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*Deep Pain of Existence, “Always Winter but Never Christmas”  
– the Language of Emotions in the State of Depression.  
Psycholinguistic Analysis of Selected Works  
by Edward Stachura<sup>1</sup>*

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Dogłębny ból istnienia, „zawsze zima i nigdy Gwiazdki” – język emocji w obliczu depresji.  
Psycholingwistyczna analiza wybranych dzieł Edwarda Stachury

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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to the issue of different aspects of depression. The introduction presents a relationship between depression and overwhelming pain of existence, sadness, and mental suffering. It was shown how depression is perceived by researchers and what are its most typical symptoms. Then, the problem of suicide was also discussed as the significant issue related to depression. It was described how people with suicidal tendencies perceive time and what emotions accompany them. These considerations constitute the background against which the profile of Edward Stachura was presented as a poet and prose writer who inscribed in the climate of depression. Further parts of the work were psycholinguistic analysis of Stachura’s literary texts, whose life was marked by a depressive illness and ended in a tragic way. The purpose of these considerations was to show the language of emotions in a state of emotional crisis emerging from the poet’s works. A great sense of the poet’s loneliness, problems in relations with others, difficult relationships with loved ones, feelings of exclusion, and mismatching with reality were described. The key condition often expressed

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the author’s master’s thesis written in the Department of Lexicology and Pragmatics (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin) under the supervision of dr hab. Dorota Filar (Subject: *A Linguistic and Cultural Picture of Loneliness in General Polish and in Selected Texts by Edward Stachura*).

in the poet's works is existential emptiness with all its nuances. The artist's language is extremely original, rich in terms of means of expression.

**Keywords:** depression; language; suicide; Stachura; loneliness

## INTRODUCTION

Both depressive illness and language are anthropocentric categories because they are inseparably connected with an existence of a human being. The problem of depression has been the object of deep interest of psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, as well as regular people (both those suffering from depression and their relatives) and also everyone who had contact with an individual affected by this kind of issues. In my opinion, there is still plenty of space for further interdisciplinary analysis and research in this field.

The purpose of this work is to try to show different aspects of depression, with particular emphasis on the language of emotions. At first, I would like to emphasize that the study of expression of feelings, in creativity, descriptions about internal experiences and in memoirs, could be an extremely valuable source of knowledge. Natural language, which we use in various forms of everyday communication, contains a certain narrative power. Narrative has always been important to mankind. Especially the stories that we create about ourselves could have a great influence over reality: "Their value lies in particular in the fact that they allow to reconstruct or read invaluable personalized messages about human life, his emotions, experiences, way of perceiving himself and the world" (Gawda, Kosacka, 2017). As Barbara Gawda writes: "This extraordinary value of narrative is due to the fact that narrative is a form of discourse having a specific structure and revealing meanings" (Gawda, 2007, p. 95). The narrative structure is a semantic structure. Paul Ricoeur emphasized the semantic value of the structure of the narrative. He writes that "the text not only says something, but also talks about something" (Ricoeur, 1989, p. 46). If we become familiar with the linguistic representation, for example, by means of a narrative, it can provide us with a lot of information about the situation experienced by a given person, as well as felt emotions and feelings (Gawda, 2010, p. 254). The example of the expression of feeling in depression is shown in the following quotation: "I'm so afraid about myself, that I will be alone about my mental state (...). How should I know what would happen? I know myself as much as I hear from your lips, as much as I calculate from black spots of my life..." (Kawalec, 2007).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> All literal quotes in this article are the author's own versions of the translation from Polish into English. "Tak się boję o siebie, że zostanę sam, o swój psychiczny stan (...). Skąd to wiedzieć mam, co to może się stać? Bo tyle siebie znam ile z ust twych usłyszę, ile obliczę sam z czarnych plam życiorysu..."

## OVERWHELMING EXISTENTIAL PAIN. SADNESS AND DEPRESSION

The term "depression" is understood as a "(...) set of experiences, including not only mood, but also physical, psychological and behavioral experiences that define a more harmful and serious condition that can be clinically diagnosed as depressive syndrome" (Hammen, 2004, p. 13).<sup>3</sup> Sometimes someone who has not experienced depression, tries to penetrate the world of a sick person and then most often makes a key mistake, imagining this disease as a common, commonly known sadness (Dietrich, Neumann, 2007, p. 10). Sadness is the main symptom of depression. Sadness in this disease is an intense feeling. It is an inseparable element of depression, appears unexpectedly in people's lives, often without any real cause. A person who suffers from depression wakes up in the morning and feels that he/she does not have the strength to get out of bed and go to work or school, and cannot wait for the day to end. Disruption of motivation takes a dimension from the state of passivity to withdrawal from their social roles (Carson, Butcher, Mineka, 2003, pp. 327–329). The person in depression feels overwhelmed with emptiness, burnout and meaninglessness of existence. Sadness defined as a basic emotion and typical for daily life is different than the feeling of sadness in depression. "Sadness accompanying depression is different. It can appear suddenly, for no apparent reason. It lasts long and is not susceptible to any external changes" (Chrzanowska, 2011, p. 23).

