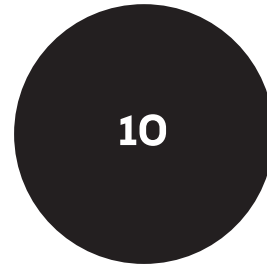




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## **View. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture.**

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## **Light and Sensitivity: Love in the Time of the Daguerreotype**

Translated by Arthur Barys

### **A Heart Loaded with Pupils**

The letters of Zygmunt Krasiński to Delfina Potocka contain a strong theme that pertains exclusively to images of his lover, to her likeness in its myriad forms. The poet demands these images incessantly. "We will quarrel over one thing," he writes, "and one thing only; you can imagine what. It is your portrait, or rather a miniature of you. The daguerreotype as well, but I want a miniature, and I will accept no excuses. I must have it." (Letter of December 12[–13], 1841; I, 402).<sup>1</sup>

Miniatures and daguerreotypes, then. And, in addition, larger paintings. A few of these, such as those painted by Ary Scheffer, can now be viewed in museums. A few remain unknown, including the one Krasiński mentions in the letter opening their correspondence of many years, which Jan Kott rightfully described as the most beautiful romantic novel in all of Polish Romanticism:

[I] dream of you going to that young woman who was supposed to paint your picture, and when this vision stands before my eyes, I want to steal each stroke of the brush, and I envy this stranger, this lady I have never seen, and I imagine her to be happy. (February 18, 1830; I, 26).

Krasiński waxes lyrical over the creation of Delfina's pictures as if he himself were an artist, but once they are finished, he venerates them as if he were a priest. "I pray to it as an ancient Greek would to a goddess!" (December 3, 1841; I, 382), he admits about one portrait. Meanwhile, he turns the so-called Baden canvas into a veritable altar: "I have placed it between two candles like an Italian Madonna, and as I write to you I gaze upon this beloved spectre, the beauty of beauties." (November 16[–17], 1843; II, 148). The concurrent acts of looking and writing acquire the characteristics of a religious experience:

Oh, Dially, I will kneel before this white spectre, before you. It is an odd

painting indeed: my eyes do not glance up towards it boldly, but remain lowered. Nor do my lips rise to place at least a kiss of peace upon its brow, no; my entire soul would gladly confess all its sins and evil deeds before it, gladly beg for mercy, for forgiveness, before crying out at long last: "My lady, lead me into eternity." (November 16[-17], 1843).

Altars of this sort must have been popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; a similar one is set up by the eponymous character in François Truffaut's film *The Story of Adèle H.* (1975), a story of the unrequited love of Victor Hugo's younger daughter. In one scene, Adèle is seen kneeling in front of a picture of her beloved. The portrait hangs on the back wall of a wooden box with hinged doors in front.



*The Story of Adèle H.*, directed by François Truffaut, 1975

Adèle, just like Krasiński, places two candles on either side of the altar, which she also adorns with a bouquet of flowers. Kneeling, she stares at the portrait until her eyes well up with tears. Truffaut based his screenplay on the journal of Adèle Hugo, which contained the same idea as the letters to Delfina: love as a religion (December 24, 1839; I, 101), one that, along with ecstasy, involves rituals and relics. Not only does Krasiński ask his beloved to store her picture (painted by Scheffer) "in a light leather cover that opens in the front" (November 4, 1845; II, 797), modeled after little wayside Christian shrines, but as he awaits the delivery of the canvas, he paraphrases the high priest Simeon's words about Christ himself: "When I see it, I will say: 'Now I may depart.'" (October 25, 1845; II, 780). Krasiński hides Delfina's likeness from the eyes of others. When his friend Bolesław Potocki pays him a visit, her portrait is stowed away into a chest, only to be returned to the commode once the guest has left. The poet even covers the image whenever he leaves the house. "I couldn't bear the thought," he explains to Delfina, "that the housekeeper or maid [...] might look at it or touch it to wipe the dust from it with a cloth." (November 17, 1841; I, 360). The count decides to "dust it" himself every day.<sup>2</sup>

