

THE LIMPING GAIT OF POST-TOTALITARIAN TESTIMONY

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Abstract: This paper aims at answering a series of questions regarding the testimonial possibility and expressibility of the extreme experiences caused totalitarian experiments. Post-totalitarian witness literature consists in testimonies of surviving witnesses, so far defined as incomplete accounts of partial experiences, in contrast to the complete testimony of reaching the limits of life and humanity, undergone by the majority - the so-called integral witnesses- who did not survive and will never be able to testify. This lacuna is used by criticism to define complete testimony, confined to impossibility and inexpressibility, along with a symbol of the integral witness: the Muslim, representing the non-human created by totalitarianism, who will never recover, return to life and humanity to testify. Yet, the discovery of a series of testimonies brought by surviving, former Muslims casts a radically different light upon the entire conceptual construct: by surviving, recovering and returning to humanity with the voice of testimony, this Post-Muslim brings complete testimony along, into the realm of possibility and expressibility. Complete testimony is set free from its absolute impossibility and inexpressibility and integrated into the survivor’s expressible and possible testimony, hereby giving it the weight of testimony about humanity, about its limits, about reaching - but maybe most important - about transgressing them. It is therefore important that these complete testimonies about experiencing the limits of life and humanity, brought the surviving integral witnesses of the Holocaust be supplemented with the complete testimonies of the similar path, brought by survivors of the communist re-education experiment.

Keywords: testimony, totalitarianism, lacuna, survivor, re-education

Introduction

Any discussion about post-totalitarian witness literature implies the preliminary conceptual investigation of the scope of testimony itself. One of the most comprehensive theoretical enquiries of the operational concepts in this field is that developed by the Italian philosopher G.Agamben, using “*the Muslim*”- an icon of the Nazi concentration camp - as a symbol of the *complete witness*.¹ The complete witness is solely entitled to testimony, having earned his authority as an integral witness by making that experience *up to the end*², yet he is precisely hereby put in impossibility of ever testifying. The complete testimony of integral witnesses is deemed to definitive impossibility: having reached *the end*, the complete witness cannot be the one to testify. On the other hand, the surviving witness has the vocation of testimony but can only account for his own experience, which did not reach *the very end*, and is thus seen as incomplete. Therefore, the gait of post-totalitarian testimony is limping, since it alternatively relies on the testimonial possibility of the incomplete experience of surviving witnesses or on the testimonial impossibility of the complete experience of the non-surviving, integral witnesses. G.Agamben sees therein a contribution to a new ethical territory that

¹The association between the common prisoner, *the Muslim*, and the *complete witness* initially proposed by Primo Levi;

² to death generally speaking;

implies the ability of „listening to the untold.”³ A similar idea has been pointed out by the literary critic H. Engdahl by reiterating the central topic previously approached by S.Felman and D.Laub⁴ “for a tie to be re-established between the victim and humanity, perhaps they have to meet in this very lack of understanding of what happened.”⁵

The lacuna of testimony

The key issue here is beyond the circumstantial aspects of the event: it is the way the experience of the event itself pertains or not to being shared, contained by language and subscribed to expressibility; the vulnerable point of testimony is the fact that the testimony of these types of events⁶ maintains a *lacuna*,⁷ as a constitutive part: testimony is brought by a witness and the possibility for a witness to testify, to become a testifying witness depends on the latter's survival. This surviving witness testifies - by and along with his own testimony - for the absence of the testimony⁸ belonging to those who did not survive, for their path *up to the end*, that cannot be borne witness to, that eludes his comprehension: hence, testimony relies partly upon an empty space: post-totalitarian testimony testifies for something that cannot be testified for. Initiated by this definition of the subject of testimony, the entire Agambenian construct becomes the „interrogation of this lacuna - or, more specific, the attempt of listening to it.”⁹ The very notion of lacuna - in the sense used here - may be subject to a separate discussion. However, it is noteworthy that - far from being a purely theoretical abstraction - the term is borrowed from those who are truly entitled to create such an association, from the surviving witnesses. P.Levi, a surviving witness himself, radically carves up the issue of testimony by clearly dissociating the destiny of the common prisoner - the overwhelming majority of which does not survive – and that of the surviving prisoner, a protégée of fate, who under exceptional circumstances is still alive, after having undergone this experience:”There is another *lacuna*, in any of the testimonies: the witnesses are by definition survivors (...). Nobody has reported about the fate of the common prisoner, because for him, survival was materially impossible. The common prisoner has been described by me, whenever I speak about the *Muslim*: yet, the Muslims *did not speak*“.¹⁰ E.Wiesel, another surviving witness, also prominent for his testimonies, refers to the same binary and elliptical configuration of testimony, where the two parts seem to be separated by an empty space, lacking any real point of junction:”Those who did not make this experience will never know, what it consisted in; those who did experience it will never share it; not

