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Foreword

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Cultural Literacy: An Outline of Total Research into Literary Culture

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Public opinion in Poland seems to be galvanized exclusively by three types of statistical data: political polling data, the number of arrested drunk drivers, and the results of nationwide readership surveys. It is possible that the demand for these sorts of figures is driven by our desire to view our country with incredulity and to confront how many of our fellow citizens fail to satisfy this or that cultural norm, which we ourselves consider highly significant.

Every two years, the National Library's Book and Readership Institute publishes the results of its readership surveys and journalists across the country try hard to outdo each other in lamenting their compatriots' lack of schooling, and the agony of culture as we know it. Curiously, similar jeremiads published on the other side of the Atlantic tend to identify and demonstrate the more practical aspects of this growing illiteracy. In the first decade of the 21st century, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), an American federal agency supporting and funding culture and art in the United States, published a series of three reports investigating the state of readership in the country, their titles spelling out a rather interesting narrative: *Reading at Risk* (2004), *To Read or Not to Read* (2007), and *Reading on the Rise* (2009).[1] The first report offers a diagnosis of the

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1 All quoted NEA reports can be accessed online at http://arts.gov/ publications, accessed June 15, 2015.

problem (i.e. a dramatic decline in readership numbers since the 1980s), the second explores the worsening of this problem (and rounded out the narrative with other readership and literacy studies), whereas the final report provides a much needed "catharsis": a small but perceptible growth in readership numbers observed for the first time in twenty-five years, giving the report its apt yet pompous subtitle *A New Chapter in American Literacy*.

The first report in the series emphasizes the devastating effects that poor literacy has for democracy, as those who cannot read are unable to consciously participate in the civic life of the nation and in the economy, specifically the publishing industry. The second installment (using a variety of contextual statistics, including the fact that illiteracy is prevalent in prison populations, whereas the majority of active voters are also readers),[2] attempts to outline the negative influence illiteracy has on the lives of individuals. In the preface to the report, the chairman of the NEA framed the issue in the following words:

> How does one summarize this disturbing story? As Americans, especially younger Americans, read less, they read less well. Because they read less well, they have lower levels of academic achievement. (The shameful fact that nearly one-third of American teenagers drop out of school is deeply connected to declining literacy and reading comprehension.) With lower levels of reading and writing ability, people do less well in the job market. Poor reading skills correlate heavily with lack of employment, lower wages, and fewer opportunities for advancement.[3]

How can a phenomenon like declining readership rates still exist in the early 21st century? The most frequent and simplest answer ("Blame the Internet!") is wrong, but more on that later. Our current state of affairs is a product of a tangled web of factors. In the National Library's 2010 report, Izabela Koryś identified a number of them, including "changes to our daily time budget" (increasingly blurred lines between work and leisure and a significant drop in the amount of free time at our

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2   Curiously, according to a 2014 report released by the National Library, readers are a minority among Polish voters, making up only 44-45% of the overall pool of voters. See Izabela Koryś, Dominika Michalak and Roman Chymkowski, *Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2014* [*The State of Readership in Poland in 2014*] (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2015), 50. The document is available online at http://bn.org.pl/download/document/1422018329.pdf, accessed June 15, 2015.

3   Dana Goia "Introduction," in *To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 2007), 5; the document is available online at http://arts.gov/publications/read-or-not-read-question-national-consequence-0, accessed June 15, 2015.

disposal),[4] competition for our attention from other media (particularly television),[5] and structural social problems, those strictly linked to the cultural capital of Poles: "In Poland, the social map of literacy and illiteracy basically overlaps with that of social exclusion."[6] The scholar also pointed out that in the early 1920s – a time when illiteracy was either significantly reduced or eliminated in some countries (including England, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden) – nearly a third of Poles were still illiterate; in other European countries (including Greece, Spain, and Portugal), however, the problem was at least as pressing as in Poland, or even worse.

Koryś also points out that these disproportionate figures are still visible in international readership rate surveys (see, among others, the results of a special 2013 Eurobarometer study, no. 399).[7] Readership and literacy surveys clearly demonstrate that family, rather than school, is still the primary provider of contact with literature – the so-called "reading socialization." Thus, one's upbringing determines lifelong interest in reading and whether one is capable of reaping its benefits.

These results point us in a very interesting direction: maybe readership rates and literacy were never all that high in the first place. Koryś seems to agree with the notion, a sentiment reflected in her conclusion: "It is difficult to ascertain whether Poles truly stopped reading books *en masse*, because it is not clear whether they actually were voracious readers at any point in the past."[8] In her analysis, Kathleen Fitzpatrick concludes that the popular fear of illiteracy is rooted in two misinformed premises – the utopian idealization of the past (which was supposedly characterized by mass readership) and a rather gloomy view on the present which sees "the novel

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4   Izabela Koryś "O (nie)czytelnikach – społeczna mapa czytelniczego zaangażowania," ["On (non)Readers—a Social Map of Reader Engagement"] in Izabela Koryś and Olga Dawidowicz-Chymkowska, *Społczny zasięg książki w Polsce w 2010 roku* [*The Social Reach of Books in Poland in 2010*] (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2012), 96. If not otherwise specified all translations of referenced works are provided by the translator of the respective article.

5   Ibid., 15, 95.

6   Ibid., 136.

7   Curiously, Poles fared better in this study (56% declared to have read at least one book in the twelve months preceding the 2013 study) than in the one conducted by the National Library. The 2014 report states that "in 2014 41.7% of respondents declared to have read at least one book in the past year, that is 2.5% more than in 2003 and 2.3% less than in 2010." Koryś, Michalak and Chymkowski, *Stan czytelnictwa*, 6. Maybe when Europe is asking the questions, we try to stand as tall as possible. The full text of the *Special Eurobarometer 399. Cultural Access and Participation*, November 2013 report is available online at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_399_en.pdf, accessed June 15, 2015.

8   Koryś and Dawidowicz-Chymkowska, *Społeczny zasięg*, 139.

[...] being forced out of its culturally central position by newer, image-based media forms."[9] The scholar also emphasizes that complaining about the decline of literacy may actually blind us "to signs of literary culture's continued proliferation, including the increasing number of devices and platforms and services through which we read today."[10] "Reading," Fitzpatrick concludes, "has not declined in significance in contemporary Western culture, but it has increasingly moved online, where it has taken on an increasingly social, increasingly active form."[11] Although such optimism might be unwarranted (we will return to the notion that the two groups – readers and Internet users – mostly overlap in the later part of this essay), the assertion quoted above perfectly encapsulates our prior deliberations: apart from acknowledging the decline in readership rates, we should not forget that reading is still held in very high regard by many, although the contemporary face of literacy has been significantly reshaped by the Internet. In this essay, I would like to invert the perspective and instead focus on the group of people actually doing the reading or, more broadly, on the people involved with literacy. The concept of "reading class," coined by Griswold, McDonnell, and Wright, will be highly useful to us in these deliberations.[12]

If we take another look at the aforementioned studies conducted by the National Library and the NEA, three issues will manifest themselves: firstly, there is a group of heavy Internet users who are also voracious readers; secondly, that particular group often uses the Internet and consumes a high number of written texts;[13] thirdly, there is considerable correlation between being a member of this group and getting involved in other forms of civic life (e.g. Polish readers were more inclined

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9   Kathleen Fitzpatrick, "Reading (and Writing) Online, Rather Than on the Decline," in *From Literature to Cultural Literacy*, ed. Naomi Segal and Daniela Koleva (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 166-167.

10   Ibid., 168.

11   Ibid., 178.

12   Wendy Griswold, Terrence E. McDonnell and Nathan Wright, "The Reading Class," in Wendy Griswold, *Regionalism and the Reading Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

13   For example, the 2002 National Library report includes the following assertion: "Already among the respondents who declared to have read at least one book, the proportion of internet users (33%) was 11% higher than in the entire population (22%)." Sebastian Wierny "Co czytają Polacy, czyli uczestnictwo w kulturze druku w Polsce na progu XXI wieku" ["What Do Poles Read or Participation in Print Culture in the Early 21st Century"], in Grażyna Straus, Katarzyna Wolff and Sebastian Wierny, *Książka na początku wieku: społeczny zasięg książki w Polsce w 2002 roku* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2004). Ten years later, scholars are observing a cumulative effect of reading practices: "Statistically speaking, regular exercise of one of the practices (e.g. reading) facilitates taking up others (consuming long-form press articles online)." Koryś, Michalak and Chymkowski, *Stan czytelnictwa*, 4.

to support charity organizations and sign petitions. Curiously, reluctant readers figure significantly among political party members and volunteers.[14]) The group we are talking about constitutes the reading class as defined by Griswold – the term describes active readers who routinely consume long-form texts. Elsewhere,[15] Griswold and Wright termed the relationship between these reading behaviors and other activities (particularly Internet usage) as "more-more pattern": "The answer lies in the emergence – or, historically speaking, the re-emergence – of a reading class. An elite segment of the general population, one that is highly educated, affluent, metropolitan, and young, has produced both heavy readers and early adopters of the Internet."[16] A similar relationship can be observed in Poland, and this is clearly visible in the National Library study and Internet user surveys mentioned above.[17]

The reading class, therefore, comprises citizens that are well-educated and well-read, commanding considerable cultural capital which is to a large extent a product of their provenance and upbringing. As illiteracy grows among the general population, the reading class replicates and grows. The goal of this essay is to invert the perception of readership surveys: instead of trying to analyze the entire population, I suggest focusing on the reading class and the multitude of ways they participate in literary culture – many of those ways elude traditional, albeit more comprehensive literacy surveys.

Such a perspective on reading would portray it as a social practice and situate it within the everyday lives and biographies of readers themselves. In his essay about "the sociology of literature after the sociology of literature" – a sweeping attempt to organize and structure the field – James English demonstrates how this approach has been shaped through interaction with other concepts, particularly the history of the book itself, which in turn reveal that our reading habits are not the only way of consuming the written word nor are they sociological practices connected to literary value and canonical literature (here, English puts particular emphasis on Bordieu's *Distinction*). What's at issue here is shifting the approach to examining reading practices, a shift from focusing on literacy (and illiteracy) towards investigating reading

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14   Ibid., 40.

15   Wendy Griswold and Nathan Wright, "Wired and Well Read," in *Society Online: The Internet in Context*, ed. Philip N. Howard and Steve Jones (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2004).

16   Griswold, McDonnell and Wright, "The Reading Class," 66.

17   See e.g. Jan M. Zając, Arkadiusz Kustra, Piotr S.M. Janczewski and Teresa Wierzbowska, *Motywacje, zachowania i poglądy autorów i czytelników blogów. Raport z badania polskiej blogosfery* [*Motivations, Behaviors, and Beliefs of Blog Authors and Readers. Report from a Study of the Polish Blogosphere*] (Warszawa: Agora SA, 2007), the document is available online at http://pliki.gemius.pl/Raporty/2008/2008_Gemius_Blox.pl_Badanie_blogosfery.pdf, accessed June 15, 2015.

as a social practice. To reinforce his point, English also brings up the work of Janice Radway, Elizabeth Long, and Wendy Griswold, among others.[18]

I have discussed this approach in *The Anthropology of Literary Reading – Methodological Issues*.[19] This essay supplements and builds upon that article, further exploring the notion of contemplating reading itself, akin to humanist sociology, which always has included cultural contexts and actor motivations in its reflections. In Poland, such a perspective is present in the works of Stanisław Siekierski and Roman Chymkowski.[20] The essay is also greatly indebted to Marek Krajewski's relational approach to cultural participation.

Paradoxically, the objective of these deliberations will be somewhat similar to the goal of classic readership surveys – if we establish what certain people do with texts, we may begin to think about the methods that would allow others to develop similar skills. The suggested approach may very well help us devise new indicators which could be later used in quantitative studies to determine the distribution of these variables in the general population.

The overriding question of the work before us is: How should we research all these issues?

1. The Problem with "Readership"

We have already somewhat explored the problems of readership. Therefore, now we can focus on issues with the term itself. In the words of Roman Chymkowski, the head of the National Library's Book and Readership Institute, literacy scholars "usually focus on statistical data analysis about readers across categories such as social status or level of literary engagement."[21]

Generally speaking, we may say that "reading" and "readership" apply to different aspects of the same phenomenon. A focus on detail and qualitative methods of collecting and analyzing materials correspond to "reading",

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18   James English, "Everywhere and Nowhere: The Sociology of Literature After the Sociology of Literature," *New Literary History* 2 (41) (Spring 2010): x-xi. A good introduction to this particular research perspective can be found in Elizabeth Long's, "On the Social Nature of Reading," in *Book Clubs. Women and the Uses of Reading in Everyday Life* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

19   Maciej Maryl, "The Anthropology of Literary Reading – Methodological Issues," trans. Benjamin Koschalka, *Teksty Drugie* Special Issue 2 (2012): 181-201

20   See Stanisław Siekierski, *Czytania Polaków w XX wieku* [*The Readings of 20th Century Poles*] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa UW, 2000); Roman Chymkowski, *Autobiografie lekturowe studentów* [*The Reading Autobiographies of Students*] (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2011) and Roman Chymkowski, "W stronę antropologii praktyk lekturowych," ["Towards an Anthropology of Cultural Practices"] *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* 2/3 (2011).

21   Chymkowski, *Autobiografie*, 14.

whereas a focus on the general picture and quantitative techniques correspond to "readership." We may even say that "reading" and "readership" are emblems of two separate movements emerging in the study of literature reception, parallel to the extant division of sociology into scientific and humanistic sociology.[22]

Describing the condition of literacy entails identifying readers and then establishing what demographic group they belong to. Thus, the population is split along the lines of participation in a given cultural practice (in this instance: the number of books read) and the degree of identification with the practice. Scholars working in the field have identified different types of cultural participation (e.g. the National Library assumes that there are three types of readers: *omnireaders*, *monoreaders*, and *non-readers*[23]). The goal of these studies is to identify the potential problem, which in turn would allow the experts to draft appropriate recommendations for policymakers and/or alert the public to those findings.[24]

Several objections have been raised over the years against traditional studies examining cultural participation, including readership surveys. In his review of both past and more recent research work in the field, Marcin Jewdokimow points out that voices critical of such studies often focus on value judgments made in them or the necessity of getting definitions and concepts to correspond to cultural change.[25] Marek Krajewski also brings attention to the fact that traditional studies of cultural participation are often asymmetrical in nature, presuming a hierarchical division between "those who create and those who consume."[26] Participation in culture, therefore, is understood as "doing something with cultural resources," resources external to the participant, who, in turn, is perceived as a consumer satisfying specific needs.[27] The aspect of power and conferring value judgments onto specific practices

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22   Ibid., 15.

23   See e.g. Koryś and Dawidowicz-Chymkowska, *Społeczny zasięg.*

24   The scholars are aware of the limitations of surveys based on respondents' declarations, and this is why they consider answers as an expression of their identification with reading culture. The fact that a "consistently decreasing number of people feel socially pressured to present themselves as readers" is also a very significant bit of information on the condition of literary culture. Ibid.

25   Marcin Jewdokimow, "Nowe koncepcje uczestnictwa w kulturze – od władzy symbolicznej do negocjacji i partycypacji," ["New Concepts of Cultural Participation – From Symbolic Power Towards Negotiation and Participation"] *Zoon Politikon* 3 (2012): 83.

26   Marek Krajewski, "W kierunku relacyjnej koncepcji uczestnictwa w kulturze," *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* 1 (2013): 46.

27   Ibid., 42.

is equally important – in this model, culture is "perceived as […] a relatively consolidated whole, controlled by the state and its institutions, tasked with regulating the behavior of the citizenry."[28] Drawing inspiration from Foucault, Jewdokimow puts it more bluntly:

> Studies in cultural participation have never analyzed existing cultural practices; instead, they have always served as a political means of manufacturing them, subordinating them to the logic of population management, which, in turn, means that the research agenda has been subordinate to the objectives of the state's cultural policy (either explicit or not).[29]

Thus one can discern in statistics a tool for managing the population – ostensibly objective indicators become a means of conferring value judgments on certain cultural practices.[30]

As far as the incompatibility of old categories with new cultural phenomena is concerned, the primary charge against it revolves around the fact that many new forms of cultural participation elude outdated conceptualizations. Krajewski asserts that contemporary research into cultural participation does register the shift in the value of indicators devised in other cultural contexts, but that it is afterwards mistakenly interpreted as proof of the transformation of the process of participation itself:

> They capture the decrease in the number of books read by Poles, but they are unable to register the metamorphoses of reading practices spurred by the emergence of mobile phones, global computer networks, and e-books, or how the relationships between publishers, book vendors, and readers, as well as between readers and authors, have changed in the past decades.[31]

Therefore, in the case of traditional cultural participation studies, a portion of cultural activities may fall "under the radar" of generic research questions. This is well demonstrated by analyses authored by Balling and Kann-Christensen who reviewed Danish studies of cultural participation conducted between 1964 and 2012. They observed a gradual shift away from investigating how people spend their free time (citizen-oriented view) towards asking about their participation in specific cultural

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28 Ibid., 44.

29 Jewdokimow, "Nowe koncepcje," 88.

30 Ibid., 86.

31 Krajewski, "W kierunku," 48.

events (customer-oriented view).**32** Framed in such a way, the studies begin to re-semble attendance lists for cultural events rather than examinations of genuine cultural participation (e.g. NEA studies count anyone who has managed to read even a single line of a poem during the past twelve months as a reader, which means that people who have read nothing beside a poem stuck to a bus window in order to promote poetry are counted as readers).**33**

The scholars quoted here seem to agree that in order to prevent research studies from turning into rote inspections of attendance (not) satisfying certain cultural norms, the perspectives, roles, and motivations of social actors should be taken into consideration. In the words of Balling and Kann-Christensen:

> Surveys should not just ask "what," "how much," but also "with whom," and "why." We should investigate not only whether people visit cultural institu-tions, play video games, and participate in social networks online, but also what they do during these visits/activities.**34**

In his analysis, Jewdokimow examines and identifies a common thread running through all the novel approaches to cultural participation: their intention is to "pre-serve an open or, more precisely, a partially closed definition [of cultural participation – author's note], and to have the definition of a cultured person open to negotiation."**35**

The perspectival shift suggested in this essay – a response to these above-men-tioned postulates – is inspired by the relational concept of culture as proposed by Marek Krajewski. Let's begin with a definition:

> The relational concept of culture offers a specific understanding of culture wherein culture is the effect of linking diverse elements into an aggregate and is simultaneously a factor determining the course of that particular process. I presume, therefore, that it is neither an object nor an aggregate of objects, but a property of the linkages comprising a specific aggregate, a specific configuration therein.**36**

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32   Gitte Balling and Nanna Kann-Christensen, "What Is a Non-User? An Analysis of Danish Sur-veys on Cultural Habits and Participation," *Cultural Trends* 2 (2013).

33   See Tom Bradshaw and Bonnie Nichols, *Reading At Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America. Research Division Report #46* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 2004), 2; the document is available online at http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/ReadingAtRisk.pdf, ac-cessed June 15, 2015.

34   Balling and Kann-Christensen, "What Is a Non-User," 75.

35   Jewdokimow, "Nowe koncepcje," 93.

36   Krajewski, "W kierunku," 37.

Such a definition implies shifting the perspective away from "what we usually consider to be the chief actors in the social life of a nation (the state, the institutions, the system of government) towards actors we heretofore have ignored: objects, products of popular culture, fashions, trends, online crazes, niche snobberies, and the actions of individuals."[37] In other words, this change in perspective means that rather than paying attention to how many cinema tickets someone bought or how many books they read, we are more interested in what pictures they took with their mobile phone and what they wrote on Facebook about a book they read. It is in the use of such media that cultural participation manifests itself.

A similar thread runs through another report entitled *Korzystanie z mediów a podziały społeczne. Kompetencje medialne Polaków w ujęciu relacyjnym* [*Media Use and Social Divisions: A Relational View of the Media Competences of Poles*]: contrary to the universalist approach employed by traditional cultural participation studies, a relational definition of media competence implies seeing it as an ability to "use the medium in support of something that the subject considers important or spends a lot of time on (i.e. is identified by the individual as an important part of their lives)."[38]

Such an approach presumes that there is no single pattern of media use (or, more broadly, of culture use) and these patterns are contingent upon – to invoke Alfred Schütz's phenomenological sociology – those spheres of life considered significant by the individual:

> In line with our assumption, the skillful employment of media involves their successful use in an area that the surveyed person considers significant. Every person who identified a given area as significant for them was also asked whether the use of a given medium makes it easier or harder for them to enjoy that sphere of their life.[39]

What does that mean for research into readership? Well, it offers a different perspective on literary culture:

> Reading books provokes the emergence of new social relationships based on book recommendations we receive, the purchase, borrowing, or

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37 Ibid., 38.

38 Mirosław Filiciak, Paweł Mazurek and Katarzyna Growiec, *Korzystanie z mediów a podziały społeczne. Kompetencje medialne Polaków w ujęciu relacyjnym* [*Media Usage and Social Divisions. A Relational View of the Media Skills of Poles*] (Warszawa: Centrum Cyfrowe, 2014), 5, the document is available online at http://ngoteka.pl/bitstream/handle/item/215/korzystanie%20z%20mediow%20a%20podzialy%20spoleczne.pdf, accessed June 15, 2015.

39 Ibid., 38.

downloading of books from websites, conversations about books, pondering about the lives of the authors and the lives of their characters, lending out one's own books, treating books as props in status games, or treating them as means of separating ourselves from others, etc.[40]

Adopting the relational concept of cultural participation in order to reflect on the act of reading itself will allow us, on the one hand, to look at our prior practices from a different perspective and, on the other, allow us to notice new, emerging practices and phenomena.

2. Cultural Literacy

Given all of the reservations outlined above, particularly the multitude of practices comprising literary culture which still elude readership surveys, I would like to suggest employing a different category of l i t e r a c y in order to describe the anthropology of reading outlined in this essay. Here, I am referring in particular to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of using the term literacy to describe writing skills.

As a starting point for introducing the concept of literacy, we shall use the studies conducted by the National Library which employed this notion. The authors of that report determined that merely coming into contact with a book hardly exhausted the subject of readership,[41] and decided to employ the literacy category to expand the field of examination: "We are not interested in investigating whether a person has reading and writing skills – competencies which we nowadays consider absolutely essential – as much as assessing the degree and scope of their actual use in contact with the foremost incarnations of the written word: books, newspapers, and magazines."[42] Although the report talks of "active participation in print culture,"[43] its actual understanding of literacy is quite narrow and covers reading books and newspapers. Devised by the Book and Readership Institute for the purposes of the study, the literacy index is based on the premise that the "complementary practices of reading books and readings newspapers [are] two distinct forms of participation in print culture."[44] The literacy index, therefore, seems to be drawing the limits of the reading class we discussed above.

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40   Krajewski, "W kierunku," 49.

41   Wierny, "Co czytają Polacy," 12.

42   Ibid., 11.

43   Ibid., 24.

44   Ibid., 15.

I would like to suggest a wider understanding of this concept, firstly by broadening it beyond print culture to cover digital, online, and handwritten practices (the latter somewhat less popular nowadays), and secondly by applying it to diverse (i.e. not necessarily written) products of culture. In this instance, the concept of cultural literacy, operationalized by Naomi Segal within the context of diagnosing contemporary cultural and literary studies, should be particularly helpful.[45] (The context of this proposition itself is interesting as an attempt to outline a path along which contemporary enquiries into literary criticism may develop). Segal defines cultural literacy as "an attitude to the social and cultural phenomena that shape and fill our existence – bodies of knowledge, fields of social action, individuals or groups, and of course cultural artefacts, including texts – which views them as being essentially r e a d a b l e."[46] The heart of the matter, therefore, is looking at social and cultural issues from a literary perspective, focusing on those artefacts and their qualities such as textuality, fictionality, rhetoricity, and historicity.[47]

Such an approach to literacy allows us to transcend beyond readership and embrace all practices involving the written word. This, in turn, stems from the belief that the research potential of the asymmetric modeling of participation in literary culture, which guided prior readership studies, has been exhausted. Focusing purely on the reception of a given work of art in the course of investigating cultural participation is artificial and tends to exclude a wide range of creative practices from consideration. The alternative approach is further justified by the emergence of new forms of expression. To quote Fortunati:

> Social networks, forums, blogs, listservs, chat rooms, discussion boards, instant messages and emails, to name but a few, have enabled forms of discourse that challenge the boundaries outlined by print culture between the private and the public, the author and the reader, the aesthetic and the instrumental.[48]

It would be cliché to assert that new media require us to develop new media skills. Thus, we are not talking here about literacy as a functional skill, but rather combining a range of cognitive, motivational, neuropsychological, and sociologi-

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45 Naomi Segal, "Introduction," in *From Literature to Cultural Literacy*, ed. Naomi Segal and Daniela Koleva (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). This essay is deeply indebted to diagnoses collected in that book, particularly in texts by Segal, Fitzpatrick, Fortunati, and Schreibman.

46 Segal, "Introduction," 3.

47 Ibid., 7.

48 Leopoldina Fortunati, "Electronic Textuality: Introduction," in *From Literature*, 143.

cal processes,[49] in so far as it is relevant to harnessing the skill to accomplish specific objectives or to participate in print culture. In other words, this particular skill is a foundation on which we can build cultural literacy, that is participation in a broadly defined literary culture. Additionally, from the perspective of social actors, contemporary net-based writing and reading practices often blend and permeate one another. To describe the feedback cycle between our online activities and the things we end up reading, Lori Emerson devised the concept of readingwriting.[50] It is a product of the "filter bubble" we live in – our collected search queries, reading materials, and online behaviors determine what we see on the screens of our computers, smartphones, in search engine results, and even what news we get served.[51] Technology wields an increasingly greater influence over what and how we read.

Let us recapitulate the most important characteristics of cultural literacy as a research subject (possibly to nail them to the front door of the Staszic Palace in Warsaw).

First of all, the field is focused on investigating activities practiced by people participating in culture, that is actual social actors. All conclusions are to be based on empirical data—we are not interested in speculation, introspection, or theoretical inquiries.

Second, literacy is, at its core, a social activity. Following Elizabeth Long, we reject the figure of a "solitary" reader and writer.[52] People write and read texts within a web of mutual relations, and these activities become the reasons and the pretexts for establishing and maintaining relationships (often serving as their catalyst).[53]

Third, our area of interest includes various writing practices and literary behaviors, regardless of their canonical or non-canonical (popular) status. Both writing and reading, as forms of cultural participation, are of equal interest to us.

Fourth, from the perspective of these social actors, there is continuity between offline and online practices which, nowadays, seem to coexist or even merge and complement each other. Therefore, we consider them interchangeable and do not

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49 See Patricia A. Alexander, "Reading Into the Future: Competence for the 21st Century," *Educational Psychologist* 4 (47) (2012).

50 Lori Emerson, *Reading Writing Interfaces. From the Digital to the Bookbound* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 163-164.

51 See Eli Pariser, *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You* (London: Penguin, 2012).

52 See Elizabeth Long, *Book Clubs. Women and the Uses of Reading in Everyday Life* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

53 See Danielle Fuller and DeNel Rehberg Sedo "'And Then We Went to the Brewery.' Reading as a Social Activity in a Digital Era," *World Literature Today* 3-4 (88) (2014); the document is available online at http://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2014/may-august/and-then-we-went-brewery-reading-social-activity-digital-era#.VWmRIM_5cgs, accessed May 30, 2015.

differentiate between the two. We are also interested in hybrid practices,[54] emerging at the intersection of the analog and digital world (e.g. online libraries lending actual printed books).

Fifth, we investigate purely "literary" writing practices – neither functional nor utilitarian. We are, therefore, dealing with broadly defined literacy transcending traditionally defined literary texts, including both digital literature and blogs, specific genres of journalism, as well as other forms of acquiring knowledge about the world and the experiences of others. We look with equal interest at all cultural products that somehow reference the literary tradition (broadly defined, from novels to non-fiction) and contribute to it. We are not interested in the user manual for a washing machine, but a blog reviewing washing machines is right up our alley. Given the convergence of genres and discourses, it is difficult to draw distinct lines and even more difficult to justify them. Neither is it possible, for reasons outlined earlier in this essay, to embrace the category of leisure time as a space in which to perform writing practices. Essentially, only additional research and the creation of a dynamic catalog of literacy would allow us to outline a framework – dynamic and evolving – for literacy as postulated here.[55] Leaving a definition somewhat open is not without its advantages.

Sixth, the research applies only to people participating in literary culture, that is all those who Griswold considers the reading class. We are not interested in people who remain outside literary culture. In this sense, the approach runs close to the perspective of the Polish school of literary communication, the difference being that – in line with the first and second postulates outlined above – we are interested solely in empirical entities, while our definition of literary culture is more than the circulation of high culture and the opinions of so-called experts.

Seventh, we examine cultural literacy in reference to literary behaviors and practices based primarily on linguistic record in the context of other cultural texts such as movies, television series, video games, exhibitions, garbage, or steak and chips. We are not postulating that literacy research should become the new media studies. On the other hand, however, we need to embrace a broader definition of text itself, one that would take intersemioticity, transmediality, and the convergence

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54 I borrow the term from Anouk Lang "Introduction: Transforming Reading," in *From Codex to Hypertext: Reading at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Anouk Lang (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 4.

55 The difficulty in capturing the "non-functional" or "autotelic" forms of cultural participation are well illustrated by Pierre Bordieu in his conversation with Roger Chartier: "I said earlier that there is no need to read, but I might say now, perhaps playfully, that this need in its most basic form—before it constituted socially—shows up in train stations. Reading arises spontaneously when a person has time with nothing to do or is stranded somewhere all alone." Todd W. Reeser and Steven D. Spalding, "Reading Literature/Culture: A Translation of «Reading as a Cultural Practice»," *Style* 4 (36) (2002), 668.

of media (e.g. a film featuring the statement of a blogger posted on YouTube can be analyzed as a remediation of an essay or a manifest) into account. From this perspective, the objective of the studies will be to diagnose why these particular behaviors are preferred by the users over other (e.g. multimedia) forms of cultural participation.

Eighth, I postulate commencing upon a project of total research – more on this soon. As the Internet still remains primarily a text-based medium, analysis of literacy may very well be one of the more interesting forms of exploring cultural participation – investigating Text as defined by Barthes, that is as an infinite network of connections and relationships from which a visualization of the culture of the written word emerges.

3. Research Areas

A brave new world is on its way, but contrary to what optimists believe, it still has a long way to go before it gets here. Maybe it never will and will forever remain *en route*, that is it will never fully come to pass, forever sentenced to taking shape before our eyes – we are in a transitional period during which we can examine how the processes of remediation affect our understanding of literature.[56] Let us try to identify the most important areas of research into cultural literacy. All of these issues have already been explored in the relevant literature – I am bringing them up solely in the form of broad research questions which will help us draw up individual areas of investigation.[57] These are:

a. Reading online and offline: What are we reading and why are we reading these particular texts (books, blogs, articles, electronic literature, etc.)? Why do we read in the first place? What is the point and motivation of such an activity? What do people do with these texts? How are they of use to them? How do they assign value to them? Do they return to them for repeated readings? Where do they store them? How do they share them? etc.

b. Forms and functions of literary behaviors: How do old and new forms of literary work function nowadays (e.g. traditional genres, as well as blogs, fan fiction, creative writing, letter-writing both online and offline)? What motivates writers? What strategies do they employ? What is the role of the sender in the communication process inscribed into a given genre? What does the interaction with the audience look like? How are literary groups constituted nowadays? etc.

c. The infrastructure of literacy: What objects and instruments do we use to read and write nowadays? How do the media we use (both hardware and soft-

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56 See Jay D. Bolter, *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print (*New York: Routledge, 2001) and Lang "Introduction."

57 See e.g. Anna Kowalska, *Nowy Odbiorca* (Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 2014), 166-184, 194-205.

ware varieties) affect the comprehension of text? What is the impact of increased mobility and synchronization? What texts exists today only because of them? How do algorithms – using the multitude of traces we leave behind as we browse the Web – affect the selection of our reading materials and our opinions? What does the distribution and the price of text look like nowadays? What are the ethical implications of using illicitly distributed reading material? etc.

d. Network of relationships: How did the relationships between all the members of the literary scene (senders, recipients, institutions) change? How is literacy used as pretext for the establishment of new relationships? How do opinion networks drive our reading choices and the distribution of our own opinions? What do processes of collective reading look like, both online and offline? etc.

The economy of literacy: How is the contemporary literacy market developing? Who are the contemporary writers in the broadest sense (i.e. people who write for a living)? Who makes money off writing? To what degree does the economy affect all of the above-mentioned elements? etc.

4. The Project for a Total Literacy Study

Shifting theoretical conceptualization in order to capture newly emergent phenomena produces the need for new methodologies. This is all the more important given the fact that new phenomena always produce new data that we can harness to better flesh out the complexity of these processes and gain ever more insight into the behaviors of individuals. The point of the matter, therefore, is to facilitate a wide-reaching integration of as many diverse research projects as possible and then triangulate the methods at the largest scale possible – put another way, to launch an all-encompassing, comprehensive study.[58]

It is still a preliminary postulate, one that requires work and development. It may be somewhat utopian, but it is not beyond the realm of possibility; it draws on the methodology of prior studies and on capabilities offered by data generated by electronic-based culture. Similar projects, conducted under the "mixed methods" umbrella, have already been launched to investigate a vast amount of phenomena, including the Beyond the Book project, dedicated to mass literary events[59] – data

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58 Here, I am expanding on the postulate of integrated research put forward in Fay Sudweeks and Simeon J. Simoff, "Complementary Explorative Data Analysis. The Reconciliation of Quantitative and Qualitative Principles," in *Doing Internet Research: Critical Issues and Methods for Examining the Net*, ed. Steve Jones (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999).

59 See Danielle Fuller, "Reading as Social Practice: The Beyond the Book Research Project," *Popular Narrative Media* 1.2 (2008) and Danielle Fuller and DeNel Rehberg Sedo, "Mixing It Up: Using Mixed Methods Research to Investigate Contemporary Cultures of Reading," in *From Codex to Hypertext.*

sourced from surveys allow scholars to determine which types of readers appear at certain events (and which types do not); establishing their motivations is accomplished through observing the audience, interviewing attendees and the organizers, and analyzing available event materials.

The project for a total, that is all-encompassing, study presumes expanding the scale of diagnoses by integrating a range of diverse anthropologically-oriented research projects, which would allow us to shape the investigation of literacy in a way that would reveal much more about our practices than any survey-based readership study.

Postulating the need for an all-encompassing research project is to suggest taking a step forward and attempting to integrate data streams flowing from various levels and systems – "soft" and "hard," quantitative and qualitative. Naturally, I am not proposing the development of a consistent methodological system, but rather a shift toward the anti-hierarchical (anarchic?) coexistence of different methods and techniques which, in turn, would reveal different areas of a very broad phenomenon.

We should, therefore, start with actual readers as it is their behaviors we are interested in. We can identify them using various data, existing records of their creative efforts and completed books. Research materials can be divided into several groups: creative efforts, reactions to others' work, writing and reading communities, literacy discourse, existing data, and created data.

First off, we have texts, which are the products of diverse "literary behaviors," regardless of whether they appear as niche publications or receive prestigious literary awards (as mentioned before: that is not necessarily important from the perspective of social actors themselves). Therefore, we have to take into account all non-functional texts, such as literary work (i.e. the products of traditional literary efforts), blogs, fan fiction, memes, as well as functional forms, which can be used as a basis for literary output, such as e-mail, IMs (instant messaging), social network platforms and so on. We should attempt to devise a definition of such creative output and catalog them, in order to subsequently analyze corresponding types of reading.

The second group comprises typical "proofs of reception," that is records of the reactions elicited in readers by literary works.[60] This group includes both traditional forms of expression (e.g. reviews, letters, recordings), as well as the more modern ones (e.g. blog commentary, social network posts, ratings, Internet comments). One particular form of such proofs would comprise attempts at reconstructing discus-

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60 The term "proofs of consumption" and a preliminary categorization have been suggested by Michał Głowiński in "Świadectwa i style odbioru," ["Proofs and Styles of Reception"] *Teksty* 3 (21) (1975). That particular subject, with regard to online sources, was explored by Andrzej Skrendo, "Nieprofesjonalne świadectwa lektury," ["Non-Proffesional Proofs of Reading"] in *Obraz literatury w komunikacji społecznej po roku '89* [*The Image of Literature in Social Communication Post-1989*], ed. Andrzej Werner and Tomasz Żukowski (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2013).

sions about texts rolling through different media – print newspapers, online news portals, social media networks; integrating the messages from all of these sources will allow us to analyze reception processes in a more comprehensive manner than before. Obtaining private communications – e.g. e-mail chains, IM logs – would also offer invaluable insights.

Reading and writing communities – both online and offline – are another source of research material that offers precious insights into the role of reading in the everyday lives of people participating in reading culture. Reading communities – such as book clubs – are excellent sources of material to study group processes and collective negotiation of meaning.[61] Research should also cover writing communities – e.g. poetry and fan fiction portals – which often serve as a platform for the distribution and discussion of content.

The next group covers something I have broadly termed literacy discourse, that is statements and events testifying to the cultural role and status of literary texts in a given community. These include newspaper columns and op-eds about (non-) reading, as well as different events and initiatives promoting book reading (such as *I am Not Sleeping with People Who Don't Read*, *The Book Is Female*, and *Library Night*). In this case, research material should also include institutional forms of readership promotion, such as materials on the operations of cultural institutions or the observation of participants in libraries, trade shows, and poetry readings. Our area of interest also covers the writers' own framing of their work and the readers' framing of their motivations, as communicated through a variety of meta-literary messages, for example blogs, forums, and social network posts. We should also strive to cover the book industry's marketing efforts (e.g. the values that they invoke or refer to).

Existing data, by that I mean data sets available in electronic form as well as the surfeit of metadata that can be acquired from the Internet, is another important group. An all-encompassing research project should strive for maximally integrating existing data resources, especially statistical data sets drafted by publishers, libraries, blogging platforms, bookstores and repositories. Examining data about book lending and sales across Poland against the backdrop of assessing online readership would allow us to base our study of reading on something more solid than mere declarations themselves. Additionally, we may try to obtain so-called "organic data," or metadata created by most of our electronic and online activities, which are stored

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61 See especially Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance. Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Long, *Book Clubs*. A broader discussion of the subject can be found in my essay, Maciej Maryl, "Czytanie romansu online. Kolektywny odbiór literatury w Internecie." ["Reading Romance Online: The Collective Consumption of Online Literature"] in *Tropy literatury i kultury popularnej* [*Literary and Popular Culture Tropes*], ed. Sławomir Buryła, Lidia Gąsowska and Danuta Ossowska (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2014).

by a vast number of state or business entities and our devices.**62** Pertinent data also includes data created "unintentionally" (e.g. metadata on the number of posts or commenters on blogs, dates of publication, tweets on literary awards, browsing histories, etc.), as well as data created in the course of processing already existing text resources (e.g. linguistic analysis of a given text or discussion). One particularly interesting example of such data usage is the analysis of passages highlighted by users of Amazon's e-book reading platforms.**63** In this case, access is the biggest hindrance – much (most?) of this data is proprietary, belonging to commercial entities and obtaining it would require consent and collaboration from the owner.

The last group is created data, that is data collected by researchers in the course of interacting with people participating in literary culture. It is, therefore, mostly data sourced from surveys, individual and group interviews, as well as reader experiments conducted in the laboratory and in the home (e.g. in the form of book reading journal entries). Research efforts allow us to fill the gaps in the existing source data described in the preceding groups.

The aforementioned list and the examples above definitely do not exhaust all the possible research areas and tools, but they also indicate that there is great potential for further research. I have undoubtedly failed to mention a number of potential data sources here, including those that have not emerged from the wilderness of data yet.

The project of an all-encompassing literary study offers the opportunity to find a common denominator for different, scattered, and contributory inquiries taking place in many of the areas we outlined above (some of which are collected in this volume). It is a suggestion that has to be fleshed out and operationalized within a specific research project. Therefore, I am opening the subject up for discussion and inviting everyone interested to collaborate.

So, let us go back to the question posed in the beginning of this essay – Why do we read? Well, there it is.

Translation: Jan Szelągiewicz

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62 I borrow the term from the papers released after a 2014 research symposium: Mary Lou Rife, Damaris King, Samuel Thomas and Rose Li, *Measuring Cultural Engagement: A Quest for New Terms, Tools, and Techniques: Summary of a Joint Research Symposium Held at the Gallup Headquarters in Washington, DC, June 2-3, 2014* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts and the Arts & Humanities Research Council, 2014); the document is available online at http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/measuring-cultural-engagement.pdf, accessed June 15, 2015. One of the chief conclusions of the seminar was the suggestion to make the most possible use of organic data in order to measure cultural participation.

63 Tully Barnett, "Social Reading: The Kindle's Social Highlighting Function and Emerging Reading Practices," *Australian Humanities Review* 56 (2014).

Polish Theories of Literary Communication

Jerzy Ziomek

A Common Defence of Literary History: The Reader's and the Researcher's Shelf

Jerzy Ziomek
(1924-1990) – literary historian, in his work he focused mostly on the Renneisance period. Among the most reckongnized of his numerous works is the comprehensive synthesis *Renesans* (1973) and the shorter *Literatura Odrodzenia* (1987), *Wizerunki polskich pisarzy katolickich* (1963), *Powinowactwa literatury* (1980), as well as *Retoryka opisowa* (1990), and *Prace ostatnie* (1994), published posthumously. He edited Jan Kochanowski's *Psałterz Dawidów* and the collected works of Biernat of Lublin. He was awarded The Knight's Cross of the Order of the Rebirth of Poland, the Golden Cross of Merit, and the Medal Komisji Edukacji Narodowej.

For the third time (since 1974) I have taken part in defending literary history – my motivation being not only concerned with the evident difficulties in writing and publishing books as well as subsequent updated versions of a university manual, but most of all with the presence and the apparently growing popularity of such literary theories which explicitly, or at least implicitly, negate the possibility and the need for constructing syntheses in the field of literary history. My statement of course, but also the opinions expressed by opponents of the thesis suggested by the title, refers to a special traditional type of research called the "history" (or the "past") of a given literature defined by the territory or most often by the language, and described in a certain chronological order aimed at reconstructing its evolution. I do not have in mind here elaborate historical analyses, but historical syntheses to be precise. Recapturing such seemingly obvious terms is not superfluous pedantry. We have just found out that "in five recent literary histories of West Germany, there is a tendency to depart from the principle of the comprehensive synthesis in favour of the principle of illustrative examples"[1] and that "histories of

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1   Siegfried J. Schmidt, "*O pisaniu historii literatury*," trans. Maria Bożena Fedewicz, *Pamiętnik Literacki* 3 (1988): 239. The original

literature are c o n s t r u c t i o n s – not reconstructions."[2] To that, we could simply respond that the problem is not the selection of illustrative examples itself – as these, astonishingly, have not changed for over a century – but the system, that is the "linking of the data." No sensible person would call such linking "reconstruction," if this term implied an absolutely objective recreation of the real shape. The work of the literary historian does not resemble the work of the archaeologist or palaeontologist who creates a hypothesis of a whole out of preserved remnants – it is only one of many possible and useful philological techniques. Reconstructing a prior system of values is not the same as recommending values to contemporary readers, as is inevitable in historical writings.

In this context, "the researcher's shelf" stands for "expert" readings.[3] "The reader's shelf," on the other hand, is a rough image of the usual, unprofessional practice steered by the more or less refined taste and the more or less conscious intellectual need. I treat these two terms as a starting point of discussing the need for the history of literature – the starting point that is deliberately uncomfortable in view of the submitted thesis. I hereby propose a moment of false sincerity. Frankly speaking, we do approach literary works of different languages and cultural circles outside of school requirements – but not the history of literature. As children and young adults, we read books according to their difficulty and usefulness – and not in their historical order. As adults, we read books at random or on others' advice, for entertainment or to be in vogue. This particularly concerns foreign literature. The average educated patron of a bookstore or library reads French, English, German, Russian and, most of all, Latin American authors, while ignoring their chronology. The author's name is to her or him only a signature of a certain value, such as swift action, exotic themes, mystery, conundrum or the simple life; and there is a need to identify the name with the presented world. Many years of critical and selective reading eventually results in a fairly high level of cultural sophistication. The reader's shelf is by no means a selection of popular texts of low artistic quality. There is no reason to be indignant about the fact that someone did not get through Joyce and Proust if she or he reads Thomas Mann or Günter Grass with understanding. There are people who, despite holding a degree in Polish literature, have not read *Pan Tadeusz* but know Gombrowicz almost by heart.

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article of the German scholar was published in English "On Writing Histories of Literature. Some Remarks from a Constructivist Point of View," *Poetics* 14 (1985).

2   Ibid., 239, see footnote 16.

3   See Janusz Sławiński, "O dzisiejszych normach czytania (znawców)," *Teksty* 3 (1973).

The reader's shelf, therefore, is a composition which is not so much chaotic as it is individualized; far from being canonical, it might be a sphere of free self-realization afforded by reading. Perhaps only the sociologist of literature (or even the psychologist) might want to interpret variants of reading choices in comparison to the invariant nature of literary history. Surely such approaches may turn out to be valuable, but neither do they confirm the need to study literary history nor do they question such a need. What I call to be invariant is in fact an arbitrarily established canon of supposedly non-scientific ambitions which does not mean they are wrong or unworthy of being accepted. Continuity of national culture, the need for remembering, the need for patriotic and/or international education, inculcating values of Western Christian culture – these slogans should not be rejected, but they are too weak to persuade an enthusiast of disordered readings to study the history of literature. There is, anyway, no reason to be scandalized by amateur readership and, even more, to professionalize the more sublime part of culture for those who do not yield to the pressure of iconic mass media.

The question about the need for literary history, therefore, should be formulated in a different way. We ought to think whether reading is at all possible in a simple and dry "reader-text" relation? When does a "text" become a "work"? And what does it mean to "become a work"?

The simple, or even primitive, "reader-text" relation happens quite rarely in practice: at best, this concerns reading popular entertainment literature of questionable quality. All the attention is directed towards the author, the author as an agent, as well as the author's environment and time period, which constitute the first step to a "contextual" and eventually "historical" reading. "The reader's shelf" can co-exist with "the researcher's shelf." It is not unprofessional reading which challenges and threatens a synthetic understanding of literary history. It is rather the various and often simply fashionable literary theories in whose shadow this discussion will be conducted.

Robert Escarpit came up with the notion of "creative treason"[4] and the question is why. The fact that there exist "updated readings" of books, different from those from the time of their creation and release, was and is a trivial statement; only it is hard to answer the question – as once Tadeusz Zieliński did – "Why Homer?". Why do we constantly read Homer, Virgil, Dante, Rabelais, Cervantes and many others? Or maybe we do not read them? Or do

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4   Robert Escarpit, "La littérature et le social," in *Le littéraire et le social* (Paris 1970), trans. Janusz Lalewicz, "Literatura a społeczeństwo," in *Współczesna teoria badań literackich za granicą. Antologia*, vol. 3, ed. Henryk Markiewicz (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1973), 124 and futher.

we read them because of school or our snobbism? The sociology of literature may describe the contemporary (but also historical) canon and create a ranking system, but it cannot explain this immutable mutability of tastes. The notion of "creative treason" is evasive: of course there is also "adaptive reading,"[5] which is evidently incompatible with the conventions from the time of a work's creation (the easiest way to prove it is to use the philological example of how the meanings of words change) but in order to have "treason," there must be a rule and form of "faithfulness" first. Against whom? Against the author's will? What the author wanted to say is such an archaic formula that nobody treats it seriously nowadays. Twentieth-century readers do not care much about the political context of Dante, but maybe they are interested in Beatrice? In any case, when it comes to the debate over the usefulness of literary history, I would prefer to avoid any statements about the enduring problems of human existence mainly because they are only superficial and misleading allies of the literary historian.

The reader's shelf may be completely accidental, but it could also be a well thought-out collection, and thus the improbability of "treason" operating in something so total and enriching. There is no such reader who does not know that every text has its set of expectations.[6] It is hard to imagine a reader without something we call "literary culture."[7] While it is true that "the style of reception" of a given work may be in discord with the styles of production of a given work,[8] the sum of the production and reception styles in a sufficiently broad synchrony probably generates a symmetrical system. Jan Mukařovský wrote about the relation of a work with artistic conventions of the past as a component ensuring that the work is comprehensible to the recipient.[9] Following his reasoning I would say that the literary work in relation with the reader is, more or less, a late play in a sequential game[10] which means that the result of the game depends on the tally of profit and

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5   Henryk Markiewicz, "Rzut oka na najnowszą teorię badań literackich za granicą," in *Literaturoznawstwo i jego sąsiedztwa* (Warszawa: PWN, 1989), 7-31.

6   „Everyting told and contained in the text is burdened with anticipations," Gadamer summarizes Heidegger – see Barbara Skarga, *Granice historyczności* (Warszawa: Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, 1989), 17.

7   Janusz Sławiński, *Dzieło – Język – Tradycja* (Warszawa: PWN, 1974), 66.

8   Michał Głowiński, *Style odbioru* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1977), 126 and further.

9   Jan Mukařovský, *Wśród znaków i struktur. Wybór szkiców,* ed. and introd. Janusz Sławiński (Warszawa: PIW, 1970), 27.

10   Or rather in an extensive-form game.

loss in the entire chain that precedes it. The difference between the reader's shelf and the researcher's shelf is that the reader does not know and does not have to know earlier results, while the researcher tries to reconstruct them.

If literary history is not so bad, why do we need to defend it and why must this defence be common? Who is waging a campaign against the literary historian? As it turns out, the list of opponents is considerably long (according to Henryk Markiewicz[11]) and the arms remarkably diversified.

In the first place, although not without hesitation, I would mention phenomenology. Hesitation stems from the fact that the term is overused and hides all kinds of orientations, often not even orientations but justifications of subjectivist-impressional propositions. I am not acquainted with a more outstanding theory of a literary work than Ingarden's *Das literarische Kunstwerk*. This seminal book and all the ensuing works not only omit the history of literature, but they also make such a history impossible. In the *Dodatek* [*Addendum*] to *O poznawaniu dzieła literackiego,* the author divides literary science to the history of literature and the "analytical-descriptive study of literary works of art," whereas he expresses a certain amount of mistrust towards the positivistic methodology which considers "all literary studies" to be a "historical science."[12] Is he right? Ingarden argues that:

> cognition of a work created in a different historical epoch is approached [...] by a detour so that the first subject we get to know is not the work itself but various other subjects related to the creation and reception of the work.[13]

Here is the essence of the conflict. It is not that the prominent philosopher did not appreciate studies done on different types of works for example of styles. Indeed, he respectfully spoke about *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, but at the same time Wölfflin seemed to him "very far from the general theory of an artwork, from the problems of its existence."[14] It is meaningful and

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11 Henryk Markiewicz, "Dylematy historyka literatury," in: Markiewicz, *Literaturoznawstwo i jego sąsiedztwa.*

12 Roman Ingarden, *O poznawaniu dzieła literackiego,* trans. Danuta Gierulanka (Warszawa: PWN, 1976), 450.

13 Ibid., 451.

14 Roman Ingarden, *Wykłady i dyskusje z estetyki,* ed. Anita Szczepańska (Warszawa: PWN, 1981), 170.

understandable that he agreed with Wölfflin's views more readily than with other research procedures applied by literary historians: art historians – despite being prone to reflecting over works, and not a single work – seldom think about the non-artistic personality of a painter or a sculptor because they are more interested, metonymically speaking, in Rembrandt's brush or Thorvaldsen's chisel than in Rembrandt or Thorvaldsen themselves. Scholars occupied with literature, however, are sinfully inclined to identify a work with its author, but if it was true that Werther, for example, was "a transcription of a love affair that Goethe himself had,"[15] this fact according to Ingarden would be meaningless to the research done concerning a work of art.

A contemporary researcher has not much willingness to take up problems that are formulated this way: Johann Wolfgang and Charlotte von Stein, or Adam Mickiewicz and Maryla Wereszczakówna – these topics have long been ridiculed. But is the "creator-work" relation and the social context of the author really not of our interest at all?

It turns out that it is not only Ingarden who is standing on the frontlines against historical syntheses, but unlike many other contemporary thinkers, he does not make the debate any easier due to the philosophical elegance of his theory. Yet, we should not reject the thought that a literary work is an elementary and indivisible unit of collection called "literature." We should approve of a thesis that since a work is not an ideational or psychological subject, it may only be an intentional one. However, does the acceptance of these claims disable or only restrain the methodology of literary history? Or following Ingarden's reasoning about the layered construction of a work, are we abandoning phenomenology at the moment of switching to genealogical and historical studies.[16] When all is said and done, it appears that eclecticism is a virtue of the literary historian.

Ingarden is sometimes considered to have helped pioneer the aesthetics of reception,[17] the most remarkable representative of which is Hans Robert Jauss. If this is in fact true, concepts promoted by the Constance School make evident the weaknesses of such inspirations. Jauss states:

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15   Ingarden, *O poznawaniu,* 453.

16   Jauss states that Prague school structuralism applied Ingarden's inspiration while "historicizing" it: "[…] hat […] einen Ansatz der phänomenologischen Ästhetik R. Ingardens aufgenommen und historisiert," Hans Robert Jauss, "Geschichte der Kunst und Historie," in *Geschichte. Ereignis und Erzählung,* ed. Reinhart Koselleck and Wolf-Dieter Stempel (Munich: Fink, 1973), 206.

17   Ryszard Handke, "Dialektyka komunikacji literackiej," in *Problemy teorii literatury*, series 3, ed. Henryk Markiewicz (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988), 444.

the renewal of literary history requires the liquidation of superstitions
of objectivism (…)[18].

What are these superstitions? It is easy to surmise, as in other editions of
this work Jauss recalls the famous historiographer, Leopold von Ranke. How-
ever, his sorrows associated with the well-known phrase *wie es eignetlich war*
almost do not concern literary historiography, and in any case they are simply
one of those respectable positivistic eccentricities which, a century after the
scholar's death, are no longer considered superstitions. I left off quoting Jauss,
so I duly continue: the renewal of literary history also requires

support of the traditional aesthetics of production and presentation with
the aesthetics of reception and impact. The historical character of litera-
ture does not base itself on the established *ex post* connection of literary
facts but, first of all, on cognizing a literary work through its readers.[19]

Jauss initiates an untimely polemic: who defines today a "literary fact" iden-
tically to Ranke's understanding of it in (global) history? In this sense, facts
could only be philological objects and "quasi-literary" events, and these de-
serve the respect of any decent research methodology, irrespective of polem-
ics. When Jauss looks for facts which are unquestionable, empirically provided
and verifiable, paradoxically, he returns to the positivistic methodology. It
frames the encounter of the text with the reader and the horizon of expecta-
tions drawn by the reader. The literary historian is supposed to be, argues
Jauss, first the reader, then the researcher.

This is true, but this truth does not provide any benefits because in order
to stand on the firm ground of this challenge issued to traditional studies of
literature, it is necessary to immobilize this "horizon of expectations," which
is impossible, or describe particular "horizons" which not only could be done
but already has been done – eventually, any history of reception of a given
work, writer, trend or epoch is nothing else than a history of horizons: fairly
useful, similarly to the research in the field of sociology of literature which
should not be treated as a "challenge issued."

The Constance School eventually collapsed, and the eighties brought an-
other wave of doubts and deconstruction which is hard to argue with be-
cause: 1 – deconstructivism, when it attempts to be a coherent programme,

18   Hans Robert Jauss, "Historia literatury jako wyzwanie rzucone nauce o literaturze (frag-
menty)," trans. Ryszard Handke, *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (1972): 274.

19   Ibid.

dissembles itself in a suicidal manner, 2 – terminologically, it is very compli-
cated[20] (at least in its French, post-structuralist version), 3 – in fact, it refers
to American New Criticism although what distinguishes it from its prede-
cessors is that it does not see text as a coherent and hierarchical structure.[21]

The reaction to this decade of "exhaustion with literary theories" *(Rezension
der Theoriemüdigkeit)* has inspired the latest proposition of German literary
theorists: the "empirical literary theory" (abbreviated to ELW – *Empirische Lit-
eratturwissenschaft*) promoted by the NIKOL Working Group launched in 1983
by a few scholars from Siegen and Bielefeld led by Helmut Hauptmeier and
Siegfried J. Schmidt.[22] It is symptomatic that this most recent attempt, initi-
ated under the slogan "empiricism," in many ways continues Jauss's concepts,
although he is rarely mentioned in this context. The ELW rejects the sub-
jectivist and irrationalistic tendencies of American deconstructionism. The
central assumption of this group is that it is subject-oriented *(sachorientiert)*,
not person-oriented *(personenorientiert)*. It does not mean that the ELW wants
to deal with texts only, or be occupied with history without names, which
would be an outdated and ridiculous idea, even in art history; orientation
to subjects is to be based on examining "action roles" *(Handlungsrollen)* to be
fulfilled by the "actor."[23] There are four roles composing a system of mutual
links which can be illustrated with the following graphic scheme:[24]

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                        LV
                         |
       LP ------------------------------------ LR
                         |
                        LVA
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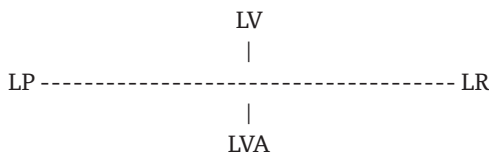
20   Originally, the author used a made-up term from Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz's works
     (Polish: "zagwazdrany"), [translator's footnote].

21   Markiewicz, "Dylematy historyka literatury," 26.

22   Siegfried J. Schmidt, *Grundriss der Empirischen Literaturwissenschaft*. Teil I/1: *Der gesells-
     chaftliche Handlungsbereich Literatur*. 1/2: *Zur Rekonstruktion literaturwissenschaftlicher
     Fragestellungen in einer Empirischen Theorie der Literatur* (Braunschweig-Wiesbaden:
     Suhrkamp Verlag, 1980-1982). An English summary of the book was also translated into
     Polish (see footnote 1).

23   The translation of this text into Polish from English (Schmidt, "*O pisaniu historii literatury*,"
     233) uses a slightly misleading term "podmiot" (Eng. *subject*).

24   I refer here to the shorter and later version of the ELW programme: Helmut Hauptmeier
     and Siegfried J. Schmidt, *Einführung in die Empirische Literaturwissenschaft* (Braunsch-
     weig – Wiesbaden, 1985), 15.

where LP means "production" (*Literaturproduktion*), LV — "distribution" (Literaturvermittlung), LR — "reception" (*Literaturrezeption*), LVA — "post-processing" (*Literaturverarbeitung*).[25]

This proposition differs from Jauss's concept by attempting to dismiss a contradiction between the aesthetics of production and the aesthetics of reception – so characteristic of the Constance School. Its advantage is treating the roles of actors in a spiral fashion: research does not end with reception, but is conducted further through transformations back to "production," and at the same time it does not rule out direct mutual influences. The ELW Group is not correct in treating these roles equally in practice – even with the advantages of dealing with problems related to distribution and reception which stems from the detailed programme of the (preferable) group research and questionnaire surveys.

It is difficult to decide which is more important: production or reception. Due to the character of their work, literary historians have a conciliatory and tolerant disposition; they do not intend to ignore sociological facts, but they cannot give their consent to the symmetrical treatment of production and reception. For literary historians, Jan Chryzostom Pasek is a part of seventeenth-century literature, and not the nineteenth century, when Edward Raczyński published the *Pamiętniki* in the 1830s. Jean Potocki is a problem of the post-gothic novel in the beginning of the nineteenth century which does not mean we may be indifferent to Edmund Chojecki's translation and further complicated story of *The Manuscript's* manuscript. Responding to the question whether this novel belongs to Polish or French literature, we will say that the primary criterion is always language, but there is no methodological collision if we consider Polish literature as part of European literature. Obviously, the researcher occupied with Romantic drama will be interested in Shakespeare, but it does not mean that we should read his works only on the occasion of studying Słowacki for example, as it is practiced at some universities, and not in the original context of European Renaissance and its peculiar English variation.

And how to classify works, which at the time of their writing were, certainly, read and praised, but then forgotten – and not due to some reckless mistake, but simply in the natural course of things? This "natural" order of things has no biological meaning here, but is related rather to the "theory of communication." Literary history gathers information from the past and makes a selection which means registering not only the accruement of values

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25 The English version of the term post-processing is accurately translated as "przetworzenie." Ibid., 234.

but also their loss.[26] The capacity of human memory, understood not necessarily personally but rather socially, is limited and – even though there is no obligatory canon outside school requirements – the contents of the reader's shelf may be roughly described as a probabilistically hierarchized system: some texts can be found there almost for sure and others definitely will not be encountered. And if we were to discuss the horizon of expectations, in any sense, this is the one we want to talk about, but this horizon – despite being worth sociological analysis – is not an element of historical thinking.

I am not separating here text from work as demanded by some theoreticians who believe that a text becomes a work once it connects with the reader; in such a case, the number of readers who contribute to the work should be established beforehand. The debate about the production perspective with the reception perspective, however, concerns the most important matter – something I would call "the concealed work." Work A may disappear from the current readership circuit, but it remains the subject of the historian's interest if it was once read by B, influenced B and through B, it influenced C and so on – one by one until it becomes a sufficiently important event. Perhaps nobody reads Biernat's fairy tales if not obliged to, but Biernat reaches readers not only directly, thanks to reprints, but also in an indirect relation through his more outstanding successors such as Krasicki. If the example of Biernat seems banal, once again will I refer to Stanisław Porębski, who as we know was a great author of the completely lost *Skotopaski* – bucolic tales praised by Kochanowski. These bucolic tales surely have a specific role in the poetry of the bard from Czarnolas and in the development of the genre, in general. It is an extreme example of a situation which we call developmental value and which is an inalienable part of historical-literary thinking.

This example leads us to the question about the approach literary history assumes towards general history or – as others prefer – global history. From the point of view of the user (in our case: the reader) this contradistinction is substantial. The central point here is the way we understand the "event" (*Ereignis*) and "fact" (*le fait, l'événement*[27]), and this is made even clearer as the relation between a particular "event", independent of its interpretation, and the whole process is oftentimes the source of methodological disputes and misunderstandings, which, by the way, are not always insurmountable.

An event in socio-political history is never granted to the posterity directly but through evidence – more or less trustworthy documents. The Battle of

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26   On this subject Krzysztof Dmitruk, *Literatura – społeczeństwo – przestrzeń. Przemiany komunikacji literackiej* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1980).

27   Algirdas J. Greimas, "Sur l'histoire événementielle et l'histoire fondamentale," in *Geschichte, Ereignis und Erzählung*, 139-153.

Grunwald took place, but it also did not, in the same way as there were and there were not numerous elections, mutinies, uprisings and so on. The historian reconstructs not only the course of these events, but also their causes and effects among which we live. In the history of literature, an elementary event is a work which, unceasingly from the day of creation until the present time, exists as an identical object (intentionally understood) that is (in fact) directly given to us. This is usually the case because, of course, not everything has been preserved, we do not know what has been lost, lost facts can only be presumed and can sometimes possibly be reconstructed. However, what is ordinary in the methodology of social history becomes a flaw in the image and a deforming loss in the history of literature. The theory of literature, therefore, generates many auxiliary disciplines aimed at conducting reconstructions – similarly to archaeological procedures.

However, like the social historian, the historian of literature is not necessarily dealing with one individual author-creator, who can be through documents, but with everything that was a source of the work's creation, its singular effect and influences.

These ascertainments are obvious, it would seem, or even banal. Yet, this dualistic methodological situation was and is the cause of hellish arguments among literary theoreticians.

René Wellek wrote not without a reason, but only partially correctly:

> Literary study differs from historical study in having to deal not with documents but with monuments. A historian has to reconstruct a long-past event on the basis of eye-witness accounts; the literary student has direct access to his object: the work of art.[28]

First of all, works which are the subject of study and interest are not always monuments as such as this definition implies a specific style of thinking about literature. Secondly, it is true that the "subject" of research is the work itself or its pure form. Questions that should be asked are: How do works belong to another work as its anticipations, consequences and relations, called intertextual relations today? Are non-literary causes of a work significant and if yes – how?

It is cliché to complain about the history of literature being composed of analyses of single works, and (what is worse) read as simple and symmetrical expressions of the author's thoughts and emotions. An adversary of such undoubtedly archaic and, frankly speaking, "Lansonian" approach says that whoever wants to think about literary history must think about the

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28   René Wellek, "Literary Theory, Criticism, and History," *The Sewanee Review* 68 (1960): 13.

genre. Hence, the most effective form of describing literary history as the evolution of norms is through a genre system.[29] On the other hand, by no means embracing Lanson or referring to him, some "eloquent Frenchmen" discovered that… the work is unique, but in its extraordinariness still open to exegesis, which Jacques Derrida calls "hierocriticism" and contrasts it with the, supposedly, meagre "poetics of laymen", which deals with the history of genres.[30] With a different methodological justification, but with similar consequences, the concept of "open work" functions in the contemporary humanist consciousness.

Officially, the animosity between literary history and literary criticism is inevitable. Literary criticism is understood quite specifically and widely, not only as the reviewers' work being the first to have contact with a somehow unexpected work, but as an updated communion with an old work, when updating does not merely mean an ideological and naïve presentism, but a dialogic hermeneutic statement aspiring to be something like a second work.

Roland Barthes probably has put it most vividly as he expressed a sound conviction that criticism is meta-language. From that, he makes a seemingly inappropriate conclusion:

> its [criticism] function is not to discover "truths" but discover "valence" exclusively…[31]

which means a coherent sign system. And if that is so, then

> critical proof, if it exists, depends on the ability not to discover the analysed work but quite the opposite – to possibly completely cover it with our own language.[32]

Apart from the effect of this wordplay, I am probably not mistaken if I see in this sentence a postulate to radically autonomize criticism as a legitimate partner. Criticism equals here any interpretation, also in reference to past

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29   "Jauss seems minimally interested in how a text as a member of a genre is constituted." Ralph Cohen, "History and Genre," *New Literary History* 2 (1986): 211.

30   Michel Beaujour, "Genus uniwersum: gatunek literacki renesansu," trans. Maria Dramińska-Joczowa, *Pamiętnik Literacki* 2 (1989): 336.

31   Roland Barthes, "Czym jest krytyka?," trans. Janusz Lalewicz, in *Mit i znak. Eseje,* ed. Jan Błoński (Warszawa: PIW, 1970), 285.

32   Ibid., 286 and further.

works. It becomes clear, therefore, why literary history deserves rebuke, according to Barthes, when it is a history of works, or even worse, a "history of writers."[33]

And this is the essence expressed in other words of the made-up collision between what I call the reader's shelf and the researcher's shelf; only the reader's shelf, in my opinion, is simply unprofessional reading, while in the quoted fragment of Barthes's thought, it becomes an antagonism which creates an unavoidable conflict among literary theoreticians.

Users of the reader's shelf are not obliged to be interested in annotated readings – such a thought could only emerge in some terrible, city of the sun, utopia ruled by philosophers. What is crucial is whether a component of reading, of any reading of a work, is its historicity which might be understood as both a direct and necessary cause (except for folklore) and as a favourable cause[34] to a certain extent and in a certain way (social relations of different duration)? In historiographic practice, a positive answer means that the researcher wants to remove the made-up contradiction between a discipline about "the principles of literature, its categories, criteria, and the like" and the one occupied with "concrete literary works" between statically treated criticism and history of a developmental character.[35] I will repeat again after Mukařovský: the relation of a work with artistic conventions of the past ensures that it is comprehensible to the reader.[36] It means that the work not only agglomerates a set of causes and possible effects, but this set is also an indexical sign co-shaping the sense that is not of little consequence to readers in any epoch. The fact that the work is created by a person does not mean it is an image of the artist's freedom. On the contrary – it is an image of the conflict between the postulated freedom and restraints imposed by artistic norms and non-artistic circumstances. The trace of this contradiction is present in every literary fact and this is the reason why it is not recommendable to divide history of literature to institutional history and readership. Historicity in this sense is not a writing technique but an outlook on life. It is not a coincidence that history of literature began together with Romanticism:

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33   Barthes, "Historia czy literatura," trans. Wanda Błońska, in *Mit i znak*, 165.

34   Markiewicz, "Dylematy historyka literatury," 266.

35   Wellek, "Literary Theory," 1. Quoting Wellek, we should remember that originally he uses the terms *literary theory* and *literary criticism* which have a slightly different meaning than "teoria" and "krytyka" in Polish.

36   Mukařovský, *Wśród znaków i struktur. Wybór szkiców.*

> Placing a man in history, treated as a human form of creation and one that is basic, is sometimes even the only form of self-knowledge; Romanticism all the while noticed the objectivity of the historical process.[37]

This is why it is hard to accept the concepts of schools which question the unity of literary history by separating from it so-called criticism and reducing other research practices to narrow empiricism. Significantly, such practice connects seemingly remote schools. There is a positivistic complex of non-objectivity in it. Since we cannot articulate the final and certain judgement regarding a work, we should exclude it from the scientific process or/and find incontestable methods of polling the reader. The history of literature does not have to be free of the historian's taste – what is important is that the rules of axiological options should be included at least implicitly, but nonetheless as self-consciously and clearly as possible, and thus adapted to the norms of social behaviour. The history of literature is always the result of a specific effect of alienation towards the past, but in this context the word "alienation" does not mean disapproval and for sure it does not refer to freedom and axiological subjectivity. The alienation effect (*der Verfremdungseffekt)* expresses the social feeling of the flow of time and the degree of social changes. In any case, if something makes literary historians wonder or even astonishes them, it is not the freedom of judgement and its changeability, but the opposite – a strange stability. In the last century, there were no sudden revisions, spectacular degradations and rehabilitations, and if there were any, they were short-lived. Of course, discoveries and new interpretations were present in detailed analyses but the system of ranks, if we may say so, in syntheses has remained unchanged.

In this article, I assumed a defensive tactic, deliberately and consciously, even though it may seem an easier task. If I were to signal a positivist programme, I would say that I support methodological anti-naturalism. Yet, is it a programme if the declaration requires using "anti-" as a prefix? I know only one answer to the doubts expressed in the following question: process or work? Literary history obviously focuses on tracking transformations but in this narrative two techniques are required – one of them (I wrote about it fifteen years ago) is a technique, a focal change which indicates the ability to switch from seeing a wide panorama to the detail, and the second one (for which I will also use film terminology) is the rule of "freeze-frame," signifying the obligation to stop the narrative in order to interpret both the work and its relevant part, perhaps even one word.

Translation: Marta Skotnicka

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37   Maria Janion and Marta Żmigrodzka, *Romantyzm i historia* (Warszawa: PIW, 1978), 19.

Andrzej Skrendo

Reception Theory: The Object, Range and Goals of Research. A Commentary to the Title and Postscript

> Most disputes in literature result not from the differences in reception but from the differences in understanding reception.
>
> Stanley Fish

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Discussing reception theory means accepting at least three assumptions: that we can find a satisfactory description of the concept of "reception" and distinguish it from others such as "reading," "response," "communication," "interpretation," "hermeneutics," etc.; that we know what constitutes "literature," in other words, agree on what constitutes the object of reception (since researching reception involves investigating reception, but also constructing that which is supposed to be its object – a work or a text; frankly, it is unclear which of these acts happens first); finally, that we are certain that investigating reception can be referred to as "research" (a question directly related to the previous one: if reception theory constructs its object and if there exist many reception theories, to what extent can we still talk about "research"?). In short, there are three assumptions and each of them has been disputed.

With regard to the first issue, the debate about the concepts above suggests that particular reception theories (even if they shun such a label, preferring to be called "erotics of reading," "politics of interpretation" or

"pragmatics of reading") only seemingly use the same vocabulary and describe the same experience. Thus, unification of the research field seems unlikely.[1] Reception theory did not receive a clearly outlined field to cultivate and discussions about its extent and nature, even its existence, devour substantial amounts of the "researchers'" energies. Responses to the issues above also vary dramatically; some say literature exists only in reception, granting the reader almost unlimited freedom; others say that reception is a factor to be considered in literary research but the actions of the reader are limited in several ways, a position represented by Umberto Eco who distinguishes three elements of interpretation: the linear manifestation of the text, the reader and the cultural encyclopedia containing the language as well as the collection of all earlier interpretations of a given text. Eco believes that interpreting a text means discovering "a strategy intended to produce a model reader."[2]

But the problem has several other sources. On the one hand, reflection on reading is an integral component of numerous methodologies and philosophical directions, such as neopragmatism or deconstructivism, but on the other, ideas developed by scholars initially interested in reception have developed divergently, meaning that reception theory again lost its autonomous character (Jauss, as we know, moved in the direction of hermeneutics, and Iser toward the anthropology of culture). The notion of "reading" is fundamental also to the theory of interpretation which appears to stretch across all divisions into methodological directions and orientations, and theory of communication adds to the discussion its own claims about reception and claims of universality.