There are a great many similar passages. "Your picture lives mystically [...]. I am in love with it." (December 1[-2], 1841; I, 377-378). It is no wonder then that difference between the person and her likeness is blurred. "Hurry to Monikarz and don't leave without yourself." (October 26, 1845; II, 786). When the portrait of his beloved arrives, Delfina herself is splintered and Krasiński takes note of this transformation: "you are at once my multitude and unity," he writes (December 12[-13], 1843; II,

195). A specific likeness corresponds to each Delfina:

'You, the Roman, you, the Alpine and you, the Nicean,' I say to them, not with my lips, but with the waves of blood that murmur in my heart! And I don't know which to prefer, and I prefer none of them and I would let myself be slaughtered for each of them, and I love every one, because I love you! (December 12[-13], 1843; II, 195).

It is for this reason that Krasiński must correct himself in another letter to Delfina, in which he describes the sensations the portraits evoke in him: "looking at you – all of you, I meant to say," he writes, changing the singular into the plural. (December 12[-13], 1843; II, 195).

Thus, in Krasiński's letters, to love means to look, and this synonymity is aptly expressed by the metaphor I borrow from him in the subheading:

Know that my heart is Argus; its thousand eyes gaze at the thousand moments spent with you. *My heart is loaded with pupils like diamonds* and each bears the impression of the spirit of a single place, a single hour. (January 31, 1844; II, 271; emphasis added).

As one might expect from the heart of a Romantic, this heart also sees "more things (...) than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Krasiński might not conjure up images of spirits returning from the afterlife, but the poet does have visions of a different sort. One of his letters to Delfina contains a fragment that could most aptly be described as "antiquated."

The letter is dated December 13, 1841, when the poet was in Munich and Potocka was in Paris. Krasiński considers the meaning of the upcoming date of December 24, which pagans considered a magical time, he notes, and which Christians celebrate as "the celebration of the birth of God on Earth." He then writes:

Listen: this year, at 12 in the evening, remember that I will be alone in my room and I ask you to be alone too, if you can; flex your will so that you will appear to me here. Accept in your spirit my will to see you; pause for a moment and want it! I, meanwhile, will do the same for you – I will order him who constitutes my outer form to tear away from me so that I may stand before you for a moment; I will pause with all my heart so that you

painting indeed: my eyes do not glance up towards it boldly, but remain lowered. Nor do my lips rise to place at least a kiss of peace upon its brow, no; my entire soul would gladly confess all its sins and evil deeds before it, gladly beg for mercy, for forgiveness, before crying out at long last: "My lady, lead me into eternity." (November 16[-17], 1843).

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and well-heard “languages,” ones that were gradually forgotten or marginalized in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their reconstruction is one of the purposes of this article.

### “Like Light, Like Magnetism”

Much would be explained by the voice of the other side. Unfortunately, Delfina’s letters have not survived, and thus it is impossible to determine whether she also experienced such “appearances,” in the words of Krasiński who attempted in various ways to bring out the sensuality of his experience. Nor is there a way to determine how frequently the poet himself experienced them – the gradual disappearance of these descriptions in his correspondence may well be the result of an editor’s hand at work, and the manuscripts no longer exist.<sup>3</sup> In what context could we then place the quoted passages? How can we find out whether the experience described was within the realm of the everyday, whether it was a credible narrative that could be mentioned in public? It seems that Krasiński himself can provide a partial answer to these questions. The context for the appearances is the concept of animal magnetism, which was well known to Krasiński’s contemporaries: “It is only my mind, magnetically inclined, that detached your figure from you and placed it before me.” (October 31, 1844; II, 551). In the same paragraph the poet mentions the concept of the appearance: “what [is] all-magnetism, if not an appearance stemming from the will of a spirit directed strongly and constantly at something.” Elsewhere he adds: “magnetism [is] nothing more than some spirit, some life, some force being led to an entirely external expression of all the faculties that lie within it, meaning a miraculous revelation!” (March 6[–7], 1844; II, 340).

