

DOI: 10.17516/1997-1370-0649
УДК 130.3

Journey as a Philosophical Project

Yulia V. Sineokaya*

*Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences
Moscow, Russian Federation*

Received 10.04.2020, received in revised form 27.07.2020, accepted 10.08.2020

Abstract. Based on literary and philosophical texts describing journeys of Xavier de Maistre, Albert Camus, Hermann Hesse, Joseph Brodsky, etc. in their rooms, the author discusses the entelechy of journey as an experience of self-identification, the archetype of journey as a sacred return to oneself that is infinitely repeated regardless of time... A journey is viewed as an experience of a wanderer's personal freedom, movement of culture in space: memory, myth. A journey acts as a kind of pilgrimage: a person goes on a journey in search of those moments when he can go beyond his personality, realize his potential, thus transforming himself into a different, more true and free self-consciousness. The article is devoted to a mental journey presented as an experiment in the acquisition of the meaning of life by a person, as an experience of philosophical self-reflection and gaining identity with oneself. An existential journey through the inner intelligible space is both an experience of personifying history and an attempt at self-identification.

Keywords: existentialism, self-identification, archetypes of internal space, entelechy, travel round my room.

Research area: philosophy.

Citation: Sineokaya, Yu.V. (2020). Journey as a philosophical project. *J. Sib. Fed. Univ. Humanit. Soc. Sci.*, 13(8), 1384–1397. DOI: 10.17516/1997-1370-0649.

*Some travel because they are looking
for themselves others –
because they want to lose themselves!*
(Nietzsche. Letter
to Fraulein Simone, February 6, 1884)

The idea to write an article about the experience of a mental journey through the confined space of a room was formed several years ago under the impression of the essay “A Journey Around My Room” by the officer of the Kingdom of Sardinia Xavier de Maistre, who was under house arrest for a duel in the spring of 1794. In the spring of 2020, being alone during home isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, these long-time reflections seemed to me not only timely, but also of a practical value. The experience of compelled lack of freedom, simultaneously experienced by people from different countries, seems to me the right time to embark on an existential journey. Usually the soul and body of a person go on a journey together, but in the case, I am describing, only the soul is a traveller.

A journey is wandering, the route of which does not necessarily lie only in the external (physical) space. A journey is movement in the space of culture: memory, myth, imagination, dreams. An existential journey through the inner space is both an experience of personifying history and an attempt at self-identification.

In the essay “The Four Cycles,” Jorge Luis Borges writes that European culture is an endless variation and interweaving of the plots of four original legends: about the heroic defence of a city doomed to death, about eternal return, about an inconsolable search and about the death of God. The second and third stories are related to a journey.

What does journey mean? The way to yourself? Comprehending your meaning? Or, on the contrary, an attempt to escape from the hassle of everyday life, the labyrinth of actions, the flow of words and experiences? Is it an experience of freedom or doom? A breakthrough from a cell called “here and now,” which is

wide open by a thought, or a dictate of a closed route? What caused the eternal craving of people for vagrancy, changing times and places?...

Journey is the experience of a wanderer’s personal freedom: freedom to leave the familiar world, cross borders, immerse yourself in someone else’s space, freedom to choose a route due to the traveller’s individual motives that induce him to change places, and sometimes times.

The most common motives for journey are the desire for self-identification, the craving for discovery and new knowledge.

Traditionally, a journey also served as a social ritual. For example, in medieval Europe, a journey was often a knightly “initiation,” the purpose of wandering was to justify or confirm the social status of the traveller. Medieval travel routes had a vertical vector of movement. The pilgrim wanderer, following his own path, ascended the ladder of goodness from hell to heaven. The recurrence of walking to holy places mythologized the process of wandering. The texts of pilgrimage are dominated by the myth of purification. The whole path is the path to goodness, catharsis. The path of the medieval wanderer is a return to the origins, to the beginning of the world. Mircea Eliade describes the archetype of journey as a sacred path of return to oneself endlessly repeating outside time, to “the beginning of all beginnings”: “It is necessary to start your journey from some definite moment, as close to the present time as possible, and to make it all the way backwards in order to reach the origins, ad originem, to where the very first life, having emerged in the world, will give rise to Time, to achieve an amazing moment when Time will no longer exist, since there is nothing, nothing is present. The meaning and purpose of this technique is clear: the one who goes back in time must inevitably reach the starting point, which ultimately coincides with the creation of the world.”²

In secular culture, a journey is also a kind of pilgrimage. A person sets off on a journey in search of those moments when he can go beyond his personality, realize his potential, transforming himself into a different, more

¹ F. Nietzsche Letters (2007). M., Cultural Revolution, p. 217.

² Eliade, M. (2010). *Aspects of the myth*. M., Academic project, p. 84.

true and free self-consciousness. A journey is a path of understanding the world and oneself through the Absolute: “An ancient Russian traveller prefers to touch the shrine directly, and a new wanderer touches the representation of the shrine, the embodiment of the Absolute through the reception of another person, which is, the cognition through art. The art object inherits supernatural properties of the hieratical object.”³ It is essential that the wandering is not so much a way of understanding another, but self-modelling, self-actualization.

Entelechy of journey

The phenomenon of journey is of interest to me, first of all, as entelechy – a form of human self-realization, as an experience of self-identification.

