Wojciech Owczarski: Schulz and Dreams[1]

In the works of Bruno Schulz, you can find a surprising number of characters falling asleep, snoring, and struggling in a bedding "warm and sour from sleep"[2]. His texts are full of humorous descriptions of "unknown impasses of sleep"[3]. In the cluster of metaphors showing the "complicated world of dreams"[4], Schulz's ingenuity seems inexhaustible, although it is almost always a struggle, a scuffle, a tussle. The extraordinary frequency with which the motif is explored suggests that the author of *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass* associated something extremely important with the sphere of sleep.

This statement may seem like a truism, as there are very few examples in Polish literature of prose considered more oneiric than Schulz's. However, I do not intend to deal here with Schulz's oneiric poetics. I am interested in a much more specific issue, namely the question of which areas of experience the writer associated with sleep. Not what he dreamed, or what he thought about dreams, but what he talked about whenever he told his characters to "scrambling laboriously up some hill of snoring"[5]. To put it another way: I am interested in Schulz's dream phantasm.

Schulz's views on dreams can be reconstructed quite easily. Jerzy Jarzębski did it a long time ago, pointing out the clear connections between Schulz's beliefs in this area and the teachings of Freud and Jung. The writer used the concept of "the subconscious"[6], he was also familiar with the notions of suppression, repression and censorship[7]. Perhaps the most Freudian ending is the ending of "Spring", when to Joseph's statement: "I cannot answer for my dream", the feldjeger officer replies: "Yes, you can"[8]. Schulz knew very well that dreams were never innocent.

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2 B. Schulz, "The Old-Age Pensioner", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, translated by Celina Wieniewska, London: Penguin Books 2008, p. 291.

3 B. Schulz, "A Night in July", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 209.

4 Ibidem, p. 206.

5 Ibidem, p. 209.

6 J. Jarzębski, *Schulz*, Wrocław: Ossolineum 1999, p. 245–253.

7 Ibidem, p. 128–129.

8 B. Schulz, "Spring", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 203.

However, Jarzębski is right when he claims that "Schulz was clearly more fascinated with Jung and his version of depth psychology than with Freud (although there are no literal traces of this fascination)"[9]. The crowning proof of this is the famous fragments of "Spring" dealing with the descent to the underworld: "Likewise, when we sleep, severed from the world, straying into deep introversion, on a return journey into ourselves, we can see clearly through our closed eyelids, because thoughts are kindled in us by internal tapers and smolder erratically. This is how total regressions occur, retreats into self, journeys to the roots"[10].

If Jung had Schulz's writing talent, he would probably write in this way. However, knowing what Schulz thought about the nature of dreams brings us only slightly closer to answering the question of what role dreams played in his imagination. It is similar with knowledge about the writer's actual dreams. In fact, we only know one of his dreams – the dream about a cut-off penis – described in a letter to Stefan Szuman[11] (assuming, of course, that the account was not made up). There is also a fragment in the letter to Tadeusz Breza, but it does not refer to any specific dream, it only contains a mention of "one of those dreams when we dream that someone who has long and irreversibly left has returned and is in our city, and we, due to a strange delay, due to incomprehensible absent-mindedness, we have not yet visited him, although he is someone close and dear to us"[12]. And that is probably all – at least I have not been able to find any traces of Schulz's other dreams. I devoted a lot of attention to the dream about the penis, trying to show how much this early childhood dream influenced the shape of Schulz's imagination and how – in a disguised way – it constantly returned in his works[13]. Now, however, I would like to go the opposite way – not from a specific dream towards the rules of imagination, but from regularly recurring ideas towards the meaning of a specific phantasm.

Włodzimierz Bolecki, author of the entry on "Sen" ["sleep" or "dream"] in the Schulz dictionary, states that "at the narrative level, 'dream' is the name of

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9 J. Jarzębski, *Schulz,* op. cit., p. 126.

10 B. Schulz, "Spring", op. cit., p. 163.

11 "I dream that I am in the forest, at night, dark, I cut off my penis with a knife, make a hole in the ground and bury it. This is, as it were, an antecedent, a dream sequence without emotional intonation. The actual dream comes: I come to my senses, I realize the monstrosity and terribleness of the sin I have committed. I don't want to believe that I have really committed it, and I still realize with despair that it is so, that what I have done is irrevocable. I am as if already outside of time, in the face of eternity, which for me will be nothing else than a terrible awareness of guilt, a feeling of irreparable loss for all eternity. I am eternally damned and it looks like I have been locked in a glass jar from which I will never come out. I will never forget this feeling of endless torment, eternity of damnation" (B. Schulz, *Księga listów*, zebrał i przygotował do druku J. Ficowski, Gdańsk 2002, Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria 2002, p. 34–35).