The second issue is related to the doubt concerning "literature" as the name for the object of "reception." It seems that we have one thing in mind when we talk about the activity of the readers in the context of their reception of a "literary work" and another when we refer to "literature," and something yet different when we assume "literature" to be synonymous to "text." This is apparent in Roland Barthes where the movement from "a work to text" is closely related to the concept of "the pleasure of the text." As a side note, it is possible that having moved from the "reception of the work" to the "reception of the text" we now have begun to go back. Or that we have moved from "the

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1   Such hopes were expressed by editors Janusz Sławiński and Tadeusz Bujnicki in the introduction to *Problem odbioru i odbiorcy* [*The Questions of Reception and the Receiver*] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1977).

2   I am referring to the remarks included in Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* [Polish edition – *Interpretacja i nadinterpretacja*], ed. Stefan Collini, trans. Tomasz Bieroń (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 1996), 65.

reception of the work" to the "reception of the text" and then simply to "reception" (which would correspond to the sequence of Ingarden – Barthes – Fish).

This is not only about Barthes's case, of course, nor about the fact that reception scholars must describe practices as diverse as literary criticism, pedagogy or – to borrow from Janusz Sławiński – "expert reading;" it is not even about the fact that "reception of literature" must include also everything that is done with or to literature by philosophers, anthropologists, ethnologists and other representatives of professions beyond literary criticism. All of these issues are important but they are also secondary to the fundamental question which may be phrased as follows: did reception theory (or rather, reception theories) cause an increase of issues to be solved or rather are we dealing with an increase in the number of languages used to reformulate and paraphrase issues already known (mostly from the structuralist tradition)? I think that old problems described in a new language cease to be old problems. Reception theory not only changed structuralism but also contributed to its destruction.

In the 1971 article entitled *Perspektywy poetyki odbioru* [*Perspectives of Reception Poetics*] Edward Balcerzan argued: "Each element of the work can be seen as a t a s k for the reader. Each element can be described as an appeal to perform a semiotic operation assumed in it."[3] The category of a virtual reader and the resulting understanding of reception create in the system of theoretical poetics "a certain, relatively separate, s u b s y s t e m – a poetic c o n s i d e r i n g the receiver, a theory of work oriented at reception."[4] A few years later, in 1979, Janusz Sławiński writes in a similar vein but he already thinks differently: "the category of virtual reader is without any doubt destructive for the structuralist model of literary work: it results in a confusion within a stratified order because it cannot be attributed to any level of the work's organization and, most importantly, removes its fundamental feature – its closed character."[5] In a 1987 article *Od metod zewnętrznych i wewnętrznych do komunikacji literackiej* [*From External and Internal Methods to Literary Communication*] Michał Głowiński will argue that the contradiction between the internal order of the work and all that which is external (social, historical, psychological) can be reconciled in a theory of literary communication. But this comes at a price of "dethroning" reception theory, which becomes incorporated into theory of communication and coexists on equal footing with the "theory of rhetorical

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3   Edward Balcerzan, "Pespektywy poetyki odbioru," in *Problemy socjologii literatury*, ed. Janusz Sławiński (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1971), 86.

4   Ibid., 83.

5   Janusz Sławiński, "Odbiór i odbiorca w procesie historycznoliterackim," in *Próby teoretycznoliterackie* (Kraków: Universitas, 2000), 102.

structure," sociolinguistics and speech act theory.[6] Notably, already in the 1960s in a response to Lévi-Strauss, Umberto Eco admitted that – according to the criteria set by the author of *Structural Anthropology* – the concept of the "open work" has nothing to do with structuralism as it does not reconstruct the presumed objective structure of works, but the structure of a perceptional relation.[7] At the same time, Eco rejected the notion of Lévi-Strauss's being the only possible version of structuralism (as evidenced by the remarks in *La struttura assente* [The absent structure], especially by the distinction between methodological and ontological structuralism).

The third issue concerns the word "research" (eagerly discarded today, perhaps a bit too recklessly). There is no doubt that, considering their own postulates, not all reception theories can be referred to as "research" (and perhaps, this is also when they cease to be "theories"), but the word can surely be applied to German *Rezeptionsästhetik*. Its central notion of *Erwartunghorizon* was meant to result in an "objectivization" of reception, even if one of Jauss's goals was to move away from the "superstition" of objectivism. The horizon of expectations, as we know, is assumed to have its own structure and is determined by a pre-understanding of the genre, the form and themes of already familiar works, and the opposition between the poetic and practical language.[8] Reception is meant to be a guided process whose tangible determinants can be found in the linguistics of the text. For Jauss, the text is a "musical score," which is frequently the case in reception theory.[9]

Jauss's argumentation aimed to prove that the horizon inscribed in the work soon exposed its weakness (Jauss claimed, for instance, that the horizon reveals itself in the text because its author can also be a receiver). The work was becoming less determinate, but gained context. Jauss's historicism allowed for thinking that the text has no sense on its own, as there is no timeless sense; that reception is a process of inscribing the text continuously with new meanings, and as such it is not a process of discovery, but a creation of meaning; that research must be limited to describing historical changeability of reading norms. The work is not a fact, but an act of reading and individual

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6   Michał Głowiński, "Od metod zewnętrznych i wewnętrznych do komunikacji literackiej," in *Poetyka i okolice* (Warszawa: PWN, 1992), 17-23 and elsewhere.

7   Umberto Eco, *Dzieło otwarte. Forma i nieokreśloność w poetykach współczesnych*, trans. Jadwiga Gałuszko et al. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo WAB, 1994), 14.

8   Hans Robert Jauss, "Historia literatury jako prowokacja dla nauki o literaturze," in *Historia nauki jako prowokacja*, trans. Małgorzata Łukasiewicz (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL, 1999), 145.

9   Ibid., 143.

acts of reading are incomparable as they contribute to the text rather than extract something from it.

This brings me to the fourth issue, one which has not been mentioned so far. This is also where my commentary to the article's title ends, and where the postscript begins.

It seems that reception theory was always at a risk of sliding into relativism. Initially, psychologism seemed likely to become its vulgar form. Although a strong anti-psychological tendency can be found already in Ingarden (a feature characteristic for phenomenology as such, and one connecting Ingarden to Husserl), the methods devised by Ingarden for the purpose of limiting the freedom of concretization also raise doubts.[10] To avoid the specter of relativism, reception scholars ceaselessly emphasized that they aim to discover not the principles of an individual act of reading but more general principles, ones which have a social dimension; that it is not individuals and their acts of reading, but "large and massive wholes"[11] which constitute the units of reception theory; that, in fact, it is not the reader, but the work which has remained the object of research, except that it is now framed by a certain theoretical model of communication.[12]

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10 To tell the truth, Ingarden himself was filled with doubt. *The Literary Work of Art* contains an interesting passage revealing his optimism. Opposing relativism, which threatened concretization, Ingarden ensures that it is enough to turn directly to what is crucial to a given work and exclude various random traits of individual concretizations to leave the hopeless state of extreme subjectivism, and claims that the extremely subjectivist position of literary criticism proves only certain naiveté, see *O dziele literackim. Badania z pogranicza ontologii, teorii języka i filozofii literatury*, trans. Maria Turowicz (Warszawa: PWN, 1988), 420 footnote 1. This is very telling: naiveté characterizes not those who believe in the phenomenologist's "directness" and the possibility to exclude (basing on this very directness) various random features of concretization, but those who emphasize the relativist consequences of reading theory. On the other hand, in "The Literary Work and its Concretizations" published [in Polish] in *Szkice z filozofii literatury,* with an introduction by Władysław Stróżewski (Kraków: Znak, 2000), on page 71 in footnote 2, Ingarden admits that while it may be easy to introduce the concept of "correct concretization," it is extremely difficult to provide reliable criteria allowing to distinguish between "correct" and "incorrect" concretizations.

11 Sławiński, „Odbiór," 113.

12 Ryszard Handke notes: "Despite what terminology [reception theory] may seem to suggest when treated superficially, it does not encourage focusing on the reader and analyzing the content and mechanisms of his experiences. On the contrary, it focuses on the work except – by placing it within the *realia* of a communicative situation – it reveals the multitude of codes used to formulate it as an utterance and constituting a part in the act of its reception." "Dialektyka komunikacji literackiej," in *Marksizm, Kultura, Literatura,* ed. Bogdan Owczarek and Krzysztof Rutkowski (Warszawa: PIW, 1982), 91.

However, relativism arrived from a different direction, not from the "outside," but from the "inside." According to some versions of deconstructivism (although, perhaps, not according to Derrida), the meaning, endlessly postponed in the movement of *différance*, results in the text not having any sense but always postponing one. The text is revealed as empty. Whatever we find in it is what we had earlier put into it. This is, someone could say, a very convenient theory as it relieves us of the obligation to read; regardless of what we read from now on, we always read the same. Consequently, the theory of reading transforms into its opposite and the process takes place precisely when it culminates, in other words, when it places all power in the hands of the receiver.

I am interested in the anti-relativist arguments appearing in the contemporary theoretical thought. They return very often, especially today after the so-called "ethical turn." In fact, anti-relativist pursuits can be found also in deconstruction itself, despite it being frequently charged with relativism: I am talking about Hillis Miller's "ethics of reading," Derrida's reflection on the paradoxes of gift and law, and hospitality, and deconstruction as resisting the frame of the performative-constative opposition, and production-discovery axis; I am also talking about Lévinas (highly influential today and of great importance to deconstruction) and his claims of not being interested in ethics itself, but in the sense of ethics, and his search for non-transcendental and at the same time universally binding principles which establish ethics.

A similar effort – to avoid transcendental solutions and save rationality – is undertaken by Richard Rorty. Similarly, Rorty moves toward ethics. His liberal utopia can be described as a community rooted not in metaphysics and epistemology, but precisely in ethics, and at the same time as a vision of society where the charge of relativism could lose validity. What Rorty says about the macho philosopher[13] or the strong misreader who simply beats the text into a shape to serve his own purpose[14] may be deceptive. One must not be fooled by the declarations that the only consequence of pragmatism in literary research is contained in the suggestion that we are not to "be afraid of subjectivity nor anxious for methodology, but simply proceed to praise our heroes and damn our villains by making invidious comparisons."[15] If we do that, we

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13   Richard Rorty, "Deconstruction and Circumvention," in *Essays on Heidegger and Others: Philosophical Papers,* vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 86.

14   Richard Rorty, "Nineteenth-Century Idealism and Twentieth-Century Textualism," *The Monist* 64, no.2 (1981): 155-174.

15   Richard Rorty, „Texts and Lumps," in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*: *Philosophical Papers*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), 79.

give in to the temptation of what Rorty himself calls "silly relativism"[16] based on "the bad inference from «no epistemological difference» to «no objective criterion of choice»."[17] And this concerns also the criterion of choice between various readings. The actions of a strong misreader are justified by the fact that the text has no distinguished context as there exist no unrelational properties and all properties can be captured only institutionally as elements of social practice. However, if we discard what can be referred to as "silly relativism," it turns out that strong misreading is neither an anarchist practice (as it is regulated by communities), nor a reductionist one (it does not involve reducing all context to a single one). The crux of the question is whether there exist epistemologically privileged contexts (not according to Rorty) and not whether they should be distinguished from one another.

If this is how the neo-pragmatic project of reading is to be understood, Rorty is right to suggest that there is no fundamental difference between himself and Stanley Fish.[18] This would concern mainly what Fish refers to as model of critical activity based on persuasion, juxtaposed against the essentialist mode of inference, the model "where interpretations are either confirmed or disconfirmed by facts that are independently specified" and where the critic "must be purged of all […] prejudices and presuppositions."[19] But does anyone believe today in "models of inference"? The real question is what makes Fish's project of "interpretive communities" better than some version of hermeneutic speculation. It would appear that, although Fish's vision does without the idea of "the fusion of horizons," it is rather immune to the risk of relativism.

Fish does not claim that there exists no context capable of supporting the act of reading, but that we always already are in some kind of context (even by questioning it, since this very act happens within the context's frame and not outside of it). The text does not have to possess a universal, core sense which would restrict the freedom of reading and constitute protection from relativism because the text always appears in a certain context which allows to distinguish between "deviational" and "normal" interpretations. The text may have several literal meanings (basic ones) dependent on the point of reference but they can be distinguished because they are anchored in some sort of an environment. We may – without falling into contradiction – insist

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16   Ibid., 89.

17   Ibid., 89.

18   In an interview with Joshua Knob, Rorty says that his and Fish's proposals are in fact the same. "A Talent for Bricolage. An Interview with Richard Rorty," *The Dualist* 2 (1995): 56-71.

19   Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class. The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 365.

on the validity of our reading as change takes place within contexts of equal epistemological validity.

Fish's project seems attractive also because it competes successfully with various versions of hermeneutics. Instead of unearthing the sense and asking what a text means, we must observe the way the text works because its meaning is its action. Perhaps this is how one could describe what reception of literature, or simply reception, is today.

Translation: Anna Warso

Elżbieta Rybicka

The Anthropological and Communicative Aspects of Epistolographic Discourse

Introduction

I would like to begin with two statements. In his 1913 essay *Nieoficjalna literatura* [*Unofficial Literature*], Karol Irzykowski wrote the following about the art of correspondence and 19th-century letters:

> They are lacking the true essence of letters, when two people communicate with another in writing – a highly distinctive and characteristic social form; these are mostly one-page diaries written day to day for another person, that is journals posing as letters, not a dialogue but a monologue.[1]

Vincent Kaufmann, writing in 1990, noted that as a scholar of contemporary literature he had learnt (incidentally like many of his peers) to scrupulously ignore the writer's biography, justifying this lack of attention with the well-known topos of the "death of the author." He thus excluded epistolography from his interests on account of such institutionalized norms on research. He wrote about this in the introduction to his book *L'equivoque épistolaire*,

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1   Karol Irzykowski, "Nieoficjalna literatura" [1913], in Irzykowski, *Pisma rozproszone 1897-1922* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1998), 206.

devoted to the letters of writers of the modernist canon including the corre-
spondences of Baudelaire, Flaubert, Proust, Rilke, Kafka, and Mallarmé. Yet
Kaufmann's book does not portend an easy return to forgotten categories –
far from it. For him, letters become a "machine for producing distance,"[2] the
absencing of the Other:

> Letters appear to favour communication and proximity; in reality they
> disqualify every form of participation and generate the distance which
> allows a literary text to occur.[3]

And although Kaufmann begins by stressing the "ambiguity" of the letter,
its final effects are rather unambiguous, as he emphasises only one of its two
codes: the literary one. In other words, for literature to be born, the letter must
die, and communication turn into auto-communication.

I would see in these two statements two testimonies of modern reflec-
tion on epistolography, which open and close a certain way of thinking about
letters. Both speak of them as a monologue signalling an epistolary crisis of
communication. And it is this problem – the communicative crisis – that
I would like to make the "critical point" of this study.

Varieties of Letters

My reason for starting with the "death" of the letter is to argue that this is not
the case. The fact that life remains in this means of communication is made
abundantly clear by the extremely intensive renaissance of epistolography
research especially in Francophone science and culture – a phenomenon
which has gone as far as epistolomania. Historians, sociologists, specialists
in literary studies, researchers of styles, psychoanalysts and philosophers have
all shown an interest in correspondences. With this attention towards epis-
tolography come institutional ventures. In France at least two research insti-
tutions deal solely with letters – both searching for and publishing 19th- and
20th-century correspondences and launching research on them. These are the
Centre Pluridisciplinaire de Recherche, d'Étude et d'Édition de Correspon-
dances du XIX siècle, established at the Sorbonne in 1980, and the Association
Interdisciplinaire de Recherche sur l'Epistolaire, which has brought together
scholars from various disciplines since 1987. As something of a curious aside
that says much not only about the French epistolomania, I will also mention

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2   Vincent Kaufmann, *L'Equivoque épistolaire* (Paris: Minuit, 1990), 25.

3   Ibid., 8.

the epistolary festival *Les Nuits de la Correspondance*. Among the results of this "institution" has been the publication of a collection of readers' letters to the writers who have changed their lives.

In France, it is not only the letters of artists that are published, but also those of anonymous witnesses and actors of history, soldiers of the First and Second World Wars, and love letters. Open letters and travelogues in letter form have also made a comeback, as has even the epistolary novel, joined by fictitious apocryphal letters and continuations such as a sequel to *Dangerous Liaisons*. In Polish literature, a sign of revival seems to be the return of the poetic letter. The letters of Jacek Podsiadło are an obvious and the most interesting example, but we can also cite those of Jarosław Mikołajewski, Artur Szlosarek and, of the younger generation, Tadeusz Dąbrowski.

On the one hand, this increased interest in epistolography seems obvious, in tune with the reorientations in the contemporary humanities. On the other hand – with the abrupt nature of this epistolomania – it arouses curiosity and provokes questions about both the causes and the potential consequences and uses. I will leave the answer to them to the end, but for now I would like to point to just a few problems by way of introductions to the areas I am interested in.

Research on epistolography is subject to the same fashions and trends that are visible in other cases. Owing to the polymorphic and multifunctional nature of letters, the scale and dispersion of interests is huge. Perhaps the only common feature of the diverse research perspectives is the peculiar "democratisation" of the subject. Attention is paid not only to its literary aspects, although of course the problem of the relations between epistolography and literature frequently appears. A unique characteristic is the domination of historical and interdisciplinary research. The history of the letter as a socio-literary phenomenon and means of communication is interesting enough as to be placed between the history of artistic forms and social history, the history of mentality or changes in customs.[4] Epistolary practices are associated, for example, with the history of education of diverse social communities and their access to a postal service, or the history of private and family life. In Polish culture, epistolary practices and epistolary manuals participated in the formation and transformation of the national language. Finally, letters are associated with politics. Janet Altman makes a strong case for the relationship between epistolography and politics, arguing that the letter played a role in

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4   Anne Chamayou, the author of one of the most interesting books on epistolography, notes that its history should take into account extremely diverse parameters, both more literary (for example discursive types) and socio-cultural ones. See Anne Chamayou, *L'esprit de la lettre (XVIIIe siècle)* (Paris: PUF, 1999), 178.

"establishing the power of certain social groups."[5] Altman claims that every epistolary manual assumes a certain conception of society, since in proposing linguistic and stylistic norms for a specific social group at a specific historical moment, it projects a picture of the groups conducting this practice. It therefore "stages – through its selection, orders and prohibitions – to an equal degree the politics and poetics of epistolary writing."[6]

Brigitte Diaz proposes an interesting, albeit schematic ordering of the diverse research perspectives.[7] She lists four main forms in which letters can be considered:

1. document
2. text
3. discourse (in the narrow sense of a discussion[8])
4. action.

Of course, in practice a letter is usually all of these at once. The first two varieties of the letter are fairly self-explanatory. A letter considered as a d o c u m e n t constitutes evidence of a historical, social, political and literary reality. This type of understanding was perhaps the most widespread in the 19th century, but was limited at the time to the domination of formalistic and structuralistic methods. It

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5   Janet Altman, "Pour une histoire culturelle de la lettre: l'épistolier et l'Etat sous l'Ancien Régime," in *L'epistolarité à travers les siècles. Geste de communication et/ou d'écriture*, ed. Mireille Bossis (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1990), 106. The relations between politics and epistolography are also covered by the edited collection *La lettre et la politique*, ed. Pierrette Lebrun-Pérerat and Danielle Poublan (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1996).

6   Altman, "Pour une histoire," 107.

7   Brigitte Diaz, *L'épistolaire ou la pensée nomade. Formes et fonctions de la correspondance dans quelques parcours d'écrivains au XIX siècle* (Paris: PUF, 2002), 49-62. Another good introduction is Kazimierz Cysewski's article "Teoretyczne i metodologiczne problemy badań nad epistolografią," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1 (1997). We can make a simplified division of the research methods on epistolography into socio-cultural [e.g. Marie-Claire Grassi, *L'Art de la lettre autemps de La Nouvelle Héloise et du Romantisme* (Genève: Slatkin, 1994); Marie-Claire Grassi, *Lire l'épistolaire* (Paris: Dunod, 1998); the collected work *La lettre à la croisée de l'individuel et du social*, ed. Mireille Bossis (Paris: Kimé, 1994); as well as Altman mentioned above], focusing on describing the process of the emergence of the discourse of privacy in 19th-century social systems; and the literary studies approach (the most extensive bibliographies of works can be found in Chamayou's and Diaz's books).

8   In this article I understand discourse more broadly – as a socially institutionalised type of practice that is both supra- and subgeneric, as well as having culturally specific rules and conditions and being markedly characterised by statements and situations. I follow the definition offered by Ryszard Nycz, "Literatura nowoczesna: cztery typy dyskursu," *Teksty Drugie* 4 (2002): 41-42.

is also worth noting that its documentary value changed. Recently, for example in Małgorzata Szpakowska's 2003 book *Chcieć i mieć. Samowiedza obyczajowa w Polsce czasu przełomu* [*To Want and to Have: Polish Self-Knowledge About Customs in Times of Change*], the letter no longer proves informative about actual states of affairs, instead being evidence at the *doxa* level, at the level of convictions and beliefs, a document of self-knowledge.[9] However, although the analysed letters are in a way doubly restricted documents (in terms of both subject and object), with numerous reservations attached, Szpakowska's book remains an insightful diagnosis of changes in customs.

Yet a letter is also a t e x t, animated by more or less conscious aesthetic intentions. In some cases letters even become "great literary manoeuvres" – as with Schulz or Rilke.[10] This is such a self-evident matter, long present in the subject literature, that I will just add that the literary nature of a letter is of course a historical-cultural variable.

Epistolography conceived as d i s c o u r s e is connected to two traditions: the older, classic one defines the letter as a "discussion between those who are not present;" while contemporary pragmatic analyses contributed to redefining the relations between the letter and conversation in a strict sense, showing the differences between the two types of communication.[11] Here again we are faced with the thorny issue of the absent addressee of the letter, showing that the conversational model of epistolary communication is perhaps the most controversial area of contemporary research. This is because the dominant premise in the modern critical consciousness is the self-reflexivity of epistolography, meaning that letters are essentially written for themselves. It is clear that contemporary criticism, after unsuccessfully attempting to kill off the sender, set its sights on the addressee. Brigitte Diaz describes this making the addressee absent with the rather apt metaphor of "e x - c o m m u n i c a t i o n."[12] The receiver is thus ex-communicated in order to liberate the letter writer, allowing him to produce himself – his self-creation. At the same time, this metaphor speaks of a past state, a past and no longer functioning communication. (The "ex-communicating" model has limited scope and applicability, and furthermore the problem of the

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9   Małgorzata Szpakowska, *Chcieć i mieć. Samowiedza obyczajowa w Polsce czasu przełomu* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo W.A.B., 2003).

10   Elżbieta Neyman discusses this in her essay "A ciało słowem się stało," *Teksty Drugie* 4/5/6 (1993).

11   Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni, "L'interaction épistolaire," in *La lettre entre réel et fiction*, ed. Jürgen Siess (Paris: SEDES, 1998).

12   Diaz, *L'épistolaire ou la pensée nomade*, 58.

"ex-communicated" addressee seems to a great extent to be a historical question, to which I shall return at the appropriate moment.)

Writing, addressing and sending a letter also means trying to act remotely, or at least believe in the performative power of epistolography. Letters are thus also a form of a c t i o n – this is an age-old concept, as, for example, Juliusz Słowacki ardently told Joanna Bobrowa: "this letter you hold before you is enchanted – by my will – my feeling – my truth – is bewitched – it has the strength and power to heal even a heart."[13] A less poetic version was offered by Irzykowski, at the end of the essay cited above, where he says, "It is not by deeds alone that a man lives, indeed, by deeds he only lives little and seldom, as long as we regard fulfilling intentions as deeds. By far a greater role in life is played by announcements of deeds, that is gestures." He then briefly outlines his theory of gestures as s y m b o l i c a c t s, referring to an economic metaphor:

> In the circulation of interpersonal relations, d e e d s i n c a s h are only more glaring points in complicated sociological processes – this material is too hard and costly. Yet statements, threats, hopes, notes, manifestos, boasts, promises, fears, in sum thousands of symbolic a c t i o n s – this is the material from which the fabric of political life is spun – concluding with the two now inseparable cells of social life, love and friendship.

In this essay, Irzykowski outlined what today we might call a performative conception of epistolary communication as symbolic acts. The performative conception is one of the fundamental premises of Stefania Skwarczyńska's theory of the letter:

> A letter can be a distinct fragment of life, an a c t o f l i f e. It then moves it, shapes it, it is a moment of the action with which life moves its protagonists: the author and addressee of the letter. A letter with a proposal creates a whole in life with the fact of acceptance or refusal of this proposal, it is a moment woven into the life and the orders of the fortunes of two people; it m o v e s the action between them, rather than just being the passive receptor of it. [...]
> In this way, a letter is a l i n k i n t h e d r a m a t i c a c t i o n w i t h w h i c h l i f e i s d e v e l o p e d ; [...]
> Every letter is identical to the life event, the act, it pulls the act along, produces the event; [...] So we see that the relationship between

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13 Juliusz Słowacki, *Korespondencja,* vol. 1 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1962), 489.

correspondence and the life it "produces" and that surrounds it is indeed dramatic, in the purest Greek sense of this word.[14]

Interestingly, this way of thinking about letters, as a form of action, often appears in critical situations and experiences – isolation, imprisonment, exile and lunacy. It also appears to be activated by a demiurgic dream which attributes a kind of omnipotence to words.[15] An example might be the letters written by Słowacki during the period when he belonged to the Circle of God's Cause sect. This is interesting as this interpretation of letters is guided by the intention of using words to unify the symbolic sphere and reality. Yet the letter conceived as an action also plays a huge role in political, social and religious activity – all forms of open, political and apostolic letters therefore in a way reveal the dream of the entire epistolary practice, namely of writing that is action at the same time.[16] To conclude these remarks, I will just add that the performativity of the letter is also confirmed in the legal sphere – in credentials, for example.[17]

The "Dangerous Liaisons" Between Epistolography and Autobiography

The history of the letter as a form of statement and means of communication is related to the history of autobiographical forms.[18] These relations were initially based on the principle of exclusion, or, to put it more mildly, replacement. Whereas the 18th century was the age of the letter, the beginning of the end of this era came with Rousseau's *Confessions*; the 19th century is regarded as a period of intimate writing, diaries, autobiographies and autobiographical

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14   Stefania Skwarczyńska, *Teoria listu* (Lwów: nakł. Towarzystwa Naukowego, 1937), 303, 313.

15   On critical experiences in epistolography see *Experiences limites de l'épistolaire. Lettres d'exil, d'enfermement, de folie*, ed. André Magnan (Paris: Champion, 1993).

16   An interesting analysis of the "violence" of correspondence based on the conception of a letter as action is given by Pierre de Gaulmyn's essay "La violence apostolique de Paul Claudel (1904-1914)," in *Les lettres dans la Bible et dans la littérature*, ed. Louis Panier (Paris: Coll. Lectio Divina, 1999).

17   This is discussed by Chamayou in *L'esprit de la lettre*, 61. But we should also bear in mind that their performativity can make letters become the tool most repellent to manipulation and intrigue, while they are also susceptible to becoming a hermeneutic trap, producing a deceptive illusion of an apparent communicative community, or a potentially tragic projection.

18   The question of the relations between letters and autobiographical genres arises frequently. See e.g. Martine Reid, "Ecriture intime et destinataire," in *L'Epistolarité à travers les siècles; Les écritures de l'intime. La correspondance et le journal*, ed. Pierre-Jean Dufief (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000).

novels. This is an attractive thesis, and we will not have much difficulty in confirming it. Sociologically oriented scholars link this domination of intimate genres with the development of the private space, "a room of one's own." In the 19th-century consciousness, one wrote a diary for oneself, to understand oneself. The appearance of the intimate diary and the autobiographical novel confirms the disappearance of the other person, and the "I – You" dialogue is lost.[19] Indeed, the dominant force in modernity and modernism is the "narcissistic," self-presenting "I" from *Confessions* – contemplative, realising itself not in action, but in self-analysis, and like Narcissus slowly disappearing, unable to recognise itself in its own image.

The domination of the autobiography is also accompanied by a process that we might call the a u t o b i o g r a p h i z a t i o n   o f   e p i s t o l o g r a p h y. In other words, the history of the letter from the 18th to the 19th century is one of advancing p r i v a t i s a t i o n. It moved from the public space (and the related functions) to the private space, before becoming "autobiographized" and as a result able to participate in the construction of the private "I." On the way, however, privacy gradually changed into a private format. Letter-writing became d e p r i v a t i o n, absencing the other and the advancing change of the dialogical rule of the letter into a monological one and of communication into self- or ex-communication. This process of epistolography's autobiographization culminated with the letters of modernist writers. Rilke professed in a letter to Lou, "'I write this, dear Lou, as in a diary, all of this, because I am not able to write a letter now and yet wanted to talk to you."[20] Kafka too offered Felice excerpts from his diary as a substitute for letters.[21] Brzozowski suffered from a similar affliction, according to Irzykowski's rebuke, which he puts in a letter:

> You, sir, treat people as pawns, and live like a "wood grouse, which during its call becomes deaf to all!" I once read your letters to Perlmuter – these are not letters, but excerpts from a diary of thoughts.[22]

Yet the most expressive version is delivered in *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, whose protagonist questions the very legitimacy of writing letters:

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19   Chamayou, *L'esprit de la lettre*, 167.

20   *Rilke and Andreas-Salomé: A Love Story in Letters*, trans. Edward Snow and Michael Winkler (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2008), 92.

21   Elias Canetti, *Kafka's Other Trial: The Letters to Felice,* trans. James Stern and Elizabeth Duckworth (New York: Schocken Books, 1973), 221.

22   Karol Irzykowski, *Listy 1847-1944* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1999), 74-75.

I don't want to write any more letters either. Why should I tell someone that I am changing? If I change, I'm no longer the person I was, and if I'm something different from what I used to be, I plainly don't have any friends. And I can't possibly write to strangers, people who don't know me.[23]

The process of autobiographization of the letter also influenced the perception of epistolography in the critical consciousness, and above all on contemporary correspondence theory, resulting in a situation in which letters are usually described with the aid of categories developed in the analysis of autobiographical forms.[24] One consequence of this process seems to be a kind of tragicomedy of errors, that is the equation of the epistolary "I" with the autobiographical "I." The most emphatic example is the aforementioned book by Kaufmann, which perhaps most radically places epistolography in a narcissistic, self-reflexive gesture.

The two forms of expression have of course influenced each other during their development; every letter of course also has an autobiographical aspect, and in practice often takes the form a diaristic letter; the letter, of course, especially for artists, may be only an expression of concern for themselves (the case of Gombrowicz). Nevertheless, I think that substituting the autobiographical "I" for the epistolary "I" paints an incorrect picture.

The necessarily schematic history of the letter therefore led from the form of the letter as rhetorical speech to the letter as an autobiographical monologue via the conception of the letter as discussion. Yet time proves that this does not have to be the case, and makes a certain adjustment to the argument of the domination of autobiographism in the 19th and 20th centuries. Corrections are also suggested by successive publications of correspondences, along with more careful examinations of genres of intimate writing, diaries and autobiographies. Diaries replace the Other, and yet at the same time cannot function without a "you" – telling in this regard is the number of phrases addressed to an illusory you or personifications along the lines of "Dear Diary" (extremely characteristic here is Irzykowski's journal, which makes use of a comprehensive range of variations on "you" and ends with recorded letters to friends).

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23   Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, trans. Robert Vilain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 4.

24   Many factors coincided to lead to the autobiographisation of epistolography, and editorial decisions – that is publishing not the entire correspondence, but a partial block of letters of one author – were not insignificant in this.

We can find a somewhat paradoxical and direct testimony to the transformed relations between letters and intimate writings in the next, and, I would argue, highly characteristic phase of the evolution of Philippe Lejeune's reflection on autobiography. In this stage, Lejeune treats this genre – narcissistic and egocentric in the manner and tradition of Rousseau – as dialogical and communicative. In his 1999 essay *Is It Possible to Define Autobiography?* he writes:

> Autobiographies are not objects of aesthetic consumption, but a s o c i a l
> m e a n s   o f   i n t e r p e r s o n a l *understanding*. This understanding has
> several dimensions: ethical, emotional, referential. The autobiography
> was created to pass on universal values, sensitivity to the world, unknown
> experiences – and this within the framework of personal relations, per-
> ceived as authentic and non-fictional.[25] [Italics denote original emphasis;
> letter-spacing my emphasis.]

One cannot fail to notice that this definition of autobiography as, I repeat, a "social means of interpersonal *understanding*," gives it the status of a letter.

Similarly telling in this sense are the changes in the views of Małgorzata Czermińska. In her essay "Między listem a powieścią" ["Between Letter and Novel"], published in 1975, she treats a collection of letters as an "autobiographical novel," so she at once "literarizes" and "autobiographizes" epistolography.[26] In her later works, Czermińska notes that even the most narcissistic autobiographical narrative contains some traces of the Other and implements a strategy of challenge that emphasises the presence of the "you" in autobiography.

This leads me to the conclusion that, first, the relations between epistolography and autobiography are not one-directional, and second, albeit obvious, the nature of these relations is dependent on cultural and historical concerns. Letters and diaries are linked by a peculiar connection, almost as if one could

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25 Philippe Lejeune, "Czy można zdefiniować autobiografię?," trans. Regina Lubas-Bartoszyńska, in *Wariacje na temat pewnego paktu. O autobiografii*, ed. Regina Lubas-Bartoszyńska (Kraków: Universitas, 2001), 18. Lejeune made similar comments in his conversation with Paweł Rodak ("'Nie istnieje tu nic, zanim nie zostanie wypowiedziane'. Rozmowa z Philippem Lejeune'em," *Teksty Drugie* 2/3 (2003): 221-222) [Translator's note: in English, the question "Is it possible define autobiography?" opens Lejeune's collection of essays *On Autobiography*, trans. Katherine Leary, ed. Paul Eakin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989)].

26 Małgorzata Czermińska, "Między listem a powieścią," in *Autobiograficzny trójkąt. Świadectwo, wyznanie i wyzwanie* (Kraków: Universitas, 2000).

not exist without the other. A spectacular example of this epistolographic-autobiographic hybridisation is Derrida's *Envois*, as a peculiar variant of the chiasmatic relationship between the letter and the diary, the epistolary "I" and the autobiographical "I."

The latest trends would therefore suggest, to paraphrase a classic saying, that w i t h o u t Y o u t h e r e i s n o t h i n g. And when the Other appears, one can begin talking about communication.

Epistolography in a Communicative Perspective – Discovering Oneself and/through the Other

Lejeune summed up the communicative situation of epistolography concisely and accurately: "There is no eternal essence of the letter, but the fluctuating and contingent existence of a certain mode of written communication."[27] Following this assertion, and without going into further details, the centrepiece of 18th-century epistolography would be social communication, which is defined by problems such as the dissemination and confrontation of philosophical ideas in the microcosm of epistolary circles, as well as the shaping of the sphere of public debate in accordance with the spirit of reciprocality and participation. Salon culture, meanwhile, legitimised the "social" and community-building function, forming meaning and maintaining social ties. The 19th century was dominated rather by p r i v a t e c o m m u n i c a t i o n, and therefore a preponderance of problems related to the constitution or expression of subjectivity – questions of identity, self-analysis, self-creation, self-presentation, self-reference and the like.

In the 20th century, on the other hand, at least at first glance, the distinctive feature appears to be a general sense of a c o m m u n i c a t i v e c r i s i s, and thus the auto-communication or ex-communication mentioned above. The context for this is certainly the modernistic linguistic crisis,[28] as it was not only a crisis of representation and expression, but also, consequently, a communicative crisis. This therefore means a process of alienation concerning words, their non-adjacency to emotions and thus to known questions connected to the problem of expressing the inexpressible. Kafka noticed this with regard to letters, writing in his diary that "if our letters cannot match our own feelings – naturally, there are varying degrees of this, passing imperceptibly into one another in both directions… even at our best, expressions like

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27   Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, 144.

28   On the modernist crisis in language see Ryszard Nycz, "Język modernizmu: doświadczenie wyobcowania i jego konsekwencje," in Nycz, *Język modernizmu. Prolegomena historyczno-literackie* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1997).

'indescribable,' 'inexpressible,' or 'so sad,' or 'so beautiful,' followed by a rapidly collapsing 'that' clause, must perpetually come to our assistance [...]."[29] The consequence of the double alienation of words was an increase in the communicative distance and alienation.[30]

Yet we must make two remarks to bear in mind regarding the communicative vicissitudes of the letter. Firstly, we ought to include phenomena from more local cultures, disturbing the schematic order of this very general outline. I am thinking in particular of Polish emigrations, which bring quite some confusion to the letter's historic tribulations. In both cases – the 19th and 20th centuries – the émigré communicative system was conducive to integrative and community-forming functions, as letter-writing to a great extent replaced the public forum – Jerzy Giedroyc and Jerzy Stempowski are two good examples here.[31] Paradoxically, then, emigration, distance, estrangement and absence were creative factors. We might also very well bear in mind the correspondence of Czesław Miłosz, which refers to the pragmatism of Enlightenment culture, clearly fulfilling the function of the exchange of ideas, intellectual dialogue, and public debate.

Secondly, there are signs that thinking of letters solely as a form of auto-communication may be becoming a thing of the past. This does not mean, of course, that the latest works announce a communicative ecstasy, a problem-free borderless understanding and undisturbed harmony of contact. On the contrary, the lesson of modernity, its writers and theoreticians, was so acute that all forms of unproblematic views of communication now seem impossible.

This is because, on the one hand, as Erazm Kuźma puts it, "communication is the result of lack, [...], a surrogate means, an attempt to heal the wounds of division, [...] it is a sign of a desire that cannot be fulfilled."[32] On the other,

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29 Franz Kafka, *Diaries, 1910-1923*, trans. Joseph Kresh (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 135.

30 As an example of the modern creation of distance we can take the unpublished letters of Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer. These are summarised by Katarzyna Fazan as follows: "the need to transform the convention of understanding through the letter into a convention of misunderstanding, estrangement, creating distance and finally eliminating the addressee becomes a strong letter-writing impulse... The letter becomes a conversation with its own language or individual conception of the internal world." Katarzyna Fazan, *Szczera poza dekadenta. Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer: między epistolografią a sztuką* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Naukowe "Societas Vistulana," 2001), 71, 86-87.

31 See Andrzej Stanisław Kowalczyk, *Nieśpieszny przechodzień i paradoksy. Rzecz o Jerzym Stempowskim* (Wrocław: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Polonistyki Wrocławskiej, 1997), 96-154.

32 Erazm Kuźma, "Modele komunikacji literackiej we współczesnych doktrynach literaturoznawczych," in *Sporne i bezsporne problemy współczesnej wiedzy o literaturze*, ed.

communicative distance can, at least in some cases, be a creative principle as, thanks to remoteness and absence, correspondence becomes possible. And just as every border crossed at the same time confirms it, every sending of a letter seeks to remove this distance, while also acting as a reminder of it. Perhaps, then, we should not be too hasty in rejecting the communicative dimension of literature, and if anything reformulate it.

The most important thing in these communicative dilemmas, however, would seem to be the return of the epistolary "You." And the main reason that makes it indispensable in the communicative scenario is the fact that correspondence is, to put it as briefly as possible, d i s c o v e r i n g o n e s e l f a n d / t h r o u g h t h e O t h e r. As a result, epistolary communication becomes a m e d i u m of anthropological issues.

Epistolography from the Point of View of the Anthropology of Writing

The oldest tradition views the letter as *speculum animi*. Another tradition says, like Mallarmé in a letter to Cazalis, that "one is all too much of a comedian when one writes."[33] Although the communicative aspects of epistolographical discourse cannot be separated from anthropological ones, the following quotation by Brigitte Diaz seems to characterise contemporary thinking on the anthropological problems of epistolography: "more than the agent of communication, the letter is a necessary relay in the constitution of the subject, and the epistolary exchange – which in reality often functions as an exchange «from and to oneself» – becomes the site of a true ontogenesis."[34] This is why I would once again like to refer to the letter's historical vicissitudes, as they confirm the importance of epistolography in performative identity formation.

At the turn of the 19th century, both epistolary manuals and epistolary practice combined with the introduction and popularisation of writing "one's own way."[35] Owing to the potential consequences, this is an extremely

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Włodzimierz Bolecki and Ryszard Nycz (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2003), 208.

33   *Selected Letters of Stéphane Mallarmé*, ed. and trans. Rosemary Lloyd (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 38.

34   Diaz, *L'Épistolaire ou la pensée nomade,* 61. Researchers do indeed concentrate on the problem of the epistolary "I." See e.g. *Les Lettres ou la règle du jeu*, ed. Anne Chamayou (Arras: Artois Presses Université, 1999).

35   The best Polish example is Szymański's letter book. See on this topic: Przemysława Matuszewska, "Pod hasłem naturalności. O listowniku Stanisława Szymańskiego," in Matuszewska, *Gry z adresatem. Studia o poezji i epistolografii wieku oświecenia* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1999), 131.

interesting question. It is not only about the popularisation of a new, simple epistolary style, as we can consider the anti-normativism of a letter book not just in stylistic terms, but also from an anthropological or social perspective. In this sense the improvisational and personal epistolary practice proposed by Szymański, for example, can be seen as an action towards modern subjectivity of someone who at this stage was still a spontaneous, free individual expressing himself in his own way. In other words, it advances the conception founded on the notion of "human nature,"[36] which incidentally points to its cultural determinant, the Enlightenment naturalism of Rousseau.[37]

Another testimony is the fact that, starting in the 18th century, the changing form of the letter as confession also participated in the changing meaning of the concept of intimacy. Whereas initially it served to describe the sensual relationship between two people, in the 1840s as much as "inner and profound," "intimate" now meant "what constitutes the essence of things." So it was no longer associated with relations between people and the emotional realm, but rather with self-reference and self-analysis.[38]

According to this epistolary practice, there is a school educating the subject and his social relations. We should bear in mind, of course, that the "constitution" of the subject in a letter in fact involves staging a p e r s o n a in the place of the person, discovering oneself by inventing oneself.[39] In this case, however, it focuses on the identity of a subject isolated from interpersonal relations. This is the dominant perspective in research on epistolography.

There is yet another angle from which we can examine the epistolary "I," which is the way followed by Irzykowski when speaking about the highly dramatic and at the same time dialogical staging in ideal correspondence:

> True correspondence is the dialogue not of two people, but two spirits, when any hint of casualness is to be excluded, and the encounter is to take place in as deep and ever deepening a sphere as is possible. So this is not an "exchange" of thoughts and feelings, compliments or jokes, but a living drama, that one must not play out, but act out with a s e n s e o f

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36 Ibid., 132.

37 On Enlightenment naturalism see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 355-367.

38 On the changing notion of intimacy see Jean Beauverd, "Problématique de l'intime," in *Intime, intimité, intimisme* (Lille: Société d'Etudes Romantiques de l'Université de Lille III, 1976), 15-16; Daniel Madelénat, *L'Intimisme* (Paris: PUF, 1989). See also Diaz, *L'Epistolaire ou la pensée nomade,* 31-32.

39 See e.g. Bernard Beugnot, "De l'invention épistolaire: à la manière de soi," in *L'Epistolarité,* 35.

t h e a t r i c a l i t y. And one may lament how undramatic the raising of today's man is, how little a sense of theatricality he has, how he cares not for the troupe, but is only a better or worse soloist. The true letter player, then, will not write blindly, regarding his partner only as a vessel of his effusions, but will mind the consequences of his words and his silences, will be interested in the other person, his character and being, and activate his whole finesse and invention to conquer the other soul, because he knows that the stakes are the highest being a person for a person.[40]

I see in Irzykowki's ideas a conception competing with the dominant one in the modern theory of epistolography, borrowed from autobiographical forms. It is an interesting one owing to its d r a m a t i c nature, accentuating both the d i a l o g i c a l i t y and the realization of the epistolary "I" in a c t i o n, that is in the symbolic gestures of the letter. The epistolary "I" is an interactive, relational and acting persona, in particular because the epistolary gesture and communication mean discovering oneself and the other and at the same time oneself through the other. By analogy to narrative identity, we can therefore call this the communicative identity. I distinguish it mostly because, owing to their self-narrative character, the currently dominant models of narrative identity are closest to the autobiographic "I," in laboratorial isolation from interpersonal relations. The communicative identity proposed here would be closest to the conception of Hannah Arendt, as it links speech with action, and they in turn with realisation in the network of interpersonal relationships.[41]

The range of possible correspondence relationships demonstrating various ways of forming communicative identities seems vast, so I shall only give a few example scenarios. The relations between the epistolary "I" and "you" might be founded on the myth of Pygmalion – this was how Słowacki thought of his correspondence in the mystic period, writing to his mother: "with some despair I am throwing myself onto paper, with the desire to throw handfuls of my soul at people, transforming them into themselves, nibbling at their bodies, until I make what is familiar into the most beautiful of mortals."[42] Irzykowski wrote that he wanted to use correspondence to "cause souls to stir, that is to stir them up" – and a particular example is his letters

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40   Irzykowski, "Nieoficjalna literatura," 208.

41   See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). Julia Kristeva recalled Arendt's conception in her book *Life: Hannah Arendt – or Action as Birth and Estrangement*, trans. Ross Guberman, vol. 1 of *Female Genius* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

42   Juliusz Słowacki, *Korespondencja*, vol. 2 (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1962), 25.

to Erna Brandówna: we can find a similar motif too in the relations between Stanisław Wyspiański and Lucjan Rydel.

Cyprian Norwid depicted the ideal communicative system differently in a letter to Maria Trębicka: "How many times instead of an optical reflection have I longed for a second lamp, burning no less watchfully."[43] A good example of such relations seems to be the correspondence of Miłosz and Thomas Merton or Giedroyc and Stempowski.

Letters, then, discover and act out themselves and the Other in a chiasmatic relationship, one that is co-formed based on a bilateral interaction. And this is the reason why I see epistolography as such an important practice of writing, or a "social form," as Irzykowski said, that is important for our communicative identity.

Instead of a Conclusion: a Few Proposals

To close, I would like first to return to the question about the causes and consequences of contemporary epistolomania. The increase in research on epistolography of course matches the general trends, the popularity of personal documents. As in similar cases, it is explained by the interest not just of experts, but also of a wider readership, with the past experienced, perceived and recorded in its everyday life. A further stimulus in France is the long-present tendency in historiography to trace rather the intimate and private history of humanity than political events. Epistolography is therefore appreciated for its cognitive value – as a personal document.

This is the cause that stands out first and foremost, but I would view others as being no less important. These are in part suggested by the cultural context, especially the communicative one. Both the anarchic development of means and carriers of communication and the unprecedented thriving of communications theory lend themselves to a renewed examination of the oldest medium.

What do we learn and what do we look for when reading letters from the past? One might say that we look for communicative and social models. We therefore celebrate 17th- and 18th-century social forms, the significance of the exchange, the value of common life. Of course, there is an element of nostalgia for the lost sense of community, the creative word and changing reality. This is a paradox of contemporary culture – the communicative crisis triggers a reaction in the form of heightened interest in communication.

It is also important to note that interest in epistolography dovetails with the sociological, philosophical and psychological conceptions of the relational

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43 Cyprian Kamil Norwid, "Listy," in *Pisma wybrane*, ed. Juliusz Wiktor Gomulicki (Warszawa: PIW, 1968), 368.

subject, realised in interactions, or, in more ceremonial terms, in the encounter with the Other. An undoubted merit of contemporary epistolary research seems to be the hypothesis/conclusion that "without You there is nothing," that is the reformulation of the problem of the Other as the communicative you. I would therefore see in epistolography a particularly legitimate field of research on subjectivity not only in its "separation" and isolation, but in its relations with others. These might lead not only to a reflction on relational identity, but also to historical-cultural communicative models, the interpersonal drama of which Irzykowski and Skwarczyńska wrote.

Correspondence also appears to be an attractive place for c u l t u r a l   a n a l y s i s   o f   f e e l i n g s. But first a brief digression on the modern literary criticism project. In his 1920 essay "The Perfect Critic," T. S. Eliot claimed that "a literary critic should have no emotions except those immediately provoked by a work of art – and these […] are, when valid, perhaps not to be called emotions at all."[44] Thus excluding the expression of emotions from literature, one of the foundations of the canonical stream of modernism, equally emphatically stated by Eliot ("poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion"), and the escape from the person ("it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality") go hand in hand with the programme of literary criticism. Institutional education disseminated this aestheticizing mode and idea, and in so doing labelling as "affective fallacy," "simple-mindedness" or "naive" reception the style of reading that searches for expression and emotion in literature and art. The consequences are well-known, since narcissistic modern aestheticism, as Richard Shusterman puts it, "rather than opening us up to real moral feeling and human sympathy, indurates us into an aesthetically refined but morally insensitive attitude, where we tend to regard everything, even people, as objects for aesthetic use."[45] From the internal, that is modern, perspective, Ortega y Gasset makes a similar diagnosis in his essay "The Dehumanization of Art," frequently cited as one of the most insightful testimonies of the era.

We also know that this situation is changing, and emotions are slowly beginning to occupy researchers, examples being the interest in nostalgia or empathy.[46] By way of reassurance, I will add that speaking about cultural

44   Thomas Stearns Eliot, "The Perfect Critic," in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber & Faber, 1975), 56.

45   Richard Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics. Living, Beauty, Rethinking Art* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 165.

46   See Anna Łebkowska, "Pragnienie empatii," *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2002); Jarosław Płuciennik, *Literackie identyfikacje i oddźwięki. Poetyka a empatia* (Kraków: Universitas, 2004).

analysis of emotions does not nullify their linguistic dimension as Clifford Geertz clearly underlined:

> Words, images, gestures, body-marks, and terminologies, stories, rites, customs, harangues, melodies, and conversations, are not mere vehicles of feelings lodged elsewhere, so many reflections, symptoms, and transpirations. They are the locus and machinery of the thing itself.[47]

I would of course add letters to this list of "media;" in them the cultural formation of emotions has both a privileged and peculiar place. They are after all a sphere of circulation, a "relay" between culture and the nature of emotions.

Many dangers arise from the cultural analysis of emotions (and of ethical criticism too), especially the p r o b l e m   o f   t h e   l a n g u a g e   o f   d e - s c r i p t i o n. I think that two proposals might be promising. The first is that of the still relevant Stefania Skwarczyńska, analysing for example the letters of king John III Sobieski from the perspective of the court culture of expressing emotions. The second is Niklas Luhman's sociocultural research on coding intimacy and the semantics of love. Both of these, I feel, deliver a credible language for describing the language of the formation and functioning of emotions in culture.

The third and final field of research on letters might be the historical "norms of intimacy" and relations between the public and private sphere which epistolography provides testimony for.

These three example fields of interest might give an impulse and the foundations for the anthropology of writing and sociology of literature,[48] the centre of which would be the emotional person communicating with others.

Translation: Benjamin Koschalka

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47 Clifford Geertz, "Culture, Mind, Brain/Brain, Mind, Culture," in Geertz, *Available Light. Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 206.

48 The sociology of literature does not appear here by chance. It is the consequence of both the definitions of epistolography accepted in this article (not only the forms of expression but the way of communication) and general convictions on literature (its sociocultural circumstances). This perspective leads to reformulating the problem, or rather the question, about a possible sociology of literature. Yannick Séité referred to this in his interesting essay "La théorie littéraire questionnée par l'histoire," in *Textuel* 37 (2000), "Où en est la théorie littéraire," ed. Julia Kristeva and Evelynn Grossman (Paris, 2000).

Lidia Burska

Stefan Żółkiewski's Last Book

Stefan Żółkiewski's last book, which he never completed,[1] impresses us with the sheer breadth of its attempt to describe one hundred years of literary culture in Poland, commencing with the end of the last century, and ending with the turbulent and still shapeless present, in 1990. If completed, it would likely have been the author's opus magnum, the crowning achievement of his theoretical explorations, one he embarked upon in the 1970s and which focused on questions concerning the function of literature in the process of social communication, the role of writers and the behavior of readers. It would likely have complemented and augmented his early writings, such as *Kultura literacka (1918–1932)* [*Literary Culture (1918–1932)*] and *Kultura, socjologia, semiotyka literacka* [*Culture, Sociology, Literary Semiotics*], which provoked rather lively interest and debates at the time.

The editors of Żółkiewski's final and unfinished book – Alina Brodzka, Maryla Hopfinger and Oskar Czarnik – decided to extract and prepare for print only a small section devoted to the final years of the period of partitions and interwar Poland. Though fragmented and

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1   Stefan Żółkiewski, *Społeczne konteksty kultury literackiej na ziemiach polskich (1890–1939)*, ed. Alina Brodzka, Maryla Hopfinger and Oskar Czarnik (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL, 1995), 147.

incomplete, the book *Społeczne konteksty kultury literackiej na ziemiach polskich (1890–1939)* [*The Social Contexts of Literary Culture on Polish Lands (1890–1939)*] provides a thorough depiction of the concept behind this venture. This is facilitated by the author's clear and precisely formulated research objectives and tasks. Our relatively good grounding in the theoretical functions of the model proposed by Żółkiewski does not, however, spare us anxiety about whether this model can actually turn out to be transferable and expansive enough to encompass the rather opaque (if we reject the easy faith of ideological speech) "social contexts" of literary culture following 1945. The editors have spared us the responsibility of debating this problem.

What interests Żółkiewski most about the transformations that occur in culture is their continuity and progression; what is "repeatable, redundant, and communicable," what is "subject to regularities;" in other words a system, or, more cautiously, the structure of the whole. The author's goal is to describe this structure, to formulate hypotheses describing the "direction and axiological nature, the aim and degree of effectiveness" of these developmental tendencies. As was the case in the earlier books mentioned above, the concepts and tools of description are taken from the theories of communication and sociology; the subject matter, meanwhile, is provided by the historiography of social transformation and statistics. Żółkiewski's hypotheses fit perfectly within the boundaries marked by these disciplines of knowledge.

The first hypothesis assumes that the development of the capitalist order has resulted in the massification – and the subsequent democratization – of social communication. According to the second, the phenomenon of the massification of communication inevitably entails blurring the boundaries of participation in earlier (diverse and disconnected) local cultures associated with particular milieus, groups or clearly distinct classes. The crossing of boundaries involves migration, both in the physical sense – from villages to industrialized cities and in the spiritual sense – from regional folklore (the culture of the spoken word and illiteracy) to the ubiquitous culture of the printed word. The ultimate result of these phenomena, depicted by Żółkiewski within the context of the extensive process of their gradual accumulation and growth, is the emergence of a national culture, one that functions within a homogeneous social space.

This, in the most general terms, is the model created by Żółkiewski in his last book. The fact that he did not provoke the interest of literary scholars and that the book, published half a year ago, has gone almost completely unnoticed without any response, proves only that we live in an era of different scholarly faiths and orders (or disorders, if you prefer). It would, however, be disloyal to the late author to accuse him of failing to adapt his model to the current trends in the study of literature. I do think that we could consider

which aspects of *Społeczne konteksty kultury literackiej* could inspire new questions and avenues of exploration.

The theoretical edifice erected by Żółkiewski has an enormous and well-stocked cellar, yet it is crowned by an impressive though controversial roof. Meanwhile, inside, instead of a well-organized interior, we find one that has been hurriedly thrown together. The book's value lies in its "material base," if you will pardon the expression: an empirical (data-based) description of the specific factors that enable participation in culture (institutions providing widespread access to education, organizations or political parties that seek ideological influence among the newly-emancipated classes, and finally, the senders and recipients of the symbolic contents of literature). The bibliography of the book deserves separate attention as well: it was compiled by the author in great abundance and with astonishing meticulousness. The sheer amount and variety of data gives them a life of their own, often in contradiction to the discourse strategy proposed by Żółkiewski.

He desires to crown his structure with a hypothesis stating that national culture is also (though not exclusively) shaped by the lengthy process of the emancipation of socially underprivileged classes (workers, peasants) – their liberation from the dominant patronage culture of the intelligentsia. In other words, the culture that first pushed these classes to participate in literary communication also, *nolens volens*, gave rise to their emancipatory aspirations. Żółkiewski writes:

> The debate over emancipatory tendencies in literary culture, ones that stand in opposition to patronage tendencies, was a significant issue in the interwar years. The point was […] whether the participation of new readers in literary communication should be subjected to the foreign (in terms of class) though familiar (in national terms) model of the cultural patron […]. This patronage with a foreign character can never be perceived in absolute terms, as – and I strongly emphasize this – both the newly emancipated classes and the patrons shared, to a great degree, a common national tradition. Rather, it was a question of accents, dominant tones, of the extent to which these traditions were common or separate.

Yet, just as he takes such a clear stance on the origin and "equipment" of national culture, he himself subsequently obfuscates this matter. Hence the impression that the interiors of his structure are excessively makeshift, filled with mockups, which is how I consider his concepts of literary circulations (borrowed from his previous books) and of the role of the writer, as well as his excessively wholesale approach to the transformation of literature. They are too automatic and conventionally associated with empirical descriptions, as

if the author failed to perceive that the data he collected was explosive enough to blow away his old terms and dynamise the entire theoretical model. One example is Żółkiewski's excellent description of the various political parties determining the ideology of emancipatory social movements (as this was not always a matter of self-determination). Yet the manner in which these parties shaped the desired models of participation in culture also applied to shaping culture itself, including models of Polishness which inevitably absorbed "partisan," ideological, and "class" content. How did this occur? What dynamics were involved? What were the consequences in terms of national culture? These are questions that Żółkiewski leaves unanswered, but which have been brought to our attention by the very facts of the author's own biography, facts that he prudently collected. Therefore, paradoxically, the great virtue of his last work is its incompleteness, as it thus provides inspiration for further exploration and completion.

This is no easy task. Not just due to the enormous documentary work required, but also because Żółkiewski's theses are at odds with the image of national culture (and its origin) perpetuated by the collective consciousness. These theses can lay the ground for intellectually attractive yet controversial concepts, ones that will replace the "grand narratives" (of the supposed eternal spirit of tradition) with "minor narratives" about the infrastructures that facilitate and help shape social communication; about institutions, the media, politics, and social engineering; and about the people who participate in the processes of creating and understanding cultural texts. But are any of the professor's students willing to undertake such a task?

Translation: Arthur Barys

Institutional Contexts of Polish Literary History

Adam Karpiński

The Consequences of "The Age of Manuscripts." The Reconstruction of an Era

> There will always be pedants and archives, and their services, suitably strained, will always be necessary.
>
> René Wellek

The fundamental procedure of the history of literature is always reconstruction: this is a feature of historical studies, which take the chaos of information contained in sources and use them to extract facts, form them into a whole, and insert them into the chain of causes and effects. On the one hand, the concept of reconstruction is linked in an extremely obvious manner with interpretive processes: one interprets sources, facts and influences, and the subject of research is not only not specified once and for all, but by its very nature demands that ever new hierarchies be evaluated and determined. In this sense, every synthesis of literary history that paints a picture of an era or period from the history of literature is a reconstruction. On the other hand, the concept of reconstruction results from the very fragmentary, incomplete and either more or less residual nature of the starting material; just as the form of a building is reconstructed from the remnants of archaeological excavations, the facts preserved in sources are used to rebuild the image of the history of the art of the word. The more distant the era in question, the greater the importance of the fact of recon-

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struction itself, and, whether we like it or not, the subject of the research must be treated as a fragment of the whole that did not survive. A classic example might be the lyric poetry of ancient Greece, where the work of philologists has made it possible to piece together fragments of the works of Archilochus, Alcaeus and Sappho, while another is the literature of the Middle Ages, also largely reconstructed.

From this point of view, if we look at the history of literature and attach fundamental significance to the ways of perpetuating and transmitting texts, we can cautiously discern a turning point with the invention and popularisation of print. From 1453, when Johannes Gutenberg printed his "42-line Bible," to the end of the 15th century, European printing presses produced at least 35,000 editions of books. In the 16th century, print became a practically compulsory stage in the life of a literary work. A new chapter in European culture began, that was once called the "Gutenberg galaxy," and this also changed the scope of reconstructive actions, by providing access to a higher class of material – printed text.

Of course, the mere fact of its printing was not a sufficient condition for a text to be preserved. Printed books too could be destroyed, damaged by overuse or burnt. We often only know of the existence of a specific literary work from external sources. And sometimes luck would have it that one single copy survived, the best example being Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński's *Rytmy* [*Rhythms*]. Yet the fact remains that printing, reproduction of a number of copies of a work, increased its chances of survival. Printing also meant that, even at the outset, the literary legacy was subject to a previously unknown categorisation. Such elements as the title page, author's name, printer, title, year of publication, technical description of the size, accompanying texts (forewords, dedication), even when they were not all present, transformed the quality of the library, not only reproduced by the edition, but to a great extent systematised and organised. We frequently fail to give due attention to this fundamental difference between the manuscript era and the age of printing, seeing it as somewhat self-evident. But just think what the oeuvre of Mikołaj Rej and Jan Kochanowski would look like today without the support of "printer's oil." Leaving aside the fact that it would no doubt have a rather different form, it is worth asking what would have survived. Would Kochanowski's *Laments* have been preserved? Would we be able to reconstruct his collections *Songs* and *Epigrams* from the incomplete handwritten sources, not remotely guaranteed by an authorial seal? Would we have the sense of dealing with a fragmentary word, an imperfect reconstruction?

Such questions, though seemingly absurd, take on another, more serious countenance if we look into the depths of the 17th century and attempt an overview of the literature of the Polish baroque, when many writers decided

against printing their works, when many were satisfied with handwritten copies as a means of their dissemination, and when, irrespective of the mass of printed materials appearing, there was also an unprecedented growth in handwritten forms of preserving, reproducing and passing on texts. The 17th century, without any exaggeration called "the age of manuscripts," is something of a breach in the "Gutenberg galaxy." This certainly isolated occurrence in the literary Europe of the time has interested several generations of historians and literary historians, from Aleksander Brückner to Wiktor Weintraub, who wrote the following four decades ago:

> We are facing a fascinating phenomenon in the sociology of literature which has never been studied in detail, and a grasp of which is necessary for a correct comprehension of Polish baroque literature.[1]

Assuming that we agree with the eminent scholar's diagnosis, however, we should next ask whether this was indeed just a matter of "comprehension," and therefore a hermeneutic issue. Or is this not a more elementary degree of cognition of literature, not at the level of interpretation of texts (also cultural), but at that of the very revelation of facts? After all, the relations between literature and the "manuscript culture" are not confined to the sociology of literature. From them derives that which we today call the literature of the baroque era.

In order to answer the question of what were (and still are) the consequences of the 17th-century "manuscript culture," we must distinguish two areas of research: the first is the general presence of the handwritten book in society at the time, which we can study above all as a sociological phenomenon, and the second is the handwritten circulation of literary texts as a domain of philological research. Entering the first area, we record the types of manuscripts, types of texts they contain, and the role of literature through widely used genres, as well as the authors who were referred to most often, and so on.[2] Particularly interesting here is the possibility of identifying certain

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1   Wiktor Weintraub, "O niektórych problemach polskiego baroku," in *Od Reya do Boya* (Warszawa: PIW, 1977), 94.

2   Maria Zachara identifies the following types of noble *silvae rerum*: 1) family *silvae*, with very diverse contents; 2) functioning collections connected with the specific activity (public, teaching etc.) of their author; 3) sets of poems, maxims, of very much literary character; see Maria Zachara, "Sylwy — dokument szlacheckiej kultury umysłowej w XVII w.," in *Z dziejów życia literackiego w Polsce XVI i XVII wieku*, ed. Hanna Dziechcińska, vol. XLVIII of *Studia Staropolskie* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1980); 201-202.

characteristic types of texts that appear in all types of *silvae rerum*, such as literature (also poetry) for specific occasions, political texts, literary games typical of noble circles and excerpts from the work of various authors designed to be useful *loci communes* for various occasions. Equally interesting are the rules governing the way these texts functioned, to a certain extent bringing their lives as manuscripts closer to the traditions of text in folklore,[3] such as: a) anonymity (the author's mark is superfluous, and soon rubs off); b) intensive circulation, due to the overlapping of oral, manuscript and printed tradition; c) the tendency to edit the text (creating alternate forms and variants), which is also linked to the ease of adapting it to the circumstances.

We obtain slightly different perspectives by entering the second area of research, which we defined as the handwritten circulation of literary texts. We continue to remain in the sphere of 17th-century manuscripts, but with a different object of interest: literature using manuscripts as its fundamental environment in which to exist and endure; literature, and thus the most significant works and eminent authors, such as Daniel Naborowski, the Morsztyns, and Wacław Potocki. And it is this that I indeed see as the decisive factor for this period of the history of literature, to which I would like to devote this essay.

The questions that we must ask when discussing the "handwritten" character of 17th-century literature can be grouped around two main problems. The first is the o r i g i n of the phenomenon, the whole cluster of causes that led to this concentration of manuscripts. The second is the c o n s e q u e n c - e s which we continue to experience today when reconstructing, or rather constructing, a picture of 17th-century literature, or simply dealing with the works of this era. In previous research, issues concerning the origin have been very dominant – of course, especially from the perspective of the sociology of culture. Equally obviously, there is no unequivocal answer to the question of why most authors of note did not take advantage of the benefits of the typographical art. What we do have are rather suggestions pointing to a number of circumstances, chief among them being censorship, privatisation of literary life and changes in the mentality of the writers themselves.[4] It is cer-

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3 The appearance in research on the literary life of old Poland of such concepts as "noble folklore" and "monastic folklore" is no coincidence. On this subject see Janusz Maciejewski, "Folklor środowiskowy. Sposób jego istnienia, cechy wyodrębniające (na przykładzie «folkloru szlacheckiego» XVII i XVIII wieku)," in *Problemy socjologii literatury*, ed. Janusz Sławiński (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1971), 249-268.

4 See Luigi Marinelli, "O rękopiśmiennym i anonimowym charakterze poezji polskiego baroku: cenzura jako hipoteza konieczna," in *Staropolska kultura rękopisu*, ed. Hanna Dziechcińska (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1990).

tainly easiest to discern the relationship between the decision not to print works and the desire to become independent from censorship. Yet it seems not to have been the censor as an institution that was the cause, but rather a reaction to any interference. This is more of a psychological phenomenon than anything else. Of course we can give a whole host of examples – traces of interference from Church, moral and political censorship (from the index of Bishop Szyszkowski, via the problems with the edition of Wespazjan Kochowski's poetry, to the ruling on the burning of *Władysław IV*, one of Samuel Twardowski's works, for alleged defamation of the good name of the Tsar of Muscovy). But we cannot speak of fears of problems in all cases. Even if the former Arian Wacław Potocki, for example, might have been justified to have such concerns, this was not the case for Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, or even Daniel Naborowski, who was easily able to seek refuge from the strong Radziwiłł family. Rather than fear, this was usually a simple aversion towards the "gelding" of poems, as Jan Andrzej Morsztyn put it in his epigram *Do Piotra o swych księgach* [*To Peter About His Books*]. Rather than "printing oil," he suggested leaving the lute "sitting at home" (see *Do swoich książek* [*To My Books*]), so as not to be infected by the derogatory process; in reality, though, people sought other ways for reaching an audience, such as copying out single poems and entire blocks of them.

The second set of causes falls within the boundaries of the social processes that to a certain extent regulated literary life. Most of the authors of the handwritten circulation hailed from the noble or magnate classes. It was they, rather than burghers, who confined themselves to manuscripts. Printing was not a sign of social advancement, but rather was connected to the costs that had to be borne. At the same time, literary life was subject to the same processes as other forms of social life in 17th-century Poland. These processes aimed at decentralisation, rusticalisation, provinciality, and finally privacy. This was aided by the decline of literary patronage. Patrons of art, architecture and theatre could be encountered, but not patrons of literature, which became a private, or at most social pursuit. The Radziwiłłs treated Naborowski as a servant and a diplomat, but never as a writer. Jan Andrzej Morsztyn ceased to be a poet as soon as he became grand treasurer of the crown.

The third set of reasons is linked to the literature itself, which produced certain templates. The model of the "Domestic Muse" was created in noble circles, patronising Hieronim Morsztyn, Daniel Naborowski, Zbigniew Morsztyn, Wacław Potocki, but also authors from the magnate stratum, such as Jan Andrzej Morsztyn and Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski. This term even appeared in the titles of collections (one of Zbigniew Morsztyn, for example), and meant something more than poetry associated with various

circumstances of family life.[5] In this wide-ranging, catch-all phrase, Jan Kochanowski's "I sing to myself and the Muses" took on its own peculiar meaning. This literary topos was lacking an understanding of art (poetry) as an act of immortalisation, as a conversation through the ages. In return, "Domestic Muse" found a closer perspective – that of friends and neighbours. They had no need for print – a manuscript sufficed, treated the same as a printed book. Here the question of the elitism of this "Domestic Muse" surfaces – with its very small readership in every sense, whether it was the courtly Muse of the author of "The Lute" or Potocki's Carpathian Muse. At the same time, though, we have the sense that the handwritten circulation, which defies any control, makes the fruits of the Muse belong to the reader, in a very broad sense. To the extent that we could speak of egalitarianism. Elitism and egalitarianism here form a knot of contradictions that every researcher of the culture of this era must bear in mind.

Without lingering further over the origins of this aspect of the "manuscript culture," let us now focus on the c o n s e q u e n c e s which we experience today as historians and readers of the literature of the Baroque era. Only then do we become aware of the significance of the "I sing to myself and the Muses" topos, understood almost literally here. Above all we should ask how much survived of the actual output of these times. After all, we are acting almost as if we had all such works in our possession, ignoring the fact that history was not kind to 17th-century manuscripts. And furthermore, only in the 19th century did the literature from this period begin to be discovered. Wacław Potocki "appeared" with the publication of his *Wojna Chocimska* [*The Chocim War*] in 1850, the poetry of Jan Andrzej and then Zbigniew Morsztyn was discovered, one after the other, in the second half of the 19th century, and somewhat later, towards the end of the century, the figure of Daniel Naborowski became known thanks to the discovery of Jakub Teodor Trembecki's *Wirydarz poetycki* [*The Poetic Garden*]. But what if *Wirydarz* had been lost? The naive and seemingly senseless question "What did not survive to the time of Brückner and Edward Porębowicz?" begins to make sense if we take into account the fact that, with some exceptions (e.g. Wacław Potocki), by then there were almost no autographs of Baroque poetry remaining. We ought therefore perhaps to perceive the period between the 17th and mid-19th century not only as a time of storing texts in manuscripts, but also as one of their gradual loss. It would be immensely interesting to compile a directory of non-surviving 17th-century works about which we know from third-party

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5   On the "domestic muse" in a narrower sense see Ludwika Ślękowa, *Muza domowa. Okolicznościowa poezja rodzinna czasów renesansu i baroku* (Wrocław: Uniwersytet Wrocławski, 1991).

sources.**6** After all, it is impossible to form any other type. The retrieval of baroque literature in the 19th and early 20th centuries was interrupted by the Second World War, which wrought unprecedented devastation on manuscript collections. Suffice it to mention the example of Warsaw's collections. Of 13 200 manuscripts recovered from Russia by the National Library in 1923-1934 (including 11 000 from the collection of the Załuski Library), fewer than 2000 were saved. Of the 8000 manuscripts of the Krasiński Library, only 75 survived. Not much was left of the 4000-plus items in the collection of Warsaw University Library.**7** The majority of these manuscripts were still to be processed.

Awareness of the fragmentary nature of what we know about the literature of the Polish Baroque no doubt does nothing to improve the mood of historians of Old Polish literature, and yet the losses listed above are only the beginning of the problems. Leaving a major proportion of literary works to the mercy of copyists meant that they began to be subject to the aforementioned rules for texts to function in manuscripts, of which at least two had very far-reaching consequences: 1. The rule whereby the links between the author and the work are loosened; 2. The rule whereby the work is edited and adapted to the will of the reader/copyist, irrespective of the will of the author. For these two reasons alone, we must be sceptical of the inheritance left to us by the 17th century. To understand the scale and depth of this problem we need examples, to which I shall try as far as possible to apply some order. Priority must without doubt go to a u t h o r l e s s w o r k s. The Baroque era accustomed us to this category of anonymous literary works, which certainly is not the same as saying that we understand all the aspects of the problem. Above all it is important to note that what is of interest to us is not popular or occasional literature, which naturally forwent an authorial mark. The point is that "first-rate" works were also lacking this mark. Let us cite a few. Certainly we must first mention the translation of Giambattista Marino's *L'Adone*, written around the mid-17th century and only recently published from the manuscripts.**8** This is the first

6   It would be possible to compile such a directory on the basis of already existing bibliographies (e.g. the *Nowy Korbut* bibliography of Polish literature, yet it would be absolutely incomplete without the detailed bibliographies of individual authors' works. In the case of just one, Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, a list of seven lost works has been established (during work on the edition of his *Collected Works*).

