

Shoo!

Whoever ignores my prayer, truly timid,
In the name of the Father, the Son, the Spirit.

You see the Lord's cross, don't you?

If neither food nor drink you desire,

Then leave us in peace and retire!

Shoo!

Adam Mickiewicz, a poet who combines in himself and in his work multiculturalism of the borderland, but also politicism and mysticism, in his most famous work used an old pagan custom, cultivated in the Belarusian borderlands until today. Forefathers' Eve, a mystical-religious ritual, evoking souls wandering among the living, is a chance for them to find peace. There are several conditions to be met: the wise pellar who will summon these souls, people of faith, ready to help these ghosts, and finally, the very souls who will tell the living what keeps them on earth and thus teach them what is really important in life. The final chord of this particular lesson of ethics is the spell 'Shoo'!

Mickiewicz's 'Shoo!' scares off those who are 'not from this world', who evoke fear, anxiety. This fear is known to every child who is afraid of a dark corridor, of going down to the cellar, of a curtain gently leaning away from a draughty window, and who knows that fear will scam when the light shines. Then it will turn out that in the hallway, cellar and behind the curtain there is no evil or a monster.

'Shoo!' (Polish 'A kysz!') is an onomatopoeia, which is a sound imitative word. It imitates the warning sound of an owl, a goose, snake or cat, emitted out of fear or to scare off the enemy. A shoo is an intense sound, arousing horror, but also showing determination and strength - this is why people have adopted it from the animal world. And just as animals, they warn, express anger, fear and fight with their opponent.

Linguists know the function of the onomatopoeia 'A kysz!', although they are not sure of the origin of the phrase. We know that it occurs in Polish, Ukrainian, Lower Lusatian, Czech, Russian, Bulgarian, Latvian or Estonian. This 'A kysz!' in everyday use usually deterred domestic animals from places where they should not be.

However, let's go back to the Mickiewicz's formula of the spell, i.e. words that have a magical effect and are meant to dispel evil powers. Of course, it was not romantic poets who invented magic and magical rituals. Magic and rites have accompanied people

since they started to form communities. They were supposed to explain the incomprehensible, to call the unnamed, to protect from the unknown, to deter the evil. A world full of inexplicable phenomena and powers was incomprehensible. Fire sustained life and took it away, but the emergence of a spark was not an ordinary physical phenomenon, but the action of mysterious forces, which in the end became an emanation of a divine creature, putting this inexplicable world in order. And just as a child casts away the fears lurking in the dark corridor with the light of a night lamp, people have for centuries wiped out in various ways what they thought was unreasonable, yet resulted from evil powers, a curse or a hex. The evil was repelled by masks, noise, talismans - the miasma could be frightened by the sound of the knockers with which the processions of penitents walked through the cities during the plague, the destructive power of the lightning was protected by a candle exposed in the window, and the red ribbon on the wrist protected from the evil eye.

Apotropaic magic, that is, the one that protects, was reaching and still reaches not only rites but also magical objects. Christianity did not harm it, but only added further options and tools, which is another proof that fear and ways of dealing with it do not belong to the belief system, but to the emotional sphere of existence.

And all of a sudden, from one day to the next, in the post-enlightenment reality, with the paradigm of reason still in force (although it is impossible to hide that this paradigm has been in crisis for quite some time), something appeared that caused widespread anxiety. Invisible to the naked eye, acting out of hiding, attacking young and old, poor and rich, famous and ordinary. The disease always causes anxiety. A mass morbidity or epidemic causes fear, while a pandemic can cause panic. This global experience, which has become the experience of hundreds of thousands of people around the world, shows, however, many other phenomena: we find out in an almost physical way that a human being is a social creature and needs another human being. Isolation that lasts too long gives rise to rebellion, the need to act, to tell others about one's emotions and fears. It also gives rise to the need to fight the unknown.

In the ArtBrut Gallery, this struggle can be expressed through art, i.e., action that is magical in its own way, and the spell 'Begone!' becomes the key to the locked door of the isolation room. The key that would open it and allow us to go back into the world, breathe in fresh air, meet another man and tell him 'glad to see you'.

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