Entelechy (or entelecheia) is a philosophical term introduced by Aristotle, that means “realization,” the fixation of things in existence on the form that opens up to consciousness. Aristotle called entelechy the revelation of the inner desire inherent in being and compelling it to acquire a form, i.e. to the realization of its essence and meaning: “Matter is a possibility, essence is entelechy.”⁴

In the third chapter of the ninth book of “Metaphysics,” Aristotle brings together the terms “energy” and “entelechy” as those denoting reality, but points out that the first of them originally meant a certain movement or activity, while the second denotes the factual givenness or realization of something.⁵

In the first chapter of the second book of his treatise “On the Soul,” Aristotle defines entelechy as the essence and form of a thing, presenting the soul as the entelechy of the body. “The soul must be a substance of a natural body which potentially has life. But substance as a [form] is entelechy; therefore, the soul is the entelechy of such a body.”⁶ However, Aristotle does not fully clarify the identity of the soul and the entelechy:

“Moreover, it is not clear whether the soul is the entelechy of the body in the same sense that a shipman is the entelechy of a ship.”⁷

Entelechy is something “potentially capable of living,” a realizing potency, an objectifiable probability of something. “We must not understand by that which is ‘potentially capable of living’ what has lost the soul it had, but only what still retains it; but seeds and fruits are bodies which possess the qualification. Consequently, while waking is actuality in a sense corresponding to the cutting and the seeing, the soul is actuality in the sense corresponding to the power of sight and the power in the tool; the body corresponds to what exists in potentiality; as the pupil plus the power of sight constitutes the eye, so the soul plus the body constitutes the animal.”⁸ Entelechy takes place when matter, physical or spiritual, takes shape and form, when potency becomes embodied by reality, and the general acquires individuality, when an idea is realized or manifested. Entelechy, according to Aristotle, is the revelation of the internal energy inherent in being and forcing it to acquire a form, i.e. to realize its essence and meaning. Matter is possibility, essence is entelechy.

Entelechy turned out to be one of the least developed, but the most essential categories of European philosophy. A modern researcher points out the fact that “entelechy is associated with a certain incomplete distinctiveness, an escape from logical clarity and clear unambiguity that put the perception of this phenomenon on the brink of analytical cognition and inner experience.”⁹

In the intellectual history of Europe in modern times, we can find the experience of using this category in the works of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Unlike Aristotle, Leibniz distinguishes between “soul” and “entelechy.” In *Monadology*, entelechy appears not so much as an acquired state of being, but as an independently existing discrete reality. “All simple substances, or created monads, could be called

³ Schönle, A. (2004). Authenticity and fiction in the author’s self-awareness of Russian travel literature 1790-1840. SPb., Academic project, p. 105.

⁴ Aristotle. (1976). *On the soul*. Collection of works in 4 vols., M., Mysl’, (1), p. 394.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 395.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

⁹ Knabe, G.S. (1994). *The entelechy of culture*. Materials for lectures on the general theory of culture and culture of ancient Rome. M., Indrik. p. 141.

entelechy, for they have certain perfection in them and they have self-sufficiency, which makes them the source of their internal actions and, so to speak, incorporeal automata... If we wanted to call everything that has perceptions and aspirations in the general sense, as I have just explained, souls, then all simple substances, or created monads, also could be called souls; but since feeling is something more than simple perception, I agree that for simple substances that have only the latter, a common name for monads and entelechies is enough, and that only those monads, the perceptions of which are more distinct and accompanied by memory, can be called souls.¹⁰

In the 20th century, the concept of “entelechy” was used by Edmund Husserl to describe European culture as a process of unfolding the ideas of ancient Hellenic philosophy in time. In the chapter “History of Modern Philosophy as a Struggle for Human Meaning” from the book “The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology,” Husserl refers to the category of “entelechy” not as an embodied idea, but as the energy of embodiment of the values discovered in Greece. In an intelligible sense, Europe is the entelechy of philosophy as a science. However, Husserl leaves open the question of whether the entelechy, first manifested in the Greek people, is inherent in humanity as such or not. In other words, it remains unclear whether European humanity, along with the emergence of Greek philosophy, acquired as its goal the aspiration to be humanity proceeding exclusively from a philosophical sense, or whether it is just a historical illusion that took possession of the Greek people due to certain historical events. The answer to this question determines the understanding of whether European humanity carries an absolute idea in itself, or whether it represents an empirically fixed anthropological type, similar to the inhabitants of China or India. Only in the case of a positive answer to this question, the Europeanization of other peoples would be endowed with an absolute meaning, which is included in the meaning of world history.

¹⁰ Leibniz, G.-V. (1982). *Monadology*. Works in four volumes: V. 1, Ed. and comp. by V.V. Sokolov. M. Mysl'. p. 416.

Husserl sees entelechy not as an act or its result, but as a process, not as an embodied idea, but as an endlessly unfolding energy of its embodiment.

The idea of looking at the phenomenon of journey as an entelecheic process, the purpose of which is self-embodiment, the search for the traveller's self-identity, came to me while reading the chronicle of an unusual journey that laid the foundation for a new genre two centuries ago – a journey round one's room.

Journey in the interior

In 1794, François-Xavier de Maistre, a thirty-year-old officer of the Kingdom of Sardinia, was placed under house arrest. The reason for this state of affairs was a duel over a ladylove, as a result of which the opponent of our hero was mortally wounded. The confinement lasted 42 days. Every day he wrote a new chapter in a book called *Voyage autour de ma chambre* (A Journey Round My Room).

The very fate of Count Xavier de Maistre could serve as a plot for an exciting historical novel. A writer whose talent was celebrated by Charles Augustin de Sainte-Beuve in France and Vladimir I. Dal in Russia, a landscape and portrait painter who captured six-year-old Alexander Pushkin, a brilliant officer of the Napoleonic Wars era, Xavier de Maistre was the twelfth of fifteen children in the family of a Sardinian nobleman. Xavier was the younger brother of the famous philosopher Joseph de Maistre, who helped him to publish the book “A Journey Round My Room” (Joseph found his brother's notes interesting and without the author's knowledge gave the book to the publisher).