7   See Danuta Kamolowa and Krystyna Muszyńska, *Zbiory rękopisów w bibliotekach i muzeach w Polsce* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1988), 248, 250, 270 (here too is a bibliography of the contents of collections and losses).

8   Giambattista Marino, Anonymous, *Adon,* published from the manuscripts by Luigi Marinelli and Krzysztof Mrowcewicz (Roma-Warszawa: Università di Roma, 1993), vol. 1-2.

translation of this work in Europe, and, according to the contemporary editors, a high-class one. The anonymous translator was an outstanding poet and an even better Italianist, an expert in Marino's work. He tackled a difficult, extremely complicated work and completed the task with no less aplomb than Piotr Kochanowski as the translator of Tasso and Ariosto. Sixteen thousand lines of *L'Adone* have survived in this version (compared to the 41,000 in the original) in two copies, and we do not know whether the translation was ever completed. The sources did not contain the name of its author. Who was he, how did he learn Italian literature and language, was he a private "hobbyist," or did he benefit from a patron? If so, then where in 17th-century Poland was such an Italophile bred? The Lubomirski circles, or perhaps the Myszkowskis? "Is it possible," ask the editors of the recent edition, "that a poet of this stature literally 'melted' into thin air?"[9] It turns out that this is possible, but this also shows the size of the gaps in our knowledge of the literature of this time.

There are many examples of anonymous works. Sticking with Italian inspirations, it is worth mentioning one of two translations of Guarini's *Pastor fido*, which has hitherto been anonymous, although Wanda Roszkowska seems to have solved this riddle by naming Stanisław Żórawiński as the author.[10] While we are speaking about translators, we should also cite the translation of Mairet's *La Sylvie* by an unknown author who was certainly not a literary novice.[11]

A good example of original work is a series of outstanding poems, from the manuscript of the Czartoryski Library, signature 434, written in the early 17th century by an unknown author to friends in Padua, which Alojzy Sajkowski tried to attribute to Hieronim Morsztyn.[12] Another case was *Oblężenie Jasnej Góry Częstochowskiej* [*The Siege of Jasna Góra*], an exceptional work of Polish epic poetry that has fascinated generations of scholars who continue to search for the author.[13]

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9   Ibid., vol. 2, 31.

10   In a paper presented at the session *Polish Literature and Culture after the «Deluge»* (Warszawa, Institute of Polish Literature, University of Warsaw, and Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, December 1990).

11   This translation was incorrectly published as a work of Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski by Z. Skarbińska-Wierzchowska: "S. H. Lubomirskiego przekład 'Sylwii' Maireta," in *Archiwum Literackie* X (1966), 255-317.

12   Alozjy Sajkowski, *Włoskie przygody Polaków. Wiek XVI-XVIII* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1975), 38-43.

13   This issue was covered by Renarda Ocieczek, *"Oblężenie Jasnej Góry Częstochowskiej." Dzieło i autor* (Kraków: Secesja, 1993), who hypothesised that the author might have been the little-known preacher Stefan Damalewicz (died 1673).

Incidentally, the interest in *The Siege of Jasna Góra*, an anonymous work, is exceptional, since as a rule a piece of literature without a signature does not break through to the top. At best it tends to exist in the margins of the main-stream of the history of literature, which is in practice above all the history of authors. Would the cycle of erotic poems once found by Brückner in the manuscript of the Zamojski Library (signature 1049) arouse such interest if not for the possibility of linking it with the name of Mikołaj Sęp-Szarzyński? Would the translation of *Orlando Furioso* have the same value for literary histo-rians if it had remained anonymous? And yet only by chance do we know that it was Piotr Kochanowski who was responsible for this translation, thanks to a fortunate note by an unknown hand on an internal card of the Jagiellonian Library manuscript. So many lucky coincidences!

The lack of name is something like the first level of – unconsciously nega-tive – interpretation. We might go further and formulate a certain regularity in our view of literature, still inherited in the 19th century – one that we could call the a u t h o r ' s   i m p e r a t i v e.

The imperative, whose presence we are not always aware of, works in two directions. We have already mentioned the first. It is the need to possess a name in order to be incorporated in something that we call the process of literary history, the history of the era.

The second direction is more subtle. Since the work managed to sur-vive without a writer's name, we must give it one. At this point a problem of a particular type of attributions arises, which one can easily question but not refute. The best-known example (although perhaps not the best example here, as it is a printed work) is *Antypasty małżeńskie*, attributed to Hieronim Morsztyn. There is almost universal agreement that this was not written by Morsztyn's pen, and at best we can put a question mark next to *Banialuka*. So what?

Another example – the poems from the Kórnik Library manuscript, signa-ture 488, once discovered by Roman Pollak, who attributed most of the works found there to Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski on very shaky evidence: the initial transferred from *Orfeusz* [*Orpheus*], an authentic work by this author also recorded in the Kórnik manuscript. And today these poems function and are published as the works of Lubomirski, although he was probably not their author. But there is no way of proving this without being able to responsi-bly point to another name. After all, one cannot exclude the possibility of Lubomirski's authorship. Just as it was impossible to rule out that these might be the works of, say, Samuel Twardowski. The marvellous cycle *Somnus. Fortuna. Invidia* owes its life to Lubomirski's name, and gains a new interpretive field within his oeuvre. Which begs the question of whether it is worth laying waste to this? Another work in this manuscript, the aforementioned translation of

Mairet's *La Sylvie*, is again an interesting example of how suggestion becomes certainty. Roman Pollak suggested Lubomirski as the author (of course without proof); the work was published as one of Lubomirski's with a question mark, and by the next phase, in studies of the Polish pastoral, it had become just another of his works. The question mark was removed – who needed it anyway?[14]

The effects of the author's imperative seem to be rather broad. One cannot fight this imperative, although it is perhaps worth being aware of its consequences. In fact, it was already in operation in the 17th century, when for various reasons the authors of manuscripts attributed literary texts to famous names. In extreme cases, handwritten tradition even created an author practically out of nothing. The example of Jerzy Szlichtyng (c. 1600–1644) illustrates this well. His authentic oeuvre was written in the 1630s and comprised three works: *Pieśń o królu Władysławie* [*The Song of King Władysław*] (1635), *Wjazd do Gniezna Jana z Lipia Lipskiego* [*Jan Lipski's Arrival in Gniezno*] (1639) and probably *Żart piękny o tabace* [*A Beautiful Joke About Snuff*] (1650, as a supplement to *Nauki do dobrego używania proszku tabakowego* [*Lessons in the Good Use of Snuff Powder*]). Historians of literature judge these works as rather mediocre, and this seems a fair verdict. Yet Szlichtyng became a poet of renown thanks to Jakub Teodor Trembicki's *The Poetic Garden*, where we find a separate anthology of his poems beginning with the above mentioned *Joke About Snuff*. It is followed, however, by poems by Kasper Twardowski (*Lekcje Kupidynowe* [*Cupid's Lessons*] and Hieronim Morsztyn. Only today are we able to strip them all from Szlichtyn, whose name is mentioned scrupulously by *Nowy Korbut* as a competitor to these other authors. We are thus witnessing the near deletion of one of the "inhabitants" of the Old Polish Parnassus.[15]

Old Polish manuscripts could lose the poet's name, or create the poet, but they could also lose the work, leaving just the name. Again, we can mention a number of examples of this type, and the history of literature has extremely rich traditions of it. We may retreat to the Renaissance, recalling Stanisław Porębski, author of the now unknown *Skotopaski* [*Pastorals*], praised by none other than Kochanowski. The most spectacular case in the Baroque era are the

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14   I discuss the issue of works from the Kórnik manuscript more broadly in a separate article, "'Somnus. Fortuna. Invidia'. Problemy tekstu i autorstwa," which appeared in quarterly *Ogród* 1 (1994).

15   The misunderstanding concerning the work of Jerzy Szlichtyng was discussed by Radosław Grześkowiak in his paper *Czy Hieronim Morsztyn napisał swoje wiersze? Kwestia jedności autorskiej 'Summariusza wierszów'*, delivered at the session "Problems of editorship of 17th-century Old Polish literature" (Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, November 1992).

authors mentioned in Jan Andrzej Morsztyn's *Nagrobek Otwinowskiemu* [*Epitaph to Otwinowski*] (verses 393–402):

> May the body be lifted by poets' toil
> To put this noble burden to rest in the soil […]
> Two Kochanowskis, Morsztyn Jarosz, Naborowski,
> Simon Simonides, Rej, Smolik, Karmanowski,
> Orzelski, Żórawiński, Grotkowski, all we have known
> Poland rich in sons can find her own.

Of the list given here, Jan Andrzej Morsztyn must have particularly valued Jan Grotkowski (d. 1652), the court writer of Władysław IV and Jan Kazimierz, royal secretary, diplomat, and an educated man who knew Italian and German. It was to him that Morsztyn wrote (*Do Jana Grotkowskiego, pisarza pokojowego jego królewskiej mości* [*To Jan Grotkowski, Court Writer to His Royal Highness*]):

> Like owls to Athens, to the forest wood
> Sending thee a verse will do no good:

and further:

> You are first for me and to thee I explain
> That in Polish verse thine truly I remain

And in another poem (*Do Jana Grotkowskiego, internuncjusza jego królewskiej mości w Neapolim* [*To Jan Grotkowski, Internuncio of His Royal Highness in Naples*]):

> Mayhap in thy verse to joke fertile and rude
> In the present and the fallen Rome,
> But thou, forgetting how the homeland is crude
> Speakest in a rhyme not foreign, but of home…[16]

Reading these words, we must surely expect a great deal from Grotkowski's works, if only… precisely, if only anything had survived. We have an author, we have testimony to his talent and output, yet we have no texts.[17]

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16   Quotations according to Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, *Utwory zebrane*, ed. Leszek Kukulski (Warszawa: PIW, 1971), 8-9, 81.

17   There is a good chance of linking the translation of *L'Adone* with Grotkowski's name, which the editors of this work (following the path of Brückner) are inclined to do; see Giambattista Marino, Anonim, vol. 2, 40.

Alongside Grotkowski, Morsztyn also mentioned another name, Stanisław Żórawiński, the Castellan of Bełsk, whose talents are mentioned on several occasions elsewhere, such as in Wacław Potocki's *The Chocim War*. In this case too we do not know his work, as we can hardly count the two poems in Trembecki's aforementioned *The Poetic Garden*. Or in fact not two, but one poem and one title. The first work, *Judicium Imci pana Żórawińskiego, kasztelana bełskiego o Naborowskim* [*The Judicium of Mr Żórawiński, Castellan of Bełsk, on Naborowski*], is a homage of a poet to a poet:

> Not my venture is it with thee to duel,
> For a layman am I, and thou of Polish poets a jewel.[18]

The second poem bears the title *Elogium na śmierć pana Myszkowskiego, złożone przez pana Żórawińskiego, kasztelana bełskiego* [*Elogium on the Death of Mr Myszkowski, Submitted by Mr Żórawiński, Castellan of Bełsk*].[19] And here it appears that the inscriber made a mistake (moving the page?), as under this title is a poem (Hieronim Morsztyn?) known from several copies as *Nagrobek Pisi* [*Epitaph to Pisia*], to which (for symmetry's sake) Jan Andrzej Morsztyn later added *Nagrobek Kusiowi* [*Epitaph to Kuś*]. It may be that the translation of Guarini's *Il pastor fido* will permanently be attributed to Żórawiński, and perhaps this will be the beginning of finding his further oeuvre.

Works without an author, authors without works, works with incorrect attribution – this is not the end of the list of the problems associated with the author–work relationship that came from the handwritten circulation of literature of the Baroque era. There was also the question of the complete d i s p e r s a l o f a w r i t e r ' s o e u v r e.

The nub of this issue is shown by the state of research on the works of the epoch's most important poets, of whom Wacław Potocki is in the best position fortunately on account of surviving autographs. Jan Andrzej Morsztyn was lucky enough to find a consummate researcher and editor of his legacy in the form of Leszek Kukulski. Kukulski's work, incidentally, is an excellent documentation of the phenomenon of dispersal of the poetic oeuvre. He was unable to find the autographs, but did have 29 manuscripts at his disposal, containing copies of poems of various sizes and qualities, including nine "collective" manuscripts with larger blocks of works (the largest set consists of 241 texts). Kukulski's consolidation of such a dispersed output, conducted

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18 Quoted in Jakub Teodor Trembecki, *Wirydarz poetycki*, ed. Aleksander Brückner, vol. 1 (Lwów: Nakł. Towarzystwa dla Popierania Nauki Polskiej, 1910), 313.

19 Ibid., 95-97.

with admirable scrupulousness and enviable skill, resulted in the edition *Utwory zebrane* [*Collected Works*], which is and shall always remain only a reproduction, a reconstruction of Morsztyn's poetry, always open to new finds and new philological knowledge.[20]

Another example is the work of Hieronim Morsztyn. Here too there is a lack of autographs, and the surviving evidence suggests that an original author's collection existed of which the *Summariusz wierszów Morsztyna* [*Summary of Morsztyn's Poems*] we know is an extract. Although the source work is not finished, we can indicate its general direction. Scholars have so far been interested in proving the authorship of the works in *Summary*, and now, as this seems obvious, the research is reaching the original collection of which *Summary* was an extremely meagre extract. While an editor of *Summary* from not long ago based his work on six collective sources,[21] the author of a later work on its authorial unity had 11 at his disposal.[22] To this we must add a further three now located at the National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv. That makes 14 collective sources, and the list does not end there. These numbers speak of the scale of the dispersal, as does the number of sources with single works, none of which beats *Szlachecka kondycja* [*The Noble Condition*], of which over 30 copies are known. Compared to those of Jan Andrzej, Hieronim Jarosz's texts have more of a handwritten tradition, and they were also changed more. A complete detachment of the works from the author also took place. When he composed his *Poetic Garden* around 1674, Trembecki no longer knew Hieronim Jarosz, and divided his poems between other authors: Naborowski and Szlichtyng.

Daniel Naborowski, the next "victim" of the "age of manuscripts," was perhaps the least fortunate of all the authors mentioned. Several autographs have survived, but there is no trace of the existence of an individual collection. The only collective source (*The Poetic Garden*) gives 148 works, of which some (i.e. 27) are doubtless epigrams by Hieronim Morsztyn. In *The Garden*, after copying *Dafnis świętojański* [*Midsummer Daphnis*], Trembecki notes "the end of Naborowski. Naborowski's ceaetera of this opera videantur in my Quodlibeta."

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20 Leszek Kukulski discussed the sources of Morsztyn's poems in depth in *Komentarz edytorski* (Jan Andrzej Morsztyn, 655-727). I attempted to interpret the handwritten traditions of Morsztyn's poems in my paper *Morsztyn odnajdywany. Wokół edycji Leszka Kukulskiego*, presented at the academic session "Reading Jan Andrzej Morsztyn" (Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences and Institute of Polish Literature, University of Warsaw, December 1993).

21 Marian Malicki, "*Summariusz wierszów* przypisywany Hieronimowi Morsztynowi i odmiany jego tekstu," *Archiwum Literackie* XXVII (1990), 119-478.

22 Grześkowiak, *Czy Hieronim Morsztyn napisał swoje wiersze?*

Yet this collection has not survived. Outside of *The Garden*, Naborowski's poems were written down separately, and it is extremely hard to consolidate them. Each individual work requires a separate testing procedure. The first attempt to publish the poems of this poet, by Jan Dürr-Durski, can hardly be counted as a success. It is unclear whether this will ever be possible, and if so when.

One might cite further examples – Stanisław Herakliusz Lubomirski, Zbigniew Morsztyn – illustrating how literary history copes with consolidating a poetic oeuvre, and at which stage of the reconstruction of these works we find ourselves today. I also think that each of these examples would bring other observations, show a different history of works recorded in manuscripts, one that is not closed, but only delivers the material from which we build a "picture of an era."

So far I have been trying to point to some of the effects – and the most important ones, I think – caused by the departure of 17th-century authors from the printed tradition. These were issues concerning the author–work relation. And it would be truly wonderful if this were the extent of the consequences of Baroque literature's involvement in the handwritten circulation. Yet even if we assume that all the pieces of the puzzle fit, that the authors found their works and the works their authors, we are still stuck with the problem of the form of the texts that we have left. We know from experience that copyists' invention is unlimited, and no doubt some authors would not have recognised their texts in the edited versions of Old Polish manuscripts.

We are more or less familiar with the mechanism of the handwritten circulation, and are able to predict what kinds of transformations a text could be subjected to. Not much has changed here since ancient times. A separate discipline of philological sciences known as textual criticism has been dealing with these problems for centuries, and today we have both an adequate number of examples and the tools for researching the traditions of texts.

A discussion of the types and means of the changes made by copyists and self-taught editors here would be a set of examples and anecdotes. Yet it would be a very limited set of examples, confined to those literary works where all sources were actually tested and their errors identified. That is to say that one can only give an example of transformation when it has been corrected. In most cases this is only possible if all available sources are tested, which is a laborious, albeit usually effective, pursuit. Let us take one example, Lubomirski's *Orpheus*. It was possible to take 11 copies and arrange them in the form of a "family tree," arriving at a form of the text which was the original source for all the versions available to the

editor.[23] But this certainly does not mean that we now have Lubomirski's text. The problem is that there is a difference between the "encyclopaedic" definition of the work and that of the text of the work available to us. In the history of literature it is the former that functions; in the form of an encyclopaedic entry, it might read: "S. H. Lubomirski's *Orfeusz*, paraphrase of G. Marino's *L'Orfeo*, written probably in the 1660s." In the latter case we mean the work that we in fact have at our disposal, and this is by no means the *Orpheus* written by Lubomirski, but a text in the form of a copy. Comparison with the original text can in extreme circumstances be something akin to comparing the bones of a mammoth with the mammoth itself, as we can at best recreate the original form according to the hints we receive, that is carry out a process of research which leads us to a certain form of the text. By eliminating some of the distortions and comparing variants we can reconstruct the archetype of *Orpheus* available in tradition. And this is the form of the text that the philologist delivers to the reader. Nothing more. And this is still not Lubomirski's *Orpheus*. We received a similarly constructed archetype (often in the form of variants) of the text of the Polish *L'Adone* in the edition of this work cited earlier.[24]

The age of manuscripts sharpens the distinctions between the work itself and copies thereof, the work and its archetype existing in tradition, and the literary historian should perceive this and to a certain extent respect it. Because the distance between the original and the proposed archetype may be considerable. In the same way as the difference between the literature of the Baroque era and the image of this literature that we have today.

By a circuitous route through examples demonstrating the consequences of 17th-century literature's "handwritten" nature, we have again arrived at the problem from which this essay began – that of reconstruction of an era in the history of literature. This might appear to be a self-evident fact accepted by all, but do readers of a synthesis of literary history have this awareness of reconstruction when in measured-out compartments they find a ceremonially adopted selection of authors with classified and formally adorned works?

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23   The tradition of the *Orpheus* text is discussed in detail in Adam Karpiński, "Tradycja tekstu w wieku rękopisów. Uwagi o rękopiśmiennym funkcjonowaniu dzieła literackiego," in: *Staropolska kultura rękopisu,* 27-42. For other examples from Lubomirski's oeuvre see Lubomirski, "Problemy edycji dziel poetyckich Stanisław Hieronim Lubomirskiego (wybrane zagadnienia z krytyki tekstu)," in *Problemy edytorskie literatur słowiańskich*, vol. 1, ed. Janusz Pelc and Paulina Pelcowa (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1991), 203-221.

24   See editor's comment to Giambattista Marino, vol. 22, 65-69.

This is not a simple matter. On the macro scale, processes of literary history, ideas permeating the epoch, and aesthetic formations dominate. And it is neither easy nor necessary to question the order that has been worked out. What is required is an awareness that the baroque era as we see and present it is – to use a term from textual criticism – an archetype and only an archetype, a figure of the era that we are slowly reconstructing.

Translation: Benjamin Koschalka

Ryszard Nycz

Polish Literature in the Shadow of Censorship. A Lecture

1.

Abolishing the countrywide censorship measures and dissolving the Main Office of Control of the Press, Publications and Performances (on June 6, 1990) were examples of those rare acts, political and legal in nature, whose implications – clearly visible today – have definitely exceeded the initial, rather local effects (the removal of restrictions on the content of public communication and means of expression used to disseminate it). It has affected both our understanding of Polish literature in its historical entirety and specificity (instead of just the forty-five postwar years), and has also affected the appreciation and evaluation of Polish literature, at the very least because it has essentially nullified the *raison d'être* of a substantial portion of the literature and called the variety of techniques and conventions it employed into question. It becomes fairly easy to imagine how this has been the case once we realize that Polish literature has had a history of growing and defining its qualities – generally considered peculiar, specific only to itself – under the supervision of institutions of control; it has either been forced to develop in the shadow of political censorship or it has deliberately (and at high social, cognitive and artistic cost) situated itself beyond censorship's reach.

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Akin to Atlantis, this entire literary continent has sunk into a mythical, although not quite distant past. Presently, tried and true techniques and literary devices have suddenly proved useless. Even topics that were once the most appealing, mostly due to their political brazenness, have ultimately been made banal. Widely known and used methods of "reading" between the lines have become outdated and defunct – this, in turn, has resulted in a large portion of Polish literature becoming incomprehensible (and uninteresting) to Polish readers, especially the younger ones. These observations are only a handful of the many explanations concerning the transitory, critical state Polish literature finds itself in, the feverish reevaluations and the overarching search for new syntheses and criteria that contemporary literary criticism has embarked upon. Undoubtedly, the situation has been shaped by a multitude of other factors, including a general shift in sensitivities, cultural transformations, and new intellectual and artistic trends; among them, however, the lack of censorship has undoubtedly been the most substantial and fraught with consequences.

Given, therefore, the scale and complexity of the problem, which is impossible to explore exhaustively in a short introduction to the main body of the analysis, I would like to suggest a couple of short reflections on some basic aspects (basic at least in my opinion) of this nexus of issues, beginning with a look at early instances of censorship in the history of Polish literature, following a long trail of already published studies, as well as different strategies of employing Aesopian language as a way of dissembling, examining its contemporary, final incarnation, and concluding with an overview of the contemporary literary landscape since the abolishment of censorship, with a particular focus on literary institutions, writerly attitudes and readerly preferences, as well as transformations with regard to poetics.

2.

As we all know, institutions of control are as old as literature itself. It was no different in the case of Polish literature, overseen from its very beginnings by the watchful eye of the Church – or state – affiliated censor. According to scholars of this field, the first victim of censorship in Poland was Szwajpolt Fioł (a Franconian from Neustadt living in Krakow), sentenced to jail in 1491 for printing four Orthodox Christian books. The first censored book was Maciej Miechowita's 1519 volume *Chronica Polonorum*, wherein the author questioned whether it was possible for the 17-year-old Sophia of Halshany, wedded to the 74-year-old king Władysław II Jagiełło in 1422, to bear the king's three sons: Władysław III Warneńczyk (b. 1424), Casimir (b. 1426), and Casimir Jagiellonian (b. 1427). To strengthen his claim, Miechowita invoked

the opinions uttered by Vytautas the Great, who allegedly appeared at the assembly at Horodło to accuse Sophia of extramarital affairs with as many as seven knights, namely Hińcza of Rogowo, Piotr Kurowski, Wawrzyniec Zaremba of Kalinów, Jan Kraska, Jan of Koniecpol, and the brothers Piotr and Dobiesław of Szczekociny – the first four were captured and jailed while the rest fled. "Some wonder," Miechowita concluded, "how a doddering old man was able to impregnate a blooming, young queen." The entire argument of the acclaimed historian, including a slate of details on the mysteries of the House of Jagiellon and the validity of their claim to the throne, was meticulously scrubbed from the first and subsequent editions of the *Polish Chronicle*.

As we can surmise from the two examples, the role of the censor at that period of history was performed by either the Church or a representative of the royal court, and individual acts of censorship were local (and only sometimes provoked by the intervention of ambassadors of foreign powers) and summary in nature, incurring rather minor penalties. The final legislative act of the former Rzeczpospolita in this matter of censorship was the passage of the Cardinal Laws by the Great Sejm on January 8, 1791. Article XI guaranteed the freedom of speech to all citizens under threat of prosecution, though in reality only the nobility could claim that freedom. In any case, this first formal and legal guarantee of freedom of speech would remain only on paper because the Targowica confederates restored general censorship barely a year later, while neighboring countries extended their legal jurisdiction (including the enforcement of censorship measures) to annexed Polish lands.

Out of the three kinds of institutional censorship that Polish literature was subject to – Austrian, Prussian and Russian – it was undoubtedly the latter that authors found the most sophisticated and, in consequence, the most punitive. It was the Russian censors who devised and established forms of coercion and control that were later widely adopted by Communist censorship institutions in Poland after The Second World War. Authors who remained subject to Russia's authority devised forms of resistance that remained effective long afterwards, even during the forty-five-year-long period of postwar Communist domination. I would like to explore these phenomena in-depth here.

In Congress Poland governorates, all printed material was subject to Russian censorship which employed a combination of the previous preventive censorship system, preserved as law, with repressive and (in practice) prescriptive censorship measures. Books were subject to much more severe censorship measures than the press, and so were publications aimed at the general population and literary works accompanied by music. Certain books published abroad were also banned in the Kingdom, including books encouraging the youth to work on restoring Polish independence, and those that

portrayed Western governorates of the Empire as Polish (e.g. "our Ukraine, Volhynia, and Podolia" in Eliza Orzeszkowa's *The Last Love*) or suggested that any lands within the borders of the Empire may have any Polish element to them – "wherever on Polish lands." No quarter was given to scientific and specialist publications if they were found to contain any trace of patriotic ideas (like Józef Supiński's *Polish School of Social Economy*). From religious publications, the censors meticulously removed (in fear of their political undertones) any prayers that called Holy Mary the "Queen of Poland" as well as prayers "for the homeland" and "for the prisoners."

Both the name "Poland" and the adjective "Polish" were rigorously scrubbed from public discourse and replaced with terms like "domestic" or "ours." During periods when censor control was particularly tight (e.g. 1867, 1873), the list of prohibited words was expanded to include any instance of the words "homeland" or "motherland." The censors also removed distinctively Polish honors, references to traditional garb, customs, musical elements ("confederate cap," "kontusz," a type of split-sleeve overcoat, or "karabela," a type of Polish sabre), and replaced the word "king" with "prince." It can be said that the strategic goal of these efforts was to scrub the language (and, as a result, the public consciousness) of any trace of Polishness; careful removal of the term "Poland" from print was intended to result in the breakdown of the very notion of a free and independent Poland, and eventually in the complete disappearance of Polish national identity. Thus, language regulations and policies were adapted to the political status quo, where even the official name "Kingdom of Poland" was replaced with the recommended term "Vistula Land."

Society responded to these attempts to remove any and all manifestations of Polishness by boycotting Russianness in all spheres of life; writers responded to these efforts by eradicating all traces of anything Russian in their circles which they also described at length. Insofar as we can surmise, readers completely approved of the practice. Of all the authors publishing realistic novels in the Kingdom of Poland in the late 19th century, it seems that only Reymont was criticized for his inauthentic portrayal of a sprawling industrial city in the Kingdom in *The Promised Land*. It is symptomatic, however, that the allegation was put forward by none other than Roman Dmowski, a known proponent of Polish-Russian cooperation, in his review of the novel printed in the *Przegląd Wszechpolski* [*All-Polish Review*] (1899, no. 2) outside the Kingdom's borders. In the review, Dmowski alleged that Reymont depicted Poles, Germans, and Jews in his novels, but failed to introduce any Russian characters even though they were the actual administrators of Łódź in the period that the novel takes place. A similar allegation, however, could be made against all other widely acclaimed and popular writers of that era, including Orzeszkowa, Prus, Sienkiewicz, Berent, and Żeromski.

In short, Tsarist repressions were met with a boycott (which became a way of life for some – a patriotic duty to be fulfilled), while restrictive censoring was countered with the expulsion of Russia and Russians from the popular worldview. In literature, this removal translated into the elimination of Russians as potential characters, while in everyday life, it led to the limitation or even complete avoidance of contacts with Russian citizens. The transmission of forbidden or regulated content (either political or patriotic) – in the face of extant restrictions on freedom of speech and the repressions their violation resulted in – was accomplished with the help of a special "Aesopian" language, its widespread adoption and comprehension allowing it to remain conducive, durable, and effective throughout the period. As Eliza Orzeszkowa wrote to Malwina Blumberg, the translator of *On the Niemen* in 1887:

> No dates and nothing to explicitly reference our nation's struggles and suffering. We employ, one may say, a code fit for a prison: one word masked by these many events, another by that many, one sign meaning this term, this sign another. And we understand each other – the authors with their readers – perfectly.

3.

It is easiest to define Aesopian language as a method of formulating communications that conceal their explicit meaning – often moralizing or satirical – through allegory, symbols, and multifaceted fables. Aesopian language was often employed in occasional poetry and political writings during the Partitions period, and has been a staple of literature whenever subject to severe censorship measures. The emergence and durability of such language were usually compelled by specific historical circumstances, including harshly enforced prohibitions on public speaking (or writing) on certain subjects, and censorship institutions which often promulgated detailed indices of subjects and phrases that could not be uttered on stage or in print. Aesopian language can be treated as a variation of the allegorical code, wherein the layer of figurative meanings is supposed to create a hermetic shell for the meaning concealed from the watchful eye of the censor, while the stability of the code and the reading competencies of the audience (equipped with a proper key) ensure that the coded communication is decipherable.

In general, we can identify three types of artistic strategies that can be used to communicate "forbidden" patriotic, political, and nationalist messages. The first of these entailed the bypassing of censorship restrictions by choosing a historical subject or the historical novel genre, considered fairly "innocent" by censors. This is one of the reasons why the historical novel – against the

claims of European theorists of positivist philosophy and literature – was so prevalent in positivist literature. This particular method was employed by Walery Przyborowski in his novel on the January Uprising called *Upiory* [*The Phantoms*], which he set in Spain: Warsaw became Bilbao, Krakowskie Przedmieście became Madryckie Przedmieście, while Traugutt became Bona Fide. Similar intentions guided the hands of Kraszewski, Sienkiewicz, and Orzeszkowa, who chose to set their novels in ancient times and use them to explore the subject of "resistance against an imperial power."

The second strategy entails the use of signals alerting the reader to censorial interference (either real or assumed as a means of self-censorship) as an indirect and special sign used in auxiliary communication. Read in the code of Aesopian language, censorial eliminations, signalized using an ellipsis for example, turned into rhetorical ellipses, conveying information by deliberate omission. Similar strategies were used wherever censors replaced the adjective "Polish" with the pronoun "ours" and the noun "Poland" with the word "country." In the context of Aesopian language, these terms converted into deliberate rhetorical devices, like antonomasia (understood here as the replacement of a proper name with an epithet or a periphrasis), and indirectly evoked proper patriotic literary contexts, akin to Wincenty Pol's *Song of Our Land* or the poetry of Lenartowicz. We may very well say that this strategy included a generally popular tactic of striving to recapture lost perspectives and introducing a politically charged message despite conspicuously eliminating all political undertones in public communications.

The third strategy can be found wherever the author engages in efforts to deliberately alter the style of the statement, elevating them to metaphors, allegories, or symbols of patriotic and political themes. This, in essence, is the reason that authors call uprisings and their results – fairly frequently, sometimes seemingly out of habit – as "tempests" and "disasters" respectively. Here is another example of such a periphrasis, drawn from Eliza Orzeszkowa's *Anastasia*: "[…] he left for war and then spent long years in that peculiar, snow-white realm." The sentence does not contain any mention of "uprisings," "exile," or "Siberia;" the latter two terms, however, have been periphrastically replaced with an outline of the place the character has been sent to. The circumlocution characteristic of a periphrasis allows the author to skip over or omit phrases and terms that the censors would definitely find "undesirable." The semantic characteristics of Aesopian speech, implemented in the passage, encourage the inferential interpretation process, allowing the reader to acquire missing information about historical and political events.

According to general indicators of allegoric texts and reading methodologies befitting allegoresis, the interpretations of Aesopian language of all the aforementioned types reveal a proclivity towards attributing to the semantic

two-dimensionality of such constructions the function of differentiating be-
tween individual types of reading, dependent on the range of the intended
audience's competencies. According to this somewhat "wishful" thinking, the
literal reading, based on direct meanings and purged of all patriotic and po-
litical undertones, was intended essentially for the censor (considered to be
quite naive); the other semantic plane, the allegoric spiritual reading, was
intended solely for the (default and fully competent) Polish reader, with whom
the patriot author was entering into a cultural and tribal covenant.

This simplistic vision of a peaceful, orderly coexistence of the control func-
tion performed by censorship institutions and the communicatory mission of
literature was rarely corroborated by historical and literary realities. Indeed,
the censor may have failed to understand implicit meanings in the text. He
could also have pretended not to understand the second, politically charged
layer of the text. But there still is a third option. The censor, as simple civil
servant, may have been satisfied with certain phrases and subjects not ap-
pearing explicitly in the text; in this case, the primary reason for the publica-
tion of said texts would not have been the cleverness and ingenuity of the
writers, but rather the censor's opinion that the authors' comical attempts at
subterfuge were essentially harmless.

Generally speaking, it may behoove us to stop at this seemingly overly
cautious conclusion. Strategies employed by both writers and censors were
influenced by a host of unpredictable variables which – in practice – forced
both parties to employ individual solutions which did not always follow
the assumed power dynamic and sometimes even turned the structure on
its head: the writer (or his editor or publisher), preempted expected inter-
ference and self-censored the text; the censor, on the other hand, was the
perfect reader, easily deciphering even the most cleverly veiled allusions;
the reader, finally, often moved between two extremes – either he employed the
Aesopian code to decipher works that held no second meaning or, quite the
contrary, was satisfied with just the literal level, and saw no reason to look
for political undertones in every sentence. Undoubtedly, in each of the afore-
mentioned cases, the existence of censorship institutions and their actual
and potential efforts made a very specific mark on the nature and qualities
of all literature.

4.

Awareness of that peculiar state of affairs, awareness of the fact that in litera-
ture, created in the shadow of censorship, "thoughts and inspirations/ Peek
from behind the words as if from behind prison bars" (to use Mickiewicz's
words) was critically dissected for the first time in the late 19th and early

20th centuries. That particular period – the Young Poland period – saw the commencement of initial inquiries into historical symptoms of institutional political control, from early Polish statehood to modernity. The period also saw the first analyses of short- and long-term effects of, in the words of Antoni Potocki in *Polish Contemporary Literature*, "the influence of censorship on the style of our literature [...] and on the methods of formulating concepts in that particular era – deeply symbolic and replete with nods of tacit understanding." These analyses revealed not only the positive, but also the negative (artistic and cognitive) consequences of that sort of "political interference in literary matters," including, according to Potocki, the emergence of a new literary genre characterized by the banality of thought, "an addiction to platitudes and clichéd phrases," and simplicity of expression with the author's "words [..] not rais[ing] suspicion, the [unspoken] [...] encompassed by the ellipsis. The ellipsis is a Masonic symbol." In this critic's opinion, by introducing a "double standard for truth," the genre led to the degradation of its own quality and introduced a dangerous relativization of more than just literary values.

To put things as simply as possible, the strategies that Polish writers employed in their games with censors in the Partitions period were dominated by different factors in different periods. The specific situation of Romantic literature is determined primarily by the fact that the most acclaimed works were created and published mostly abroad, beyond the reach of censorship officials, and only Polish editions were subject to their efforts – which allowed interested parties to trace the scale of those interferences introduced into the texts. In this regard, the situation of positivist literature was radically different – it was written with censorship more or less in mind. This, in turn, compelled it to accept the rules and regulations of publication and further cultivate the traditions of Aesopian speech. As is clearly apparent, censorship in this case was no longer an external threat to an already integral text; instead it became a constant factor in – and an important internal dimension of – the entire process of communication: from creation, through semantic construction, and up to the reading of a literary work.

From this perspective, the literary output of the Young Poland period can easily be distinguished by its much broader range of techniques and strategies of bypassing censorial restrictions: writers only sporadically made use of the possibility of publishing original versions of their work abroad, to be later disseminated in their homeland; they mostly released their work domestically, acceding to the demands of censors but recouping eventual losses through successful instances of establishing an Aesopian understanding with the reader; often enough, however, authors decided to release two versions simultaneously – one version was pruned by Russian censors, while the other

was closer to the author's original intentions and published in the more permissive Austrian partition. Nonetheless, if we were to try looking for specific situational aspects of such literature, we should do so in the context of a particular, symbolist variation of Aesopian language, that is a semantic structure wherein the Aesopian message is only one of many possible (although equally weak) interpretations of a complex, whilst fundamentally vague or indeterminate, conceptual symbolism of the work.

Due to the interpretational ingenuity of intellectually sophisticated readers (and the fact that writing circles strictly adhered to the Aesopian code of communicating with the reader), even the most abstract and "artistic" works were often imbued with clear, political intent and patriotic undertone. One instance of such a phenomenon is the reception of Leopold Staff's *The Treasure*, a typical example of the allegoric and symbolist poetics of Young Poland. In Henryk Elzenberg's *The Trouble with Existence*, the entry under June 28, 1912 explores how the vague sense of the eponymous symbol was easily decipherable by simply looking at the "purely" autonomous work of art through the prism of the contemporary political situation:

> The treasure is clearly the motherland. The play celebrates the idea of a homeland, against waves of criticism coming from the cosmopolitans and practitioners of utilitarianism [...]. The motherland is the "temple," while the people are the "stones" making up the temple walls and there is no point in "asking a stone for opinions." Staff's characters possess a nearly superhuman will: they are no longer people, they're taut springs. [...] But *The Treasure* is an excellent read, and a timely one, given how the Polish Section in Petersburg obediently votes in favor of spending half a billion on the Russian war fleet, while our local one withdraws an already passed language bill only because the Austrian minister proposed its members do so. Those who do not like it have only the Unyielding Sentinel to cheer them up.

Censorship did not disappear after Poland regained independence in 1918, but those national institutions which took the place of Tsarist ones did not have the same reach, power, and character. Its efforts were focused primarily on anarchists, leftists, and Communist sympathizers among the avant-garde writers (including Jasieński, Stern, Wat, Peiper, Czuchnowski), but it did not spare authors associated with Sanationist circles (famously, its victims included the essays of Antoni Słonimski and one of the most acclaimed literary works of the interwar period, Julian Tuwim's *The Ball at the Opera*). Necessity forces us, however, to omit these issues and the issues of Nazi and Soviet censorship during the Second World War, so that we can talk a little about the

characteristics of censorial restrictions placed upon Polish literature after the war.

5.

I discussed the 19th century context at length here because I believe that one cannot properly examine strategies employed by both censors and writers without exploring the traditions which gave rise to both, that is 19th-century efforts of both Tsarist censors and the writers who tried to resist them. Such efforts provided the basic modes of behavior that later writers assumed in their relationship with the authorities in postwar Poland, and they also shaped the nature of the early relationship between literature and politics. Let us, therefore, try to apply the categories we outlined above – including censorial repressions, boycotts, and a multitude of variants of Aesopian language – to literature circulated in the 45 years after the Second World War.

Censorship efforts resulted in the removal of a large portion of historical knowledge associated primarily with Soviet repression against Polish citizens (including issues related to Polish martyrdom, warfare, uprisings, the Gulag, politics) from public consciousness, something which undoubtedly shaped the cultural and mental identity of the nation. Alongside it, censors purged contemporary émigré literature, the international canon of anti-Communist literature, the work of writers labeled as subversive for one reason or another, as well as a large, ever-shifting pool of subjects, phrases, beliefs and opinions, the selection and elimination of which is explored in depth in *The Black Book of Censorship.* The book is a collection of documents produced by censorship institutions between 1974 and 1977, smuggled outside Poland by Tomasz Strzyżewski, a censorship official, and published in London in 1977. Between 1949 and 1955, when censorship and publication control was particularly tight, even the refusal to print a government-approved text could lead to the shutdown of a circulation (a fate which befell *Tygodnik Powszechny* in 1953). These were all well-known methods employed by censorship authorities across the entire former Soviet Bloc.

There was no outright defiance of Communist authorities during the postwar period, comparable to the defiance of Russians and Russian influence during the Partitions period, except for maybe a short while after the introduction of martial law, when the boycott of state-controlled media became nationwide, organized and effective; it involved not only the creators of culture but also their audience – readers sent books back to writers, audiences booed actors or musicians or refused, *en masse*, to participate in theater performances or concerts.

This finally leaves us with Aesopian language. Generally speaking, it was an enduring and important component of literature written and published during the communist period, excluding maybe its socialist realist phase (due to particularly intense censorial efforts and an aesthetic doctrine which precluded the use of allegorical and symbolic forms of expression). Like in the 19th century, historical parables and allegories were popular among writers, especially during the so-called "thaw period" (post 1956). Here are a couple of examples: Hanna Malewska's *Sir Thomas More Refuses*; Andrzejewski's allegoric short stories and his novel *Darkness Covers the Earth*; Jerzy Broszkiewicz's dramatic triptych *The Names of Power*; Jacek Bocheński's novels *The Divine Julius* and *Nazo Poet*; the prose of J. J. Szczepański; as well as similar works which explored the events of March 1968, including the celebrated *A Mass for Arras* by Andrzej Szczypiorski. The second strategy – using censorial interference to transmit prohibited content – was utilized quite rarely (probably due to its ineffectiveness and indecipherability). It was, however, characteristic of literature published in the 1980s, primarily because of the fact that the 1981 censorship bill allowed to denote passages that were tampered with and to provide the specific article of the censorship law that the offending passage supposedly violated.

Undoubtedly, the most artistically valuable results were produced by the third stratagem – the invention of a special group of stylistic measures to communicate prohibited political and historical themes and undertones. The number of solutions available to artists under this strategy was enormous. One could follow the abstract and grotesque style favored by Stanisław Mrożek, a style that often acquires political topicality through an ostentatious disavowal of any such intention, like in the famous introduction to *The Police*: "This play does not contain anything besides what it contains, that is it does not allude to anything, it is not a metaphor in any way, and it does not have to be read."

One could also employ a style engaging in overt dialogue with 19th-century traditions as well as with contemporary censorship, a style employed by Tadeusz Konwicki in *The Calendar and the Hourglass* and particularly in *New World Avenue and Vicinity*. Zbigniew Herbert was, without a doubt, the undisputed master of the style. His entire output is more or less allegoric and Aesopian in nature, and his *Report From the Besieged City* is an exemplary, monumental implementation of the artistic and ideological possibilities inherent in that sort of writing.

Such an overview of postwar literature from the perspective of 19th-century criteria allows us to realize that the latter do not include at least two new important phenomena which transcend outdated classifications and are specifically important to the literature of the postwar period. The first of

these is the critique of newspeak, pioneered by Mrożek (in his early satirical and grotesque works from the late 1950s), developed into a basic poetic strategy by poets of the 1968 Generation (mostly Barańczak and Krynicki), and later widely adopted as a default stylistic idiom by the younger generation of novelists and prose writers during the martial law period. The other new phenomenon was the emergence of an independent publishing industry, the so-called "second circulation," in the late 1970s and its rapid development in the early 1980s. This underground movement introduced additional avenues of disseminating literature, but most importantly, it radically reshaped the situation of underground literature and evaluation criteria – from here on out, it was finally possible to judge work that was written as intended, the writing unrestrained and uncensored.

One rarely acknowledged and underappreciated pioneer of the movement was Janusz Szpotański, author of a number of satirical poems which combined sharp wit with political insight, astute psychological and sociological observation, and solid writing. Distributed as typewritten manuscripts, played back from tapes in the form of operas, and performed in private domiciles by the author himself – *The Silent and the Blabberers*, *Targowica or the Gnome's Opera*, *The Tsarina and the Mirror*, *Comrade Scumbag*, Szpotański's works were allegedly the first manifestation of independent artistic activity, realized completely beyond the reach of censorship and institutions of control. The most comprehensive anthology of Szpotański's work was released in 1990 by the London-based "Puls." It was too late, however, to give the man the popularity he deserved by then as readers were more interested in translations of Western literature, especially popular fiction, thrillers, and spy novels. Thus, Szpotański remained a pioneer, or rather an unacknowledged and poorly appreciated classic of underground Polish literature, literature that was satirical and political.

6.

The brief survey above was meant to demonstrate that the efforts of institutional censorship, effective over many decades, have made an indelible mark on Polish literature as a whole, which can clearly be seen not only in 19th-century literature, but also in the literary output during the forty-five years after the Second World War. The consequences of the actions undertaken by political institutions of control, as well as the consequences of the use of Aesopian language that these actions inspired, were not limited to an isolated portion of the overall issue or one of many literary strategies. Rather, they determined (i.e. simultaneously shaped and deformed) the character of literature as a whole – its qualities and the competencies of its readers – not

to mention indicators and categories that described and evaluated literary life in a given period.

Firstly, the Aesopian language that dominated Polish literature has no definite and formal shape or form; it did not become a fully formed allegorical code, utilized in accordance with an "agreement" concluded between the authors and their audience, but remained fragmented in nature, partial, fickle (due to its dependence on historical, political, and cultural conditions of a given literary environment), and parasitical towards the tropological nature of language and traditional cultural connotations. For this reason, it generally cannot be fully "translated" or "deciphered" into coherent and complete allegoric meanings. In consequence, however, it has become something more than just a technical and historical measure of indirect communication and bypassing institutions of control; it has become a permanent and enduring component of individual poetics.

Some writers (especially those fond of the allegorical style) have been using it even when no threat of censorial interference has loomed over their work – take for example Mrożek's and Herbert's works written abroad or after the censorship office was abolished. It definitely improved the literary quality of the writings, refining style and augmenting the complexity of semantics, which sometimes led to critics or writers themselves ironically praising censorship for "coercing" authors into committing similar acts of stylistic and semantic ingenuity. In general, however, its use has permanently marked Polish literature as hermetic and occasional; this mark often makes it particularly hard to grasp the magnitude of significance that decides the historical and literary importance of a given phenomenon, sometimes even making it impossible for readers lacking proper competencies to come into full cognitive contact with the work.

Secondly, the prevalence of the Aesopian reading of literature in the past, a past characterized by the presence of institutions of control, has exerted a deforming influence on the semantics of literary texts, resulting in its over-interpretation – or rather hyperinterpretation – thus introducing political and topical undertones into texts that were created without any such intention in mind (like Kapuściński's *Shah of Shahs* and *Emperor*). Obviously, allegory can always be appended, as it can make up not only a portion of the basic dimension of the text's semantics, but also a type of supplementary, external semantic system which complements and enriches its significance and – in its capacity as a literary code – depends largely on its internalization, and its ability to persist and propagate in the readers' consciousness. And so in this case (i.e. reading in Aesopian code) derivative, secondary meanings, introduced from outside or imposed by the readers became a permanent component of the meaning of a given literary work, despite having no direct relationship with

its internal structure, by participating in shaping (if not outright determining) the face of this sort of literary fact.

Thirdly, the mere existence of censorship institutions – not only actively restricting freedom of speech, but also creating permanent reference points for writing, reading, and evaluating literature – led to a peculiar situation, wherein even authors who were never in any way interested in taking up historical and political issues in their writing were perceived through its categories. This sometimes resulted in works being judged on what they did not talk about and on potential reasons for the lack of certain (Aesopian) techniques and meanings. This, in turn, imbued the choices made by "apolitical" writers with a certain political stigma (not always justified) of false apoliticism, a suspicious "asylum" or "reservation," established in a "hell" for artists, which otherwise essentially provided them with (in Herbert's word) "total isolation from life in hell," and was not only approved of, but officially financed by the state. Those who bypassed censorial control and chose to publish their work through underground channels were often automatically subjected to the consequences of their decision, which led to their work being thrust into political immediacy, the cult of unambiguity, and a clearly dichotomous black-and-white range of values. Both phenomena were determined, fueled, and justified by the emergence (or rebirth, in an inverted form) of a special sort of critical doctrinarism, which evaluated work according to a single criterium: a pre-determined and "ideal" literary message.

The aforementioned attributes have largely influenced the dominant image of Polish literature as a whole, regardless of the fact that its past contains beliefs and poetics that were not subjected to the influences of Aesopian language and cannot be explained in categories of positive or negative reaction to institutions of control. The situation today, although still vague and lacking fully realized parameters, allows us to identify at least some basic tendencies in the three aforementioned areas, namely institutions and norms of literary life, readerly preferences, and tendencies of individual poetics.

Therefore, in the sphere of institutions and the norms of literary life, the end of censorship has allowed us to make up for lost time fairly quickly (e.g. the distribution of books that were heretofore banned or the dissemination of historical knowledge that was eliminated from public discourse by censorship), and also compelled us to reevaluate our own attitudes and expectations towards literature, while relieving it of the patriotic duty to surreptitiously communicate "illegal" ideas. It has also compelled us to reevaluate the status and role of writers in a normal, modern society in which the writers' prior, privileged "missionary" role would essentially be unjustifiable. In the modern, open market of ideas, the writer needs to rebuild, or redesign his bond with

the reader; the publisher needs to create a market according to rules much different than before; and literary circles have to come together to recreate, from the ground up, proper cultural and literary institutions.

Uncompromising in its commitment to telling the truth, the underground literature has had great historic significance – in both meanings of the word – in these circumstances. Allegoric historical novels are nowadays of interest mostly to older historians of literature, who are much more attuned to Aesopian codes. The Aesopian style itself, fused in the readers' minds with the very concept of Polish literature and its specifics, still haunts its halls, but nowadays, however, it mostly lacks the political, cognitive, and artistic legitimacy it once enjoyed.

The most important event in the sphere of reader preferences is definitely the breakdown of the "national" covenant myth; the fiction of there being some sort of unanimity between Polish writers and readers. The literary and political agreement on utilizing Aesopian communication was based on the assumption of there being a national consensus on basic political, ideological, and axiological issues; Aesopian language required the acceptance of a one, true reading that would lead to the deciphering of the coded message; it did not allow any debates over its aptness. Pulling political discourse to the surface has revealed a basic uncertainty over its prior legitimacy and the existence of a pluralism of attitudes, forcing their mutual confrontation and, therefore, the necessity of providing justifications for presenting positions which no longer can simply invoke the presupposed "national consensus."

7.

Finally, I would like to turn our attention to certain changes or shifts in literary styles or strategies. Generally speaking, the seat of previously dominant attributes of literature – occupied by a complex of special tricks and techniques to encipher information, construct entire systems of allusions and multilayer tropological substitutions, as well as deep-rooted meanings – has been taken over gradually but noticeably by techniques exposing the complexity of the organization and the semantic value of the superficial layer; saddling it with the burden of a given work's "ambiguousness." Respectively, the traditional, vertical variant of allegory – heretofore employed by the use of Aesopian language, based on the opposition of superficiality and depth, the overt and the covert meaning – has been increasingly supplanted by the variant of narrative allegory, one derived solely from literal meanings and whose reading does not require any external augmentation. Comparing specific texts is the easiest way to spot the difference.

A good example of the former is a classic poem by Zbigniew Herbert, long published without a title but starting with the *incipit* "We stand on the border." As evidenced by the poem's reception over the years, the Aesopian meanings encoded in the texts turned out to be so difficult to decipher for the readers (Polish readers, too) that for many years it has remained essentially unavailable, hermetic. Only after it regained elements removed by the censors – those which were meta-textual (in the form of the title: *To the Hungarians*) and extratextual (in the form of the date: 1956) – the readers were able to decipher that the poem was dedicated to the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, thus connecting individual phrases and seemingly extra-historical symbols with specific political and historical events (e.g.: "we stand on the border," "hold out our arms," "for our brothers for you/ we tie a great rope of air").

The latter variant of narrative allegory is represented by another well-known poem, Wisława Szymborska's *An Opinion on the Questions of Pornography*, which demonstrates how this particular literary discourse was embarked upon towards deep and far-reaching transformation. The poem, created in the mid-1980s, near the collapse of Communist rule as well as the decline of Aesopian language, can be considered as a farewell, a nostalgic and ironic death knell, a tribute to the "Poles' lengthy nocturnal conversations," as well as the bygone style of communicating lofty and secret meanings. In this case, they are no longer concealed by the veil of metaphoric substitutions, but stem directly from a rather successful exploitation of lexicalized homonymy and the idiomatics of "debauched" literal meanings, combining erotica and politics in an ambiguous game, sexual freedom with freedom of thought, and – more generally – the "treacherous" character of language (revealing its speaker) with a "dishonestly" used technique of enacted lyrics. Understanding the poem – including deciphering the "secret" message about a clandestine meeting of people interested in discussing politics – does not require from the reader additional, extra-textual knowledge from, for example, history or politics, but only a general idea of literary matters and cultural traditions plus a little experience in extracting the hidden message of literary works from peculiar configurations of literal meanings. The main weight of this sort of text is located – one might say – outside it, and all of its secrets are hidden within its rich surface.

The third phase of relinquishing Aesopian speech and traditional obligations of literature can be illustrated by the "flagship poem" of the "Brulion" generation – Marcin Świetlicki's *For Jan Polkowski*. The meaning of the poem – from the perspective assumed herein – lies in the liberating power of the gesture of protest against the restrictions and limitations of Aesopian speech which fulfills its social obligations, but produces spiritual and artistic paralysis in the process (branding writers as producers of "the poetry of slaves,"

for whom even love poems would be written using a "dragon alphabet"). Świetlicki is quite obviously employing a two-dimensional semantic structure in his poem – here embodied by the ironic metaphors of poetical discourse. He does so, however, to expose the consequences – heretofore mostly concealed or trivialized – of using such a method of communication and attempts to subvert the traditional hierarchy between overt and covert meaning, decidedly abiding by the freedom of using whatever speech one may want to, strictly on one's own behalf. He does so to express the truth of individual experience rather than act as a conduit for obligatory social, patriotic, and religious messages and themes, coagulating into a deck of stale clichés and stereotypes employed in constant rotation.

Świetlicki's poem already has an assured place in contemporary Polish literature as it serves as proof of an important breakthrough in literary consciousness, its revolutionary nature evidenced by the very structure of the message: announcing a program for a new poetry movement over the course of a sarcastic polemic and dramatic reckoning with the obligations of literature, fulfilled through Aesopian speech. However, there is much more to contemporary dialogues with poetic tradition of (un)censored "doublespeak" than just this. The fourth – and final, at least as of right now – phase could be documented in Miłosz Biedrzycki's innovative poem *Akslop*, which I would like to quote here in its entirety as it is probably the least known:

> Akslop, seems like a name of some Danish city
> I'm just passing by, although I'll be staying for
> a while, because the ministers of agriculture
> sat on milk cans and blocked
> all the roads. I've been already a little steamrolled
> by local peculiarities, like Diwron
> or Cziweżór. I've loved a couple of local girls,
> the cops have chased me a few times
> through the sidewalks. the people are great,
> they're convincing me to stay. I promise you,
> wherever I will be, Akslop will always be
> on my mind[1].

Biedrzycki's poem should draw our attention primarily because it is a representative testament (full of deliberate offhandedness) of spiritual liberty in shaping ones own poetic voice and vision; unimpeded by obligations and

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1 Miłosz Biedrzycki, *(„Gwiazdka")*, (Kraków–Warszawa: Fundacja „brulionu"1993).

missions imposed by history and circumstance, by resentments, or by negation or the desire to object, and yet still anchored in the traditional model of literature. The estrangement of the poetic vision is achieved here not only through employing otherization, but also through the use of a classic palindrome trick (based here on reversing the names to be read backwards), which encodes the solution to the riddle on the surface of the text and thus constructs its own dual meaning on a single, primary level (linguistic-symbolic) of its artistic organization. I personally consider this poem an example of the last phase of literary dialogue with censorship in coded speech mostly because of the nearly untrammeled distinctness of the perspective it assumes, enriched with additional programmatic value.

The ostentatious yet playful detachment from the Poland-centric perspective and its highest values, from the "automatic" identification with a nexus of characteristics denoting Polishness and the allegoric code used to read them, is a pretty telling testament to how far we have come. The long shadow that censorship cast over Polish literature no longer has any effect on this sort of work; as we know full well, phantoms cast no shadow. This demonstrates how radically different the situation has been for younger generations of writers and readers – not only have they been free of having to always keep the existence of censorship in the backs of their minds, but it has been increasingly more difficult to realize the sort of power that this strange institution once wielded, an institution whose name – to use Biedrzycki's own trick – nowadays sounds more like *pihsrosnec*.

8.

To conclude, let us add just one more thing: in times like these, literature – for many, understandable reasons – occupies a marginal position in the hierarchy of human needs and interests. The writer, this time only on his own behalf, has to reestablish a connection with his readers and fight for their attention. The shape of each author's work is decided by opaque circumstances, ambiguous situations, and heterogeneous factors. We may even say that post-Communism and post-totalitarianism entered into a peculiar symbiosis with post-modernism and other post-isms. Already these ambiguous, somewhat "provisional" definitions and terms clearly indicate that the current literary and cultural moment is deeply in flux.

Awareness of the fact can be found primarily in the work of the most acclaimed writers that have entered the literary stage in the late 1980s, and this is probably why an intensely experienced value of freedom is one of its defining characteristics – it is the generation that is both aware of the dangers as well as the opportunities it brings, devoid of fears and illusions. Therefore, it

is maybe of this generation that we should expect the fulfilment of the most difficult task – a task that demonstrates the breadth and depth of the changes we are witnessing: the formation of our own literary idiom of speaking, redefining the character of Polish literature.

Translation: Jan Szelągiewicz

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Systems of Literary Communication in Great Émigré Literatures[1]

1.

The notion that literary works in exile constitute a separate class of literary phenomena challenges those beliefs which are almost common in Central and Eastern Europe today, and indirectly also in other cultural-geographic regions. During those decades of communist oppression, we strove to break down barriers first preventing, then merely obstructing, free and comprehensive communication between those abroad and at home. The current gratification resulting from the restoration of these ties is now projected onto the past, disseminating the notion of a fundamental and crucial unity of literary works produced by individual nations, a unity of literature (or, broadly speaking, culture) which had been divided artificially and – more importantly – by external forces.

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1   This text was first presented in Warsaw in 1985 at a meeting of the literary criticism division of Towarzystwo Literackie im. Adama Mickiewicza [Adam Mickiewicz Literary Society]. I am grateful for the inspiring remarks received from Janusz Maciejewski and Jacek Trznadel. This version of the article was finished in autumn 1995 to be presented at a conference organized in December that year by the Slavic Studies Center at the Sorbonne. (The session was canceled due to a wave of strikes which paralyzed France at that time.)

We seem to be witnessing a triumph of the belief that the internal characteristics and immanent workings of literary development are identical at home and in exile, and that the differences between them result only from external circumstances such as the authors' lives, the behavioral patterns of sociological groups as well as philosophical, religious and – particularly – political views. Theories of literature have slowly given in to the stereotyping that generically unifies Polish literature and culture, not to mention Russian, Czech, and several other. The omnipresence of such a simplified and value-infused image of literature blurs important differences between different types of literary systems; instead of facilitating the creation of a comprehensive narrative of a national literature, whose current history has been shaped by diasporas. In recent years, only a handful of writers and scholars have objected to these homogenizing tendencies: the most astute arguments have been made by Tadeusz Nowakowski during the Congress of Polish Writers at Home and in Exile [Spotkanie Polskich Pisarzy z Kraju i Obczyzny] and later by Jerzy Jarzębski in *Tygodnik Powszechny*.[2] The homogenizing notion, dominant today, seems startling even at the level of its axiological assumption – why would one wish to assimilate and annul differences? Are not diversity and variety more desirable? Do not post-communist societies, "inferior" in so many respects to the so-called "normal" ones in the West, have something unique to offer in the area of culture, in the form of parallel dyadic literatures? Nonetheless, we should avoid the extremes of both the homogenizing and pluralist approaches. Let us first examine the fundamental beliefs that define the arguments, respectively, for the unity and plurality of literatures of countries that share both the totalitarian and émigré experiences.

The key argument of the advocates of unity is that, whether at home or in exile, the authors employ a native language which is the basis for all literary activity. Both here and there, texts were written using a shared language – whether it be Polish, German or Russian – which is an obvious, but also a general and rather banal truth, one of negligible importance to scholarship. Besides, it is easy to prove that a shared language does not exclude the possibility of different literatures. The Spanish language does not annul the distinctiveness of literatures in Argentina, Venezuela and Mexico; French is shared by the literatures of France, Belgium and parts of Canada.

One should not go too far with these analogies, however. The homogenizing approach finds an even stronger justification on ethnic grounds. Despite a shared language, new literatures emerged where there emerged new nations: the literatures listed above are undoubtedly autonomous because they belong to different nations in Latin America, or to Belgium (as opposed

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2   Jerzy Jarzębski, "Pisarze, dzielcie się!," ["Writers, share!"] *Tygodnik Powszechny* 14 (1991).

to France), or North America (regardless of sharing the English language for a few centuries). It must be noted that 20th-century migrations did not create new nations, as members of great migrant communities died in exile or returned home, or became assimilated – surely their descendants were assimilated. Certain liminal sociological-ethnic phenomena did emerge, but on a far smaller scale than nation-building per se.

Following the dictates of common sense in research which suggest avoiding extreme positions, it must be admitted that there are no dual Polish, Russian, Czech literatures etc. in the literal sense of these formulas. But neither can we agree to the cognitive approach, just as unproductive, because little value is added resulting from the acknowledging the linguistic and national identity of individual literatures. Apart from the noble and once useful platitude about the unity of literatures, one must recognize and analyze their numerous and rich differences and varieties. Obviously, I do not have in mind the obvious differences resulting from natural or ontological distinctiveness of the artists and individual configurations of time and space. I mean the structural differences of perhaps universal scope in the modern era which dates back roughly to the Industrial and the French Revolutions.

Emigration creates o r i g i n a l s y s t e m s o f l i t e r a r y c o m m u n i c a - t i o n , d i s t i n c t from the ones back home. They resemble one another more than they resemble their respective linguistic-national equivalents. Consequently, literary communication in exile is closer to the analogous German or Russian forms of literary communication than to the one in the Polish People's Republic, not to mention those which were in separate areas under German and Soviet occupations after 1939. I define literary communication as the entirety of the phenomena, relations and institutions determining the existence and the functioning of literary meanings and values. The existence of literary values and meanings includes their creation, dissemination and, in particular, their reception. Institutions, in turn, create the possibility of contact between people with any kind of interest in literature.

The difference in the nature and function of each émigré literature derives from its s e p a r a t i o n f r o m t h e n a t i v e e t h n i c t e r r i t o r y a n d i t s n a t i o n a l s t r u c t u r e s . That which is signaled by the expression "in exile" is precisely what determines the emergence of a new type of literary communication and gives distinctness to the emigrant literatures in comparison to the "normal" ones, functioning within national communities, on the native territory and within the framework of their own national socio-cultural arrangements.

Before I present a more detailed theoretical description of the system of literary communication in exile, I am going to discuss other methodological proposals for the examining of the specific characteristic of émigré

literature. The most frequent approach has tended to focus on facts not typically literary in nature, pointing to differences in the life experiences of the authors (experiences related to their stay abroad), or to their ideological and worldviews presented in the context of civic and artistic freedom. There have also been numerous attempts to indicate strictly literary facts in search of common determinants that comprise the émigré character of a given literature.

This research direction (signaled by Claudio Guillén[3] and others) was adapted by Wojciech Wyskiel in his resourceful study *Wprowadzenie do tematu: literatura i emigracja* [*Literature and Emigration: An Introduction*]. Assuming the approach which views literature in exile as a "system of texts," he attempts to define specific migrant "literary structures." In the key passage of his theoretical-literary analysis, Wyskiel writes:

> Among the great literary subjects […] one seems to have a special relation to the literature in exile. I call it the theme of dispossession. I understand dispossession mainly as depriving the individual from all to which the individual is entitled by the right of being born in a particular place, to particular parents and in a particular time. It is manifested in individual works with varying degrees of clarity, in several transformations and embodiments. Nevertheless, I think that it can be defined and described. […] The theme of dispossession evokes an entire range of motifs or topoi. This is not the place to try and catalogue them. However, two motifs seem exceptionally important here: that of the Arcadian homeland and of death in exile.[4]

Although the great subject of dispossession, alongside its numerous semantic patterns, is frequently discussed by exile writers, it cannot become a determinant of the specificity of émigré literature. An awareness of specific historical-literary arrangements debunks the abstract character of this idea and its incompatibility with textual empiricism. The lost Arcadian lands were described equally frequently at home and abroad. Another motif mentioned by Wyskiel's study, that "of a great journey (modeled after Odysseus)" was frequently chosen also by authors who were not forced into exile. In world literature, the theme of alienation from social reality was most perfectly captured by Franz Kafka, and that of alienation from contemporariness and

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3   Claudio Guillén, "On the Literature of Exile and Counter-Exile," *Books Abroad* 50 (2) (1976).

4   Wojciech Wyskiel, "Wprowadzenie do tematu: literatura i emigracja," *Pisarz na obczyźnie,* ed. Teodor Bujnicki and Wojciech Wyskiel (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1985), 34-35.

search for time past by Marcel Proust, even though neither was an emigrant in the common sense of the word.

Similar problems plague other attempts at locating the specificity of émigré literatures at the level of literary form. One Polish literary scholar tried to extricate the specific poetics of the literature in question: the fundamental characteristics were centered on notions such as space, time, the concept of author ("creator," "poet," "writer," "artist"), a construct labeled "literature on legs" and memory. Such poetics, arguably descriptive from the outset, frequently shifts dangerously close to normative poetics, and rather than defining texts created exclusively abroad, tends to define the qualities which such texts should display. In the concluding remarks, the author basically admits this, stating the following:

> Just as the poetics of émigré literature was practiced both at home and abroad, so did literature which was not so-called émigré appear wherever it wished to: at home, in exile or in any other place abroad.[5]

Postulates on the theoretically significant and wide reaching historical-literary distinctiveness of diaspora literatures cannot be defended on the level of artistic language. Advocates of the approach which unifies individual national literatures are right to tease and ironically enquire about the exclusively emigrant artistic convention supposedly emerging in exile. Indeed, emigrant poets did not create a qualitatively different type of metaphor or verse pattern, prose writers did not come up with a new position of the narrator, nor did playwrights produce a new type of dialogue. Thus, academic liquidators are right about the morphology of literary works, but they are wrong about the identity of systems of literary communication.

2.

A basic consequence of the existence of literature in exile is its inevitable coexistence with the literatures of the host states. Institutions and literary circulations of emigrants function within the institutions and literary circulations of their adopted country; the life of literary diasporas either courses next to, above or among them, but it always confronts the literary life of the host societies. Thus, the key specificity of the system of artistic communication in exile (including literary communication, of course) is the overlap between the web of relations

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5   Eugeniusz Czaplejewicz, "Poetyka literatury emigracyjnej," ["Poetics of Literature in Exile"] *Poezja* 4-5 (1987): 170.

c o n n e c t i n g   p e o p l e   a n d   i n s t i t u t i o n s interested in literature/art and the host web of relations. This impacts the means of production, dissemination, and above all the reception of literary values.

Within the systems of artistic communication abroad there emerge in large numbers m e c h a n i s m s   o f   c o m p a r a t i v e, confrontational and (partially) artistic p e r c e p t i o n. While living in an alien linguistic and cultural environment, participating in the economy, submitting to foreign legal regulations and to the consequences of political activity, and so on; the audience in exile has a distinct relation to émigré artistic creations, especially in the case of literature. Could this proposition be tested against the example of emigrant communities which are almost completely cut off from having cultural contacts with the host society? Such cases could be found in the political Polish diaspora in London or the economic diasporas in Chicago and New York. But these instances are rare and rather exceptional, found among the individuals who almost never participate in literary life itself. As a rule, one is influenced by the system of signs of the new living environment.

This regularity becomes more strongly pronounced with the passing of time, and especially in the young generation. For the youth raised abroad, the local culture – which includes also language and literature – becomes the basic frame of reference. This young readership looks at emigrant writing and the whole of that nation's literature from the position of an outsider. Their perception is not only irreversibly relativized through their relation to external systems, but the emphasis is also moved to the patterns and values of the host environment as its contemporary culture becomes one's point of departure. This phenomenon concerns not only the readership, but determines the behavior of the artists as well.

Such reversal of perspective may be perfectly illustrated by the activities of young writers in the 1950s who grouped themselves around the London-based magazines *Merkuriusz* and *Kontynenty*. The influence of their environment, or to be more precise, the background of English (or Anglo-Saxon) culture showed in the poetics of their lyrical work and their programmatic activities. They recognized their new position in literary culture and the process of artistic communication, as declared by Janusz A. Ihnatowicz in *Merkuriusz Polski*:

> Those of our generation, who left Poland in 1939, or crossed Russia have also, from our early childhood, crossed a kaleidoscope of cultures and education systems which – despite opposition from our parents and Polish teachers (we all know how that was happening) – inevitably left their trace on the surface of that psychological mirror […] we look at the Polish culture through the eyes of Western culture as opposed to the older

generation who viewed the Western culture through the lens of the Polish culture. We read Słowacki against the background of the Seine poplars and Stratford walls.[6]

Generally speaking, the situation is less clear for those very people sending such literary signals. Moreover, artists in exile behave like those artists back home, which is to say: individuals find it easier to alienate themselves from the contemporary context, although one can never alienate himself completely. Meanwhile, among the receivers of literary signals, such instances can be ignored by theoretical and historical-literary reflection: reception of artistic phenomena in exile is always different, sometimes radically different. This, in turn, completely modifies the course of literary communication. Literary studies of the last two decades have already indicated the great role of reception in the historical-literary process, and even in the understanding and constituting of the literary work. In his watershed study on the subject, Janusz Sławiński writes:

> the morphology of the work includes not only what constitutes the structural order but also that which makes it resemble more a f i e l d than a system. Viewed as a structure, the work reveals itself to us in the aspect of its objectivity and stability, viewed as a field it reveals itself in its openness, in its – dyadic – subjectivity and, consequently, its susceptibility to the intervention by those who at any point and by any means may play the communicative role of receiver designed within the work. The structure makes the work an object which can last in the historical process; as a field the work is capable of living in that process, and as a consequence, of becoming transformed.[7]

Another difference between emigrant and national reception – the latter conditioned by restricted liberty – can be described according to the p r i n - c i p l e o f a s y m m e t r y. In non-democratic and non-sovereign societies, reception is selective, controlled from the top and steered from the outside. The very possibility of reading various external and historical sources is annulled. This annulment concerns, first and foremost, literature in exile and vast swaths of world literature, and even some works from the state's own

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6   Janusz A. Ihnatowicz, "Z listów do przyjaciela (O młodym pokoleniu i jego odrębności od starszych," ["From Letters to a Friend: On the Young Generation and its Distinctness from the Older Ones"] *Merkuriusz Polski* 2 (1995).

7   Janusz Sławiński, "Odbiór i odbiorca w procesie historycznoliterackim," *Próby teoretycznoliterackie* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo PEN, 1992), 82.

national tradition. Meanwhile, diasporas allow access to sources, without the limitations imposed by censorship, the police and customs.

An even greater asymmetry can be found in the sphere of reception testimonies. Even if, by chance, an opportunity arose in the enslaved states to read forbidden books, it was impossible to produce reading testimonials – or it was possible to do so only unofficially, in private and for one's own use. The periods of National Socialism and Stalinism lack texts which systematize the process of reading. To put it another way, no critical-literary and scholarly texts were published on Orwell or Koestler, on several works of other foreign writers, nor on the contemporary literary refugees, on Heine the Jew in Germany, Vladimir Solovyov – the fideist – in Russia, reactionary Witkacy in Poland (whatever was published on them, was also grotesquely biased). Paraphrases, pastiches and stylizations had to be unclear and undecipherable, while sociological research on vast areas of literature was forbidden, or rather – could not be carried out as unofficial reception was officially non-existent.

