

**ON A. STICH'S ANALYSIS
OF OTHER AUTHOR'S INTERFERENCE
WITH BOŽENA NĚMCOVÁ'S LETTERS**

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The contribution discusses Stich's analyses of B. Němcová's letters to so-called unknown addressee (Stich, 1976; Stich, *Dovětek o Valhale*, 2011: 153–156.). It views Stich's argumentation as grounded in a specific version of the part-whole image schema, especially the fact that the author expects the parts of the whole to be relatively homogenous and that he treats them as if they existed all at once, without a diachronic perspective. It also shows that some polemical reactions to Stich's analyses may be triggered by these specific features of the part-whole image schema.

Key words: Alexandr Stich, Božena Němcová, image schema, part-whole, letter

**KE STICHOVĚ ANALÝZE CIZÍCH ZÁSAHŮ
DO KORESPONDENCE BOŽENY NĚMCOVÉ**

Príspevok sa zaoberá Stichovou analýzou dopisů B. Němcové tzv. neznámému adresátovi (Stich, 1976; Stich, *Dovětek o Valhale*, 2011: 153–156). Vidí Stichovu argumentaci jako ukotvenou ve specifické verzi představového schématu části a celku. Za specifika Stichova pojetí schématu části a celku pokládá zejména autorovo očekávání, že části tvořící jeden celek by měly být relativně homogenní, a také to, že autor zachází s částmi, jako kdyby existovaly všechny zároveň, jakoby bez diachronní perspektivy. Príspevok rovněž naznačuje, že některé polemické reakce na Stichovu analýzu mohou souviset právě s uvedenými specifiky Stichova přístupu.

Klíčová slova: Alexandr Stich, Božena Němcová, představové schéma, část-celek, dopis

1.

A. Stich's analysis of Sabina's interference with certain works by other authors (esp. Stich, 1976; Stich, 2011) belongs among those works that were, and still are, highly inspirational. This paper will discuss Stich's analysis of the possible other author's (Sabina's) interference with four letters (fragments) written by Božena Němcová. No original manuscripts of these letters have been preserved and they are usually referred to as letters to an unknown addressee (Stich, 1976: 49–114).¹ Certain aspects of Stich's methodology

¹ The relevant texts include three relatively long fragments and one shorter note. They were originally published by J. E. Sojka in 1862 (for more details, see, e.g., Němcová, 2004: 405) and are usually dated between 1854 and 1855. The texts are published as a supplement to Stich's analysis (Stich, 1976:

used in the relevant part of his study will be discussed and some of the reactions to Stich's text will be noted. The paper will follow a selected theoretical apparatus of a cognitive approach to language, especially the theory of 'image schemas'. The main text under analysis will be the original version of Stich's *Sabina – Němcová – Havlíček: textologický a stylistický příspěvek k sporům o Sabinových zásazích do cizího díla* (Stich, 1976),² combined with the new edition of *Dovětek o Valhale* (Stich, 2011 [1979]: 153–156).

2.

Stich's analysis of Božena Němcová's letters offers much inspiration. What is most interesting is the question concerning which method to use when seeking to discover the author of a text, a part of a text, or of a certain textual layer when we are not in possession of the original manuscript. The question can be answered in numerous ways, using both quantitative and qualitative methods of ascertaining the authorship or of forensic linguistics (see, e.g., Sedláčková, 2012). Stich's method could be called **stylistic** as his main arguments are based on the notion of style as, among other things, an integrative and differentiating principle of a text (see, e.g., Hausenblas, 1996: 59–61).

When re-reading Stich's analysis and his argumentation it was felt that the text could be read and interpreted from a different point of view – that of **cognitive linguistics**, namely the notion of part-whole image schema (see 3). This indicates the possibility of there being a further point of compatibility³ between (contemporary) cognitive linguistics and Czech linguistic tradition, which may precede the cognitively oriented trends by a number of years. In this case, the point of contact concerns stylistics: both the integrative function of style (and Stich's analytical method used in the texts under analysis) and the part-whole image schema aim to capture similar things, but the cognitive approach attempts to draw more general implications that concern not only the language but also, e.g., general principles of the functioning of the human mind (see, e.g., Janda, 2004). Although Stich himself (understandably) does not and could not indicate any relation between his methodology and cognitive linguistics (which originated approximately 10 years after Stich's study was published; see Janda, 2004), some connection between Stich's methods and the cognitive approach has already been mentioned in scientific literature (see Chromý, 2006).

The next three sections will introduce the basics of image schema theory and the part-whole image schema (3), will attempt to pinpoint Stich's methodology (4), and will cover some reactions to his text (5) using it as a kind of prism.

116–128; Stich, 2011: 131–140); for a further edition, see Němcová (2004: 81–83, 126–128, 146–149, 200).