Xavier had served as a lieutenant in the Sardinian army until 1800, participating in the wars with France in 1796 and 1798-1899, and then joined the Russian army under the command of General Bagration. Xavier de Maistre retired as Major General of the General Staff of the Russian troops and soon married Sophia I. Zagriazhskaia, the aunt of Natalia N. Goncharova, the wife of Alexander S. Pushkin.

At the beginning of the book, Xavier de Maistre admits that the idea of describing the wanderings in his own room came to him a

long time ago, but the forced lack of freedom allowed the idea to come true. Before venturing the journey, the writer notices that his journey is unique in that it does not require money and is available to everyone, and he can invite all his readers to travel alongside him.

He calls his journey transcendental. Usually the soul and body of a person go on a journey together, in his case, only the soul turns out to be a traveller. Xavier de Maistre considers this type of a journey the most wonderful. Despite the fact that the body of our hero continues to languish locked up, his soul moves freely in time and space, gaining new knowledge about itself and forming the personality of the writer. This entertaining 42-day journey of a young man can be compared to a cathartic experience of self-discovery, confession or even a mystery. "The journey of my soul around my own room gave me a sense of metaphysical freedom."¹¹

Every day, the author's attention is focused on a new piece of the interior of his refuge. Looking at things, each of which has its place and its own history in his destiny, the writer makes an exciting mental journey into his past, present, and sometimes into the future, talks with friends and loved ones who are far from him, analyses the meaning of everyday life and experiences.

The journey around the room is full of funny episodes. The first object in the centre of the traveller's attention is his bed, symbolizing the entrance to the world of secular whirlwind, and now he feels like an outside observer and judge over it.

The next object that attracts his attention is a portrait of a pretty initiator of the duel. Pondering over the natural-scientific explanation of the nature of the artistic phenomenon: no matter where the audience was in the room, everyone looking at the portrait had the impression that the lady's gaze was focused on him – Xavier de Maistre suddenly comes to the conclusion that this portrait is brilliant in its truthfulness. A woman's heart is fickle: even being next to him, his beloved one looks at and flirts with all the gentlemen around her.

Days go by, plots change.

A writing desk, in the depths of which the memory of the past is kept...

Father's bust is a warm caress of home comfort...

A dried rose is an incombustible, unquenchable passion...

Engravings depicting urban everyday life are the earnest sermon of a freethinker dreaming of revolution...

Raphael's self-portrait is a virtuoso essay about the dissimilarity of the nature of painting and music: the artist's work requires experience, the art of thinking and symbolization of meanings, while the musician gives passion of a soul directly, without mediation of a rationalizing mind...

Labyrinths of bookshelves are unpredictable facets of a wandering soul...

And finally, a mirror is a brilliant invention that reflects, according to the writer, the view of each of us at ourselves through the prism of sincere, pure and unconditional love for ourselves. Each person takes pleasure in admiring his face and invariably discovering there exactly what he wanted to see. There are no people who do not experience a sense of blissful pleasure from observing their own reflection transformed by their imagination beyond recognition for the sake of an all-overcoming love for themselves. It would be nice, notes Xavier de Maistre, to invent another mirror that reflects the inner world of people and demonstrates to everyone their ideals and values, motives and principles of actions, however, the writer continues, probably no one would want to look into such a mirror, except for philosophers, and it is likely that even they would not want to.

The journey round the room ends with a noisy dispute between two ladies – the soul (l'ame) and the flesh (la bete) contesting their priority right to the journey. As a result, the author compromises the action, equalizing the significance of the soul and body, and draws a conclusion about the dual nature of existence. Both sensuality and corporeality are proclaimed as the guarantee of the feasibility of an intellectual journey, since for its transcendental wanderings the soul needs sensations delivered to it by the flesh.

¹¹ Xavier de Maistre *Voyage autour de ma chambre* (1984). Edition Jose Corti, c. 82.

Journey as an Experience of Metaphysical Freedom

Xavier de Maistre's transcendental journey around his own room, which is based on his house arrest, is reproduced in a different way a century and a half later in one of the episodes of Albert Camus's famous novel *The Stranger* [L'Étranger] (1942). The protagonist of the story, a thirty-year-old Frenchman named Meursault, who lives in Algeria, turns out to be imprisoned. The court sentenced him to death. The reason for this sentence was manslaughter. While awaiting sentencing in solitary confinement, Meursault experiences complete isolation from the outside world. Staying in an absolute eventive and informational vacuum: outside of time, the account of which he has lost, without the possibility of any movement outside the cell, without any kind of communication (dating and reading are prohibited to him), Meursault is trying not to lose his identity, to find a way to preserve his self. As a result, after several fruitless efforts, Meursault finds a way to autonomize himself from emptiness, to protect his personality from decay: "Yes, I had to endure some troubles, but I was not very unhappy. Again, the most important thing for me was to kill time. But since I learned to recall things, I have not been bored anymore. Sometimes I remembered my bedroom: I imagined myself leaving one corner and walking across the room, then returning back; I cast about in my mind everything that I met on my way. In the beginning, I was quick to deal with it. But each time the journey took more and more time. I remembered not only a wardrobe, a table or a shelf, but all the things that were there, and I imagined every thing in all its details: colour and material, inlay pattern, crack, chipped edge, etc. I tried in every possible way not to lose the thread of my inventory, not to forget a single item. Within a few weeks, I could spend hours describing everything in my bedroom. The more I thought about it, the more forgotten or neglected things came to my mind. And then I realized that a person who lived in the world for at least one day could easily spend a hundred years in prison. He would

have enough memories not to get bored. In a sense, it was beneficial."¹²

The source of freedom to remain himself for Camus' hero, as well as for another prisoner – Xavier de Maistre, turns out to be the archetype of eternal return, initiating an entelchy existential journey in the closed space of human memory.