12 Ibidem, p. 55.

13 See W. Owczarski, *Miejsca wspólne, miejsca własne. O wyobraźni Leśmiana, Schulza i Kantora*, Gdańsk 2006, p. 102–148.

a state or situation that allows the narrator of the stories to talk about crossing the boundaries of normality"[14]. It is hard to deny it, but at the same time almost everything allows the narrator to talk about "crossing the boundaries of normality" – the time turned back in the sanatorium, the sudden and unexpected shrinkage of Aunt Perasia, or even the furious buzzing of flies during the "dead season." Dreams and sleep are no exception in this matter. Schulz does not have to refer to dreams to go beyond "normality" in his works. In Schulz's world, dreams and sleep play a much more important and much more specific role. To understand this role, we will be forced – along with Schulz – to climb into bed and dig through monstrous piles of bedding.

"Beds unmade for days on end, piled high with bedding crumpled and disordered from the weight of dreams, stood like deep boats waiting to sail into the dank and confusing labyrinths of some dark starless Venice"[15]. This short fragment from "Tailor's Dummies" perfectly describes the nature of the fantasy we are interested in. Dreams have "weight", the bedding is "crumpled and disordered", and at the same time, the sleeper seems to be immersing himself in the water element. The dynamics of Schulz's dream image are determined by "heaviness" and "ebb".

As I have already mentioned, Schulz's sleeping characters are usually forced to fight, or at least to struggle with the resistance of matter. This is said most literally in "Dead Season" – the father and the black-bearded man fight each other in a dream like the biblical Jacob with the angel: "At some still more distant mile of sleep—had the flow of sleep joined their bodies, or had their dreams imperceptibly merged into one?—they felt that lying in each other's arms they were still fighting a difficult, unconscious duel. They were panting face-to-face in sterile effort. The black-bearded man lay on top of my father like the angel on top of Jacob. My father pressed against him with all the strength of his knees and, stiffly floating away into numbness, stole another short spell of fortifying sleep between one round of wrestling and another. So they fought: what for? For their good name? For God? For a contract? They grappled in mortal sweat, to their last ounce of strength, while the waves of sleep carried them away into ever more distant and stranger areas of the night"[16]. Similarly, the following passage appears in "Eddie": "And those in their beds who have already caught sleep will not let go of it; they fight with it as with an angel that is trying to escape until

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14 W. Bolecki, "Sen", [in:] *Słownik schulzowski*, pod red. W. Boleckiego, J. Jarzębskiego and S. Rośka, Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria 2003, p. 346.

15 B. Schulz, "Tailor's Dummies", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 26.

16 Idem, "Dead Season", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 237.

they conquer it and press it to the pillow. Then they snore intermittently as if quarreling and reminding themselves of the angry history of their hatreds"[17].

Most often, however, in the absence of an angel, sleepers struggle with the bed linen or their own snoring. They clearly need these struggles for something, since they do not intend to "let go" of the dream once "captured". "In all the beds people lie with their knees drawn up, with faces violently thrown to one side, in deep concentration, immersed in sleep and given to it wholly"[18]. What is the purpose of this clinging to sleep and the duvet? Was the goal to win a fight for a blessing like the biblical Jacob? In his descriptions of sleep and sleeping, Schulz enjoys evoking religious allusions. Dr. Gotard's dream is "a great pathetic ascension on waves of snores and voluminous bedding"[19]. So, could persistent tussling with a duvet cover or a pillow be the way to heaven? Not necessarily. Although in one of the fragments of "Spring" a sky as huge as a featherbed appears[20], it is, however, a sky "gray, sultry […] enmeshed in the black net of tree branches"– a sky that "lay heavily on human shoulders"[21]. It is hard to reach such a sky in your sleep. Yet Schulz's sleeping heroes are certainly striving for something. So what are they trying to achieve? What kind of blessing are they fighting for?