³ G. Agamben, *Ce rămâne din Auschwitz. Arhiva și martorul*, Cluj, Ed. Idea Design & Print, 2006, p.8.

⁴ main idea of Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's work, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, New York, Routledge, 1992.

⁵ H. Engdahl, *Witness Literature - Philomela's Tongue. Introductory Remarks on Witness literature*, Proceedings of the Nobel Centennial Symposium, Stockholm: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd.2002, p.9.

⁶ generally caused by totalitarian rule, sharing the surviving / non-surviving witnesses ratio issue, regardless of whether it is the Nazi concentration camp practicing extermination or the Communist Gulag practicing re-education of detainees.

⁷ Concept theorised by G.Agamben, initially coined by P.Levi;

⁸ integral testimony exclusively restricted to the testimony confined in impossibility;

⁹ G. Agamben, *Ce rămâne din Auschwitz. Arhiva și martorul*, Cluj, Ed.Idea Design & Print, 2006, p.7.

¹⁰ P.Levi, *Conversazioni e interviste*, p.215.

truly, not *to the end*. The past belongs to the dead¹¹ concludes E. Wiesel, only enhancing the awareness of this lacuna and building an additional wall within the elliptical space at the core of testimony. He decrees the parallel failure of the two structural constituents of testimony, on one hand admonishing the lack of absolute¹² consistence of the possible testimony of the surviving witness and on the other hand, documenting the absence of the complete testimony of integral witnesses, who have disappeared in that *end*, the limit of this experience, thus isolating complete testimony in the register of impossibility. The *lacuna of testimony* consist in the fact that testimony is possible only if uttered by a surviving witness, yet the latter is only an exception, of minimal relevance when compared to the exponentially wider majority of common prisoners, who did not survive. This type of testimony has been so far coined by criticism as the space of a lacuna, the disjuncture point of this ellipsis being placed somewhere at the line differentiating between survival / non-survival, where spoken testimony comes into being and unspoken testimony sinks into evanescence. In the light of this hypothesis, at least two further questions arise almost automatically: What if the complete testimony of this experience – *up to the end* - could be shared by an integral witness, returning to life from that outermost limit of life and humanity? And, on the other hand, what if one could follow Dante's footsteps and be able to transcend the boundary of this world and get access to the complete testimony beyond it? Since the latter alternative - Dante's journey into the after-world - has not been replicated yet, the focus rests upon the former option, namely that of an integral witness returning with his complete testimony of the experience undergone up to its limit. This situation exists in very few exceptional cases of survivors of the limit situation of the concentration camp, but it was also made possible on a larger scale under the specific circumstances of another totalitarian experiment, namely the communist re-education experiment.¹³ This experiment aimed at transforming the detainees of political prisons into the very opposite of what they had been before, destroying by means of systematic extreme physical and psychological torture¹⁴ every aspect of their person (values, beliefs, personal attachments, and self-esteem), thus altering and substituting identity with another matrix, that of the new, re-educated communist man. This process implied keeping the victim alive, during all the stages of the re-education procedure, which brought them to the limit of life and humanity, only to allow them to slip back to their senses and to reason to repeat the process all over again, until the desired result - genuine, profound and complete re-education - was obtained. Re-education meant, in this case, the complete annihilation of all the person's former characteristics and the substitution thereof with new ones, making re-education an act of destruction of one life (with all its attributes: beliefs, values and attachments) and of re-creation of another life within the same person's body¹⁵. The percentage of surviving witnesses of the re-education experiment is therefore higher, their testimonies bringing the account of literally touching the bottom and experiencing the limits of humanity in this experiment. This makes the existing, spoken testimony of re-education relevant for the current

¹¹ E. Wiesel, *For Some Measure of Humility*, in Sh'ma. A Journal of Jewish Responsibility, no.5, 31 October 1975, p. 314.