The genre of a transcendental journey around one's own room, introduced into the literary and philosophical discourse by Xavier de Maistre, turned out to be extremely popular only in the 20th century. However, for the sake of accuracy, it should be noted that in 1863 the German educator, teacher and writer Hermann Wagner published a book for children titled "Traveling around the room" intended to familiarize kids with the world around them. This publication, of course, does not belong to the genre of a transcendental journey.

A mental journey through the closed space of your own home, the starting points in which are pieces of furniture, books, souvenirs and other things that give a unique face to the house and serve as landmarks in the fate of travellers. It is important not to confuse it with another popular literary genre of the 20th century – chosisme (materialism, from the French word "*chose*" – "*a thing, object*"). Alain Robbe-Grillet, the author of "*In the Labyrinth*," is considered to be the founding father of chosisme. The idea of chosisme consists in a detailed description of objects as they are, outside the connections between them, in writing out everyday details, seemingly completely unnecessary and pushing back the story of events and images of characters.¹³ Such descriptions are mesmerizing: the author sets an unexpected experiment on the reader, and even on himself, assigning to human consciousness the role of Democritean empty "nothingness" – a repository of an infinite number of things. Being in such texts is reduced to an inventory of the objects that fill it. These objects have meaning only for themselves; they are signs of themselves, not symbols or metaphors.

¹² Camus, A. (1989). *The Stranger*. M., Prometheus, p. 71.

¹³ Robbe-Grillet, A. *In the labyrinth* (1999). SPb: Azbuka.

Journey as a communal project

Another experience of the entelechy journey around the room, surpassing the immanence of chosisme, is the socially oriented collective project of the circle of Moscow conceptualists of the 1970-1990's – Ilya Kabakov, Joseph Backstein, Andrei Monastyrskii and others, which is called "Rooms" (1986). In the preamble of the collection the authors of the project emphasize that their work is devoted to housing problems of the world avant-garde in the mid-80's.

It is noteworthy that the conceptualists themselves call their association a "geographic club," and themselves – travellers and discoverers of terra incognita – the Soviet housing reality in particular, and the Soviet everyday tradition in general, for the world outside the Soviet Union. Reflection on the space of "socialist everyday life" is at the centre of the conceptualists' creative work.

The realities of the Soviet existence need to be explained for everyone who is unfamiliar with them from their own everyday experience, otherwise it is impossible to understand the meaning of the creative work of these artists. The works of conceptualists presuppose the "involvement" of the life and cultural situation of their authors. The sad paradox is that the most powerful understatement of the conceptualists' works is understandable only to people close to them by the type of everyday culture, and the interpretation and explanation of their works for an external viewer requires such clarification that inexorably destroys the meaning of their works. For the artists of this circle, it was important that their work did not get lost, did not disappear overnight along with the Soviet era, so that their works would sound and remain in Russian culture, would be involved in the common European artistic tradition. After all, works of art live only when they give a creative impulse to the audience, remaining a necessary link in the continuity of the creative process.

The "Rooms" project was created as a meta-journey of conceptualists into Soviet everyday life. The communal apartment in this context acquires the status of the most important component of Soviet life, expressing its es-

sence. The Soviet reality in "Rooms" appears not only as a politicized, ideologized form of everyday life, but is also an existential object of the emotional attitude of artists.

At the centre of the project there is Ilya Kabakov's installation "A Room. (The man who flew to space from his room)" (1985), considered by his colleagues as a problematization of the ordinary by the author, an attempt at aesthetic sublimation of the element of life.

Kabakov's "Room" is one of the rooms in a large, overcrowded communal apartment. Inside this room, objects are in extreme disarray: sticks, jars, belts, newspapers, papers are lying interspersed... The furnishings of the dwelling are wretched: instead of a bed there is a cot with an old pillow and a blanket, there is no table at all, instead of wallpapers the walls are pasted over with all kinds of posters placed in the most ridiculous way, so that together they form an unthinkable absurdity and a mess. In the midst of all this, a mysterious machine hangs in the air. It consists of a saddle for a chair, a spring and rubber bands. The lonely inhabitant of this room, as it becomes clear from the story of his neighbour, was overwhelmed by the dream of traveling into space, and he did realize this dream – his "great project." One night, the neighbours in the communal apartment were awakened by a terrible crash. The local police officer recorded the disappearance of the resident and a through hole of unknown origin in the ceiling of his home.

Considering the centuries-old history of the Russian dream of space flight and the space migration of mankind from the overpopulated Earth to the nearest planets, it is not difficult to include the "Room" installation in a number of similar projects, among which there are the ideas of Nikolai Fedorov and Konstantin Tsiolkovskii.

The existential layer of Kabakov's work was generated by the fact that the author identified himself with a character who reveals his essence, existence. The main impulse of the author-hero is a sincere desire to get out, fly out of the situation of the Soviet everyday life.

In my opinion, the "apartment myth" of Moscow conceptualists can be viewed as a special genre of a journey, an attempt to move

from the plane of a “picture” to a three-dimensional, open, dynamic reality. Entering the “room,” the viewer finds himself entirely within the work. The structure of perception and experience of the artist’s idea, the semantic features of his work are determined by the correlation between the rhythm of the image and the viewer’s journey through it, by the change in the position of his body. There is no traditional exhibition distance between the viewer and the work. The possibility of free movement-travel in the exhibition space determines both the freedom of perception of the author’s work and freedom from its influence. The activity of spectator behaviour, its subjectivity is not dulled by the author’s logic, which allows the spectator-wanderer to remain independent, to generate aesthetic meanings himself.

