

Title: Tymoteusz Karpowicz's Language Traps in *Odwrócone Światło*
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This paper will analyze Tymoteusz Karpowicz's critique of language, as contained in his collection *Odwrócone światło* (1972). The key concept used to explain Karpowicz's poetry will be Wittgenstein's idea of "language games" (or "traps"). The paper will demonstrate that Karpowicz's deeply philosophical approach to language has been informed by the experiences of modern history, especially the two world wars and the Communist period in Poland. The poet does not conceive language as merely a "structure" that is erroneous and can be arbitrarily fixed or changed. Language is an ontological core around which the whole human world evolves. Many of Karpowicz's poems exhibit the way our "habitual meanings" enslave our mental processes. We set "language traps," in which we get caught ourselves. A particular form of "language trap" is our communal memory. In *Odwrócone światło*, language is repeatedly presented as an instrument capable of chopping, hacking, dissecting, and mutilating. On the other hand, the poet's very tool, language, seems to have been chopped up and mixed at random. This way, Karpowicz brings his reader's mental habits to a "zero point," in order to lead him/her to a cognitive catharsis.

Another aim of my paper will be to explain Karpowicz's use of biblical imagery. The collection *Odwrócone światło* is divided into ten chapters, the titles of nine of which refer to major events from the life of Jesus Christ. I will discuss several distinct themes that correspond to those titles. The most significant theme is that of silence. In Karpowicz's poetry, silence is an attribute of God. It is superior to other forms of language. Silence is immediate and unambiguous, it is "pure language," without "meanings" "added" by inferior beings, the angels (and further multiplied by man). Similarly to Wittgenstein, Karpowicz seems to have dreamt about the ideal poet, who would "be able to convey thoughts by themselves without words."