Another important difference between the two types of analyzed literatures is related to access and the p o s s i b i l i t y o f c o n t i n u i n g a t r a d i - t i o n. This problem resembles the previously discussed issue, but it is more pronounced among the a r t i s t s of the enslaved states. Exile allowed the artists to freely connect with all temporal layers and currents of national and common tradition. In contrast, totalitarian states exercised strict control over what could and what could not be creatively assimilated from the heritage of the past. The selection was motivated by the ideological usefulness of the past works and, in extreme cases, entire periods were to vanish from collective memory. Literatures emerging in totalitarian or authoritarian states had to develop without the support of tradition as a whole as writers repeatedly tried to tie the loose ends, connect the elements of cultural sequence, and save literature from annihilation, reviving it as a living phenomenon which had been administratively eliminated.

Some specific features of literary communication (which could be seen as "abnormal" from the perspective of non-divided literatures) are shared, or at least similar, in the national and emigrant systems. This includes a frequent, in fact regular, temporal gap between the work's creation and publication. In non-democratic states, this regularity was caused by all kinds of censorship and repressive measures, and among the emigrants by financial and "technical" difficulties broadly understood. The principle of hiatus between the temporal systems of production and reception includes phenomena as diverse as the so-called late debuts (even by the most recognized writers: Białoszewski and Herbert in Polish literature, Solzhenitsyn in the Russian), or a decades-long absence of works pretending to the status of a masterpiece: *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Kolyma Tales* by Varlam Shalamov, *The*

Pulp by Jerzy Andrzejewski, early exile works by Gombrowicz, Bobkowski's *Sketches with the Quill* and so on.

In the historical-literary process, the chronological distance is frequently widened by the geographical one, since relatively many works written in home countries began to first function, and for years, in exile (e.g. Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, Tyrmand's *Diary 1954*, *The Gulag Archipelago* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn). This became commonplace after the establishment of the Russian *samizdat* and the Polish writers' habit of publishing in exile in the second half of the 1970s. This phenomenon becomes increasingly important in attempts to fully recreate the historical-literary process, because an entire group of excellent w o r k s   e x i s t e d   i n   t w o   t e m p o r a l   s y s t e m s distant from each other: in the dimensions of the creative process and the mechanisms of reception. Returning to Janusz Sławiński's categories, one could posit that different orders regulate the creation of literary structures and their existence as areas of readerly activity. As closed structures of signs, they refer to the original context, as a "repository where interpretations accumulate and become systematized:" they direct us to the temporal dimension from a few or dozens years ago. This separation of chronological layers becomes an important interpretative problem also in creating historical-literary syntheses.

Several literary masterpieces exist, thus, in two different temporal dimensions and two different systems of literary communication – at home and in exile. This complicates the traditional recognition of the need to write two histories of literatures (existing here and there), the need to write two additional histories (of creation and reception) – or at least to acknowledge the temporal incongruence of both spheres of literary communication. It was this specificity of divided Central and Eastern European literatures which proved the historical-literary and interpretative validity of creating two separate and complementary theories, particularly pronounced in German scholarship, namely *Produktionsaesthetik* and *Rezeptionsaesthetik*.

Let us return to the communicative differences between national and emigrant systems. The basic difference lies in the g r e a t e r   a u t o n o m y   e n j o y e d   b y   e x i l e d   l i t e r a t u r e and its freedom to realize its immanent possibilities and goals. Literature in the non-democratic states is submitted to control and external pressure, forced to fulfill external goals. Depending on the methodological approach, this will be expressed in different ways, but the gist of it remains the same: there is a qualitative difference between them in the possibilities of realizing one's own being, entelechy, teleology, grammar, destination and so on.

Diaspora literature is also prone to social pressure, including audience expectations, economic limitations, pressure from political and religious institutions and demands of the sponsors. However, external pressures in

emigration are incomparably less severe than in the enslaved societies for two reasons: first, the participants in literary life largely identify with the values and goals of emigration, and consequently external expectations and demands are not divergent from those of the writers. This theoretical assumption is confirmed by the histories of 20th-century diasporas. German literature in exile opposed Hitler even stronger than the community of refugees fleeing the Third Reich, and the Russian exile writers opposed Bolshevism at least as fervently as other Russian emigrants; exile literatures of Central European nations were at least as independently driven and democratic as other institutions. Second, it is easier to avoid external pressure in exile, as the loosely organized and "stateless" emigrant community is less prone to control and repression. Such communities work rather through cultural pressures "spiritual" in nature as there is no possibility of traditionally defined censorship, nor of considerable gratification. Additionally, it is much easier to free oneself from the local inconveniences by participating in the literary life of geographically distant lands – emigrant communication crosses state boundaries.

Other important differences between systems of literary communication will be only mentioned briefly in the following paragraphs. Exile literature is characterized by a s t a t i s t i c a l   s h i f t – the relative number of writers increase faster abroad. In large contemporary diasporas, this concentration increased sometimes several dozens of times. After the events of 1933, nearly one percent of the German population left the country, with German writers figuring prominently among them; after the Second World War the total number of Polish emigrants amounted to 2-3% of the national community, including almost half of our most outstanding writers and about 1/3 of all literary people. This leads statistically to an increased literary interaction and greater contact opportunities within the community. What is important and greatly influences the goals of literature abroad as well as the functioning and the shape of literary works is that their k e y   a u d i e n c e   i s   l o c a t e d   o u t s i d e   t h e   e m i g r a t i o n   s y s t e m, in the home country. This audience, however, remains nearly – sometimes completely – beyond one's reach and with the passing of time becomes less familiar. All of this results in diaspora authors turning more towards the future reader and the time when the home country will no longer be isolated.

Here are the other characteristics specific to literary communication in exile:

- small circulations of books and journals resulting from smaller audiences, as already mentioned, and from the financial weakness of emigrants;
- lesser intensity of literary life, fewer journals and publishing houses (which translates to fewer reviews, public readings etc.);

- weaker dialogue with the neighboring disciplines of emigrant culture, fewer theater spectacles, film adaptations, television and radio programs (with the notable exception of the anti-communist writers taking part in the Western radio programming after the Second World War);
- more intense contact with foreign cultural arenas: bilingual writing, translations (for instance, American film scripts by German emigrants), etc.;
- a particularly difficult situation for authors using other media than the book and the press, resulting from the weakness or non-existence of emigrant theater, cinematography, radio and television. In other words, playwrights, authors of film scripts, radio programs, songs and librettos are faced with particularly difficult conditions.

3.

The distinctiveness of the systems of literary communication in exile is largely responsible for the difference in the development of the historical-literary processes home and abroad. They follow different timelines and their turning points do not take place at the same time. In the historical outline of recent Polish writing, 1945 is the only date of equal importance to both systems. Later, the critical moments in the nation's history (at the end of 1940s, middle 1950s, 1980 or 1989), do not overlap with turning points in emigration literature. Obviously, the introduction of social realism, the abandoning of its ideas and the reclaiming of pluralism in literary life were insignificant phenomena outside the borders of the Polish People's Republic. In exile, it was the purely literary or sociological-literary factors (such as generational change) that mattered most. In my attempted periodization of emigrant literature, major turning points are signaled by the following dates: 1945, 1950-51, 1968-69, 1980-81.[8]

Russian literature is similarly asynchronous. The history of that portion of literature which developed in the Soviet state can be divided into the following periods: the first one starts with the Russian Revolution and ends with the complete domination of Social Realism (usually pegged to 1932), the second one ends with the political thaw and de-Stalinization in the mid 1950s, the third concludes with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the timeline of Russian literature in exile is based on the appearance of three emigration

8   Krzysztof Dybciak, "Czym jest i jaką ma wartość literatura emigracyjna?," ["What is the Nature and Value of Literature in Exile"] *Kultura Niezależna* 11-12 (1985). Reprinted in *Panorama literatury na obczyźnie. Zarys popularny,* ["Landscape of Literature in Exile. A Popular Outline"] (Kraków: Oficyna Literacka, 1990).

waves: after the Russian Civil War (1917-1920), after the Second World War and at the beginning of 1970s.[9]

This article focused on the s t r u c t u r a l   a n d   f u n c t i o n a l   s i m i l a r i - t i e s between various literatures in exile. Such is the approach resulting from a theoretical-literary perspective. A historical-literary approach would reveal several discrepancies. Literatures of the three great emigrations of this century (Russian, German-speaking and Polish) differed in how long they lasted as well as their range, geography, genealogical hierarchies and worldviews.[10] For instance, an important feature of the anti-Nazi emigration (which slightly modifies our theoretical findings) consisted in the emergence of a German language-based system of communication created by representatives of several nations and people of varied ethnic belonging. In the diaspora, the German language was used by the Austrians (Broch, Musil), Germans (the Mann brothers, Brecht) and authors identifying as Israeli as well as those expressing solidarity with more than one ethnic group – for instance, the citizens of Czechoslovakia and Hungary (and earlier, the citizens of the Habsburg monarchy) who were of Jewish origin and raised in the German language and culture (Koestler, Lukács, Joseph Roth), writers such as Canetti and Celan. This richness of literary facts may allow us to reconstruct a few varieties of communication systems in exile but it will not undermine the validity of distinguishing a separate type.

Translation: Anna Warso

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9   Wolfgang Kasack, "Emigracja," *Enciklopiediczeskij słowar russkoj litieratury s 1917 goda*, (London: 1988), 878-882.

10   I discuss the similarities and differences between the Polish and German emigration in an analysis published in *Przegląd Polonijny* 2 (1996).

Michał Głowiński

Poetry and the Ritual: Poems for Bolesław Bierut's 60th Birthday

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will soon appear in an
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Distinctions between literary genres did not play a major role in the theory of social realism, but official expectations with regard to literature had to at least take into account the rudimentary genealogical properties of literary writing. Novels and plays, which by no means could have been written within a day, served different purposes than poetry. Narratives were supposed to illustrate specific theses spawned by party propaganda which promoted specific attitudes, dictated the correct vision of the world, and thus set the direction of history, creating heroes of socialist work and conveying "moral" teachings (such as, "Stay vigilant!"). However, this was accomplished with a certain degree of delay – the famous novel on the foulness of the nationalist right-wing tendencies, for example, was created several years after the healthy forces among the Polish Communists managed to discover and eradicate this "foulness" with the brotherly support of their Soviet friends.

Poems could also fulfill some of these tasks, conveying for instance teachings seen as worth spreading by dispatchers of communism (e.g. "Stay vigilant!"), but they were not suited to satisfy other demands of aesthetics. However, the specific qualities of poetry made it a kind of light cavalry for literary socialist realism as poets could respond to the ongoing events without delay, singing

praise or – if need be – marshalling resistance against hostile forces. Temporal distance, inevitable in the case of novels for purely technical reasons, was unknown to poetry. And this was true whether the author was to produce a panegyric for the socialist leadership, or a lampoon to reveal the disgusting face of President Truman, Chancellor Adenauer or one of the domestic enemies: Anders, Mikołajczyk, the reactionary clergy, and so on. In this sense, poetry was helpful in a more direct manner: it could be called to action immediately and quite literally, ordered by phone. In fact, it was common practice to call authors and commission their verses on specific matters or for a specific anniversary, and calls of this kind came not only from the publishing houses, but from party headquarters as well. It is precisely this peculiar practice that Przyboś refers to in his popular (and poignant) satire.[1] While certain conversations were not meant for the phone in the Stalinist era, certain poems were to be o r d e r e d b y phone. It was a time when poetry had to be occasional, in the narrow sense of the word.

Przyboś's poem (continuing, or perhaps complementing, his larger poetical polemic against social realism presented in *Głos o poezji*[2]) signals this issue already in the title [*To the Poet with a Schedule*], capturing at the same time one of the more important characteristics of social realist poetry. The schedule in question included not only current political events, but also sacred dates of communism including anniversaries of revolutions and official holidays, such as May 1, July 22, November 7, Lenin's and Stalin's birthdays, and other events. In socialist realism, poetry's *raison d'etre* was completely subordinated to the communists' liturgical calendar which had its fixed holidays, but also movable feasts and celebrations taking place only every few years (such as leaders' jubilees). It was precisely this subordination to an imposed and strictly codified liturgy of lies and falsehood which determined the character of poetic production, determining its function and dictating its role and – more or less directly – its qualities.

Subordination to the communist calendar resulted in the ritualization of poetry. Anniversaries and holidays belonged to the sphere of rites whose rules were observed very strictly and whose elements had to be appropriately arranged. Nothing could break the *decorum,* adjusted to whatever was seen as a key function in each case. Moreover, the rituals in question excluded all

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1   Julian Przyboś, "Do poety z terminarzem," ["To the poet with a schedule"] in *Pisma zebrane*, ed. Rościsław Skręt (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1984), 340-341. The poem was published first in *Nowa Kultura* 18 (1958) and later included, among others, in *Najmniej słów* [*The Fewest Words*] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1955).

2   Written in 1953, the poem had a rather complicated publication history, described meticulously by R. Skręt in a commentary included in the edition cited above, 640-643.

aspects of the poet's personal engagement, which since Romanticism has been largely and consciously viewed as one of poetry's crucial characteristics – the imprint of personality present in the work regardless of the circumstances of the poem's creation, its content and character. All elements indicative of the poet's personality lost their importance, and were seen as being irrelevant from the perspective of any given ritual, and detrimental or even potentially dangerous as they could disturb, blur or diminish its principles. This was the case of both positive rituals, devoted to the praise and celebration of leaders or events significant to the communist mythology, and those that were negative, focused mostly on throwing strictly regulated sets of invectives at the enemy. In the process, the poet as a personality, as an individual who uses their own voice precisely on the account of being a poet, became redundant or an epiphenomenon at best, and was to be known only as the provider of the ordered good, singing praise to Stalin, Bierut or Dzierżyński. Whether he revealed his personal attitude to the subject or not, was not really a matter of any importance. In fact, the status of such a poet answering the phone call did not differ much from the position of a hired court poet whose patron allowed almost no margin of liberty. In fact, Andrei Sinyavsky's famous thesis that socialist realism is rooted in the tradition of courtly classicism is perfectly applicable to poetry.[3]

Poetry's subordination to the ritual entailed not only an elimination of everything subjective but also a radical conventionalization of all poetic means. A rigid, strictly regulated convention became a literary equivalent of the ritual, or in fact, one of its embodiments. After all, it is the ritual that sanctions what is permitted; and it is the ritual that dictates which phenomena disrespect the boundaries of *decorum*.[4] As in any other sphere of social realist production,

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3   Abram Terc [Andrej Sinyavsky], *Sąd idzie* and Anonym [Andrej Sinyavsky], *Co to jest realizm socjalistyczny?* [*On Socialist Realism*] trans. Józef Łobodowski (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1959).

4   It may be worthwhile to refer here to Jean Cazaneuve's theory of ritual, formulated in *Sociologie du rite (Tabou, magie, sacré)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971), where the author presents the ritual as a symbolic act: "It may be an individual or collective act but one which, even when sufficiently flexible to include an element of improvisation, stays true to certain rules which determine its ritualistic character." (12) Rituals differ from other customs not only because of their assumed effects, but also because of the importance of involved repetition – this is not a matter of practice but the very essence of the ritual. Their transformation is extremely slow and all sudden and significant change dissolves their value and *raison d'etre* (see page 13). My purpose, of course, is not to apply the theory of the ritual to a particular and recent case. However, it is also difficult to ignore the fact that this particular case embodies perfectly some of the characteristics listed by the French anthropologist as constitutive of the phenomenon. Rituals observed

references to styles and directions which had been judged as wrong were unwelcome. Agreeing to the role set by the communist regime, the poet also agreed to meet certain demands in the sphere of poetics, that is to resign from his own voice. Any praise or peon using the tone of the dark, reflexive poetics of the 1930s, or any form of avant-garde poetics, would have been seen as a betrayal of the established rules, or a blunder. Poets did attempt to retain at least a trace of their own personality, using various excuses and procedures to leave an imprint of their individual character in the text. However, agreeing to the role of a poet who obeys the rules of ritual also meant that certain lines were simply not to be crossed. This is captured perfectly in Przyboś's poetic lampoon:

> Where did the Editor manage to lure you from,
> all of you busy bees:
> 1) followers of Father Baka, crowding in the stanzas,
> 2) arcadian rhapsodists of the garden plots,
> 3) Homers of chivalric romance on pipes,
> 4) philistines excreted in the privies of censorship,
> 5) screamers raising high to [star] decorated skies,
> finally – thundering, loud and determined
> TYRTAEUSES!… slithering up the worshipped stairs…
> Your drums lead to nausea, your sweet roller organs cause nausea,
> dilligent, toadyishly haughty,
> scribes of linage,
> graduates of the void ["lyre"]…[5]

The oxymoronic character of toadyish haughtiness and crawling Tyrtaeuses illustrates the situation in question particularly well. Poetry in the service of the Stalinist ritual was characterized by references to the tradition of revolutionary art, copying its models, attitudes and values. At the same time, despite alluding to the revolutionary sphere, it was an expression not of rebellion but of servitude; rather than negating official views and practices, it perpetuated them; it praised authority while failing to question the actions and characters of rulers. Although the ritual of celebratory Stalinist

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by social realist poetry were a form of cult where repetition played a significant role (it is possible, in fact, to create a catalogue of repeated motifs) and the thaw [of October 1956], which in this perspective constituted the radical change mentioned above, dissolved the *raison d'etre* of panegyric poetry.

5   Przyboś, "Głos o poezji," in *Pisma zebrane*, 336. [Here and elsewhere, mostly literal translations made for the purpose of this essay – Anna Warso.]

poetry may appear paradoxical, its internal contradictions are not contradictions in the traditional sense of the word once we take into account the fact that Stalinism dismantled all systems of social communication and had the power to use them, and do to them, whatever was needed at a given time. Conventions of revolutionary poetry reflected the communist rhetoric of the period, and panegyric poetry is perhaps the clearest example of this phenomenon.

The communist calendar of the Stalinist period, requiring poetry's ritualistic participation, was also extremely crowded, and so verse makers working the schedule had a lot on their plates. The ritual which incorporated poetry into its works engaged not only poets, but also journal editors who had to dutifully celebrate the anniversary of the revolution with an appropriate rhyme by printing a stanza or two to praise the July Manifesto or celebrate the birthday of the current, or a long deceased, leader (mostly Lenin[6] and Dzierżyński). Then, there were also unforeseen circumstances which had to be answered in verse, and Stalin's death constitutes a particularly telling example of such a circumstance – the Polish People's Republic experienced two waves of poetry devoted to Stalin: his birthday of 1949 and his funeral one of 1953. Any editor failing to publish a suitable poem would have been accused of ideological negligence. The quality of the poem was of secondary importance; any kind of rhymed text was good enough as long as it was published in the right place and at the right time. An absence of such a text would have broken the ritual, questioning the current political literary order and impoverishing the liturgical dimension.

A poet with a schedule had numerous obligations as the communist agenda included not only holidays and anniversaries, but also various propagandist activities related to concurrent local and international events. Poetry was in fact assigned a rather prominent role, whether it was the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 or the death sentence for the Greek communist activist, Nikos Beloyannis, in 1952. Consequently, hundreds of poems were ordered and written, unified to the degree that they seemed like impressions from the same matrix. Even poetic protests against death sentences (as was the case with Nikos Beloyannis, who became the object of numerous peons and lamentations) had to be sanctioned and decreed. Tender and shaken, the poets

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6   Separate poems about Lenin were, in fact, relatively scarce in the period in question, which can be explained, perhaps, by the fact that the years 1949-1953 lacked a good Lenin-related jubilee. As far as I am aware, no separate anthology of Lenin-devoted celebratory poetry was published, except for the volume entitled *O Leninie. W trzydziestą rocznicę* śmierci [*About Lenin on the 30th Anniversary of His Death*], containing various types of materials, among them literary tributes to the leader.

protested fervently against the murder of a man they had not heard of the day before, and voiced their protests as if unaware of the crimes taking place in Poland. Whoever accepted the order was transformed to a poet, and verses were composed in accordance to specific needs. Enthusiasm for the leader may have been valued equally to the outrage at a death sentence in a distant land – ordinary propagandist activities had a broad scope; and even though poetry surely did not play a prominent role, it was ritualistically necessary, as it elevated the rhetoric of propaganda. The process was most successful when a recognized, popular and well-liked author joined the effort.

Without a doubt, the poetry of social realism was a celebratory endeavor, but in a way different from lyrical poetry as it was not the poet who decided which occasion deserved his or her interest. The occasion was chosen by the person placing the order – that is, in the last instance – a party official. Nonetheless, it was not directly determined by propagandist activities, although this was the ultimate goal, but by the requirements of the ritual to which poetry was, in a sense, indispensable, and which determined the schematic character and conventions of poetry.

Its relation to the communist ritual was fundamental to the poetry of social realism; poetry was free from this dependence only in rare instances (at least in the sense that it was not created on direct demand). This essay does not aim to describe the phenomenon in its entirety, focusing instead on one distinct example whose analysis, however, can hopefully shed light on the whole. Poetry of social realism is highly unified – in fact, Wojciech Tomasik notes that by describing the programmatic poetry of the Stalinist era one reveals the fundamental properties of the entire poetic production of that time period.[7] I believe this applies not only to poems expressing the Socialist creed, but to all types of celebratory poetry in its numerous incarnations. It is a production so highly de-individualized, so sharply and arbitrarily regulated, that an analysis of part of the output allows for an interpretation of the whole.

The present essay focuses on a relatively small fragment of the phenomenon, namely, poems written to commemorate Bolesław Bierut's 60th birthday, and discusses only a selection of those poems included in the anthology entitled *Wiersze o Bolesławie Bierucie* [*Poems about Bolesław Bierut*].[8] The Stalinist

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7   Wojciech Tomasik, "Poezja twardych rąk. Socrealizmu wiersze programowe," in *Słowo o socrealizmie* (Bydgoszcz: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Bydgoszczy, 1991).

8   Zdzisław Łapiński, "Jak współżyć z socrealizmem," in *Jak współżyć z socrealizmem. Szkice nie na temat* (London: Czytelnik, 1988), 90. The anthology was published in 1952 by Czytelnik; unfortunately, the name of the editor is not provided. Zdzisław Łapiński comments: "Bolesław Bierut was another presence [after Dzierżyński – M.G.] who encouraged or enforced a concentration of motifs and structures fundamental to the discussed

era produced several celebratory anthologies of this type, which in itself was naturally a consequence of poetry's ritualization and the instrumental, thematic approach of the time. Some of those volumes including poems about communist heroes such as Stalin[9], Dzierżyński, Świerczewski[10] and Bierut, were meant as a form of worship. Of course, they also had practical applications as well, becoming resources for poems used during various types of jubilations and festivities organized at schools, factories, community and cultural centers.

The volume devoted to Bierut is relatively humble, containing only fourteen poems, but they were all written by eminent Polish authors.[11] These

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poetics: enigmatic to a certain degree, a person whose life lacked dramatic events (as far as was officially revealed), which was a serious obstacle in the attempts at a poetic treatment of the subject. Additionally, an overzealous tribute may have offended someone who was still alive."

9   *Strofy o Stalinie. Wiersze poetów polskich* [*Verses about Stalin: Poems by Polish Poets*], (Warszawa: Związek Literatów Polskich, 1949). The cover lists Związek Literatów Polskich [Union of Polish Writers] as the publisher, but also this publication fails to provide the name of the editor. Another volume published in the same year by Czytelnik under the title *Wiersze o Stalinie. Wybór wierszy poetów radzieckich* [*Poems about Stalin: A Selection of Verses by Soviet Authors*] was edited by P. Pollak. The vast number of mourning poems was not collected in a separate volume.

10   A number of poems about Świerczewski was written and a propaganda song, with lyrics by Robert Stiller, actually became in fact quite popular. Łapiński comments ironically on *Poematy o generale* Świerczewskim [*Poems about General* Świerczewski]: "Dzierżyński and Bierut were problematic from the literary perspective, but the problems were not insurmountable. Świerczewski's case was different. His soldiery death and perfect revolutionary life immediately worked themselves on their own into forms well known to Polish literature. [Władysław] Broniewski was an undisputed poetic champion of the discipline and the winner of several awards. The traditional theme enticed also the innovators attempting, perhaps, to show that the artistic means which had been previously used for the purposes unrelated to the needs of the moment, can be useful in refreshing already worn-out patriotic poetic forms. Tadeusz Różewicz's later activity in the field probably had the same source.
See Łapiński, *Jak współżyć z socrealizmem*, 91.

11   The invaluable Polska Bibliografia Literacka [Polish Literary Bibliography] provides information about other poets who commemorated Bolesław Bierut's birthday in 1952 and they are Władysław Broniewski, Tadeusz Fangart, Wanda Grodzieńska (in „Świerszczyk"!), Jerzy Jurandot, Leopold Lewin, Jerzy Miller, Wacław Mrozowski, Zdzisław Polsakiewicz, Seweryn Skulski, Anatol Stern, Grzegorz Timofiejew and Jan Zalewski. They represent a decidedly weaker set. The jubilee included also a foreign author, Liubomyr Dmyterko (trans. by G. Timofiejew), who celebrated Bierut with a separate poem. Notably, the business in question was not restricted to poetry only. Tributes to Bierut also took the form of radio plays, children's stories (in 1952 Halina Rudnicka published a separate book entitled

were, following the table of contents, Adam Ważyk, Artur Międzyrzecki, Anna Kamieńska, Henryk Gaworski, Stanisław Piętak, Włodzimierz Słobodnik, Jan Koprowski, Teofil Kowalczyk, Stanisław Wygodzki and Jerzy Ficowski. The list

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Prezydent Bolesław Bierut – wielki przyjaciel młodzieży [*Bolesław Bierut – A Great Friend of the Youth*] and several jubilation speeches, written by, among others, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Lucjan Rudnicki and Julian Tuwim. It may be worth explaining why the first league of panegyrists did not include Broniewski, who was highly beloved at the time and officially promoted as the greatest among the poets. All seems to suggest that the poet was simply late to the party, having written his text at the very last moment, or even after the fact. Broniewski's poem is entitled "To Bolesław Bierut" and appeared in "Trybuna Ludu" on July 22, 1952 (203), in the special issue. It was later reprinted by a few journals but, as far as I know, was never included in any of the poet's volumes and became forgotten. I am quoting the entire text below:

We crossed the Bug River and there's Poland!--
comrade Bolesław.
There march our formidable brave soldiers
Warsaw-bound and headed for glory.

We ourselves build, we ourselves plough,
we claw at the hard soil
we want to, we can make it,
ours is the victory!

A worker – now means more
than one pair of hands,
enough of working like mules,
enough of the suffering!

A farmer? now means a tractor, cooperative,
the People's Republic
Working together and honest,
may it long prosper and flourish!

And it cost so many years of imprisonment
so many misinterpreted thoughts
to become Host of this land
for everyone here, for each of us.

Who else but comrade Bolesław
has more right today
to grasp in his hand
our glorious and bloodied banner?

Clearly, the poet did not rise above the panegyric standard of the period.

includes only one completely unknown author (Kowalczyk[12]) and two more who obediently served the communist authorities for decades (Gaworski and Koprowski). The rest are well recognized, some among them actually remarkable poets who in the years to come actively engaged in the fight against the totalitarian regime. The very fact that the anthology includes more than literary hacks or poets with a schedule, as labeled by Przyboś, makes the entire thing even more fascinating. This is not only because we could ask ourselves why great authors decided to fulfill the order for poems and, consequently, participated in the jubilee ritual (an important question, especially considering the fact the list of fourteen authors is not dominated by party activists but rather poputchiks). What seems more important here is the issue of how those poets situated themselves within the framework of conventions and obligations resulting from the ritual and whether they attempted to moderate or circumvent them somehow.

Their impersonal character is a striking feature of the poems in question. This should come as no surprise, as they were all created to order. In addition, some of the authors might have viewed the task of writing these poems as something to be done for this or that reason, and also something not to be taken seriously. But while this explanation is not to be completely excluded, it seems that there were also other issues at play. The fact that poems about Bierut – with only one exception – are all characterized by such a high level of impersonality (and, consequently, representative of occasional literary production for jubilees, regardless of the addressee) is not motivated, or at least not entirely, psychologically. It was not caused by the fact that the poet, regardless of whether they were a renown author with years of experience or a third-rate beginner, was unable leave a personal mark in their work; of course they were able to do so – even if what they felt toward the work was barely contained disgust, because a personal mark in a literary work is not (or does not have to be) a matter of honesty or real engagement (emotional, intellectual, or any other), but also an element of literary convention in and of itself – a convention which was not used here (with a few exceptions). This, most certainly, was not an accident. It seems that leaving a personal mark, in other words, reaching for that particular convention, was not expected of the poets, as whoever placed the order needed something else. Naturally, it was important to be able to put a name of a well-known and recognized author above the poem praising Stalin, Bierut or Dzierżyński, regardless of the actual value of the work. Such a gesture strengthened the propagandistic message

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12 Actually, Teofil Kowalczyk has earned himself an entry in *Słownik współczesnych pisarzy polskich* [*Dictionary of Contemporary Polish Writers*], series 2, vol. 1, ed. Jadwiga Czachowska (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1977).

and utility. But it was less important (or not important at all) to emphasize that it was the poet as a person – Słonimski, Iwaszkiewicz, Gałczyński, Dobrowolski – who praised the brilliant leader of the revolution, or of the entire progressive mankind, and sang his glory. This was not only because of the underlying assumption that the poet was not to be viewed as a partner of the praised person, as a comrade or interlocutor. Social realist panegyrics went even further: it did not matter that comrades Stalin or Bierut were praised by a particular person, even if that person happened to be a famous poet. What mattered was their being praised by the entire progressive mankind, by the working class, by the laborers of the country, which does not mean, of course, that the discussed works belong to choral poetry; a collective subject was not necessary and was rarely created. Concealing or de-individualizing the poem's speaker sufficed.

This phenomenon has a broader field of reference as it is related to another typically social realist practice of using general categories for the spheres normally reserved for the individual. In the case of the discussed poems, generality is expressed in several aspects of the work whose only remaining individual element is the praised hero. This very generality determined the fundamental qualities of the poem. In lyrical works, the clarity of the speaker results in the clarity of the situation of utterance; consequently, one is usually able to reconstruct the speaker and the circumstances of the act. But in the poems following the rules of the communist ritual only one thing is clear and certain, namely, the direct addressee of the work (if the poem approaches the so called *Du-Lyrik*) or the person described by the work (in the case of narrative poems). The situation of the subject is unimportant. Hence, the unnaturalness found at the very foundation of these poems, and the vagueness of their rhetoric. The latter may seem slightly odd as the tradition of laudatory poems strongly imposes a rhetorical structure, but the panegyric works of the past corresponded to other kinds of rituals and did not share the obligations highlighted earlier in this text. The blurring of the rhetorical situation takes place even when the address itself constitutes the basic element of composition:

> Mud covered outskirts of Lublin
> painfully seared in your memory,
> but perhaps you reminisce also about this land,
> which you had to abandon early.
>
> <div align="right">S. Piętak "Pozdrowienie znad Sanu"
["Greeting from the Banks of the San"]</div>

In some cases, despite the clear recipient and destination of the poem, generality is a key aspect:

Who has found his true self in the fight, defeated and broken down
- even with hands stiff with cold – retained a hot burning heart,
who knew he cannot be thwarted by the shadow of prison bars,
that people will rise the next day and break the bolts on the door,
who was free even when captured in the cells of Sanacja
he, who in Nowa Huta, knew Częstochowa awakens the new dawn,
he is the first one among us. And may the song fight alongside,
a song raising the man and an unidolatrous one.

> J. Ficowski, "Kto znalazł siebie..."
> ["Who Has Found His True Self"]

I am quoting this eight verse essay in its entirety, as it may serve as a particularly good illustration of the discussed phenomenon. The speaker has been moved to the background and the way the sentences are formulated suggests that they convey eternal, unquestioned and undisputable truths, even though they simply praise a specific individual and were written in specific circumstances, per order.

Broadly understood, depersonalization and its crucial consequences constitute the main feature of social realist ritual poetry, such as can be found in the poems about Bierut, and even more pronounced in the works devoted to Stalin. This is why exceptions to this rule must be noted carefully, exceptions such as Iwaszkiewicz's *List do Prezydenta* [*Letter to the President*] found in the body of poetry celebrating Bierut's birthday. Today the poem evokes disgust, as do other works collected in the volume, but it cannot be denied that it stands out from the rest and, in fact, is the only text in the collection which can be treated seriously. This is how Tomasz Burek approached "List do Prezydenta" in his interesting analysis. The critic admits that the poem fulfills the numerous demands of social realist poetics:

> The author of the cited poem, already a well-respected author of considerable literary output and achievement, chastised nonetheless for his tendency for aestheticizing contemplation, seems to agree and internally identify with the imposed, rather unflattering image, or model. It is a model of a sinful egotist and aesthete who prefers the seven-colored rainbows suspended in the skies to the epic of collective history. The author takes his eager and exaggerated self-criticism of his interwar past so far that he forgets – or skillfully pretends to have forgotten, in order to cast even more severe self-accusations and to humble himself even more in front of the victorious and empowered Common Man – that as a writer he is always engaged in debates concerning the teachings of others.[13]

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13   Tomasz Burek, "Mądrość daremna," in *O twórczości Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza*, ed. Alicja Brodzka (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1983), 37-38. In the context of this particular

Burek reveals how the poem resounds with echoes of Iwaszkiewicz's postwar poetry and how it revisits the problems reappearing on various occasions and in several forms in Iwaszkiewicz's other works. We are dealing here with a poetic tribute which nonetheless retains a personal character. This fact precisely contributes to the poem's particular position: it was undoubtedly written to meet the demands and follow the principles of the social realist ritual, but at the same time it breaks the most important one. As a consequence, it is a gesture of both acquiescence and transgression, and being such an unusual phenomenon, worth a closer look.

Such act of stepping outside the rules of the ritual was perhaps not demanded, but certainly implied by the epistle as a form. A poetic letter taken seriously – and this is how Iwaskiewicz approached his text – assumes a clarity of the situation of transmission and an individual character of the subject who addresses or, in fact, communicates with the receiver. Both are presumed equal, even if the speaker means to honor the addressee while remaining self-critical. "List do Prezydenta" fulfills the basic criteria of the genre: it is indeed a poetic letter locating itself within the tradition of a very ancient literary form. This can be seen particularly clearly when the poems is compared to another literary tribute to Bierut: *List kwietniowy* [*April Letter*] by Gaworski. Differences in their literary culture and poetic craft require no commentary, as they are self-evident; Gaworski's subject makes various promises and swears oaths to the addressee, but never expresses nor negotiates his own case, even while pretending to do so. The poem can hardly be described as an epistle in the classical sense. In another sense, it becomes an unintentional caricature of Iwaszkiewicz's work.

> You dwell in Warsaw, Comrade, we all know,
> But I keep seeing you away from the capital,
> Crossing country roads and forgotten paths,
> Wearing your light coat and worries shadowing your face.
>
> (...)
> My song is still awkward,
> like an unqualified worker.
> But, Comrade, I will take better care of it now,
> I will feed it my heart and refine it with work,

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poem Balcerzan speaks of "doing away with pathos of the genre" but what he has in mind is not the epistle but the panegyric. See Edward Balcerzan, *Poezja polska w latach 1939-1965*, part I: *Strategie liryczne* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1982), 152.

And, like windows, I will keep my words wide open,
to the people's struggle, their worries and love.

<div align="right">H. Gaworski, "List kwietniowy" ["April Letter"]</div>

One could simply comment that this was how poetic letters used to be written and lay the matter to rest. But the form cannot exist without a clearly indicated addressee, which reveals yet another question of fundamental significance. Namely, what were the ways to present the recipients of not only the epistle, but of the ritual celebratory poem? What traits were they attributed with and how were they positioned? While the matter requires a detailed analysis, one could already posit that it would reveal issues similar to those concerning the construction of the subject – the problem of the relation between the general and the particular, between that which undergoes generalization and that which remains unquestionably individual. The problem, however, is resolved differently than when the matter concerns the poet who can remain silent about himself, remove himself out of the spotlight, limit his own presence to an extreme degree, almost annihilating it. Nothing of that kind can be done to the addressee of a poem written to celebrate the addressee: here Stalin has to remain Stalin, Bierut has to remain Bierut and Dzierżyński has to remain Dzierżyński, and even the humble Świerczewski cannot be replaced or transformed into someone else. This is the crux of the problem: how to conciliate between writing a tribute to the leader, (part of the phenomenon euphemistically referred to during the political thaw as the cult of the individual) and the collectivism inherent to Marxism-Leninism?

This is also where the problem of what I call communism's personal code reveals itself.[14] Its deficient and schematic nature can be seen in panegyrics, and other poetic tributes written for leaders. This schematism and attendant deficiency constitute a universal quality of communist discourse, one which dominated both poetic production and pseudo-historical accounts to an almost identical degree. Even speaking about the dictator (especially on special occasions, such as anniversaries which turned into public holidays) had to be contained within the borders delineated by ideology and the ritual spawned by the ideology. As a result, the leader receiving the tribute remains a depersonalized figure, be it Bierut, Stalin or anyone else (either in Polish or Soviet poetry). Naturally, the poets do not go so far as to regard the person of the leader as a replaceable figure or an example, as a role played by a particular person due to some sort of a coincidence. If that were the case,

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14   See Michał Głowiński, "Wielka przebieranka," ["A Great Masquerade"] in *Nowomowa po polsku* [*Newspeak in Polish*] (Warszawa: Open, 1990), 139.

the panegyrism of social realism would become pointless. No, the process is much more complicated.

The celebrated leader is presented as an embodiment of the communist ideal of a man, a person whose biography fulfills all conditions required to become a communist activist, consequently transforming into a kind of model. Working class roots of the praised champion are emphasized wherever possible, including detailed accounts of his life of hardship and poverty, as well as class instinct; supported by the party, the teachings of Marxism-Leninism has shaped the hero into what he has become, a leader. When this is impossible, when it would require presenting an image clearly contrary to biographical realia, various types of substitute sub-plots are created, as in the case of Dzierżyński (who came from the gentry, in other words, from a kind of background generally frowned upon by Bolshevik propaganda). In a lengthy poem about the founder of Cheka, Leopold Lewin enumerates, among the factors determining the life choices made by the hero, softness of his heart and the desire to continue the work of Polish freedom fighters (the poem makes references to the uprisings).[15] Bierut, posed no such difficulties to his panegyrists and the proletarian elements of his biography were repeatedly emphasized, for instance by Ważyk in his epic laudatory poem, written [originally] in hexameters.

> So began the youth of a student, a builder and a typesetter,
> Behind a lime-filled cart, lettercase, deprived of sleep and meal
> at gatherings of youths ready to storm skies,
> bustling and busy, passionate, the world became clearer to him,
> masses of people transformed into a nation and class.

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15 Leopold Lewin, *Poemat o Dzierżyńskim* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1951). Lewin's lengthy work remains an interesting curiosity even against the backdrop of social realist poetry, as it was written in the perfect style of the early Romantic verse novel. Lewin skillfully displays literary craft of a fifth-rate poet of the previous century (not even using assonance!). He was a prolific author in the early fifties, catering efficiently and without delay to various party celebrations and political events (he did not miss even the one discussed above, producing "Kantata o Bierucie" ["Cantata about Bierut"]) and it would seem had a great chance of becoming a key social realist verse-maker, one praised and celebrated widely. This never happened; Lewin did not receive recognition even in that period and remained only a producer of poetry. His case seems interesting as it illustrates certain kind of epigonism; even though impeccable from the ideological perspective and always ready to serve his masters, Lewin did not receive the approval and appreciation from the social realist lawmakers. His poems about Dzierżyński, included in *Wieczny płomień* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1951), an anthology edited by Wiktor Woroszylski, are discussed by Z. Łapiński in the already referenced essay (85-90).

Now armies are in the trenches. And before Lublin's typesetter
manages to hear Lenin's words over the noise of the battle,
he prints the truth about war as if already knowing them.
This is how adulthood begins, hounded
by four different types of police, dragged through the prison cells,
but never alone. The party knows, and remembers.

<div align="right">A. Ważyk, "Droga pokoleń" ["The Path of Generations"]</div>

The praised leader transforms into an exemplary hero and his biography into that of an ideal of a party activist. This is evidenced not only by the biographical plot, which I have emphasized here, but also by the way all aspects of the hero's life are treated. His praises are also praises directed towards the communist party (because it managed to produce such a leader, but also because it is him and no one else, him – the magnificent and unequaled one – who stands at the helm). The hero's actions are faultless because he understands the laws that govern history, revealed by the party, but at the same time he also shapes them; he is a creation of history but also its creator. The image of the hero's biography is infused with general assumptions of historical and material dialecticism, and one continuously finds in it direct references to their theses and recommendations.

The problem we are facing here is the one we have faced discussing the issue of the sender. Here, too, tensions between the particular and the general resurface. Poems written for Bierut contain a multitude of general sentences; however, it is not a property of these poetic works only; a similar tendency can be found in the entire corpus of social realist poetry, including poems about other heroes. On the one hand, general sentences convey the truths evident from the hero's biography, and on the other, the hero's teachings, directed at the people, the working class and so on. Ważyk's poem, for instance, contains aphorisms such as this one:

Who looks through the eyes of the Party, can separate wheat from chaff
mend the mistake, cut off traitors, calling them what they are.

Other authors follow the trend with even more zeal, gifting the reader whole bunches of general truths:

Undefeated is he who has been molded
with all that is honorable and human.

He will enter the ruins like the sun does,
building a common man's joy.

> He will mete just punishment for the enemies
> of the motherland as the world watches.
>
> With a determined and brave hand
> he will bring closer people's victory.
>
> > T. Kubiak "18 kwietnia 1892-1952"
> > ["18 April 1892-1952"]

The first couplet plays a special role in Kubiak's poem (as its incipit and coda), creating a frame for the praise of Bolesław Bierut that follows; the poems generally teem with communist generalities of this kind.

However, generality as a quality cannot be reduced to generalizing sentences, such as those above. Sometimes, it takes a different form when the panegyrist does not focus on the celebrated person as an individual, but on the party. Woroszylski's poem is a fervent praise of the latter. The reasons to praise the party are numerous, and include, for instance, its teachings:

> Who else if not the will of the Party
> gave a beginning to new life?
> It was its voice that kept calling:
> "Comrade, stay vigilant!"
>
> > W. Woroszylski, "Sierpień" ["August"]

Woroszylski's poem as a whole focuses on the fight against imperialism, titoism and right-wing nationalist tendencies. This very fight becomes an occasion to praise the leader who excels in it.

> It was through fight, struggle and hardship
> that the cadre grew, wise and brave,
> And it
> > appointed
> > > Bierut
> To reach for the victory under His lead.[16]

What the cited passages highlight is the following: despite an extremely schematic character with regard to the presentation of the sender and the addressee, we cannot speak of one standard model for the panegyric poem. In other words, as a poet, you cannot praise the communist leader exactly

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16 Typically, the theme of cadres resurfaced in other poems as well. For instance, Ważyk writes: "Once, imprisoned in Rawicz, he thought about saving the cadres."

the way you would like to, but you can do it nonetheless in various ways. The praise may remain hidden – it does not have to be expressed in a direct and clear rhetorical construction proper to a panegyric. Ważyk and Kubiak's poems resemble biographical expositions and present, via poetic abbreviation, a model biography of the president. Woroszylski's poem, referenced earlier, is different: it seems to depart from a single biographical element, a detail, and endows it with a general sense. Some of the poems were preceded by notes explaining the described events, as in "Noc noworoczna", where Międzyrzecki writes, "On New Year's Eve of 1943 in Warsaw, Bolesław Bierut led the first historical meeting of the State National Council". The poem itself resembles a ballad, recounting the event, classified as historical from the very beginning, and alluding to the Romantic tradition (Słowacki, among others). Międzyrzecki's poem also manages to praise the leader:

> Liberate Warsaw, O swift labor leader,
> you were prophesized in their deeds and song!
>
> They did not come to see you from any romantic cloud,
> But from the hungry suburbs and humble fields,
> Led by the son of this earth
> Who called, through the fire and smoke,
> And people joined their strong arms
> Listening to the New Year's Eve's sounds.
>
> <div align="right">A. Międzyrzecki, "Noc noworoczna"
["New Year's Eve"]</div>

However, the described event is not a detail from the hero's biography, regardless of how many profound details it may have contained – the poet attributes everything in the text with a symbolic dimension. The place itself – Warsaw[17] – is symbolic, and so is the time. New Year's Eve is not an ordinary night – it foretells the coming of a new time, a new era. One would think that a poem about a particular event should assume a narrow temporal frame, but this is not the case here. Since the celebrated event is of historical significance, the inclusion of a broad temporal perspective becomes unavoidable, and this was especially a common practice in social realism.

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17   Warsaw plays the role of a symbolic place also in other poems – it is a widely ranging phenomenon of social realism, and naturally not restricted only to the poems about Bierut. Warsaw becomes a sacral space where the new can triumph; Kamieńska's poem *Warszawa* from the Bierut-cycle may serve here as a good illustration.

Międzyrzeczki's poem constitutes a transition to celebratory poems where the historical dimension becomes a dominant factor. Among the works featured in the anthology in question are also poems by Słonimski, Kamieńska and Słobodnik (to a certain degree). All of them aim to depict the worshipped activist, but also highlight the "future's marble outline" (to borrow from Kamieńska). Poetic praise may be anchored in a particular object, and when it is, the panegyric discourse transforms into a historiosophical discourse: the author expresses in rhyme the teachings of historical materialism. The evil past fades and gives way to the bright future. Praised be the drivers of the locomotive of history (to reference Broniewski's famous formulation from *Słowa o Stalinie* [*Words about Stalin*]) and among them also is he whose gentle eyes look down from the portrait adorning the walls of every classroom:

> And so, walking into oblivion, it disappears in the deep mists of history:
> The retinue of princes and kings, and of lords, noble and bloodthirsty,
> But at school, from the frame of the portrait, his eyes – gentle and bright
> look down on your young days and want to protect them from all harm.
> Do not mourn the days which are long gone, today you have much better hosts!
> Poland belongs to you now as it grows to pickaxes' melodious songs.
>
> A. Słonimski, "Portret Prezydenta"
> ["The President's Portrait"]

Słonimski's poem presents the arrival of the new and bright future through a series of worn-out archetypal images which do not cease to surprise in a poet of such experience and unquestionable poetic proficiency.

> Today, look! Although our road is still difficult and covered in mists,
> The spring can be smelled in the air, brought by the eastern warm wind.
> The snow and mud are still here, but they cannot make the frost come back.
> The heart feels lighter when the first gusts of early spring winds start to blow!
> It is easier for the eyes and hands, and with ease the air fills the lungs,
> Hark, hark the sounds of the wind of the new centuries to come!

A similar development can be found in Kamieńska. Her descriptions envision a world where better future is about to come, and the recipient of the praise is portrayed as a mythical creator of the new era.

> He who said to the ashes of Warsaw: Rise!
> And to the nation: Build your capital!
> Has now carved his name in its living plan
> where the streets pulsate with the steps of the youth.
>
> A. Kamieńska, "Warszawa"

Historicist discourse dominates the description – becoming a part of the panegyric whole as the references to Słowacki's *Uspokojenie* anchor it within a literary tradition. In Słobodnik, the historiosophical dimension is related to a sort of conceptism:

> In Łazienki, the empty eyed statues
> Look at new history which comes,
> With peasant and worker steps,
> Singing the people's song.
>
> Having offered his own heart in sacrifice
> To Poland of hammer and plough,
> The people's son entered the Belvedere -
> The country's servant and host.

<div align="right">W. Słobodnik, "Syn ludu" ["The People's Son"]</div>

I believe that a broader phenomenon is revealed here, one I have decided to refer to as social realist conceptism. It has many sources. Among them probably is the fact that panegyrics of the discussed kind, unified and schematic in so many dimensions, had to retain a degree of uniqueness, otherwise they would transform into repetitions of the same, accepted truths. This uniqueness was easiest to achieve through the multiplication of curious ideas under the umbrella of grand praise: the need to describe the celebrated hero in an original manner resulted in a competition for the most elaborate and unusual presentation. In fact, this conceptism in naming follows the tradition of panegyric as a genre (its historian mentions the "ostentatious or magniloquent element[18]"). However, the conceptism in question encompasses more than panegyric names, determining in some cases the entire structure of the poem – for instance in Teofil Kowalczyk's highly stylized poem. His imitation of gestures from the folk poetic tradition produces truly curious effects:

> The tractor and the harvester thunder in the fields
> Our granaries are bursting with bread and meal.
>
> If only I could soar like a nightingale in the skies
> I would fly to Łazienki and sing to him every night.
>
> If only I could turn to a moon of pure silver
> I would shine down with bright light in Warsaw on the Belvedere.

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18   Hanna Dziechcińska, "Panegiryk," in *Słownik literatury staropolskiej* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1990), 545.

I can't turn to a moon and I am no nightingale
But on my tractor I will plough harder the field.

[...]

And one day when a chance comes to visit the capital
I will take these flowers with me to lay in the Belvedere.

And as the stars glitter over darkened skies
I'll be thinking: it is for Him that they're shining so bright.

<div align="right">

T. Kowalczyk, "Piosenka ludowa"
["A Folk Song"]

</div>

This is indeed a completely new level of the panegyric acrobatics, where the volume and number of tricks replace quality and the panegyric transforms into an unintended grotesque. Kowalczyk's poem, located in the final reaches of poetry harnessed to serve the ritual, borders on the laughable. The range of possibilities available to such poetry varied: in a certain way, it was extremely narrow and meager, tolerating only procedures strictly regulated by the doctrine and the social realist custom; elsewhere it was relatively broad and extensive, allowing for varied, diversified and, at times, even surprising solutions. This duality determines the properties of panegyric ritual poetry, highly conventionalized and yet permitting – if not innovation – then at least certain oddities and eccentricities.

Poetry's subordination to the ritual in the period of social realism constituted its main property and characteristic, determining all of its remaining features. It was precisely this subordination that expressed the subjugation of literature, poetry in particular, to the mechanisms of propaganda – and consequently, its status. Naturally, poems were written and published outside the communist liturgy of enslavement and lies, but the landscape was dominated by those created for the schedule. Bierut's birthday poems from the collection presented in this article may serve as an example, a point of departure and a form of documentation of the discussed phenomenon and while they may not present the full extent of the phenomenon, they nonetheless give a certain idea of its range and properties. My goal here was to emphasize its ritualistic character, role and place; to present its whole extent would require a more voluminous text encompassing the poetry of Polish social realism in all its pathetic fullness.

Translation: Anna Warso

Sociology of Culture

Wendy Griswold, Stanisław Krawczyk

"In a Lively Mind Many Things Happen at the Same Time:" Cultural Sociology and the Sociology of Literature (a Discussion)

Stanisław Krawczyk: Professor Griswold – during your doctoral years at Harvard in the late 1970s, you met Harrison C. White, a sociologist famous for his research on social networks. You also came in contact with Richard A. Peterson, a scholar from Vanderbilt University who was developing the production of culture perspective. And the circle of doctoral students at Harvard at the time included other researchers who would become influential figures in sociology – for instance, Paul DiMaggio. How did those relationships influence your career?

Wendy Griswold: At this period cultural sociology was just beginning to take form in its contemporary version. Prior to the 1970s, there was the sociology of culture if you studied art, literature, etc. Not very many people did so but it was possible. However, anything broader was usually associated with Parsons and structural functionalism, with studying the relations of the cultural system to other systems. By the 1970s most Americans were no longer persuaded by that, but the alternative was a sort of Marxian idea: culture is pretty much epiphenomenal and you really want to be looking at structure and material or economic life, and the relations of production, and all that. Neither of those positions gave much independence or autonomy to culture per se.

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It was during the 1970s that there began emerging what became a very robust field where people looked at culture as potentially independent or having complex relationships – not the simple reflection-type relationship – with social structure. And I was lucky enough to be in graduate school when this was happening. One of my professors that you did not mention who was very important to that was Ann Swidler. She was an assistant professor at Harvard when I was there. Richard Peterson was not on the Harvard faculty, but he came there often for summer schools and other things, and I got to know him. Paul [DiMaggio] was a student a year or two years ahead of me. And then Harrison White, who was actually the chair of my dissertation committee.

Harrison White did publish with his wife an important book in the sociology of art, a book on the impressionists,[1] but he is not primarily known as a cultural sociologist. Regardless, I think he has been very influential in the lives of everyone that he touched. He was such a powerful intellectual model, he was interested in everything and had a very intense mind. For instance, in most seminars you have a set of readings, and everybody reads the same book or books. And he would come in to our seminar with a huge pile of books that were all different. He would just throw them onto the table and have everybody take one: a book about Anglo-Saxon law, or another one about the Indian caste system. Totally different books. And Harrison would have everybody read a separate book, then come back and talk about the social organization in that particular work. This was a very unusual way of doing things, and I think he inspired everyone, not because of what that he was particularly teaching, but just because of his quality of mind. I do not think he had a great deal of commitment to sociology of literature or cultural sociology as we understand it, but he inspired intellectual development from everyone. A really remarkable, remarkable person.

We also used to have – as I am sure the students in Poland do – graduate student groups that would get together and just talk. Paul DiMaggio and I, and several other people who were interested in culture, would get together and read Bakhtin and Robert Venturi, and works on postmodern architecture; just the books that had caught our attention, but weren't part of any curriculum. Our groups would get together at 7:30 in the morning, or late in the evening, and talk about these books. Paul was very involved in that.

Do you think all this had any palpable effect on your later work? Or would you rather say that it was a part of the general intellectual atmosphere in which you developed as a scholar?

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1   Harrison C. White and Cynthia A. White, *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (Chicago–London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).

For my individual work, all this gave me inspiration to study what I wanted to study, and do the research that I wanted to do, and not give a lot of thought to what the field was, or what the current job prospects were. It is very competitive, getting a position in the academic world, and so a lot of students in the American system tend to think, "What areas am I likely to find a position in?" Working with people like Harrison, you did not think that way at all. I mean, I did my sociology dissertation on Renaissance plays, and you need to have a certain intellectual self-confidence to do that.

I think that has carried through. For instance, later I did work on Nigerian writers and studied topics that did not obviously fit even into the sociology of culture. That tendency to feel quite free to follow my research inclinations definitely comes from Harrison and the atmosphere at Harvard in the late 1970s. Other than that, I believe I also went along with the discipline, as the field as a whole moved away from the two extremes that you have mentioned.

I imagine that when Polish postgraduate students come across the interview and read about the competition in the late 1970s or the early 1980s in the US, they may think about the current situation in Poland, where there is also a clear shortage of workplaces in academia.

Of course that is true in today's United States as well. But I think the general idea was, "Just figure out what you are interested in because if you follow your inclinations, your passions, and what is really important to you, you will do better work." My research on Renaissance plays represents a rather extreme case of working like that. And if you try to figure out, "there is a growing market in organizational sociology, so I think I will do work in organizational sociology," your work won't be as good. Apart from Harrison, Ann Swidler was also important in that area. She very much encouraged me to choose research topics without worrying where the discipline was, and to just follow my inclinations. I try to do that with students as well.

I am thinking that the book that grew up from your doctoral dissertation[2] might be one of the most literary books in your career; "literary" in terms of reaching to works by literary scholars, to the whole of Elizabethan scholarship.

I had done my Master's degree in English, and I was pretty familiar with that world. So merging the two and drawing on literary scholarship came

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2   Wendy Griswold, *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre, 1576-1980* (Chicago–London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986).

quite naturally when I was writing my dissertation. Even though it was strictly in sociology – it wasn't a joint dissertation – that was still pretty familiar to me.

During your later career, did you move away from this kind of literary scholarship? Or were they further points or periods – perhaps the whole timespan of your career – when you did similar things?

The other major study that I did was on the Nigerian novel[3] and the problem there was that there was not that much scholarship. So I had to create the data that I then analyzed. It is a whole different thing than when you are working on Shakespeare, when you have got this huge body of work to contend with. When you are working on Nigerian novels or African fiction, you have a very thin body of work and from the sociologist's point of view, you do not know what the data are. I had to put together the population – not a sample, but the population – of Nigerian novels, because nobody had done it. And so, I identified about 500 novels (I was able to actually read about 475 of them).

So it is a whole different story, a different project. I think it was equally literary work in that I spent about half that book talking about the content of the novels, but it was another kind of project just because there wasn't much critical work available. That would be a little different now, but just a little. You know, you have a lot of theoretical work about post-colonialism and so forth, but nothing like the body of work that you would have on the Renaissance, or on more modern European or American literature.

When I still studied Polish language and literature, many of us were aware that so much had been written on the great Romantic poets or playwrights of the Polish tradition, like Adam Mickiewicz… It could have been crippling to students, I suppose.

Oh, sure! And the literary scholars who are not sociologically oriented would say, "You're barely scratching the surface!," and that's definitely true, because as a social scientist you have different objectives. There's a fruitful tension. But when you are studying something that has not been recognized yet, you have different problems: knowing what the data are, knowing what the contours are. On the other hand, you do not have the burden of the past, the heavy weight of critical tradition.

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3   Wendy Griswold, *Bearing Witness: Readers, Writers, and the Novel in Nigeria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Does your further work on literary regionalism fall into the same category? Studying literature, but in the fields where there is not as much literary scholarship as in the case of Elizabethan plays?

That's probably true. There's a lot of research on specific regional cultures (say, the literature of the American South as a big case of regionalism), but not that much work on regionalism in general. In the first book that I did in that area, *Regionalism and the Reading Class*,[4] I wrote on Norway and Italy, and several American cases, and so on. Thinking across different regions and trying to understand what produces and what reproduces a place-space literature – this is probably something that hasn't been done very often.

We have come to the comparative, international – or transnational – aspect of your research. There have certainly been many difficulties to overcome in carrying out studies of Norway, Nigeria, Italy… Would you be able to tell me about some of these difficulties and the solutions you have applied to deal with them?

What I believe – and what I also tell students – is that you should not focus too much on the difficulties if there is something you want to do. You should do it!

Now, that said, there are certain things that you need to attend to. So, for example, I had originally done quite a bit of work on West Indian writers and West Indian novels, Barbadian writers, or Jamaican writers. I wanted to compare that with another social setting where the English novel had been reproduced, and so I was going to work at a place that had been an English colony. In former English colonies, and particularly in Africa, shorter works are sometimes written in African languages, but longer pieces – anything the size of the novel – are almost always written in English. This way I got around the limitations of language, which could have been a difficulty with comparative research. And sometimes you have to work with other people who know more about something than you do. In Norway, I worked with a Norwegian scholar and he was able to translate and understand things in a way that I could not.

So I do not see these things as difficulties. You have to think it through: "What can I do as a researcher, and how can I address the questions that I have, based on what I know and what I have going for me?" Sometimes that may require learning another language or spending a long period of time in another place if you are doing comparative work; sometimes not.

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4   Wendy Griswold, *Regionalism and the Reading Class* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Doing this kind of research probably requires a fairly high degree of comfort with uncertainty, particularly if you are working in a place like Nigeria. Also, a lot of things can come up that are a little scary, and not everybody would be comfortable with this. So you have to know yourself. But I am just very curious about other parts of the world and I like to travel, and I am not too easily intimidated, and so forth.

Still, you have to be realistic. I do not work in Kano in Nigeria. Recently there has been a lot of Boko Haram activity there. And I am not sure I will, as a Western scholar, come back to Kano anytime soon. So I am not just saying, "Throw yourself into anything," but you have to know what you are comfortable with and where you want to go to answer your questions, to do the sort of scholarship that you want to do.

Perhaps the importance of researchers' personalities could be a little more strongly emphasized in teaching.

I think that is true, and I see that with students. For example, I encourage students very often to do work in Africa. I am not an Africanist, but I try to say, "If you are interested in urbanization or gender, or social change, why not look at it in an African setting?" And sometimes that works; I had one student who is now at the University of Notre Dame, very successful, on his way to getting tenure. He studied health messages, specifically AIDS messages, in the United States and in Ghana. And I encouraged him, I said, "You should go to Ghana, you should do this there." But other students just are not comfortable with that.

So yes, I think personality has something to do with the type of research. For example, there are some people that do well in interviews, and others aren't skilled at that – maybe they do better in theoretical work, where they are working with texts.

Another thing about teaching: in 1994 you published a handbook[5] which Marco Santoro later called "the first, and arguably still most influential, textbook in cultural sociology."[6] In the acknowledgments to the third edition, you said that you taught yourself a lot by teaching students. Is there something you would like to say to other teachers of cultural sociology, or the sociology of literature?

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5   Wendy Griswold, *Cultures and Societies in the Changing World* (4th ed.) (California: SAGE Publications, 2013).

6   Marco Santoro, "Culture As (and After) Production," *Cultural Sociology* 4 (2008).

I do not know if I have any particularly useful advice on that. I teach sociology of culture every year and I have done so for thirty years; *Cultures and Societies in the Changing World* basically came from lectures for a course that I taught. It has been revised a few times and I have changed the structure a little bit but not too much. It covers things that I think need to be covered.

The universities that I have taught at – the University of Chicago and Northwestern University – are both quite interdisciplinary. When you are teaching a sociology of culture class, you may well have students from outside of sociology; for instance, you may come upon a student of English who has never read Durkheim and Marx. So I include a fair amount of discussion of those theorists. I suppose every teacher has to think through what their audience is, what backgrounds their students have, and adjust the teaching accordingly. I would say my teaching in the textbook is aimed not strictly for students of sociology but for general students in the arts and sciences.

This may be good news for Polish literary students, including postgraduates. The book might be more approachable to them thanks to that.

Yes, I would hope so! In my program, I am on dissertation committees for students in English, and then French and Italian literature, and communications, political science, as well as sociology. That is very common in the US, though I suppose more unusual in Europe. So when we think of teaching, we think of these doctoral students in a variety of fields that might be interested most generally in the connection between social structures and cultural objects, such as literature, art, religion. I gather that at Polish universities sociology students study sociology in a sociology department and it's less routinely interdisciplinary.

Almost all my teaching is with doctoral students, I teach very little at the undergraduate level. One of the things that I tell my students is: get involved in any kind of editorial work. If there is a journal or an organized blog or whatever, get involved. I think students – and all of us – can learn a tremendous amount from that type of activity and sometimes this is not obvious to students. They are probably well aware that you should present you work at conferences, but I also think writing book reviews is a terrific thing to do, or reviewing for journals, or getting on editorial boards. Sometimes there is a prize for, say, student writing – getting on a committee that awards such prizes is truly useful professional training. This is not just about cultural sociologists, though it may be a little more for them than for other sociologists, because we tend to be more qualitative than quantitative and more on the side of working with words.

Getting back to the sociology of literature: in the late 1980s you co-edited a book about that field. And in the early 1990s, you wrote a paper on its state.[7] How do you think sociology of literature may have changed since that time?

One of the things that have happened is big data. What used to be called content analysis twenty or thirty years ago has now become big data. Sometimes it is topic modelling, sometimes it's network analysis, sometimes it's the sort of thing that Franco Moretti does… You know, these big digitized datasets and the Google matrix, and so forth. I think that is the big change, the big thing that has happened in what we can call the sociology of literature (even though the category "sociology of literature" itself is not really prominent).

And that worries me a little, because it is a case of the methods being so attractive that they can determine the questions we ask. Some questions are not amenable to that type of research, so it is a little bit of a concern that these rather glamorous new methods may have the surprising effect of narrowing the field of inquiry.

In Poland there has been no real development of this kind, at least so far. For instance, we do not read Franco Moretti, although there has been a translation of one of his works in Second Texts.[8] There is some work in the field of digital humanities, and there is a tradition of stylometry, but neither has ever been a defining part of the academic field. So perhaps it is all still in front of us.

It may come! And I guess what I am saying I would say more generally with digital humanities. In the US, there is a lot of money available for work in this area, it is very glamorous. And there are many questions that can be appropriately addressed with big data, and making things available through digitization has been a wonderful thing – that type of project, I am all for! But I think the humanities as a whole need to be wary of posing questions because of the available methods; that's not the right way to come up with research questions. So that is my concern.

Would you agree with James F. English that the very term "sociology of literature" has been muted over the last quarter century?

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7   *Literature and Social Practice*, ed. Philippe Desan, Priscilla P. Ferguson and Wendy Griswold (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Wendy Griswold, "Recent Moves in the Sociology of Literature," *Annual Review of Sociology* 19 (1993).

8   Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," *Distant Reading* (London – New York: Verso, 2013).

I do not think it was ever real big to begin with, to tell you the truth! There were a few of us who happened to be sociologists and happened to be working on literature, and we continued using what I guess was originally a Marxian term that was associated with György Lukács and people like him. But I do not think that, since the early 1970s, that was ever a very major term. And it is not now! But it does capture an approach in which you're looking at literature (or type of literature: Norwegian novels, Renaissance plays, etc.) as a particular cultural object and you are thinking like a sociologist. And I guess I mean two things by that.

The first thing is that you are looking at sociological variables and influences. That was what the Marxists did – Lucien Goldmann, Lukács, and the people in the 1960s and 1970s. They were looking at class influence and so forth.

But the other thing, the one I would emphasize more, is that you are putting together data in a systematic way. And you are setting up comparisons and hypotheses: if I am right, then I expect to see this, and if we see this pattern, then we can interpret it as this. It is some sort of a balance between an interpretive sociology and one that is related more to the scientific method and more, I say, systematic. My methods article[9] and my whole way of thinking is very much an attempt to combine these two: the systematic data analysis of the sciences and the interpretive, meaning-centric approach of the humanities. In a sense, the sociology of literature thought of broadly is that impulse: to think sociologically and systematically, but about objects that are conceived of as carrying meaning, as capable of being interpreted by human agents.

In other words, what sociology of literature is about – or one of the things it is about – is research designed with a specific kind of cultural object in mind.

Yes, at least in my view. And again, some methods do not allow for that. This is a sort of caricature, but if you are mindlessly combing through piles of data or throwing stuff into a network machine to see what comes out, that can give you information but it does not allow for much by way of interpretation or understanding, meaning construction at group levels or individual levels, etc. This would be missing a part of what's interesting to me about culture, about cultural works, and literary works in particular.

By the way, I always say there is a difference between cultural sociology and cultural studies. Cultural sociology should be systematic. You should have

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9   Wendy Griswold, "A Methodological Framework for the Sociology of Culture," *Sociological Methodology* 17 (1987).

a clear research question and a clear set of data, clear definitions, and a hypothesis: if I am right, I expect to see this, and if I am wrong, I won't see that, and what will that mean, and that kind of thing. On the other hand, cultural studies is more theoretically driven, more purely interpretative: powerful theory that is illustrated by some cultural materials. I do think it is an important distinction and since my students are doing cultural sociology, I very much try to encourage them to be systematic about it.

I have been able to locate an early version of your article on cultural geography as a method. This paper may have the strongest methodological component in your articles over the last several years. Has it actually been published?

No, we have not gotten very far with that. I was doing that with a student and then she went off to do a post-doc. We presented the work at one of the events of the American Sociological Association; we might get back to it in the future. I suppose my own research interests then got on the development of place, which is a geographic issue but is not about developing the techniques of mapping the way we had envisioned in that paper.

I suppose everybody has on their desk or in their mind things that are still half-baked, research projects that have not come to a conclusion. Sometimes they never do. I had a wonderful one years ago that we also presented at the ASA, looking at place images on state quarters, and what states adopted which images.

Those two examples, I think, are both great research projects I did with graduate students that have not reached a final stage. Perhaps they never will, and perhaps they will. But I would say to students: "That's good." I actually say it to graduate students all the time. They have their dissertation projects and they have to carry that through, but I think it is good to have a lot of research projects going on all at once. They may not all come to fruition but – this is a Harrison White thing – a lot of things are happening in a lively mind.

When I was in graduate school, I did a piece of research on the impact of the copyright law on the American novel.[10] It had nothing to do with my dissertation, it had nothing to do with any requirements that I had, it was just something I got interested in. And I published it in the *American Journal of Sociology*, it was my first article, and it is probably the reason that I got my job [as an assistant professor at the University of Chicago]. But it was

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10   Wendy Griswold, "American Character and the American Novel: An Expansion of Reflection Theory in the Sociology of Literature," *American Journal of Sociology* 4 (1981).

a study that was off to the side, off my primary focus on Renaissance theater. A second piece of research, which got stalled, was the work that I was doing on a West Indian writer George Lamming. I did that for the first couple of years at graduate school, then didn't do it for my dissertation, it sat unfinished and ten years later I dusted it off, finished it and published it as an article in 1987.

That has been my way and I think that is a good thing. We have a lot of interests, we have a lot of curiosity, so I think it is a good thing to have – even at the student stage, which was certainly my case – several research projects going. One of them will be your dissertation but others will be something else. Maybe they will get published sooner, maybe they will get published later, maybe they'll never get published but they will be intellectually stimulating and influence other work.

So, do not allow yourself to get monopolized by your dissertation topic?

Yes, though probably some professors would shudder to hear that advice. And it goes back to what we've said already: it depends on the individual, depends on the personality. But you know, you work on a dissertation for a few years, and there's a lot of interesting stuff going on in the world aside from what you're working on in your dissertation. Some of it you may want to pursue, collect some data and do a little writing, do a talk at a conference or sketch out an article, work with somebody else, you know, have a lot of balls in the air at once. I think that's one of the pleasures of intellectual life.

Both in Renaissance Revivals and in the aforementioned methodological article, you included some guidelines for cultural sociologists. Do those early formulations still stand?

I am sort of embarrassed to say, yes, they do! Particularly the article. I believe in that approach, I try to do so in my own research. Looking at agents as both producers and receivers, looking at their social locations, looking at the intellectual history, and looking at the social context… With the Nigerian book, for example, I try very much to do that.

In my advanced seminar on methods of cultural analysis, I start with that article and I organize the seminar on that article. And as the years go by, I get a little embarrassed – gee, I really ought to have updated this – but it's what I believe in, I believe it's a fruitful way to understand the interaction between cultural objects and humans as social actors. So I have not changed a lot in that respect. I still try to carry out studies this way, especially in more elaborate, longer pieces of research.

That methodological article also touches on the current concerns of cultural sociology. I am thinking about the work of Jeffrey C. Alexander and Philip Smith, and about the so-called cultural turn of the last decade or so. There are some new controversies concerning the relationship between the social and the cultural. Would you be able to address these controversies briefly? Perhaps you might suggest how your cultural diamond heuristic may be useful in addressing them?

I am afraid I am going to disappoint you because I have to say I do not get terribly interested in that type of debate. In the first place, cultural sociology came into its own in the early 1980s. And it came on its own in large part because of this generation that you have already referred to, that of Paul Di-Maggio and Ann Swidler, and myself, and Richard Peterson. Peterson's work was earlier, but it was then that his production of culture thinking was applied to a broader set of concerns. There was also Howard Becker and his book *Art Worlds*.[11] And the American Sociological Association's section on sociology of culture was formed in the early 1980s and it grew very quickly. So the idea that this is something that happened in the last ten years… I think it is just wrong.

What has happened in the last ten years – and this is to Jeffrey Alexander's credit, but it is also a little bit of a distortion – is that he and his colleagues at Yale have been very concerned with putting together what they called a strong program in cultural sociology. In their enthusiasm for doing that, there has been a certain forgetting of what happened in the 1980s and 1990s. It is as though you're announcing a new thing, but something similar was going on for a long time.

And the debates, subject–object and others… Your chair [Prof. Elżbieta Hałas] writes about Florian Znaniecki and he was writing about some of the same issues: the ideal, the material, and all this. These debates have been around a long, long time. We sometimes think that the current situation of some of these issues is new when it's just a new vocabulary to old, very profound questions that are not going to get answered definitively one way or another.

So I am not terribly interested in some of these debates today. I am more interested in more substantive questions; in looking at certain cultural things and seeing how they work rather than in theoretical debates.

I am reminded of this "explosion of cultural studies in sociology" that you mentioned in the preface to the third edition of your handbook. So, amid

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11   Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley – Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982).

the fire and smoke of the explosion, we may lose sight of what's been there even before the ignition?

Yes, I think the ground was kind of cleared in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Again, let me take two towering figures in American sociology, Richard Peterson and Howard Becker. Becker was doing interactionism and social psychology, Peterson was doing industrial sociology and systems. And in the late 1970s and early 1980s people from both schools realized these were not incompatible. To get the full picture, you need to understand the nuts and bolts of production and how things work through the system the way Peterson and his people talked about. And you need to understand how a system creates itself in the sort of art worlds in the phenomenological sense that Becker talked about. And once the previous fights about the Marxists on the one side and the structural functionalists on the other died down, there was the sort of recognition that people who were interested in vehicles of meaning – whether it be popular culture, art, or religion, or whatever – were involved in the same type of enterprise. It was just natural that these things came together and then took institutional form in the ASA section.