The “Rooms” project also includes a visual journey along fifteen routes – the real interiors of rooms of the representatives of the elite of the Soviet underground art of the “developed socialism” era. This voyage through the rooms is intended to testify to the lifestyle and mental structure of their inhabitants, artists. Now, not the “author” of the room himself acts as a commentator-guide, but the conceptual artist Georgy Kiesewalter, who wrote the text “Fifteen Rooms” – a detailed commentary on the photo gallery.

Moving from photograph to photograph and reading text after text, we seem to move from room to room in a huge communal apartment that has sheltered the colour of the Russian avant-garde. Here is a room – a “public thoroughfare,” where amid chaos and glaring poverty we suddenly notice a Swiss saxophone on a bed, in the corner near the window there is a fashionable and expensive sound amplifier “Yamaha;” and a modest, carefully tidied room characterized by the absence of everyday excesses bordering with asceticism, and a gloomy closet of a beatnik or a hippie. There is also a room here, the main difference of which is tightness. This is just an example of the very “universal” room, which combines a bedroom, living room and workshop. In installation it is indicated that the artist himself, his wife and children, a cat, a rather large dog, a couple of budgerigars also live in this room, and on the

top of all that, there is a goat in the bathroom (combined), which is unusual for the city, but children always have milk...

In the classical cultural context, the completeness of the dwelling does not act as a sacred space: the kitchen or hallway are ordinary places, but the bedroom or study are sacred. In the situation of communality and overcrowding of the Soviet everyday life, where the kitchen smoothly turns into the bedroom and into the study, due to the absence of a sacred room with a clear boundary, a curious phenomenon – a “sacred point” emerges. Thus, the sacred appears in the form of the very dynamic, it fights for its existence. We are witnessing the mystical transformation of the profane into the sacred.

Journey as an experience of self-discovery

The peak of his enthusiasm for philosophical journeys in his own room fell on the first half of the past century. Among the classics of this literary genre, I would point out the story of Somerset Maugham “Honolulu” and Hermann Hesse’s essay “A Walk in the Room.”

Somerset Maugham, it seems to me, has revealed the secret of most “room travellers”: “An old Frenchman wrote a book called *Voyage autour de ma chambre*. I have not read this book and do not even know what it is about, but its title excites my imagination. In a similar way, I could travel around the world...”¹⁴ Maugham’s story “Honolulu” (1921) is an experience of such a trip around the world.

Having noticed at the very beginning of his story that truly wise travellers wander only in their imagination, and “the most beautiful journeys are those that you make sitting by a fireplace, because thus you do not lose your illusions,” the writer sets off on a long journey.

The wandering narrator considers the regions traditionally surrounded by a halo of romance to be the most attractive places for the pilgrimage. A traveller usually expects to see something beautiful there, but the impression he has formed is immeasurably more complex than that which a simple contemplation of

¹⁴ Maugham, S. (1990). *Honolulu*. Catalina: stories. Kiev, Politizdat of Ukraine, p. 44.

beauty can give. The pilgrim is doomed to inevitable disappointment, which, however, gives these places a special attraction. Maugham likens this feature to the weaknesses of great people, making them less wonderful, but more interesting.

Maugham considers Russia to be one of the “mysterious places;” and an icon hanging on the wall of his room serves as a window into this country. Another such a place is China symbolized by a porcelain trinket on a bookshelf. And Honolulu – a city of primitive superstitions, one of which is the plot of the story.

Another experience of such a journey is Hermann Hesse’s “A Walk in the Room” (1928) – a virtuoso confession of the writer taking the route of finding inner supports in a time of fading youth, when the time comes for forced reconciliation with the coming “winter of life.” At this stage, the present and the future are woven from the past, and are built mainly from memories and reflection on what once happened. “A new time is coming, a different life – life in a room, by the light of a lamp, with books and sometimes with music, a life in which there is also a lot of beauty and depth, but the transition to it is difficult and unpleasant, it begins with chills, sadness and internal rebellion... More recently, my room was a haven for hours of rest and work, a refuge with open doors and windows... I was in this room only as a guest, life was not here, but outside, in the forest, by the lake... And now suddenly the room has become important again, it has become a home – or a prison, a permanent abode...”¹⁵

The author gazes intently at the new abode – his old room, trying to “get closer and make friends” with it. Here are his main assistants – the objects of the familiar interior: old books, a large writing table, chairs, paints, watercolours, which Hesse calls tangible pieces of his memory. These are things that he has gained confidence in over the years, watching them gradually age. There is an extraordinary plush animal – “half deer, half giraffe, with a bewildered fabulous look,” which for a long

time served as his only pet, replacing a dog or a cat; and a Ceylon sacred relic made of bronze – a boar (a scapegoat in the Old Testament): “For me, a boar is not a rare thing, but rather a symbol, he is my brother among us marked with a sign, clairvoyants, jesters and poets, with their souls covered with stigmas, bearing the curses of the era, while their contemporaries dance and read newspapers...”¹⁶ And only when an inner reconciliation with a new way of life has occurred, the habit of living locked up in a room comes to Hesse. In the end, such a life seems to the writer quite bearable.

Journey as a social phenomenon

In the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of this century, there was also interest in the genre of a journey around the room, however, the spirit of these wanderings has changed markedly. The subjective and objective components of journey notes have been split and now exist independently. Thus, the essays by Viacheslav P’etsukh and Anri Volokhonskii can serve as polar examples of “subjective” and “objective” perception of the route around one’s room.

The text of the writer and publicist Viacheslav P’etsukh, who was popular during the years of Gorbachev’s Perestroika, can be viewed as a journey to the 1990’s. By inviting the reader for a walk through his one-room apartment located under the roof of a skyscraper in the distant Moscow outskirts, the author opens the door to his private life for us. Viacheslav P’etsukh calls the last decade of the 20th century “the outrage of evil times.” He presents the events of that contradictory time in the style of “pure existence,” supplying his fellow traveller-reader with a myriad of deeply intimate experiences, while managing to abundantly quote his own works of art from different years.

