but in a different, opposite way to the behaviour of Odd (or Luna). In a sense, she is like a child with ADHD and is very different from all other characters of the performance: Odd, Luna, Moon, Odd's mother and flying fish. As M. Tomczyk-Maryon wrote in her blog: "Gunn is pure joy and love."

Meeting the Other, so different from themselves, makes Odd and Luna more open, helps them accept their own identity as well as otherness, makes them less shy, less focused on their own physical and psychological safety, encourages them to make friends. The Moon, concluding their stories, says: "Odd got boiled with love and his mum stopped being a hen which days and nights incubated her son as an egg. Luna believed in herself (..) she decided to find friends. This time, not from the moon."

EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL OF THE PERFORMANCE “ODD AND LUNA”

As mentioned above, the situation of meeting Others is common in the human world (it is the essence of the Dialogue's philosophy), but it should be emphasised once more that meeting “a very different other” has been present in modern¹⁸ Polish social life not longer than for the last 25-30 years (about a period equal to a generation). And it makes the situation quite different from other multicultural, multiracial, multinational countries. Therefore, named and quoted in this article literature regarding otherness, differences, meeting Others, should refer to Polish publications describing particular local situation, stressing that it was published basically in the last 20 years.

Moreover, it should be pointed out that more and more books and articles about the otherness and the Others are published in Poland. That is one of the areas¹⁹ where the philosophy of dialogue (in some parts and aspects) is being extended and incorporated into pedagogy. The other important aspect, which is becoming present in Polish pedagogy, is the otherness understood as strangeness, as being not just the Other but the Stranger and the different one. It is important to emphasise that – as it was mentioned above – the situation in Poland is particular. The books published in Poland for the last 25-30 years present the otherness from very different points of view – starting from the psychological, through ethical, anthropological, and certainly pedagogical. The number of newly-published books very clearly shows that this particular subject is very important and up to date. It is sometimes difficult to set apart the books concerning otherness and the Other as just “not being me” and the publications turning to understand otherness as being a stranger, being different or strange. And in the analysed performance this subject could be treated twofold. But as this article is mostly referring to the understanding of the Other in the Dialogue's philosophy, it does not concentrate (as the philosophy of dialog and J. Tischner are not) on the two approaches to otherness: multiculturalism and interculturalism. However it should be pointed out that in both perspectives, Dialogue's philosophy and cultural perspective there is a common stage: the presence of the Other (understood as “not me” or “different one”) must first of all be noticed.

As Joanna Lendzion and Aleksandra Dymińska write about meeting different ones:

The way in which children perceive the differences arising from meeting “the Other” depends (...) on the knowledge and experiences of their parents. They should be the guides in the multicultural world which is constantly setting new tasks for them that involve creating a multicultural educational space, own identity, building mutual tolerance (Lendzion & Dymińska, 2015, p. 279).

18 In this case “modern” will refer to Polish society after the Second World War.

19 The other one is the dialogical relations between teachers and students/pupils, widely presented in the “educational” parts of books published under the common title “Pedagogy of dialogue” (Pedagogika dialogu).

Further in their paper the authors characterise the psychical multiculturalism as the

reaching one's values world. It refers to the sense of belonging, otherness, consciousness and pride from one's roots. In cultural aspects it refers to differences in the area of language, religion, race, rituals, prevailing patterns, as well as ethnics, symbols and beliefs (Lendzion & Dymińska, 2015, p. 281).

Among the qualities of multicultural education for pre-school children the authors, quoting Elżbieta Chromiec, name "implementation and forming the habit of continuous dialogue" (Chromiec, 2003, p. 28). In their opinion,

the multicultural education should lead to orientation in the world of different cultures, but always with the background of child's own. It should form a creative person, conscious of what he or she is, who he or she is becoming, constantly discovering him/herself and the Others (Lendzion & Dymińska, 2015, p. 286).

One more important matter regarding children and "the meeting situation" consists in a problem of one's own identity. When an adult meets "the Other," he or she has usually already developed his/her own identity that influences the meeting. When a child meets the Other, his/her own identity is constructed or identified under the impact of the meeting and the Other, as it was shown by the example of Odd meeting Gunn or Luna meeting fish. B. Milerski, in his article "Dissenter as a pedagogical challenge," stresses that, regarding contemporary pedagogical and philosophical discourse,

Otherness, experiencing difference (...) is a constitutive element of individual and social life. Individuals create their identity through the experience of otherness and difference (...) However, otherness and difference do not only concern differences between particular individuals and social groups, but permeate individual identities from within (Milerski, 2013, pp. 38-39).