The key to answering this question seems to be the fact that in the vast majority of cases, Schulz's ideas of sleep are immersed in the depths of dirt, waste, secretions and all kinds of abject things. The bedding is usually dirty and has not been changed for a long time. Sleepers sweat profusely and have open mouths, often drooling. They are bothered by flies ("The shop assistants, bothered by flies, winced and grimaced, stirring in an uneasy sleep")[22]. Even Adela's flawless body loses its charm in sleep and is exposed to the invasion of night intruders:

> Without putting on the light, Adela goes to bed and sinks into the tired bedding of the previous night […]. Adela is fast asleep, her mouth half open, her face relaxed and absent […]. Adela is […] completely limp, completely surrendered to the deep rhythm of sleep. She has no strength even to pull up the blanket over her bare thighs and cannot prevent the columns of bedbugs from wandering over her body. These light and thin, leaflike insects run over her so delicately that she does not feel their touch. They

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17 Idem, "Eddie", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 284.
18 Ibidem.
19 B. Schulz, "Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 260.
20 Polish: "niebo […] ogromne jak pierzyna". The passage from the original Schulz text is omitted in Wieniewska's translation.
21 B. Schulz, "Spring", p. 156.
22 Idem, "Dead Season", p. 227.

> are flat receptacles for blood, reddish blood bags without eyes or faces, now on the march in whole clans on a migration of the species subdivided into generations and tribes. They run up from her feet in scores, a never-ending procession, they are larger now, as large as moths, flat red vampires without heads, lightweight as if cut out of paper, on legs more delicate than the web of spiders[23].

Schulz clearly revels in hyperbolizing these parasites. But the playfulness of the description proves even more the importance of dream phantasms. As Julia Kristeva says, "laughing is a way of placing or displacing abjection"[24]. And sleep, for Schulz, is precisely the domain of abjection. The heroes of his prose, entering the sphere of sleep, immerse themselves in impurities, jeopardizing their own identity, but at the same time gaining a chance to consolidate purification.

Let us look at the situation of Uncle Charles, who, in his wife's absence, indulged in debauchery and returned to his unclean apartment only for a few hours of sleep. Then – as we read,

> "The crushed, cool, disordered bedclothes seemed like a blissful haven, an island of safety on which he succeeded in landing with the last ounce of his strength like a castaway, tossed for many days and nights on a stormy sea. Groping blindly in the darkness, he sank between the white mounds of cool feathers and slept as he fell, across the bed or with his head downward, pushing deep into the softness of the pillows, as if in sleep he wanted to drill through, to explore completely, that powerful massif of feather bedding rising out of the night. He fought in his sleep against the bed like a bather swimming against the current, he kneaded it and molded it with his body like an enormous bowl of dough, and woke up at dawn panting, covered with sweat, thrown up on the shores of that pile of bedding which he could not master in the nightly struggle. Half-landed from the depths of unconsciousness, he still hung onto the verge of night, gasping for breath, while the bedding grew around him, swelled and fermented—and again engulfed him in a mountain of heavy, whitish dough"[25].

The sweaty body of the libertine clings to the "fermented" bedding, which sometimes washes away like water and then sticks to it like dough. Wanting to "drill through, to explore completely, that powerful massif of feather bedding", the

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23 B. Schulz, "Dodo", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 270–272.
24 J. Kristeva, *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, p. 8.
25 B. Schulz, "Mr. Charles", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 49.

uncle seems to be counting on the fact that he will lose himself in these feathers, but at the same time – that he will rub himself against them and wipe off some dirty, sticky coating. Perhaps Schulz's heroes actually roll around in stale bedding so passionately in order to finally free themselves from it by lying in the mud and all sorts of filth? But what would that mean? And why does it happen in a dream?

Kristeva argues that filth is not a quality in itself, but it applies only to what relates to a boundary

and, more particularly, represents the object jettisoned out of that boundary, its other side, a margin"[26]. Schulz's characters live permanently "on the margins of reality", as Krzysztof Stala has long proven[27]. However, sleep is an area particularly conducive to liminality. Wallowing in dirt and drowning in sleep are parallel experiences, related to the violation of the boundary between subject and object. Vomiting, like sleep, throws you out of the established rules of the game and, as Kristeva writes, "shifts towards the abject"[28]. Schulz's subject in a dream is transformed into "doubtful and problematic forms, like the ectoplasm of a medium, by pseudomatter, the cataleptic emanations of the brain which in some instances spread from the mouth of the person in a trance over the whole table, filled the whole room, a floating, rarefied tissue, an astral dough, on the borderline between body and soul"[29]. The parted, saliva-dripping mouth in a dream allows this tissue or ectoplasm to escape, and the sleeper himself loses his coherent identity. He loses it to such an extent that in Schulz's descriptions there is no distinction between sleeping and dreaming. Dreaming here becomes one with the physiological process of sleeping. In "The Comet", the father sees "the clearly visible contours of an embryo (…) sleeping upside down its blissful sleep in the light waters of amnion"[30]. A dream can therefore be slept, not necessarily dreamed. At the end of "Autumn" we read: "The vast cavernous beds, piled high with chilly layers of sheets and blankets, waited for our bodies. The night's floodgates groaned under the rising pressure of dark masses of slumber, a dense lava that was just about to erupt and pour over its dams, over the doors, the old wardrobes, the stoves where the wind sighed"[31]. What is this lava – a product of physiology or a dream? Schulz has no intention of answering this question; his imagination consistently blurs the boundaries not only between the subject and