In the very first lines of his essay, puzzled by the question “Why do people travel?” P’etsukh answers directly: “It seems to me that the universal human passion for travel is from a lack of mental strength.”¹⁷ And he continues

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 332.

¹⁷ P’etsukh, V. *Traveling around my room*. October, 2004, 10, p. 38.

¹⁵ Hesse, H. (1995). *A walk in the room*. Collection in 8 vols., M., AST, vol. 6, p. 331.

to substantiate his thought: “It’s a completely different matter when you travel around your room. The travelling clothes is the most ordinary: a chintz robe sewn by his ex-wife in the manner of a Japanese kimono; there are no drips from above, no drafts, the air temperature is favourable, about 20 °C, even in the dead of winter; safety everywhere; well, except that a stray plane will demolish your twenty-second floor, which seems unlikely, if you take into account the maximum distance from all the airfields near Moscow. The means of transportation are extremely reliable, there are only two transfers, namely from the sofa to legs and from legs to the sofa, where you can lie down so deftly that it seems as if you are soaring above your bed from an excess of mental strength; food is regular and of high quality... Finally, you do not depend on anyone, and nothing can poison your journeys: neither Islamists, nor rogue tour operators, nor transport workers’ strikes, nor stomach cramps.”¹⁸ Thus, our voyager full of mental strength plunges into the depths of his memory.

The journey of Viacheslav P’etsukh is made in the genre of memoirs. Interior items and imagination now and then carry the author to distant countries, in which he himself has never been, however, the main theme of his wanderings is his own personality in the interior of the Russian perestroika. The text of “Traveling in My Room” is interesting not so much because it is a kind of exhibitionistic act of its author, but because it is the most important document of the era. “Maybe a Russian cultural person is only able to take care of the good of the fatherland and believe in a better future only because he hates the unscrupulous, drunken, corrupt, shameless and unprincipled Russia, but for the most part he hates that it is not what he sees in dreams, but such as it is. In any case, the smartest Russian people did not love their fatherland, from Pushkin to Academician Pavlov, and we all know how Lenin hated it, not to mention Peter the Great. For me, all these attitudes are disproportionately strong, even too much. It is not that I adored Russia (although I adore it unconsciously), not

that I did not love it (although I certainly do not love it). I am rather afraid of it.”¹⁹

I believe that nothing else can tune a person to self-reflection and self-understanding so correctly as travelling. It is not for nothing that sometimes unfamiliar travel companions, in a few hours of conversations with random interlocutors, learn about themselves as much as they would not have revealed during any confession or interrogation. Travel notes are the most entelechic literary genre.

Anri Volokhonskii’s essay “Some pictures from my room” completes the recent book by this author titled “Memories of the Long Forgotten.” Anri Volokhonskii is an iconic figure of the Russian underground of the 1950’s-70’s, “a Leningrad-Israeli-German poet at different stages of his life” (Danila Davydov). His text is completely devoid of existential, emotional and spiritual dimensions. Volokhonskii’s story is akin to a home game. On the table there are picture cards laid out in such a way that you can get a solid impression of the life in a foreign land of an emigrant at the turn of the 20th-21st centuries. One has only to pick up one of the cards that make up this mosaic, turn it over, and you will read important information about this piece of furniture and the cultural context in which it is immersed, and, probably, you will also hear a historical anecdote or an amusing story from the era in which this or that little thing from the everyday environment of the author appeared, diligently avoiding even a hint of his own, private, intimate being: “At the end of the rack there is a brass crucifix in the shape of a diamond with holes drilled in the corners for attachment to the grave cross. In 1972, I was walking around the city of Vladimir one summer and I met a boy of about eight years old, who frantically rubbed this crucifix with chalk, trying to clean off the patina. “Be careful, or you’ll spoil it,” I said, and proceeded on my way. After some time, the boy caught up with me and gave it to me. Below there was a plate with a blue bird. We thought it was a dodo bird. I have a lot of drawings of the dodo: an engraving from the Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopaedic Dictionary, a postcard with a famous painting by Savery, a vivid image in the

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 38.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 47.

bestiary of Aloys Zötl, two photos – side-face and full-face – of a dodo model made of brownish fluff of an ostrich that was exhibited in a local pharmacy. I consider the dodo to be the heraldic bird of the Russian intelligentsia, so I collect images on occasion. But it was not a dodo on the plate, it was a phoenix.”²⁰

What a wonderful metaphor for the final chapter of the book of memoirs of a Russian intellectual, isn't it? In the place of the dodo, an extinct flightless, non-swimming and poorly running bird symbolizing extinction, to accidentally discover a symbol of eternal renewal – the mythical phoenix that, foreseeing death, burns itself, and then returns to life from the ashes...

Journey as an experience of acquiring identity

A classic journey through one's own room in search of finding oneself and clarifying the entelechy of one's existence is, in my opinion, the book by Joseph Brodsky “A Room and a Half” (1985).²¹ This is a multidimensional human document in the genre of a philosophical essay, touching upon the realities of Soviet Russia in the 1950's and 1980's.

The text of “Room and a half” was written by Brodsky in English during his emigration to the United States. The centre of the story is the fate of the poet himself through the prism of the life of his parents.²² In the summer of 1972, Joseph Brodsky was forced to emigrate to the United States. The possibility of even a short-term return to the USSR was forev-

er excluded. Since then he had never seen his mother, Maria M. Volpert, and father, Alexander I. Brodsky, who applied for permission to see their son twelve times in twelve years of solitude. Congressmen and prominent cultural figures of the United States made the same request to the government of the USSR, but even after Brodsky underwent open-heart surgery in 1978 and needed care, his parents were denied an exit visa. Brodsky's mother died in 1983, a little over a year later, his father died. Both times Brodsky was not allowed to come to the funeral.