This kind of sadness makes a person unable to live a normal life because intensity of this emotion impairs people's functioning. Artur Cedro argues that "sometimes it is worth experiencing little sadness, because sadness makes you reflect on yourself" (Cedro, 2011, p. 26). He warns, however, that "one cannot grieve too long, because then sadness can destroy everyone and everything" (*ibid.*, p. 26). In depression the emotional control is also impaired. Affect or emotion regulation is a process involving many elements, such as initiating, modeling and continuing affective experiences, and cognitive operations on affects or emotions, but also in relation to behaviors associated with these processes (Doliński, Błaszczak, 2011). Regulation can take place at various levels, e.g. at the neurophysiological level or relating to metacognitive regulation based on emotion awareness. Emotion control is an element of emotional regulation (Gawda, 2018, p. 217). It is clear that people with depression have a serious difficulty regulating and controlling their emotions and affects. In addition, it is puzzling that a depressed person experiences a kind of "feeling of lack of feelings":

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<sup>3</sup> "(...) zespół doświadczeń, obejmujący nie tylko nastrój, ale także doświadczenia fizyczne, psychiczne, behawioralne, które określają bardziej szkodliwy i poważny stan, który może zostać klinicznie rozpoznany jako zespół depresyjny".

This “feeling of lack of feelings” prevents even depressed patients from feeling full grief and sadness. While a healthy person experiences deep sadness because of the death of a loved one, a person suffering from severe depression seems to be almost or even completely unaffected by such a fact. (Dietrich, Neumann, 2007, p. 10)

When people properly controlling emotions are capable of feeling compassion, their way of expressing feelings is appropriate and flexible (Górska, 2006). But the special kind of atmosphere is created by depression, which is often known to be the disease of our age. Myra Chave-Jones, a well-known American psychologist, writes that depression creates a sunless, covered in snow, landscape which children from the stories of Narnia by Lewis would describe as: “always winter, but never Christmas” (Chave-Jones, 1993, p. 5). The author also explains what exactly this unpleasant condition is, which is increasingly affecting people regardless of age, origin or economic status:

Depression is as ordinary as a common cold. It can be so gentle that it does not even deserve this name – it can only be a very temporary bad mood which is gone the next morning without a trace. On the other level it can be an indefinite feeling of persistent misery that can make our life colorless. It may also, in its extreme form, almost completely paralyze our ability to act, prevent us from performing the simplest activities and even lead to the loss of interest in life as such. (*ibid.*)<sup>4</sup>

People suffering from depression feel helpless, alienated, unloved, unnecessary and worthless. They have no strength for a normal existence, they forget about their duties and obligations towards children, parents or employers. They suffer both body and spirit. In depression, there is often a decrease in interest in various spheres of life, and in extreme cases even a lack of interest in satisfying primary biological needs, such as hunger or thirst (Czabała, 2000, p. 593). A person with depression perceives himself as an individual unable to continue living, not deserving of them, responsible for the painful and unjustified suffering of others (Jervis, 2005, p. 33).

## EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS IN DEPRESSION

It may be interesting to look at the lexis of a person suffering from depression. As Michael Yapko writes, tens of millions of people experience the pain of existence every day (Yapko, 2002, p. 17). The clinical psychologist, the undis-

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<sup>4</sup> “Depresja jest równie powszechna jak zwykle przeziębienie. Może być tak łagodna, że nawet nie zasługuje na tę nazwę – bywa tylko przelotnym nastrojem, po którym nazajutrz nie pozostaje ani śladu. Może to być nieokreślone uczucie upoczywogo przygnębienia, które sprawia, że nasze życie staje się bezbarwne. Może też w swej skrajnej postaci niemal zupełnie sparaliżować zdolność do działania, uniemożliwiając nam wykonywanie najprostszych czynności i prowadząc nawet do utraty zainteresowania życiem jako takim”.