Magnetism in the writings of Krasiński is a topic worthy of a lengthy study and there have already been some publications on the subject.<sup>4</sup> What appears to be most characteristic is the fact that the poet was practically uninterested in the therapeutic dimension of magnetism, defined by the creator of the concept, Franz Anton Mesmer, as a “universal medium for curing and preserving mankind.”<sup>5</sup> Krasiński makes practically no mention of it in his 1857 essay *Magnetyczność* [Magnetism]. He does, of course, borrow from Mesmer the concept of “a fluid that mediates in the human body”<sup>6</sup> (a notion completely abandoned by magnetizers in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century). While Mesmer saw disturbances in this vital fluid as the source of all disease, Krasiński associated it with love, charisma and, most importantly, with the souls of the dead.

To Krasieński, the fluid that “serves as the buckle of the spirit, clasped to the body” (M, 163), “in other spheres of social life it gushes brilliantly from the eyes of a speaker on stage, from the eyes of a hero in the heat of battle, wielding the internal thunder of his spirit. That same fluid, in love between the sexes, evokes extraordinary phenomena that also affect people from a distance” (M, 162). Most importantly, the author points out that this fluid could serve these spirits as “as flimsy garments, as fleeting organs whose adoption would allow them to enter into contact with us” (M, 164). In “this fluidity or radiance that flows from us,” Krasieński writes, they would find “a certain type of disembodied corporeality that nevertheless remains corporeal” (M, 164). Krasieński thus does condemn the spiritualist séances that were becoming fashionable at the time, but not because he regards them as a mystification. He was concerned that “the mere touch of a table” would conjure not the spirits of the saved, but those of the damned, “who in the past were consorted with only through devilish rituals” (M, 165).

Mesmer, were he to read Krasieński’s article, would of course have been furious. He made great efforts to keep his theory from being associated with the occult. He didn’t foresee that the semi-sleep state induced in patients by the hand movements of the magnetizer (whose intention was to rebalance the fluids) would be regarded by the Romantics as the state of being in the netherworld. Adam Crabtree makes note of this unexpected turn of events: “Mesmer, who considered himself a rightful son of the Enlightenment, realized that his beloved system was being used to support what he himself regarded as irrational and unprovable superstition.”<sup>7</sup> In Krasieński’s *Magnetyczność*, communication between the living and the dead with the help of the vital fluid clearly belongs to the realm of late 19<sup>th</sup> century spiritualism, along with its attempts to make its discourse more scientific and its introduction (for that very purpose) of the concept of ectoplasm. It is telling that Krasieński wrote his essay the very same year in which *The Spirits’ Book* was published by Allan Kardec, author of the peculiar postulate: “Spiritism will either be scientific, or it won’t exist at all.” Perhaps that claim would have been seconded by Krasieński, who wrote of the spirits that came from the netherworld: “There is nothing in this assumption that contradicts reason” (*Magnetyczność*, 164).

Can the descriptions of the conjuration of the spirit of Delfina, who was still alive at the time, be compared to *Magnetyczność*? I believe they can. The similarity of certain images is striking. The external shape that tears off from the body and

soars through space to finally make an impression on some surface resembles the spirits capturing the "radiance that flows from us." Both texts contain odd turns of phrase that testify to an attempt at transcending the traditional dichotomies of spirit and matter or body and mind. "The sensuality of matter, but without its burden," which appears in a letter to Delfina, corresponds to a "type of disembodied corporeality that nevertheless remains corporeal" in *Magnetyczność*.