“Those who are poor are ready to recycle everything. I am utilizing the feeling of guilt,” – with this confession Joseph Brodsky begins his book, written at the intersection of memoir and utopian genres. “Now that they [parents – Iu.S.] have died, I see their life as, as it was before, and before she included me. Also, I think, they might remember me. If, of course, now they do not have the gift of omniscience and watch me sitting in the kitchen in the apartment, I rented for the college, writing these lines in the language, which they do not know, although, for that matter, now they must be all-lingual. This is the only opportunity for them to see me and America. This is the only way for me to see them and our room.”²³

“Room and a Half” is a conversation between Joseph Brodsky and himself, a journey into the depths of himself, an attempt to catch up with himself and understand himself who has departed, a search for self-identification, and finally, a self-portrait of one of the heroes of the 20th century, whose personal experience was typical for many of his compatriots and contemporaries.

Reflecting on the path of his life, Joseph Brodsky returns to childhood, at a time when a child strives for adulthood and independent existence, longs to escape from home – his cramped nest – out into the vast world, in real life. In due time, this wish comes true and the young man, conquered by new perspectives, starts building his own nest, his own reality. But when the new reality is studied, independence is realized, it suddenly turns out that the old nest has disappeared, and those who gave

²⁰ Volokhonskii, A. (2007). *Memories of the Long Forgotten*. M., New Literary Review, p. 109.

²¹ In 2008, based on Joseph Brodsky's book “Room and a Half”, a feature film “Room and a half, or a Sentimental Journey to the Homeland” was shot (directed by Andrei Khrzhanovskii, scriptwriters – Andrei Khrzhanovsky and Yuri Arabov). In May 2015, the municipality of St. Petersburg officially announced the opening of a museum-apartment of Joseph Brodsky in the Muzuri apartment building (24 Liteiny Prospekt, apt. 28), created on the basis of one and a half rooms that the Brodsky family had occupied there since 1955, and from where the poet forever left Russia in 1972 for forced emigration.

²² In addition to the essay “Room and a Half”, Brodsky dedicated the book “Part of Speech” to his parents, the poems “The thought of you removed, as a servant demoted...” and “In Memory of Father: Australia.”

²³ Brodsky, J. (1995). *Room and a Half*. New world, 2, p. 55.

him life have died. And then comes the realization of oneself as deprived of the cause and effect. “If once there was something real in life, it was the nest, cramped and stuffy, from which he wanted to escape so bad. For the nest was built by others, those who gave him life, and not by himself knowing all too well the true value of his own labour and using, in essence, only the life given to him... After all, with all his skills, a person will never be able to recreate the primitive, sturdy nest that heard his first cry of life. And he will not be able to recreate those who put him there. As a consequence, he cannot restore his cause.”²⁴

Brodsky knew that his fate worried his parents; they suffered, but they always supported him as best as they could, because he was their child. “Subsequently, when I managed to print something here and there, they were flattered and sometimes even proud of me, but I know that if I were an ordinary graphomaniac and a failure, their attitude towards me would be exactly the same. They loved me more than themselves, and most likely would not understand my feeling of guilt towards them...”²⁵ (Brodsky, 1995: 95).

Reflecting on the phenomenon of a room in a communal apartment as a limited area in which his young years passed, Brodsky notes that, oddly enough, the compression of space is always clearer and better organized than the open space. “For confined spaces there are more names: a cell, a closet, a grave. There is only a broad gesture for the vastness.”²⁶

In the USSR, the minimum living space was 5 square meters per person. With all the unsightly aspects of this form of living, the communal apartment, according to Brodsky, had one important metaphysical feature. It uncovered the very foundations of existence: destroyed any illusion about human nature. “What barbs or medical and culinary advice, what confidential information about products that suddenly appeared in one of the stores, are exchanged in the evenings in the communal kitchen by the wives preparing food! It is here where you learn the basics of life – with half an

ear, out of the corner of your eye. What quiet dramas open up when someone suddenly stops talking to someone! What a school of facial expressions this is! What an abyss of feelings a frozen, offended spine or an icy profile can express! What smells, odours and fragrances float in the air around a hundred-watt yellow tear hanging from a tousled braid of an electric cord! There is something tribal about this dimly lit cave, something primordially evolutionary, if you will; and pots and pans hang over gas stoves like tom-tom drums.”²⁷

Brodsky also emphasizes another important feature of the organization of space in Russia. In our country, it is more difficult to come to terms with breaking bonds than anywhere else. “Russians are much more sedentary people than other inhabitants of the continent, who move much more often, if only because they have cars and have no reason to take borders seriously. For us, an apartment is practically a life-long haven, a city – for life, a country – for life.”²⁸ Consequently, the idea of constancy, a small motherland, attachment to a place in domestic culture is deeper, just as the feeling of their loss is more tragic and irreparable.

A mental return to Leningrad, in the Russian years of his life, brings Brodsky to the main question of his book, which arises before everyone whose fate is the route of finding themselves, finding the meaning of their existence as a series of attempts to surpass their current self: when and where does the transition from freedom to slavery, and from slavery to freedom acquire the status of inevitability? When does the choice of freedom become acceptable to a layman? For what age does the substitution of a free state become most painless? The poet leaves the answer to these questions open, but these questions themselves are by no means rhetorical for Brodsky: “A revolutionary or a conqueror should at least know the correct answer. Genghis Khan, for example, knew it. He simply killed anyone whose head rose above the hub of a cart wheel.”²⁹

²⁴ Ibid, p. 94.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 95.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 50.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 55.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 96.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 101.