puted authority in the field of depression, cites the following frequently repeated statements of the sick: "A thief lurking in the dark who robs me of my life"; "Invisible, treacherous, monster"; "Choking loop of pain"; "The curse of the never-ending agony".<sup>5</sup>

A human lexicon is a concept that in some way refers to a specific set of words most often appearing in a specific human mind. I think it is possible to see what kind of words a person uses most often. The description of these words, i.e. description of one's personal lexicon, in turn, may allow conclusions about his personality, intelligence, character, disposition, dreams, desires, aspirations, as well as fears, phobias and prejudices. If someone uses more often specific words referring to meanings that we can learn, experience with the senses, it means that he is closer to clear, simple and factual thinking. Such a man is rather a realist and rationalist. People who formulate statements with abstract vocabulary, when defining states, emotions, feelings, or existential problems, are usually more spiritual, complex, sensitive, able to make some philosophical generalizations. It seems that in many people, despite individual differences, a lot of common points could be found in the depressive language they use. I suppose that if the visibly afflicted were asked to write on a piece of paper their associations and thoughts that swirl in their tormented minds, there could be keywords and reflections similar to those presented by Yapko: pain, despair, misery, half-sleepy dull indifference, "do not say anything to me", life of an idiot story, screaming and meaningless, heroism of everyday life, horror, uncertainty, fear, anxiety, desire for eternal sleep, nirvana, petrified with pain, torment, death entering the brain. These are examples of words related to the depression lexicon or sadness lexis.

However, it turns out that sadness can sometimes be constructive, even brilliant. If you are aware of the disease, you achieve superiority over it. As Pascal writes: Man's dignity is great in the fact that he knows his misery. There is a reason why we associate this idea with the novels by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, a master of psychological prose, who, for example, in one of his novels (*Idiot*), argued that the man who knows he is an idiot is not really an idiot anymore. This is a timeless truth that reveals the power of self-awareness and self-reflection.

#### THE INSIDIOUSNESS OF DEPRESSION AND ITS "LETHAL CONNOTATIONS" – THE PROBLEM OF SUICIDE

Suicide is associated with depressive state. It can be seen as a challenge to death as well as a "rebellion against life; as a struggle with death that must come anyway, or with a life that must end one day; as taking something away from life

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<sup>5</sup> "Czający się w ciemnościach złodziej, który okrada mnie z życia"; "Niewidzialny, zdradziecki, potwór"; "Dławiąca pętla bólu"; "Przekleństwo nie kończącej się agonii".

and giving death the chosen meaning” (Kijaczko 2003, p. 120). Suicide is commonly understood as the result of losing the will to live (Czapiński, 1994). There is also an explanation of this phenomenon in terms of searching for a path of one’s own existence, an attempt to find the meaning of life and the sense of the world in general (Frankl, 1971). However, according to some researchers, the cause of a suicidal act may very well be trivial, banal, completely disproportionate to this act (Susułowska, Sztompka, 1968). Sometimes a simple stressful situation can cause suicidal thoughts. Such people could be assessed as “having the suicidal ideation” (Jarosz, 1997). The specific relationship between suicide and depression has been emphasized by Yapko (2002). His reflections on the problem of depression begin with recalling the story of a promising psychiatrist who committed suicide, despite the fact that he graduated from a medical school at the age of twenty-two, and was an outstanding authority in the field of behavioral therapy and a specialist in forensic medicine. It turned out that the reason for suicide was an emotional crisis caused by the break-up of his marriage. The man, despite the professional, unquestionable knowledge of the emotional needs of man, necessary for maintaining mental health, could not cope alone with the life problem he had to face. Feeling extremely helpless, he turned to his colleagues for professional help. Because of his scientific position, these requests seemed absurd to them. Being unable to find the solution, he shot himself. The author of 91 strategies for breaking the mechanisms leading to depression emphasizes (*ibid.*, p. 18) that it is important that this tragic case is only one of about 30,000 suicides committed in that year (*ibid.*). Undoubted suicide, called the “ultimate solution to transient problems”, is the most dramatic threat in depression. These situations always make us reflect. Is the act of suicide always an act preceded by full decision-making awareness and a comprehensive choice? Brunon Hołyst writes that, based on the research on attempted suicide, it can be assumed that “in many cases the decision on committing suicide is essentially a choice between a situation that the individual cannot cope with, and a situation in which no efforts will have to be made (...) it is therefore – with the rights of paradox – a decision to avoid decisions and choices (...)” (Hołyst, 1983, p. 9).