The spiritualist interpretation of magnetism is not, however, the only context that for Delfina's appearances. Another is optics. Krasieński attempts to explain this journey of the external shape, this doubling of the person, this "tripling and centupling of the spirit" using the laws of physics. He asks Delfina, "Why would your form be unable to multiply itself a thousand times and fly to me over the air waves like light, like magnetism?" (December 24, 1839; I, 98). After all, Krasieński writes, there are ways of proving the flight of "forms" through the air waves, the instantaneous travel of "external shapes." Reflections in the mirror and the daguerreotype testify to these processes: "Light," the poet explains, "can be reflected, and having only carried the form away, can appear in a mirror separately from the body, [and it can] multiply that form endlessly and transfer onto a daguerreotype" (early February, 1842; I, 509). Thus the light, having carried away the external shape of Delfina, can also transport it and reflect it in the eyes of Krasieński hundreds of kilometres away.

The poet therefore attempts to prove that what others consider to be supernatural is not supernatural at all; his visions are no miracle, but can be comprehended by the mind. It is all the result of rays passing through a lens, not an apparition but an appearance. Krasieński describes that which might seem magical as something that can be scientifically proven. He is no different in his efforts from the spiritualists who, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, began founding institutes devoted to the study the materialization of spirits. But the phrase "like light, like magnetism" suggests yet another level of confusion between science and magic. Recall that the daguerreotype process, to which Krasieński compares Delfina's appearances, was said to be miraculous in the early years following its appearance.

In her reconstruction of the terms in which the photographic process was discussed up to the late 1850s, Małgorzata Maria Grąbczewska points out that it was often linked to a romantic concept of nature, wherein nature could not be thoroughly



studied or controlled.<sup>8</sup> The daguerreotype, which was regarded above all else as a trace left by light<sup>9</sup> – Nicéphore Niépce, Daguerre's partner, used the term "heliography" or "sun writing" – was long treated as the uncanny revelation of hidden powers of nature: a mystery or a miracle. This was not just the position held by laymen who wrote for instance that the daguerreotype as an invention was "shrouded in a veil of mystery."<sup>10</sup> Even William Henry Fox Talbot, who discovered one of the earliest photographic methods, the calotype, sums it up thus:

The phenomenon which I have now briefly mentioned appears to me to partake of the character of the *marvellous*, almost as much as any fact which physical investigation has yet brought to our knowledge.<sup>11</sup>

Krasiński treats the daguerreotype images of Delfina like any other likenesses of his beloved, carefully preparing the setting, gazing at them for hours on end and sometimes crying. Yet he perceives in them a certain advantage: "There is no pencil that could so faithfully capture the perfect shape of your face," which he attributes to chance or Providence. It was thanks to some force beyond the power of humans that "you were there with all your spirit on this metal plate – there, I say – with your St. John's spirit, and yet [it was] the same spirit as you!" (February 12[–13], 1843; I, 717).

Delfina's appearances are therefore, on the one hand, of a spirit that appears thanks to its ability to capture the fluid that serves the living "as the buckle of the spirit, clasped to the body," and on the other hand – a wave of light. At the same time, each explanation reinforces the other. Srdjan Smajic accounts for this intriguing entanglement of optics and the occult in his writings on the relationship between spiritualism and the development of the detective novel:

The wave theory of light [the development of which was restarted by Thomas Young who estimated the wavelength of light in 1801 – author's note] resuscitated previous speculations on the ether and proved immensely useful in constructing scientifically buttressed claims for the existence of invisible spirits and higher intelligences.<sup>12</sup>

It should be noted that the daguerreotype played a role similar to that of Young's experiment. In its own way, the former also contributed to the reinforcement of belief in invisible forces. However bizarre it may seem today that Krasiński likened

the conjuration of spirits to developing a photograph, one should remember that to many of his contemporaries developing a photograph was like conjuring a spirit.