¹² In the terms used by E. Wiesel as walking that road „*to the end*“;

¹³ similar to brainwashing techniques;

¹⁴ including mutual and (self)denunciation/mutilation/humiliation/betrayal /- in short: mutual and (self) destruction.

¹⁵ also relevant according to Agambenian interpretation of bio-politics and bare life;

analysis. Is this testimony brought by the integral witnesses of re-education not equally valid, as another instance of complete testimony about reaching the very boundary of life and humanity¹⁶ caused by totalitarianism? In order to answer that, we need to take a closer look at the logical and conceptual background, as coined by recent criticism and check whether it is capable of harbouring the emergence of a new concept, namely that of factually possible, existing complete testimony of experiencing the limit(s) of life and humanity. Following an inductive logical pattern, the subject of testimony (especially in the context of the concentration camp experience) has been so far defined in relation to its existence and its possibility of factual manifestation: if testimony exists, then the witness has survived. This inductive reasoning narrows the definition by another exclusive stipulation: if the witness survived, then he has not made the experience *up to the end* and his testimony is therefore disqualified, as being of low relevance and consistency, when compared to the dense and highly relevant integral testimony of the many who passed away. Spoken testimony receives cumulatively two limitations: as an exception, this type of testimony is not relevant for the rule; moreover, in this exceptionality of survival also resides the incompetence of bringing testimony about an enormous and unknown space - that of the complete experience and integral testimony. Integral testimony is so far definable, as the potential¹⁷ testimony of the true witness, the integral witness: "It is not us the survivors, I repeat, who are the true witnesses..."¹⁸ insists P.Levi. Bringing the analysis back to its starting point, to the witness, a new term is introduced, as an iconic representation of the *integral witness*: The Muslim is a symbol used to clarify the distinction permanently operated between witnesses and integral witnesses, between "we, who (...) have not touched the bottom"¹⁹ (the surviving witnesses) and "those who have seen the Gorgon"²⁰ (the integral witness). In an attempt to clarify the distinction between the two subtypes of witnesses and, implicitly, the two categories of testimony, as well as the dynamics of the relationship between them, P.Levi outlined a portrait of the *integral witness*, pinpointed by him in the figure of the Muslim. He emphasised reaching the end of life and reaching the end of their humanity as the two main distinctive features of the *Muslim*, and hence of the *integral witness*. The gap between them and the surviving witnesses widens, implying a sequence of several quasi-ontological levels: the Muslims - the integral witnesses - do not only fail to survive and die. They lose their humanity, but not to death. To be more specific, they die, but not before having lost their humanity."We who were favoured by fate tried, with more or less wisdom, to recount not only our fate but also that of the others, indeed of the drowned; but this was a discourse 'on behalf of third parties,' the story of things seen close at hand, not experienced personally. The destruction brought to an end, the job completed, was not told by anyone, just as no one ever returned to describe his own death. Even if they had paper and pen, the drowned would not have testified because their death had begun before that of their body... they had already lost the ability to observe, to remember, to compare and express themselves. We speak in their

¹⁶ making the experience *up to the end* repeatedly and being kept alive on purpose, despite of reaching the limits of life and humanity in this cyclic process not once, but several times.

¹⁷ the forever virtual and immaterial confined to the impossibility of ever becoming manifest;

¹⁸P.Levi *I sommersi e i salvati*, Torino, Einaudi, 1991, p.64.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.64.

