

Deformacja



When viewed in an idiosyncratic mirror image, transforming water into land, the map of the Mediterranean looks like a large island with several sizeable lakes, most prominently, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete and Cyprus, the huge Adriatic peninsula and a plethora of smaller water basins.

Googując słowo 'deformacja', otrzymujemy zgoła odrębny zestaw rezultatów niż dla słowa 'deformation' (patrz: ilustracja porównawcza wyżej): wyniki w języku polskim dotyczą deformacji ludzkiego ciała, a nawet aborcji dokonanej przez znaną i kontrowersyjną piosenkarkę popularną; wyniki dla słowa w języku angielskim informują nas najpierw, że 'deformation' to pojęcie z zakresu materiałoznawstwa, inżynierii i fizyki, a obrazy dla tego hasła są wykresami dla lub ilustracjami tych pojęć. Translating the above paragraph, for purposes of understanding of non-Polish speaking users, I am committing a deformation only to the semantic and perhaps syntactical extent, those two languages having similar 'deep structures', to use a technical term from one branch of linguistics.

Looking closer (further?) and more superficially, you will have noticed that the forthcoming translation of the Polish paragraph resembles the so-called original only in it being composed of a similar set of signs (the Polish sign set is wider), other than that, one could say – visually – they are almost entirely else.

Podobieństwo w stopniu znacznym jest zachowane w tzw. „nazwach własnych” (proper names).

Here is a Google Translate version of the paragraph: "Googling the word 'deformation', we get a quite different set of results than for the word 'deformation' (see comparative illustration above): the results in Polish refer to the deformation of the human body, and even abortion performed by a well-known and controversial popular singer; results for a word in English inform us first that 'deformation' is a concept in the field of materials science, engineering and physics, and the images for this entry are charts or illustrations of these concepts."

The concept of deformation, belonging in one form or another to the fields of geology, cartography, meteorology, mathematics (deformation theory) and visual arts, besides those already engaged and probably a few others, stands in an uneasy relation with our civilisational preference for the form (whose obvious Aristotelian sources won't be a concern).

Deformation, or deformity, to be exacter, is to be avoided and is only neutral in scientific descriptions. Deformation is marked and marred by a disfiguring and a degradation, a debasement of a form, a downturn from the self-evidently higher realm of formality and formation (the obvious Biblical sources of which valuation, a sanctity of creation, including Christian devaluation of the physical form to be transcended into a more unalterable one, also do not affirm deformation, except in the practice of pity for the deformed).

Yet, human cognition hinges on deformation (the sciences tell us). Without the reduction and multi-step transformation of sensual stimuli, also conceivable as translation, conscious participation in the world would be impossible. Similarly, the emergence of the world, geological formation, would not have occurred if its previous states hadn't been deformed.

These – and their parallels in other domains – can hardly be viewed as subtle interventions. The extent to which sensual stimuli are deformed to be processable by consciousness is likely to remain eternally unknown, while reconstructions of the Earth's distant past draw maps of an unrecognisable planet, except in its general contour. Deformation can be 'diagnosed' as such only to the extent that a deformed (source) form remains recognisable.

The superficial look of Polish to English (machine) translation brings to the fore the all-too-rarely identified fact that our operations are embedded in semi-transparent environments making asserting resemblance possible: our fairly expert, if unmindful usership of language, memory and perception (and the Internet) allows us to claim an *odstępstwo* from a prototypical shape, *jaki często nadal niestety bywa desygnowany jako "normalny"*.

Without those competences understanding of the previous sentence is hindered to the point of dissolution.

The foregrounding of the fact also calls for a foregoing of the so-called 'background knowledge'. A foregoing which is completely impossible (impossible to complete) as it is gradual. The repetitious action parallels the working of deformation, which if completed, would make it impossible to recognise a form that has undergone one.

Roughly without the rough 'background knowledge' we begin to recognise the subtlety of natural operations: in the utter practicality of language, requiring no skills of grammarians, no theory, to be expertly deployed; in changes to the Earth's contours so slow that are perceptible to the human only in periods of exceptional dramatism (the current era, for instance); in translations of messages of light in the eye so delicate it took several thousand years for the post-Neolithic human to construct instruments sophisticated enough to evidence the process.

Manifestations of (naturally ineluctable) deformation here performed also inform us with an awareness of mediation, without which empowered userships of contemporary civilisation is endangered: unless we are made aware of mediated nature of our participation in the environment, both the so-called natural and man-made, accepting it was the patriarchal civilisation emerging from the shores of the Mediterranean that led us to formulating our relationship with the world as its suzerain 'movers and shapers', we run the danger of

becoming slaves to designers of our current means and devices of shaping our relationships with other human and non-human forms. This requires formal education.

We find ourselves in a paradoxical situation revealed by recognition of deformation. We are, simultaneously, demanded to forget and to learn. To undo our background knowledge to regain the sensation of limits necessary to our perception and predication of deformation. And to introduce formal education of mediation – media education – in order for the forgetting and foregoing can begin.

And begin it must, the necessity is environmental, the stake is human species' survival. Here lies the healing promise of deformation: vacuity of existing forms of cooperation becomes more apparent daily. To abolish them entirely would mean making mere human treading of the Earth impossible. Anyway, they are already undergoing various, lawinowe deformations.

Many perceive the process according to the traditional meaning of deformation: the world is going to the dogs, we have to do everything we can to preserve – the preservation being more of a nostalgic reconstruction – the forms of the past. Even the most recent past. It is a natural reaction to the drastic, over-encompassing changes of the current time.

Looking onto and into deformation offers us a subtler, conceptual and practical, naturally human-made means of reconnection. One world has been falling apart for another one to be emerging – the evolutionary limitation of deformation, its gradualness and relative imperceptibility when coupled with a conscious, species-broad effort at understanding frameworks which make possible recognition of one thing's departure from its previous incarnations, or representations, equip us with

an active manner of acceptance of the current unmaking of received forms, of trust in the changing nature of the world we inhabit, which requires from us a concerted learning effort in forgetting former forms (still in operation, in their desperate defense against going into disuse) also by way of educating ourselves in their species of operation.

For when the deformation is completed, we won't be able to recognise the world it will engender. Now, we are perfectly capable, without a perfect knowledge or understanding of the whole scope of on-ongoing deformation, part of the deformation being an imperfect abandonment of certain forms of the knowledge and understanding, to steer – intuitively and intellectually – these processes of deformation so as to avoid our self-willed annihilation.

Use your free on-line translation service for a Polish version:

"Skorzystaj z darmowego tłumaczenia on-line dla polskiej wersji": słowami Google Translate.

Skorzystaj z bezpłatnej usługi tłumaczenia on-line dla wersji polskiej:

Kto jest autorem tego błędu?

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