### A Digression: Photographing the Spirit, and the Spirit of Photography

The notion that a picture is like a spirit was discussed by Roland Barthes who defined the photograph as the return of the dead.<sup>13</sup> But what Barthes treats as a metaphor was taken literally in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> I am referring to the extraordinary popularity of so-called spirit photography: pictures depicting indistinct, blurry, semi-transparent figures emerging from behind the subjects of the portrait. While modern photography experts are able to quickly identify these images as the product of simple techniques such as the dual exposure of a single negative, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century such photographs were veiled in mystery. Many believed that the faded figure “haunting” the portrayed person was in fact a ghost: the spectre of someone who had died and was sending a message from another world by way of a trace



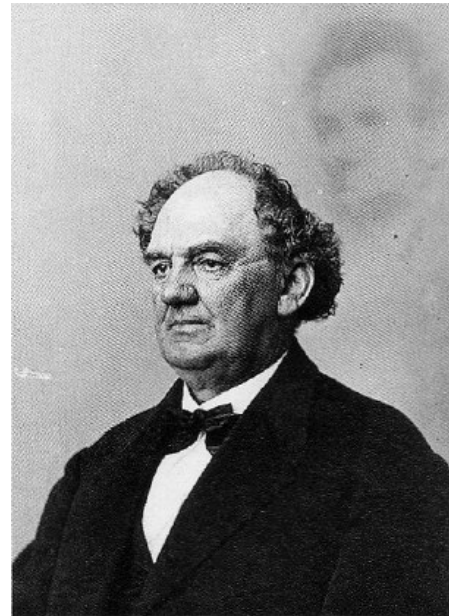
William Mumler, *Autoportrait*, 1861

reflected on light-sensitive material. According to Arthur Conan Doyle – who, in addition to the Sherlock Holmes stories, wrote a two-volume history of spiritualism – the first spirit photographs appeared in 1851, but no prints from the 1850s have survived. The oldest surviving photograph of a ghost, a self-portrait by William Mumler (1832–1884), dates back to 1861. Mumler took it when he was still an amateur. The image portrays an indistinct, white shape emerging from behind the photographer’s back. He recognized the figure to be a cousin of his who had been dead for twelve years.

Pictures of ghosts, or spirit photography, owe their beginnings to chance. The first photographic images were made on polished, silver-coated copper plates that could be exposed multiple times if the daguerreotypist failed to achieve the desired result on the first attempt. If the plate wasn’t cleaned thoroughly, a trace of the first image would appear when the subsequent one was developed in mercury vapour. Once exposure times were reduced sufficiently to start photographing people, photographers would often discover semi-transparent figures in their images.

These “immaterial, translucent figures which are the result of a double exposure, undoubtedly resemble the uncanny representations of spirits depicted in Romanticism.”<sup>15</sup> In this way, a simple mistake gave rise to a new photographic technique.

It is William Mumler who is regarded as the precursor of this technique. While he was still an amateur when he took the 1861 self-portrait, he decided to take up ghost photography as a profession after recognizing his deceased cousin in the image. By the late 1860s, Mumler had set up his own studio in New York and the portraits he took there mostly depict the Civil War casualties with whom numerous grieving American families wished to communicate. Among his best known pictures is a photograph of Mary Todd Lincoln accompanied by the ghost of her dead husband, Abraham Lincoln. This image continues to be remembered not only due to its association with the name of a U.S. president, but also because his ghost played a key role in the downfall of Mumler’s career. He was brought to trial for forgery and fraud and one of the prosecution’s witnesses, the entertainment mogul Phineas Taylor Barnum, commissioned his own portrait with the ghost of Lincoln from the photographer Abraham Bogardus. Unsurprisingly, Bogardus fulfilled his assignment perfectly. His picture of Barnum and Lincoln’s ghost was presented as evidence in court, convincing the jury that the ghost of Lincoln in the picture of Mary Lincoln was fake.<sup>16</sup>