Another question connected with the problem of suicide is related to the aspect of personality tendencies initiating autodestructive thoughts. Freud, Adler, Zilboorg, Menninger, Levis, Brill are the authors “promoting the concept of the death instinct as immutably embedded in the personality of every human individual” (Gawda, 2003; Hołyst, 1983, p. 95). It is also worth emphasizing that according to researchers, there are personalities who are, metaphorically speaking, marked by death, directed towards it, focused on self-destruction, containing the element of suicide (Gawda, 1999).

As Gawda (1999, pp. 93–101) writes: “In such a personality lies the original source and cause of suicidal thoughts or acts. It is like a personality that generates

suicide, i.e. one in which self-destructive thoughts, desires or visions of self-destruction are deeply rooted. Freud would say that this personality is characterized by a strong death instinct /Thanatos/" (*ibid.*).<sup>6</sup> Another characteristics of this type of personality is specific time perception. Charles Neuringer and Marvin Levenson stated that people with suicidal tendencies perceive time "slower", it seems to last longer (Neuringer, Levenson, 1972, pp. 181–186). According to Gawda:

For a man who wants to take his own life, life is not the highest value. Therefore, there are no temporal transgressions. A characteristic phenomenon that characterizes most suicides is the so-called narrow time perspective. There is no vision of the future, it practically does not exist, the present is usually very painful and associated with the past. Only elements are chosen from the past that are arguments for the painful present. There is no perspective either forward or backward. Time seems to stop. Someone lives as if they have already died, in apathetic indifference. As if the soul has long left the world in which the body moves like a marionette. (Gawda, 2000, pp. 139–142)<sup>7</sup>

To a man who attempts suicide, death seems to be deliverance from the current state of affairs. In his sense, death is, therefore, something that will end the suffering (Bruner, 1991). It is also worth adding that when a person with suicidal thoughts makes the final decision about life and death, he suddenly becomes completely muted: "(...) when the ambivalence is defeated, the suicide is usually calm and composed, and his behavior does not indicate that he intends to take his own life" (Hillman, 1996). It is like on the other side (*ibid.*). Peter Kramer, professor of clinical psychiatry at Brown University, argues that depression should be considered a disease in the full sense of the word (Kramer, 2007). He writes:

We associate depression with a heroic attitude, without which we would be poorer as a human race. We are attracted to features that can accompany her – such as alienation; we do not always see the effects of the disease in them. We seem to value depression in our own way. Among other things, this is my conviction that depression (...) is not exactly a disease. (*ibid.*, p. 10)

The major portion of my article is concentrated on analysis of literary narratives or poems written by Edward Stachura. I would like to analyze the issue of vari-

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<sup>6</sup> "W takiej osobowości leży pierwotne źródło i przyczyna myśli czy aktów samobójczych. To jakby osobowość generująca samobójstwo, a więc taka, w której niezwykle silnie zakorzenione są myśli samodestrukcyjne, pragnienia czy wizje samounicestwienia. Freud powiedziałby, iż taką osobowość cechuje silny instynkt śmierci /Tanatos/".

<sup>7</sup> "Dla człowieka pragnącego odebrać sobie życie, życie nie jest najwyższą wartością. Dlatego też nie ma transgresji temporalnych. Charakterystycznym zjawiskiem cechującym większość samobójców jest tzw. wąska perspektywa czasowa. Nie ma wizji przyszłości, ona praktycznie nie istnieje, teraźniejszość najczęściej jest bardzo bolesna i skojarzona z przeszłością. Z przeszłości wybierane są jedynie elementy będące argumentami na rzecz bolesnej teraźniejszości. Nie ma perspektywy ani w przód, ani w tył. Czas jakby zatrzymał się. Ktoś żyje tak jakby już umarł, w apatycznym zobojeźnieniu. Jakby dusza już dawno opuściła świat, w którym ciało porusza się jak marionetka".

ous aspects of depression through exploration of the language emerging from his works. Stachura is an example of an outstanding poet, a novelist, an artist, whose life was marked by a severe mental illness and came to an end in a tragic way.

#### WHEN LIFE HURTS... THE TRAGIC FATE OF EDWARD STACHURA AND HIS LANGUAGE OF EMOTIONS IN THE FACE OF DEPRESSION

##### **An eternally young poet who “rewrote from the air”<sup>8</sup>**

Edward Stachura was a poet and lived as a poet because poetry meant his perception of the world and himself. The book *Everything Is Poetry*, published in 1975, contains a unique concept of “panpoetism”. The author assumes that poetry not only pervades everything, but everything is poetry and everyone is a poet (Pęczak, 2019). “Sted” (the nickname of Stachura) was a very popular poet, considered a “cursed” one, who takes the reader into the world of his metaphysical fears, questions about the sense of existence (Tyszkiewicz, 2019).