Once that happened, it became quite legitimate for a student to say: "I am studying sociology of culture." When I was in graduate school, there was not even a term for that. It would not have meant anything. But by the 1980s and even more into the 1990s this became legitimate; the section grew, there were a lot of people interested. I do not know about "explosion," that may be overdramatic, but I think the growth started from this period and in the early mid-1990s it was quite natural and quite dramatic. I think that now the cultural section is the second or third largest section in the ASA. And this growth has taken place over thirty years, so it did not all spring up overnight.

A short while ago you mentioned the name of Znaniecki. Your lecture tomorrow[12] will be taking place as part of the Florian Znaniecki Colloqium.

Yes, I was charmed by that.

Do you think that there is some aspect of what Znaniecki worked on that might be of particular interest to cultural sociologists today?

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12   The interview took place on the eve of Professor Griswold's lecture, "The Future of Reading in the Digital Age," which was organized at the Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw, on March 3, 2015.

Well, I have to say that my knowledge of his work is extremely limited, and so anything I say you should take with a grain of salt. But two things. One, I am probably typical of most American sociologists that know his work almost exclusively through *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, the study with William I. Thomas. And because I had the first half of my career at the University of Chicago, that was especially the case. Part of what that book did for American sociology was introduce new methods (the use of life histories, or the use of letters and documents) as a way of trying to construct the life-worlds and the interpretive apparatus of… the Polish peasant in Europe and America! I think it was tremendously important methodologically and in its way of combining empirical and theoretical work, and in not being driven by a narrow view of science where you have to count things or you have to do a statistical analysis. There is some uncertainty, how much was Thomas, how much Znaniecki, who knows, but the work itself was very, very important.

Then the second thing which I know much less about: in my mind, I associate Znaniecki's understanding of culture with Weber's writings on Verstehen and other things. In this approach, interpretation is not an ornament to social action, you can not understand the latter without understanding people's interpretation of their situations. That does not mean subjectivism, that does not mean it is all in the mind, there is a real world out there, but it is being mediated through the mind, then the mind acts back on the real world. I think that was both Znaniecki's and Weber's way of thinking and that would certainly be a way of thinking that I agree with. You can get rid of these dualisms about "material life is always the causal actor vs. ideal life in the mind is always the causal actor." You can just understand that the social reality is an interplay between the mind and the physical or material world. I think that is very useful, very important for cultural sociology.

I would repeat, however, that most American sociologists are much less familiar with the theoretical side of Znaniecki's writings, and I admit that I am, too. Most American sociologists would primarily know his work through his study with Thomas.

Of course, Professor Hałas is the expert on that and I have read one of her articles, introducing things that I have not heard of, the humanistic coefficient and things from his writing that seem extremely useful. But I only know them through her article, and so I have a very superficial understanding of his theoretical work. Still, I think – and this gets a little bit to what I said earlier about myself not being terribly attracted to debates that stay on the strictly theoretical level – that when you do something like the multi-volume work on the Polish immigrant experience, that lasts. Nobody is going to describe that in the depth that Thomas and Znaniecki did. And so something like that

is really for the ages, whereas if you read a debate over theory from long ago, it's either been absorbed in this year's version of that old debate, which may well go back to Plato, or it seems very old and dusty and nobody worries about that stuff anymore. Something of the empirical solidity of *The Polish Peasant*, that is going to be on the library shelves (or on the digital library shelves!) two hundred years from now.

We talked earlier about personality. I probably have a rather unsophisticated view of the critical nature of theoretical debates because they do not interest me a whole lot and I would much rather get down to the substantive.

I believe the empirical thrust is apparent in your works from the very start. And after that methodological article from 1987 and perhaps the review articles on the sociology of culture[13] and the sociology of literature, I think most of your studies have had a very clear empirical component.

In fact, I do not want to be – and I am going to sound semi-humorous, but I am actually serious here – one of the people who do major empirical studies early in their careers, and then spend the rest of their careers pontificating on theories and on how to do things, and on what the current state of debate is. In a sense they're not doing real research anymore. And I have always had a horror of that. I think that as long as you are in academia you should be doing real research and not just glossing over. And a lot of senior people getting late in their career, as I am, spend an awful lot of time doing these vision pieces and so forth. I consider that a waste of brain cells. I think if you are still able to do real research where you can actually come up with some new knowledge, new understanding of how the world works… That is what I want to be doing.

I am wondering if that might not also be related to the scholars' personalities.

It could well be. But I always find it a little bit embarrassing when you look at the vita of the senior person and all of the actual research has come fairly early on, and then it is mostly overviews… And I did some of that myself, as you pointed out, I did that in *The Four Good Reasons (and One Bad One)*, or even in the cultural sociology textbook. But I would not want to shift from a research focus to doing only or mostly that. To me, that is just pontificating, I would not want to do it.

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13   Wendy Griswold, "The Sociology of Culture: Four Good Arguments (and One Bad One)," *Acta Sociologica* 35 (1992).

We have not yet talked about what is probably the major focus of your research right now. What do you consider to be the most important tenets of your work on reading?

Well, of course I have always been interested in reading as a practice that involves people and cultural objects. Right now we have a paper coming out in *Poetics* on the One Book programs and how they select the books that readers will read. These programs are very popular in America. For instance, if you have a program "One Book, One Chicago," there will be a book that everybody in Chicago is encouraged to read, and there will be a lot of activity around that book. And that particular paper shows that the people who select books for One Book programs are not just responding to elite tastes – you know, what gets reviewed in *The New York Times* – but they are also not just responding to popular tastes. They are not going to choose *Fifty Shades of Grey*. So they are not cultural intermediaries – neither the top nor the bottom is telling them what to do; they're actually quite independent. And in doing what they do, they tend to be very diverse. You will have libraries in states that are largely white that will be selecting books by African Americans, books by Hispanics, this sort of things.

So those people are diverse, they are cosmopolitan in their orientation. But they are also really devoted to the literature of place. They believe that if you're in Montana, you will be particularly interested in Montana writers, and so they will often include those. That is one of the mechanisms for reproducing place. Then the readers associated with these programs are people who have some commitment to reading collectively and to meeting and interpreting what they have read in group settings. Taken together, all this is an example of the kind of processes that interest me a lot.

Another thing is the question that is just of ongoing subjective curiosity to me: the difference that the digital revolution is going to make for reading. Is print out the window? Do people no longer read? Do people read as much as they ever did but on their phones? What is actually going on there? I have been asking these types of questions in focus groups in about a dozen different countries at this point,[14] and of course so many things are changing, the digital world keeps changing, the availability of both print and digital materials keeps changing, and so on. I am just very curious to keep tabs on the degree to which reading is or is not changing in the twenty-first century. So that is the ongoing research question that has to be provisionally answered on an ongoing basis, and it's very context-specific.

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14   One focus study led by Professor Griswold was organized in Warsaw on March 2, 2015.

And the last thing I would say about reading is actually my secondary interest right now. I have a book that I just finished that I consider a follow-up to *Regionalism and the Reading Class*, but it is a very American studies type of book. It is about the Federal Writers' Project in the US which was a New Deal program in the 1930s to employ writers. What those writers did was write travel guides, which had a strong cultural influence. This is related to the general question of the relationship between books and place, and the construction of place. I finished the book, I will send it till the end of the summer to the University of Chicago Press. I have just got back the suggestions for revisions, so I got to get that done before they publish it. I think of it as a secondary thing, but this illustrates what I said before: in my view, you should always have a lot of research interests going on!

And there is yet another thing that has nothing to do with literature. It is about looking at images and representations of Saint Jerome and the relationships between the human and the non-human in those representations. So, you know, very different research interests and I am excited about all of them!

Explorations of the Book Market

Paweł Zajas

An Ethnography of the Production of Translation: Literatures from the (Semi) Periphery on the German Publishing Market

1.

In the macrostructure of the global literary translation market, the German language plays a central, dominant role. A decisive factor in this respect is language's role as a vehicular medium between semi-peripheral and peripheral languages.[1] The Frankfurt Book Fair continues to figure among the most important cyclical industry events, while a translation into German paves the way for authors from smaller national literatures to achieve recognition on the global market and stimulates further translations into other languages. Since the Second World War, the proportion of translated literature in the German publishing market has ranged from 8 to 13 percent of all publications. According to data from 2008, two-thirds (66.9 percent) of the 7 342 translations published in Germany were from English, 11.5 percent were from French, 2.9 percent from Italian, 2.6 percent from Spanish, 2.3 percent from Dutch, 2 percent

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1 Johan Heilbron, "Towards a Sociology of Translation. Book Translations as Cultural World-System," *European Journal of Social Theory* 2(4) (1999): 434, 435. This article came about thanks to research stipends (Suhrkamp-Stipendium and Fellowship Marbach-Weimar-Wolffenbüttel) awarded by the German Literature Archive (Deutsches Literaturarchiv) in Marbach am Neckar.

from Swedish, 1.8 percent from Russian, 1.4 percent from Japanese, and 1.2 percent from Turkish. Between 0.5 and 1 percent of all the published translations were originally written in Norwegian, Finnish, Polish, Modern Hebrew and Danish.[2] Confining the statistics to fiction does not present a significantly different picture. Over half of all such publications (58.1 percent) are translations from English, 10 percent from French, 3.9 percent from Spanish, 3 percent from Swedish, 2.9 percent from Italian, and 2.4 percent from Dutch.[3]

In an attempt to take a closer look at this asymmetrical cultural exchange, which the Dutch sociologist Johan Heilbron calls a "core-periphery structure,"[4] in this essay I will analyse the contemporary transfer of (semi-) peripheral European literatures into German using the example of Dutch literature, while referring to the status of Polish literature in Germany. The scope of the research material was dictated not so much by the "neighbourly orientation" of these smaller literatures towards the larger supranational language as by the striking disproportion in their transfer. While data shows that literature from the Netherlands and the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium accounts for over 2 percent of all translations into German on the market, translations of Polish literature do not exceed beyond 0.6 percent.[5] We also get a certain idea of the position of both literatures in the "global culture system"[6] by looking at the Index Translationum – World Bibliography of Translation, founded by the League of Nations in 1932 and maintained under the auspices of UNESCO. Although the data it contains are only indicative, one should note that Dutch is ranked 11th on the list of original languages, whereas Polish is ranked 14th (behind Czech).[7]

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2   Norbert Bachleitner and Michaela Wolf, "Einleitung: Zur soziologischen Erforschung der literarischen *Übersetzung* im deutschsprachigen Raum," in *Streifzüge im translatorischen Feld. Zur Soziologie der literarischen Übersetzung im deutschsprachigen Raum*, ed. Norbert Bachleitner and Michaela Wolf (Wien: Lit Verlag, 2010), 15-16.

3   Ibid., 16.

4   Johan Heilbron, "Translation as a Cultural World System," *Perspectives. Studies in Translatology* 8(1) (2000): 12.

5   Slávka Rude-Porubská, "Who Chooses Literature for Translation? Translation Subsidies in Germany," *Primerjalna književnost* 33(2) (2010): 284.

6   Abram de Swaan, *Zorg en de staat* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1989), 68-89; Abram de Swaan, "The Emergent Global Language System," *International Political Science Review* 14(3) (1993): 219-226.

7   *Index Translationum. Top 50: Original Languages*, accessed October 17, 2016, http://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsstatexp.aspx?crit1L=3&nTyp=min&topN=50

Heilbron notes that the distribution of literary translations can be presented as a four-level structure. The original medium for over half of all translations is English, giving it a hyper-central position in the asymmetrical global cultural exchange system. The next two languages, German and French, occupy a central position, with each of them sharing approximately 10 percent of the global translation market. The group of around eight languages with between 1 and 3 percent of the literary transfer are called semi-peripheral, with the remaining languages occupying a peripheral position. These include Chinese, Arabic and Japanese, demonstrating that the number of native users of a given language is not a major factor in determining how central or peripheral it is in the "international translation economy."[8] We can thus describe the proportion of Dutch and Polish literature in the German language as semi-peripheral and peripheral respectively.

The presented empirical data comes from the publishing archive of Suhrkamp Verlag in Frankfurt, which in 2009 was bought by the German Literature Archive (Deutsches Literaturarchiv) in Marbach am Neckar. There are two fundamental reasons which make this material valuable. First, Suhrkamp Verlag has played, and continues to play, an important role in introducing both Dutch and Polish literature into Germany. Interestingly, the case of Polish literature often figures in internal correspondences as a point of reference for discussions on presenting Dutch literature and, *pars pro toto*, other smaller national literatures on the German publishing market. Dutch and Flemish authors occasionally appeared at Suhrkamp even in the 1950s (e.g. Paul van Ostaijen and Antoon Coolen), although over the next two decades only 12 titles appeared (including those by Jacques Hamelink, Ivo Michiels, Paul de Wispelaere, Lodewijk de Boer, Lucebert and Felix Timmermans). The next dozen publications came in the second half of the 1980s, when the publishing programme included such authors as Thomas Rosenboom, Renate Rubinstein and Cees Nooteboom, who even today is a "flagship" author for Suhrkamp.[9] Their first foray into Polish literature came only in 1962, at a time when the

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8   Johan Heilbron, *Structure and Dynamic of the World System of Translation*, UNESCO International Symposium "Translation and Cultural Mediation," February 22-23, 2010, 2, accessed March 19, 2014, http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/40619/12684038723Heilbron.pdf/Heilbron.pdf

9   Data on the basis of *Die Bibliographie des Suhrkamp Verlages 1950-2000*, ed. Wolfgang Jeske (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2002), and internal materials of the publishing house prepared for Siegfried Unseld in April 1992 ("Niederländische Literatur im Suhrkamp und Insel Verlag," April 27, 1992, Suhrkamp-Archiv, hereafter: SUA; Allgemeine Korrespondenz. Stiftung für die Produktion und Übersetzung Niederländischer Literatur, Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar, hereafter DLA).

larger West German publishing houses already had significant translations from Polish to their names. The Frankfurt-based publisher's most important authors certainly include Zbigniew Herbert and Stanisław Lem. Many Polish authors appeared in the series "edition suhrkamp," founded in 1963, including Jerzy Andrzejewski, Wiesław Brudziński, Henryk Grynberg, Hanna Krall, Marek Nowakowski, and Zofia Romanowiczowa. The "Bibliothek Suhrkamp" series, established in 1951 and mostly publishing 20th-century "classics," included translations of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Jan Józef Szczepański, Leszek Kołakowski, Czesław Miłosz and Wisława Szymborska. The "suhrkamp taschenbücher" series, meanwhile, showcased Polish fantasy literature of Jerzy Żuławski, Stefan Grabiński and Stanisław Lem, as well as the works of Julian Tuwim, Roman Bratny and Władysław Terlecki. Suhrkamp's best-known project popularising Polish literature in Germany was "Polnische Bibliothek" ("Polish Library" – 1982-2000), initiated by the German Institute of Polish Studies in Darmstadt and funded by the Robert Bosch Foundation. The series' 50 volumes presented to German readers the most important works of Polish writers and volumes devoted to specific periods of Polish literature, from the Middle Ages to modern times.

Secondly, by studying the publishing house's archive in its original state (before it was converted into a literary archive, with the organizational structure and access to correspondences inherent in the latter type of documentation),[10] it is possible to reconstruct the logic and structure of the communication and decision-making processes initiated (or imposed) by individual actors of the publishing sphere. The availability of data from the Suhrkamp archive provides an insight into the "manufacture of the translation"[11] of Dutch and Polish literature, and in a broader methodological perspective offers unique laboratory conditions for researching the microsociology of literary transfer. We can thus track the processes of choosing,

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10   The data analysed in this article was acquired during research stays at the German Literature Archive in Marbach am Neckar in February and July/August 2013. The publishing documents that form the core of the analysis concerning Dutch authors at Suhrkamp Verlag and the publishing notes on Polish authors were found at the place of their "production" by individual actors of the literary sphere (publisher, editors, financial department etc.). A "disordered" archive presents the researcher with the obvious intuitive problem of finding the material of interest, but it does have the undoubted virtue of permitting the precise recreation of the dynamic of literary transfer. Work in a "raw" archive is impossible without the kind and expert help of archivists. At this point I would like to thank Anna Kinder, who supervises research on the Suhrkamp Archives, as well as Claudia Gratz, Iris Hoffmann, Elza Weber and Martina Stecker.

11   Hélène Buzelin, "Translations «in the Making»," in *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, ed. Michaela Wolf and Alexandra Fukari (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub. Co., 2007), 141.

reviewing, confirming/rejecting and promoting aesthetic products within a relatively small team.

I am now getting closer to the key question in this essay: which specific factors of the publishing realm led to the relatively prominent position of Dutch literature in the German book market in the mid-1980s, whereas Polish literature was relegated to a peripheral position with less than half the number of translations? The presented material largely concerns Dutch literature, owing to the current state of my research. Polish literature mainly appears in those places where archival documents indicate points of contact within a specific, collective decision-making process (e.g. correspondence of the publisher and individual editors). The reconstruction of the decision-making processes concerning translations of Dutch and (to a more limited extent) Polish literature spans a period from the early 1960s to 1993, when the Netherlands and Flanders were guests of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Without a doubt, this event acted as a catalyst as Suhrkamp alone published over 138 translations from the Dutch between 1993 and 2014.[12]

Notwithstanding the undoubted importance of this turning point, I think that it is worth looking at the decisions that preceded it within the publishing house and accompanied the processes of producing translations. Based on the data I have gathered, I pose the following research questions: 1) which socio-aesthetic strategies and practices influence the dissemination of (semi-) peripheral national literatures in the German literary industry, and 2) how do these discussions and processes develop at large, prestigious publishing houses, and finally 3) which actors, elements and circumstances play a decisive role here?

2.

This framing of the research problem highlights the gap between the methodological postulates of the sociology of translation and actual research practice. Although there have been many voices highlighting the need to investigate research on literary translation from the perspective of the actors involved – including Daniel Simeoni, Johan Heilbron, Gisèle Sapiro and Andrew Chesterman[13] – analyses of the archives of publishing houses have

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12   Data on the basis of the Dutch Foundation for Literature (Nederlands Letterenfonds) databases, accessed May 11, 2014, http://www.letterenfonds.nl/vertalingendb/zoek.php

13   Andrew Chesterman, "Bridge Concepts in Translation Sociology," in *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, 171-183; Gisèle Sapiro, "Editorial Policy and Translation," in *Handbook of Translation Studies*, vol. 3, ed. Yves Gambier, Luc van Doorslaer and John Benjamins (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub. Co., 2012), 32; Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro, "Outline for a Sociology of Translation. Current Issues and Future Prospects," in *Constructing a Sociol-*

been rare. Empirical studies done on the production process of translation are restricted above all by its "private status," which generally makes it impossible to access data.[14]

The few existing studies on publishing data illustrate how little we know of the production process of translation in a commercial publishing house, from the selection of texts and copyright negotiations to the marketing of the final product. An interesting aspect of these studies is the analytical perspective chosen by their authors, which provides insights into practices to which researchers have previously paid little attention, instead using ready-made traditional categories. Hélène Buzelin proposes a kind of "thick description" of the decision-making processes in publishing houses, and was the first researcher to suggest applying Bruno Latour's ethnomethodology to translation research. For a long time, Latour's pioneering ethnographic insight into the practice of knowledge production and the processes of technical and scientific innovations which he described as "science in action"[15] failed to provide inspiration for the sociology of translation. This is all the more surprising as the term "translation," understood as "a relation that does not transport causality, but induces two mediators into coexisting,"[16] compromises in a way the core of actor-network theory (ANT). Buzelin believes that the potential of ANT may be helpful in taking another step in the direction which Bourdieu and his followers propose within translation studies. Latour offers a perspective whereby the sociology of translation can be directed towards a process-oriented approach and reconfiguration of research analysing translation production. This in turn might make it possible to more accurately identify the mediators involved, as well as opening up to analysis new areas of action that may affect or be decisive in the publication of a translation.[17]

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ogy of Translation, 93-107; Daniel Simeoni, "Translating and Studying Translation: The View from the Agent," *Meta* 40(3) (1995): 445-460.

14   Buzelin, "Translations «in the Making»," 142. In her book on the reception of Polish literature in the Federal Republic of Germany, Hedwig Nosbers also examines the question of the complete lack of access to data from publishers' archives, which are treated as "confidential material," as well as the reluctance of publishers and editors to cooperate. Hedwig Nosbers, *Polnische Literatur in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945/1949 bis 1990. Buchwissenschaftliche Aspekte* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 9.

15   Bruno Latour, *Science in Action. How to Follow Scientists and Engineers Through Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1987.

16   Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 108.

17   Hélène Buzelin, "Unexpected Allies: How Latour's Network Theory Could Complement Bourdieusian Analysis in Translation Studies," *The Translator* 11 (2005): 215.

ANT, as used in translation research, seems not so much to be a specific analytical model as it is a way of thinking about the decision-making mechanisms within the structure of a given publishing house. The basis of this view is a kind of cognitive agnosticism which requires a departure from the intuitive explanatory macro-models also inherent in studies on the reception of Dutch literature in the German-language area.[18] Owing to the lack of data on the core of the *Literaturbetrieb*, that is on the selection mechanisms and production of literature by specific publishers, the available monographs focus on published titles and c o m p l e t e d initiatives of cultural intermediaries, meaning that they do not go beyond – if I may use a rather obvious metaphor – the tip of the iceberg, below which reveals the invisible processes of translation production. In this essay I argue for the "sociology of associations"[19] in research on the production of translations, yet do not deny the agency of such elements as the "market," "political context," and "cultural policy," while stressing the need for carefully tracing the connections between individual actors and avoiding limiting their scope and heterogeneity. The departure from reductionism typical of ANT, which reduces complex phenomena to a simple model of cause and effect, will work well in an analysis of empirical data acquired during the analysis of a publisher's archive. The available literature on the subject employs a convenient interpretive shortcut according to which "changes in the book market," "the principal orientation of the German-language literary landscape abroad," "regained trust,"[20] or socio-political transformations either lead to a growth or decrease in interest in a given literature, accounting for the fluctuations in Dutch-German and Polish-German literary transfer. I would argue that this should be replaced with a time-consuming and labour-intensive path "into the deep," using archival materials to test individual connections between actors.

3.

My ethnographic perspective on the analysis of associations between individual actors in the publishing field requires at least an abbreviated explanation of the structure of the archive in question. Owing to the organization

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18   Key works in this area are Herbert Van Uffelen's book *Moderne niederländische Literatur im deutschen Sprachraum 1830-1990* (Münster: Zentrum für Niederlande-Studien, 1993), and Hedwig Nosbers' study *Polnische Literatur*.

19   Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 13.

20   Van Uffelen, *Moderne niederländische Literatur,* 430, 443, 446.

I observed during my 2013 research stay, I can reconstruct the decision-making levels, and thus recreate the logic of individual actors' actions. The Siegfried Unseld Archive (SUA) acquired by the German Literature Archive in 2009 spans the period between 1945 and 2002. It was comprised of materials from four publishing houses – Suhrkamp Verlag, Insel Verlag, Jüdischer Verlag and Deutscher Klassiker Verlag – and divided into 11 departments: 1) publishing house management, 2) administration and personnel, 3) editorship, 4) production, 5) distribution, 6) advertising, 7) the press, 8) copyright and licences, 9) marketing, 10) readings, 11) accounting and finances. The SUA also contained the archive of the publishing house's founder, Peter Suhrkamp, from his split from S. Fischer Verlag until his death and Siegfried Unseld's acquisition of the house in 1959.

In the first phase of research on translation production from Dutch and Polish literature, I analysed the correspondences of the publishing house's management and editorial department. Particularly significant for understanding the decisions made by the publishers, from the managerial correspondences, are the "Notes" [*Notizen*] and "Siegfried Unseld's Travel Reports" [*Reiseberichte Dr. Siegfried Unselds*]. The "Notes" constitute a kind of index of the publishing house's annual correspondences in the form of brief notices for the publisher or composed by him personally; they give an idea of the titles, authors and events which the management viewed as important. The "Travel Reports," meanwhile, were lengthy circulars which all editors were required to confirm they had read by signing them. These documents clearly framed the publisher's expectations towards the editorial department. Apart from "Notes" and "Travel Reports," the managerial correspondences also include the so-called "General Correspondence" [*allegemeine Korrespondenz*] and "Authors' Volume" [*Autorenkonvolute*]. The former contains the publisher's correspondence and correspondence c o n v e y e d to the publisher between staff and writers, translators, journalists, critics, booksellers, agents etc. The "Authors' Volume" contains the publisher's letters and s e l e c t e d correspondences of the staff with certain authors whom the publishing house considered important. We must bear this s e l e c t i v e nature of the data in mind later when analysing it. The most important source of knowledge on translation production is "Editorial correspondence," which encompasses not only authors, but also translators, publishers, literary agents, private intermediaries and external consultants.

Having established all this, let us now look at the empirical data. In the 1960s, selection of texts from Dutch literature took place in two relatively autonomous editorial teams. The first was headed by Karl Markus Michel and Walter Böhlich, while in the second department the editor of "edition suhrkamp," Günther Busch, made decisions entirely independently. In 1964

Michel was corresponding with a certain Judith Polak[21] – an exchange that the publisher himself, Siegfried Unseld, had begun three years previously. In total, Polak reviewed three novels by the Flemish prose writer, playwright and poet Hugo Claus for Suhrkamp: *De koele minaar* (1956, *The Cool Lover*), *De hondsdagen* (1952, *Dog Days*) and *De verwondering* (1962, *The Surprise*). Although in this period Claus commanded an unquestioned position not only in the Flemish and Dutch literary system, but in the international one too (thirteen translations by 1964), Polak delivered a negative verdict on the first of these novels on account of its "lack of a sense of humour and of the grotesque, two characteristics of contemporary Dutch [sic] literature."[22] She regarded the second book as "incomparably better," while *De verwondering* for her was distinguished by Faulkneresque features, "well-written, interesting and gripping."[23] The correspondence with Judith Polak therefore visibly comes from the publisher's individual initiative (supported by the editor), yet this, probably partly due to the decidedly amateurish character of the reviews, did not lead to any decisions to publish.

Between 1960 and 1970, Suhrkamp maintained contact with the Foundation for the Support of Dutch Literature Translations (Stichting ter Bevordering van de Vertaling van Nederlands Letterkundig Werk), founded in 1954 in the Netherlands, and also backed by the Belgian government from 1960. Although the Foundation's activity until it was closed in 1989 was the first attempt at the professionalization and institutionalization of Dutch and Flemish cultural policy in the field of literature, it is viewed extremely negatively in the literature on the subject. The reasons for the failure of Dutch literature to advance notably in the global literature system were put down to limited funds, selection of titles usually dictated by personal preferences, chance relationships and the authors' position in the Dutch literary system (ignoring the characteristics of the target market), as well as poor translation quality.[24]

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21   The only biographical reference to Judith Polak-Siliava that I have managed to find to date is in the Dutch historian Richter Roegholt's book *De stad is een gesprek. Terugblik op mijn leven* [*The City is a Conversation. Memoirs*] (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2003). Roegholt remembers Judith Polak-Siliava as a short-statured Jew who emigrated from Berlin to France after Hitler came to power, before settling in the Netherlands. According to Roegholt, Polak-Siliava was the wife of the Dutch communist Karl Polak and an acquaintance of the well-known Slavicist Karel van het Reve (109-111).

22   Judith Polak to Siegfried Unseld, January 3, 1961, SUA: Suhrkamp/03Lektorate, DLA.

23   Judith Polak to Karl Markus Michel, August 10, 1964; Judith Polak to Siegfried Unseld, July 2, 1964, SUA: Suhrkamp/03Lektorate, DLA.

24   Sandra van Voorst, "'Het goede litteraire werk uit Nederland'. De *Bibliotheca Neerlandica* en het vertaalbeleid van de Stichting voor Vertalingen 1954-1966," *Internationale Neerlandistiek* 1 (2013): 43.

The correspondence between Suhrkamp and the Foundation was initiated by the poet, writer and translator Hans Magnus Enzensberger. The latter planned to include the Flemish poet Paul van Ostaijen in an anthology of international literature he was preparing in early 1960, and a year later proposed a separate German edition of the poet's verse and prose work. Enzensberger's plan was then realised through Karl Markus Michel and Walter Böhlich, who spent the next four years unsuccessfully seeking the copyright (the contract was ultimately finalised in May 1965) and the Dutch edition of van Ostaijen's prose (apparently there were no copies available in the second-hand market, so its purchase only became possible in 1966). The question of copyright and a lack of specialist support from the Foundation also proved to be an obstacle in the planned publication in 1965 of the books of Willem Frederik Hermans, one of the major figures and also the *enfant terrible* of Dutch literature. The Foundation's representatives did meet Suhrkamp editors at the Frankfurt Book Fair (notably Siegfried Unseld himself was not present at these meetings), but substantial support on their part was by default confined to reports submitted in the correspondence on contemporary Dutch-language writers. Their informational value took the form of encyclopaedic enumeration of titles and was similar to the Foundation's English-language promotional brochure *Writing in Holland* published in 1955.[25] Only in 1969 did Suhrkamp first receive translation samples from Foundation staff – the prose of Gerrit Krol, Dick Hillenius and Karel van het Reve. These received negative reviews, however, with the verdict that they did not fit the publishing house's programme.

Whereas editors Karl Markus Michel and Walter Böhlich were part of the publishing house's management, the decision to translate Dutch literature came from the second independent operation headed by Günther Busch, the director of "edition suhrkamp," which Siegfried Unseld called a "publishing house within a publishing house"[26] and established in 1963. Unseld emphasised the series' significance for the reception of Central and Eastern European literature in the German language and in other Western European countries:

> It is to him [Busch] that we owe the gradual opening of the series to theoretical and critical texts and the considerably greater inclination towards East European literature. It is astonishing how fast the "edition"

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25   Joost de Wit to Waltera Böhlich, April 27, 1965, SUA: Suhrkamp/03Lektorate, DLA.

26   Undated note by Siegfried Unseld from 1967, SUA: Suhrkamp/01Korrespondenz der Verlagsleitung. Notizen, DLA. In the next note, Unseld asks for information on the titles of series to which copyright has been acquired, and on those in the process of being translated or produced (May 8, 1967, SUA: Suhrkamp/01Korrespondenz der Verlagsleitung. Notizen, DLA).

has become known also in Eastern Europe. During a visit to Prague I was told more than once that it has opened a window to Europe for East European writers, with Herbert's *Poems* and Hrabal's *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age* both mentioned. Zbigniew Herbert owes his fame and the Vienna Literary Award to his publications in "edition suhrkamp." *Dancing Lessons* has achieved great success; Qualtinger read the text for radio and television, and a record is being prepared. An Italian publishing house has acquired the copyright, now there are publishers in France and England trying to get it. The Dutch [sic] author Ivo Michiels assured me that the form and construction of the series inspired him to write.[27]

Extremely significant for understanding the dynamic of translation production concerning Dutch literature at Suhrkamp is the correspondence of Günther Busch with the translator and disseminator of Dutch-language Belgium literature, Georg Hermanowski, from 1964-1979. Hermanowski (1918-1993) was stationed in Belgium during the Second World War, and after its conclusion, studied Dutch literature at the German studies faculty at the University of Bonn. In the first quarter-century after the war, he was among the most important and most active agents of Flemish-German cultural transfer: by the end of the 1960s he had translated 42 novels by Flemish authors, which represented some 12 percent of the total 355 translations of titles by authors from Flanders and the Netherlands.[28] However, at the same time, Hermanowski's accomplishments come with numerous reservations concerning the ideological character of the transfer he promoted. He apparently distanced himself from the broad conception of "Dutch literature" and advocated a consistent distinction between "Dutch" and "Flemish" literatures. He saw in the latter a "synthesis of the mystical and [practical] affirmation of life," "a call for freedom and self-determination" and "roots in the faith of the fathers."[29] According to Van Uffelen, his "conservative" translation programme outright rejected contemporary Flemish authors such as Hugo Claus, Louis Paul Boon, Hubert Lampo and Marnix Gijsen, whom he called "cynics," "realists of banal reality" and "defeatists."[30]

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27 Ibid.

28 Van Uffelen, *Moderne niederländische Literatur,* 426.

29 Georg Hermanowski, *Die Stimme des schwarzen Löwen. Geschichte des flämischen Romans* (München: Starnberg, 1961), 15.

30 Van Uffelen, *Moderne niederländische Literatur,* 419. See Daniel de Vin, "Hermanowski en Vlaanderen. «Vlaamse» literatuur in Duitse vertaling na de Tweede Wereldoorlog," *Ons Erfdeel* 2 (1979): 197-205.

An analysis of the 15-year-long correspondence between Hermanowski and Günther Busch casts doubt upon this assessment. Hermanowski's public image – that of a one-man office working under the aegis of the "Flemish course," promoting traditional Flemish peasant prose – stands in stark contrast to the figure of Hermanowski as a literary intermediary offering commercial services to one of Germany's major publishing houses. It is notable that at no stage of the correspondence were his occasional negative verdicts on "avant-garde" writers motivated by ethical or ideological concerns; rather his reasons were literary or market-based. The latter factors were decisive for Hermanowski. For example, his critical evaluation of Hugo Claus's novel *Sakrament* (1963) was dictated not by the text's anticlerical overtones, but by its hermetic and excessively "Flemish" nature, which meant that only "initiated" readers would be able to understand his caricatures of different types of people.[31]

While working with Busch, Hermanowski presented 17 lengthy reports mostly concerning Flemish authors, on the basis of which four projects were carried out: publication of the two parts of Ivo Michiels's avant-garde prose cycle, a collection of poems by Paul de Wispelaere and a volume of stories by Dutch poet and prosaist Jacques Hamelink.[32] Several caveats must be taken into account regarding this modest – at least in numerical terms – result. First, Hermanowski was the first professional consultant to the Suhrkamp publishing house for Dutch-language literature. Although the picture of Flemish literature which he painted as "traditional" and "Catholic" is confirmed both in his work as a publicist and his translation, one must also bear the market conditions in mind. Hermanowski estimated the number of readers of traditional Flemish novels at around six thousand. Only up to 1964, as part of the "Flemish course" which he ran, he published 30 volumes, whose average

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31   Georg Hermanowski to Günther Busch, June 20, 1964, SUA: Suhrkamp/03Lektorate, DLA. In the same year Hermanowski gave a positive review of another of Claus's novels, *De verwondering* (1962, The Surprise), suggesting that the National Literature Fund at the Belgian Ministry of Culture might purchase a large number of copies of the book. Notably, Busch commissioned Hermanowski's review two months before Judith Polak's recommendation of the same title. This inconspicuous coincidence is one of many "simultaneous" and independent (and therefore inefficient) traces of actions taken by publishing actors working in the two editorial departments.

32   Ivo Michiels, *Das Buch Alpha*, trans. Georg Hermanowski (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1965); Michiels, *Orchis Militaris*, trans. Hermanowski (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969); Paul de Wispelaere, *So hat es begonnen*, trans. Hermanowski (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1966); Jacques Hamelink, *Horror vacui*, trans. Jürgen Hillner (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1967).

sales exceeded 7000 copies.[33] When acting as a consultant to Suhrkamp, Hermanowski was flexible in adapting to the publishing house's profile, following the characteristics of a particular series in selecting titles as well as their orientation towards avant-garde literature. He would visit the annual Antwerp Book Fair and reserve translation rights, making regular reports on new publications, and his direct contacts with the cultural attaché at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium in Bonn made it possible for the Belgian Ministry of Culture to purchase part of the edition. It was also through Hermanowski that Günther Busch was able to personally contact writer Ivo Michiels. His collaboration with Suhrkamp allowed Michiels to sell the rights to translations of his *Book Alfa* into Polish, Italian, English and the Scandinavian languages; he was also a regular guest at the Frankfurt International Book Fair and worked as a literary consultant himself.[34]

The question therefore remains: why did Hermanowski's decade and a half of collaboration with Busch not translate into success in the market and media for the Dutch-language authors published by Suhrkamp?[35] The answer is complex. The first factor is certainly the position of the editor of the "edition suhrkamp" series – Günther Busch from 1963 to 1979 – who was relatively independent from the decisions of the main publisher. He had a separate budget and did not require management approval to distribute it. But this exceptional autonomy also meant a lack of information flow concerning the selection of manuscripts that did not go beyond the editorial department. The second significant factor was the elitist nature of the series, whose objective was to introduce readers to new literary, philosophical and social phenomena. Although it did not individually present national literatures, we can identify certain preferences on the basis of the available data. During Busch's term, a total of 951 books were published, of which some 616 were theoretical texts. Of the 335 works of fiction a little under 30 percent were translations; 21 from English, 13 from Polish, 12 from French, 11 from Czech, and six apiece from Serbo-Croat and Dutch.

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33   Georg Hermanowski to Günther Busch, October 25, 1964, SUA: Suhrkamp/03Lektorate, DLA.

34   Correspondence between Günther Busch and Ivo Michiels, December 7, 1964 – October 24, 1969, SUA:Suhrkamp/03Lektorate, DLA.

35   In January 1974 both of Ivo Michiels's novels, Paul de Wispelaere's poems and a volume of Paul van Ostaijen's prose called *Grotesken* featured on a list prepared for the publishing house of titles of which more unsold copies were returned to them than the number of copies sold (Siegfried Unseld to Gisela Mörler, January 4, 1974, SUA: Suhrkamp/Korrespondenz der Verlagsleitung. Notizen, DLA).

The relatively privileged position of Polish literature in "edition suhrkamp" was also visible in other series. The reason for this was not just the "Polish wave" on the German publishing market in the 1970s and '80s, but also the "centralised" decision-making process regarding Polish authors. Here a fundamental difference can be observed: while authors from the Netherlands and Flanders appeared almost exclusively at the level of editorial correspondence, all matters concerning Polish literature were dealt with in the correspondences of the managerial department between 1960 and 1985. From March 1962, Siegfried Unseld was in regular contact with Karl Dedecius, who was until 1999 one of Suhrkamp's regular collaborators. From 1965 until 1967, Unseld was advised by Juliusz Stroynowski, whom he had met at the Warsaw Book Fair, and after 1967 he also worked with Klaus Staemmler who, apart from Dedecius, was one of the most active translators of Polish literature. The Slavicist Peter Urban was responsible for editing Polish authors from 1966 to 1968, followed by Werner Berthel, who contributed particularly to the promotion of the writing of Stanisław Lem. Lem himself (whose work with Suhrkamp began in 1971), as well as Zbigniew Herbert (at Suhrkamp from 1963), more than once advised the publisher on specific issues concerning the publication of individual books. Hedwig Nosbers's implication that nobody with a background in Polish studies worked at Suhrkamp and that the publisher only contacted authors in exceptional circumstances, being reliant on translators' suggestions, therefore appears wide of the mark.[36] It is also interesting to note that it was not just editors, translators and writers themselves who acted as intermediaries for Polish literature: the Warsaw-based Authorial Agency mediated in copyright sales too, and there were also private agents active in West Germany (including Wolfgang Thadewald and Ernst W. Geisenheyner).

To conclude this essay it is worth examining the period between 1985 and 1993, when the work of Dutch-language authors gradually became a priority for Suhrkamp, while at the same time Polish literature lost its relatively privileged position. What factors led Suhrkamp client Cees Nooteboom, a writer with a relatively marginal position in his native literary milieu, to become the "face" of Dutch literature in Germany, garnering sales of almost half a million books within a decade of his debut?[37]

In an article published in 1993, Herbert Van Uffelen put the explosion of interest of publishers and readers in Dutch literature down to the so-called "Nooteboom effect":

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36   Nosbers, *Polnische Literatur,* 125.

37   Ulrich Sonnenberg, "Verkaufsübersicht Cees Nooteboom," January 4, 1994, SUA: Suhrkamp/03Lektorate/Rainer Weiss, DLA.

> In the mid-1980s Nooteboom was discovered in the German language area. After his novel *Rituelen* […] received the Ferdinand Bordewijk Prize in 1980, and the International Pegasus Literatuurprijs in 1982, the [East German] publisher Volk und Welt […] issued a German translation of the novel. A year later Suhrkamp published the licensed edition of this translation, before continuing to publish translations of the Dutch author. Between 1985 and 1990, the following appeared: *In Nederland* (*In den niederländischen Bergen*, 1987), *Een lied van schijn en wezen* (*Ein Lied von Schein und Sein*, 1989) and *Mokusei!* (1990). […] In Nooteboom a new master of literary technique had been unearthed.[38]

More nuanced information can be gleaned by analysing the publishing house's archive. The "discovery" of Nooteboom took place at Suhrkamp after the editor Elisabeth Borchers read the Volk und Welt translation of *Rituals* (first published in English in 1983), and suggested making use of the "pan-German rights" to the text, including it in the main programme for autumn 1985.[39] The remaining three books by Nooteboom were published *despite* the editorial department's negative appraisal, on the express wish of the publisher. In May 1985, Siegfried Unseld went on a three-day study trip to the Netherlands, meeting representatives of the country's most important publishers. His Dutch contacts became regular thereafter, resulting in specific recommendations to the editorial department, which incidentally was represented by Dutch-speaking Raimund Fellinger from 1980. The year 1985 therefore marked a turning point in the process of translation production of Dutch literature at Suhrkamp: decision making become centralised, with the editors responsible for Dutch-language authors (who had previously enjoyed relative autonomy) coming under the jurisdiction of the head publisher. From 1987, Unseld maintained personal correspondence with Nooteboom, and despite

38 Herbert Van Uffelen, "Cees Nooteboom en het succes van de Nederlandse literatuur in het Duitse taalgebied. Het Nooteboom-effect," *Literatuur* 10 (1993): 253. Quantitative data on Dutch literature in translation into German between 1990 and 1997 (and thus reflecting the impact of the 1993 Frankfurt Book Fair on the transfer of Dutch literature to Germany) can be found in Sandra van Voorst's article "Over de drempel. Nederlandse literatuur in Duitse vertaling 1990-1997," in *Object: Nederlandse literatuur in het buitenland. Methode: onbekend. Vormen van onderzoek naar de receptie van literatuur uit het Nederlandse taalgebied*, ed. Petra Broomans, et al. (Groningen: Barkhuis, 2006), 111-122.

39 Elisabeth Borchers to Siegfried Unseld, November 1, 1984, SUA: Suhrkamp/03Lektorate/ Elisabeth Borchers, DLA. We should add that the poor quality of the translation meant that thorough corrections were necessary before Suhrkamp could publish the book, and owing to the lack of qualified translators, the French version of the novel was consulted for the German translation.

the highly unsatisfactory sales of the author's two books published to date, ensured that his visits to Germany were given extensive media coverage, initiated reprints of specific titles and appealed to his colleagues to grant Nooteboom a special status. It is important to note that the Dutch author not only adeptly promoted his own work, but was also active as a literary intermediary, successfully recommending texts of Dutch-language authors to Suhrkamp, including Thomas Rosenboom and A. F. Th. van der Heijden.

Nooteboom's status rose after the unprecedented commercial success of his *Berliner Notizen* [*Berlin Notes*] and *Die folgende Geschichte* [*The Following Story*], both published in 1991. The former came about in part by chance. In May 1988, Nooteboom received a scholarship from the Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin, and his hot-off-the-press chronicle of the events surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall from the perspective of a Dutch writer with an excellent understanding of Germany was enthusiastically received. Just five months after publication, *Berliner Notizen* was recognised with the 3 October Literature Prize (Literaturpreis zum 3. Oktober) inaugurated the same year by the Bouvier Booksellers Association, with the justification that "the German unification process is not just an internal matter for Germans, but requires a critical view from the outside."[40] Meanwhile, the success of *The Following Story* in Germany began a month after its publication on 10 October 1991, when during the literary programme *Das literarische Quartet* Marcel Reich-Ranicki called Nooteboom "a European author of great importance," and his novel "one of the most important books" of the year.[41]

Although Reich-Ranicki's words are usually quoted in the context of the establishment of Cees Nooteboom's position (and with it that of Dutch-language literature as a whole) on the German publishing market, we should also note that the German critic was distinctly talking about a "European" author. Siegfried Unseld also saw in Nooteboom one of "the most important European prose writers,"[42] and did not link his work with plans for presenting Dutch literature as a separate group of texts. Neither did other Dutch authors published by Suhrkamp during this period (including Renate Rubinstein,

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40   Berliner Buchhandelgesellschaft Bouvier to Suhrkamp Verlag, September 27, 1991, SUA: Suhrkamp/01Autorenkonvolute/Cees Nooteboom, DLA.

41   A recording of the programme can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=_2ZrZP82IRs, accessed June 9, 2014. In August 1993, less than two years after publication, the sales figures for *Die folgende Geschichte* reached 100,000 (Siegfried Unseld to Rolf Staudt, August 6, 1993, SUA: Suhrkamp/01Korrespondenz der Verlagsleitung. Notizen, DLA).

42   Siegfried Unseld, "Reisebericht. Menorca," July 31 – August 2, 1993, SUA: Suhrkamp/01Autorenkonvolute/Cees Nooteboom, DLA.

with whom Unseld made contact through Amsterdam-based Suhrkamp authors Norbert Elias and A. F. Th. van der Heijden) operate under the banner of national literature.[43] This modus operandi changed briefly only in time for preparations for the 1993 Frankfurt Book Fair, where Flanders and the Netherlands were guests of honour. Unseld then approached the Dutch foundation Stichting Frankfurter Buchmesse with the idea of preparing a joint presentation of Klett, Hanser and Suhrkamp's Dutch-language offerings. What Van Uffelen calls a "successful operation" of three publishing houses[44] was therefore in fact a marketing ploy formulated *post factum*, as part of which the consistent construction of the brand of specific authors in the mid-1980s was incorporated into the promotional strategy for literature from Flanders and the Netherlands.

At the same time, there was another cause for this "denationalisation" of Dutch authors taking place behind the scenes. Starting in the mid-1980s, Suhrkamp was engaged in a constant struggle with the "Polish Library" series, a success in terms of both political concerns and image, but not a market success, and in the correspondences of the management department, there were regular signals of alarming sales figures of specific titles and a call for marketing ideas to find a solution to the problem.[45] It is interesting to note

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43   From the outset, Unseld regarded Nooteboom as a writer of "European literature" (and on his initiative on November 3, 1989 the Dutch author gave a lecture at the headquarters of Deutsche Bank with this very title). According to Unseld, Nooteboom's novel *Ein Lied von Schein und Sein*, published by Suhrkamp in 1989, was an expression of the "central European fate," and its author was one of the mainstays of the planned, but never realised, "European Library," within which the novels of the Dutch prose writer Simon Vestdijk were also supposed to appear (Siegfried Unseld to Cees Nooteboom, May 20, 1988; Siegfried Unseld, note, October 16, 1990, SUA: Suhrkamp/01Autorenkonvolute/Cees Nooteboom, DLA). An expression of the "denationalised" perception of authors from Flanders and the Netherlands on the German publishing market is the Hermann Wallman's 1997 essay with the telling title "There is no such thing as Dutch literature." "Why," he asks, "should I be interested in Dutch literature just because it happens to come from Belgium or the Netherlands? A writer [...] does not represent a country, let alone a government, but rather his own particular qualities."
Accessed June 17, 2014, http://www.letterenfonds.nl/en/essay/7/there-is-no-such-thing-as-dutch-literature

44   Van Uffelen, *Moderne niederländische Literatur,* 446.

45   For example, in 1991, sales of 30 of the 39 volumes published to date did not exceed 800 copies (Christoph Groffy, undated note from 1991, SUA: Suhrkamp/01Korrespondenz der Verlagsleitung. Notizen, DLA). The general view is that Suhrkamp displayed insufficient engagement in promoting Polish literature and the "Polnische Bibliothek" (Nosbers, *Polnische Literatur,* 130-132) are in contrast with the regular comments at the managerial correspondence level from the mid-1980s onwards concerning diverse proposals for pro-

that in the internal correspondences of the managerial department, the "Polish Library" was a (negative) point of reference in promotion of other, "lesser" national literatures. At a conference on the reception of Dutch literature in the German-speaking publishing market held in Stuttgart in March 1989, the head of Suhrkamp's editorial department warned against presenting Dutch and Flemish authors in the "ghetto of the 'Dutch Library'."[46] Publishing individual national literatures in the form of a "concise" series starkly contradicted Suhrkamp's previous policy of promoting the complete works of authors, and the fortunes of the project presenting Polish literature *in toto*, launched in 1982 (doubtless for political reasons) by the German Institute of Polish Studies and financed by the Bosch Foundation, was a lively and current illustration of the merits of the previous approach.

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Based on Suhrkamp's publishing archive, the ethnography of translation production thus provides us with interesting information concerning the dynamic of (semi-) peripheral national literatures on the German publishing market. By analysing the processes concerning both selected and rejected titles in the form of a chronological narrative, I see it as important to be aware of the level at which the processes of interaction and negotiation occur and are recorded. By studying the editorial correspondences and comparing them with other layers of the archive, we can observe when the actors interested in achieving a specific objective were successful in securing the action of other actors, and so in essence what Latour calls "translation."[47] Latour follows Michel Callon in identifying three clearly separate phases. In the first, actors look for points of contact between themselves and the identities and interests of other actors,

motional campaigns. In September 1993, the Bosch Foundation, which had so far provided subsidies of 9000 marks for each of the books published, did not agree to increase this amount, a step that the publisher deemed to be necessary. The gap in funding for further volumes in the Polish Library was to be filled by the Foundation purchasing 200-300 complete sets as a gift for "East German, and possibly also Silesian libraries" (Rolf Staudt to Siegfried Unseld, September 2, 1993, SUA: Suhrkamp/01Korrespondenz der Verlagsleitung. Notizen, DLA).

46   Raimund Fellinger to Siegfried Unseld, "Reisebericht Fachtagung 'Unbeschreiblich Niederländisch. Die Rezeption „kleinerer" europäischen Literaturen auf dem deutschsprachigen Buchmarkt am Beispiel der Niederlande', vom 3. Bis 5. März 1989 im Waldhotel Degerloch, Stuttgart," March 7, 1989, SUA: Suhrkamp/01Korrespondenz der Verlagsleitung. Notizen, DLA.

47   Renate Grau, *Ästhetisches Engineering. Zur Verbreitung von Belletristik im Literaturbetrieb* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2006), 58.

thus stabilising the system of mutual relations. In the second phase, actors look for the acceptance of other actors for their own interests, in order in the third phase to gain it in the form of mutual obligation.[48]

As for the publishing house's correspondences concerning Dutch literature, contacts between Dutch/Flemish and German actors in the publishing field did not go beyond the first two phases of translation for many years, understood as a process of mutual interaction. Owing to the lack of professional "services" from literary consultants, translators and institutions responsible for cultural policy, the publishing house's interests entirely missed recommendations solely concerning the hierarchy and specifics of the Dutch-language book market (a problem best illustrated by the editorial department's contacts with the Foundation for the Support of Dutch Literature Translation between 1960 and 1970). It remains paradoxical that the editorial departments' comparative autonomy also ultimately hampered the wider transfer of Dutch literature. The lack of coordination in the process of choosing books and the idiosyncratic selection criteria (as in the case of Günther Busch's editing of the "edition suhrkamp" series) led to many projects being rejected without consultation with the management of the publishing house.

The year 1985 represented a turning point in Dutch literature, although the reasons for this watershed analysed from the "internal" perspective of the publishers differ from the political and market-based explanations cited by Herbert Van Uffelen. Referring to Latour's division into phases of translation, we can assume that in the second half of the 1980s, individual actors of the publishing field not only found mutual acceptance for their projects, but also committed to their realisation. Completion of the "translation" process took place at four complementary levels. First, the aforementioned "centralisation" of decisions led to a standardised policy of the publishing house towards Dutch literature. Second, there was a significant change in the way in which the editorial department worked with external consultants and translators. Suhrkamp began to collaborate on a permanent basis with the Munich-based specialist in Dutch studies Carel ter Haar, who not only recommended and reviewed specific texts, but also adapted them to the profiles of various series. In the early 1990s, Suhrkamp also signed a permanent contract with translator Helga van Beuningen, thus resolving the problem of inadequate translations. Third, there was a change in the relations between the publishing house and the Dutch institutions responsible for cultural policy which, prior to the 1993 Frankfurt Book Fair, subsidised the costs of translation, production and

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48   Bruno Latour, *Die Hoffnung der Pandora: Untersuchungen zur Wirklichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), 381 [English edition: *Pandora's Hope. Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999)].

advertising of various titles in a flexible and unbureaucratic manner (the subsidies sometimes amounted to 75 percent of the production costs of a given book).[49] Finally, Dutch publishers actively represented their own authors, undertaking activities typical of literary agents.

At the present stage, the correspondence concerning the transfer of Polish literature at Suhrkamp publishing house requires a more widespread, systematic analysis, encompassing all the layers of the archive detailed above. The data presented in this article are diagnostic in character, serving as a reference to the individual stages of translation which has taken place between the actors of the publishing field within my previous research on Dutch literature. Yet we are able to make an initial hypothesis that the "Polish Library" project, instrumental in promoting Polish literature at Suhrkamp, despite the apparent "commitment" of the interested parties, was in its very nature contradictory to the strategy of presenting national literatures in place at the time. The success of literature from Flanders and the Netherlands recorded in the last decade of the 20th century and still evident today resulted, apart from the aforementioned elements of how the production of translation was organised, from a radical break with the labels of "Dutchness" and "Flemishness." Polish authors were not the subject of any such "denationalisation." In February 1975, Siegfried Unseld noted that "publishing Polish literature remains an adventure. We love the Poles, but what we read is not always easy. The brilliant aphorisms of Polish authors are like sparks dancing above a catastrophe. Herbert's poems shine like stars, which for light years will continue to permeate the dark of the night."[50] Polish literature remained an adventure, while its Dutch counterpart became a lucrative business.

Translation: Benjamin Koschalka

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49   The Foundation for the Support of Dutch Literature Translation (Stichting ter Bevordering van de Vertaling van Nederlands Letterkundig Werk), closed down in 1989, was replaced by two separate national organisations: from 1991 Het Nederlands Literair Productie- en Vertalingenfonds was responsible for promotion of literature from the Netherlands, while in Belgium cultural policy in initiating and supporting translations of Dutch/Flemish literature was the preserve of the Art Division of the Ministry of Culture and the Flemish Community. Today, on the Flemish side the Flemish Foundation for Literature (Vlaams Fonds voor de Letteren), founded in March 1999, is responsible for promotion of Dutch literature abroad, while Dutch authors are represented by the Nederlands Letterenfonds, established in January 2010. The two organisations jointly presented Dutch literature at the 2016 Frankfurt Book Fair, at which Flanders and the Netherlands again featured as guests of honour.

50   Siegfried Unseld to Gottfried Honnefelder, February 24, 1975, SUA: Korrespondenz der Verlagsleitung. Notizen, DLA.

Dominik Antonik

The Author as a Brand

Dominik Antonik – literary theorist and a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Polish Studies, Jagiellonian University. He researches the interrelations between contemporary Polish literature and the market, media, and the broadly conceived social sphere, considering the authorial brand to be the central figure of the contemporary field of production, consumption, and circulation of literature. In his doctoral project he attempts to develop a new model of sociology of literature, which could explain the key issues pertaining to the presence of literary art in the interconnected culture of late capitalism. He recently published *Autor jako marka.*

Literature today operates as a type of audiovisual culture among communication practices that are characteristic of information societies, which exposes it to a number of opportunities. Contemporary culture is no longer organized by writing, but rather by complex multimedia messages. In this new civilizational configuration – one that poses an ostensible threat to traditional literary works – literature is not necessarily restricted to the margins of social communication as a practice that, while valuable, is anachronistic in terms of its adaptation to contemporary communication standards. On the contrary, contemporary literature can occupy a position in the very center of social practices, that same space in which we live, move, and interact with people and media. I believe that the works of autofiction by authors such as Jerzy Pilch, Jacek Dehnel, and Michał Witkowski have adapted particularly well to this new cultural arrangement, in which they operate not within the confines of a discrete literary space, but at the very heart of contemporary communication.

Autofiction is an exceptionally dynamic genre of literature. It has enjoyed tremendous popularity and poses a challenge to theoreticians, which can rarely be said of writing intended for the general public. Its practitioners have been blurring the lines between life and art,

confession and self-creation, combining the empirical with the novelistic. From its inception, the genre has probed the limits and capacities of literature, while these continue to change in step with the shifts underway in cultural and communication practices. I believe that, in the literature of today, it is autofiction that most thoroughly exploits the capacities offered by the infrastructure of the information society, which allows it to harness previously non-literary artistic practices and to remain at the center of the exchange of information. I will attempt to demonstrate that literature is sinking into the public sphere, and that rather than creating an alternative world to which we escape, it participates in shaping the world in which we live. Just as art once stepped out of picture frames and the walls of galleries and museums, so literature is now pouring out of books and leaving libraries to enter deep into the sphere of our daily lives and spread through social communication. Literature by such writers as Pilch, Dehnel, and Witkowski designs its physical surroundings; navigating this space is synonymous with the intense experience of the author, who integrates all of the dimensions of this work and is far more than a mere textual figure.

As we examine Witkowski's artistic activities, it will become apparent that the writer's work cannot be limited to the text in the form of a book without discarding a series of semantic fields of reference, ones activated deliberately or unconsciously by the author as well as interactive readers. It was his novel *Lubiewo* that allowed Witkowski to break out of the closed space of traditional literature. The fame the author achieved with this novel is unparalleled in Polish literature, and while the book can be compared to a detonator, the actual explosive charge in this case was, of course, the mass media, which blew it out of proportion, causing it to gradually fall back down into the quotidian. With more than forty reviews in the press and an innumerable number of them online, along with an unending series of interviews, 2005 was unquestionably the year of Witkowski in the categories of "literature" and "personality." The media's interest in him would likely not have been as great were it not for the novel's autobiographical elements. It quickly became apparent that not only was this a literary world which was at once fascinating and shocking, but that one of its inhabitants did, in fact, exist, and the audience were eager to meet him. A new book had been ushered into the literary canon, and accompanying it on the public stage was a new personality: ostentatiously effeminate, politically incorrect, with no regard for social taboos, while turning extreme vulgarity into literary artistry and humour, while also willing to share his secrets; the perfect hero for a culture that had craved novelty since the systemic transformation of 1989.

Since the author was the main character in his own writing, the media took an interest in him, rather than the book, and each interview provided more

information that automatically linked the plot threads to the writer's own biography. Regardless of how much truth there is to Witkowski's personal revelations, every interview he has given integrates with other statements regarded as autobiographical and intertwines with his writing. Consequently, his literary work pours out of the individual novels and begins to form a space of autobiographical information.

Witkowski's media image is a kind of game the writer plays with the readers, a game similar to the one observed in autofictional literature itself. He decides which elements of his own life story to reveal and which to falsify, and the extent to which he shows his actual personality or poses as someone else. The problem is that there is no way to separate the author's presence in the media from his writing. *Lubiewo* paired with the author's public persona form a semantic space which the reader navigates. Subsequent books broaden this space and, furthermore, thematize the author's own mediality.

Witkowski's biography and his media persona have become intertwined with the autofictional *Lubiewo*, forming a single semantic space in which the author is the main character. Just like the novel's Michaśka, the writer presents an exaggerated, flamboyant public image. He made his public debut as the main character of his own novel, and so he has remained. This image is constantly being developed and is subject to minor modifications with the release of subsequent books, but remains consistent. The literary figure automatically refers us to the interviews and photo sessions in which his real (media) counterpart appears, thus making it impossible to focus exclusively on the book and delineate its exact boundaries.

Lubiewo eludes stabilization for yet another reason. So far seven editions of the book have been published, each containing a different version of the novel. It is a space of a living, ever-changing text, a space that also includes photographs, illustrations, not to mention the atmosphere conjured up by publishers every time a new version of *Lubiewo* is released. The novel has also made its way into the public space through performances and author appearances. Witkowski himself staged *Lubiewo Show* at Wybrzeże Theater, a one-man show combining recitation with performances of scenes from the novel and – more significantly – performances of himself, as Michaśka is at once the author, celebrity, and the main character of his own books.

The novel has also been released as an audiobook read by the author, while its latest edition, *Bez cenzury* [*Uncensored*], is performed by Jacek Poniedziałek. The choice of actor is significant, as Poniedziałek was one of the first well-known people in Poland to come out as gay. Conscious of the strongly distinct character of Witkowski's vocal performances and how closely linked they have become to his writing, Poniedziałek refrains from proposing a new reading of the novel. The blurb on the cover of the audiobook reads:

To an actor, grappling with this extraordinarily malleable, Gombrowiczian and Old Polish language is like taking on the giant slalom as a beginning skier. Michał does a wonderful job of reading his own books, so I decided that my performance would be more Witkowski than Poniedziałek.

Witkowski performs his novels wonderfully and his interpretations are a part of that literature. *Lubiewo* cannot be separated from the voice of its author, his image, his voice, or the remarks he has made outside the book. Poniedziałek correctly observes that this work operates as a whole, which is why he does not read the text or narrate the novel, performing instead its main character, that is, the author. The actor assumes the role of Witkowski, not some abstract character in this book, because all of his writing, interviews, and recordings are a stage for the spectacle that is the author's personality, rather than a collection of autonomous statements. *Lubiewo* is not a book: it is a semantic space in which the reader navigates through the writer's living text, voice, and image, and through illustrations and events taking place in the public sphere.

Witkowski turned his next book into a performance at TR Warszawa, staging it as a monodrama titled *Barbara Radziwiłłówna Show*. The stage upon which Witkowski performed his novel resembled an enormous book cover. It was as if literature had literally descended from its isolated cultural space into material reality: the author, synonymous with the main character and the actor, appeared on a set that imitated the territory of the novel; his physical surroundings became a setting in which to experience literature. A similar phenomenon occurs at author appearances, where the writer becomes a medium for his own work. Witkowski, known to the public as a figure in his novels and the mass media, appears before them and thus confirms that one is tied to the other, that he himself is the literature.

Przemysław Czapliński aptly observes that Witkowski's narrative is a "ball of garbage rolling around the cultural dumps of the last two decades."[1] Though the critic is referring mainly to *Barbara Radziwiłłówna*, the metaphor is an excellent description of Witkowski's work as a whole. *Lubiewo* is a collection of budding stories collected on the street, gossip elevated to the level of mythology; *Barbara Radziwiłłówna* is a cultural collage or kaleidoscope of Polishness. The next drain into which these gutter stories flow, meanwhile, is *Margot*.

This book perfectly complements the world created by Witkowski. The unabashedly pink cover hides a number of equally bold characters and stories. There is a bit of *Lubiewo* in *Margot*, which resembles the former in the way it

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1   Przemysław Czapliński, *Resztki nowoczesności* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2011), 127.

collects gossip and tosses it into a literary melting pot in which it multiplies and melts into Witkowski's signature style. Michaśka's (i.e. Witkowski's) literary breakthrough is a gallery of queers set against a tacky backdrop. *Margot*, on the other hand, depicts the equally vivid world of long-haul truckers. The trashy bars, parking lots, and seedy-looking girls walking well-worn beats seem familiar enough, but the characters we encounter in these clearings and public toilets reveal their dual identities when, at night, they transform from boring truck drivers into hunters prowling for perverse sexual pleasures.

When asked to explain why the book contained so many hard-core sex scenes, Witkowski replied, "I guess that fucking has become part of my image."[2] It is undoubtedly true that this theme, the execution, and the manner in which the book was written are typical of Witkowski. All of this means that the author of *Margot* is the same Witkowski whom the readers are already familiar with, and as a result he once again becomes the subject of the book. In an online video promoting the novel, the author says: "I think my readers will find it satisfying. They'll find a lot of the vibe of the previous books and the kind they associate with my prose. They definitely won't feel betrayed."

If Witkowski mentions the possibility of betraying the reader, then that indicates the existence of a loyalty pact between the author and his audience. With each book he publishes and public appearance he makes, Witkowski broadens the semantic space in which he is the main character, and he builds a recognizable image based on his signature writing style and personality. His readers derive satisfaction from navigating this autobiographical space, and they await the opening of ever-new spaces to further exploration. Witkowski thus functions not just as a writer, but also as the quality that binds all of his public appearances together. One could say about each of his books: "Yes, this is Witkowski. This matches his persona." The author permeates the entirety of his work and his readers have grown accustomed to this fact. The same is true of *Margot*, in which Witkowski has a strong presence. The visual convention of the book itself and the style of the author's photo on the cover allow us to assume that this is the good old Michaśka we know from his previous novels. The author is revealed through the language and the extravagant stories relayed in the book, particularly in part two, which discusses Polish celebrities. Witkowski describes a milieu to which he belonged after the success of *Lubiewo*, while the story of the rise and fall of a great star, Waldek Mandarynka, is, to a certain extent, the story of the author himself.

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2   Michał Witkowski, "Witkowski jedzie tirem," interview by Tomasz Kwaśniewski, *Duży Format*, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,6946944,Witkowski_jedzie_tirem.html, accessed September 4, 2012.

The release of *Margot* was accompanied by an unconventional promotional campaign. Along with billboards promoting both the book and Witkowski, the title was marketed using techniques hitherto unseen by the Polish literary industry. Crucially, the entire campaign focused on the author himself. At a metro entrance in downtown Warsaw, one of the most crowded locations in the city, Witkowski sold mandarin oranges from a small booth, where he also signed copies of his book for readers. The author wore a t-shirt promoting the novel; the garment itself had a certain symbolic undertone. The front of the shirt bore references to the cover and first part of the book, in which readers encounter the author as they remember him from his previous novels. This is the essence of Witkowski's personality and style: lacking any moral restraints, perverse and vulgar, yet blurring all of this foulness with his signature sense of humor. On the other hand, the back of the shirt, emblazoned with the words "I am Waldek Mandarynka!," is associated with the author's depiction of the world of Polish show-business, but also with Michaśka, who was a media heroine. This t-shirt — one side of which referenced literature imbued with Witkowski's style and personality, while the other alluded to his presence in the media — was worn by the author himself, thus emphasizing the indivisibility of the two orders. Such t-shirts and other literary paraphernalia advertising *Margot* were provided to readers who demonstrated particular involvement in the world created by the author.

Following the premier of his new book, Witkowski was invited to appear on the talk show hosted by Kuba Wojewódzki, who happens to be one of the characters in the novel. The author took the opportunity to promote his latest book as well as himself. He appeared on television not just as a writer, but also as a character in the novel who leads a double life, a well-known and respectable person who, at night, transforms into a degradation-seeking prostitute. There are so many levels here that it is difficult to separate them. On a couch next to the host sits the inaccessible flesh-and-blood author, one familiar to us only as a media persona, the subject of photo sessions and interviews. He is also a writer who is consistently present in his own books as a certain recognizable style, a worldview, a quality that binds his entire literary output and refers to the concept of the author embedded in the consciousness of his readers. But it is also the main character of *Margot*, who is appearing on the show to create another chapter of the novel external to the book. On the one hand, he appears as a figure with a double identity (thus augmenting the first part of the book), and, on the other, he undergoes a metamorphosis in front of the audience, becoming a star (thus expanding the part about celebrities).

Though the author appeared on the show in an ordinary, inconspicuous outfit, it did include a subtle element that revealed the role he assumed in secret. This was a reference to the characters in *Margot* and their practice

of dressing up, both in the literal sense and with respect to their identities. While he appeared to be dressed in ordinary clothing, a long, sequined women's blouse emerged from below his leather jacket. The entire situation was explained by the "Margot" pin – one of the promotional items mentioned above – on the author's jacket. On the one hand, the pin explained what the whole masquerade was about, and, on the other, it announced the literary annexation of the space of the television studio. The women's blouse concealed beneath the jacket was hot pink, the same color as the cover of the book and the purse Witkowski was carrying. "Lot lizard" handbags like this one, containing *Margot* and promotional items, were sent to the literary desks of various media outlets, to the universal surprise of the editors. The very packaging of the novel made reference to the recognizable style to which everyone had grown accustomed through Witkowski's books and public appearances.

Witkowski put on a literary spectacle at Wojewódzki's talk show. He appeared as a recognizable writer and a character in the novel, while also performing the part about celebrities and media manipulation before the entire country, thus re-enacting the author's success story concealed in Waldek Mandarynka's own biography. The forgotten writer once again became the subject of gossip, a topic of discussion, and a target for photojournalists. It is a literary story that descended into reality. The author did not exist beyond his own work, as he turned every public appearance into a literary performance, the space in which he performed his own personality. Where there was Witkowski, there was also literature.

Michał Witkowski returns as a writer and media personality in *Drwal* [*Lumberjack*]. This time our subject is not hidden behind any character, but appears under his own first and last name, reinforcing the connection between the novel and reality with constant references to Witkowski's appearances in the public sphere. The author is present in *Drwal* as a character and, through the book's meta-literary threads, as an actual writer. Furthermore, the story of Witkowski's media career is so essential to the novel that certain elements of the plot are incomprehensible to readers who lack this knowledge.

Before the book was even released, a series of films were posted on the author's website and YouTube in which Witkowski talks about himself and his new novel. Each clip opens with a foreboding musical intro and a visual sequence in which the cover of *Drwal* appears on the screen. The films all end in an identical manner: they are shut between the first and last pages of a symbolic book. This device alone, one that combines many statements under a single label, suggests that they collectively form a single literary space. What was released in the advertisement market was not a complete and finished book, but a transmedia story comprising the text, vocal interpretations, public performances, and videos published online and on television. The location in

which Witkowski's statements were recorded are particularly telling. The author is seated on a chair in a room with a decor resembling that of Communist Poland: tacky upholstery, unbelievable imitation leather, classic Gierek and Gomulka-era wall units, an old hair salon hood dryer repurposed as a floor lamp, and many other objects on which the era of bad taste and mediocrity left its indelible mark. It's an apartment taken not from People's Poland, but from the world of Witkowski's novels, which are invariably populated to some extent by the mental and material relics of the previous political system.

Witkowski appears in the book as its writer, a literary character, and pop-culture icon, thus demonstrating the fact that these orders intertwine and that it is impossible to separate his public communiques into different autonomous domains, first, because all of these appearances combine at the level of the plot and together create an autofictional stage on which the spectacle of the author's personality takes place. Second, our natural inclination as the audience is to combine scattered bits of information into a semantic whole. We think in terms of associations, and our perception is trained to integrate, rather than deconstruct, audiovisual communiques. To pick up only one communication channel operated by Witkowski would require us to assume a transcendental stance vis-à-vis culture, which, of course, is impossible. Witkowski's writing reveals the uselessness of the methodologies and concepts assumed in the study of literature. In order to comprehend the specific nature of this work, one must ask not what it means, but how it works; only then will its open, spatial, multimedia nature be revealed.

What I have presented here is a short and randomly-chosen route that one may plot through the enormity of Witkowski's literary work. I hope, however, that this minor sample of the possibilities that lie within his writing illustrate the sheer scale of its potential. I have focused on Witkowski as the phenomena that interest me are most vibrant in his work, but the oeuvres of such writers as Dehnel, Pilch, and Stasiuk could be mapped in a similar fashion.

Witkowski's writing demonstrates that the scope of literature can overlap with the scope of our everyday activities, encompassing not just books, but also the press, the Internet, television, radio, and the public sphere; it shows that dispersed bits of literature are everywhere and are readily accessible. As the distance between the audience and the medium disappears, we begin to experience literature from the inside, as if in direct contact with its surfaces. Its places in contemporary culture and social communication can be understood with the help of a theory formulated by Scott Lash and Celia Lury:

> In this view, subjects encounter not a signifying structure, or even the materiality of the signified, but the signified or sense itself as it is materialized. This is communication. This is information. The media environment,

or mediascape, is a forest of extended intensities, of material signifieds around which subjects find their way, orient themselves via signposts. Thus Horkheimer and Adorno's culture industry recalled the extensity of a landscape; today's global culture industry has the intensity of a mediascape.[3]

It is becoming increasingly difficult to examine culture strictly in terms of a superstructure or sphere of values that is separate from us and operates somewhere above our heads; art, meanwhile, no longer fits into the traditional model. The division between culture and economy or the domain of art and material reality is becoming inoperable. At some point, the ubiquity of radio, television, and newspapers in our everyday began to feel more like things than media: that tendency has only intensified in recent times. The reification of media and the parallel process of transforming things into media constitute, in Lash and Lury's view, the very foundation of the global culture industry.[4]

The reification of media and the mediatization of things are two parallel processes from which there emerges a culture that does not discern between life and art, or action and interpretation. We speak of reification when music starts to be played in public – on the radio, on the bus – thus becoming an element of the contemporary audiosphere; when a fairy-tale world and its characters become the theme park that is Disneyland; when films are transformed into computer games; when brands such as Apple organize their retail space in a particular way or turn the launch of a new product into a spectacle that draws eager audiences in the hundreds and is viewed online by millions of people.