*Abraham Bogardus, Phineas Taylor Barnum (with Lincoln's ghost)*

A similar trial took place in Europe six years later. However in this case the defendant, Édouard Isidore Buguet (1840–1901),<sup>17</sup> immediately confessed. Furthermore, shortly after the trial Buguet submitted to the national library a series of his self-portraits depicting the photographer with the ghost of Paganini, his own doppelgänger, and a levitating chair, parodying spirit photography. Signed by the photographer, they bear the caption “anti-spirit photographer.” Buguet’s “late” work was continued by Eugène Thiébault, known for his images depicting skeletons wrapped in bedsheets. But images created for the purpose of amusement had already begun to appear during Mumler’s career. Writing about the early 1860s,

Chéroux points out that “spirit photography had two faces. It was like Janus, used both for mystification and demystification.” On the one hand, it “reinforced the spiritualist hypothesis by demonstrating the possibility of communicating with the dead, if only visually. On the other hand, it poked gentle fun at that belief.”<sup>18</sup>

It seems interesting that even after Buguet had admitted to the forgery, his clients did not cease to believe that the hazy figures in the pictures were actual depictions of their dead loved ones.<sup>19</sup> This is a significant complement to the story of the Mumler trial, during which one picture of a ghost served as evidence against another. Both the photographers’ stories point to a moment in the history of photography when its encounter with spiritualism led to the reappearance and re-emphasizing of the question of agency. In the introduction to his book about the Mumler trial, Louis Kaplan explains the difficulties faced by scholars researching that moment in history. Kaplan proposes to approach the problematic nature of agency inherent in spirit photography through the use of Bruno Latour’s concept of iconoclasm:



Edward Isidore Buget, *Balzac; The Portrait of Amelie Boudet, wife of Allan Kardec, with husband's ghost; Antispiritist Photography; Eugene Thiebault, counterfeit of Photography of Ghost no 2*

If the discourse of spirit photography produces truth effects for those who believe in the divine agency of these images, it also produces fraudulent effects for those who believe in their human fabrication. In other words, these ghostly developments offer an exemplar of the type of iconoclasm that the sociologist of science Bruno Latour defines as “what happens when there is uncertainty about the exact role of the hand at work in the production of a mediator.”<sup>20</sup>

## Conjuring Delfina

Krasiński doesn’t paint Delfina himself. But neither does he leave any leeway to the painters; he anxiously participates in their work. Convinced that the “brush of a damsel better conveys a woman’s features,” he chooses a female artist. He spares no criticism regarding not only the size of the miniature, but also certain general ideas belonging to what one might call the philosophy of the portrait. He goes as far as to instruct Delfina herself: “Dress yourself in black – you look best in black, particularly in velvet – and tie your pearls into a knot on your breast [...] so

their ends rest on the backdrop of your black dress." (February 5, 1842; I, 525). He is just as adamant in his demands of Scheffer, an artist in whom, one might imagine, Krasiński would place a bit more trust given his admiration for the painter. Yet Krasiński employs the same mentoring tone with him: "add some more hair, shift the hair a bit onto the cheeks, and the face will appear smaller." (October 14, 1845; II, 765). He doesn't hesitate to involve his wife in Scheffer's work. The painter, if we are to believe Krasiński, talked to Eliza in person and was grateful for her comments. Having implemented the proposed modifications ("spreading expression over the cheeks," "reducing the lips," "more inspiration in the eyes"), he assures the poet in a letter that the changes have elevated the painting to a "masterpiece of beauty" (November 4, 1845; II, 797). Krasiński never paints Delfina himself. But he wants "to steal each stroke of the brush" of a hired female portraitist. (February 18, 1839; I, 26). In the admission quoted at the very beginning of this study, a meaningful duplication stands out. One image is created on canvas while the other is formed before the poet's eyes. It is, in a sense, an image of the first image. Thus, though Krasiński doesn't paint, he does occasionally perceive certain parallels in what he does: "Paints blaze in the very essence of my soul," he writes. (December 13[-14], 1841; I, 411). After all, doesn't he admit elsewhere: "Today I will paint you at Lago di Nemi."? (March 1, 1842; I, 578). Krasiński feels like the creator of Delfina's paintings. He feels like the creator of his lover herself: "Oh, if only you know how I love [you], how I love [you], like Raphael loved his Madonnas." (November 16, 1843; II, 152).