² For a new edition of the text, see Stich, 2011: 7–152; for more details about this edition, see M. Charypar's afterword in Stich, 2011: 239–258.

³ For further relevant topics, see, e.g., the theory of centre and periphery, or certain texts by, e.g., M. Dokulil and I. Němec.

3.

Cognitive linguistics (see, e.g., Johnson, 1987: 29) uses the term **image schema** to denote a general schema or general structure in our mind that is formed on the basis of our everyday experience and of our experience with various repeating patterns. This approach sees image schemas as frequently connected with such experiences as movement through space, perception, or the manipulation of objects. The function of image schemas is to organise our experiences. Image schemas are reflected in our thinking and speaking in various ways:

[...] in order for us to have meaningful, connected experiences that we can comprehend and reason about, there must be pattern and order to our actions, perceptions, and conceptions. A schema is a recurrent pattern, shape, and regularity in, or of, these ongoing ordering activities [...] (Johnson, 1987: 29)

The following image schemas are considered among the most basic: the container schema, the part-whole schema, the path schema, the cycle schema, the link schema etc. (Johnson, 1987: 126). G. Lakoff (1987: 274) suggests that image schemas are *gestalts* and that their functioning stems from their structure (configuration). As far as the part-whole image schema is concerned (which we see as constituting the centre of our discussion of Stich's analysis of Božena Němcová's letters), Lakoff (1987: 273–274) presupposes that it is connected with such bodily experiences as that we are whole beings having bodily parts that we can manipulate; that we are aware of the wholes of our bodies; and that we also perceive the part-whole structure in other objects in our surroundings. According to Lakoff (1987: 273–274), the basic structural parts of the schema are wholes, parts, and the 'configuration' (of the parts), and the basic logic of the schema's functioning is that it is asymmetric (e.g., if A is a part of B, then B is not a part of A); that the whole cannot exist without the existence of its parts; that parts may exist but they may not form the corresponding whole without a proper configuration; that if we destroy the parts we destroy the whole; and that if the whole is located somewhere the parts are located in the same place. What is interesting for our analysis is Lakoff's (1987: 273) statement that the parts being connected or in contact is a typical feature, but not a necessary feature, of the part-whole schema, and his suggestion (Lakoff, 1987: 274) that the concept of configuration or structure itself is a metaphorical projection of the part-whole image schema, especially of the feature that the parts of the whole have to be organised in a certain way.

4.

If we apply the concept of the part-whole image schema to Stich's analysis of Božena Němcová's letters, it is evident that the part-whole image schema has a specific form in Stich's studies, especially in the following aspects:

a) The part-whole image schema is connected with a strong expectation that the parts that constitute the whole are (or should be) of a similar character; that the parts of one whole are (relatively) homogeneous etc.

b) Parts forming one whole are seen as if lacking a temporal perspective. That is, they are seen as if existing all at one time (without respect, that is, to the time of their origin) and the author usually considers all parts simultaneously.

Although these specific features of the part-whole schema do not belong among the basic features of the given image schema in the theories of Lakoff and Johnson (Lakoff, 1987; Johnson, 1987), the notion of the homogeneity of the parts of one whole is a basic supporting argument in Stich's discussion of the studies under analysis, and the conception of all parts existing at one time seems to be one of the salient features of Stich's methodological approach in general (see also, Šebek, 2007). It is also possible to see that some of the reactions to Stich's analysis of Němcová's letters could stem from a different view of the part-whole image schema: some authors either work with a different variety of the schema or they do not apply it at all (see 5).

As has already been mentioned, we interpret Stich's basic argumentation about outside intervention in Němcová's letters as based on the presupposition that the parts of a certain whole have a similar character, that parts belonging to one whole are in mutual concord, are to some extent homogeneous (but not identical – such an interpretation would represent an oversimplification), and should form a (relatively) homogeneous whole (*gestalt*). This approach leads to the assumption that any part that is (too) different from other parts of a certain whole – e.g., one that is atypical or extreme in some way – can be regarded as 'suspicious', mainly being suspicious from not being a part of the given whole (but perhaps belonging to some other whole). Stich's approach to wholes and parts can be illustrated by the following quotations from his texts on Němcová's letters:

With the best will in the world, we cannot reconstruct the schema⁴ that would explain all the deep inner discrepancies. And if such a schema were found we could not expect anything other than that the texts of the letters were manipulated at the level of their composition, and even that they are assembled from different letters. (Stich, 1976: 53)⁵