The mediatization of things, on the other hand, occurs when objects or events acquire sign value and start to function in a web of relations moderated by the media. One example is the Euro 2012 football championship hosted by Poland and Ukraine. The radio chooses the official song for the tournament, television focuses on the event for a few months, billboards bearing the tournament's logo transform the space of the city, and the same symbols appear on food and sporting goods alike. The Euro Cup as a brand and particular vibe exists thanks to the circulation of signs in media.

The superstructure descends onto the base, while the latter rises towards the former. They meet halfway, where media become reified and material

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3   Scott Lash and Celia Lury, *Global Culture Industry: The Mediation of Things* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 14.

4   See ibid., 8.

environments are mediatised. The authors of *The Global Culture Industry* call the meeting point of both tendencies the media environment.

> In this in-between zone a material environment […] has become mediatized. And mediums (the films and art) have descended into the environment, as merchandise, as installations. Image has become matter and matter has become image: media-things and thing-media.[5]

Thing-media becomes part of our everyday lives; the distance that once separated us and them is disappearing, and thus we no longer relate to them through meaning and interpretation, but rather by navigating them. Goods acquire cultural value, while art acquires exchangeable value. Products gain sign-value, and art turns into merchandise and descends into reality. The division between artworks and things ceases to be functional. Media and things meet in the same sphere of intensity, the media environment, which is at once the place in which we live. Art is no longer something that is in front of us: it is now beside us. The epistemological relation is supplanted by ontological co-participation. We live in the same space in which the reified artworks operate, and thus we do not interpret signifiers, but rather encounter signifiers; the mediascape is an intense environment. "In such an environment," Lash and Lury write, "the people who make, circulate and use objects are not external to such an environment. To put this differently, our method does not assume a distinction between media and society."[6]

I believe that contemporary autofiction can operate in just such a media environment. It is not external to us, and we do not pick it up as a message that requires interpretation; rather, we encounter it, we move among its different pieces. In writing about the process of reification, Lash and Lury make no mention of literature, as the assumption that media are objects is associated with one condition: that these media are not texts. Film, music, paintings, sculptures – all of these were once texts in the sense that the viewer or listener maintained an epistemological relationship with them. They were representations, not things, thus it was through interpretation that we interacted with them in a semantic order. Media that were texts were reified, but these texts – in the literal sense – remain texts that can be read. As an activity that is spread out in time, reading is always interpretation, and thus it does not belong to the momentary, intense mediascape: the text is a web of signifiers, not the signified. Such is the logic proposed by Lash and Lury. However,

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5   Ibid., 9.

6   Ibid., 28.

I consider this understanding to be incorrect when applied to the context of Witkowski's writing. In presenting Witkowski's literary work as a multimedia web of relations that can be navigated, I have also demonstrated the process by which literature can be reified – literature made to pour out of libraries and step into our daily lives, becoming a part of the mediascape. The theory postulated by Lash and Lury can be expanded to include the phenomenon of the reification of texts, making it particularly useful in describing contemporary literature, which is undergoing a number of transformations as an object of culture and is acquiring its own dynamic within the culture of circulation.

Literature becomes a material object of culture when it descends into reality and designs a space through which we can move. Authors appear on television, in the press, on the Internet and on billboards, and their likenesses are extensions of a personality game that blurs the boundaries between subsequent books, before finally emerging from their confines, stepping into the mediascape, which overlaps with the social sphere. All of the authors' media appearances become literary, and the writers descend from their separate artistic space into the materiality of social communication, thus becoming a permanent fixture of the cultural space. Literature – which has functioned thus far only in the order of representation, interpretation, and meaning – is becoming, by way of contemporary communications practices, ubiquitous and reified; it is becoming a part of our environment, an object of culture to which we relate not so much through interpretation as we do by navigating it.

Literature is taking over entire sections of bookstores along with exhibitions and billboards; its images are all over the daily press, the Internet, and television; it is materializing as merchandise such as posters of the writer, distributed with magazines, and bags, t-shirts, and pins advertising Witkowski's book. Literature is being transformed into parties, installations, and artistic events such as the happenings and theater performances staged by the author of *Lubiewo*, and literary events held in the form of spectacles, recorded and posted online for all to view. These are situations in which the authors – and, at the same time, their characters – leap from the books directly into reality. Once separated from the world in its own space of focus and silence, literature now enters the din of social communication when it is broadcast in the public space such as a train station or shopping mall as a radio show or audiobook, thus becoming a part of the contemporary audiosphere.

I believe that this reification of literature was only possible because the process was strictly tied to the mediatization of its author. The text came into existence as matter, while the author became the medium of his own work. Witkowski does not function at the base-level as a flesh-and-blood author or as a literary representation (autobiography) at the superstructure-level.

Just like his literature, he operates in the "middle" ground, in the mediascape, where he exists in a web of relations moderated by media. The text descends from the sphere of art into reality, while the author undergoes mediatisation. There is no boundary between the author and the text, as both function together on the same plane, in the intense media environment. The author, together with his autofictional text, create a single object of culture, one that combines the material and media aspects. The readers, meanwhile, operate in the same space, as there is no distinction between media and society.[7]

Every encounter with Witkowski's writing is an intense experience of the author. Rather than signifying structures, we come across the actual signified, which is a certain recognizable authorial quality. It is this quality that permeates and integrates every public appearance he makes, and because of it each element of his transmedia oeuvre refers back to a single identity that combines into a whole. The author functions as a brand, integrating a broad space of signs and bestowing external value on products. The intense experience that is Witkowski's writing does not reveal the writer's life story (his autobiography), but rather the virtual core of this autofictional literature, that is the author's own brand. His work affects us not through books, but through the brand. It involves the production of a virtual difference that bestows value and an identity on this work, yet it can neither be named nor indicated. Witkowski writes one book after the other, each different from the previous, yet they all refer us back to the same brand, just as all Apple products – aluminium laptops, iPhones, and iPods – share a certain identity that defines the image of the company as a whole. In one interview the author describes this intense and virtual quality, one that defines all of its material extensions, as *witkowszczyzna*, or *Witkowskiness*. The literary space marked by the writer's books and public activities is a place in which readers experience *Witkowskiness*.

Lash and Lury write:

> The commodity is produced. The brand is a source of production. The commodity is a single, discrete, fixed product. The brand instantiates itself in a range of products, is generated across a range of products. The commodity has no history; the brand does. The commodity has no relationships; the brand is constituted in and as relations. The commodity has no memory at all; the brand has memory. The products in which a brand instantiates itself, indeed actualizes itself, must somehow flow from the brand's memory, which is the brand's identity.[8]

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7   See ibid., 29.

8   Ibid., 6.

I believe that Witkowski's writing has generated such a great density of internal and external relations, and that it has traveled so many trajectories between media and the audience, that it has begun to be discerned as separate and unique. The brand emerged, as if from its own background, at the intersection of individual books and the writer's public activities. It is a kind of identity that is not contained in the author's individual appearances, but permeates them all. It is the virtual core of this work, one that is actualized in material realizations. Witkowski actualizes his brand in books on the subject of fluid identity, in camp aesthetics, photographs, audio recordings, films, his trademark style, and his general media personality.

The brand operates as a virtual generative structure. It is an intense core that develops towards extensity and predicates; an abstract individuality, always unspecific. It permeates the work of authors, but it is not the same as their appearances or books. Thus, in contrast to products, the brand cannot be owned. When we buy a brand-name product or a Witkowski novel, we purchase the right to participate in the experience of the brand. The value of this work lies not in the writing itself, but is bestowed from outside, and comprises in part our own relationship with the brand.

The work of the author of *Lubiewo* affects us not through autonomous books, but as one great project named Witkowski that functions capably within the mediascape. Each of the books are part of the brand and contain what Baudrillard calls "sign value." Witkowski is a cultural phenomenon in Polish literature and his brand cannot be examined merely in terms of the "quality of the books," as this approach would preclude the understanding of how his work functions and how it affects the audience. The value of brands is determined based not on the products they manufacture, but the efficacy with which they have captured the social imagination. Products released by companies such as Apple or Nike have use value and exchange value, but it is not their internal qualities that persuade consumers to purchase more and more of them. Consumers buy them because they are part of a brand: they have sign value that refers to a virtual identity with which the users feel they have a relationship. I believe that Witkowski's work functions in a similar manner, but on a micro scale. The value of the writer can be found not just in his literature, but also in its many extensions and emotional capital. The value of the media transfer initiated by Witkowski increases together with the value of the brand thanks to the emotional engagement of the readers.[9] One may evaluate individual books as autonomous entities, but this literary work functions through the sign value which, to the readers, constitutes

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9   See Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 207.

the difference that emerges in their relationship with the brand. The literary value is a quality of the book. The brand and the sign value are qualities of the experience that arises from the consumer's relationship with the brand.[10]

Witkowski's work functions through a virtual brand that is concretized with each appearance the writer makes. We perceive the object, but we experience the intensity of the brand, the signified. Lash and Lury write:

> The brand experience is a feeling, though not a concrete perception. Thus Walter Benjamin talks about the colour of experience. What Benjamin is saying is that you may perceive the painting, say, as an object, but what you e x p e r i e n c e is non-objectual — that is, colour. This is the experience of an intensity. Brands may embrace a number of extensities, but they are themselves intensities. Brands are in this sense v i r t u a l s. As virtuals, they may be actualized in any number of products. Yet the feeling, the brand experience, is the same.[11]

Our contact with Witkowski's work is an experience of the intensity of author as a brand, an experience that determines the identity of this literature and is its core or soul. The social imagination of the readers encompasses not only the likenesses of the writers, their voices, and the topics encountered in their writing, but also the signifieds, that is, something virtual. Every element of Witkowski's work refers back to this virtuality, which is the basis of our emotional relationship with a brand. We encounter his autofictional work in our everyday lives – in the newspaper, in books, on the radio, on television, and online – and, as a whole, it constitutes a sort of installation; it is a physical environment that enables us to immerse ourselves in the experience of the brand, in the author's intensity. It is literature that does not signify, but affects us. We do not read it, but rather we experience it by navigating it. We encounter materiality – voices, quotations, a likeness – and we experience intensity, the essence of the matter.[12] The writer's work does not function as a narrative, but as an identity. It does not tell the author's story, because it is itself like him: it is his (his brand's) concretization.

Witkowski builds brand awareness by encouraging the readers to form an emotional bond with him, a close relationship that wins him their constant attention. Without the interest of the audience there is no one to drive the flow of information, and when this circulation subsides, the sign value of this work

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10   See Lash and Lury, 7.

11   Ibid., 14.

12   See ibid., 197.

is threatened, as is the brand's position in the social imagination. Witkowski affects us through the virtuality of his brand, which functions not in a separate cultural space, but immanently within the very bloodstream of society. It does not impact the readers mechanically, through an external influence, but vitalistically, drifting and self-organizing within the social imaginarium. It is like bio-power: physiological, rather than mechanical.[13] What is at stake here is the virtual order of capturing the audience's attention, the highest good of contemporary culture.[14]

Brands can never be owned: one can only build a relationship with them, and this requires an encounter with their many concretizations. Witkowski's work is a distributed database, and the brand drives us to explore and navigate it. It is literature that bears the promise of a multiplicity of experiences. While this offers us constant entertainment, it also leaves us unsatisfied. We build a relationship with the brand, following its actualizations, but no matter our level of consumption, we will never acquire the object upon which we bestow our affection, because it is virtual. Our active reception is further driven by the temporal and spatial conditions of our access to the brand's various actualizations, merely compounding its value and attractiveness. The consumer is under the pressure of time and must keep up with the flow of information. Literary events, interviews, radio and television programs: all of these constitute Witkowski's transmedia work. Henry Jenkins writes:

> To fully experience any fictional world, consumers must assume the role of hunters and gatherers, chasing down bits of the story across media channels, comparing notes with each other via online discussion groups, and collaborating to ensure that everyone who invests time and effort will come away with a richer entertainment experience.[15]

Authors circumscribe a broad context in which our own activity takes place, but this context does not remain stable. The price we pay for open access to information is its short shelf life. Not only does it become outdated, it is lost entirely when not recalled for too long. This work is based on ephemeral events – appearances on television and the radio – that wind up online for all to access. But the Internet is not a stable archive. With time, links break and

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13   See ibid., 12–13.

14   See Kazimierz Krzysztofek, "Status przemysłów kultury: między ekonomią i kulturą," in *Perspektywy badań nad kulturą*, ed. Ryszard W. Kluszczyński and Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2008), 234.

15   Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 21.

information disappears. This is a literature that relies on novelty and nowness, in the broad senses. Traditional literature is geared towards transmission and is linked to the dynamic of collective memory. The work of Witkowski and his ilk is based on communication, the flow of information at a given moment. It operates in a narrow time frame, focusing on topicality and synchronicity, rather than diachronicity, and does not seek to leave a permanent mark. It operates on quickly processable information, not values and knowledge that appeal to our long-term memory. It speaks to a contemporary audience, which, thanks to mediated communication, always exists "in the same time," rather than to future generations.[16]

Brands and Witkowski's transmedia work both operate in an affective economy that mobilizes readers to pay constant attention and receive messages in real time. Yet this temporal logic is not a shortcoming of this work; on the contrary, it creates positive time pressure. It makes the appearances more appealing, and every audience member who spends time accompanying the brand in its media journeys is rewarded with more content. Ideal consumers always have their eyes wide open, constantly searching for new access points to their desired sources of entertainment, becoming emotionally engaged in expanding their experience, and eagerly sharing information with their social networks.[17] That's how convergence culture works. Different media systems are forced to cooperate, and the content flows smoothly among them. Rather than being limited to a single medium, the audience travels in search of information and combines contents drifting across different media systems.[18] This manner of consuming culture sustains the depth of the experience and stimulates a sense of satisfaction at having created our own, unique interface to the world, thus motivating us to consume even more.

According to Jenkins, a characteristic feature of contemporary cultural production are extensions, or "efforts to expand the potential markets by moving content or brands across different delivery systems."[19] This way of organizing information responds to the expectations of the audience, which travels freely across different media platforms in search of content. I believe that the theory formulated by the American media scholar offers an apt description not just of large entertainment industries, but also of the work of Witkowski and authors like him.

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16   Régis Debray, *Wprowadzenie do mediologii*, trans. Alina Kapciak (Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 2010), 5–19.

17   See Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 25.

18   See ibid., 3.

19   Ibid., 284.

Witkowski's work testifies to a radical shift in how literature operates, a shift that is due only in part to the media infrastructure of the information society. What appears to be more relevant is the change that has occurred not at the technological level, but in our way of thinking and our perceptive strategies. Literature does not necessarily need to use hypertext in order to create non-linear narrative labyrinths, nor must it abandon the book for multimedia in order to expand into the realms of film, photographs, and sound. We don't need links to connect information in different media systems and areas of culture, because we can find the connections ourselves and follow our own paths. Our ability to pick out and combine information enables us to operate freely in the mediascape and to consume the work of such writers as Witkowski in the manner I propose above. The author of *Lubiewo* has created a multimedia autobiographical space which we navigate. Additive comprehension allows us to follow Witkowski's brand, which concretizes itself in various texts, media, and events, thus acquiring its own dynamic. Witkowski's literature is an interactive installation of sensations that the author enables us to experience. Not the flesh-and-blood author, but the authorial brand that permeates this entire body of work and allows us to find a certain identity within it. Attempts to limit this work to the traditional reading of text would resemble the actions of Adorno, who formulated his theses regarding American television shows based on their scripts, without ever having switched on a TV set.[20]

Translation: Arthur Barys

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20   See Theodor W. Adorno, "Telewizja jako ideologia," in *Sztuka i sztuki. Wybór esejów*, trans. Sław Krzemień-Ojak, ed. Karol Sauerland (Warszawa: PIW, 1990).

Marcin Rychlewski

Publishing Circulation Systems Versus the Book Market in Today's Poland

I f our aim is to describe the mechanisms driving the contemporary book market in Poland, a market of which literature is a part, then we will discover that one of our basic tasks is to redefine its publishing circulation systems in order to avoid undue simplification and to view the publishing map of Poland in its entire complexity. In an age when the "McDonaldization of culture" is frequently offered as a catchy diagnosis, there exists a temptation to exaggerate and succumb to the illusion of an all-encompassing homogenization accompanied by total chaos. Though not completely devoid of empirical grounds, such as the ubiquity of consumerism or the law of supply and demand that is characteristic of the free market, this vision has the crucial flaw that it is precisely that – a vision – and as such it fails to account for many of the details. Yet it is these nuances that generate the many paradoxes that can be observed in the way literature functions in society in the context of other books, audiobooks, the internet, CDs and DVDs.

Here is the first: few would doubt that today all books, with no exception – from novels and theoretical works on Polish literature to self-help books and joke books – must compete equally in the market battle to win customers, a battle that determines, to a certain degree, their sales, and indirectly affects their reception as well. At the

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same time, a cursory glance at the circulation of academic books and novels, to take but two examples, leads us to the obvious conclusion that they differ in terms of the size of the print run and the way in which they are financed. The former, typically published in short printing runs by small university publishing houses, are generally financed by various institutions, while novels, which are invested in by private businesses, must, to a greater degree, respond to self-regulating economic mechanisms. The differences can also be seen in the distribution channels, both wholesale and retail. While academic literature rarely appears on the shelves of large chains due to the high promotional costs and is therefore sold mainly in specialized bookstores, the natural setting for the novel, particularly thrillers and crime novels, is the "book supermarket," where a constant battle is waged for the status of being the bestseller.

There is a long tradition of reflecting on the circulation systems of literature in the field of literary sociology in Poland; suffice it to mention the work by Stefan Żółkiewski,[1] Janusz Lalewicz,[2] the reflections of Oskar Stanisław Czarnik, which contributed to the formation of the topic,[3] and the historical-literary work titled *Próba scalenia* [*An Attempt at Consolidation*] by Tadeusz Drewnowski.[4] Yet the problem lies in the fact that these perspectives cannot be applied to contemporary times, as they referred to a completely different historical reality. Żółkiewski, who discerned five circulation systems in the period between 1918 and 1932 (high art, trivial, pulp, literature "for the people," and village fair circulations), wrote of times in which the dominant medium (even within the realm of so-called popular literature) was the printed word. Meanwhile a crucial breakthrough occurred in the 1960s: the end of the "Gutenberg era" and the dawn of the "electronic media era," to use the catchy phrase proposed by McLuhan. This revolution had a significant impact not just on the position of literature, but on all other books as well. Oskar Stanisław Czarnik, on the other hand, described the literary circulation systems in post-1945 Poland in reference to distinctive political and economic

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1   Stefan Żółkiewski, *Kultura literacka 1918-1932* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1973).

2   Janusz Lalewicz, *Komunikacja językowa i literatura* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1975), Lalewicz, *Socjologia komunikacji literackiej. Problemy rozpowszechniania i odbioru literatury* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1985).

3   For example, the entry *Obiegi społeczne literatury* [*Social Circulations of Literature*] in Oskar Czarnik, *Słownik literatury polskiej XX wieku*, ed. Alina Brodzka et al. (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1992).

4   Tadeusz Drewnowski, *Próba scalenia. Obiegi, wzorce, style* (Kraków: Universitas, 2004).

circumstances of the time, when a truly free market for books was practically non-existent, as it was subject to the central planning of the state. In the context of the Polish People's Republic, one can hardly discuss the notion of the postmodern consumer society as observed in the West in the 1960s onwards, and which only began to emerge in Poland after 1989.[5]

Any attempt to describe publishing circulation systems in contemporary Poland must therefore begin with the somewhat trivial observation that the main factors stimulating culture today, and which differentiate it from the interwar and communist period, are a late-capitalist consumer lifestyle[6] and the domination of electronic media and the entertainment industry. As brutal as this might sound, the success of a publishing endeavor today hinges largely upon its economic value, while its remaining values, regrettably, are typically a matter of less concern. The quality of participation in the book market is determined by costly distribution, which is the *sine qua non* condition for reaching mass consumers, and by the contributions of the media that influence the choices readers make.

Undoubtedly one of the most important tasks ahead of us is to accurately locate the main circulation system. It is certainly insufficient to state that this circulation is popular and commercial in nature. The first problems arise at very moment we attempt to define popular literature, even if we were to use the adjective "popular" only in reference to fiction. In her review of various methodologies for the study of popular literature, Anna Martuszewska does point out the need to reflect upon texts that belong to the category of pop-culture,[7] however the author fails to offer a clear definition of this term.

Agnieszka Fulińska, on the other hand, proposes a rather artificial division between commercial and popular literature. The former, according to the scholar, is like a "manufacturing process" conducted by the literary industry, in

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5   In contrast, the admittedly catchy network topologies proposed by Lalewicz – "ad hoc," "institutionalized," "star," and "bus" – are essentially suspended in an abstract void, considering the fact that the scholar illustrates them using examples that can hardly be considered typical of literary communication (telephone networks, radio, "Chinese whispers"). (See Janusz Lalewicz, *Komunikacja językowa i literatura*, 121.) On the other hand, the chapter devoted to circulations in *Socjologia komunikacji literackiej*, published ten years later, is largely a commentary on the views espoused by Escarpit and Żółkiewski (Lalewicz, *Socjologia komunikacji literackiej*, 139–167).

6   For more on this subject, see Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism, Where All of Life is a Paid-for Experience* (New York, NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2000).

7   Anna Martuszewska, "Jak rozbierać „tę trzecią"? O badaniach literatury popularnej," in *Nowe problemy metodologiczne literaturoznawstwa*, ed. Henryk Markiewicz and Janusz Sławiński (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1992), 273.

which "neither the individuality of the author nor the reader matters."[8] In the latter case, the goal is to publish "literary works" that approach the standards of high culture. This division becomes vague when we consider the fact that Fulińska's reasoning is mainly focused on the economic factor. The conclusion is that whatever is sold in large volume can for some reason be unpopular, and vice-versa: that whatever is popular among the readers may not have any commercial value.

Of course, the localization of literary circulation systems (or publishing circulation systems in general) cannot take place in a methodological vacuum; it must be based on criteria of some sort. The researcher has at his or her disposal several possibilities, each of which involves a margin of error and has certain drawbacks. The first criterion, a e s t h e t i c s, inherently comes with the risk of falling into the trap of excessive axiology, which, at best, can result in the reinforcement of judgmental dichotomies (high-art literature vs. mass-market literature), and, at worst, an aristocratic rejection of popular literature entirely as a subject that is beneath any serious reflection.[9] Such an approach precludes any description of the complex relationships that exist between circulations, some of which will inevitably be downplayed or overlooked entirely. To put it in visual terms, this would be akin to plotting on a map only the roads that we ourselves travel.

The risk involved in this approach goes beyond merely reinforcing the existing axiological opposition between the "high" and the "popular," or the creation of new ones ("popular literature" vs. "commercial literature"). Even the status of the positive pole is not as clear as it might seem if we consider the fact that the canon comprising high-art literature is subject to incessant modification that results in the inclusion of new works previously regarded as noncanonical. Though it is based on tradition and various, often contradictory, aesthetic concepts, it is legitimized by the power of social institutions that represent the "field of power"[10] and consecrate this canon: critics, renowned writers, and, above all, universities and the Ministry of Education. Thus, if we are to be precise, rather than speaking of some s u b s t a n t i a l form of high-art literature, we should discuss certain conventions, genres, or individual literary works that, by force

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8   Agnieszka Fulińska, "Dlaczego literatura popularna jest popularna?," *Teksty Drugie* 4 (2003): 56.

9   Authors who have warned against creating oppositions of this type include, for instance, Anna Martuszewska ("Jak rozbierać 'tę trzecią'?," 275–279). See also the equally brilliant essay by Krzysztof Uniłowski, "Z popem na ty," *Pogranicza* 2 (2007).

10   I have borrowed the concept of the "field" from Pierre Bourdieu. See, for example, Pierre Bourdieu, *Teoria obiektów kulturowych*, trans. Andrzej Zawadzki, in *Odkrywanie modernizmu*, ed. Ryszard Nycz (Kraków: Universitas, 1998).

of tradition, authority, and social practice, are perceived as artistic. The status of the opposite pole in this opposition is equally difficult to determine. If we were to employ such minimalistic quantifiers as sales numbers and readership, we would discover, first of all, that some books popularly associated with "high" literature enjoy commercial success, as proved by the examples of Olga Tokarczuk, Wiesław Myśliwski, and Andrzej Stasiuk.[11] Secondly, it is impossible to predict which of the titles currently classified as second-rate popular literature will one day be consecrated and included in the canon.

The matter is only made more complicated by the critics, who increasingly resemble hunters prowling the media in search of a new literary star: suffice it to mention the case of Dorota Masłowska. This phenomenon weakens the division between the artistic and mass-market circulations, since critics, as Przemysław Czapliński astutely observes, must collaborate with the mass media if they are to be heard at all, which, paradoxically, undermines the authority of those who write literary reviews and evaluate books, and it erodes the sovereignty of the high culture they represent.[12]

The second criterion, one that serves as a point of departure for reflection on literary circulation systems, was proposed within the field of literary sociology in Poland by Stefan Żółkiewski, who wrote of the "d i s t i n c t s o c i a l   f u n c t i o n s" of texts" and the "individual nature of the readers' needs," which those texts satisfy.[13] Such a perspective inevitably leads towards reception theories and their associated methodological problems. The fundamental question, in this case, can be summed up as follows: if we were to organize the social map of literature based, for example, on the category of the horizons of expectation proposed by Jauss[14] and the implementation

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11   One interesting list is the EMPiK TOP 20 for October 8 to 21, 2007. At 1st place is Marek Krajewski's *Dżuma w Breslau* (a new release); at 3rd place is *Life*, by Paulo Coelho (which comes as no surprise); 4th: *Bieguni*, by Olga Tokarczuk (a new release); 8th: *Dojczland*, by Andrzej Stasiuk; 9th: *Traktat o łuskaniu fasoli*, by Wiesław Myśliwski. It is quite likely that Myśliwski's novel returned to the TOP 20 as a result of having won the Nike Prize. The TOP 20 list published by the bookstore chain Matras for October 11–17, 2007, is similar: 1st place: *Dżuma w Breslau*, Marek Krajewski; 2nd: *Bieguni*, Olga Tokarczuk; 3rd: *Traktat o łuskaniu fasoli*, Wiesław Myśliwski; 6th: *Life*, Paulo Coelho; 13th: *Dojczland*, Andrzej Stasiuk. Interestingly, the next edition of the list (November 1–7, 2007) includes Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's *Dzienniki 1911–1955* [*Diaries, 1911–1955*]. (www.wirtualnywydawca.pl).

12   Przemysław Czapliński, *Powrót centrali. Literatura w nowej rzeczywistości* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2007), 130–131.

13   Żółkiewski, *Kultura literacka 1918-1932*, 412.

14   See Hans Robert Jauss, *Historia literatury jako prowokacja*, trans. Małgorzata Łukasiewicz (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 1999), 145–150, 161–167.

of those expectations, then what are the genuine expectations of the a c t u a l reader, and what sensations does he or she experience when reading? In order to examine the actual reception, we would have to rely on some empirical "reception testimonies,"[15] otherwise we would merely be engaging in pointless theoretical discussions.

Finally, a third possible criterion would be the category of d i s t r i b u - t i o n. This idea is not at all new, as these sociological grounds lay the foundation for the classification of literature in the Polish People's Republic as official or underground, published in Poland or published by Polish émigrés. From this perspective, the focus of our attention would be empirical authors, readers/clients, publishers, wholesalers, booksellers, advertisers, the mass media, and institutions supporting literature. A perspective of this type is not without its shortcomings: it can easily lead one to the seemingly plausible conclusion that in the circumstances of the free market and its inherent struggle to win customers, books are essentially just another commodity. At that point we are on the verge of being mired in numbers and statistics, and losing sight of not just literature, but any book at all. Reports published by book marketing specialists such as Łukasz Gołębiowski and Marcin Świtała, while interesting, testify to the reality of this threat.[16]

Nevertheless, if we intend to ground our analysis in "hard" empiricism and seek out credible data, then we can hardly ignore this criterion. I believe there is an opportunity to be found in the study of distribution channels, which is tied to research on genres and the target reader-consumer. These can prove to be highly informative, provided that, rather than constructing static models, we attempt to find answers to the question of the mechanism that shapes circulations today and will do so in the near future. It is also important that we not limit ourselves to general and catchy assertions, but focus instead on the nuances, such as the complex nexuses between the main stream and its various branches. It may even be discovered that the book market in Poland today is at once centralized and stratified; centripetal and centrifugal; brick-and-mortar and virtual. One of the factors that can be used to describe these contradictions could be distribution.

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15   A term coined by Michał Głowiński (see *Dzieło wobec odbiorcy. Szkice z komunikacji literackiej* (Kraków: Universitas, 1998), 136–153).

16   For example, Łukasz Gołębiowski, *Rynek książki w Polsce w 2007*, vol. 1: *Wydawnictwa*, vol. 2: *Dystrybucja* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Multico, 2007); Marcin Świtała, *Zachowania konsumentów i marketing na rynku książki* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Analiz, 2005).

From this perspective, a portrayal of the circulation system (i.e., the "flow," "distribution,"[17] or, as a commodity, the "trade" of books[18]) would mainly entail an examination of the m e t h o d s of distribution and free-market mechanisms, and, to a lesser extent, the publisher profile, the sender, the type of receiver (specifically, the reader-consumer[19]), as well as other factors such as academic and educational institutions, television, periodicals, and literary criticism. I will explore these issues later in the text.

The Main Circulation

In result of the systemic transformation that took place in Poland after 1989, the nature of the main circulation system became popular and commercial. It should be noted, however, that its "popular-commercial" character is more a product of sales performance and the forces involved in distribution and promotion than a response to the readers' alleged preference for books addressed exclusively to an unsophisticated, mass-market audience. This aspect of the distribution system has been pointed out by several authors, including Przemysław Czapliński, who aptly described this circulation as the "book highway."[20]

This "book highway" – to continue the use of this catchy metaphor – is de facto controlled by a handful of retail monopolists, that is, large bookstore

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17   Polish: *rozpowszechnianie*. Cf. *Słownik literatury polskiej XX wieku*, 730.

18   See Lalewicz, *Socjologia komunikacji literackiej*, 143. The same scholar also describes circulation as "storage" (*Komunikacja językowa i literacka*, 127), which seems rather controversial. It is one thing to "store" a copy of a book on a bookshelf at home or at a library, and quite another to "store" the entire printing at a warehouse because buyers cannot be found. The latter can hardly be described as participation in any sort of circulation.

19   "To a lesser extent" because today, in contrast to what Żółkiewski wrote, a circulation is not characterized by the "flow" of texts within "particular circles of readers" that are isolated from other circles which, in turn, would be associated with some separate circulation (see Żółkiewski, *Kultura literacka 1918–1932*, 412). For example, students of liberal arts faculties read academic papers (which belong to the specialized academic circulation), as well as crime and fantasy novels, which are part of the popular-commercial main circulation. The latter, meanwhile, are certainly read by audiences other than the students and faculty of universities. The same is true of the writers and publishers, who can participate in various circulations (e.g., Umberto Eco, to name but one). This was even observed by Żółkiewski, who nevertheless noted that, in the past, a psychophysical writer who operated in more than one circulation did so through strictly separated sender roles, and assumed the role of the "literary technician," for instance, under a pseudonym (ibid., 413, 444–445).

20   Polish: *książkostrada*. Czapliński, *Powrót centrali*, 26.

chains. Alongside the two largest giants, EMPiK and Matras, who have dominated the market for many years, Dom Książki (particularly its subsidiary Książka Warszawa S.A.) held a substantial share of the market, as did the online retailer Merlin. A growing role is played by mail-order book clubs such as Świat Książki and Klub dla Ciebie.[21] This circulation is additionally serviced by just a few giant wholesale distributors that set the conditions for publishers, including Firma Księgarska Jacek Olesiejuk, Azymut, Wikr, Wkra, Matras, and Platon.[22] Czapliński's observation that "centralized control" had returned to the book market after 1989 seems particularly accurate and astute with regard to distribution.

However, we would encounter a problem if we were to pose the question of what books were commercially successful in this circulation and if we were to attempt to create a typology of them similar to the one proposed by Żółkiewski. It would then turn out that the main circulation, the one in which the greatest number of readers-consumers participate, is wildly heterogeneous and cannot be classified using the traditional dichotomy of "fine" and "popular" literature. An analysis of the admittedly influential and commercially effective bestseller lists published by EMPiK and Matras is enough to confound any expectations one might have as a literary scholar. A cursory glance at two lists published in October and November of 2007, in which EMPiK's TOP 20 bestsellers included novels by Marek Krajewski (*Dżuma w Breslau* [*Plague in Breslau*]), Vargas Llosa (*The Bad Girl*), Olga Tokarczuk (*Bieguni* [*Flights*]), Harlan Coben (*The Final Detail*), Andrzej Stasiuk (*Dojczland*), and Wiesław Myśliwski (*Traktat o* łuskaniu *fasoli* [*A Treatise on Shelling Beans*]). Also featured are books by Leszek Kołakowski (*Czas ciekawy, czas niespokojny* [*Interesting Times, Turbulent Times*]), Umberto Eco (*On Ugliness*), Tomasz Lis (*Pis-neyland*), Sempé and Goscinny (*Histoires inédites du Petit Nicolas*), and the self-help book *I ty możesz być supertatą* [*You, Too, Can be a Superdad*] by Dorota Zawadzka.[23] Like other bestseller lists, this one appears to be completely

21 See Gołębiewski, *Rynek książki w Polsce w 2007*, vol. 2: *Dystrybucja*, 149.

22 Ibid., 52.

23 Lists covering October 8 to 21, 2007, and October 22 to November 4, 2007. The same is true of the TOP 20 list published by the bookstore chain Matras. Here are the data for November 1 to 11, 2007, and November 8 to 14, 2007: 1st: *Histoires inédites du Petit Nicolas*, René Goscinny and Jean-Jacques Sempé; 2nd: *Dżuma w Breslau*, Marek Krajewski; 4th: *Bieguni*, Olga Tokarczuk; 5th: *Pis-neyland*, Tomasz Lis; 9th: *On Ugliness*, Umberto Eco; 13th: *Traktat o* łuskaniu *fasoli*, Wiesław Myśliwski; 15th: *Dojczland*, Andrzej Stasiuk. The second list: 1st: *Histoires inédites du Petit Nicolas*, René Goscinny and Jean-Jacques Sempé; 2nd: *Pamiętnik* [*Diary*], Paweł Jasienica; 4th: *Dżuma w Breslau*, Marek Krajewski; 7th: *Bieguni*, Olga Tokarczuk; 9th: *Pis-neyland*, Tomasz Lis; 10th: *Traktat o łuskaniu fasoli*, Wiesław Myśliwski; 11th:

chaotic, with "artistic" literature appearing alongside crime novels, political books, interviews, biographies, self-help books, children's books, young adult literature, and joke books.

Yet, more importantly, there is another striking fact that contradicts the traditional "high-art" vs. "popular" opposition: namely, that artistic literature can also be p o p u l a r   a n d   c o m m e r c i a l l y successful, at least in the sense that it is purchased by the mass-market consumer. There is another fact that testifies to the weakness of this dichotomy: the giant bookstore chains that make up the commercial "book highway" are, as we know, the very ones who hold the costly book signings for the so-called "top shelf" authors.

To use Żółkiewski's old typology, we might say that today both "high-art" literature and trivial or pulp tiles often meet in the same distribution channel. The slight sense of chaos is further exacerbated by the fact that the main circulation includes, alongside quality fiction, non-fiction and cookbooks, such items as periodicals, CDs and DVDs, audiobooks, and even stationery and toys. Thus we observe, on the one hand, the c o n c e n t r a t i o n of distribution and, on the other, heterogeneity in the range of products.

The first of these two phenomena is clearly tied to the business operations of large bookstore chains, the goal of which is to achieve a monopoly, which is nothing extraordinary in the free-market world. The heterogeneity, and sometimes even randomness, of the offer is a result of it being addressed to a broad, urban audience; essentially, the everyman, a person of an undefined sex, age, education, and interests. The business strategy can be summed up in a simple rule: "something for everyone." In terms of the efficiency of distribution, such heterogeneity in the product range has a centripetal effect, because it enables the concentration of potential readers-consumers in a single chain, taking them away from small, niche bookstores.

The challenge involved in characterizing the main circulation in Poland lies not just in the fact that, rather than being focused in a single bookstore chain, this circulation is spread out across several stores that compete with each other and thus influence the nature of the market. The large-scale distribution of books currently takes two forms: b r i c k - a n d - m o r t a r (stores with a specific physical location) and v i r t u a l (the Internet). The two dimensions typically overlap and complement each other, as both large chains and small bookstores combine brick-and-mortar operations with online and mail-order sales (including EMPiK, Świat Książki, Klub dla Ciebie, and even the online retailer Merlin, which has opened its first physical store). The virtualization of the book market may mark

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On Ugliness, Umberto Eco; 20th: *Dojczland*, Andrzej Stasiuk. (www.wirtualnywydawca.pl, accessed May 1, 2015.)

a genuine revolution. However, it is likely too early to draw any far-reaching conclusions.

Finally, there are supermarkets, which cannot be overlooked, considering the fact that, as Łukasz Gołębiewski argues, if we were to combine retail bookstore chains and supermarket chains into a single analytic category, the latter would rank among the five largest booksellers in Poland, following EMPiK and Matras.[24] However, a consistent application of the traffic metaphor would require us to concede that supermarkets, like kiosks, are at most a single lane on the book highway. The common feature of hypermarkets and large chains such as EMPiK is, undoubtedly, their mass-market target consumer. Nevertheless, the fundamental difference lies in the fact that large supermarkets do not focus on selling books, which are just one of many products available on their shelves. Furthermore, their range of titles is often limited to children's books, dictionaries, self-help books and bestsellers.

Among the side lanes on the book highway, there is also the so-called "kiosk" circulation, which is by no means synonymous with newspaper kiosks in the narrow sense, nor with the most low-grade form of literary production such as Harlequin romances. Rather, it refers to books (typically albums or literary masterpieces) published in high print runs and distributed as entire series with daily newspapers and weekly magazines.[25]

The share of this circulation in the main stream should not be underestimated, not just because it encompasses traditional kiosks, grocery stores, and, naturally, large supermarket chains that also carry periodicals. There are two other reasons, ones that only indirectly involve distribution. Firstly, the printing of a single title of this type sometimes exceeds twenty thousand copies. Secondly, while these editions do not feature new releases or the current literary titles, their domain is that of literary classics, which reach a mass audience by way of newspapers and the points of distribution typically associated with them.

This circulation challenges the spatial categories that are traditionally used to describe the relationships between circulation systems and cultural registers. In this case, both vertical categories and categories of range prove unsatisfactory. If we were to apply a vertical perspective, we would have to conclude

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24   Gołębiewski, *Rynek książki w Polsce w 2007,* vol. 2: *Dystrybucja,* 137–138.

25   A few examples of such series are: "Klasyka XIX wieku" ["19th Century Classics"] and "Kolekcja XX wieku" ["20th Century Collection"], published by *Gazeta Wyborcza*; "Klasycy sztuki" ["Art Classics"], published by *Rzeczpospolita,* and "Polska literatura współczesna" ["Contemporary Polish Literature"] by the weekly magazine *Polityka*.

that that which belongs to the "high" register is distributed through means hitherto associated with that which is "low" (newspapers; cheap, disposable, utilitarian objects). On the other hand, if we use the "elite" vs. "egalitarian" opposition, it would appear that the aristocratic world of literary master-pieces descends from its ivory tower and emerges, almost literally, onto the streets. It is telling that, as part of a collection published by the weekly maga-zine *Polityka*, kiosks and grocery stores have stocked books by Marek Hłasko, Czesław Miłosz, Olga Tokarczuk, Julian Stryjkowski, Edward Redliński, Paweł Huelle, Jerzy Andrzejewski, Hanna Krall, Wiesław Myśliwski, Witold Gombrowicz, Tadeusz Borowski, Gustaw Herling-Grudziński and Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz alongside food products, cosmetics, newspapers and crossword puzzle books.

Circulations of Limited Scope

Along with highways, the map of Polish publishing circulation systems of course features local roads, which I refer to as p r o f i l e d circulations of limited scope. An exhaustive typology and characterization of these circu-lations would require the space of a voluminous book, therefore I will only discuss the three I consider particularly relevant, namely, the s p e c i a l i z e d a c a d e m i c, r e l i g i o u s and l i t e r a r y circulations.

1. The Academic Circulation

The s p e c i a l i z e d a c a d e m i c circulation is characterized by a particular type of readership, which comprises mainly of students, teachers, university lecturers, and others. This circulation has its own niche bookstores that do not, however, form any chain that competes with the main circulation. It also operates its own magazines and, furthermore, often receives additional finan-cial support from institutions belonging to the "field of consecration" and the "field of power," or the relevant ministries and universities.

From 2001 to 2006, the revenue from the sales of academic books amount-ed to 25.1 percent of the market, while textbooks made up 28.5 percent.[26] These data are hardly surprising if one considers the fact that the demand for academic literature is associated with the necessity of education and stimulated by institutions of higher learning and the Ministry of Education. Academic and popular science books also occasionally become bestsellers, though this applies exclusively to titles written by intellectual celebrities such

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26   Calculated from data provided by Łukasz Gołębiewski, *Rynek książki w Polsce w 2007* vol. 1: *Wydawnictwa*, 88.

as Umberto Eco and Norman Davies,[27] or authors whose books discuss sensitive subjects, such as *Fear*, by Jan Tomasz Gross.[28]

Still, the overall share of academic literature in the main circulation is unimpressive and contradicts the statistics. First, much of the revenue from sales is a result of high prices, rather than large printings (which average 3,000 copies). Second, this circulation is present in niche bookstores, rather than large chains. This can be explained by the high costs of distribution and promotion, which pose a barrier to entry for most small academic publishing houses, despite the subsidies they receive from their associated universities and other institutions. Only large publishers such as the Kraków-based Znak can afford to pay for distribution and promotion through large bookstore chains, and even they are willing to pay such premiums only in the case of potential bestsellers that can sell out and recoup the company's investment. Smaller publishers are forced to distribute their titles through alternative channels that circumvent wholesalers and large chains. This method of operation allows them, at best, to recuperate the cost of publishing the books. Due to the lack of funds for distribution and promotion, academic books often have a very limited availability, and are sometimes excluded from any circulation system whatsoever, if we consider the fact that readers cannot purchase a given publication if they are unaware of its existence. Such is the case with certain books that are promoted only through word of mouth or distributed at academic conferences.

2. The Religious Circulation

The existence of a profiled r e l i g i o u s   b o o k   circulation is a significant phenomenon in the Polish market. The average revenue from sales of all books of this type in 2001–2006 amounted to 5.1 percent of the entire market.[29] The religious literature available in the main stream is limited largely to titles devoted to, or written by, John Paul II, of which *Pamięć i tożsamość* [*Memory and Identity*] sold 1.2 million copies in 2005.[30] Even if we account for the specific nature of 2005, the year of John Paul II's death, it should be noted that the sale

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27   Norman Davies's *Europe East and West*, for example, was listed at number one on the EMPiK TOP 20 for August 27 to September 9, 2007.

28   Second place on the EMPiK TOP 20 list for January 14 to 27, 2008. Gross's book lost only to J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.

29   Calculated based on the report by Łukasz Gołębiewski (vol. 1: *Wydawnictwa*, 88).

30   Ibid., 33.

of "papal" literature has dipped insignificantly and continues to top pre-2004 sales.[31]

This circulation has its own audience and particular distribution channels. Religious books are addressed to a specific symbolic and religious community that is absent from the academic circulation system, which is dispersed among various specializations and their associated "sub-circulations" (liberal arts, medicine, law, economics, etc.). The greater cohesiveness of this circulation stems not only from the shared world view of its readership, which is obvious, but from the somewhat hermetic nature of the distribution system and the homogeneity of the titles. This system operates through what can be described as a micro-chain (Księgarnia św. Jacka has eighteen locations, as of 2006); it has its own printing houses (e.g., Drukarnia św. Wojciecha in Poznań), its own publishing houses (WAM, Biały Kruk, Edycja św. Pawła, Jedność, W drodze[32]) and even Catholic wholesalers.

Interestingly, there is a certain dialectic of centripetalism and dispersal inscribed into the circulation of religious books. On the one hand, this circulation is characterized by a standard range of titles addressed to a formatted, Catholic audience, while, on the other, it is noticeably dispersed, as this circulation includes, alongside books, such items as religious merchandise, icons, CDs and vestments. It resembles in this regard, albeit at a smaller scale, large bookstore chains, with the difference that the religious circulation is ideologically c l o s e d, while the main circulation is o p e n. For example, books such as J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* or Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* would never appear, for obvious reasons, in the religious circulation, while *Jesus of*

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31   Ibid., 33, 131–137.

32   I have omitted from this list the publishing house Społeczny Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, despite its extensive traditions and obvious associations with *Tygodnik Powszechny* and members of the Polish Church. However, in its current form, this publisher can hardly be classified as Catholic, as most of its output comprises literature belonging to the broad category of the liberal arts (prose, essays, and academic literature). In 2006 religious books made up approximately 40 percent of all the publisher's titles. Furthermore, in recent years Znak has turned out to be a significant actor in the popular-commercial circulation, publishing numerous bestsellers such as Norman Davies's *Rising '44: The Battle for Warsaw*, Ryszard Kapuściński's *Travels with Herodotus*, René Goscinny and Jean-Jacques Sempé's *Histoires inédites du Petit Nicolas*, Myśliwski's *Traktat o łuskaniu fasoli*, Vargas Llosa's *The Bad Girl*, and Gross's *Fear*. Among Znak's greatest commercial successes, only John Paul II's *Pamięć i tożsamość* could unambiguously be classified as "religious literature" (cf. ibid., 263–270). Interestingly, in the 1990s Znak also published a few interesting books about rock music (David Sinclair's *Rock on CD*, Gino Castaldo's *La Terra Promesa*, and Steve Turner's *Hungry for Heaven*). While only the last title was written from a Christian perspective, it did not constitute an attack on rock culture, nor did it have anything to do with religious orthodoxy.

Nazareth, by Benedict XVI, could possibly be found in the popular circulation. This situation could be compared metaphorically to a one-way entrance ramp connecting a local road to a highway.

3. The Literary Circulation

The l i t e r a r y   c i r c u l a t i o n appears to be the most heterogeneous and problematic of the three. According to the statistics, it generated an average 18.9 percent of the revenue of the entire market from 2001 to 2006,[33] yet that is less than one fifth of all book sales, and the above data account equally for poetry books, titles on the required reading list, books assigned to students of Polish studies, crime novels, women's literature, fantasy literature, and so on. There is no particular distribution channel associated with this circulation, and its identity is defined largely by the adjective "literary" and the fact that it continues to be regarded by the general public as a vestige of what was once the "high-artistic" circulation. While, like the academic circulation, it has its own specialized periodicals (e.g., *Nowe Książki*), the most influential media in this system are currently large newspapers, weeklies, and television.

If we were to attempt to identify the characteristic features of this circulation in its sociological dimension, we would have to point to its associations with the "field of consecrating institutions" and the "field of power." After all, the literary circulation is more than just a body of literary works that travel from the author and publisher to the reader-consumer; it is a system that also comprises literary critics, schools, universities, prestigious prizes, and, finally, the Ministry of Education. These associations can be classified as d i r e c t and i n d i r e c t.

The former comprise institutional operations carried out by the Ministry of Education, or alternatively, universities, with the purpose of influencing readership among children, young adults and students. Examples of such actions include school reading lists and the literary canon that every aspiring Polish Literature graduate is required to be acquainted with. Of course, these standards have, at most, a potential effect on the book market, considering that the required reading list does not consist of new releases and that libraries exist. In any case, the effect of institutional pressure is certainly not comparable to that exerted by textbooks. While the required reading list remains relatively stable and is only subject to minor modifications, textbooks undergo constant change, thus driving up demand, to a certain extent.

Literary prizes, on the other hand, including the most prestigious media prizes such as the Nike and the *Polityka* Passport, are examples of indirect

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33   Calculated based on data provided by Łukasz Gołębiewski (vol. 1: *Wydawnictwa*, 88).

associations. They are indirect because while they are awarded by a special-ized circle of critics and academics who carry out what can be described as the "consecration" of literary works, they are not a form of direct pressure of an institutional nature. These verdicts are, often unintentionally, increas-ingly a kind of literary certificate of quality to be exploited in marketing and advertising. I have already discussed this topic in an earlier section of this article. The persuasive influence of literary prizes as well as reviews in the popular press has in recent years been driven more by the potential of the media than the authority of the critics, who, as representatives of the "field of consecrating institutions," are gradually losing their positions as literary arbiters, as they are increasingly becoming a part of the "field of economic domination" typical of all production, including that which belongs to the popular-commercial circulation.

Despite the support of institutions and literary authorities associated with the "field of consecration" and the "field of power," literary fiction, by appear-ing in the main stream, must fight for the reader-consumer by the same rules as do self-help books, joke books and cookbooks. Otherwise it is relegated to the margins. The presence of literature in the main stream is significant. However, an examination of bestseller lists reveals that these largely consist of crime novels, women's fiction, thrillers, fantasy novels, young adult and children's books and non-fiction: all the genres that Żółkiewski, in describing the literary culture of pre-war Poland, would surely include in the t r i v i a l c i r c u l a t i o n.

Statistical data for 2006 show that the most frequently purchased genres of literature were crime novels (20 percent), romance and women's fiction (15 percent), young adult and children's literature (11 percent), non-fiction (11 percent), and various types of fantasy fiction (8 percent).[34] Poetry is not mentioned at all in the data, which means that it plays a negligible role in the main circulation. This is a result of both its relatively narrow target audience and the high costs of distribution mentioned above. Perhaps poetry, due to its elite nature, is the last bastion of what was once the "high-artistic" circulation.

Literary Circulations or Publishing Circulations?

Our definition and location of circulations as well as our assessment of their role hinges largely on our methodological assumptions: for example, whether or not we consider bestseller lists more or less credible than anonymous ques-tionnaires and polls, or than the interpretation of statistical data compiled by book market analysts. If we were to include in the literary circulation the

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34   Ibid., 64.

"sub-circulation" of the books on the required reading list, then the aforementioned 18.9 percent market share would have to be increased by an average of 2.8 percent per annum. The same is true of young adult and children's literature (averaging 8.5 percent of the revenue market share in 2001–2006), which Gołębiewski lists as a completely separate category from "literary fiction,"[35] which is a flawed approach, as the former also includes literary titles, ones that influence the circulation as a whole, such as the *Harry Potter* series and *Histoires inédites du Petit Nicolas*, by René Goscinny and Jean-Jacques Sempé. But the problem lies in how much these numbers shape the current position of literature on the overall publishing map of Poland. It appears that the traditional, sociological diagnoses offered by Stefan Żółkiewski and others explain very little today, when the "high-artistic" literary circulation is no longer the dominant one, while the homogenized main circulation has now expanded to primarily include literature that was once classified in the low-grade and inferior popular-trivial circulation. As Krzysztof Uniłowski correctly observes, "the outdated vision of a pyramid built of circulations stacked one on top of the other has been replaced by the metaphor of the network… Such a project [moreover] disrupts the stability of the divisions separating superior and inferior, dominant and subordinate, and central and peripheral areas."[36]

The metaphors that seem more appropriate in these circumstances appear to be the ones that reference horizontal space, particularly the metaphor of the highway and local roads, which not only illustrates the main circulation and the profiled circulations of a smaller scope, but also lacks the semantic ambiguity resulting from the figurative and literal meanings of the word "network." This metaphor is particularly useful when we want to point out contradictions and paradoxes, ones that Uniłowski in a sense alludes to. An observation of the contemporary Polish market reveals an interesting pattern. The c l o s e r we approach the center of distribution, the greater the d e g r e e   o f   d i s - p e r s a l   a n d   h e t e r o g e n e i t y of what is found there. The opposite is also true: the farther we go from the "book highway" towards the p e r i p h e r i e s of distribution, the greater the c o h e s i v e n e s s and h o m o g e n e i t y. For specific examples, we need look no further than EMPiK on the one hand and, on the other, Catholic and academic bookstores.

There is one extraordinarily important issue that is worth mentioning at this point, one that involves the "horizontal" configuration of contemporary circulations. It is not at all true that the vertical configuration has completely

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35   I was informed of the existence of this division by Łukasz Gołębiewski himself. The matter is discussed in a rather ambiguous manner in the book *Rynek książki w Polsce w 2007*.

36   Uniłowski, "Z popem na ty," 24.

disappeared from the public consciousness. The memory of the "high" circulation still exists; what is more, this notion is exploited by publishers when compiling the myriad "masterpiece collections" and "classical literature collections" distributed with newspapers. The very words "masterpiece" and "classical" refer to a group of "consecrated" works belonging to the "high" register. The point is that, in the current commercialized culture, the opposite poles of the former configuration have lost their distinctiveness and clarity.

There remains yet another problem. If literature has lost its privileged role on the map of book publishing and consumption, and on the contemporary cultural map in general, then are we justified in using the somewhat outdated academic terminology of "literary circulations," in the plural, inherited from the socio- and historical-literary tradition? Naturally, this is not to suggest that circulation is homogeneous, which is clearly not the case. Rather, the point is that it does not form any internal opposition that can be convincingly justified: there is no longer an official circulation vis-à-vis an underground one, nor a local circulation opposite its émigré counterpart.

Perhaps it would be best to change our approach and come to terms with the myriad "publishing circulations," of which literature is merely one part? Such a perspective would hardly be a welcome change for literary scholars. Nevertheless, this particular point of departure in the study of the subject has the benefit of facilitating the identification and description of certain social, distributional, marketing, semiotic, receptory and interpretative mechanisms, while also offering the possibility of actually influencing contemporary egalitarian, commercialized culture.

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Who Needs the Book?
Copyright in the Late Print Epoch

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Arguments presented by supporters of strengthening and expanding copyright protection are usually based on the assumption that it would serve the interests of the artists, allowing them to draw more profit from their work. This is the position taken, for instance, by ZAIKS (the Polish Association of Authors and Composers), one of the oldest and most active organizations of collective copyright management: "ZAIKS strives to protect the rights of Polish artists as true creators of Polish culture and the country's intellectual elite whose presence is a necessary condition for society's real development."[1] In fact, the Polish Act on Copyright and Related Rights in Chapter 8, Article 78.1 points to the creator as the copyright holder.[2]

A systematic study of the literary field in Poland after 1989 suggests, however, the assumption to be wrong as only a small number of writers identify their interests with the successful implementation of copyright protection. Meanwhile, the unauthorized distribution of digitally copied books – commonly referred to as

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1   "About ZAIKS," http://www.zaiks.org.pl/88,36,0_zaiks-ie; accessed October 6, 2014.

2   "Act No. 83 of February 4, 1994, on Copyright and Related Rights," Dz. U. [Journal of Laws] of 1994 No. 24, item 83.

piracy and almost unequivocally criticized by publishing houses – has proven to be a practice regarded positively by the authors themselves. Yet, the assumption that writers and publishers have opposing interests is patently false in the case of the model of printed books, considered by both groups to be fundamental for literature to function. This comes as a surprise in so far as the printed book determines the central paradigm of copyright law based on the concepts of individual ownership and original creation. This article attempts to shed light on this seemingly paradoxical constellation of interests, pointing to different motivations of both groups and the problem of recognizing one's own position within the literary field. We use the book, then, as a mediatory concept for specific interest groups: writers on the one hand, publishers on the other, and their attitude towards copyright protection.

The article uses empirical data gathered as part of a broader research effort entitled *Literatura polska po 1989 roku w* świetle *teorii Pierre'a Bourdieu* [*Pierre Bourdieu and Polish Literature after 1989*], led by Piotr Marecki.[3] The information gathered includes, among others, seventy-four author interviews (conducted with both prose writers and poets). It is not a representative sample, as the focus was on qualitative research and research on communities that are difficult to access. Furthermore, authors constitute a dispersed, inconstant group and therefore it is impossible to determine precisely the proper number of authors in Poland. The sample represents, nonetheless, groups of diverse achievement (with regard not only to the number of published books but also awards and nominations, translations and citations in academic studies) and of varied ages (the oldest respondent was born in the 1930s, the youngest in the 1990s). Interviews were also conducted with seventeen representatives of publishing houses (editors and owners). The sample included possibly a full spectrum of publishing activity in the field of literature: from one-person publishing houses and even non-existent ones which grew out of journals in the 1990s, to those which are middle-sized and relatively specialized, to large publishing houses offering a wide and diverse range of literature.

Our article analyzes excerpts from interviews relevant to the issue of copyright and the phenomena accompanying the shift from the printed book to online literature. Bourdieu's terminology suggested in the title of the research project will serve only as a frame of reference. Our main task here is to describe the process of remediation as seen today in Poland's literary field, and its consequences.

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3   Grzegorz Jankowicz, Paweł Marecki, Alicja Palęcka et al., *Literatura polska po 1989 roku w świetle teorii Pierre'a Bourdieu. Raport z badań* (Kraków: Ha!art, 2014).

The Principle of the Book

At least since the 16th century, or since Gutenberg's invention of print, the codex has served as a concept structuring the way people think about writing literature. A book is not simply a medium for literary content. First and foremost, it shapes the basic categories for describing texts and their qualities, such as cohesion, integrity, immutability, individual character, authorship, and so on. Jay David Bolter comments that:

> it seems natural to think of any book, written or printed, as a verbal unit. For the book is already a physical unit, its pages are sewn or glued together and then bound into a portable whole. Should not all the words inside proceed from one unifying idea and stand in the same rhetorical relationship to the reader?[4]

In addition, early concepts of copyright protection were based on the codex, as seen clearly in the example of the debate held in Germany in the second half of the 18th century concerning the emerging issue of copyright.[5] Its participants characteristically always based their arguments on the book as a material object. It was Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte who first made the distinction between material and immaterial aspects, which served as the first and the most difficult step to justify the need for the legal protection of literary works. Both philosophers were faced with the problem of redefining the concept of the book in a way that would combine the unlimited ownership of the copy purchased by the reader with the projected rights of the author to benefit from the published work and to be protected against illegal reprints.

Kant notes that "[a book] is not a thing which is thereby delivered, but an act [*opera*], namely a speech, and, what is more, literally."[6] By introducing a dual meaning of the book – seen as both *opus* and *opera*, an outcome and an act, "an external product of mechanical art (*opus mechanicum*)" and "a discourse of the publisher to the public,"[7] Kant could propose a rational framework for

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4   Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space. Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), 10.

5   See Martha Woodmansee, "The Genius and the Copyright: Economic and Legal Conditions of the Emergence of the «Author»," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 4 (1984).

6   Immanuel Kant "On the Injustice of Reprinting Books" after Friedemann Kawohl "Commentary on Kant's essay *On the Injustice of Reprinting Books (1785)*" in *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900)*, ed. Lionel Bently and Martin Kretschmer, www.copyrighthistory.org; accessed May 14, 2015.

7   Kawohl, "Commentary on Kant's essay *On the Injustice of Reprinting Books (1785)*."

tackling the abovementioned conflict of interests. Fichte, similarly, introduces the distinction between the physical and the ideational aspect of the book in an attempt to extract from the material object a part that would remain the property of the author regardless of its copy being purchased by the reader.[8]

This example points to three important issues. First, it reveals how deeply rooted the book is in the thinking about literature. Its material qualities transform into metaphors, used in the descriptions of literary discursive practices en bloc. Seen as a closed corpus of text, bound by a cover and with the name of the author and the title printed on it, the book thus determines the basic model of literature.

Second, the problems which the paradigm of the book poses to Kant and Fichte reveal the incompatibility of this seemingly unquestionable model with the literary practices of early modernity. The influence of technological change on the rapid development of the book market, dating from the end of the 18th century,[9] renders the two-centuries-old book metaphor inadequate for describing the emerging phenomena. Among them was also, to use Kant's formulation, the "unjust reprinting of books," which led to the creation and spread of copyright laws as a tool for protecting the interests of authors and publishers. The analytical acrobatics which both philosophers had to perform are proof that the book had already ceased to be a fully functional metaphor of literature, even though it continues to serve, despite everything, as the primary point of reference.

Third, the legislative movement aimed at regulating the growing book market, together with the economic and technological processes which have transpired since the end of the 18th century, have created strictly modern institutions – publishing houses, distribution companies, bookstores, literary criticism – preserving the influence of the book metaphor on the shape of practices within the literary field. Quoting Maciej Maryl, if "literature in our culture has taken the form of a closed, printed text existing in the context of institutionally determined conventions of reading and writing,"[10] it is necessary to emphasize precisely the institutional adoption of the models which shape the practices within the literary field for the broadly defined methods of distribution and consecration.

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8   Johann G. Fichte "Proof of the Illegality of Reprinting: A Rationale and a Parable," in *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900),* ed. Lionel Bently and Martin Kretschmer, www. copyrighthistory.org; accessed May 14, 2015.

9   Maciej Maryl, "Technologie literatury," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 2 (2012): 171.

10   Ibid., 162.

The analysis presented based on writers' interviews focuses on the extent to which the book has remained a model for the institution of literature. The notion of remediation describes the process where "a newer medium takes the place of an older one, borrowing and reorganizing the characteristics of writing in the older medium and reforming its cultural space."[11] What results from this process of remediation, from this evolution of media and forms of communication, is a "reconfiguration of the communication structure, in fact, of the entire cultural order resting upon it."[12] It is precisely the technological change, entailing broader social and cultural transformations, that invalidates the neutrality (or "naturalness") of the book principle, which in turn allows for a critical analysis of its determinants. The social and technological phenomena of today – a time described by Bolter as "the late age of print"[13] – allow us on the one hand to look into the historical determinants of the institution of literature via the de-naturalized medium of the codex book, and on the other hand, to observe the process of remediation (in other words, of two crashing paradigms of description and literary function) and a critical analysis of the ideologies and interests behind them. The latter will be explored in more detail further in this article.

Remediation

The process of remediation, between the printed book and the digital book, indicates that participants of the literary field are attempting to transfer the qualities of the older medium to the new one – they define and use the new medium while relying upon the categories developed in connection with the older medium. The use of the word "page" to refer to contents presented online is a classic example of this phenomenon.

This article focuses on the remediation between the printed book and the digital one in the context of those principles regulating the literary field and the literary market, in particular with regard to copyright. This includes issues such as the means of distribution, mechanisms of evaluation (also economic evaluation) and the methods of individualizing copies. The basic problem that the publishers are faced with amounts to a distinction between scarce and free goods. Printed books published in certain numbers and constituting material objects clearly belong to the first category. Meanwhile, digital

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11   Bolter, *Writing Space,* 23.

12   Grzegorz Godlewski, *Słowo – pismo – sztuka słowa. Perspektywy antropologiczne* (Warszawa: WUW, 2008), 285.

13   Bolter, *Writing Space,* 1.

books, especially due to the minimal costs of reproduction and distribution[14], have the status of being a free good. Thus, as publishers aim at transferring the characteristics of scarce goods to digital books, they use copyright laws as their main tool. Bolter notes, "If technologies really determined cultural values, then the notion of copyright would already have been severely curtailed, if not abolished, at least for electronic publication. Hypertext certainly seems to suggest a different economic and social model."[15] Remediation in this case means applying copyright to control the circulation of digital books and as a consequence, creating economic scarcity not justified by the technical conditions of reproduction. Remediation reveals itself as not only a neutral cultural process but also as a tool used for the protection of interests of a certain social group.

This process takes place for instance in the distribution of electronic books. Although the electronic form of the text allows for distribution through several available channels, in practice (determined by economic interests and legal regulations) the number of distributors of electronic books in Poland is severely limited, mirroring in fact the state of the printed book market. Capital relationships between e-book distributors and the biggest parties of the book market perpetuate and copy the relations associated with the printed book to the digital book market.[16] Reproduction of these relations applies even to the distribution costs which in the case of e-books are proportionally the same as in the case of printed books.[17]

One of the publishers surveyed in the research confirmed that electronic distribution by the market's strongest players reflects the distribution model of traditional books. Meanwhile, the costs of printing have been replaced by

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14   Chris Anderson, *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More* (New York: Hyperion, 2006), original essay published as „The Long Tail," *Wired Magazine,* October 2004.

15   Bolter, *Writing Space*, 211.

16   Key distributors of electronic books in Poland include Nexto (part of the Ruch SA group), Virtualo (Empik), Publio (Agora SA) and Woblink (owned by Grupa Wydawnicza Znak). Allegro, Merlin and Platon (one of the biggest distributors of printed books) also have their own platforms for e-book distribution.

17   "When asked how much a publisher of e-books has to pay for distribution, Virtualo dodged the answer citing «trade secrets», but a representative of a Warsaw publishing house revealed to Polskie Radio that the distribution costs look similar for printed and digital books. E-book distribution «devours» between 40% to 50% of the publication costs." (Hanna Uszyńska, "Wiemy dlaczego Polacy przepłacają za e-booki" ["We Know why Poles Pay too Much for E-books] PolskieRadio.pl 2013, http://www.polskieradio.pl/42/259/Artykul/964519,Wiemy-dlaczego-Polacy-przeplacaja-za-ebooki; accessed July 27, 2014).

a tax on goods and services paid by the publisher, which amounts to 23 percent for e-books and 5 percent for codex books. This reveals the influence of the state on the literary field and on the preservation of the book principle, as the VAT rate on e-books is determined against the interests of the actors in the field, including the readers. Regardless of the size and position of the represented publishing house, responding editors admitted in interviews that the current solutions are "bizarre" and prevent the development of the medium in Poland. Preferential tax rate favors the printed book as a special good requiring protection and popularization, attributing to e-books the status of being an object qualitatively different from the paper medium.

One should not underestimate also the importance of international copyright regulations, such as the Berne Convention (signed for the first time in 1886 and later amended several times, ratified by Poland in 1934), Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) from 1994 and the Treaty of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). All of these regulations are closely tied to the economic models dominant in the late capitalism, which suggests that the described mechanism is not a consequence of particular policies of states (including the Polish state) but a global tendency.[18] The interests of the state in maintaining the traditional book market result also from the attempt to preserve an entire economy sector related to print: publishing houses, printing houses, paper production, and so on.[19]

However, the policy of the state does not explain fully the strategy of the largest publishers to transfer the traditional distribution model onto online content and, as a consequence, maintaining the principle of the book. Representing their publishing houses, editors themselves are entangled in the book market (different from the literary field). As a result, they discuss the electronic forms mostly in the context of market mechanisms. This logic can

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18 Protection of intellectual property, including copyright, is one of the key activities of the World Trade Organization and acceptance of existing regulation is a prerequisite for joining the WTO. See: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/trips_e.htm, accessed October 6, 2014].

19 "The Minister [of Finance, in reply to an inquiry of the Commissioner for Human Rights] remarked that even in the event of changes in the EU law, any change in the Polish regulations on the matter would have to be preceded by a study of the impact of such an amendment on the publishing market, to ensure that a lower rate would cause no harm to the traditional book market." ("Inquiry submitted to the Constitutional Tribunal concerning the difference in VAT rates for printed digital publications." Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, 2013, http://www.sprawy-generalne.brpo.gov.pl/szczegoly.php?pismo=1774751, accessed October 2, 2014).

be seen even in an interview with the editor of one of the smallest publishing houses participating in the research, one whose business yields negligible profits:

> We haven't made such plans yet. Regarding the digital format of our books we rather talked about releasing some [for free] from time to time rather than distributing them at certain prices. We will rather head towards such anarchistic cooperative models which may prove to be more effective. Because there are analyses showing that such content release may generate interest in the traditional form. Sometimes the publishers themselves release their books to, I don't know, *torrent sites* [...] which sometimes animates sales.

It could be argued then that publishers and their special interests shape the global tendencies with regard to the legal regulation of the book market. However, regardless whether it is the state or the publishers' primary interest to maintain the scarcity of produced goods, there is no doubt that their efforts appear to be convergent (as they were at the birth of the modern copyright law[20]) and are realized using a wide range of copyright protection structurally tied, in the late print period, to the principle of the book.

However, this is not the case when it comes to authors. Their interests, as has been said in the introduction, are usually cited as the key argument for the strengthening of copyright protection. Interviews with writers being analyzed here, as well as a more general analysis of the literary field, clearly suggest that the interests of authors are not identical with the interests of the publishers and do not involve copyright protection or preserving the methods of codex book distribution. Nonetheless, this discrepancy is not reflected in the attitude towards the paradigm of the printed book which remains the basic model determining the ways for evaluating literary production. The following section of the article contains an analysis of the diagnosed discrepancy.

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20 This remark is a reference mainly to the general observations made by Michel Foucault in "What is an Author?," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault,* ed. Donald Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 113. More detailed historical inquiries point to, among others, the monopoly of the printing trade granted to the London-based Stationers Company but dependent on the institution's taking the responsibility of acting as censor. See also John Feather "From Rights in Copies to Copyright: The Recognition of Authors' Rights in English Law and Practice in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*, ed. Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 195.

"That Which Really Exists, Exists on Paper"

Generally, two seemingly contradictory tendencies emerge from the interviews with the authors. On the one hand, there is a certain resistance within this group against electronic media and digital forms of literature – a resistance to recognizing the Internet as a medium offering new opportunities, different from the one offered by paper – on the other hand, however, unauthorized distribution of literary texts online ("piracy"[21]) is not usually perceived in negative terms, as it serves certain desirable ends.

Electronic forms of literature were treated with reserve by the majority of respondents. Among fifty-seven opinions where the traditional book was directly compared to the e-book, thirty-two clearly favored paper. Twelve authors unambiguously affirmed the efficacy of electronic forms, while eight respondents were referring only to e-books, often identified as Internet literature.[22]

Among the reasons for the codex book preference, the respondents mentioned sensual contact with the object ("The book needs to have its paper, its shape, its smell"), as well as the low demand for e-books (based both on their own experience and intuition), and lack of interest in the subject on account of their habits and tastes; reading a printed book was also compared to a face to face meeting. E-books are thus seen as complementary to paper, and publication only in the electronic form as a source of disappointment. Paper is a necessary element of book distribution.

Such opinions voicing the importance of printed books were accompanied by evaluations of the Internet which are very telling in the context of this analysis: "it's some sort of dump", "those blogs and whatnots also contain a lot of thrash", "there is no filter". Of course, the Internet is a space where every user may receive any type of online content, but it is also a space where they may produce content and share it with millions of other users. This truism has its consequences also for the literary field, regulated by institutions with the power to consecrate and bestow symbolic capital. The Internet seems to be a threat for the traditional mechanisms of distribution and control of literature, and at the same time, it still has not developed its consecration tools, thus remaining subordinate to the mechanisms of another order. Media

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21   Although "piracy" as a term is often used neutrally in the public debate, it carries clear axiological connotations and implies a classification of discussed practices as illegal; we have decided avoid the term in order to highlight their complex determinants.

22   Several interviews with respondents possessing additional knowledge concerned also, i.a. blogs, periodicals, and literary portals (Liternet.pl, Nieszuflada.pl, etc.), as well as literary forms specific to the Internet (hypertext, literary games, etc.).

recognition, anointment by an authority, as well as literary prizes are simply contingent upon the primacy of print.

Literary awards are a good example of the primacy and dominance of print and perhaps one of the most important consecration tools governed by the criteria of the literary field,[23] which they shape in several dimensions. Since awards are also an institution where important writerly interests converge, we will use this example to present and explain those interests.

Publisher's representatives who took part in the survey clearly confirmed that awards compel people to read certain authors and may even guarantee peer recognition of both the book and its author. Secondly, awards provide a significant income boost, often allowing the authors to continue with their work over the next several months. "Frankly speaking, it's a kind of subsidy for the writer". Third, attaching the name of the award to the name of the writer opens further opportunities for earning a living from the literary activity, or rather, from activities related to literature. Remuneration for actual literary work is low or non-existent for the vast majority of writers, especially in the case of poetry.[24] Their proper income is earned through full-time employment, various types of commission or capitalizing on their position as authors by publishing essays, reviews and other short texts for the popular media, various short forms for literary journals and anthologies, conducting workshops, meetings with the readers, participation in festivals, fellowships and so on. Awards facilitate recognition in the system of libraries, cultural institutions, popular and professional journals; they are the writer's *raison d'être*.

However, to apply for awards, the printed form is required.[25] The editors of a mostly online publishing house commented:

> Well, no, there's no other option. You have to send the paper version. If this doesn't change, we'll have to continue [investing in] paper… Initially we hadn't planned for any paper [publications]… And then it turned out that we had an opportunity to print those few books and it proved beneficial. I mean, to the authors, not to us.