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26 J. Kristeva, op. cit., p. 68.

27 See K. Stala, *Na marginesach rzeczywistości. O paradoksach przedstawiania w twórczości Brunona Schulza*, Warszawa 1995.

28 J. Kristeva, op. cit., p. 47.

29 B. Schulz, "Treatise on Tailor's Dummies: Conclusion", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 39.

30 idem, "The Comet", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 110.

31 idem, "Autumn", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 327.

the object in a dream, but also between the sleeping subject and the dreaming subject. The sleepy dispersion of the subject is perfectly visible in the confession of Joseph from "Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass": "Thus I sleep for irregular stretches of time, for days or weeks, wandering through empty landscapes of sleep, always on the way, always on the steep roads of respiration, sometimes sliding lightly and gracefully from gentle slopes, then climbing laboriously up the cliffs of snoring. At their summit I embrace the horizons of the rocky and empty desert of sleep. At some point, somewhere on the sharp turn of a snore, I wake up half-conscious and feel the body of my father at the foot of the bed. […] I fall asleep again, with my mouth open, and the vast panorama of mountain landscape glides past me majestically"[32].

"Empty landscapes of sleep" or "rocky and empty desert" could be understood as the content of a dream, but "roads of respiration" and "cliffs of snoring" indicate that all these metaphors may equally refer to the ailments of the sleeping body. We will never find out whether Joseph is dreaming about climbing or struggling with his own breathing. In Schulz's vision of sleep, these two possibilities are no different from each other.

Immersing yourself in the dream element, in this identity-blurring lava, in the dirt-stained secretion or ectoplasm – is ultimately aimed at cleansing and reconsolidation. Dynamics of dream processes – "a race on all the floors"[33], rising and falling, "a gallop of snoring"[34], a struggle with the bed linen – it is supposed to lead to separation from the "I" of what is unnecessary and unwanted, to get rid of burdensome excess. Here, Uncle Charles, once he had "drilled through" the "massif of feather", calmed down and "slowly returned to his senses, to daylight"[35]. This return was possible thanks to freeing himself from the burden weighing him down. The last act of this release took place after waking up: "Charles yawned out of his body, out of the depth of all its cavities the remains of yesterday. The yawning was convulsive as if his body wanted to turn itself inside out. In this way he got rid of the sand and ballast, the undigested remains of the previous day"[36].

Yawning turns out to be the ultimate cleansing. By getting rid of the "ballast", the dreamer becomes a subject again, only now he is "inside out", transformed, re-constituted. As a result of sleep topped with convulsive yawning, he got rid of the "remains of yesterday". As is known, Freud used this term to describe fresh experiences that constitute the material of a dream. These experiences, according to Freud, may be quite trivial, but they may also occupy a great deal of conscious

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32 idem, "Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass", op. cit., p. 259.
33 idem, "Eddie", op. cit., p. 283.
34 idem, "Dead Season", op. cit., p. 237.
35 idem, "Mr. Charles", op. cit., p. 50.
36 Ibidem.