For me, the genre of an existential journey through one's own room is an experience of philosophical self-reflection and self-identity. These literary journeys are not akin to historical memoirs, they do not defy death and do not represent an escape from oblivion. Memory is inevitably selective, which makes it indistinguishable from forgetting, non-being. Memory flaws, like the findings of the imagination, distort reality. The shorter the memory, the longer the life, the proverb says. Otherwise, the longer the future, the shorter the memory. Traveling around your own room is not a memory, but a living, effective entelechy process that implements the likelihood of self-embodiment, the purpose of which is to find yourself.

The entelechy journey is an event of individualization of the general. It is the embodiment of physical or spiritual matter into the reality of appearance and form through an existential experiment. In other words, a metaphysical journey is the identification of a common property, principle, paradigm from the bustle of everyday life, the realization of the potential.

It is also important to note that a mental journey through inner space is transcendental

to the space-time continuum. A narrator himself finds himself on the other side of the spatial and temporal dimension of his path, observing it as if "from a distance."³⁰ Obviously, like an ordinary journey, a mental journey always takes place with reference to a certain point in space, be it a natural landscape, a closed space of your own room, a myth, a dream or the virtual world. Each moment of the journey corresponds to one specific point of space included in the route (it does not matter real, virtual or imaginary). In this case, the time coordinate turns out to be additional, and, sometimes, unnecessary. A metaphysical journey can take place at any time: before, during and after the actual journey itself.

The implementation of an entelechy journey presupposes two defining vectors of movement – "up": to abstraction from everyday events and stereotypes of behaviour, to generalization of practice in ideas, concepts and images, and "down": to everyday life activity. The defining feature of the trajectory of reflection-journey is its fundamental openness – the infinity of the horizon, the absence of a fixed "arrival" point in the route.

³⁰ See: Dunne, J. (2000). *An Experiment with Time*. M., Agraf.

References

- Aristotle (1976). *O dushe [On the Soul]*. Collection in 4 vols., Moscow, Mysl', 1. p. 394.
- Brodsky, J. (1995). Poltory komnaty [A Room and a Half]. In *Novyi mir [New World]*, (2), p. 55.
- Camus, A. (1989). *Postoronni [The Stranger]*. Moscow, Prometheus, p. 71.
- Dunne, J. (2000). *Eksperiment so vremenem [An Experiment with Time]*. Moscow, Agraf.
- Eliade, M. (2010). *Aspekty mifa [Aspects of myth]*. Moscow, Academic project, p. 84.
- Hesse, H. (1995). *Progulka po komnate [A Walk in the Room]*. Collection in 8 vols., Moscow, AST, 6, p. 331.
- Knabe, G.S. (1994). *Entelekhiiia kul'tury. Materialy k lektsiiam po obshchei teorii kul'tury i kul'ture antichnogo Rima [The entelechy of culture. Materials for lectures on the general theory of culture and culture of ancient Rome]*. Moscow, Indrik, p. 141.
- Leibniz, G.W. (1982). *Monadologiia [Monadology]*. Collection in four volumes: 1, Ed. and comp. by V.V. Sokolov. Moscow, Mysl', p. 416.
- Maugham, S. (1990). Gonolulu [Honolulu]. In *Katalina: rasskazy [Catalina: Stories]*. Kiev, Politizdat of Ukraine, p. 44.
- Nietzsche, F. (2007). Pis'ma [Letters]. Moscow. In *Kul'turnaia revoliutsiia [Cultural Revolution]*, p. 217.
- P'etsukh, V. (2004). Puteshestvie po moei komnate [Traveling around my room]. In *Oktiabr' [October]*, (10), p. 38.
- Robbe-Grillet, A. (1999). *V labirinte [In the labyrinth]*. SPb. Azbuka.

Schönle, A. (2004). *Podlinnost' i vymysel v avtorskom samosoznanii russkoi literatury puteshestvii 1790-1840* [Authenticity and fiction in the author's self-awareness of Russian travel literature of the 1790-1840's]. SPb. Academic project, p. 105.

Xavier de Maistre (1984). *Voyage autour de ma chambre*, Edition Jose Corti, p. 82.

Volokhonskii, A. (2007). *Vospominaniia o davno pozabytom* [Memories of the long forgotten]. Moscow. In *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* [New Literary Review], p. 109.

Путешествие как философский проект

Ю.В. Синеокая

*Институт философии РАН
Российская Федерация, Москва*

Аннотация. Опираясь на литературные и философские тексты, описывающие путешествия по собственной комнате Ксавьера де Местра, Альбера Камю, Германа Гессе, Иосифа Бродского и др., автор рассказывает об энтелехии путешествия как опыте самоидентификации, об архетипе путешествия как сакральном бесконечно повторяющемся вне времени возвращении к себе. Путешествие рассматривается как опыт личной свободы странника, движение в пространстве культуры: памяти, мифа. Путешествие выступает своего рода паломничеством: человек отправляется в путь в поисках тех моментов, когда он может выйти за пределы своей личности, реализовать свой потенциал, преобразуя себя в иное, более истинное и свободное самосознание. Статья посвящена мыслительному путешествию, представленному как эксперимент по обретению человеком смысла жизни, как опыт философской саморефлексии и обретения тождества с собой. Экзистенциальное путешествие по внутреннему интеллигибельному пространству является одновременно и опытом персонификации истории, и попыткой самоидентификации.

Ключевые слова: экзистенциализм, самоидентификация, архетипы внутреннего пространства, энтелехия, путешествие по собственной комнате.

Научная специальность: 09.00.00 – философские науки.