We were deducing by a detailed stylistic and textological analysis of Němcová's individual style, confronted with the usage of that time, that this image absolutely and radically deviates from the otherwise highly consistent structure of Němcová's imaginative expression, that it is inconsistent with her ideological approach, and that the assumptions about the influence of a personality of another author that would trigger this stylistic deviance is unsupported; on the other hand, we have shown that the image of Valhalla in this semantic and axiological context is close to Sabina's circle. (Stich, 2011: 153)

Entities of various types and on various levels of abstraction are seen as 'wholes' in the corresponding parts of Stich's studies: the actions of Němcová as a person can be regarded as one whole, but the texts (especially the literary texts) written by Němcová can also be wholes. Furthermore, different groups of these texts can also be wholes – e.g., the (unpreserved) letters written by Němcová (the four letters to an unknown addressee) – but a sole text (e.g., one letter) can also be regarded as a whole. Other phenomena are also seen as one whole: the way a certain motif or character is modelled (e.g., the grandmoth-

⁴ The use of the term 'schema' is a coincidence – the author did not have in his mind 'schema' as a term relating to cognitive linguistics.

⁵ All quotations from Stich's papers were translated from the Czech language by L. S. Ř.

er) in Němcová's texts; and the usual syntax or meaning of a word used in various texts (e.g., *fantazie* – imagination, *romantika* – romanticism). Certain wholes associated with Sabina are also considered in Stich's studies – in this case, e.g., Sabina's (supposed) method of treating another author's texts can be seen as one whole, but Sabina's motivation for interference with or modification of Němcová's letters form a further whole. According to Stich's reasoning, there is even the very abstract whole of human behaviour, common to all people in general, probably without respect to the era in which they were living or to their gender (but perhaps limited to people of a certain culture). See, e.g., Stich's consideration of the (il)logical sequencing of information and communicative intentions in two of the letters:

[...] and [Božena Němcová] adds that the addressee could write her biography after her death that she will therefore continue the narration of her memories next time. In letter C, she really returns to her youth, writing numerous details concerning Chvalkovice, then finishes abruptly, apologises again for the length of her letter (but why does she apologise, it is indeed for her future biography that she has explicitly entitled the addressee to write last time!) and she adds that she may need the memories of the recently described characters for her future literary work – but has she forgotten that she has entitled the addressee to write her biography?! Such failure of memory is not completely excluded, but such forgetfulness is more than suspicious in an author with such a memory, especially for the content and wording of her letters, as Němcová (as we will demonstrate on p. 61). (Stich, 1979; there are other 'wholes' in the quotation, e.g., Němcová's ability to remember the content and wording of her letters; the emotional engagement of the subject that refers to Stich himself⁶ is of further interest.)

Analogically to the 'wholes' that Stich considers, the '**parts**' under analysis are also diverse. When the wholes are of a textual character, the parts may be represented by a variety of linguistic means and from various levels of language, but they may also be, e.g., motives. When the wholes are related to persons (especially to Němcová), the considered 'parts' may include their psychological features, their capacity for memory, their habits (e.g., Němcová's habit of dating her important letters), their tendency to repeat or not to repeat wording, and their motives or their typical images.

When considering whether a certain part belongs to a certain whole, Stich mainly uses the criterion of **good enough resemblance** with other parts belonging to the corresponding whole (even though the measure of similarity is a highly subjective criterion) and the **repeating appearance or habituality** of the given type of part of the whole (in other words, the author considers whether a similar or identical type of part is repeated elsewhere in the whole, preferably repeated several times).

The way Stich reasons about different types of wholes and parts can be demonstrated by the following quotations:

[...] in the text C, as it is published in the 1st edition NM, there is no trace that would signal any seams in the text, neither is it possible to divide the text into independent parts according to its content. (Stich, 1976: 51)

⁶ On subjects standing outside the text and subjects modelled within the text and their correspondence, see also Macurová (1983).

This part has all the linguistic and stylistic features characteristic of Němcová's letters in general, uncomplicated, spoken syntax, fluent descriptions, a sense for detail and its colourful linguistic depiction, the accumulation of details and their paratactic juxtaposition, lexical spoken expressivity and lexicon crossing of the borders of the standard etc. The Slovakism is very conclusive as well [...] (Stich, 1976: 57)

As far as motives are concerned, there are places firmly connected with other letters by Božena Němcová in this part of letter C, especially the part about an indeterminate desire [...]. (Stich, 1976: 57; see especially the significant formulation 'firmly connected')

[...] the remainder of the letters does not talk about the grandmother in such a way as does letter C. See also, for that matter, *Obrazy z okolí domálického II* [...] (Stich, 1976: 58)

[...] and she moved on to Chvalkovice, and she would interrupt the narration after one sentence that she has already written a lot and that the addressee must be bored – but there could not have been a word about boredom there, as it should be stated there that she has already written to him about Chvalkovice last time! (Stich, 1976: 51)