Dariusz Pachocki, the editor of Stachura’s diaries, remembers that: “Stachura had something which was extremely close to me, something that I could not specify at first. Later I realized that it was about the authenticity of this writing. Behind the literary creation there are specific experiences and real emotions” (Pachocki, 2012).<sup>9</sup>

If we had a supernatural opportunity to talk to Edward Stachura in one or another space, we would probably shyly ask him if he was serene and whether he found solace in the embrace of his beloved “apple branch”. However, storing the image of an “(...) eternal boy in a Douglas jacket, with a haversack and a guitar” (Stefańczyk),<sup>10</sup> infatuation with his apotheosis of life in every dimension, and sadness caused by the fact that the poet “rewriting from the air” (Rutkowski, 1984, p. 10) ended his life in the worst possible way, would make our attempts to penetrate his beautiful mind more emotional. “Sted” appears to us as someone who has traveled the vastness of the world, who was still wandering “taking shortcuts”. He wandered and often erred as if he could not identify with any place. When we recall the image of this one of the most outstanding Polish artists, we always see a young man characterized by “mild helplessness and delicate beauty”<sup>11</sup> (Stefańczyk). It is almost impossible to imagine him as an old man. Józef Koziół (1997, p. 235) writes that creators of culture are par-

<sup>8</sup> “Przepisujący z powietrza”.

<sup>9</sup> “Było u Stachury coś niesłychanie mi bliskiego, coś, czego na początku nie potrafiłem sprecyzować. Później pojąłem, że chodzi o autentyczność tego pisarstwa. Za literacką kreacją kryją się konkretne doświadczenia i prawdziwe emocje”.

<sup>10</sup> “(...) wiecznego chłopca w kurtce-douglasówce, z chlebakiem i gitarą”.

<sup>11</sup> “łagodną bezradnością i delikatną urodą”.

ticularly vulnerable to difficult experiences: "They are not made of marble and therefore fear, doubts, stress and mental breakdowns are inherent part of their lives". Sometimes these emotional difficulties are so deep that they end in the worst possible way.

In the story of Stachura we should also mention about his relations with loved ones. Certainly, he did not have good relations with his family, and he was particularly in conflict with his father. He often ran away from home, felt misunderstood, unacceptable and was perceived as a freak mainly due to his literary aspirations. These family misunderstandings undoubtedly significantly contributed to the depression of the poet. According to retrospective studies, people hospitalized for depression rated their parents as "more rejecting, controlling and displaying hostile reserve" than those in the control group (Crook, Raskin, Eliot, 1981). Very similar results were obtained in environmental studies with the participation of non-patients in which individuals, discouraged about the future, presented a negative picture of their parents (Blatt, Wein, Chevron, Quinlan, 1979; Holmes, Robins, 1987, 1988).

On July 14, 1979, Stachura wrote in his diary about suicidal thoughts: "How hard it is to take this one step. I have been getting up and talking to myself for several days: »If I had done it yesterday, I would not have had to bother«. If only it were obvious to me! But it still isn't completely (...)" (Stefańczyk).<sup>12</sup> On July 20, 1979, the author once again went to the "Drewnica" hospital for treatment, but on the second day, left the facility without the knowledge of the staff. On July 24, 1979 in his Warsaw apartment, at Rębkowska St., the poet realized the idea that had developed in his mind a few months earlier in Bednary. He overdosed on psychotropic drugs and tried to cut the veins with a knife. Finally, he took his life by hanging himself from a ceiling hook. On July 24, 1979, Stachura committed suicide while being in a state of depression and delusional psychosis. In depression with psychotic features, patients believe that they are such a bad person that they deserve punishment (Hammen 2004, p. 29). Psychotic depression appears to be quite stable during repetitive episodes (Coryell, Winkour, Shea, Maser, Endicott, Akiskal, 1994; Sands, Harrow, 1994). This means that if a person suffers from this type of depression, then the following episodes will most likely be characterized by psychotic symptoms.

In further sections of the article, we will look at the language of the poet's emotions in a depressed mood, clearly correlating with loneliness in this work.

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<sup>12</sup> "Sobota, 14 lipca: Jak ciężko jest dać ten jeden krok. Od paru dni wstaję i mówię sobie: »Gdybym to zrobił wczoraj, dzisiaj już nie musiałbym się męczyć«. Gdybyż to było dla mnie oczywiste! Ale ciągle do końca nie jest..."