attention[37]. However, they are always only a disguise for a wish coming from the unconscious. In Schulz's vision of sleep, these "undigested residues of yesterday" seem to be much more important. It is because of them that all these dramatic "dream fights" occur. The task of sleep is digestion and excretion, the consistent disposal of all memories, experiences, ideas, emotions, reactions or behaviours that could disturb the image of self. The dreamer empties himself of the "leftovers" that do not fit into the whole he wants to become. He removes them in the form of secretions and fumes. Sometimes he also shakes them out of the bed, like Kathy in "The Old-Age Pensioner", who "yawns and stretches languorously for long minutes before she opens the windows and starts sweeping and dusting. The night air, saturated with sleep and snoring, lazily wafts toward the window […]. Kathy dips her hands reluctantly into the dough of bedding, warm and sour from sleep. At last, with a shiver, with eyes full of night, she shakes from the window a large, heavy feather bed, and scatters over the city particles of feathers, stars of down, the lazy seed of night dreams"[38]. In "Visitation" we witness how shop assistants "unwound themselves lazily from the dirty bedding" and "abandoned themselves for a moment to the delights of yawning—a yawning crossing the borders of sensuous pleasure, leading to a painful cramp of the palate, almost to nausea"[39]. The nausea can give pleasure because it is a harbinger of rebirth. Kristeva defines abjection as "that trifle turns me insideout, guts sprawling: […] 'I' am in the process of becoming an other at the expense of my own death, During that course in which 'I' become, I give birth to myself amid the violence of sobs, of vomit"[40].

Among the countless theories on the function of dreams opposing Freud, one seems particularly close to Schulz's vision. Its authors, Francis Crick and Graeme Mitchison, argue that the purpose of dreams is to cleanse the brain of unnecessary memories. Strictly speaking: the function of sleep is to "to remove certain undesirable modes of interaction in networks of cells in the cerebral cortex. We postulate that this is done in REM sleep by a reverse learning mechanism so that the trace in the brain of the unconscious dream is weakened, rather than strengthened by the dream"[41]. This theory shows that everything we dream is intended

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37 "We should not underrate the psychic intensities introduced into sleep by these remnants of waking life, especially those emanating from the group of the unsolved. These excitations surely continue to strive for expression during the night, and we may assume with equal certainty that the sleeping state renders impossible the usual continuation of the excitement in the foreconscious and the termination of the excitement by its becoming conscious" – S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. A. Brill, New York: The Macmillan Company 1913, p. 440.

38 B. Schulz, "The Old-Age Pensioner", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., 290–291.

39 Idem, "Visitation", [in:] idem, *The Street of Crocodiles and Other Stories*, op. cit., p. 12.

40 J. Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, op. cit., p. 3.

41 F. Crick and G. Mitchison, *The Function of Dream Sleep*, "Nature" 1983, vol. 304, p. 111.

to be erased from memory – and effectively erased in the act of dreaming. "We dream to forget"[42] – maintain Crick and Mitchison. Otherwise, the brain would be overloaded and would malfunction. The consequence of this is the complete uselessness, or even harmfulness, of all attempts to interpret or even remember dreams. According to the authors, by trying to remember what we should forget, we expose ourselves to serious mental disorders.

Needless to say, this concept was considered controversial and caused – and continues to cause – a wave of strong criticism. However, I do not intend to comment here on the credibility of this theory. I also do not particularly care that Schulz could not have heard about it because it was announced in 1983. What is much more important is that the idea of sleep as a process of purifying memories or experiences turned out to be so attractive that it could be born in the heads of rationally thinking, outstanding representatives of experimental sciences (after all, Crick is a Nobel Prize winner for his discoveries in the field of DNA research). At the same time, as Paul Martin argues, "the reverse-learning theory of REM sleep echoes a much older strain of thought, which regarded dreams as the waste products of the mind"[43]. Martin illustrates this point with a quote from the seventeenth-century playwright Thomas Nashe: "A dream is nothing else but a bubbling scum or froth of the fancy, which the day hath left undigested; or an afterfeast made of the fragments of idle imaginations"[44]. Schulz should probably feel good in such company, gaining a solid foundation for his vision of the dream in the history of ideas and the support of the scientific authority of his late grandchildren.

Let us go back to Uncle Charles and see what happened to him after he woke up. When he finally excreted the undigested "remains", his uncle, "eased himself […] calculated something, added it all up, and became pensive"[45]. Transformed and consolidated once again, the subject turns to the future, looks boldly forward, and builds its identity on what is in front of it, not behind it. After all, "seemed slowly to shape, in that silence, its future destiny"[46]. And even though it was "harassed by sexual indulgence", Uncle Charles's body "swelling with fat", even though he himself "sat there in a thoughtless, vegetative stupor" and his "unformulated future" was like "a terrible growth, pushing forth in an unknown direction", after all, "he was not afraid of it, because he already felt at one with that unknown and enormous thing which was to come, and he was growing together