Stich's special variety of the part-whole schema as a whole consisting of similar parts is connected with another special feature: the whole in his approach is something that has – thanks to its certain (relative) homogeneity – a **tendency to be balanced**, or stable. If a heterogeneous part should appear in (or 'break into') the whole, a certain force that destabilizes the balance and that originates outside the whole is necessary – the different part can then be seen as a 'deviation', e.g.:

[...] the case that should be an impulse strong enough for this deviation in Němcová's work. (Stich, 2011: 153)

According to the author, when we analyse a given whole and given heterogeneous parts we need to seek such a point of view, or perspective, that enables us to see the whole again as 'balanced', that is, a perspective that enables us to integrate the heterogeneous parts into the whole in a motivated way, e.g.:

In this context, Němcová's own 'descent into the Valhalla of the heart' appears in a semantically completely new way – it loses its bombastic pathos and becomes a gentle instrument of humour that appears repeatedly in her epistolographic work. (Stich, 2011: 156)

One new conclusion for linguo-stylistic textology can be drawn from this: the interpretation of a structurally seemingly implacable detail is possible if circumstances outside the text can be found that change the connections concerning the value and connotations of the given textual segment and place them in a new light. (Stich, 2011: 156)

When considering Stich's approach to wholes existing all at one time without respect to the real time or sequence of their origin, we can ask whether Stich could have known the triple version of the fragment of Němcová's final letter to Náprstek (it is more prob-

able that he could not) and whether any possible knowledge of these texts might have influenced Stich's analysis and his approach to the whole of Němcová's letters.⁷

5.

The foregoing discussion of Stich's view of a similar, or 'not inconsistent', character of the parts of one whole can be regarded as one of the possibly basic mechanisms upon which human beings' categorisation of the world around them is based – e.g., the way we unite those entities that we perceive together into one category, group or whole. On the other hand, different people may have different views of what constitutes a 'good enough' similarity or homogeneity of parts belonging to one whole. This difference can be observed in some of the polemic reactions to Stich's analysis. Janáčková (2007), e.g., allows – contrary to Stich – the whole to integrate heterogeneous parts. This conception (applied to Němcová's letters) sees the production of an atypical or exceptional text by Němcová as possible. Janáčková points out that it is possible that our perception of the whole (in this case the whole of the preserved letters by Němcová) can be distorted as it is based only on the preserved parts (that is, Němcová's letters). But the 'real' whole – consisting of all letters written by Němcová – could have had a different character, and it is even possible that we do not know about important parts that could influence the character of the whole of the letters and that could form the basis for allowing us to see the now 'atypical' parts as being less atypical. Unlike Stich, Janáčková bases her approach on a conception of a wider whole comprising (potentially) also those parts of which we do not know.

A further view that opposes that of Stich is that of Charypar (2009: e.g. 27), who uses the concept of a whole structured more in terms of 'verticality' and consisting of layers (e.g., the 'layers' produced by different authors – Němcová, Sabina, Sojka). Some of Charypar's polemic is aimed at Stich's concept of the whole as something (relatively) consistent and formed from (relatively) homogenous parts. The author (see Charypar, 2009: 33) states that Stich sometimes integrates into his analysis interpretations that are not necessary but that help to make his argument an improved whole. In this case the whole is no longer represented by Němcová's letters but by Stich's argument concerning a certain topic.

Stich's notion of the simultaneous existence of all parts as seen outside a temporal perspective – the second specific feature of his conception of the part-whole image schema – becomes the target of critical remarks about the methodology he used in his analysis of motives and his work on Seifert mentioned in Charypar (2009) and Šebek (2007); such remarks signal that the given variety of the part-whole schema appears repeatedly in Stich's work.

⁷ The text of the triple version of the fragment is published in Němcová, 2007: 308–319; cf. Janáčková – Macurová, 2001, for an analysis of the texts.

6.

This paper has touched on only one of the interesting topics connected with Stich's work on Božena Němcová's letters to the so-called unknown addressee. There are other questions worthy of attention, such as Stich's overall conception of letters. Different authors may view letters from very different perspectives – on the ambiguous character of letters, see Skwarczyńska (1973; 1975) – and differences in this question may also form a basis for discussion. A reading of Stich's text may also raise interest in the way the subject that refers to the author of the text (see Macurová, 1983) is modelled, especially in his deep interest in the topic under discussion, his opinions and his expressed values. Stich's works can also be a fruitful starting point for a more general discussion on the types of intervention encountered in Němcová's letters and correspondence in the context of the various editions and selections, in academic works on Němcová, and in fiction or texts in the printed media. A more detailed analysis of this topic could reveal, e.g., different variations on Němcová's 'picture' and how it changes.

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