The equation Krasiński makes between loving and creating pictures acquires additional meaning in the context of his interest in the writing of Joseph Ennemoser, author of a two-volume history of magic, a manifestation of which he believed to be magnetism. In his view, paintings enabled one to take control of the portrayed person. Krasiński translates entire excerpts from Ennemoser, including this sentence: "Similarly, it is also possible for me to bring the spirit of my foe in a painting, to turn him into a painting and then to crush him, to tear him apart, as I see fit." (February 2, 1842; I, 512). Thus the heart loaded with pupils can resemble a loaded pistol. Krasiński certainly explores these possibilities with regard to the paintings of Delfina: "This painting [...] lives and is transformed by the internal light of the world, and by the internal light that glows within me does it change its form, expression, and features." (October 31 [November 1], 1843; II, 124). It is precisely for

this reason that the portrait is at times “angelically calm” and “infinitely sombre,” at others “full of life,” and yet at others “mocking.” Does the poet wield similar power over the appearances of his lover?

The letter in which Krasiński makes an appointment to see her on Christmas Eve suggests that to be the case. The text is punctuated with verbs that are manifestations of power: “command,” “want,” “force.” His magnetically-inclined mind paints the picture itself: “Immense desire, longing, dreaming, if constant and uninterrupted, acting continuously, must finally attain the power that has been called magnetic, the power to attract beloved places and forms, or to depart for them and reside among them.” (September 7, 1842; II, 34). He names this capability “all-magnetism”: that which transforms the will to create images into the ability to wield power over them.

But to Krasiński, such a balance of forces exists only as far as the romantic narrative is modelled after paintings; it changes completely once the point of reference shifts to photography. When paired in the formula “like light, like magnetism” with a spirit that draws its body from the bodies of those to whom it appears, it indicates a completely different process. What matters in this process is the relinquishing of power, surrendering to the rule of an external force.

Grąbczewska sees the foundations of the language of photography in “philosophical and world-view dilemmas oscillating between Romantic illuminism and faith in the power of nature on the one hand, and the Positivist belief in the progress of civilization and the key role of man on the other.”<sup>21</sup> The former model resonates more strongly in Krasiński’s writing precisely because of the entanglement of the photographic process in spiritualism. If developing a picture is like conjuring a spirit, then it follows that it not about creating an image but about passively waiting for something to become visible. This equation between the spirit and the photograph tears down the narrative that grants full power to the love-struck subject. This happens largely due to the evocative vision of spirits “clutching” at the fluid flowing from human bodies “as if at garments.” (*Magnetyczność*, 164). One may conjecture, based on this vision, that the love-struck subject, who is not a painter but a photographer, does not create an image on a separate plane, but himself becomes the plane. To reminisce, to imagine, and to await appearances is to behave like a light-sensitive material. Krasiński writes: “I myself am becoming a *camera obscura*, and the past flickers over me like light, daguerreotyping

moments of happiness into my heart with its sad, grey rays." (January 8[–9], 1840; I, 133).

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## Footnotes

1 Letter dated December 12[–13], 1841. Zygmunt Krasiński, *Listy do Delfiny Potockiej* [Letters to Delfina Potocka], edited and with an introduction by Z. Sudolski (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1975), vol. I, 402. I refer to this three-volume edition throughout this article. Subsequent quotations will be cited in parentheses with the date of the letter, the volume number in Roman numerals following a semicolon and the page number in Arabic numerals following a comma.

2 Mickiewicz's Gustaw describes his reverence for likenesses of his beloved in an identical fashion:

"So do I venerate her lifeless image  
That I dare never soil it with my lips.  
And when at night by lamp or pale moon's visage  
I dress my bed, no piece of clothing slips  
From my breast before I shade her view,  
Lying thereon this sacred sprig of yew."