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23   See Jankowicz, Marecki, Pałęcka et al., *Literatura polska.*

24   Ibid.

25   Rules for submitting literary work for the Silesius, Angelus and Gdynia awards require sending between seven to ten physical copies of the book and submission rules for other competitions (e.g. Nike, Gryfia, Nagroda Literacka Miasta Stołecznego Warszawy, Wielki Kaliber, Nagroda im. Janusza A. Zajdla) do not specify the form of submission. Only in the case of Nagroda Kościelskich, submission rules clearly state that "as an exception, particularly valuable applications may be taken into consideration based on publication in journals, in the form of booklet, typescript or electronic record."

Turning away from print entails an exclusion from institutional circulation. Thus, the following words of one of our respondents can be taken quite literally: "That which really exists, exists on paper."[26]

Maciej Maryl observes: "If the transmissions called literature today used to function in smaller circulations enabling mutual interaction between the receiver and the sender, industrial scale printing shatters this interaction. The audience is vast and silent, and there emerge intermediaries between the writer and the reader in the form of institutions such as literary criticism."[27] Habits, likes and attachment to the scent, texture and shape appear to be functional rationalizations in the context of authorial interests. If the literary field is structured by the book principle, existing in it (or even entering it) is also dependent on the principle and on the printed form.

"I Jack Things Myself"

The character of the Internet reshapes the distribution of literature and "piracy" becomes one of its major forms. It is commonly assumed that unlicensed content distribution works against the interests of its producers, however, considering the current system of remuneration for literary work (or rather, its lack), piracy appears to serve desirable functions from the perspective of the authors, which distinguishes their interests from those of the publishers. Among fifty-five opinions on piracy, only eight were unequivocally negative, invoking primarily its negative impact on income:

> This is our job, this is where we put our efforts and how we earn our living. It seems like some sort of a socialist utopia that everything can be free and I absolutely cannot accept it. I do believe that it is the authors' sacred right to control where their work is published and if it is related to any kind of sale, it is the authors' sacred right to benefit from that sale.

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26 The domination of the printed book resurfaces also, in a seemingly banal form, at the stage of critical reception. It is a common practice for the publishers to send out free copies of books, which may (but does not have to) result in the publication of a review, analysis or a critical note. One could assume that it is a practice employed to simplify the distribution process, benefitting both the publisher (whose product may potentially be discussed in a press release) and the critics (who do not have to invest their own funds to purchase book copies). Meanwhile, as one of the recorded responses suggests, reviewer copies are seen also as informal remuneration.

27 Maryl, "Technologie,"172.

However, the above position represents the minority. The remaining forty-seven interviews mentioned mostly piracy's function of disseminating the text, which proved to be the primary objective of the authors. Since income from writing is negligible, direct financial gratification is not taken into consideration. What is important is the symbolic capital which becomes a compensation in itself and/or is used to profit from paraliterary work and commissions.[28] The possibility of broadly distributing the work becomes one of the basic sources of symbolic capital, in this case translating into audience recognition as opposed to the consecration by the standard tools of the field, such as literary criticism and awards. Two authors directly describe this mechanism in the following words:

> There's a conflict of interest between the publishers and writers. Many authors, the ones I know, those within the belles-lettres, don't really strive so much for some sort of great financial success and having wads of money. What they want is more like... recognition. You know, getting attention, all the accompanying forms of appreciation that come with the book. So the authors are more willing to give something away for free, because they want to communicate.

> Considering the way I function and the situation when a book is not a source of income for me, I don't see [piracy as] a problem. The more people read it, the more they will reach for other things written by me and that strengthens my position. ... I know that a lot of famous music bands work like that, I mean, they release albums but earn their money through concerts. It's the same with the kind of books I write. Bestsellers, obviously, earn money but the author gets only a fraction of it – there is a huge machinery in between and it sort of reduces the income.

One of the respondents cited above is a widely recognized author, earning her living from literature and firmly established in the market. The number of positive opinions regarding unlicensed online distribution indicates that such an attitude is unrelated to the author's position in the literary field. However, in the case of popular, commercial literary production, such an attitude probably isn't as pervasive.

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28   Such as writing essays, reviews and other forms of writing for the popular media, as well as short texts for anthologies and literary journals, conducting workshops, participation in festivals and meeting with the authors, scholarships etc., which are the actual source of income in literature.

In other words, recognition of one's own position in the publishing "food chain" is accompanied by a very pragmatic acceptance of piracy as one of the desired distribution methods. The respondents repeatedly referred to their own position in the book market, ten mentioned low income from sales or occupying a niche position (especially in the case of poets) where any financial gratification is excluded from the process of work. In situations like these, unlicensed online distribution is, in fact, welcomed:

> Maybe it's a matter of my life situation which simply determines my position here… God, I'd be glad if someone [pirated my work]!
> If anyone thinks great numbers of people are going to buy something like that at a bookstore, I just find it ridiculous. It's better to spend more time on trying to encourage people to read in general, in any way, than to argue about copyright on the Internet.

The unauthorized online distribution of books, viewed in an unambiguously negative light by publishers as a form of reducing the economic capital of all entities engaged in the production of literature, reveals itself as a mechanism conducive to the increase of symbolic capital, the latter constituting the primary interest of the authors themselves. Of course, as we have already discussed,[29] this priority should not be explained by the field's high degree of autonomy, but rather by the structure of access to the economic capital in the literary field. As a result, the interests of the publishers and the interest of the authors are located within different stages of the book's functioning in the market. The former profit from sales, the latter from their works' reception.

However, online distribution of unlicensed copies, while it may contribute to the symbolic capital of the writer, is itself determined by the mechanisms related to the printed book. In other words, only after the book is printed is the text seen as valuable enough to become subject to unofficial distribution. Printing appears to be the first, most preliminary stage of consecration, which opens access to the following stages, such as winning awards, participating in festivals and so on.

While the interests of the publishers thus focus primarily on the codex book model as a limited good, the interests of authors are related to it only temporarily. In the case of the latter, books function only as a condition for participating in the literary field, allowing for further stages of consecration. This is also the reason for the authors' ambivalent attitude to copyright protection and the principle of the book: they provide "the right of entry" to the field but do not make it easier to function in it effectively.

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29   Jankowicz, Marecki, Palęcka et al., *Literatura polska.*

Unequivocal consent to the option of free distribution afforded by the Internet suggests that perhaps we may be witnessing the emergence of a new consecration method based on the "democratic" mechanism of approval by a direct vote (counted in downloads, clicks and interaction with the online text), characteristic of the Internet age. Naturally, this consecration mechanism is partly based on the media field as well as promotional activities by both publishers and authors themselves. Importantly, it is an explicit inclusion of the audience as an actor into the literary field.

Asked about success indicators, editors at a publishing house operating almost exclusively online enumerated such tools of consecration as an audience award from a portal, download numbers for books of poetry, or "[Facebook] likes and shares". They admit the latter to be a vulgar approach but one that nonetheless provides measurable indicators for the reach of their publications. A similar tone can be heard in the majority of interviews with the authors. Online dissemination of the text "means that it gets somewhere, that it means something not just to me, but to other people as well."

One of the authors emphasized the aspect of sharing involved in piracy: "What is today referred to as piracy, may one day… if we manage to change the law, become something normal, an act of sharing. So I don't like this negative definition". Another respondent said: "I don't think that we're talking about property here so I also don't think we can talk about theft". Recommendations, sharing and exchange are all proper to the culture of Internet literature. This particular aspect was omitted in the statements made by representatives of publishers. Representing economic entities whose purpose (in addition to publishing and promoting literature) is to yield profit (or, in the case of smaller publishers, survive in the market), they view the book more in terms of *opus* than *opera*, as an object to be sold in the market and not as content which can be distributed with the help of the Internet at almost no cost.[30]

The ephemeral nature of online evaluation and consecration is symptomatic of the remediation process taking place in the late age of print, a process whose outcome is far from settled. As an expression, "late age of print" seems to assume an inevitable decline of print, however, this does not mean that the mechanisms of the new medium are in any way determined.

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30 Commentaries on piracy mentioned also high book prices, making the readers download them for free. "I jack things myself so I'm not going be angry at people who do the same." This argument, repeated by six respondents, is important as it reveals authors to be also participants of culture, sharing the attitude of the audiences they address. The use of unauthorized copies is sometimes also seen as a stage leading to a proper purchase, a "trying out" of the product before making the decision to pay for it.

The transplantation of the paradigm of the codex book by the medium of the Internet, a process controlled by the most powerful participants of the literary field and market (i.e. big publishers and distributors), proves that, as Bolter rightly points out, technology in itself is not enough to determine the ways it is used.[31] This becomes strikingly clear in the case of copyright whose current trends suggest a strengthening of the earlier model associated with the technology of print and the principle of the book, rather than attempts to create new solutions to the challenges posed by Internet technologies. However, a recognition of the key actors in the literary field, the structure of domination and the ways of engagement which are tied to a preference for a particular medium, is necessary first and foremost to understand the ongoing processes and to avoid hasty identifications. As we have tried to show, a strong attachment to the printed book, invoked today in almost all discourses related to literature, readership promotion, education and also copyright, may in fact signal completely different interests. The paradigm of the codex book has at least two aspects. On the one hand, it determines the specific shape of restrictive copyright. On the other hand, to go back to Kant, the book as an *opus* still reveals itself as a necessary element to legitimize the *opera,* a condition necessary for the recognition of the work, and consequently, its author.

Translation: Anna Warso

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31   Bolter, *Writing Space,* 12 and elsewhere.

New Phenomena of Literary Culture

Katarzyna Bazarnik

Sociological Contexts of Liberature

> The struggles over definition (or classification) have *boundaries* at stake (between genres and disciplines, or between modes of production inside the same genre) and, therefore, hierarchies. To define boundaries, defend them and control entries is to defend the established order in the field.
>
> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*

The following article is an attempt to critically describe and self-analyze liberature, a phenomenon whose emergence I have contributed to, first as the co-author of two books — *Oka-leczenie* [*Mute-I-Late* or *Eyes-ore*][1] and *(O)patrzenie* [*Ga(u)ze*][2] — to which the label is applied, and later as a researcher who laid the academic groundwork for the theoretical postulates formulated by Zenon Fajfer. In an essay published in *Dekada Literacka* in 1999, the author proposed the term *liberature* (from the Latin *liber*, meaning book) to be used in reference to a separate genre that would include works of literature in which the writer or poet takes deliberate advantage of the space and structure of the book as well as the visual qualities of the printed word as an extra-verbal means of expression, one

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1 Zenon Fajfer and Katarzyna Bazarnik, *Oka-leczenie* (Kraków: prototype edition, 2000; Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2009).

2 Katarzyna Bazarnik and Zenon Fajfer, *(O)patrzenie* (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2003).

that constitutes a nonverbal semantic code that harmonizes with the verbal code. This proposal was made in the concluding section of the article provocatively titled *Liberature: An Appendix to a Dictionary of Literary Terms*,[3] which bore the features of an artistic manifesto and which, in hindsight, was interpreted as such by researchers as well as the authors who came to identify with the theses contained therein. The piece was published to accompany the *Exhibition of Unconventional Books* we hosted at the Jagiellonian Library as part of Bloomsday, a series of events commemorating the date on which Joyce's *Ulysses* takes place.

Fajfer at the time postulated that the writer's medium ought to include, beside language, the visual and material aspects of books and the printed word, such as the color and form of the typeface, the typography of the page (*mise-en-page*), the architecture of the volume, and even the paper or other material on which the text is printed. He encouraged other writers to make deliberate and active use of these features, seeing such poetics as a "way of saving hardcopy books from obliteration by electronic media," and concluding that "this fourth, still officially unacknowledged, mode will infuse new life into literature. This genre may be the future of literature."[4] In later articles, he also referred to tradition, pointing out a number of acclaimed writers who had employed such devices, deliberately molding the physical space of their works and subversively revealing the opaqueness of materialized language.

This theoretical postulate, which the artist provocatively presented as an "appendix to a dictionary of literary terms," may be perceived as a classic form of intervention in the consecrated field of literature with the purpose of shifting its borders and changing its internal hierarchy. As Bourdieu observes, "to produce effects is already to exist in a field, even if these effects are mere reactions of resistance or exclusion."[5] Fajfer's manifesto – this autonomy-giving voice advocating the independence and purity of literature, addressing writers and theoreticians alike – initially struck a chord with literary scholars and, in time, with artists as well,[6] perhaps owing to the fact that earlier

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3 Zenon Fajfer, "Liberatura. Aneks do słownika terminów literackich," *Dekada Literacka* 5–6 (1999): 8–9; reprinted in *Liberatura czyli literatura totalna. Teksty zebrane z lat 1999--2010* [*Literature or Total Literature*], ed. and trans. Katarzyna Bazarnik (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2010), 23–28. Subsequent citations refer to the more readily available reprint.

4 Fajfer, *Liberatura*, 28.

5 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: The Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 225–226.

6 It should be noted that Radosław Nowakowski, one of the curators of the "Booksday" exhibition at the Jagiellonian Library, previously a self-described "bookmaker," immedi-

suggestions, intuitions, and proposals for the inclusion of (typo)graphical and material qualities of the written word[7] within the scope of literary analysis had already paved the way, to a certain degree, for ideas of this type in the academic field. His proposal also fell onto a fertile sociocultural ground, drawing interest from a group of young, aspiring critics and editors, students, and alumni of Jagiellonian University's Polish Studies department in Kraków, all of whom were associated with *Ha!art*, a newly-founded interdisciplinary magazine devoted to new culture. These postulates found their practical implementation in the above-mentioned book *Oka-leczenie*, which took the form of three codices joined at the covers, written in the 1990s. In 2000, we printed a mini-edition of nine copies at a digital print shop as a prototype that could be presented to potential publishers. The manifesto precipitated other actions, not all of which were artistic in nature: in 2002 we founded the Liberature Reading Room at the Małopolska Institute of Culture, and one year later we launched the "Liberatura" book series with our second title, *(O)patrzenie*, at the Krakowska Alternatywa (later renamed Ha!art) publishing house, which also publishes the aforementioned magazine *Ha!art*. The idea for the series emerged in response to a proposal from the editor-in-chief and head of the publishing house, Piotr Marecki, who was preparing a special issue[8] devoted entirely to our artistic and cultural work, while offering to publish *(O)patrzenie*.

I will revisit these practical aspects of liberature at the end of this article; I merely describe them in short at this point in order to outline the context of the phenomenon and to point out to a few crucial factors shaping liberature as a contemporary cultural phenomenon. One the one hand, it can be described

ately declared his association with liberature, and subsequent declarations were made by other authors as more titles were published in the series.

7   See Stefania Skwarczyńska, "Problem ekspresywności czynników pozajęzykowych na gruncie wypowiedzenia ustnego i pisemnego," in *Wstęp do nauki o literaturze*, vol. 2 (Warszawa: PAX, 1954); Henryk Markiewicz, "Sposób istnienia i budowa dzieła literackiego," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 2 (1962): 331–352; Markiewicz, "Jeszcze o budowie dzieła literackiego w związku z artykułem prof. R. Ingardena," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 2 (1964): 429–434; Carl Darryl Malmgren, *Fictional Spaces in the Modernist and Postmodernist American Novel* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1985); Jerzy Kutnik, *The Novel as Performance. The Fiction of Ronald Sukenick and Raymond Federman* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986); Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Donald F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), and the concept of technotext, which emerged at the same time, unbeknownst to us: Katherine N. Hayles, *Writing Machines* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2002).

8   *Ha!art* 2 (15), (2003).

as a literary genre or a hybrid genre,[9] or the category of liberariness that characterises certain literary works,[10] while on the other hand, its very existence is often questioned, or it is pointed out that liberature is merely a trend in new Polish literature, a cultural institution,[11] or — in more practical terms — a publishing series featuring unconventional books. It seems that Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the literary field and the contemporary, functional/ rhetorical and sociolinguistic approaches to the genre may shed important light on the situation and encompass its heterogeneity within a theoretical framework.

Let us start, however, at the beginning, that is at the conclusion of the manifesto, where a generic proposal is made, one that is developed in subsequent essays by Fajfer[12] and myself.[13] While the examples of works employing the "rhetoric of materiality" provided in the article could be classified either as lyric (Mallarmé's *A Throw of the Dice*) or epic (Joyce's novel), and *Oka-leczenie* itself could equally well belong to both categories, perhaps even that of the dramatic, Fajfer's first intuition was to define the phenomenon at hand as a "literary mode." (This almost offhand proposal at the end of his essay was emphasized in a subsequent article, symbolically titled *lyric, epic, dramatic,*

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9   Wojciech Kalaga, "Tekst hybrydyczny. Polifonie i aporie doświadczenia wizualnego," in *Kulturowe wizualizacje doświadczenia*, ed. Włodzimierz Bolecki and Adam Dziadek (Warszawa: IBL and "Centrum Międzynarodowych Badań Polonistycznych," 2010).

10 Agnieszka Przybyszewska, *Liberackość dzieła literackiego* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo UŁ, 2015), Grzegorz Maziarczyk, *The Novel as Book: Textual Materiality in Contemporary Fiction in English* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2013).

11 See the syllabuses listed in footnote 49 below.

12 These articles have been compiled and presented in chronological order in the aforementioned bilingual book by Zenon Fajfer, *Liberatura czyli literatura totalna. Teksty zebrane z lat 1999-2010.* [*Literature or Total Literature*], specially published for a panel devoted to the subject of liberature at the IAWIS (International Association of Word and Image Studies) Focus Conference (*Displaying Word and Image*), held at the University of Ulster in Belfast, in June, 2010.

13 See Katarzyna Bazarnik, "Liberature: A New Literary Genre?," in *Insistent Images. Iconicity in Language and Literature*, ed. Elżbieta Tabakowska et al. (Amsterdam–Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2007); Bazarnik, "Liberatura, czyli o powstawaniu gatunków (literackich)," in *Od liberatury do e-literatury*, ed. Eugeniusz Wilk and Monika Górska-Olesińska (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2011) (also published in English); and Bazarnik, リベラトゥラ−−テキストと書物の形を統合する新しい文学ジャンル（久山宏一訳）["Liberature: A Literary Genre that Integrates the Text and Form of a Book"], trans. Koichi Kuyama, 『れにくさ』, Renyxa. Реникса [Journal of the Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo] 3 (2012). See also Bazarnik *Liberature. A Book-Bound Genre* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo UJ, 2016).

liberature[14]). Interestingly, Fajfer does not limit himself to merely aesthetic categories when describing its features; his comments on the typeface, typographic layout, and the texture and color of the paper reveal a significant awareness of the sociocultural context of a literary statement modeled in this fashion. Notice the arguments he employs when discussing the semantic aspect of print:

> A simple experiment of printing, for example, a Shakespeare sonnet in a loud type used in advertising, would prove how important these matters are — the dissonance would be obvious. But one could easily think of an artistically more fruitful use of a particular typeface; for example, the Polish national anthem printed in Polish, but with Gothic type and the Cyrillic alphabet — a device that would arouse strong emotions and provoke a response from every Polish reader.[15]

His idea to print the Polish national anthem using a Gothic font and the Cyrillic alphabet would be incomprehensible without considering the nature of the hypothetical audience of such a message. The choice of a typeface charged with negative cultural associations would "provoke a response" as a socially significant act only from a specific group of readers; those in other cultures would find the gesture either completely unintelligible or merely aesthetic in nature, hinting, for example, at a nostalgia for "historical," "beautiful," or "stylized" typefaces. Such an argument, on the one hand, exhibits an awareness of the historical and cultural context in which the author and reader always operate; on the other hand, it points to the social determinants of the bibliographical code,[16] which is typically left to the publisher, and for which, as Fajfer postulates, the author himself should now take responsibility. In liberature, this aspect of the book, which is ostensibly irrelevant from the point of view of the literary scholar, would be determined by the author of the text himself. In effect, such a text would be a work of "*auteur* literature" (as paradoxical as that may sound), analogous to *auteur* cinema or theater, a comparison that Fajfer himself makes.[17]

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14   Fajfer, "~~liryka, epika, dramat~~, liberatura," in *Od Joyce'a do liberatury. Szkice o architekturze słowa*, ed. Katarzyna Bazarnik (Kraków: Universitas, 2002), 233–239. Reprinted in English as "~~lyric, epic, dramatic~~, liberature" in Fajfer, *Liberatura*, 43-49.

15   Fajfer, "Liberatura. Aneks do słownika terminów literackich," 25.

16   I have borrowed this term from the works of Jerome McGann, among others *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

17   He compares such "*auteur*" books to performances staged by Tadeusz Kantor's Cricot 2 theater and Jerzy Grotowski's Theater of 13 Rows; see Fajfer, "Liberatura. Aneks do słownika terminów literackich," 26.

Otherwise, recognizing the semantic value of the bibliographical code and its effect on the reception of the work, one would have to accept that the message forged by a series of agents that are heteronomous to the work is not fully autonomous; yet creative autonomy, the freedom to create unbridled by external factors, is precisely what the author of *Spoglądając przez ozonową dziurę* [*Detect Ozone Whole Nearby*] seeks to achieve. Further analysis of liberature's founding manifesto and its author's subsequent statements reveals a distinct emphasis placed on the autonomy of the writer as the one true author of the work, postulating his or her independence from economic factors, the market, tastes, and historical conditions, and focusing on his or her creative freedom. Zenon Fajfer discussed this issue in one of his essays:

> As a practicing writer, I am much more fascinated with artistic prospects: first of all, a vision of creating a fully autonomous work in which the author would be responsible for its every constituent, just as sometimes happens in the theatre when the author of the play is also the stage designer and director.
> Total work, the total artist. Craig's and Wyspiański's dream transferred onto a page? Even if it were so, one should not forget that long before them, Blake and Mallarmé had seen their "monumental theatres," and after them Joyce put that into more or less successful practice.[18]

His diagnosis of the semantics governing the visual design of literary works resembles, to a certain extent, the descriptions of the meaning and function of the bibliographical code proffered by D. F. McKenzie and Jerome McGann. This subject had thus far been a focus of attention and analysis primarily for historians, bibliographers, and textual scholars as McKenzie and McGann themselves were. Such a study of the materiality of the book involved the dating of texts, determining their authenticity, characterizing the institutions by which they were published and distributed, and the types of audiences for whom they were intended. However, these activities were never – or hardly ever – carried out with an interpretative intention.[19] McKenzie's *Bibliography and Sociology of Texts* and McGann's *The Textual Condition* and *The Black Riders* were breakthroughs in their fields, ones that redefined bibliography as the sociology of texts. Their authors claimed that one cannot properly study, describe, understand, and interpret the meaning of texts without considering

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18   Fajfer, "~~lyric, epic, dramatic,~~ liberature," 47.

19   Donald F. McKenzie, "The Book as an Expressive Form," in *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 9–30.

the sociological dimension inscribed into their material form, while each edition of "the same work" is an interpretation thereof. From this perspective, the visual design of the book is regarded as a message in itself, one typically sent by the publisher, while the content of this message serves promotional and commercial purposes, described by Bourdieu as forces heteronomous to the literary field. Thus, paradoxically, the first "word" which the reader encounters comes not from the author of the text, but rather is an institutional message, one subject more to the rules of economy than those of art. The concept of a fully *auteur* work postulated in liberature changes that relationship, placing that first "word" back in the hands of authors. Even if the writers do not design the entire book themselves, by participating in preparing the prototype or design of the cover in close cooperation with the graphic designer and the editor, they become the primary agent in the process of its production.

It is precisely bibliographers and textual scholars such as John Kidd, D.F. McKenzie, and Jerome McGann who posited that the bibliographical code of *Ulysses* and the volumes of poetry published by Joyce in the 1930s were not utilitarian in nature, but rather constituted a semiotic code that was closely linked to the text and deliberately shaped by the author himself. These observations coincided with our readings of the "words on the page," or rather pages, of *Finnegans Wake*, which suggested that the fictional space of this experimental narrative is materially bound to the physical space of the book.[20] This bibliographical description of Joyce's writing confirmed our intuition that we were dealing with a highly autonomous author, one who occupied a dominant position in the network of relations among editors, publishers, printers, and distributors, allowing him to influence the physical form of the published books, or at least their first editions. The final conclusions presented in the work of McKenzie and McGann allowed me not just to ascribe liberary intentions to Joyce's writing, but also to verify the theses through the methods of genetic criticism, the fruit of which is the book *Joyce and Liberature*.[21]

Joyce is also an interesting example from the perspective of these considerations because the modernist autonomy-giving practices described by Bourdieu in the context of French literature, and in the context of English language literature by the aforementioned McGann, as well as Hugh Kenner in *The Pound Era*, or more recently by Sean Latham in *"Am I a Snob?" Modernism and the Novel*, find their partial reflection in the manner in which liberature functions in society. It is often associated with an initially marginal journal

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20   Similar associations regarding *Ulysses* had already been proposed by Hugh Kenner, *Flaubert, Joyce, and Beckett: The Stoic Comedians* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), 34–35.

21   Katarzyna Bazarnik, *Joyce and Liberature* (Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2011).

devoted to promoting "new, young" literature, published by an institution founded solely for that purpose, and the involvement of its main representative in efforts to interpret, explain, and promote his books. It is, however, apparent that Fajfer has gradually withdrawn from such activities, motivated by a desire to focus exclusively on his own artistic work.[22] Interesting commentary on these similarities has been proposed by the Italian scholar of Polish literature Emiliano Ranocchi, who observes that by describing liberature as "total literature" in which everything is or — by the author's intention — can be relevant, the poet places it in opposition to the "formal aleatoricism and philosophical nihilism" that is typical of "a significant portion of contemporary artistic output."

> All of the above postulates explain Fajfer's withdrawal from pop, a withdrawal that […] is essentially a result of his disavowal of the anthropology of postmodernism: the mixing of high and low culture, the interchangeability of the sender and the recipient, the aesthetic of pastiche, open form, the end of Grand Narratives. Fajfer places all of this in opposition to a clearly-defined separation of the roles of the artist and the recipient, the requirement for originality and homogeneity of language (i.e. style), a peculiarly closed form in which the recipient is permitted a more or less broad space of action in the sense that he may — or even must — cooperate in the creation of meaning (but wasn't that always somewhat true of traditional literature?), but within the confines of a game whose rules have been meticulously laid out by the author; finally, he places this in opposition to the teleology of art, or the return of Grand Narratives. What else is the idea of liberature if not yet another Grand Narrative, which, according to Lyotard and Jameson, were supposed to disappear forever in the age of postmodernism? After all, this narrative is founded on the idea of the upward path of artistic achievement, and is thus built on the Oedipal structure that was a characteristic feature of the Narrative of Great Avant-Garde. Upon closer examination, liberature is a label that aspires to serve as a neutral description of a certain attitude towards the physicality of the artistic medium, yet in reality, as a Narrative, it manages to convey much more than just a handy generic term (I leave open the question of how suitable it is), namely, an authentic and bold stance on contemporary aesthetics. While possibly outdated, this stance is undoubtedly fiercely polemical against other postmodern Grand-Narratives-Against-Grand-Narrative. In this sense liberature (at least as Fajfer

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22   One might describe this as another Bourdieusian polarization of the mini-field in the Bazarnik-Fajfer duo into distinct, artistic and academic, poles.

understands it) constitutes an astounding phenomenon of the endurance of modernist thought at the very heart of postmodernism.[23]

In Ranocchi's view, by establishing their ties to modernism, Fajfer and liberature place themselves in clear opposition to movements, like cyberpoetry and certain manifestations of generative literature, that present themselves as "innovative," "modern," or "experimental."[24] Such an approach is congruent with the strategy — described by the French sociologist — employed by artists fighting for the greatest possible degree of autonomy, one characteristic of a subfield of restricted production, intended primarily for other artists.[25] What is at stake, Bourdieu observes, "is the monopoly of literary legitimacy, that is, among other things, the monopoly of the power to say with authority who is authorized to call himself a writer (etc.) or even to say who is a writer and who has the authority to say who is a writer; or, if you prefer, the monopoly of the power of consecration of producers and products."[26] It is no wonder then that "the struggle […] is organized around the opposition between autonomy and heteronomy."[27] In this context, it is all the more apparent why Zenon Fajfer would criticize with such ferocity the legitimacy of *cierniste diody* [*thorny diodes*],[28] a project by Leszek Onak in which the author remixes the prose of Bruno Schulz with the Fiat 125p user's manual.[29] In the case of the

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23 Emiliano Ranocchi, "Liberatura między awangarda a tradycją. Bilans pierwszego dziesięciolecia," in *Od literatury do e-literatury*, ed. Monika Górska-Olesińska (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2012), 33–34.

24 However, Fajfer would disagree with the last label. He claims that it is theory, rather than art, that is experimental; see Fajfer, "Od kombinatoryki do liberatury. O nieporozumieniach związanych z tzw. 'literaturą eksperymentalną'," in Raymond Queneau, *Sto tysięcy miliardów wierszy*, trans. Jan Gondowicz (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2008).

25 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 217.

26 Ibid., 224.

27 Ibid.

28 Leszek Onak, "cierniste diody," *Techsty* (2014), accessed February 1, 2015, http://techsty.art.pl/cierniste_diody/index.html

29 See the discussion on the Korporacja Ha!art website: Zenon Fajfer, "Ciernisty idiodyzm," http://www.ha.art.pl/projekty/felietony/4066-ciernisty-idiotyzm; and "Cybernotaur," http://www.ha.art.pl/projekty/felietony/4103-cybernotaur; Onak, "Nie ma żadnych świętych plików. Odpowiedź Zenonowi Fajferowi" (Fundacja Korporacja Ha!art); http://www.ha.art.pl/projekty/felietony/4073-nie-ma-zadnych-swietych-plikow-odpowiedz-zenonowi-fajferowi; accessed February 1, 2015. As Zenon Fajfer states, his outrage was motivated not by Onak's digital project itself, but by the circumstances of its recep-

digital avant-garde, however, this strategy results in the paradoxical situation in which the rejection of all institutions associated with the literary field, including the very idea of the author and the literary work (not to mention economic factors, which both sides of the debate equally ignore) – typical of the "pure art" stance — can lead to the disappearance of the field altogether.[30] After all, on the one hand, if anyone who writes a bit of code to generate any string of characters is an artist, then we find ourselves ensnared in a familiar trap: "Everything is art," with one caveat: "if the artist says it is"; but if there is no artist, then there is no art. On the other hand, this raises the following question: how is the uninformed recipient supposed to know whether they have stumbled upon "something that is to be read/interpreted as art," and not some

<div align="center">critica¹ S#stem êrror?[31]</div>

In this situation, it is the notion of genre that comes to the rescue. Contemporary descriptions of this category clearly accommodate its sociological dimension, presenting genre as conventionalised types of social action that are carried out with the help of language in specific types of situations, as described by Carolyn Miller[32] and Charles Bazerman.[33] This is most apparent in linguistics, which has seen the dynamic development of the rhetorical, pragmatic, and functional concepts of genre.[34] Bazerman thus defines genre

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tion: the reaction of the genuinely amused audience at the presentation held at the Ha!wangarda Festival in October, 2014. Fajfer's arguments, however, also concern the value of digital recycling or remixing of this type.

30   This stance may also stem from the general weakness of the field of literary production in Poland, as described by Grzegorz Jankowicz et al., in *Literatura polska po 1989 w świetle teorii Pierre'a Bourdieu. Raport z badań* (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2014). Artists, consciously or subconsciously sensing the circumstances, would thus subversively refuse to participate in a game that was rigged against them from the very start.

31   Zenon Fajfer, "Ars numerandi," in *ten letters/ dwadzieścia jeden liter* (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2010).

32   Carolyn Miller, "Genre as Social Action," in *Genre and the New Rhetoric*, ed. Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994; e-book 2005).

33   Charles Bazerman, "Systems of Genres and the Enactment of Social Intentions," in *Genre and the New Rhetoric*, ed. Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway (London: Taylor & Francis, 1994; e-book 2005), 67-85.

34   The so-called Systemic Functional, or Australian School of researchers could even be described as a sociological one, as the fundamental framework they use to define the concept is based on the manner in which genre functions in specific situations.

as a frame for socially significant intentional action, a "location within which meaning is constructed and which shapes the thoughts we form and the communications by which we interact," or a type of matrix that allows us to examine the unknown.[35] In other words, it is genre that determines the horizon of the recipient's expectations, also in the literary work, which is how Michał Głowiński understands it. When selecting a piece of literature, the reader performs a cursory appraisal, assigning it to a specific genre and treating the perceived genre signals as hints for its interpretation. In other words, a certain horizon of expectations opens up before the reader, within the limits of which they can understand and interpret that work of literature. As the Polish researcher observes, "in a way, genre tells the reader what to expect in a given message, projecting, as it were, their behavior as a recipient of literature."[36] Summarizing his thoughts on genre from the historical perspective, he proposes that:

> …the literary genre established within a given culture is a semantic unit of sorts, and thus it implies to the reader what meanings he or she may expect when encountering a work of literature belonging to a particular genre. These meanings conceptualize the genre in very general terms, thus signaling to the reader certain types of meanings, so to speak, rather than specific meanings, and thus encourages them to notice the general direction of the statement; by doing so, it determines – in the final instance – the reader's stance.[37]

Therefore, a reader who remains oblivious to the existence of a genre will not only fail to understand the work, but will fail to even perceive it: they will not recognize a joke unless they are aware of the conventions governing it; they will close a website if they do not figure out that it is a work of

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A review of the successive shifts in the study of genres can be found in the aforementioned *Genre and the New Rhetoric*, see also John Swales, *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Thomas O. Beebee, *The Ideology of Genre. A Comparative Study of Generic Instability* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); and John Frow, *Genre* (London-New York: Routledge, 2014).

35   Charles Bazerman quoted in Bawarshi, "The Ecology of Genre," 70. See also Bazerman, "Systems of Genres and the Enactment of Social Intentions," 69, 75, 82–83.

36   Michał Głowiński, "Gatunek literacki i problemy poetyki historycznej," in *Polska genologia literacka*, ed. Danuta Ostaszewska and Romuald Cudak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2007), 82.

37   Ibid., 81.

digital literature; they will shrug their shoulders at the sight of a bottle-book if they do not know that literature can also be found in such unconventional forms. It is thus crucial, in the case of liberature, to signal to the recipient that they are dealing with a literary work in order to enable them to read it in the first place. Such practices are nothing out of the ordinary in literature. Stanisław Balbus lists a series of instances in which the authors themselves provided hints regarding a genre classification of their works: Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls*, which bears the subtitle "a poem," or Witkacy's *Insatiability* and *Farewell to Autumn*, both described by the author as novels. According to Balbus, these are "traces of authorial instructions" indicating the context in which, according to the author's intentions, these works are to be interpreted (this is also relevant in the case of irony or pastiche). The aim is to create a certain "hermeneutical space" in which they can enter into "semantic correlations, coincidences, or even collisions" with genre conventions (and thus with a certain horizon of knowledge and expectations on the part of the readers).[38] If the reader understands and masters the rules governing a given work (and a genre), then the interpretation of that piece of literature is fuller, richer, more satisfying, and more thorough. At the same time, the name of the genre indicates which tradition the writer is dialogically engaging with and what norms are being referred to, or even being modified, or transgressed.

In his essay *Intertextual Irony and Levels of Reading*, Umberto Eco points out a number of ways in which meanings can be encoded, mentioning in passing that the familiarity with genre rules applies not only to literature, but also to the fine arts and architecture. He lists at least two types of readers: the so-called common, naive, or semantic reader, who interprets the work at the most basic level of its content, and the semiotic (or aesthetic) reader, who is better educated, aware of various levels and types of semantic codes, and conscious of the existence of a web of subtle references to other cultural texts within a work.[39] However, in the case of liberature, even such a seasoned reader could overlook this additional, non-verbal semantic code, particularly if they have been taught to ignore messages of this type in works of literature. The proposal to distinguish a separate genre that also employs a bibliographical code (to continue using the terms coined by the above-mentioned textual scholars) offers these readers the possibility of an even richer reading, one

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38   Stanisław Balbus, "Zagłada gatunków," in *Polska genologia literacka*, ed. Danuta Ostaszewska and Romuald Cudak (Warszawa: PWN, 2007), 164.

39   Umberto Eco, "Intertextual Irony and Levels of Reading," in *On Literature*, trans. Martin McLaughlin (Orlando: Harcourt, 2005), 222–223. I wish to thank the anonymous reviewer for bringing this essay to my attention.

that nevertheless respects the *intentio operis* and *intentio auctoris*, which the Italian semiotician also references in his essay.

But what is at stake here is more than just the individual incomprehension or the enrichment of the reading. Unfamiliarity with genre rules may pose an obstacle to the proper response in certain social situations. The literal reading of mass-mailed sweepstakes letters claiming that the addressee's name had been selected to win valuable prizes that could be claimed by paying a minor deposit made many people oblivious of the junk mail genre to fall victim to their own naivety. The unfamiliarity with genre rules can also be an effective mechanism of exclusion.[40] This also applies to cultural participation. The incomprehension of frameworks in which newly-formed genres of literature and art operate — such as liberature, cyberpoetry, and hypertext — cuts recipients off from a certain sphere of social experiences, contacts, and contexts that are relevant to the contemporary world. Perhaps it deprives them of the opportunity to stimulate their creativity, to foster unconventional ways of thinking, and explore fresh perspectives on an ostensibly familiar reality: in a word, that which Shklovsky describes as "remov[ing] objects from the automatism of perception."[41]

If Anis Bawarshi defines genres as "the sites in which communicants rhetorically reproduce the very environments to which they in turn respond — the habits and habitats for acting in language,"[42] then, in the case of literature, particularly such forms that are described as experimental or exploratory, we observe the augmentation, discovery, or definition of other, new, and untypical linguistic actions, and perhaps even the demarcation of new sites and types of literary communication.[43] In the conclusion of the article

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40 This aspect is emphasized by rhetorically inclined scholars of genre. Unsurprisingly, they are closely involved with language didactics, while their rhetorical and functional models of genre are most widely used in the teaching of English as a foreign language (i.e., English for Special Purposes and Academic English).

41 Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 13.

42 Anis Bawarshi, "The Ecology of Genre," in *Ecocomposition: Theoretical and Pedagogical Approaches*, ed. Sydney I. Dobrin and Christian R. Weisser (Albany: State University of NY Press, 2001), 71.

43 Indeed, the hybridity and polymediality of liberature, or the employment of various semantic codes, requires readerly competences that are different from those involved in the reading of exclusively word-based literary works. This point is raised by the Belgian scholars Kris de Tollenaere and Jeanine Eerdrekens in their discussion of the results of an artistic and sociological experiment they conducted: see Kris de Tollenaere and Jeanine Eerdrekens, "The Hybrid Book Genre of Word & Image Narratives: Results of an Artistic

that defines genre as an ecosystem, Bawarshi states that the act of "writing is not only about learning to adapt, socially and rhetorically, to various contexts," but also about repeating and enacting that occurs within genres.[44] In the case of literary genres, which are likely the most open, hybrid, and fluid, or in the Bakhtinian sense, polyphonic types of texts, this action thus involves a meaningful modification of existing contexts, which is a manifestation of their dominant, creative aspect. This entails a change of habits and, subsequently, the habitus of the reader, as there must be, by extension, a change in the modes of perception, action, appraisal, and interpretation of a text that is presented in this manner.

This is certainly the case with liberature. As a genre that emphasizes its literary status, it opens up new opportunities for expression that are absent from mainstream literature, or only marginally present, and often regarded as a frivolous prank, provocation, or experimentation. Even the less radical examples of liberature, ones that take the form of the traditional codex, encourage the recipient to modify their readerly habits, directing their attention to the material qualities of the literary work, which are usually glossed over in reading: a peculiar numbering of the pages or chapters (B.S. Johnson's *House Mother Normal*, Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*), semantically varied typography, figurative text, visual elements, illustrations, and the color and type of paper (the aforementioned *Tristram Shandy*, B.S. Johnson's *Albert Angelo*, Stéphane Mallarmé's *A Throw of the Dice*, Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*, Adam Thirlwell's *Kapow!*, Steven Hall's *The Raw Shark Texts*, Raymond Federman's *Double or Nothing*). Bawarshi even remarks in an endnote that, in the case of genre, "reproduction" always involves some sort of modification, because a genre always requires reading, which is always already an interpretation, and thus one of many possible variations.[45] Bawarshi cites Marylin Cooper, who emphasizes that writing has a social dimension not just because it takes place in a specific context, but because the very act of writing actively shapes that context.[46] Therefore the author – the writer or poet – actively affects the conditions of their art, even if that effect

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Research Project," in *Incarnations of Textual Materiality: From Modernism to Liberature*, Katarzyna Bazarnik and Izabela Curyłło-Klag (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishers, 2014). See also Kalaga, "Tekst hybrydyczny. Polifonie i aporie doświadczenia wizualnego." The issue of readerly competences is also explored in the previously cited essay by Eco, "Intertextual Irony and Levels of Reading."

44 Bawarshi, "The Ecology of Genre," 78.

45 Ibid., 79.

46 Ibid., 70.

involves the unconditional acceptance of the rules imposed by the publishing house. From this standpoint, our efforts, which have included the launch of a publishing series, the creation of the Liberature Reading Room, organizing author appearances and events devoted to books published by "Liberature," lend further support to the rhetorical-ecological model proposed by the above researchers.

These efforts also include our active participation in a variety of popularization activities (curatorial work on liberature exhibitions and workshops at libraries, cultural centers, and festivals) and academic events (conferences, seminars, and guest lectures), while the fact that many of these events took place on the initiative of the people and institutions who invited us testifies, in our view, to the rapid emergence of a milieu of liberature readers expecting this type of interaction. They perceive the distinctiveness of liberature from other cultural texts and apparently desire to explore more substantially the conventions of the genre.

Therefore, it appears that sixteen years after the term was coined, liberature has secured a respectable position in the field of cultural and literary production. To use Bourdieu's terminology, it has almost been consecrated: the latest edition of *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich PWN* [*Dictionary of Literary Genres*], edited by Grzegorz Gazda, devotes a separate, lengthy entry to the term;[47] its author is Agnieszka Przybyszewska, a researcher who has consistently studied this phenomenon almost since its inception.[48] Liberature is appearing in school and university textbooks,[49] and the liberary style has been listed among the artistic styles of the modern Polish

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[47]   Agnieszka Przybyszewska, "Liberatura/Literatura totalna," in *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich*, ed. Grzegorz Gazda (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2012), 521–526.

[48]   This issue is the subject of part of her Master's thesis, titled *(Nie tylko) liberackie modele do składania: liberatura, e-liberatura i hipertekst na gruncie polskim* [*(Not Just) Liberary Models to be Assembled: Liberature, e-Liberature, and Hypertext in the Polish Context*], awarded first prize in the Czesław Zgorzelski Competition in 2006 for the best thesis in Polish Studies, which can also be interpreted as a form of consecration of the phenomenon itself. Her Ph.D. dissertation, titled *Liberackość dzieła literackiego* [*The Liberariness of the Literary Work*], was devoted to the same topic.

[49]   See Lucyna Adrabińska-Pacuła et al., *Po polsku. Literatura, język, komunikacja. Podręcznik do języka polskiego dla gimnazjum, kl. III* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne PWN, 2011); Dorota Korwin-Piotrowska, *Poetyka. Przewodnik po świecie tekstów* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo UJ, 2011); see also *Polonistyka* 2 (2009), devoted to "important and influential poems by Sommer, Sosnowski, Zadura, Świetlicki, Fajfer, Mueller, Kossakowski, Różycki, and Gutorow."

language.[50] The Łódź-based milieu of theoreticians to which Gazda and Przy-byszewska belong expressed early interest in the liberature manifesto, while a more academic framework for that general proposal articulated by the artistic pole of the Zenkasi duo, and further refined by myself, has emerged in part as a result of conversations and debates held with the author of the dictionary entry. As further confirmation of this interest, we received an invitation to appear at a conference titled *Future/ism: a Century Later*, held in May of 2010 by the Institute of the Theory of Literature at the University of Łódź, and to prepare an accompanying exhibition at the M2 Museum of Contemporary Art, featuring the collections housed at the Liberature Reading Room.

The further honing of this concept was encouraged by a series of conferences, guest lectures, and exhibitions in Poland and abroad. These events are too numerous to list here, but I wish to mention a few of the most important among them in order to outline the spread of the idea in critical and academic circles – and, to some extent, in artistic circles – which, according to Bourdieu, hold the power of consecration in the literary field. The first presentation of liberature at an international forum took place at the *5th Symposium on Iconicity in Language and Literature* in Kraków; along with a lecture on this subject, we prepared an English-language booklet containing, among other texts, my translation of Fajfer's founding essay and our jointly-authored "A Brief History of Liberature."[51] That same year, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań, Małgorzata Dawidek Gryglicka held an exhibition of the work of Fajfer and an academic conference titled *Construction via Deconstruction: on the New Forms of Literary Text and the Text as Artwork*. The result of this conference was the volume *Tekst-tura* [*Text-ture*], which includes another essay by Fajfer in which he continues his efforts to define liberature as a literary mode, while pointing out its "'unclean,' 'hybrid' nature,"[52] as well as my article, in which I describe liberature as one of the types of iconic literary texts anticipated in the model posited by the American researcher C.D. Malmgren.[53] In 2009 we were invited

50 *Style współczesnej polszczyzny. Przewodnik po stylistyce polskiej*, ed. Ewa Malinowska et al. (Kraków: Universitas, 2013). It should be added that the style is associated in practice with the emanational form invented and developed by Zenon Fajfer.

51 Katarzyna Bazarnik and Zenon Fajfer, *Liberature* (Kraków: Artpartner, 2005).

52 Zenon Fajfer, "Liberum veto? Odautorski komentarz do tekstu *Liberatura. Aneks do słownika terminów literackich*," in *Tekst-tura. Wokół nowych form tekstu literackiego i tekstu jako dzieła sztuki*, ed. Małgorzata Gryglicka (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2005).

53 Katarzyna Bazarnik, "Liberatura: ikoniczne oka-leczenie literatury," in *Tekst-tura. Wokół nowych form tekstu literackiego i tekstu jako dzieła sztuki*, ed. Małgorzata Gryglicka (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2005), 31–33. See Malmgren, *Fictional Spaces in the Modernist and Postmodernist American Novel*, 60.

to present liberature as a distinct phenomenon at the conference *Traditional and Emerging Formats of Artists' Books: Where Do We Go from Here?* at the University of the West of England in Bristol, a key moment in that it marked the articulation of the difference between liberature and the artistic book, with which the former is sometimes associated. That same year Monika Górska-Olesińska, a researcher from the University of Opole, held the first of two conferences titled *From Liberature to e-Literature*, which resulted in subsequent publications that contrasted works of liberature with artworks created using new electronic media; meanwhile, the triple book *Oka-leczenie* saw its first full-scale release as part of our Liberatura series. From this moment on, the concept clearly began to spread throughout the world: in 2011 we showcased liberature at a number of events, including the European Culture Congress in Wrocław, at festivals and universities in the US (including New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Oakland), at the 10th Taipei Poetry Festival and the University of Tokyo, at separate panels held as part of the IAWIS Focus Conference (*Displaying Word and Image*, University of Ulster in Belfast, June 2010), and at the 3rd European Network for Avant-Garde and Modernism Studies Conference (University of Kent in the United Kingdom, September 2012), and, most recently, at literary festivals in Italy, Bulgaria, and Romania.

This brief list clearly demonstrates that, over the past decade and a half, liberature – both as a theoretical concept and a contemporary Polish literary phenomenon – has managed to occupy a certain area of the literary field, gaining a foothold in key institutions. The Liberature Reading Room has been incorporated into the Arteteka branch of the Public Voivodeship Library in Kraków, a place visited regularly by organized groups of students majoring in Polish Studies, Comparative Literature, Editing, and Cultural Studies. It is worth mentioning that liberature is now part of the syllabi of practically every Polish Studies department and is taught in such courses as literature, contemporary culture, contemporary literary life, and cultural semiotics, chiefly in the context of the contemporary avant-garde as well as liminal and hybrid phenomena in literature.[54] The concept has been employed by foreign scholars of

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54 See for example, Tomasz Cieślak-Sokołowski, Jagiellonian University, Syllabus for the course "Pogranicza literatury – alternatywa, nowe media" ["Borderlands of literature: alternatives, new media"], accessed January 30, 2015, https://www.usosweb.uj.edu.pl/kontroler.php?_action=actionx:katalog2/przedmioty/pokazPrzedmiot%28prz_kod:WPl@12fopc.@12f14%29; Dorota Wojda, Jagiellonian University, Syllabus for the course "Poetyka z elementami teorii literatury I, II rok" ["Poetics with elements of literary theory for 1st and 2nd year students"], accessed December 27, 2014, http://www2.polonistyka.uj.edu.pl/download/studia_S/Sylabusy/Filologia%20polska%20-%20edytorstwo.htm; Agnieszka Przybyszewska, University of Łódź, Syllabus for the course "Liberatura czyli literatura totalna" ["Liberature, or total literature"], accessed December 27,

Polish literature, including Kris van Heuckelom, Emiliano Ranocchi, and Ariko Kato. The "Liberature" series now numbers over twenty titles, which include significant works belonging to the international literary canon: Stéphane Mallarmé's *A Throw of the Dice*, Raymond Queneau's *A Hundred Thousand Billion Poems*, Georges Perec's *Life A User's Manual*, Herta Müller's *Der Wächter Nimmt Seinen Kamm* [*The Guard Takes His Comb*], and James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, as well as literary works by the Bazarnik-Fajfer duo, along with books by several Polish authors associated with this poetics, including Robert Szczerbowski, Dariusz Orszulewski, and Paweł Dunajko. It has thus become one of the most distinct and recognizable series published by Ha!art. It therefore appears that we are witnessing a significant autonomization within the literary field, or even the broader cultural field, which "occurs when artistic factors dominate over political and economic factors, which translates into the hierarchy of rules governing a given area, and enhances the readiness to uphold the faith in the relevance of a given practice, a specific social game…."[55] The philosophy of liberature, or, more broadly, the vision of the writer-poet-artist posited by its chief representative, constantly emphasizes the aesthetic, artistic, and compositional grounds for stylistic choices, the search for new forms (the unconventional structure of books, emanational poetry, kinetic poetry), and the ostentatious disregard for economic factors, which is also apparent in the choice of subsequent titles published as part of the series, as these require significant expenses due to the technical challenges posed by the books. This is facilitated by the similar philosophy of the Ha!art publishing house, which refers to itself ironically as a "corporation" and operates under the motto "Everything that's unprofitable." As Jankowicz explains, such autonomy is possible only when the actors and institutions participating in the literary field are able to "translate the external forces into a given field's corresponding logic, to harness them without reformulating the goals of their own actions."[56] The

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2014, https://usosweb.uni.lodz.pl/kontroler.php?_action=actionx:katalog2/przedmioty/pokazPrzedmiot%28prz_kod:0100-KBL050%29; Monika Górska-Olesińska, University of Opole, Syllabus for the course "Literatura elektroniczna" ["Electronic literature"], accessed December 27, 2014, http://anthology.elmcip.net/materials/syllabi/Gorska Olesinska-2012-PL.pdf; Olga Szadkowska, University of Warsaw, Syllabus for the course "Historia edycji polskiej literatury pięknej" ["The history of the editing of Polish literature"], accessed January 30, 2015, https://usosweb.uw.edu.pl/kontroler.php?_action=actionx:katalog2/przedmioty/pokaz Zajecia%28zaj_cyk_id:259193;gr_nr:4%29

55 Grzegorz Jankowicz, "Formy heteronomii. Polskie pole literackie po 1989 roku i jego relacje z innymi polami społecznymi," in Grzegorz Jankowicz et al., *Literatura polska po 1989 roku w świetle teorii Pierre'a Bourdieu*, 19.

56 Ibid., 19.

milieu and institutions within which the phenomenon exists seem to have risen to this challenge. Perhaps it is even true — as the authors of the cited report on the state of post-1989 Polish literature observe — that the field of literary production is practically non-existent, however, the field of liberature appears to be a rather fertile enclave in this barren land.

Translation: Arthur Barys

Urszula Pawlicka

Digital Literature.
Current State of Research in Poland

The internet age in Poland began on 17 April 1991 when the first email was sent from the Institute of Physics at the University of Warsaw to Copenhagen.[1] Nobody then could have foreseen the intensive development of new media[2] that would ensue in the country over the next two decades, impacting socio-cultural changes and creating new forms of expression in art[3]

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1   The timeline of events are: Polish internet available at http://kalendarium.icm.edu.pl/, accessed April 2, 2014.

2   I understand new media as meaning digital media introducing changes in the textual experience, ways of representing the world, relations between subjects (users and consumers), experience of relations between corporality, identity and community, concepts concerning the relationship of the biological body with technological media and patterns of organization and production. Martin Lister, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings, Iain Grant and Kieran Kelly, *New Media. A Critical Introduction* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003), 12-13. Among their characteristics are numerical representation, modularity, automation, variability and transcoding, Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 27-48.

3   See Ryszard W. Kluszczyński, *Społeczeństwo informacyjne. Cyberkultura. Sztuka multimediów* (Kraków: Rabid, 2002); Ewa Wójtowicz, *Net art* (Kraków: Rabid, 2008); Ryszard W. Kluszczyński, *Sztuka interaktywna. Od dzieła instrumentu do interaktywnego*

and theatre.[4] As Maryla Hopfinger rightly notes, literature as a partner of contemporary transformations[5] has become the focus of experimental, new-media textual research, in a semiotic and structural context and from the perspective of market and communications possibilities.

In 1999, Zenon Fajfer introduced the term "liberature,"[6] followed in 2002 by the appearance of the neolinguists' manifesto;[7] Piotr Siwecki published the avant-pop[8] *BIOS* (2002), and then *Hyper-Gender* (2003). In 2002 Piotr Marecki coined the notion "liternet,"[9] and the first Polish hypertext novel, Sławomir Shuty's *Blok*, was published.[10] There are many links between these events resulting from observations of the growing role of new technologies: a break in linear textual conventions, galvanized literary communication in

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spektaklu (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2010); *Digitalne dotknięcia. Teoria w praktyce/Praktyka w teorii*, ed. Piotr Zawojski (Szczecin: Stowarzyszenie Make It Funky Production, 2010); *Sztuki w przestrzeni transmedialnej*, ed. Tomasz Załuski (Łódź: Akademia Sztuk Pięknych, 2010); Piotr Zawojski, *Cyberkultura. Syntopia sztuki, nauki i technologii* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo UŚ, 2012).

4 See Małgorzata Ćwikła, "Kultura 2.0: software teatru," *Dwutygodnik.com* 94 (2012), accessed April 3, 2014, http://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/4046-kultura-20-software-teatru.html; Agnieszka Jelewska and Michał Krawczak, *void setup [text [' to code or not to code? Teatr i kreatywne programowanie']* 2013, accessed April 3, 2014 http://www.nina.gov.pl/kultura-2_0/tematy/ artyku%C5%82y/artyku%C5%82/2013/02/28/void_setup_text_to_code_or_not_to_code_teatr_i_kreatywne_programowanie

5 Maryla Hopfinger, "Zmiana miejsca?," in *Co dalej literaturo? Jak zmienia się współcześnie pojęcie i sytuacja literatury*, ed. Alina Brodzka-Wald, Hanna Gosk, Andrzej Werner (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, Fundacja Akademia Humanistyczna, 2008), 164.

6 See Zenon Fajfer, "Liberature: Hyperbook in the Hypertext Era," in *Liberature. Or Total Literature*, trans. and ed. Katarzyna Bazarnik (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2010), -9--1; Zenon Fajfer, "Liberatura. Aneks do słownika terminów literackich," in *Tekst-tura. Wokół nowych form tekstu literackiego i tekstu jako dzieła sztuki*, ed. Małgorzata Dawidek Gryglicka (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2005), 11-22.

7 Marcin Cecko, "Manifest Neolingwistyczny v. 1.1," in *Gada !zabić? pa]n[tologia neolingwizmu*, ed. Maria Cyranowicz, Paweł Kozioł (Warszawa: Staromiejski Dom Kultury, 2005), 158-159.

8 See "Część Avant-pop," in *Literatura polska 1989-2009. Przewodnik*, ed. Piotr Marecki (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2010), 219-255.

9 *Liternet. Literatura i internet*, ed. Piotr Marecki (Kraków: Rabid, 2002).

10 Sławomir Shuty, *Blok*, Mariusz Pisarski (preparation), Piotr Marecki (development), Marcin Maciejowski (drawings), 2002, accessed April 4, 2014, http://www.blok.art.pl/. See Mariusz Pisarski, "Kartografowie i kompilatorzy. Pół żartem, pół serio o praktyce i teorii hiperfikcji w Polsce," in *Liternet.pl*, 19-20.

the internet, building bonds with readers, independence from publishers thanks to online publication and the availability self-publishing. Yet each of these initiatives has explored different subversive strategies[11] aiming for more profound changes in contemporary literature and literary communication when it comes to production and market rules.[12] Liberature is characterized by a rejection of the traditional book format as well as limited print runs in favor of publications prepared by the authors themselves. The neolinguists, known as the Warsaw Internet Scene,[13] demonstrated the death of the sheet of paper and in doing so raised the status of virtual space; they proclaimed the liberation of literary tradition from copyright laws while using "para-computer"[14] and remix techniques in poetry. Avant-pop, for which Siwecki was the flag-bearer in Poland, means using the spoils of media culture in order to expose the way in which mass media works. Siwecki's niche productions demonstratively reject the publishing market, making use of remix and plagiarism methods.[15] Hypertext, meanwhile, has become a symbol of literature's incursion into the digital world, reformulating previous literary categories, changing writer–reader relations and omitting publishing procedures by making works available for free online. Marecki describes the rules of subversion and writes that what is "at stake is not only a change in aesthetics and poetics, but an attack on the fundamental indicators of the market, like the size of the print run, a radical approach to copyright, and opposition to paper editions."[16]

The 2002 book *Liternet*[17] began the discussion on the connections between literature and the internet in Poland, which was followed in subsequent years by the gradual development of hypertext literature and cybernetic poetry.[18]

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11 See Łukasz Ronduda, *Strategie subwersywne w sztukach wizualnych* (Kraków: Rabid, 2006).

12 Piotr Marecki, "Strategie subwersywne w literaturze polskiej po 1989 roku," *Teksty Drugie* 6 (2012): 314.

13 See Piotr Czerski, Ewa Wójtowicz, Mariusz Pisarski, *Ha!art* 3 (2003): 135-136.

14 On para-computer procedures, see Ewa Szczęsna, "Digitalne reinterpretacje sztuki," in *e-polonistyka 2*, ed. Aleksandra Dziak, Sławomir Jakub Żurek (Lublin Wydawnictwo KUL, 2012), 63-67.

15 Marecki, "Strategie subwersywne," 316-319.

16 Ibid., 323.

17 *Liternet. Literatura i internet.*

18 For a chronological description of the most important events: Urszula Pawlicka, "Krótka historia nowych światów – podsumowanie dziesięciu lat literatury nowomedialnej w Polsce," *Lampa* 1-2 (2012): 16-21.

Yet attempts to "catch up with the West," where the "era of Story Space"[19] had started in 1987, clashed with a sceptical reception, unready for challenging the traditional rules of literature and undermining the status of the book.[20] Elitism came into conflict with egalitarianism, hierarchy with participation, and copyright with copyleft. The reasons for the incorrect diagnoses of literary and cultural activities in the digital space were: 1) inappropriate evaluating of new forms using the old rules by which literature functioned; 2) assessing projects solely from an aesthetic and structural perspective, leading to conclusions that traditional forms could be repeated; and 3) an enduring attachment to the book as a material medium associated with a "snobbish, exclusive form of entertainment."[21]

The book as a medium, alluding to the McLuhanian principle whereby the medium is the message, determines the reception of a text, as it is linked to an entire socio-cultural system. Researchers have described the cultural changes taking place under the influence of the media by pointing to the differences between print culture and digital culture conspicuous in people's consciousness when it comes to communication and in the social system.[22] From the onset, print culture determined the distance between the author and reader, and between the reader and text; such a culture created a universal perception, a "relational style of thinking [involving] high communicative competence."[23] Books became a symbol of the intelligible and friendly world,

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19   A term used by Andrzej Pająk in his article "Litteratura cybernetica, czyli burza w szklance Wody," *Dekada Literacka* 1/2 (2010): 33.

20   See Tadeusz Dąbrowski, *Poezja w erze Wodnika*, 2002, accessed April 3, 2014, http://www.fa-art.pl/archiwum/wersja1/09021.php, Adam Krzemiński, "Napisz – wydrukuj – wklej," *Polityka. Niezbędnik inteligenta (wydanie specjalne)* 1 (2011): 85; Milada Jędrysik, Wojciech Orliński, "Spór o elektroniczne książki i przyszłość papieru," 2012, accessed April 4, 2014, http://wyborcza.pl/1,123455,11277567,Spor_o_elektroniczne_ksiazki_i_przyszlosc_papieru.html; Marek Adamiec, "Dzieło literackie w sieci. Kilka oczywistości z perspektywy sceptyka," in *Tekst (w) sieci*, ed. Danuta Ulicka, vol. 1 (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2009), 37-47. The quintessence of the ongoing discourse on the struggle between old and new forms is the *FA!art* issue on the bibliocaust, whose name implies the annihilation of books in the style of the Holocaust, *FA!art* 1/2 (2011).

21   Statement by Krzysztof Uniłowski in the editorial discussion "Literatura a nowe media," *Dekada Literacka* 1/2 (2010): 9.

22   Grzegorz Godlewski, *Słowo – pismo – sztuka słowa. Perspektywy antropologiczne* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UW, 2008), 285. See Maryla Hopfinger, *Literatura i media po 1989 roku* (Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 2010), 15-45.

23   Maryla Hopfinger, *Doświadczenie audiowizualne. O mediach w kulturze współczesnej* (Warszawa: Sic!, 2003), 24.

a sign of social order, permanence and logic.[24] The mythical image of the world was destroyed by the appearance of new technologies, and with them the development of a digital culture that assumed a participatory role for its users in creating media, as well as a fragmentary and non-linear reception. Hypertext was seen as a way of deforming reality and the sense of hierarchy, not to mention the logicality of the world; it was supposed to reflect the belief in the accidental and virtual nature of the world and the separability of phenomena.[25]

Remediation,[26] or the reshaping of previous media forms through newer media, means not only a change in medium, but also a whole process of socio-cultural transformations. The hypertext theoretician George P. Landow notes that only with the development of visual media did the book come to be regarded not only as a carrier of a message, but also as a medium shaping the whole field of social communication.[27] Change in medium also means a change in the system,[28] that is to say a systemic change takes place together with the change in medium. Viewed in this way, a socio-cultural revolution cannot take place via a material book, since it refers to the order of print culture. For the neolinguists' programme to be fulfilled, a change in the form of transmission and medium was required. On the other hand, there are doubts as to how "turbulent" liberature is in its conventionality, as it is strongly entrenched in print culture, all the while striving to reformulate the meaning of the book. From this cultural perspective, literature using new technologies appears to realize its "revolutionary" potential most fully not only through the change in medium and consequent reference to another socio-cultural order, but also as a result of exploiting various semiotic systems.

The aim of this essay is to present the state of research on electronic literature in Poland, taking various approaches and theories into account. This literature was described differently in the first phase of its development, as it was then strongly influenced by postmodern theories that did not allow it to be considered in terms of cultural changes; the second stage referred

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24   Andrzej Dróżdż, *Od liber mundi do hipertekstu. Książka w świecie utopii* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Analiz, 2009), 75.

25   Ibid., 253-259.

26   See Mariusz Pisarski, *Remediacja*, accessed April 1, 2014, http://www.techsty.art.pl/hipertekst/teoria/remediacja.htm; Concept introduced by Jay D. Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation. Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

27   Ibid., 22.

28   Grzegorz Jędrek, "Zmiana nośnika czy zmiana systemu? O dwóch manifestach, jednej rewolucji i cyberpoezji," *Fragile* 2 (2013): 62.

to media studies and cultural studies in perceiving digital texts as "deep structure."[29] It is necessary to present the state of research, fourteen years after the concept of the "liternet" was coined, to indicate the inconsistencies of analyses, doubts of scholars and areas not yet covered by Polish theoreticians. Rather than a chronological order, this presentation concentrates on ordering specific areas and theoretical concepts.

Terminological Ambiguities

In order to analyze the relationship between literature and new media it is necessary to first indicate the areas of research and related issues. Terminological ambiguities result mostly from mismatches between the name and the description of the projects. The confusion in defining this field results from the different interpretations of what is text, writing and literature, as well as inconsistencies in naming; above all from, including all literary productions linked in any way to new media in one category. This results in a failure to discern the difference between digitalized and digital literature.[30]

The first attempt to pinpoint the new phenomena was the coining of the notion "liternet," to refer to all connections between literature and the internet. *Ha!art* magazine organized an academic session on literary and media studies at the ATM Gallery, the outcome of which was the publication *Liternet. Literatura i Internet* [*Liternet: Literature and the Internet*]. Marecki defined the expression as follows:

> It encompasses the broad phenomenon of "online literature," meaning literature that either previously existed in printed form and for promotional, archival or distribution purposes has been put online, or made its first appearance in digital form, but there is nothing to stop you from looking at it on a piece of paper […]. On the other hand there is the phenomenon of "web literature," that is a still rather small fringe of art that establishes its existence in the internet medium and would lose a great deal, if not everything, if published in the traditional method.[31]

The divisions within "liternet" introduced at this time were supposed to demonstrate the differences resulting from the influence of the internet

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29   Mariusz Pisarski's term: "Pod warstwą szkła i kryształu. Jak się czyta tekst cyfrowy," *Dekada Literacka* 1/2 (2010): 26.

30   This difference is highlighted by theoreticians of electronic literature including N. Katherine Hayles: *Electronic Literature: What Is It?*, 2007, accessed April 2, 2014, http://eliterature.org/pad/elp.html

31   Piotr Marecki "Liternet.pl," in *Liternet.pl*, 313.

and of changes taking place. With the benefit of hindsight, we can observe that the name "liternet" has not caught on as it limits the field solely to the internet, rather than to new media more generally. The two terms that Marecki proposes – "literature on the internet" and "internet literature" – are also not used in academic discourse; yet they indicate significant areas of research which have with time acquired different names.

According to Marecki, "literature on the internet" meant publication online, self-publishing, e-commerce, archiving, internet periodicals and e-books. The category also included publishing, distribution, communication and the broad area of online literary life. In 2010, the editorial of an issue of *Dekada Literacka* discussed the relations between literature and new media; Anna Pochłódka led the discussion, mentioning the three most important problem areas. The first concerned the very structure of the literary work, modified by "new means of expression and technical possibilities." The second covered the question of the circulation of literary texts, and the third referred to the question of evaluating texts appearing online, taking into consideration the lack of hierarchy on the internet and the associated doubts concerning the status of people publishing online.[32] On the one hand, this issue expanded the research problem, using the term "literature and new media," but on the other hand, it would seem that progress had reverted to regression, as speakers used this expression to describe all relations without distinguishing the division from eight years previously. Małgorzata Janusiewicz's recent publication on "literature in the internet era" also fails to contribute to the development of the definition. She identifies three forms: traditional (literature published online, imitating the traditional form), e-books, and e-literature (new literary genres).[33]

"Literature on the internet" implied above all a traditional form of texts not radically different from paper form. According to the criterion of the possibility to publish in print form, therefore, blogs can also be counted as "literature on the internet,"[34] rather than "internet literature," a category in which Marecki included them.

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32 "Literatura a nowe media" – editorial discussion with Anna Łebkowska, Krzysztof Uniłowski, Krystyna Wilkoszewska. Discussion led by Anna Pochłódka, *Dekada Literacka* 1/2 (2010): 7-8.

33 Małgorzata Janusiewicz, *Literatura doby Internetu. Interaktywność i multimedialność tekstu* (Kraków: Universitas, 2013), 37.

34 Evidence for this is "blooks," a portmanteau of book and blog, meaning blogs whose content is published in the form of a printed book. See Sylwia Miszczak, Andrzej Miszczak, "Blooki: z sieci na papier," *Biuletyn EBIB* [electronic document] 8 (2007), accessed April 3, 2014, http://www.ebib.info/2007/89/a.php?miszczak_miszczak

Based on these terminological complexities, we can propose distinguishing two research fields within "literature on the internet." The first domain concerns the development of literary communication under the influence of digital media and contains issues connected to the relations between offline and online literary circulations, changes in publishing, self-publishing, issues of distribution, e-books, the question of copyright and creative commons. Also relevant is internet literary life,[35] justifying the appearance of a new space for literature to function. This encompasses the following issues: publication on the internet, online magazines, literary web portals, personal sites, internet literary criticism and the status of the writer on the web.

The second domain is the aforementioned electronic literature, including digitalized works[36] and textual realizations not necessarily considered as literary, since, as researchers rightly ask, "Why look for literary genres in what is written online?"[37] Electronic writing, which includes blogs, fan fiction, reviews, emails and works published on literary websites, is analyzed from various perspectives such as genealogy,[38] semiotics,[39] media studies[40] or communications.[41]

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35   Maciej Maryl, *Życie literackie w sieci. Pisarze, instytucje i odbiorcy wobec przemian technologicznych* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2015).

36   On the digital translation of a text, see Maciej Maryl, "Reprint i hipermedialność – dwa kierunki rozwoju literatury Cyfrowej," in *Tekst (w) sieci*, ed. Anna Gumkowska, vol. 2 (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2009), 83-91.

37   Anna Gumkowska, Maciej Maryl, Piotr Toczyński (collaboration), "Blog to... blog. Blogi oczyma blogerów. Raport z badania jakościowego zrealizowanego przez Instytut Badań Literackich PAN i Gazeta.pl," in *Tekst (w) sieci*, vol. 1, 298.

38   On "multimedia genology" see Edward Balcerzan, "W stronę genologii multimedialnej," in *Polska genologia literacka*, ed. Danuta Ostaszewska and Romuald Cudak (Warszawa: PWN, 2007), 269-287. On genres from a transmedia perspective: Maciej Maryl, "Konwergencja i komunikacja: gatunki wypowiedzi na stronach internetowych pisarzy," *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich* 55 (2) (2012): 29-51; Marta Więckiewicz, *Blog w perspektywie genologii multimedialnej* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2012). Generic analysis is exemplified by considering emails as the continuation of epistolary novels starting from the 18th century: Joanna Wrycza, *Galaktyka języka Internetu* (Gdynia: Novae Res, 2008), 49-59.

39   Ewa Szczęsna, "Wprowadzenie do poetyki tekstu sieciowego," in *Tekst (w) sieci*, vol. 1, 67--75; Ewa Szczęsna, "Poetyka w dobie konwergencji," *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich* 55 (2) (2012):11-27.

40   See Monika Górska-Olesińska, *Słowo w sieci. Elektroniczne dyskursy* (Opole: Wydawnictwo UO, 2009), 41-56.

41   The communications approach: Agata Sikora, "E-mail – między listem a rozmową," in *Tekst (w) sieci*, vol. 1, 245-252; Agnieszka Dytman-Stasieńko, "Newspoetry – literacki

According to Marecki, "internet literature" concerns works that came about on the internet and, owing to their hypertextual construction, cannot be translated into printed form. Today the concepts of "electronic literature"[42] or "digital literature"[43] tend to be used. Unlike texts which are digitalized, digital literature is "born digital" and created using a computer, designed to be read (usually) on a computer screen.[44] Digital literature has many variants[45] – from hyperfiction, via cyber-poetry, to interactive installations – and raises a number of doubts as to how literary[46] works should be regarded. As a result, digital literature is described in various categories depending on the methodology used. Digital works from the textual perspective are referred to as the "art of the word,"[47] in media studies as the "object of new media"[48] or as "interface literature,"[49] or in communications terms as a "form of artistic

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cyberaktywizm?," in *Od liberatury do e-literatury*, ed. Edward Wilk and Monika Górska-Olesińska (Opole: Wydawnictwo UO, 2011), 137-146; Magdalena Kamińska, "Ta grzeszna miłość jest dziką siłą. Internetowa fanfikcja w kulturze polskich nastolatek," in *Niecne memy. Dwanaście wykładów o kulturze Internetu* (Poznań: Galeria Miejska Arsenał, 2011), 165-190.

42   A definition of electronic literature is available on the website of the Electronic Literature Organization: *What is e-lit?*, accessed April 1, 2014, http://eliterature.org/what-is-e-lit/ ELO

43   The publications in which the term "digital literature" appears include *Reading Moving Letters. Digital Literature in Research and Teaching*, ed. Roberto Simanowski, Jörgen Schäfer, Peter Gendolla (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2010).

