

His drawings created after year 1964 are dominated by a sadomasochist motive.

Instead of explaining where this motive had come from, let me quote some excerpts of two letters, which Beksinski wrote to me a few years ago (our whole correspondence is being prepared for printing). In his usual ironic and mocking style with a high dose of reflection and introspection, he explains his sexual tendencies and the things he discovered as an adult man.

I would like to stress that this man had never, throughout fifty years of his marriage, betrayed his wife, to say nothing of any attempt to fulfil his sexual fantasies (impossible anyway, as it was connected with death). But his extremely vivid imagination allowed him to sublimate these fantasies in art.

What dull critics like Jarocka and other morons, put down to his wish to “shock a viewer with cheap horror” in great measure comes from this part of his inner life.

Letter 1.

“(…)

I found out about my real likes at the age of 35. Suddenly, when drawing one of a serial pictures, I made a discovery, it dawned on me, I saw the light like S. Paul. I felt as if had got clubbed. For at least two weeks I was sort of knocked out, obsessed with only one thought: “So this is WHAT it’s all about”. Of course, later I got used to it and everything was back to normal. But WHERE DID IT COME FROM? Where did I get infected? I had thought before that I tended to be a sadist and even dreamed of raping somebody, but I knew I would never do it as I hold violence in contempt, I am a man of manners and such “low things” are not allowed. Even Tom [the artist’s son – Dmochowski’s note] had never got it in his neck, as I was afraid that being a sadist I could acquire a taste for beating a child. And then, out of the blue, one moment proved me that it was the other way round, that since childhood I had been hiding before myself what I really craved for. So WHERE did it COME FROM? Neither my mother abused me nor I had an elder sister; later in life it was women who always cared for me more than I cared for them. I had never been unhappy in love. Then where does this come from? The only explanation that comes to my head could be the fact that I nearly suffocated during the delivery. Would it be this? (…)

Why I had been hiding it before myself was easier to understand. This resulted from certain rules of my upbringing according to which you mustn’t be weaker. You couldn’t be weaker than a woman – it was nearly a symbol of shame. The desire of being weaker and molested or killed by a stronger woman, so as my agony could give her sexual pleasure, had to be pushed and was pushed into subconsciousness. After this flash of insight which I had at the beginning of the 60s, I started to believe that Freud’s psychoanalysis was not that stupid as people thought: pushing things into subconsciousness and a moment of revelation do occur. If the memories of the moment of birth had been the reason, they would have adopted a form of a perfect negation of

that situation, and in consequence also a quasi-compensatory form, as in the case of the Japanese I had mentioned. But it seems to be a need and sensation much more common than I have thought before. There are over 120 websites devoted only to porno models and well-trained prostitutes (trained how to strangle but not kill).

(...)

All of us have a built-in mechanism of sexual drive, but sexual imagination is an individual feature, just like a painting style. I suppose a “standard” does not exist. There is only adaptation to the requirements of a given culture. Whether you want it or not, these requirements have been established by Christianity, which allowed so-called “positions” to make people’s lives more interesting, but ruthlessly eliminated other things, starting from sexual relations with other mammals, family members, children etc,.. and finishing with homosexuality, masturbation, coprophagy and so on. I am ready to assume that everybody has got hidden needs but at the same time is terribly afraid to reveal them, as this means an anathema, stepping out of line or being ridiculed. These needs are sometimes ridiculous even for the one who feels them because they were born in the period of puberty as a result of friends’ stories, stupid books (and the stuff you understood from these books). When you are 10 or 12 you are not critical or experienced, so these beliefs are INFANTILE and remain such for the rest of life.

(...)

Zdzislaw.

Warsaw, Saturday, 21st October 2000

Letter 2.

(...)

As for my sexual imagination, by its very nature it is condemned solely to a mental process: I would not like to die yet, even if Alice Silverstone in person was to kill me. I loathe the smell, in particular the smell of crap. What I imagine and what really turns me on is odourless and happens in my imaginary meta-reality. My inner need is to be beaten, humiliated, abused and murdered, but in reality I am not fond of it at all. Besides, a very strong sense of humour and the fear of being ridiculed would not allow me to make my dreams come true. (...)

What can you tell somebody who thinks that everything is for everybody? I guess I have already written about it: all of us have a sexual drive but sexual imagination and sexual drive are two different things. I suppose it is even stronger in case of women. But I have a lot of female hormones so I guess that’s why my imagination is greater than the possibilities of fulfilment. Just like you believe in the bright future of intellectual cognition, I am sure that virtual reality, which you can’t distinguish from reality we live in (which I will not experience, unfortunately), will

handle these things in 100%. Here I order by the Internet a Lisa Boyle or another famous model, I programme strong sadist preferences for her (in “preferences” menu), just in case I lower her age to 18 and lengthen her legs by 10 cm. Additionally, I programme her to hold six doctor’s degrees and the title of MIT ordinary professor, the strength of Golota as well as a black karate belt, so as to feel like a piece of shit compared to her. Then I click “adjust” button, the doorbell rings, I open it and in front of me there is standing an 18-year old MIT ordinary professor with five doctor’s degrees. She kicks me in the belly, knocks me down, gags me and for the next two hours sits on my head, strangles me in all possible ways, breaks my hands and legs, cracks my fingers and tears my nails away, having an orgasm every minute. Finally I die in convulsions and wake up relaxed. The monitor, to the beat of relaxing music, displays a pulsating pink message which informs me that the service was PLN 1.500. Oh God, it’s less than one drawing! If I don’t laze about and put my nose to the grindstone, I can afford such an attraction every day. Tomorrow a beefed up Britney Spears will cross my threshold and after two-hour tortures, having tied my head to the sink, she will cut my throat with a butcher’s knife and in agony I will observe my blood dripping down the sink. I can’t wait. There is something to wait for. Life has become beautiful!

Everything’s OK, but from time to time you have to come back to harsh reality, where you must chase away ladies who would like to possess you but on a bit different and less satisfying terms. Everybody has their preferences and dreams, and what’s more important, everybody has the same right to their preferences as I have to mine.

Best wishes

Zdzislaw.

Warsaw, Saturday, 28th October 2000