As mentioned above, regarding the contents of the books, "Odd is an egg" and "Fish for Luna" were not translated into Polish. It is significant - Odd's name, which is just a popular Norwegian male name meaning "the sharp end of an arrow." But regarding the otherness, it is interesting to consider the meaning of the adjective "odd" in English and its exceptional matching to Odd's characteristics. The Polish audience, not English-speaking in great part, may not get the sense of the name at all, or perceive it as "strange" and "weird." The name of Luna, as referring to the Roman mythology and goddess Luna (embodiment of the moon), in opposite, is widely understandable, irrespective of knowledge of foreign languages among the public.

Wrocław Puppet Theatre recommends the performance "Odd and Luna" for children above 5 years. For a long time, the educational potential of theatre performances for children was recognised only as a colourful, scenic entertainment or - if treated more deeply - building some aesthetical background for future, adult reception of the theatrical art. Sometimes it is treated as a way to encourage children to start "being an artist" him/herself Stanisław Rodziński characterises the disadvantages of "upbringing towards art" as follows: "aes-

thetical upbringing was approaching of the replicant to the piece of art, was familiarity with the greatness of art, was an emboldening of a man towards art" (Rodziński, 2011, p. 213). It is quite often forgotten that contact with art, especially theatre, can lead to some particular axiological preferences and create the particular attitude towards word, people and things. As Marian Bursztyn admits: "In early phases of human life the values system is assimilated by observing behaviour of parents, teachers and other people important for the child" (Bursztyn, 2015, p. 108). The performance of Wrocław Puppet Theatre "Odd and Luna" proves that the puppet performance can be the platform of presenting and discussing difficult and important matters and values, can – in a relatively easy way – present and teach some demands of social life.

LIMITATIONS

As mentioned above the perspective of Dialogue's philosophy is usually limited to few names²⁰. The main reasons for the limitations of this article is however not, the mentioned by B. Milerski common tendency for limiting the philosophy of dialogue to the few best known authors, but: 1. The essential terms (the Other, the meeting, the dialogue) are common for all the philosophers of dialogue and the analysed performance; 2. The philosophy of dialogue is only one of the possible perspectives for analysing and interpreting "Odd and Luna" performance; 3. For the philosophy of dialogue, the "difference" and "being different" were not essential. 4. The reason for focusing on J. Tischner's philosophy apart from his theatrical connections²¹ was also the following: his philosophy is one of the latest²² among philosophers of Dialogue. Regarding this factor, it was possible to have a look on the whole wide stream of evoked philosophy (Emmanuel Levinas particularly) through J. Tischner's views.

CONCLUSION

In 1954 in "Moominsummer Madness" Tove Jansson wrote about theatre: "A theatre is the most important sort of house in the world, because that's where people are shown what they could be if they wanted, and what they'd like to be if they dared to, and what they really are." A theatre is also one of the best ways to influence children, to show them some good examples of people's behaviour and features. It is the best way to educate without "preaching" and teach without boring. That is one of the educational advantages of perfor-

20 See: note on Preface regarding B. Milerski's conclusion (Milerski, 2008).

21 Mentioned in the Preface of the article.

22 This is assumed according to Tadeusz Gadacz's *Historia filozofii XX wieku. Nurty*. [The History of XX Century Philosophy. Currents] in which he presents Neo-Kantianism, Existentialism and Dialogue Philosophy. Among philosophers of dialogue Gadacz mentions in chronological order: Herman Cohen, Ferdinand Ebner, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Abraham Joshua Heschel and Józef Tischner as the last one (Gadacz, 2009, pp. 503-638).

mance "Odd and Luna." The other one is of course the theme of otherness and differences between people that the performance is focused on.

For future researches regarding meeting Others by children and getting in relations with Others it would be interesting and useful to undertake the tests on measuring the actual impact of watching the performance and further relationships with Others established by the young spectators. It can be treated as a recommendation for the further practical researches.

Almost the last words of the performance – said by the Moon, which can in a sense suggest its "God's role" – are: "all these changes were due to the magic of love and heart." From the perspective employed in this article, it seems legitimate to suggest changing these words into the following: "all these changes were due to the magic of the dialogue and meeting."

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