²⁰ G.Agamben, *Ce rămâne din Auschwitz. Arhiva și martorul*, Cluj, Ed. Idea Design & Print, 2006, p.24.

stead, by proxy.”²¹ Hence, the gap between the surviving witness and the integral witness is presented by P.Levi and subsequently theorized by G.Agamben as one that cannot be overlooked: the two are not only divided by death, by the loss of life but also by the experience of the limit, of this *up to the end*, as a point of loss of humanity in the living body. The two are separated by the loss of humanity of life rather than the loss of the human life, as might be assumed at a first glance from the distinction survivor / non-survivor. This is the more significant lacuna of testimony, proclaimed by almost each of the surviving witnesses: It is not death reducing his testimony to silence. It is not the point of *after* death that the survivor cannot testify for, on behalf of those who reached it. It is this *before* death, which brings the surviving witness to inexpressibility. It is this condition, attainable and possible only under exceptional circumstances,²² when the end of life precedes death, and the remaining space is occupied by the non-human. It is this non-humanity that makes the surviving witness take a step back; it is this non-humanity he will outlive and be afterwards summoned to testify about it. It is this non-humanity he fails to testify for, denouncing his testimony as incomplete, irrelevant and lacunary. At this point, the testimony of such events seems condemned to this eternal limp, since it alternately relies on one hand, on the possible account of an incomplete experience and on the other hand, on the impossible testimony of the complete experience. Another important contribution to this topic²³ is brought by A. Solzhenitsyn’s in the second volume of the Gulag Archipelago, regarding the testimony about another instance of the past century totalitarianism, namely communist rule. Initially he is reiterating the very same idea, referred to as the lacuna of testimony in the terms used by P.Levi and G.Agamben: “Those who drank it bottoms up, those who tasted it at its fullest are in graves; they will never speak. The essence about the Archipelago camps will never be told by anyone”²⁴ he declares. Yet, as opposed to P.Levi, A. Solzhenitsyn²⁵ does not fail to spot an important aspect in addition to that: „but to find out the taste of the sea, even one sip is enough.”²⁶ The major achievement of this perspective is the fact that he manages to advocate equal consistency and relevance for both surviving testimony and integral testimony. Despite of proclaiming the immensity of the latter, A. Solzhenitsyn seems to manage to eliminate the (self) inhibition of testimony²⁷ and abolish its implicit presumed flaw of inexpressibility and incomprehensibility.

The Integral Witness - The Muslim

For a more accurate understanding of the operational terms under discussion, I suggest to closer investigate the original distinction witness/integral witness as initially coined by P.Levi. In his attempt to provide a concrete image for the abstract and paradoxical idea of the impossible, untold testimony of the many, who will never be able to testify, he chose the

²¹ G.Agamben, *Ce rămâne din Auschwitz. Arhiva și martorul*, Cluj, Ed. Idea Design & Print, 2006, p. 24.

²² The exception becomes the general rule of the camp in this respect.

²³ besides the S. Felman and D.Laub concept of *event without witnesses* and J.-F.Lyotard’s re-interpretation of negationist theories, according to which the *valid testimony of the gas chamber can only be brought after having succumbed in one*.

²⁴ A. Soljenițin, *Arhipelagul Gulag II*, Ed.Univers, București, 1977, p.6.

²⁵ a surviving witness of the Gulag himself

²⁶ Ibid. p.6.

²⁷ tributary maintained by P.Levi.

