

## SUMMARY

Stanisław Vincenz – a writer, man of learning, mentor, and lover of words – is remembered by his readers, family and friends as someone for whom speaking and writing were basic forms of activity. The phenomenon of Vincenz as *homo loquens* rested on both modes of communication: direct contact and the printed word, that went alongside in his life and work, harmonizing and mutually empowering. Thus speech could explain and elucidate his writing, while his writing ensured the preservation of oral culture, based on dialog and direct contact with the interlocutor.

Vincenz was initiated in the culture of the spoken word in childhood by his grandfather, Stanisław Przybyłowski, his father, and his Hutsul nanny Połahna. They instilled in him the cult of genuine conversation, and a marked penchant for meeting people in their own environment and the realities of their native culture – viz. the Hutsul neighbours. His art of verbal expression based on the living word was further honed in the *salons* of Vienna and Lvov, with their specific elitism and rules of social etiquette. His love of social life was manifest in the hospitality he offered in both his homes, at Słoboda Rungurska and Bystrec, to his numerous visitors, for whom he often acted as guide on expeditions he organized to Pokucie and the Hutsul land; this is frequently attested in memoirs. In his years of post-war exile a refurbished peasant cottage in La Combe-de-Lancey in the French Alps became an important meeting-place for family members, and for artists, writers and other intellectuals.

Speaking in public also came to him as the most natural form of expression. By the 1920s Vincenz was giving talks on Hutsul culture at meetings of the Pan-idealists centred around Rudolf Maria Holzapfel. He lectured in Hungary, where he spent the war, and later in exile spoke on current political events, lectured on cultural and literary subjects; he also appeared in radio programmes.

Vincenz's pro-social stance, together with his impressive linguistic skills, meant that he enjoyed acting as interpreter and mediator between representatives of different nations, cultures and political systems – his *Dialogi z Sowietami* (Dialogues with the Soviets) provides a record of such encounters. Apart from his personal experience based on contact with authentic bearers of oral folk culture, the deep humanistic values of the living word were further confirmed by his study of the ancient philosophers and the epics of Homer. The Greek *symposion* proved to be a cultural model for Vincenz in his life and creativity, combining the legacy of antiquity, the world of the Hutsuls, and the joyful celebration of friendship and friendly discourse.

The best portrayal of Vincenz as *homo loquens* is provided by *Rozmowy ze Stanisławem Vincenzem* (Conversations with Stanisław Vincenz), based on the diary kept in

1951–1971 by his second wife, Irena Vincenz, who systematically recorded her husband's various forms of utterance, initially "for family use" (Andrzej Vincenz, their son, was a Slavist). Irena noted Vincenz's enunciations, thoughts, opinions, responses in spontaneous and pre-arranged dialogues. Sometimes she applied an interview technique, chronicling scenes of family life and references to public events. The conversations cover a vast range of topics: from memories of childhood and family history, to contemporary, especially political, issues. The diarist also registers Vincenz's views on literature and culture. A constantly recurring theme is that of his own writing, in the form of self-commentary, and detailed explications regarding both his published works and work in progress.

In Vincenz's oeuvre, chiefly in the four-volume *Na wysokiej połoninie* (English translation *On the High Uplands. Sagas, songs, tales and legends of the Carpathians* by Henry Charles Stevens, London & New York 1955), the oral stance and speech models characteristic of spontaneous oral expression, form the basis of his chosen idiolect. The living word and oral culture are thus both an autonomous theme and a form of artistic expression. Vincenz presents his protagonists first and foremost as speaking characters, who in their linguistic communication often use traditional forms of transmission, expressing various aspects of the folk worldview. In constructing conversational scenes, discussions and other forms of speech crucial to the compositional framework, he endeavours to preserve individual features of voice colour, timbre, speech rhythm, manner of articulation, specifying moreover to whom and for what purpose a particular response is addressed.

Vincenz's learned introductions and narratorial commentaries permit us to localize these dialogues in the broader context of a primeval culture based on orality, in which all texts of social import were committed to human memory, constantly rememorized and repeated both in daily and more festive (ritualized) communication situations.

Of particular interest in the tetralogy are the varied forms of formulaic utterance current at social interaction: greetings, farewells, invitations (e.g. to a wedding), good wishes, expressions of tribute and respect – acts of social etiquette that are an essential component of social culture, exemplified in the customs and comportment of such heroes as Fok, a figure universally held in high esteem. They played an essential role in the local community, making life more secure and foreseeable, and also enabled an individual to escape from solitude and establish a bond with the environment.

Vincenz attached great importance to communication events of a polemical nature. The title of second volume of the tetralogy, *Zwada*, clearly suggests confrontational exchanges and discussions that duly bring to light controversial issues, ultimately giving rise to conflict. These address the complex histories of Hutsul families involved in the "brigand tradition" of the Eastern Carpathians; and such questions as the interpretation of ancient beliefs, generational shifts in attitude, and divergent opinions regarding "new" behavioural patterns, and institutions connected with urban civilization.

For heroes who have left a secure world anchored in mythical thought structures only to find themselves on the threshold of "new times", the most burning issue is the elementary opposition between nature and culture; its dramatic conclusion is the Hutsul lumberjacks' severance of the brotherly bond with nature.

The linguistic structure of the tetralogy displays a variety of distinct genre models characteristic of folklore. The heroes use folk saws, proverbs and riddles, magic formulae, spells and charms; they recite prayers, sing carols, and re-tell the traditional animal fables, magic tales, legends, mythological sagas, beliefs, historic and local memorats, as well as folk anecdotes, for handing on to posterity.

Vincenz does not simply provide information about utterances that are characteristic of individual genres, nor does he present them as „folkloric quotations”. He aims, instead, to illustrate and explain how these diverse genres functioned in the living tradition, point to their mutual relations and their role in the broader cultural scheme, and from an anthropological angle. Quite apart from its wealth of ethnographic detail, the picture of the old Hutsul land evoked in Vincenz’s epic work was intended as a model of the rapport between man and his natural environment. Based on dialogue, and reverence for all things living, it offered an alternative to contemporary civilization, where the fetishization of technological progress has led to man’s no longer feeling that he is part of nature, but perceives nature as his enemy.