Adam Mickiewicz, *Forefather's Eve, Part IV*, trans. Charles S. Kraszewski, (Smashwords Edition, 2015), 42.

3 The manuscripts of Krasiński's letters do Delfina, which were estimated to number five to six thousand in the 1870s, were mostly burned during World War II. The edition I use (edited by Zbigniew Sudolski) is based on the incomplete three-volume anthology compiled by Adam Żółtowski in 1930–1938. It was Żółtowski who selected the letters that were later included in the post-war edition.

- 4 Among more recent work, see Agnieszka Ziółowicz, "'Na brzegu nieznaney otchłani.' Z antropologii Zygmunta Krasińskiego" ['At the shore of an unknown abyss.' From the Anthropology of Zygmunt Krasiński], *Ruch Literacki* 6, vol. 54 (2013): 321.
- 5 Franz Anton Mesmer, *Précis historique des faits relatifs au magnétisme-animal jusques en avril 1781*, (London, 1781). Accessed December 9, 2014. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k75475m/f11.image>.
- 6 Zygmunt Krasiński, "Magnetyczność," [Magnetism] in: *Pisma Zygmunta Krasińskiego* [The Writings of Zygmunt Krasiński], ed. J. Czubek, vol. VII: *Pisma filozoficzne i polityczne* [Philosophical and Political Writings] (Kraków–Warsaw, 1912), 161. Subsequent quotations come from the same edition and are listed as "Magnetyczność," followed by the page number.
- 7 Adam Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud. Magnetic Sleep and the Roots of Psychological Healing* (New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 1993), 67–68.
- 8 Małgorzata Maria Grąbczewska, "Miscellanea photographica. Narodziny języka fotografii" [Miscellanea Photographica. The Birth of the Language of Photography], *Teksty Drugie* 4 (2013).
- 9 Krasiński was not the first to employ the mirror analogy to explain how the daguerreotype worked. His contemporaries added, of course, that a daguerreotype differed from a mirror in that it captured the trace left by light. See André Rouille, *Fotografia. Między dokumentem a sztuką współczesną* [Photography. Between document, trans. O. Hedemann (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2007), 28–29.
- 10 "Daguerrotyp, albo malowidła Daguerre, działaniem samego światła wykonane" [Daguerrotype, or the paintings of Daguerre, action executed by light itself], *Das Pfennig-Magazin*, trans. Agnieszka Ziółowicz in *Magazyn Powszechny* 6 (1839): 44.
- 11 Quoted in: Grąbczewska, "Miscellanea photographica," 13–14.
- 12 Srdjan Smajic, *Ghost-Seers, Detectives and Spiritualists. Theories of Vision in Victorian Literature and Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7.
- 13 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).



14 Raymond Bellour, while observing that the first photographic plates required long exposure times, writes about the spectral nature of the depicted figures in general.

15 Clément Chéroux, "Ghostly Dialectics. Spirit Photography in Entertainment and Belief," in *The Perfect Medium: Photography and the Occult*, ed. C. Chéroux et al. (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2005), 45.

16 See Louis Kaplan, *The Strange Case of William Mumler, Spirit Photographer* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

17 Chéroux considers the reasons why spirit photography appeared in France over a decade after the United States. He finds an explanation in the stance of Allan Kardec who published an article in *Revue spirite* in March 1863, in which he cautions readers about Mumler's achievements. He cites the case of a certain English lord who was convinced that he had seen the ghost of his dead sister in a photograph, only to learn that the image was the result of an improperly cleaned photographic plate. Kardec also mentions the use of the same process by English photographers to produce fantastic scenes. See Chéroux, "Ghostly Dialectics."

18 Chéroux, "Ghostly Dialectics," 28.

19 Gustave Le Bon discusses this phenomenon in Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: a Study of the Popular Mind* (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1896.)

20 Kaplan, *The Strange Case of William Mumler*, 3.

21 Grąbczewska, "Miscellanea photographica," 28.