image of the Muslim²⁸ as an absolute symbol of impossibility, of the everlasting lacuna of testimony. *Muslim* is one of the terms used by camp jargon to describe those emaciated figures, on the boundary between life and death, “living corpses”²⁹ who will never be able to speak the language of testimony. “Their lives are short but their numbers countless; they, the Muslims, the doomed are the backbone of the camp. An anonymous and continuously renewed but always the same mass of non-people, who march and labour in silence, in whom the divine spark has gone out, too empty of everything they had to actually suffer: One finds it difficult to call their death a death, they do not fear it, being too exhausted to be aware of anything. They stick to my memory in their faceless presence, and if I were to sum up all the evil of our time in an image, I would choose this image so familiar to me.”³⁰ The Muslim is the inexpressible, the icon of the non-human created by the camps, whose face does not retain “any trace of thought.”³¹ He is voided even of basic instincts as they “don’t even defend themselves. After the first blow he’s down, and after another two he’s dead.”³² The term Muslim is just one of an entire synonymous series, describing this newly created element of reality. A new landmark was created and - since it was unprecedented - this implied imagining a term for this new concept. All descriptions contain a cyclical questioning of two attributes: being human and being alive. This unclear, sometimes confusing and ambiguous oscillation in defining the Muslim as the living non-human or the non-living human, however, constantly points at the two aspects questioned: humanity and life. The question is whether these beings are still human and if so, where is the life in them? The other question is whether these beings are still alive and if so, where is the human in them? „They gave up any reaction and became objects. At the same time they „gave up their quality of being a person”³³ reminding one of the Aristotelian object-man, who is nothing „but a log.”³⁴ Once created and introduced to reality, the Muslim becomes the nexus, not only for the other detainees, but for anyone who faces him. He seems to carry a subliminal message, expressed in a language common to all humans, regardless of any linguistic, hierarchic, national or doctrinaire gaps, saying in silence: “This is possible; for you too; for each and every one of you.” This is one reason why the Muslim is avoided by everyone: other detainees, SS staff, even the documentary lens of a camera prefers to rest upon masses of corpses than look a Muslim in the eye. Even though he is the icon of the camp in most testimonies, the Muslim has not been of key interest for historians, so far. G.Agamben emphasises the idea that “before being a camp of death, Auschwitz is the place of an unimagined experiment, where, beyond life and death, the Jew becomes a Muslim, and the human becomes non-human.”³⁵ Yet, according to

²⁸ Muslim—term used in the concentration camp to describe the prisoners that were in worst condition, emaciated, ill, voided of any will power, closest to death; used along with other parallel terms: in Dachau Kretiner [cretin], in Stuthof Kruppel [cripple], in Mauthausen Schwimmer [swimmer], in Neuengamme Kamele [camel], in Buchenwald müde Scheichs [tired sheik], in Ravensbruck Muselweiber [Muslim woman] or Schmuckstücke [jewel] in Sofsky *Die Ordnung des Terrors*, Frankfurt a.M, Fischer, 1993, p. 464.

²⁹ G.Agamben, *Ce rămâne din Auschwitz. Arhiva și martorul*, Cluj, Ed. Idea Design & Print, 2006, p.29.

³⁰ P.Levi, *Mai este oare acesta un om?*, Iași, Polirom, 2004, p.145.

³¹ P.Levi, *Mai este oare acesta un om?*, Iași, Polirom, 2004, pp.145-146

³² Z. Ryn și S.Klodzinski, *An der Grenze zwischen Leben und Tod. Eine Studie über die Erscheinung des Muselmans im Konzentrationslager*, in *Auschwitz-Hefte*, vol. 1, Weinheim și Basel, 1987, pp. 128.

³³ B.Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart*, Free Press 1967 p.207.

³⁴ Aristotel, *Metafizica*, București, Ed. Academiei R.P.R, 1965, p.135.

³⁵ G.Agamben, *Ce rămâne din Auschwitz. Arhiva și martorul*, Cluj, Ed. Idea Design & Print, 2006, p.37.

the starting point of this analysis, as P. Levi coined it, “the Muslims did not speak.” Well then, let us see if, indeed, no Muslim has ever spoken. Let us see if, indeed, the testimony of non-humanity³⁶ has never been uttered and remains impossible in the absolute sense. Non-humanity - and the Muslim as its symbol- is seen as a point of no return, as an irreversible state bringing along the categorical impossibility of testimony.