## AN IMAGE OF LONELINESS IN EDWARD STACHURA'S TEXTS

**No people as no life manifestations.****Thinking about death as one of the symptoms of depression and melancholy**

In Stachura's works it can be seen that loneliness is correlated with pain, mental suffering, longing, melancholy, and thus with some depressive symptoms. The literary scene in which the hero finds himself alone, experiencing a deep emptiness and silence, is revealed in the description of the dream of Janek Pradera, the character from *Siekierzada*<sup>13</sup> (the most known and representative topic of Stachura's work):

Everything was white. Not white-yellow or white-orange, or white-gray, but white-white. So white that it was all covered with glowing mist. And it was quiet. No wind, nothing. Unspeakably. As if not even dead. More. Something like eternal silence. Even the sand I walked on, bogged down, didn't hiss like a snake. (...) I went to the second floor. The same. Nothing. Empty (...). (Stachura, 2000, pp. 73–75)

Here, in a sleepy dream, Janek visits a place where there is no one (as it seems only apparently): "The same. Nothing. Empty". There is only *eternal silence*. In the novel, the lack of traces of anyone's presence is imagined by using lexemes such as *white*, *silence*, *noiselessness*, *emptiness*. They can be included in a specific semantic field. They are obviously associated with the senses, sensual perception. The word "white" is opposed to black, typical of snow or milk. White can be experienced with the sense of sight. Silence (and also noiselessness) is an abstract associated with the sense of hearing. When even "steps were noiseless" and "everything was noiseless", there are also no incentives for auditory reception. The emptiness connotes: nothingness, sleep, apathy, complete lack of feeling any sensations, emotions; a kind of catatonia, hence typical states in people suffering from depression. The above concepts and their definitions also raise an interesting observation. Namely, even if we associate the lexemes with the sphere of senses, it is easy to see that in this approach the typical "sensual perception" is disputed and questioned.

Then we may consider Stachura's creative use of the semantic value of the word "whiteness" and "silence". In the above-mentioned excerpt from *Siekierze-*

<sup>13</sup> "Wszystko białe było. Nie biało-żółte lub biało-pomarańczowe, lub biało-szare, ale biało-białe. Tak białe, że aż zasnuła jarzącą się mgiełką wszystko było. I cicho było. Ni wiatru, nic nic. Niewymownie. Jakby już nawet nie śmiertelnie. Bardziej. Coś takiego jak wieczna cisza. Nawet piasek, po którym szedłem, grzęznąąc, nie syczał niby wąż. (...). Wszedłem na drugie piętro. To samo. Czyli nic. Pusto (...)"

*zada*, we read about Pradera's dreaming which is "absolute white": "Everything was white. Not white-yellow or white-orange, or white-gray, but white-white. So white that it was all covered with glowing mist" (*ibid.*, p. 73). This whiteness undeniably symbolizes the conviction of the inevitability of death, there is some obsessive thought about her, the feeling that it will come soon, and everything will be covered with *white* and *white whiteness*. The hero's overwhelming feeling of the constant presence of death is also manifested in the linguistic and cultural exploitation of the meaning of silence. In the sense of lexeme, we encounter semantic features clearly motivating such associations: "the lack of any sounds" is "the lack of any manifestations of life". This conceptualization of silence is easily perceptible in the sphere of lexical connotations (cf. e.g. the words: "graveyard", "grave", "dead silence", "quietly as if everything was frozen"). What is also of importance are combinations of silence with something dangerous, e.g. "ominous silence", "silence before storm", which can hide some secret, an unexplained puzzle.

In the analyzed fragment by Stachura, silence reaches its apogee, it is more than death or death silence, it is eternal silence. In Stachura's songs the feeling of constant presence of death and the influence it has on the hero is very clear. As it was said before, death in depression is a serious threat:

Of all the consequences of the feeling of weakness and hopelessness in a person, suicide is, of course, the most serious. Although many experiences that are unrelated to depression can contribute to suicide, in general this disorder, and especially the lack of hope that is its symptom, often leads to compromising one's own life. (Hammen, 2004, p. 54)

#### LONELINESS AS A LACK OF A LOVED ONE, CAUSING A SENSE OF WORTHLESSNESS, ALIENATION, SADNESS

Dictionary definitions show that loneliness is primarily a lack of closeness to another person, living in isolation, without family and friends. The hero of the poet's works feels lonely just when there is no beloved, important and needed person, someone who would look after him, watch over him:

(...) and nobody has been around me for so long  
 For so long  
 nobody cared about me  
 am I a tin or a tiger  
 that nobody has looked after for so long.  
 (*Rose [Róża]*, Stachura, 1984, p. 55)<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "(...) a mnie to już nikt dawno tak bardzo / dawno tak bardzo już nikt / nie pielęgnował / czy ja jestem blacha albo tygrys / że mnie to już nikt dawno tak bardzo / nie pielęgnował".