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42 Ibidem.
43 P. Martin, *Counting Sheep. The Science and Pleasures of Sleep and Dreams*, New York: Macmillan, ebook edition.
44 Ibidem.
45 B. Schulz, "Mr. Charles", op. cit., p. 50.
46 Ibidem.

with it without protest, in a strange unison"[47]. It is hard to resist the impression that it was the laxative effect of sleep that allowed for this ultimately difficult self-acceptance. When in "A Night in July" we watch Uncle Charles before falling asleep, he behaves completely differently. We see him "undressing with a dull and meditative expression. Then he would blow out the candle, take all his clothes off, and, naked, lie for a long while sleepless on the cool bed. Sleep would only gradually overpower his large body. He would restlessly murmur something, breathe heavily, sigh, struggle with an imaginary burden on his breast. At times he would sob softly and drily"[48].

Sleep in Schulz's world allows you to deal with the excess of experiences and impressions. Those who have too few experiences do not sleep at all. This is Dodo's case: "Dodo never slept. The center of sleep in his diseased brain did not function correctly, so he wriggled and tossed and turned from side to side all night long. […] His unlived life worried him, tortured him, turning round and round inside him like an animal in a cage. In Dodo's body, the body of a half-wit, somebody was growing old, although he had not lived; somebody was maturing to a death that had no meaning at all"[49]. "An unlived life" is one of the most terrifying images for Schulz. Shortly after breaking up with Josephina Szelińska, the writer confessed in a letter to Romana Halpern: "Spring is so beautiful – one should live and swallow the world. And I spend days and nights without a woman and without a Muse and I am wasting away sterile. Here I once woke up from sleep with a sudden deep despair that life was passing by, and I was not keeping any of it. If such despair continued for long, one could go mad. […] This is the greatest misfortune – not to live out your life"[50]. Let us add that even sleep does not help with this misfortune.

In contrary situations, when the excess of life (including inner life!) causes anxiety or even identity ambiguity, sleep, as we have seen, has a beneficial effect. Confirmation of what we have concluded about Schulz's dream phantasm can be found in another letter from the writer to Romana Halpern: "If I want to realize my current state, the image of someone waking up from a deep sleep comes to mind. Someone wakes up, still sees the world of dreams sinking into oblivion, still sees its fading colours in his eyes and feels the softness of dreams under his eyelids – and already a new, sober and fresh world of reality is pressing towards him and, still full of inner laziness, he is drawn into it – lingering – in his affairs and processes. Thus, in me, my singularity, my uniqueness, without being resolved, sinks into oblivion. She, who closed me off from the attacks of

47 Ibidem.
48 B. Schulz, "A Night in July", op. cit., p. 209.
49 B. Schulz, "Dodo", op. cit., p. 276.
50 B. Schulz, *Księga listów*, p. 162–163.

the world, gently withdraws into the depths, and I, like an insect released from its chrysalis, exposed to a storm of foreign light and the winds of the sky, entrust myself as if for the first time to the elements"[51].

The essence of the transformation described by Schulz here is to forget. The world of dreams sinks into oblivion, and with it "my singularity" and "uniqueness", i.e. what previously defined identity. Only getting rid of this "chrysalis" allows development and the courage to entrust oneself to the "elements". Sleep purifies, allows one to forget, to invalidate, "without being resolved", and thus creates the foundation for the pupation of the subject. And if this is the case, if the purpose of sleep is to purify memory, it becomes understandable why Schulz so rarely reported both his own and his characters' dreams. Jarzębski explains this with Schulz's desire to evoke the myth of childhood. "Although when reading ["The Street of Crocodiles"] we immediately feel the visionary and dreamlike nature of the story, words like: 'I dreamed that…' are never uttered. In fact, the writer is not interested in the dreams of literary characters at all. To enter the land of childhood, he had to shape all his work into the image of a dream. […] He managed to write a dream (not 'write it down!'), imitating the multi-layered nature of the dream subject with literary means"[52]. It is all true. Schulz, in fact, shaped his entire literary world in a dreamlike manner, so he did not have to highlight specific dreams. But perhaps the reason he did not describe dreams – and why he blurred the distinction between dreaming and sleeping – was because he believed that, as Crick and Mitchison said, "we dream in order to forget"? Then, reporting the dream would be contrary to its main purpose.

Translated by Language Extreme

51 Ibidem, p. 144.
52 J. Jarzębski, "Sen o *złotym wieku*", "Teksty" 1973, no. 2, p. 120–121.