Overcoming impossibility and inexpressibility: the Post-Muslim

Despite of that, P. Levi admits in maximal conciseness and without getting into any details - in the form of a merely optional and irrelevant comment - that: “the one, who has seen the Gorgon, did not return to tell, or returned mute.”³⁷ Or? Returned? Mute? So, there is an alternative *or?* And there is a *returning Muslim?* Non-humanity is not an irreversible condition after all. It can be transgressed and overcome by humanity. So, there is recovery from non-humanity? Non-humanity can recover to humanity? Be this recovery exceptional and conditioned by survival, it still has the force necessary to bring a new light upon the entire dynamics of all concepts used up to this point. Since the Muslim-condition can be left behind, since it is possible to escape the Gorgon, in short if one can recover from “muslimship,”³⁸ then this is just another point on the axis of the experience to be testified: experiencing the limit of humanity, experiencing non-humanity. The existence of a recovered Muslim dissipates the fundamental disjunction between survivor and Muslim, which actually translates the dissociation between witness and integral witness. If the Muslim has returned, then the Muslim can survive - admits P. Levi, but he stops there. He specifically indicates that, even under these circumstances, the Muslim won’t be able to bring any change to the parameters of testimony, for he returned *mute*. According to P. Levi, the impossibility of testimony resists³⁹ even when the human recovers from non-humanity. Even if he survives, he won’t have the vocation of testimony, because the traces left by non-humanity upon the human will have severed his testifying potency⁴⁰ completely and left him behind mute. This analysis has so far discussed the conceptual structure of testimony, as coined surviving witnesses⁴¹ and the terms further theorised by criticism⁴² coming to this point, where the existence of one exception can divert the path and the terms of the entire discussion: What if the recovered and returned Muslim is not mute? How does the entire structure of testimony change, if there is a returned Muslim, who has the vocation and the potency of direct, unmediated? What does the existence of a testifying integral witness mean, for the definition of integral testimony and for the definition of surviving testimony? What happens to the basic dissociation - testimony versus integral testimony - in case there is a Muslim, who survived and is able to testify? These questions need to find answers, because everything assumed above actually exists. The key issue here starts exactly at the point where G. Agamben

³⁶ because that’s what the Muslim actually stands for;

³⁷ G. Agamben, *Ce rămâne din Auschwitz. Arhiva și martorul*, Cluj, Ed. Idea Design & Print, 2006, p.24.

³⁸ According to Bronislaw Goscinski, in Zdzisław Ryn / Stanisław Kłodziński, *An der Grenze zwischen Leben und Tod. Eine Studie über die Erscheinung des 'Muselmanns' im Konzentrationslager*, in *Auschwitz-Hefte vol. I, Ich war ein Muselmann*, 1983.

³⁹ even when the witness escapes death;

⁴⁰ just like Philomela’s tongue in Greek mythology, severed by the perpetrator so that her testimony about his misdeed never exist;

⁴¹ Primo Levi, E. Wiesel, A. Soljenitîn etc.

⁴² G. Agamben.

concludes his study on the integral witness and the nature of testimony, by forwarding the single exception, which “seems to question, if not Levi’s testimony, at least one of its fundamental presuppositions”⁴³ and implicitly the operability of concepts based thereupon. If the *integral witness* is exclusively *the Muslim*, here comes the last page of G.Agamben’s study to pinpoint and advance - as *exceptio probat regulam* - the sole situation that may seriously impact the entire theoretical construct, requiring a significant reconfiguration thereof. If the unmediated testimony exists and is brought directly by the Muslim, then P.Levi’s paradox is doubled, because defining the Muslim as the integral witness, who cannot testify, only adds up a new paradox by the existence⁴⁴ of testimonies brought directly by the integral non-testifying witness (the Muslim) who (returned to life and humanity) can testify. There is, indeed, a corpus of Post-Muslim testimonies containing direct accounts of survivors, this time not only survivors of the concentration camp, but survivors of the Muslim condition.⁴⁵ Focussing on a section of a monograph entitled “I was a Muslim”, G.Agamben qualifies it as the situation, where Levi’s paradox is at its most extreme: not only is the Muslim the integral witness, but he can also speak and bring his testimony in first person. G.Agamben finds that this exception “punctually justifies”⁴⁶ Levi’s paradox, rather than contradicting it. It may be added, that such an exception does not only justify the paradox, but it literally doubles it, extending the area of integral testimony, on one hand towards possibility and on the other hand towards expressibility. Having so far established the manifestation coordinates of testimony⁴⁷ as well as its contents,⁴⁸ now the poles of the discussion extend. Levi’s paradox resists, being at the same time surmounted: in a minimal syntax and not so many words: *I was a Muslim*. Granting integral witnesses (former Muslims) the right to have the last say, G. Agamben actually reopens the door where P.Levi stopped: if there is a first person, past tense for *being a Muslim*, then the scope of complete testimony, brought by integral witnesses, is significantly extended. Once this new landmark is introduced in defining and interpreting testimony, the entire construct requires reconfiguration. A new interrogative series arises by default: Which are the new coordinates of this area? Is complete testimony then still conditioned by the impossibility to testify? The answer is positive but this impossibility is - as shown - not permanent, just like the Muslim condition is no longer seen as a path of no return. The Muslim condition is, indeed, an encounter with the abyss, but the fact that there is a possibility of transgressing it,⁴⁹ implies a reconfiguration of the entire conceptual framework of testimonial discourse. In the particular case, where this limit condition is overcome,⁵⁰ the former Muslim is assimilated to the surviving speaking witness and complete testimony enters the realm of possibility. Thus, the *complete testimony*, of the