The lexeme “looked after” leads us to associate this word with illness, dependence, infirmity (being sick, a child, an old man), i.e. with the situation of a man who needs to be taken care of, or even maintained. The narrator in the poem is the title Rose. Her creation may remind us of the famous (in Stachura’s language) Rose – a character from the novel *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. The beloved of the title hero demanded constant help from him, because it was a living being, endowed with the human element. If the title heroine of the poem is also included into this category in a symbolic sense, then we can conclude that the personified Rose is not as hard as a sheet of metal and as predatory as a tiger, but weak, delicate, and fragile. So, here we have a denial of its reification. It emphasizes here the aspect of humanity. Man cannot help himself because he lacks self-sufficiency.

#### REASONS FOR THE LACK OF A LOVED ONE – ABANDONMENT BY PEOPLE

As the most important reason for the lack of a loved one, the poet indicates the abandonment of people. In the texts by Stachura, the most meaningful “voice in the matter of loneliness” is the poem *I Am Nobody’s* [*Jestem niczyj*]:

(...) Nobody owns me. is here.  
 Nobody owns me.  
 Nobody owns me.  
 I’m nobody’s.  
 I’m nobody’s.  
 I’m nobody’s. (Stachura, 1984, p. 222)<sup>15</sup>

This very personal poem is a desperate testimony to the pain of existence, caused by the lack of loved ones who had left. As a result of various circumstances, we do not know exactly whether the lack of close people is due to their deaths, or one’s personal decision on leaving another person. “Nobody owns me (...) I’m nobody’s” – this phrase confirms one of the reasons for loneliness mentioned earlier, which stems from the fact that nobody needs us, that “nobody owns us”. The despair of this “nobody’s”, therefore, results from the fact that he has no one in possession, and that he does not belong to anyone, either as a thing or an object. In the general Polish language there is no language testimony that the word “nobody’s” (Polish: *niczyj*) is used in the context of man, it usually refers to objects, inanimate entities. The tragedy of the human individual emerging from the work seems to be very great and painful.

<sup>15</sup> “(...) Nikt mnie nie ma. / Nikt mnie nie ma. / Nie ma mnie nikt. / Jestem niczyj. / Jestem niczyj. / Jestem niczyj”.

The fact that the hero was forgotten by loved ones is described in the song *Birthday*:

Today is my birthday  
 which I celebrate without my family  
 Far away, high, among the wilderness  
 In the room on the hangar tower for gliders.  
 I feel quite alright here  
 I play the harmonica (...)  
 (Stachura, 1984, p. 247)<sup>16</sup>

In this poem the subject clearly regrets and suffers because he celebrates his birthday alone, without his family, i.e. without people closest to him. In turn, the main character of *Siekierezada* experiences despair, because his beloved woman is not close to him:

How many times on such winter white nights away from my wonderful Apple Branch, driven from it by eternal and always unexpected relapses of my illness, how many times I wanted to yell at our torn, excruciating fate, Apple Branch, you there, I here, here, here, I there, and I put my fist in my mouth, and I bit my fingers not to howl. (Stachura, 2000, p. 130)<sup>17</sup>

He is overwhelmed with a great longing and he feels a strong lack of closeness to this most important person in his life. It is worth mentioning that Stachura, referring to the term "white nights", makes allusion to Dostoyevsky's novel under the same title, which is a study of loneliness.

#### LONELINESS AS A LACK OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY, INTENSIFYING THE EXPERIENCE OF AN EMOTIONAL CRISIS

Linking loneliness with the lack of a person who had a similar mentality to ours and who similarly "would feel the world" appears in the fragment of the poem *I Join You [Przystępuję do ciebie]*: "I was left alone in this height / I was left alone in this latitude" (Stachura, 1984, p. 129).<sup>18</sup> The hero of the poem outlines his complicated situation. Like the characters of Byron, Shakespeare, Mickiewicz, Baudelaire and many other artists, he feels an individualist, romantic. He underlines his separateness, extraordinariness and uniqueness. Thanks to his artistic

<sup>16</sup> "Dzisiaj są moje urodziny / które obchodzę bez rodziny / Daleko, wysoko, wśród manowców / W pokoiku na wieży hangaru dla szybowców. / Zupełnie tu nieźle jest mi / Organki mi służą do gry (...)"

