

a sphere of milky luminescence. Our companion felt as if he were gazing at the mystical sun of the pole, an oneiric counterpart of the real celestial body, and for the time being, the duties of the latter being fulfilled by the former'.<sup>45</sup>

The image itself of 'reaching the very keystone of the vault of the sky' in the quotation above puts us in mind of a Gothic cathedral, while the light of the aurora borealis is associated with the colourful glow of stained glass. It looks as if Goethe's juvenile text's contrast between the South, with its emanation in the shape of classical architecture, and the North, manifesting itself in the Gothic sensibility, found its most extreme embodiment in the ideas presented in Schwarz's book. And the new scale of contrast was so monumental that it necessitated the improvisation of 'the mystical sun' as a counterpoint to 'the temporal sun'. Within this framework of reference, stained-glass is once again presented as a mimetic genre of art; nevertheless, this time the colourful panes do not pretend to imitate the luminous effects of beams of light shooting through the vaulted canopies of forest trees, but aspire to symbolize the mystical light of the North.

As outlined in this paper, there were several factors leading to the landmark developments recorded in turn-of-the-nineteenth-century German literature and relating to the novel perspective on the meaning of the ambient light inside Gothic churches. Such transformations mirrored a society-wide process of the re-evaluation of the significance of the Middle Ages, especially Gothic architecture, which came to be viewed as the distillation of the German or Germanic soul. Additionally, we should also single out the fresh reinterpretation of shade, which was prompted by the desire to improvise a symbolic counterpoint to light, which had previously come to symbolize Enlightenment. Not a whit less transformative was the romantic reimagining of light as a conduit for supra-rational understanding. The new ideas modified the perception of the interiors of Gothic churches flooded with subdued, multicolour light, which predestined such premises for the role of intermediary buffers between the world of matter and the realm of spirit. Moreover, they jump-started a surge of interest in stained glass, which encouraged efforts to revive the stained-glass tradition, occasionally spawning fantastical interpretations of this genre of art.

Translated by Mariusz Szerocki

## SUMMARY

Tomasz Szybisty

BETWEEN LIGHT AND SHADOWS; REFLECTING ON VARIED CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE PECULIAR LAMBENCY SUFFUSING GOTHIC CHURCHES AS EVIDENCED BY GERMAN LITERATURE FROM THE LATTER DECADES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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What seems to emanate from the dominant tenor permeating the scholarship dedicated to exploring the early nineteenth century resurgence of stained-glass ornamentation is the significant function ascribed to the variegated 'mystical' twilight, which played a pivotal role in the expansion of the renewed interest in this form of art. Nevertheless, no comprehensive studies have been attempted to investigate this subject matter. Drawing on selected German-language texts from the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, this article undertakes to examine the transformative developments regarding perception of ambient light prevailing in Gothic churches. There is enough evidence to ascertain that before 1800 such buildings had been habitually associated with significantly bedimmed interiors; however, in the decades that followed, this perception underwent some modification and the light was not only just subdued, but it was suffused with colourful lambency. For one, the change was the result of the re-evaluation of the image of the Middle Ages, and of the Gothic style, in particular, as it was regarded as the manifestation of the German or Germanic character; for another, the transformation was effected, to a large extent by Romanticism's pronouncements on the meaning of colour and shade. In addition, research into this phenomenon should not neglect to acknowledge the part played by studies on light phenomena, which were conducted extensively at that time, among others by Goethe. All those issues conditioned the perception of the interiors of Gothic churches flooded with subdued, multicolour light, which predestined such premises for the role of intermediary buffers between the world of matter and the realm of spirit. Moreover, the aforementioned developments jump-started a surge of interest in stained glass, and encouraged increasingly enthusiastic efforts to revive the stained-glass tradition, occasionally spawning fantastical interpretations pertaining to this genre of art.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, vol. 2, p. 401.