⁴³ G. Agamben, *Ce rămâne din Auschwitz. Arhiva și martorul*, Cluj, Ed.Idea Design & Print, 2006, p.113.

⁴⁴ even if only exceptional

⁴⁵ so far defined both as necessary condition and simultaneously as impossibility of integral testimony;

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.113.

⁴⁷ Existing as the expression of the impossibility to express;

⁴⁸ Containing the testimony of the impossibility to testify;

⁴⁹ Accounted for, by the living Post-Muslim testimonies among which, that of Bronislaw Goscinski - one of the integral witnesses recovered from the Muslim status to that of speaking, testifying witness : „ saving me from *Muslimship* and putting me back on my feet” in Zdzisław Ryn / Stanisław Kłodziński, *An der Grenze zwischen Leben und Tod. Eine Studie über die Erscheinung des 'Muselmanns' im Konzentrationslager*” in *Auschwitz-Hefte vol.1, Ich war ein Muselmann, 1983.*

⁵⁰ this time not being drowned but saved;

experience *up to the end* (so far isolated in the realm of impossibility) becomes possible since there are integral witnesses, Muslims, who found the way back to life and humanity and are able utter the word of testimony. This *up to the end* of humanity becomes a mobile marker, describing the experience of totalitarian practices, where “people live every second, factually, for their own death.”⁵¹

Conclusion

If the Post-Muslim is the surviving, returning, testifying Muslim then his testimony is the complete, manifest testimony of the totalitarian experience and of the limits of life and of humanity. Annulling that *up to the end* from the definition of complete testimony and substituting it with *up to the end and back*, the Post-Muslim, the survivor set free from the Gorgon’s embrace institutes a new possibility for the complete testimony, denouncing one of its fundamental attributes - that of impossibility. Impossibility becomes possible by the Muslim returning alive to life and to humanity. The second fundamental attribute of complete testimony -its inexpressibility - is also revoked by the *Muslim’s* return with and to the voice of testimony. Returning to humanity with the voice of testimony, the Post-Muslim brings complete testimony along into the realm of possibility and expressibility. Having found that the complete testimony of all experiences up to the limit of humanity is both possible and expressible, it becomes important that the rather thin tome of complete testimonies of this experience, *up to the end* of life and humanity *and back*, brought the surviving, integral witnesses of the Holocaust be supplemented with the complete testimonies of the similar path, brought by survivors of the communist re-education experiment. This complete testimony of totalitarian experiments “not only preserves the event in the present tense but also retains its alien and incomprehensible traits.”⁵² Complete testimony is set free by the Post-Muslim from its absolute impossibility and inexpressibility and integrated into the survivor’s expressible and possible testimony, hereby giving it the weight of the testimony on humanity, about its limits, about reaching - but maybe most important - about transgressing them.

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⁵¹ G.Agamben, *Ce rămâne din Auschwitz. Arhiva și martorul*, Cluj, Ed. Idea Design & Print, 2006, p.53.

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