<sup>17</sup> "Ile razy w takie zimowe białe noce z dala od mojej Gałązki Jabłoni cudownej, wypędzony od niej wiecznymi i zawsze niespodziewanymi nawrotami mojej choroby, ile razy chciałem zawyć nad naszym rozdartym, rozdzierającym losem, Gałązko Jabłoni, ty tam, ja tu, tu tu, ja tam, i wkładałem pięść w usta, i gryzłem palce, żeby nie wyć".

<sup>18</sup> "Zostałem sam w tej wysokości / zostałem sam w tej szerokości".

soul, spirituality, and sensitivity, he is different than the rest of people. His vague feeling of longing, combined with an unspecified fear (in Polish: *jaskółczy niepokój*) is the essence of the mental state: uncertainty, hesitation, internal tear, are one of numerous features typical of Shakespeare's Hamlet. Despite his uniqueness, he desperately wants contact with other people. Due to various reasons, he found himself completely not only figuratively, but literally.

It is possible, however, that this is not primarily about exclusion in the literal sense, but about the perception of a situation in which there are no people among us who could sympathize with us, understand us and accept us. It is no longer just a pure, emotionless description of the state of affairs. A great desire to see a twin soul lurks here. The subject is looking for a man of flesh and blood who experiences similar anguish.

To sum up, if we delve into Stachura's creativity, it is easy to feel in his works the atmosphere of nostalgia, melancholy, mental pain, spiritual suffering, and inability to accept reality. All this provokes a certain reflex (of both critics and ordinary "Sted" readers) of automatically associating the poet with mental illness and also with great artistry. Undoubtedly, severe depression dominated the sphere of his feelings and motivations. Tragic death scares, but the significance of his works sometimes seems to express some hope found in the next day.

## CONCLUSIONS

The subject of this article was the language of emotions in depression. I intended to consider this aspect at various levels. In my psychological and literary reflections, I wanted to show how important it is to track and analyze the language (both spoken and written) of a person suffering from depression. The language of suffering people can allow us to describe the world (often full of black thoughts, horror, aura of hopelessness and burnout) and become a real testimony of their existential pain. By studying some of Edward Stachura's works, one can understand a lot about mental disorders. Undoubtedly, he is an artist for whom life was poetry, but the huge, existential pain made him leave. The states described in his works, such as loneliness, nostalgia, melancholy, a sense of alienation or nervous breakdown, turned out to be destructive forces for him. However, when describing the tragic circumstances of his departure, I wanted to emphasize that you must trust that the poet "reconciled with the world", and that his soul is no longer lonely until his death. My goal was also to convey the intuitive thought that Stachura's literary achievements are (in general sense) really optimistic and giving hope even to the modern reader.

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## STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł poświęcono zagadnieniu różnych aspektów depresji. Opisano związki między depresją a przytłaczającym bólem egzystencji i smutkiem oraz powiązania smutku z cierpieniem psychicznym. Wskazano, w jaki sposób ujmowana jest depresja przez badaczy oraz jakie są jej najczęstsze objawy. Ponadto nawiązano do problematyki samobójstwa, która stanowi istotny objaw zaburzeń depresyjnych, oraz podjęto próbę odpowiedzi na pytania, w jaki sposób osoby z tendencjami samobójczymi postrzegają czas i jakie emocje im towarzyszą. Rozważania te stanowią tło, na którym zaprezentowano sylwetkę Edwarda Stachury jako poety i prozaika wpisującego się swoimi utworami w klimat depresji. Istotą artykułu jest koncentracja na psycholingwistycznej analizie tekstów literackich Stachury, którego życie naznaczone było chorobą depresyjną i zakończyło się tragicznie. Rozważania miały na celu pokazanie, jaki obraz języka emocji w stanie psychicznego kryzysu wyłania się z dzieł artysty. Opisano ogromne poczucie samotności poety, problemy w relacjach z innymi, trudne związki z osobami bliskimi, poczucie odosobnienia, niedopasowania do rzeczywistości. Kluczowym stanem często wyrażanym w dziełach poety jest pustka egzystencjalna ze wszelkimi jej niuansami. Język artysty jest niezwykle oryginalny i bogaty pod względem środków wyrazu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** depresja; język; samobójstwo; Stachura; samotność