44   Hayles, *Electronic Literature: What Is It?*

45   Małgorzata Janusiewicz mentions some seventeen different versions of electronic genealogical literature: Janusiewicz, *Literatura doby Internetu*, 40.

46   The first attempt to describe the literary nature of digital works was made by Emilia Branny-Jankowska, who introduced the category of the "literary promise": "Obietnice poezji elektronicznej," *Dekada Literacka* 1/2 (2010): 52-61; Emilia Branny, "Dlaczego klikamy? Lektura a pragnienie," in *Tekst (w) sieci*, vol. 2, 153-162.

47   The textological approach accompanies the publication *Tekst-tura*. The concept of electronic literature as the art of the word also appears in Agnieszka Przybyszewska, "Nowa? Wizualna? Architektoniczna? Kilka słów o tym, co może literatura w dobie Internetu," in *e-polonistyka*, 44.

48   The use of the concept of the "digital object" to describe digital works is visible in Urszula Pawlicka, *(Polska) poezja cybernetyczna. Konteksty i charakterystyka* (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2012).

49   Sebastian Strzelecki makes use of the notion of "interface literature" to refer to Manovich's differentiation into content and interface and their identified mutual dependencies: Sebastian Strzelecki, "Efekty interfejsu hipertekstów literackich. Perspektywy badawcze," in *Tekst (w) sieci*, vol. 2, 141-152.

expression."[50] Emilia Branny-Jankowska, referring to the cultural studies context, describes digital literature as a project of experience.[51]

The terminological confusion is not helped by pointing to the connection of digital or electronic literature with liberature – two realizations of text employing a different medium and motivated by varying goals. Since liberature appeared, the pioneers of this approach (if we can put it this way) manifested the material nature of the book conceived as a medium, underlining its physical value, which is the works' semantic part and typographical layer. Liberature and digital literature came about in the same period when there was increased significance attached to new technologies in culture. The elevation of the book was a response to digital forms,[52] which were regarded as non-material, ephemeral and short-lived. Paradoxically, the founders of liberature and researchers of hypertext pointed to a similar literary tradition, stretching from Laurence Sterne via Raymond Queneau to Italo Calvino.[53] They saw as common points a "disagreement with the traditional, linear model of literature, determined to a great extent by the qualities of the material carrier of the text. Consequently, some writers have willingly abandoned it, moving into the virtual space; others, in turn, have started to exploit it creatively and modify its features."[54] The confusion was further deepened[55] by Mariusz Pisarski's proposal of the concept "e-liberature"[56] to refer to Radosław

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50   Łukasz Gołębiewski describes cybernetic poetry as a "form of expression" reaching for different aesthetic planes than traditional poetry: Łukasz Gołębiewski, *Śmierć książki. No future book* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Analiz, 2008), 45.

51   Emilia Branny-Jankowska, "Rytm jako kategoria opisu e-literatury," in *Liberatura, e-literatura i... Remiksy, remediacje, redefinicje*, ed. Monika Górska-Olesińska (Opole: Wydawnictwo UO, 2012), 141.

52   Fajfer, "Liberatura. Aneks," 16.

53   Roman Bromboszcz accused liberatic writers of "searching through literary tradition" and calling the works they found "liberature," ignoring their attachment to concrete phenomena, e.g. the experimental novel (Roman Bromboszcz, "Poezja cybernetyczna, hipertekst, liberatura, poezja neolingwistyczna. Geneza i struktura nowych zjawisk w literaturze polskiej," in *Od liberatury do e-literatury*, ed. Eugeniusz Wilk and Monika Górska-Olesińska (Opole: Wydawnictwo UO, 2011), 60.

54   Fajfer, "Liberature: Hyperbook in the Hypertext Era," 4.

55   The titles of publications only add to the interpretive ambiguity, e.g. *Od liberatury do e-literatury* [*From Liberature to e-Literature*], which implies an evolutionary development of the given forms.

56   See Agnieszka Przybyszewska, "Niszczyć, aby budować. O nowych jakościach liberatury i hipertekstu," in *Tekst-tura*, 52; Przybyszewska, "Czy (i jak) można mówić o e-liberaturze?," in *e-polonistyka 2*, 167-177.

Nowakowski's hypertext *Koniec świata według Emeryka* [*The End of the World According to Emeryk*], and thus mixing the characteristics of liberature – the essence of which was the physical book – with those of hypertext realized in the digital space. Discussing the sense of this assertion, Agnieszka Przybyszewska not only concludes that liberature and e-literature have much in common,[57] but also introduces the concept of "liberacy"[58] to refer to all works characterized by their visual nature and the significance of typography. As a result of moving from "liberature" towards "liberacy," Przybyszewska applies it to describing digital literature, concluding that electronic literature can be more liberary than liberature itself.[59] Examining digital literature from the aesthetic point of view means that we cannot discern its "deep" structure – the layer of code that gives it its digital character and thus raises important research opportunities. The most important doubts concerning liberature as a form of digital literature are: 1) the aesthetic analysis limited exclusively to typography and the spacing of text;[60] 2) the transparency of the medium – although liberature emphasizes the materiality of a book, the medium ceases to fulfill a constitutive function at the point where similarities with electronic literature arise; 3) calling 20th-century avant-garde works liberature while at the same time pointing to their common revolutionary and experimental value is erroneous because, as Joanna Frużyńska notes, "the non-linear novel grew out of opposition to the convention of writing and print,"[61] whereas liberatic writers are at the opposite extreme, affirming the physicality of the book; and 4) the use of new and often inadequate

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57 Przybyszewska, "Nowa? Wizualna? Architektoniczna?," 45-47; Agnieszka Przybyszewska "Daleko czy jednak blisko? O tym, co łączy Liberatów i e-literatów," in *Od liberatury do e-literatury*, 31.

58 "Literary works that can be regarded as liberary are those in which the words mean not only on the basis of arbitrary relations resulting from the symbolic character of the language. Their semantics are also created jointly by spatial, material, visual and all kinds of other qualities of notation resulting from updates to the possibilities of the medium in which the transmission is created," ibid., 36-37.

59 Przybyszewska, "Nowa? Wizualna? Architektoniczna?," 49.

60 Proof of examination of both forms of literature from an aesthetic and spatial point of view is a comparison of B. S. Johnson's unbound book *The Unfortunates* with Camille Utterback and Romy Achituv's interactive project *Screen*, to ultimately ascertain that they use the same processes and transmit the same contents (Agnieszka Przybyszewska, "Książkowe interfejsy. Liberatura – przekaz graficzny w postmedialnym świecie konwergencji?," in *Liberatura, e-literatura,* 37-38.

61 Joanna Frużyńska, *Mapy, encyklopedie, fraktale. Hipertekstowe opowieści w prozie XX wieku* (Warszawa: WPUW, 2012), 30-31.

language for describing liberature, such as in the case of calling liberature "interactive."[62]

The book as medium proclaimed by liberatic writers and theoreticians of liberature is at present also acquiring the name of "interface," in accordance with post-media theories which state that reflections on the medium are being abandoned in favor of the interface and software.[63] Katarzyna Prajzner uses the term "book interface"[64] to describe the simple actions of using a book, such as opening it and turning the pages. Maciej Maryl asks whether a book is an interface or a carrier of literature, and employs the term "interface" with reference to the theory of Lev Manovich to point to a host of external conditions, socio-cultural changes determining the way in which a book is received and evaluated.[65] Przybyszewska, meanwhile, calls the book an interface outright, using this concept to describe liberature, which, she writes, "begs" to be perceived as such.[66] Once again comparing liberature with digital literature, she cites the interface as a common feature of the two, which she understands as an "active mechanism of the novel,"[67] treating the digital code metaphorically and bringing it to the liberature table. Whereas Maryl interprets the significance of the interface in its actual communicative aspect, Przybyszewska uses it to describe the traditional questions of ontology and the fusion of structure with meaning.

Methodological Problems

The terminological ambiguities, I have noted above, result from the use of different languages as well as from methodological pitfalls.[68] We can identify four

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62 Fajfer, "Liberatura. Aneks," 21. Mariusz Pisarski abandons the concept of interactivity in his characterisation of digital literature, referring rather to its responsive or participatory character: Mariusz Pisarski, *Xanadu. Hipertekstowe przemiany prozy* (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2013), 30.

63 The first book on postmedia in Poland is Piotr Celiński's *Postmedia. Cyfrowy kod i bazy danych* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2013).

64 Katarzyna Prajzner, *Tekst jako świat i gra. Modele narracyjności w kulturze współczesnej* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo UŁ, 2009), 142.

65 Maciej Maryl, "Technologie literatury. Wpływ nośnika na formę i funkcje przekazów literackich," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 2 (2010): 159-160.

66 Przybyszewska, "Książkowe interfejsy," 48.

67 Ibid., 38.

68 Mariusz Pisarski's term: "Pułapki metodologiczne w badaniach nad literaturą cyfrową," in *e-polonistyka*, 77-87.

types of discourse[69] on electronic literature. The first type comprises using new language to present "old things" – an example is Andrzej Pająk's analyses of baroque poetry within the framework of combinatoriality,[70] or Agnieszka Smaga's new interpretation of Formist poetry.[71] The second type is the use of new language to describe new phenomena, based on an already developed digital theory such as Espen Aarseth's definition of cybertext.[72] The third kind is taking the language from another research discipline and applying it to new things – an illustration being the concept of noise drawn from communication theory to describe digital projects.[73] The fourth involves the use of old language for analyzing new forms – evidence of this might be Jay David Bolter's expression "writing space"[74] to refer to a computer screen.

The last discourse, owing to its use of categories and theories from traditional literature, is especially susceptible to interpretive errors resulting from failure to adapt the methodology to the object of research. It is crucial to refer to history in order to point to similar formal or narrative strategies so that one may describe contemporary phenomena in literature as well as, to quote Anna Łebkowska, "become familiar with technology with the aid of known concepts."[75] Yet highlighting the continuity between genres in the history of literature and those originating from the use of new media can also be met with accusations of misinterpretation, since the works refer to a different cultural order.

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69   I refer to Pisarski's work in ordering the languages of description: *Xanadu. Hipertekstowe przemiany prozy*, 74-76.

70   Andrzej Pająk, "Islamskie ogrody i barokowe teksty-maszyny. Porady dla hipertekstowych ogrodników," *Techsty* 4 (2008), accessed March 14, 2014, http://www.techsty.art. pl/magazyn4/artykuly/pajak/pajak01.html; Andrzej Pająk, "Na tropie dziwnych książek. Polska droga do e-literatury (od baroku do XXI wieku)," in *Od liberatury do e-literatury*, 275-282.

71   Agnieszka Smaga, "Interaktywny model percepcji odbiorczej w poezji formistycznej oraz hipertekście leksyjnym," in *e-polonistyka 2*, 135-151.

72   The theory of cybertext was discussed by Emilia Branny-Jankowska in *Cybertekst. Metodologia i interpretacja*, accessed April 1, 2014, http://www.techsty.art.pl/magazyn/magazyn7/cybertekst/index.html

73   Roman Bromboszcz, *Estetyka zakłóceń* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WSNHiD, 2010).

74   Mariusz Pisarski, "Pole pisma," accessed April 1, 2014, http://techsty.art.pl/hipertekst/teoria/remediacja/bolter.htm

75   Quoted in Łukasz Jeżyk, "O hipertekście na horyzoncie. Z perspektywy zamglonej. Protohipertekstualność na przykładzie *Jeśli zimową nocą podróżny* Italo Calvino," in *Teksttura*, 63.

Janusiewicz, the author of one of the first monographs devoted to internet-era literature in Poland, analyses the phenomenon from the angle of literary studies at the expense of theories from other fields. She argues that doubt over research methods is not concerned with whether new-media literature can be described with the aid of traditional categories, but "which terms should be used […] to be precise and not reach for concepts that belong to other areas."[76] Yet this position leads Janusiewicz to many methodological and interpretive ambiguities, as well as those resulting from using criteria meant for traditional literature, or even no longer functioning in literary discourse, to assess digital literature.[77]

Janusiewicz alludes to postmodernism, including the Borgesian category of the labyrinth and referring to the text in Barthian terms, characterizing digital works as follows:

> Sometimes readers themselves, encouraged by the author who is the designer of a stroll through hyperlinks, become authors of an excerpt, or commentary, thereby influencing the shape and style of the work as a whole. Yet, most remarkably, in a sense the text does not exist, as it is only a set of electrical impulses.[78]

References to 20th-century theories were representative of the first stage[79] in the development of digital literature, dominated by such theoreticians as Umberto Eco (the category of the open work), Roland Barthes (the slogan

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76 Janusiewicz, *Literatura doby Internetu*, 8.

77 Summarizing her analysis of new-media literature, Janusiewicz writes, "At the same time there is the world of dialogue, of group creation, of the sense of the reader's agency. Similar processes occur as with printed literature, with two polarizing streams: demanding, high-brow literature, along with superficial, easy and gaudy literature, like tabloids. The Polish-language literary internet has not yet lost a certain elitism, still challenging its readers and demanding competences (both literary and technological), but this is because the average conscious Polish internet user (disregarding school use) is still someone with higher education. These typical characteristics of e-literature are still more characteristic of countries of rapid technological growth, but they are now becoming more noticeable here as well." Ibid., 203-204.

78 Ibid., 16.

79 The stages of research on digital literature here are based on: Marie-Laure Ryan, "Introduction," in *Cyberspace Textuality. Computer Technology and Literary Theory*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 16; Astrid Ensslin and Alice Bell, "New Perspectives on Digital Literature: Criticism and Analysis," *Dichtung digital,* 2007, accessed January 20, 2014, http://dichtung-digital.mewi.unibas.ch/editorial/2007.htm; Frużyńska, *Mapy, encyklopedie, fraktale*, 27-31.

proclaiming the death of the author), Jacques Derrida (deconstruction), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (the rhizome motif), Gérard Genette (intertextuality and hypertextuality), and Mikhail Bakhtin (dialogicality and multivocality). Mariusz Pisarski stripped digital literary theory of the false multiplication of postmodernist angles, claiming that the descriptions of text drawing from Barthes's and Derrida's ideas were "out of context" and misunderstood.[80] Pisarski distinguishes postmodernist text, characterized by "separating the text from the work," from digital hypertext, which aims to restore the text to the work. This relationship between the work and the text is meant to emphasize the significance of the condition of the material and the function of invisible layers controlling the behavior of the text.

Initial attempts to describe electronic literature treated the medium in a transparent fashion, paying no heed to the processes of programming a work, its "coded" structure and the close relationship with the digital medium. The theories of Landow[81] and Bolter[82] were dominated by thinking in terms of traditional literature theories and resulted from an optimistic approach to new technologies as making it possible to realize what the authors of "proto-hypertexts" were unable to do on a sheet of paper.

The second wave of analyses of digital literature took its tools from other fields: media studies, communications and information. Aarseth's 1997 publication *Cybertext*[83] was groundbreaking, not only proposing a new typology of text but above all offering new approaches and categories that were up to the task of describing digital works. Aarseth is responsible for the image of a text as a "machine for producing and consuming signs," made up of three elements: the verbal sign, medium and operator.[84] This theory was the first to consider a text in terms of its relationship with the layer of code and the medium. Alongside Aarseth, Marie-Laure Ryan was another important theoretician[85] who critically invoked Landow's theory, disputing the thesis

80   Pisarski, *Xanadu. Hipertekstowe przemiany prozy*, 19-28.

81   George P. Landow, *Hypertext: the Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

82   Jay David Bolter, *Writing Space. The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1990).

83   Espen Aarseth, *Cybertext. Perspectives of Ergodic Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

84   Emilia Branny, "Dlaczego klikamy? Lektura a pragnienie," in *Tekst (w) sieci*, vol. 2, 153-157.

85   Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality. Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

of the reader's power over the author and the generative nature of hypertext. Ryan introduces a narratological angle, referring among others to Manovich's theory of the work of art as database.

It is hard to identify these two periods of development of the theory of digital literature in the world in the history of Polish electronic literature, since the phenomenon only arrived here during the second wave in the West.[86] In the field of Polish research, we can distinguish several ways of presenting electronic literature and areas that are specifically covered by theoreticians.

Research Questions and Areas

In Poland, the areas of interest include digital literature from the perspective of literary tradition,[87] different media and the relations between them,[88] literary communication,[89] semiotics,[90] aesthetics,[91] structure of the text and semantics,[92] the process of digital-text reception[93] and digital translation (translating foreign-language hypertexts[94]

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86   More about a history of electronic literature: Urszula Pawlicka, *Visualizing Electronic Literature Collections*, "CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture" 18.1 (2016), accessed June 1, 2016, http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2902; Urszula Pawlicka, *Towards a History of Electronic Literature*, "CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture" 16.5 (2014), accessed June 1, 2016, http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.2619

87   Pająk, "Na tropie dziwnych książek"; Pawlicka, *(Polska) poezja cybernetyczna*; Frużyńska, *Mapy, encyklopedie, fraktale.*

88   Przybyszewska, "Książkowe interfejsy"; Bromboszcz, "Poezja cybernetyczna."

89   Piotr Sitarski, *Rozmowa z cyfrowym cieniem. Model komunikacyjny rzeczywistości wirtualnej* (Kraków: Rabid, 2002).

90   Ewa Szczęsna, "Tekst wieloznakowy w przestrzeni mediów cyfrowych. U podstaw poetyki semiotycznej," *Przegląd Humanistyczny* 4 (2013): 19-27. *Przekaz digitalny. Z zagadnień semiotyki, semantyki i komunikacji cyfrowej*, ed. Ewa Szczęsna (Krakow: Universitas, 2015).

91   Przybyszewska, "Nowa? Wizualna? Architektoniczna?"; Pawlicka, *(Polska) poezja cybernetyczna*, 41-89.

92   Emilia Branny, "Powieść a powieść hipertekstowa," in *e-polonistyka*, 19-27; Pisarski, *Xanadu. Hipertekstowe przemiany prozy*; Sonia Fizek, "Testowanie 'Hegiroskopu' Stuarta Moulthropa," *Dekada Literacka* 1/2 (2010): 38-44; *Hiperteksty literackie. Literatura i nowe media*, ed. Piotr Marecki and Mariusz Pisarski (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2012).

93   Mariusz Pisarski, "Analiza i wartościowanie dzieła literatury," in *Liberatura, e-literatura*, 129-139.

94   Fizek, "Testowanie 'Hegiroskopu' Stuarta Moulthropa"; Mariusz Pisarski, "Nowe pole adaptacji i translacji tekstu w mediach," *Fragile* 3 (2013): 22-25.

and digital adaptations[95]). In Poland these fields of interest are discussed with reference to two forms of electronic literature: hypertext and cybernetic poetry.

Hypertext is the main area of research and the most frequently cited category on account of its catch-all definition, which refers both to the literary tradition and to technological concepts. Researchers use this term in varying contexts, depending on their selected methodology.[96] Hypertext is therefore described in textological terms, alluding among others to Genette's theory of hypertextuality. Based on this premise, hypertext is presented as the structure of a text and the order of ideas.

Other theoreticians consider the concept from a technological perspective, referring to a concept created by Ted Nelson who coined the phrase "nonsequential writing"[97] in 1965 – the information technology approach determines the analysis of hypertext from the point of view of the generated construction and the layer of operation. Hypertext then appears as a system managing the text, and is sometimes also regarded as a research method.[98]

Roman Bromboszcz, a founder of the Perfokarta group, defines cybernetic poetry as "activity closely linked to cybernetics and computers. I was interested in poetry's diminished inspiration and tried to create texts that we can treat as machines, a poetics tackling problems related to technology, especially artificial intelligence, automation, robotics, as well as questions concerning knowledge-power relationships, censorship, and so forth."[99] Cybernetic poetry is characterized by generativity, automation, combinatorics, transcoding, polysemiotics, use of computer art, critique of new technologies

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95 Dorota Sikora, "Remediacja – cyfrowa adaptacja dzieł literackich," in *e-polonistyka*, 53-62; Ewa Szczęsna, Urszula Pawlicka and Mariusz Pisarski, "Przekład hipertekstowy. Teoria i praktyka," *Rocznik Komparatystyczny* 5 (2014): 373-394. One of the Polish digital adaptations is project *Oczy tygrysa (Eyes of the Tiger)*, created by Urszula Pawlicka and Łukasz Podgórni (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2012), accessed April 1, 2014, http://ha.art.pl/czyzewski/. It is an online flash adaptation of the poems of an avant-garde poet (formist) from the interwar period, Tytus Czyżewski. This project is included in the Electronic Literature Collection vol. 3 (2016), accessed April 1, 2017, http://collection.eliterature.org/3/work.html?work=oczy-tygrysa.

96 For more on defining hypertext: Frużyńska, *Mapy, encyklopedie, fraktale*, 11-12; Pisarski, *Xanadu. Hipertekstowe przemiany prozy*, 11-19.

97 Ibid., 17.

98 Pająk's conception of hypertext as a research method is close to the premises of digital humanities (Andrzej Pająk, "Hipertekst w badaniu literatury," in *e-polonistyka*, 63-75).

99 Roman Bromboszcz, "Polipoezja, cyberpoezja, performance. Zarys relacji pomiędzy teorią i praktyką," in *Digitalne dotknięcia*, 99.

and adopting various aesthetics of new media: disturbance, remixing and glitch.[100] The links it forges with other artistic fields are exemplified by the fact that digital works are not so much known as "poems," but rather as "objects," "information to execute" or "process." This also demonstrates the use of research methods from theories of new media,[101] information,[102] cybernetics[103] and digital culture.[104] Owing to its transmedial character encompassing poetry, interactive art, computer art, performance, it poses questions as to the limits of poetry and how literary qualities can be attained. The effect of the nomadic[105] features of digital poetry is that descriptions of it invoke both the artistic tradition, based on the artists' inspirations, and the literary tradition, to which the digital poets themselves refer to or in which we can find similar strategies and styles. As a result, names from music (John Cage, Pierre Schaeffer), the literary avant-garde (Bruno Jasieński, Tytus Czyżewski), and generative and computer art (Stelarc, Wojciech Bruszewski[106]) are all invoked.

Cybernetic poets managed to do what neolinguistics failed to do: to truly elevate the digital form[107] and to cyclically organize performative appearances

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100 On the characteristics of cyberpoetry see ibid., 93-114; *Poezja cybernetyczna – samookreślenie*, accessed April 1, 2014, http://perfokarta.net/root/samookreslenie.html Roman Bromboszcz, Tomasz Misiak and Łukasz Podgórni, *Książka i co dalej 7* (Poznań: Galeria AT (ASP), 2008); Pawlicka, *(Polska) poezja cybernetyczna*, 41-89.

101 See Manovich, *The Language of New Media*.

102 See John R. Pierce, *An Introduction to Information Theory: Symbols, Signals and Noise* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1980).

103 See Boris Biryukov and Efim S. Geller, *Cybernetics in the Humanities* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973); Piotr Sienkiewicz, *Poszukiwanie Golema: o cybernetyce i cybernetykach* (Warszawa: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1988).

104 See Józef Kossecki, *Cybernetyka kultury* (Warszawa: PIW, 1974); Charles Jonscher, *The Evolution of Wired Life* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999); Zawojski, *Cyberkultura*.

105 On the nomadic nature of digital poetry: Monika Górska-Olesińska, "Poezja nomadyczna," in *Sztuki w przestrzeni transmedialnej*, 210-220.

106 Bruszewski's discovered computer and generative activity was seen as a precursor to the practices of digital literature, especially cybernetic poetry: Piotr Marecki, "'Obsesyjna antycypacja' – Wojciech Bruszewski jako prekursor literatury nowych mediów w Polsce," *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich* 2 (2012): 235-246; Tomasz Załuski, "Remediacje słowa – remediacje doświadczenia. Rozum medialny i maszyny tekstualne w twórczości Wojciecha Bruszewskiego," in *Liberatura, e-literatura*, 85-106.

107 The elevation of the digital form is not the same as abandoning printing entirely – the authors also have paper publications to their name: Roman Bromboszcz, *digital.prayer* (Warszawa: Staromiejski Dom Kultury, 2008); *u-man i masa* (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art,

combining elements of poetry with computer art and music. The postulates from the neolinguists' manifesto could only be achieved when the medium changed, and language and digital acts realizing the proposed values were employed. As Leszek Onak suggests, "programming language is the language that poets always wanted to speak – a creating language."[108]

Reviewing electronic literature studies in Poland, we can identify four research trends.[109] The first is based on information-technology and culture studies, studying new forms of text arising from informational exchanges, as well as the development of new media and related practices. This movement is linked with cultural studies, which studies the progress of socio-cultural changes influencing the media. We can identify the following areas within this trend: the development of media and cultural changes (Andrzej Dróżdż, Grzegorz Godlewski, Maryla Hopfinger), digital communication and new media theories (Piotr Celiński, Ryszard Kluszczyński, Piotr Sitarski, Ewa Wójtowicz, Piotr Zawojski), the medium and textual changes (Emilia Branny-Jankowska, Monika Górska-Olesińska, Małgorzata Janusiewicz, Maciej Maryl, Mariusz Pisarski, Agnieszka Przybyszewska), the comparativist approach, comprising both the historical angle and questions concerning translation of digital works (Emilia Branny-Jankowska, Mariusz Pisarski, Andrzej Pająk, Urszula Pawlicka), and finally reference to cultural contexts covering the issue of the material nature of objects and the relationship between people and new technologies.[110]

2010); *Hz* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo WBPiCAK, 2011); *918-578* (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2012); Łukasz Podgórni, *noce i pętle* (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2010); *Skanowanie balu* (Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, Hub Wydawniczy Rozdzielczość Chleba, 2012); Leszek Onak and Łukasz Podgórni, *wgraa* (Kraków, Internet: Hub Wydawniczy Rozdzielczość Chleba, Śródmiejski Ośrodek Kultury w Krakowie, 2012).

108 Quoted in Jędrek, "Zmiana nośnika czy zmiana systemu?,"62.

109 I am referring to the proposal of Emilia Branny, who in turn quotes the Czech researcher Jakub Macek in dividing new-media discourse into the following streams: utopian, information, anthropological, epistemological, semiotic and narratological (cited in Pisarski, *Xanadu. Hipertekstowe przemiany prozy*, 60-70). I modify these areas, in particular emphasizing the departure from the name "anthropological stream." The names in brackets are both those whose theories are a foundation for consideration of digital literature and those representing a given trend in analyses of digital literature.

110 Research on digital literature in this context in Poland is only now being indicated. We can point to Roman Bromboszcz, "Splot umysłu z oprzyrządowaniem i oprogramowaniem. Eksplikacja negatywistyczna," in *Mindware. Technologie dialogu*, ed. Piotr Celiński (Lublin: Warsztaty Kultury/WSPA, 2012), 87-100, and Urszula Pawlicka, "Na marginesie rozważań o literaturze cyfrowej w kontekście posthumanizmu," *Wakat* 3/4 (2013): 74-75.

The second is semiotic, focusing on the analysis of signs and symbols in digital texts and the question of their genealogy (Edward Balcerzan, Anna Gumkowska, Maciej Maryl, Urszula Pawlicka, Mariusz Pisarski, Ewa Szczęsna, Marta Więckiewicz, Seweryna Wysłouch). The third area concerns taking into account new digital realizations and involves analyzing them using new tools without referring to any research tradition (Emilia Branny-Jankowska, Mariusz Pisarski, Piotr Sitarski). The fourth is the narratological one, represented internationally by Marie-Laure Ryan and focused on the description of narration in digital literature (Emilia Branny-Jankowska, Urszula Pawlicka, Mariusz Pisarski).

Despite the brief history and reports of the demise of electronic literature in Poland,[111] it now has a thorough analysis and theory to its name. By being open to new areas of research, theoreticians can examine this phenomenon from a broader perspective, not limiting themselves to the methods of literary studies which appear insufficient for describing transdisciplinary projects.[112] In Poland, wider research in the context of digital humanities, sensual perception, documentation and post-humanism is still lacking. The proposed areas prove that digital literature is, as Pisarski puts it, "a laboratory of all linguistic expression" and the source of the "hatching of future forms of digital communication."[113] Electronic literature understood as a manifestation of contemporary culture points to important problems in the subjects of art, science and technology, while testing future socio-cultural forms.

Translation: Benjamin Koschalka

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[111] Joanna Wrycza wrote in 2008 that, "It later turned out that the attempt to 'mechanise' literature in order to increase the possibilities for it to interact with the reader was wide of the mark. Many reasons can be cited for the failure of this literary phenomenon" (*Galaktyka języka Internetu*, 152).

[112] Discussing the problem of literary elements in multimaterial and multimedia texts, Seweryna Wysłouch (following Ryszard Nycz) calls for transdisciplinary research, which "unlike interdisciplinary research does not exhibit the boundaries and does not concentrate solely on boundary phenomena, but by acting 'across' them it dissolves these boundaries entirely," see Seweryna Wysłouch, "Ruchome granice literatury," in *Ruchome granice literatury*, ed. Seweryna Wysłouch and Beata Przymuszała (Warszawa: PWN, 2009), 22.

[113] Pisarski, *Xanadu. Hipertekstowe przemiany prozy*, 11.

Jarosław Kopeć, Izabela Koryś, Dominika Michalak

Digital and Print Hybrids[1]

Introduction

Taking the whole of society into account, reading litera-
ture online is a marginal phenomenon. However, if we
analyse a wider spectrum of practices related to coding
and decoding alphabetic texts, we could formulate con-
vincing answers to questions about the role of the Inter-
net in shaping Poles' reading habits. In this paper, we will

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1   Since Spring 2015, when this article was written, the National
Library has carried out two reading research projects. Both of
them confirm the hybrid nature of today's reading world where
digital and analogue practices complement or facilitate one an-
other rather than simply compete. However, the 2015 and 2016
surveys point also to significant differences between analogue
and digital practices with regard to social status. It seems that
while analogue reading is especially important in childhood and
adolescence as a means of educational advancement, reading
traditional books or newspapers rarely gives adults a chance
to climb the social ladder. What correlates with a higher social
status in adult life is rather the versatile usage of the Internet.
See Dominika Michalak, Izabela Koryś and Jarosław Kopeć, *Stan
czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2015 roku* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Naro-
dowa, 2016), accessed September 2, 2017, http://www.bn.org.pl/
download/document/1459845698.pdf; Izabela Koryś et al., *Stan
czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2016 roku* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Naro-
dowa, 2017), accessed September 2, 2017, http://www.bn.org.pl/
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present our conclusions drawn from the analysis and interpretation of social and demographic data on Polish readers: those who use new technologies and read literature online as well as those who prefer analogue media. Our main conclusion is that digital practices go hand in hand with analogue ones. We also argue that the social traits that have divided readers of the print media in the last decade, may soon – with great probability – be reproduced in the digital environment. The seemingly egalitarian online reading world is likely to become as clearly stratified as that of print.

About our Data

Our key source of data about Polish Internet users were surveys carried out by the National Library. We mainly refer to the research conducted in the autumn of 2014 on a representative sample of 3000 Polish citizens of at least 15 years of age. The research concerned print and digital reading practices. In this article, we also refer to several earlier researches carried out by the National Library and other surveys involving Internet users. All of the data visualized in tables below are taken from the TNS research conducted for the National Library in 2014, unless stated otherwise. All correlations characterising the entire sample of the research are relevant statistically ($p < 0,05$). Exceptions to this rule are clearly marked.

Typology of Internet Users

Although the division into users and non-users of the Internet is still one of the most important categorizations in quantitative research concerning this medium, it is also obvious that even a rough description of today's users of the World Wide Web requires more detailed categorizations because it is a much larger and more diversified group than even a decade ago.[2] In this article we put forward a typology of users based on the results of the National Library's survey from 2014 – including the digital division.

Respondents were asked twelve questions regarding their practices on the Internet during the previous month (table 1). All practices are positively correlated – none of them "polarize" Internet users by unequivocally dividing them into its advocates and critics, nor do they merely "accumulate" in

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2   Dominika Czerniawska, *Wykluczenie cyfrowe. Strukturalne uwarunkowania korzystania z Internetu w Polsce i województwie mazowieckim* (Warszawa: MGG Conferences, 2012), *Trendy rozwojowe i zmiany gospodarcze w regionie* (Warszawa: MGG Conferences, 2012), 11, accessed March 10, 2015, http://www.mgg-conferences.pl/media/pdf/reports/wykluczenie-cyfrowe.pdf

a straightforward, algebraic manner. Between people who do not use the Internet at all (non-users) and people declaring all practices mentioned in the research (omni-users), there emerge various combinations of practices clustering around common behaviour corresponding with various ways of using the Internet. In order to identify these clusters, we applied the latent class analysis method.

Table 1. The share of respondents declaring to undertake following Internet activity within the last year

During the last month, while using the Internet, did you…	Yes, I did
use e-mail?	54%
search for practical advice or tips?	47%
visit a social media portal?	45%
use a search engine other than Google?	45%
search for information related with your work or education?	41%
use an online encyclopedia?	40%
download free content?	26%
read a blog post?	26%
take part in a discussion or post a commentary under another post or article?	23%
upload something to the Internet?	21%
read literary pieces?	18%
download paid content?	15%

According to this method, on the basis of the observed indicator variables, it is possible to identify a number of separable latent classes. Our indicator variables were respondents' declarations concerning their online practices, as a result the classes we have identified differ in a statistically significant manner in terms of Internet reading practices. Apart from constructing the empirically grounded typology, this method classifies all of the observed cases (respondents) by assigning each of them to one of the separable types singled out by the algorithm.[3] Effectively, such typology may be used as a dependent variable (see Table 2).

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3   Maria Nawojczyk, *Przewodnik po statystyce dla socjologów* (Kraków: SPSS Polska, 2004), 247.

Table 2. Frequency and share of types of Internet users

Types of Interent users	Frequency	share in %
occasional users	395	13,2
social media downloaders	339	11,3
social media users	330	11,0
practitioners	295	9,8
readers of literature online	225	7,5
omni-users	357	11,9
non-users	1059	35,3
Total	**3000**	**100,0**

The proposed categorization is a typology, which means that we have divided respondents with respect to their r e s e m b l a n c e to a given type. It may happen, therefore, that among omni-users, who are supposed to answer "yes" to all questions concerning Internet usage, we will find someone who said "no" to one.

Literacy and the Social Structure

In the following, we present the primary social and demographic conditions of Internet usage. We then compare them with corresponding determinants relating to reading habits to discern discrepancies and analogies. We assume that statistical correlations between one's position in the social structure and her or his digital or analogue reading can help identify institutions and underlying forms of capital p l a y i n g t h e k e y r o l e i n c u l t u r e t r a n s m i s - s i o n.[4] In fact, this is what we are aiming at in this article: being aware that the picture that emerges from surveys is generalising and coincidental, we nevertheless believe that comparing data concerning participation in digital and analogue culture may help answer questions about the supposedly egalitarian nature of the Internet.

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4   This assumption and the research method – oriented to search for homology between the social structure and divisions related with the style of participation in culture – are mainly inspired by Pierre Bourdieu for whom this homology of social and cultural divisions (and not individual dependencies) were the starting point of the reflection upon the transmission of culture and social inequalities. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Dystynkcja* (Warszawa: Scholar, 2005), 129-148, 215-223.

In Poland, the Internet gained popularity as a meta-medium for participants of print culture. Sebastian Wierny showed that in 2002 only 1% of all Internet users – ten times less than in the entire population – were excluded from the print culture, that is they did not read books or periodicals.[5] Ten years later, the corresponding figure was 14 times higher: participation in the culture of print did not overlap with the digital divide any more.[6] This change suggests that popularization of the Internet has made its culture more diverse: there has appeared a realm where readers and non-readers of print media could theoretically meet. If however the Internet was to overcome the old divisions, it should also prevent reproduction of social and demographic differences dividing the two groups within the digital world.

Research conducted at the beginning of this century proves that the digital divide was determined by such traits as age, place of residence, education, profession and salary.[7] Pensioners, villagers, people with no education and low income were only sporadic users of the new medium, in contrast to young, educated, well-situated inhabitants of cities. Current research indicate that these features still distinguish Internet users from non-users, but the proportion between the number of members of these two groups has reversed. Using the Internet is no longer an indicator of high social standing. It is rather a lack of contact with this medium which makes it possible – with large probability – to identify the least visible groups in collective life, especially the elderly.[8] At the same time, the "hard barriers" in accessing the Internet (such as underdeveloped infrastructure in the rural areas or respondents' wealth) have lost their significance.[9]

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5   Sebastian Wierny, "Co czytają Polacy, czyli uczestnictwo w kulturze druku w Polsce na progu XXI wieku," in *Książka na początku wieku,* ed. Grażyna Strauss, Katarzyna Wolff and Sebastian Wierny (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2004), 11-45.

6   Olga Dawidowicz-Chymkowska and Dominika Michalak, *Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2012 roku. Transmisja kultury pisma* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2015), 298-301.

7   Janusz Czapiński and Tomasz Panek, *Diagnoza społeczna 2003* (Warszawa: Wyższa Szkoła Finansów i Zarządzania, 2003), 211-216, accessed March 10, 2015, http://www.diagnoza.com/files/raport2003.pdf

8   Dominik Batorski, *Polacy wobec technologii cyfrowych – uwarunkowania dostępności i sposobów korzystania*, in *Diagnoza społeczna 2013. Warunki i jakość życia Polaków – Raport*, ed. Tomasz Panek and Janusz Czapiński (Warszawa: Drukarnia Braci Grodzkich, 2014), 366. See also Dominik Batorski and Jan M. Zając, *Między alienacją a adaptacją. Polacy w wieku 50+ wobec Internetu* (Warszawa: Koalicja Dojrzałość w Sieci 2010).

9   Batorski, *Polacy wobec technologii cyfrowych*, 365.

If we were to examine solely the digital divide, the Internet undoubtedly breaks social barriers. It seems also a promise of a more open culture for future generations since most schoolchildren use the Internet frequently, and only a few percent of them do it less often than once a month.[10] However, to verify whether some old social divisions are reproduced by the new medium or not, we should look closer at Internet users and the practices they are engaged in.

We tried to establish which of the several features of one's social status most strongly and most independently correlate with the respondent's association with Internet user types denoted earlier in this text. In order to discern them, we applied the CHAID analysis. How does the algorithm work? Let us imagine a hypothetical settlement where the rule is that the inhabitants of each block of flats share at least one quality and that neighbours from each floor are possibly alike. In our research we took into account several social and demographic features. Theoretically, our "settlement" may have been designed in many different ways. In practice, however, some traits turned out to divide respondents more sharply than others, and only few variables determined the arrangement of our hypothetical neighbourhood.[11] Due to the vastness of the diagram illustrating the results of the CHAID analysis, we decided to describe its results.

The most significant variable included in the analysis,[12] that is the trait that divides our ordered settlement into blocks, is a g e. Variables determining the layout of each "floor" – are indicators of c u l t u r a l   c a p i t a l. This means that both variables overlap. As a rule, respondents who have achieved

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10 Zofia Zasacka, *Czytelnictwo dzieci i młodzieży* (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych, 2014), 173.

11 An excellent, detailed description of the algorithm may be found in the "Internet Statistics Manual" published by StatSoft, accessed March 10, 2015, http://www.statsoft.pl/text-book/stathome_stat.html?http%3A%2F%2Fwww.statsoft.pl%2Ftextbook%2Fstchaid. html

12 In the analysis, we considered the following variables: basic demographic features (sex, age, marital status, children under 15 in the household), indicators of cultural capital (respondents' education, command of foreign languages) including indicators of cultural capital acquired at home or typical of the whole environment (parents' education and profession, the level of readership in the family and among friends, as well as variables which characterize respondents' literacy upbringing: whether respondents' parents read books to them in their childhood, whether they were encouraged to read, whether books were purchased for them, whether they were encouraged to participate in afterschool activities, whether adults in the family read books themselves, whether they put emphasis on pupils' results at school and whether respondents read school-recommended readings), the social and professional situation, indicators of the economic capital (monthly net income of respondents and their households, evaluation of their financial situation).

a higher education level are more likely to use the Internet in ways employed by younger generations: e d u c a t i o n   m a k e s   t h e m   t e c h n o l o g i c a l l y y o u n g e r.

Let us get back to our metaphor to support this hypothesis with statistical evidence. Non-users of the Internet comprise 35% of the settlement population. But in the block inhabited by respondents over 67,[13] they amount to 89% of the tenants. In the building inhabited by respondents between 57 and 66 years old, it is already 70% and in every subsequent building this rate drops. Only 4 out of 100 people living in the block inhabited by the youngest respondents (15-22 years old) are non-users of the Internet. In all the buildings inhabited by respondents under 57, the majority of people use the web, but each of the buildings is statistically dominated by users of a different type.

The block inhabited by 51-56 year-olds is still dominated by non-users (56%); at the same time, the number of occasional users is almost 1.5 times bigger than in the entire settlement. Among 39-50 year-olds, the largest group is constituted by the interactive one (twice as many as on average). In the building inhabited by 22-28 year-olds, there are almost 2.5 times more downloaders, while among the youngest respondents, omni-users are dominant (36%, i.e. three times as many as in the entire settlement). T h e   i n t e r - r e l a t i o n   b e t w e e n   t h e   m a n n e r   o f   u s i n g   t h e   I n t e r n e t   a n d t h e   r e s p o n d e n t s'   a g e   r e f l e c t s   t h e   h i s t o r y   o f   t h e   I n t e r n e t ' s d e v e l o p m e n t: in the late 1990s it was still a very limited medium available to a fraction of the population, then it expanded mainly as a source of information, and finally the Internet has become the platform of social life and expression.

Nevertheless, if we take a closer look at the inhabitants of particular floors, the picture gets complicated. It turns out that some of the older respondents resemble the younger ones (and *vice versa*) in their style of using the Internet. What makes respondents "younger" (or "older") is their cultural capital: level of education (in the case of adult respondents) or parents' investment in education (in the case of the youngest respondents).

The group of 51-56 year-olds with primary or vocational education are non-users, more or less, as often as representatives of the older age group. The Internet is used with almost the same low frequency by respondents between 39 and 50 who describe members of their close family as "rather non-readers of books" (non-users amount to 63% in this group). Among younger

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13   The reader attached to survey data being presented in equal increment age groups, may be struck by age groups which were not rounded up. These categories, however, are empirical (just like all other categories depicted in the analysis), hence we cannot expect them to be as neatly divided as the arbitrary ones.

respondents (28-38 years old) with vocational education or less, there are over 2.5 times more occasional users than on average. The youngest, unless in their very recent childhood they participated in afterschool activities, are twice as often – similarly to their older friends – in the community of "downloaders". In the case of respondents over the age of 28, higher level of education, its continuation or participation in afterschool activities (in the case of the youngest group), bring them closer to the styles of using the Internet characteristic of younger generations or (in the case of the youngest ones) to that of omni-users.

It should be stressed that Internet practices of the youngest respondents are closely linked with their participation in afterschool activities. This correlation reveals how the older generation contributes to recreating divisions of class and culture. It also shows that f a m i l y   h o m e   i s   a n   i n s t i t u t i o n   o f   f u n d a m e n t a l   i m p o r t a n c e   t o   t h e   d e v e l o p m e n t   o f e - c u l t u r e . What impacts the future reading practices, however, is not the power of family bonds, but rather the educational aspirations of the family with regards to their children's upbringing. Families facilitate rather than just provide socialization to the digital world. Similarly, the relationship between the style of using the Internet and education in the case of adult respondents does not mirror the relevance of educational programmes (in most cases it had nothing to do with the Internet) but the role of schools (especially universities) as meeting places: institutions linking us with people who use the Internet. The complex interrelation between education and Internet practices support the thesis that o u r   s o c i a l   s t a t u s (our professional circles, family and friends) to a large extent s h a p e   o u r   w a y   o f   u s i n g   t h e I n t e r n e t .

Methods of using the Internet are related with social and demographic variables in the same way as analogue literacy. First of all, age and education are the main determinants of our fluency in decoding print media. The research conducted by the National Library since 1992 shows that the elderly and uneducated do not usually participate in the culture of print. The group most attuned to such a culture are young people who are university graduates or still students, whose friends read books and whose parents are well-educated.[14] Secondly, a l s o   i n   t h e   c a s e   o f   t r a d i t i o n a l   l i t e r a c y

14   Izabela Koryś and Olga Dawidowicz-Chymkowska, *Społeczny zasięg książki w Polsce w 2010 r. Bilans dwudziestolecia* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2012), 26-37; Olga Dawidowicz-Chymkowska and Dominika Michalak, *Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2012 roku* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2013), 311-314; Izabela Koryś, Dominika Michalak and Roman Chymkowski *Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2014 roku* (Warszawa: Bibioteka Narodowa, 2015), 6-13, accessed March 10, 2015, http://bn.org.pl/download/document/1422018329.pdf

(particularly book reading), t h e i n t e r d e p e n d e n c e b e t w e e n a g e a n d e d u c a t i o n i s s i g n i f i c a n t. Even though on average Poles read less and less with time, this tendency is less noticeable among well-educated people, and least visible among children of educated parents. The elderly (over 60) who have higher education, unlike their peers without education, still read books and periodicals.[15]

Thirdly, in the case of literacy – both analogue and digital – we observe a s i m i l a r p a t t e r n o f g i v i n g u p r e a d i n g. *The Social Diagnosis* [*Diagnoza Społeczna*] from 2013 demonstrates that uneducated, elderly people and villagers are statistically more likely to stop using the Internet.[16] The National Library research shows that the same features (especially combined with low cultural capital) coincide with quitting analogue reading. The Internet, however, is still younger than one generation, so we cannot tell whether this pattern is going to last.

In the 2014 survey, which we studied more closely than previous data, the conditions of transmitting reading culture were related to one's upbringing in the family and the reading habits of friends. The survey's results back the previously formulated theses according to which educational differences and the fact that readers usually associate with people similar to them, are one of the main barriers to spreading readership. If the Internet indeed gets adapted in a way that is typical of literacy, we may expect that inequalities related to using the Internet are not a temporary phenomenon. They will keep reproducing, even though the ways of using the Internet are bound to evolve. What seems fundamental to greater egalitarianism of the social life online – just like in the case of print literacy – is decreasing educational inequality, particularly that brought on by the inherited social capital. In spite of appearances, these inequalities have not diminished in the post-transformation Poland and, as we have attempted to show, they are reflected in the divisions in the digital world.[17]

Who Reads Online, and What?

It is hard to examine reading behaviour in detail using surveys as researchers usually pre-define respondents' answers and are forced to rely on their

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15   Dawidowicz-Chymkowska and Michalak, *Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2012 roku,* 26-28, 62-69.

16   Batorski, *Polacy wobec technologii cyfrowych*, 366.

17   Zbigniew Sawiński, "Zmiany systemowe a nierówności w dostępie do wykształcenia," in *Zmiany stratyfikacji społecznej w Polsce*, ed. Henryk Domański (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, 2008), 43.

declarations. Drawing conclusions is then based on *ex-post* declarations, distorted by both the limitations of human memory and the social context of the interview. It should be stressed that in Poland, reading books is a socially valued activity – the fact that whether we read at all and what books we read may incite social judgement can therefore impact respondents' declarations.

Such difficulties are also experienced by researchers examining electoral preferences. It is widely known that some respondents tend to deny their support for extreme political factions, instead they prefer to point to widely accepted establishment parties and avoid revealing their sympathies towards the radical ones. We suspect that a similar mechanism may be influencing reading research in Poland leading to, for example, inflating the reading rate or influencing declarations on reader's choices.

In the case of reading literature on the Internet, an additional difficulty lies in the fluidity of the research subject. In our 2014 survey we asked respondents if they had read any "literary works" online in the past month. To our surprise, 36% of respondents who declared to have read a literary work on the Internet during the past month also stated that during the past year they had not read any books. We cannot tell, however, what they read and how they understood the term of "literary work". Were that poems, fanfiction, unpublished literary pieces on literary websites? Or only book reviews and interpretations on blogs or, in the case of students, summaries of school readings or "cribs"? Whatever it was, they called it "literature".[18]

Surprisingly, reading literary works on the Internet turned out to be a h i g h l y   s e l e c t i v e activity: an activity that allowed for the statistically significant identification of a specific type of Internet users. The type is composed of users for whom reading literature online is one of very few activities, and of omni-users who are distinguished by the fact that they take part in all activities. What is interesting is that both groups behave similarly with regards to analogue reading , that is a similar percentage in each of the groups declared that they regularly read such literary genres as comic books, poetry, prose fiction, science and popular science books (Table 3). The regularity of reading books is comparable as well; moreover, it is higher than the average (reading seven or more books per year was declared by 20% of respondents in each of the groups). A positive correlation is also observed in the case of other book-related practices, like using public libraries, purchasing books as a gift or collecting books (Table 4).

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18   Similarly, it is also likely that, when asked about books read in the past year, respondents tend to name paper books rather than their electronic counterparts. Low rates of e-books registered in the National Library's surveys indicate that respondents do not always consider reading literary works in digital formats as "reading books."

Table 3: Characteristics of types of Internet users

Types of Internet users:	average age (in years)	% of pupils/ students	% of those who read comic books within last month	% of those who read poetry within last month	% of those who read science and popular science books within last month	% of those who read fiction within last month
occasional users	43	5%	1%	4%	7%	21%
social media downloaders	32	19%	9%	7%	22%	35%
social media users	37	9%	4%	6%	17%	36%
practitioners	42	4%	1%	4%	16%	37%
readers of literature online	37	15%	14%	20%	38%	48%
omni-users	31	27%	13%	21%	37%	48%
non-users	59	0	2%	3%	4%	18%
Total	44	8%	5%	8%	16%	30%

Table 4. Reading and book-oriented practices of various types of Internet users, the share of respondents who:

Type of Internet users:	Read an e-book within a year	Listened to an audiobook within a year	Read 7 or more books within a year	Bought a book as a gift for someone within a year	Used a public library within a year	Own collections over 100 books at home	Own both p-books and e-books or audiobooks
occasional users	3%	12%	7%	14%	10%	11%	4%
social media downloaders	25%	35%	14%	14%	17%	18%	9%

Type of Internet users:	Read an e-book within a year	Listened to an audiobook within a year	Read 7 or more books within a year	Bought a book as a gift for someone within a year	Used a public library within a year	Own collections over 100 books at home	Own both p-books and e-books or audiobooks
social media users	10%	22%	13%	18%	15%	17%	8%
practitioners	10%	20%	15%	15%	14%	19%	7%
readers of literature online	28%	34%	20%	26%	24%	28%	15%
omni-users	34%	33%	20%	21%	19%	28%	13%
non-users	1%	13%	6%	9%	7%	12%	6%
Total	12%	21%	11%	15%	13%	20%	8%

Certain similarities between readers of literature, omni-users and downloading social media users with regards to analogue readership practices can be explained by a relatively bigger number of students in these groups. Among pupils and students, the highest share of book readers can be observed (77% in comparison to 42% in total population). However their motivation for reading books is of extrinsic (imposed by educational requirements) rather than of intrinsic nature. Since the educational system in Poland does not instil a habit of reading or passion for literature in its students, many of them give up books upon graduation.[19] The link between education, cultural capital and reading is clearly observed in groups of non-users and occasional users of the Internet. Respondents belonging to these categories declare undertaking digital and analogue reading practices most rarely, which confirms that digital exclusion in Poland is embedded in cultural and educational rather than solely economic inequalities. According to the data of the Central Statistical Office of Poland, the majority of respondents who do not use the Internet at home explain this with "lack of such need" or "lack of skills" ("lack of financial resources" is not an obstacle)[20]. In the case of non-users, the same reasons – namely "lack of

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19   Koryś and Dawidowicz-Chymkowska, *Społeczny zasięg książki w Polsce w 2010 r.;* Michalak and Dawidowicz-Chymkowska, *Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce w 2012 roku;* Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Społeczeństwo informacyjne w Polsce. Wyniki badań statystycznych za lata 2009-2013* (Warszawa, 2014), accessed March 10, 2015, https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/nauka-i-technika-spoleczenstwo-informacyjne/spoleczenstwo-informacyjne/spoleczenstwo-informacyjne-w-polsce-wyniki-badan-statystycznych-z-lat-2009-2013,1,7.html

20   Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Społeczeństwo informacyjne w Polsce. Wyniki badań statystycznych za lata 2009--2013.*

skills necessary for enjoyable reception of fiction and non-fiction" and "lack of such need or habit" – would be applicable also to reading of books.

Our reconstruction of online reading models is based on respondents' answers regarding books they read, including books in digital formats. Out of 1,275 book readers in the 2014 survey, only 43 declared they read books in non-analogue formats. Their number is too small to allow for any quantitative conclusions, but they provide a rough qualitative insight into how digital and analogue practices interrelate.

Out of 43 respondents, 11 readers enlisted books in digital formats only which means that, most likely, they completely shifted from "paper" books to digital media. The rest of the group members combined reading of both digital and analogue books with a clear preference for the traditional medium. This tendency remained unchanged between 2012 and 2014 surveys, although the number of texts downloaded from the Internet slightly increased (from 26 in 2012, to 38 in 2014). Digital formats were used as carriers of popular best-sellers such as E. L. James's trilogy, George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*[21] or novels by Jodi Picoult, as well as more ambitious works, such as Wiesław Myśliwski's *A Treatise on Shelling Beans* (2007), *Stommowisko* by Ludwik Stomma (2013) or Dorota Masłowska's *Honey, I Killed Our Cats* (2012). In 2014, in addition to school required reading (*Pan Tadeusz* by Adam Mickiewicz, or *Krzyżacy* by Henryk Sienkiewicz) read by teenage students in Poland, literary classics in the digital format were named by both a well-educated academic living in a big city (Jonathan Swift's *Gullivers' Travels*) and a qualified worker with secondary education living in the countryside (Sienkiewicz's *Trilogy*). The Internet turned out also to serve as a source of manuals, guidebooks, cookbooks, travel books, fantasy books and detective stories. The e-books listed by our respondents were either legally purchased, illegally downloaded or received as a gift. The number of users of digital formats in the sample is nevertheless too small to determine whether this diversity (of literary genres, readers' social backgrounds or sources of books) is characteristic for the digital circulation of literature in general.

The data indicates however that reading books in digital formats is complimentary or additional to reading analogue books, and is a mark of readers' versatility. Readers using copies in both forms (digital and analogue) acquire books from more sources than average readers (the Internet plays a secondary role here; public libraries, their own and their friends' collections or book purchases are equally important) and are distinguished by being consistent and coherent in their reading choices. They often read according to the

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21 Books listed by respondents have not been annotated as we do not have precise information regarding editions they had in mind. We only quote titles and names mentioned by respondents.

"monographic" or "serial" method, which means that they systematically read pieces by their favourite author, also keeping the chronological order of publications and reaching out for the most recent books, not yet available on the Polish market. We can observe "obtaining" books in digital formats which are hardly available in the printed form. For instance, one respondent found it interesting to "confront" Polish editions of books borrowed from the public library with their digital originals in English (available online).[22]

In some cases books in digital formats can proliferate to those social environments where "analogue" books are hardly available, rarely present or welcome. An iconic representative is an 18-year-old student living in Silesia. She is of a rather underprivileged social background (a daughter of a blue-collar, working single mother). In her home, there is no habit of buying books, people in her close environment neither read books (she describes her family and friends as non-readers), nor ever did (no memories related with reading books from her childhood). The girl reads only some of the obligatory school readings and rarely goes to the library. However, the deficit of analogue books in her environment is compensated by intensive reading of fiction downloaded from the Internet – read systematically and serially (e.g. Claire Cassandra's *City of Angels* or the *Grey* series by E. L. James). It is hard not to get the impression that in the environment where the habit of reading books is particularly rare, and not necessarily socially accepted, the Internet enables access to literary works unavailable otherwise and allows for their "safe" reception, as digital reading may be hidden under the cover of "usual" computer usage. It also allows for a discreet reading of books that are potentially frowned upon (e.g. *50 Shades of Grey* downloaded by teenagers living in the countryside).

AFK or IRL? Digital Analogies to Analogue Practices

Many Internet practices have their analogue counterparts. An example of such a pairing is reading physical books and reading literature online, or meeting with friends in person and using social media. The relation between these practices seems to be a fascinating problem. The question is whether Internet practices push out their analogue equivalents or whether they coexist with them, as in the case of readers who read e-books in order to have access to texts unpublished in Poland.

Obiegi kultury – a research conducted by Centrum Cyfrowe "Projekt: Polska" pointed out the fact that people who download free or unlicensed files from the Internet also read more, and more often, in "paper format" than people

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22   The order of titles listed by the respondent allows us to presume that reading original versions was complimentary to reading these books in Polish.

who do not download any files.[23] The researchers conclude that: "despite having access to digital content, Internet users do not abandon traditional channels of access to books."

Acquisition of cultural texts is just one among many practices within the Internet environment that people engage in as an equivalent to certain offline practices. To fully respond to the question whether online practices push out offline ones or whether they are complimentary, we decided to take a closer look at a wider spectrum of reading practices. Referring to the types of Internet users described in the introduction to this paper and comparing the types of users it defines, together with offline practices corresponding with the ways in which they use the Internet, we found a series of positive correlations between online and offline practices.

Table 5. Free-time activities of different types of Internet users

Type of Internet users:	Socializing offline*		Reading periodicals in paper edition		Reading a blog post	Watching TV during a day (average)	
	NOT	YES	All types of periodicals	Periodicals on hobbies		I don't watch TV	I watch over 4 hours
occasional users	49%	51%	63%	11%	0%	2%	11%
social media downloaders	45%	55%	68%	21%	38%	4%	12%
social media users	43%	57%	70%	16%	64%	3%	10%
practitioners	51%	50%	77%	13%	0%	2%	11%
readers of literature online	52%	48%	72%	10%	35%	4%	8%
omni-users	51%	49%	65%	21%	91%	10%	6%
non-users	56%	44%	62%	4%	0%	3%	24%
Total	**51%**	**49%**	**66%**	**12%**	**25%**	**4%**	**15%**

* Respondents were asked the following question: "If you had five more hours of free time, how much time would you devote to going out with friends and family?"

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23   Mirosław Filiciak, Justyna Hofmokl and Alek Tarkowski, *Obiegi kultury. Społeczna cyrkulacja treści. Raport z badań* (Warszawa: Centrum Cyfrowe Projekt Polska, 2012), 61-62.

Among the respondents associated with the type 'social media user,' that is Internet users who focus their online practices around social media, only slightly over 43% answered "none" to a question about how much time they devote to social meetings with their friends and family, going out to a café, pub, restaurant, etc. In contrast, it was more than 56% among non-users. In the group of omni-users this percentage was lower than among non-users – it was less than 51%.

Reading paper periodicals also positively correlates with using the Internet. Non-users read periodicals less frequently than all groups of Internet users – during the 12 months preceding the survey nearly 62% of non-users read a newspaper, magazine or periodical, whereas the highest percentage was associated with users-practitioners at 77.29%. All other groups of users also read periodicals more often than the non-users.

When planning our research we formulated a hypothesis that high readership of blogs among the omni-users might be followed by their slight interest in printed periodicals, especially related with hobbies. It turned out, however, that the group of the most active Internet users read printed periodicals related with hobbies over five times more often than non-users (20.51% vs. 4.31%). At the same time, 91% of omni-users declared reading blogs during the month preceding the survey. It seems, therefore, that both of these practices – reading newspapers and blogs – coexist in this group with intensity impossible to find in other analyzed segments.

The most explicit negative correlation of online and offline practices was found by comparing Internet use with television watching. The respondents were asked about the number of hours per day (on average) they devoted to television watching during the week preceding the survey. The answer "over 4 hours" was given by non-users almost 4 times more often than in the group of omni-users (24.17% vs. 6.44%). The almost exactly reversed proportion was noted for the answer: "I do not watch television" (10.08% of omni-users, 2.74% of non-users). It seems that if the Internet really pushes out any offline activity, it is watching television.

The conclusions drawn by the authors of the *Social Diagnosis 2013* are seemingly contradictory. They draw attention to the fact that despite the popularity of the Internet, the time we devote to watching television is increasing. But when they look at groups which we also compare in our research – Internet users and non-users – they state that "the mentioned effect is a result of various behaviours of users and non-users. The former spend less time watching television, while people who do not use the Internet spend more time in front of the television set."[24] The authors, therefore, point to the fact that television

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24   Batorski, *Polacy wobec technologii cyfrowych,* 319-320.

is becoming less important to Internet users, but not on the society-wide scale. Our conclusions are not in conflict with the *Social Diagnosis* as we do not speak about the tendencies in the whole of society, but about the difference in television watching habits among particular types of Internet users and non-users.

Positive correlations between the frequency of online and offline practices in particular groups prove that, to a great extent, the I n t e r n e t s t r e n g t h - e n s o r c o m p l e m e n t s a n a l o g u e p r a c t i c e s. Social media users more often want to go out with friends to pubs and restaurants. Put another way, people who socialize offline more often, also use social media more frequently. There are more such pairs of practices that are mutually positively correlated, as we tried to show on the basis of a big set of data coming from our research.

In the discourse describing new technologies and the ontological status of the digital world – digital representations, mediations and "virtual realities" – we find two polar definitions of the digital. On the one hand, we speak about virtual reality: a vision of the alternative world existing somewhere in the silicon chips of computers, well-grounded in cyber-punk fiction; on the other hand, we speak about reality dilated or extended by adding the digital (so-called augmented) reality. When a lawyer asked Peter Sunde, one of The Pirate Bay founders, when he had met his colleague IRL (in real life), Sunde replied: "We don't say IRL, we say AFK (away from the keyboard). We think that the Internet is for real."[25]

Our conclusion about the hybrid, digital-analogue, nature of cultural practices today is supported by the conclusions of the authors of the *Obiegi kultury* report mentioned earlier. The report also convincingly demonstrates that when we speak about analogue practices in comparison to digital practices, spaces of implementing these practices are not rigidly separated – they rather seem to co-exist next to each other. Omni-users outside the Internet are simply AFK, but they are still the same readers.

Conclusion

As depicted by the examples of readers of literature on the Internet for whom the Web is an "escape door" from their social class culture, new technologies at times help bridge social divisions. However, representative research show that only a small share of our society manages to climb the social ladder this

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25   The conversation registered for the documentary *TPB AFK: The Pirate Bay Away From Keyboard,* directed by Simon Klose, accessed March 10, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTOKXCEwo_8

way. On the whole, digital reading goes hand in hand with analogue reading and thus is unlikely to do away with social differences dividing analogue readers and analogue non-readers. The previously formulated fear – that those inequalities may reproduce in the digital environment – is thus backed by empirical data. Our conclusions undermine the belief that the Internet brings about a truly equal public sphere.

Translation: Marta Skotnicka

Piotr Toczyski

Academic (Non)Reading from the Perspective of "User Friendliness:" An Insight from the Fields of the Sociology of Literature and of Multimedia

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The purpose of this article is to draw the reader's attention to an important issue in the Polish edition of an international research project inspired by Columbia University in New York, namely, the matter of user convenience in accessing texts, which translates into reading – or, in fact, merely into the possibility of reading. These topics have received only marginal attention in the field of the sociology of literature and the media.

The very fact that such a quantitative study inspired by an American university was even conducted in Poland is itself fascinating, as it illustrates the internationalization of social studies on multimedia readership. Other international quantitative multimedia studies have also been conducted, including the World Internet Project, which has been part of the discussion on the Internet and online readership since 2010.[1] While these studies are often inspiring, they can also sometimes pose an obstacle in examining the subject. Nevertheless, the overall balance of such projects should be considered positive.

The Polish edition of the study discussed in this article, namely, the study on multimedia readership inspired by researchers from Columbia University, is thus

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1   Piotr Toczyski et al., *World Internet Project. Poland 2012* (Warszawa: Agora S.A. & TP Group, 2012).

yet another in a series of projects that have the potential to depict Poland's "interactive" and "multimedia" character in an international context. Unfortunately, the results of research conducted in other parts of the world are not yet available. Waiting for their publication may turn out to be counterproductive, as even in the case of the World Internet Project there seems to be no cohesive methodology that would guarantee cross-national cognitive cohesion.

A cursory glance at Polish research in this field encourages reflection on the state of contemporary academic texts, which span – like many other products of the written word and their readers today – "the virtual and printed text."[2] The perspective on the subject presented herein will be an innovation with regard to the issue at hand, but it is still an insufficient response to a much more far-reaching challenge: to depict the Polish results in a global context.

The Background and Current Literature on the Subject

A good backdrop for the discussion of the results can be found in other studies of readership in Poland, which I discussed in the press – at the time a medium that actually permitted astute analysis – where I made the claim that "he who does not read is twice as important as he who does."[3] This statement was a reference to the fact that the National Library, which commissions the most widely-cited readership surveys in Poland, seems more eager to calculate the number of non-readers of books than to emphasize the population or percentage of actual readers. Many may find it disconcerting to see an emphasis being placed on data showing that, over the past year (2012, in this case), 60.8 percent of Poles had not read a single book.[4]

Studies commissioned by the National Library display an annual fluctuation: non-readers apparently made up 56 percent of the population in 2010, while the results for 2008 and 2006 were 62.2 and 50.3 percent, respectively. What could possibly make the number of people who had not picked up a book initially grow by 12 percentage points following 2006, only to drop by 6 and then rise again by 4 points? The simplest explanation could be that the surveys were conducted on different samples that is either people 15 and

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2   Piotr Toczyski, "Między tekstem wydrukowanym a wirtualnym," in *Korzystanie z mediów a podziały społeczne. Kompetencje medialne Polaków w ujęciu relacyjnym*, ed. Mirosław Filiciak (Warszawa: Centrum Cyfrowe, 2013).

3   Piotr Toczyski, "43,6% Polaków to zdeklarowani nieczytelnicy książek," *Duży Format*, August 6, 2013, 2.

4   Roman Chymkowski, Izabela Koryś and Olga Dawidowicz-Chymkowska, "Społeczny zasięg książki w Polsce w 2012 r.," (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2013), accessed March 27, 2014, http://www.bn.org.pl/download/document/1362741578.pdf

older or 18 and older. However, the results compiled in the document provide no such information.[5]

The issue of readership in Poland has also been examined in another study, one preceding Columbia University's intended examination of the use of multimedia – including multimedia text – in academia in Poland. The World Internet Project study, conducted on an equally well-selected and sufficiently numerous sample of Poles, indicates a greater number of readers than non-readers. The results of that survey show that in 2012, only 29 percent of Poles were non-readers, a very minor change compared to 2010 and 2011.[6]

Now that we know that in mid-2012 the non-reading population amounted to at least 29 percent (according to the World Internet Project) and at most 60.8 percent (late in the year, according the National Library, we can examine a third data source: the results obtained by the Center for Public Opinion Research (CBOS).

At the start of every year, CBOS pollsters conduct a survey of the number of Poles who claim to read at least one book per year for pleasure. These data cover the past 25 years.[7] They show that the number of non-readers grew over the first five years following the systemic transformation, from 36 percent in 1988 to 43 percent in 1993. According to the cited surveys, the number has since fallen below 40 percent only once, in 1996. Interestingly enough – from the point of view of this comparison – the survey conducted by the National Library that year provided similar results. Meanwhile, in 2000 both CBOS and the National Library found the number of non-readers to be 46 percent, while the values for 2002 and 2004 were almost identical, with the CBOS survey placing the value at 43 percent non-readers, and the National Library reporting 41.8 percent. Since 2006, however, the two institutions have published diverging results. In 2008 there was a difference of 8 percentage points between them, a discrepancy that rose to 17 points in 2008 and 14 in 2010.

The data presented in Table 1 shed light on the discrepancies in the survey results cited above and offer a better understanding of the context of this incongruity. It is a list of surveys conducted since 2014 which studied the reading habits of a nationwide, representative sample of Poles.[8]

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5   Ibid.

6   Toczyski et al., *World Internet Project. Poland 2012.*

7   Michał Feliksiak, *Aktywności i doświadczenia Polaków w 2012 roku* (Warszawa: CBOS, 2013), accessed March 27, 2014, http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2013/K_013_13.PDF

8   Piotr Toczyski, *Wokół kierunków i form transformacji czytelnictwa w Polsce (o genezie, źródłach, celach, metodach i realizacji badania zmian czytelnictwa)*, (2014), accessed June 4, 2015, https://depot.ceon.pl/handle/123456789/5930

It is worth noting that the institution responsible for carrying out the majority of book readership surveys in Poland is the aforementioned Center for Public Opinion Research, rather than the widely-cited National Library, though not all of CBOS's studies are initiated by the center itself. The questions posed by CBOS pollsters vary in form, depending on how the researchers choose to formulate them. Some questions begin with the words "Have you…", while others open with phrases such as "How many…" or "When did you last…". This variation leads to discrepancies in the twelve-month readership index, even in the case of data collected as part of a single survey.

In the key year of 2012, when three such surveys were conducted in Poland, the difference between the findings by CBOS and the National Library amounted to nearly 20 percent, with CBOS reporting that 41 percent of Poles were non-readers and the National Library placing the number of non-readers at 60.8 percent of the population. Recall that another source mentioned above, the World Internet Project, determined that same year that 29 percent were non-readers.

Therefore, the only thing we can ascertain based on quantitative studies conducted in Poland is that they lack a generally-accepted methodology that would provide unambiguous results. It thus makes more sense to consider the phenomena of readership and non-readership by applying certain ranges and examining them as a part of exploratory projects. In such circumstances, the very issue of readership and its opposite, non-readership, is difficult to define satisfactorily.

I intend to use this subversively presented background (non-readership rather than readership, in the years 1988–2012, with particular emphasis on 2012) to sketch the remainder of this essay, in which I will discuss readership among students.

Methodology

Pollsters conducted the study in question in June 2013, at several departments formally belonging to three institutions of higher learning in a major Polish city: one public and two private. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic and promises made to the governing bodies of the universities, nothing more can be said about the city chosen for the study. The survey was conducted on a sample of students of law and those departments that correspond to what our English-speaking partners refer to as "cultural studies" and "media studies," which also includes journalism and related fields. The purpose of these choices was to provide a diverse sample, not to compare results among students majoring in different subjects.

Table 1. Readership in Poland as measured by CAPI (computer-assisted personal interviews) conducted in the homes of the respondents in 2012–2013 and in January 2014, presented in chronological order. (Own work)

Date conducted	Research project name	Commissioned by	Fieldwork conducted by	Sample size	Target population	Sampling method	Percentage of people who had read at least one book in the past 12 months	Question posed	Question context
January 2012 (5–11.01.2012)	Aktualne problemy i wydarzenia [Current Problems and Events]	CBOS (Own survey)	CBOS	1,058	Age 18+	Random (PESEL-based)	57%	"Have you read a book for pleasure in the past year?"	Events of the past year
April and May 2012 (16.04–20.05.2012)	World Internet Project	Agora & TP (Orange)	Ipsos	2,007	Age 15–75	Stratified random sampling	71%	"How many books do you read per year, on average?"	Media consumption
November 2012 (specific survey dates unavailable)	Stan czytelnictwa w Polsce [The State of Readership in Poland]	National Library	TNS Polska	3,000	Age 15+	Random (PESEL-based)	39%	No data	"Omnimas" omnibus survey (a syndicated study in which many clients pose questions and respondents provide answers during a single interview, using a questionnaire comprising separate sections covering separate issues)
January 2013 (3–9.01.2013)	Aktualne problemy i wydarzenia [Current Problems and Events]	CBOS (Own survey)	CBOS	1,227	Age 18+	Random (PESEL-based)	59%	"Have you read a book for pleasure in the past year?"	Feelings and opinions on the events of the past year
October and November 2013 (29.10–26.11.2013)	Kierunki i formy transformacji czytelnictwa w Polsce [The Transformation of Readership in Poland: Trends and Forms]	Observatory of Culture program, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, with funding from the Polish Chamber of Books	CBOS, using a questionnaire designed by OPI PIB and CBOS	2,031	Age 15+	Random (PESEL-based)	62% / 69%	"When did you last read a book for pleasure?" / "How many paper books have you read from start to finish (or almost completed) in the past 12 months?"	Media consumption
January 2014 (9–15.01.2014)	Aktualne problemy i wydarzenia [Current Problems and Events]	CBOS (Own survey)	Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej	1,067	Age 18+	Random (PESEL-based)	59%	"Have you read a book for pleasure in the past year?"	Feelings and opinions on the events of the past year

The survey was conducted through the auditorium method, with responses provided by students of various years. The questionnaire was thus filled out by fourth and fifth year students, though the international goal was to reach undergraduates and students of parallel years (i.e., people who had not yet earned a Bachelor's degree and first to third year students). Subsequent international analyses will thus take into account 648 out of a total 760 submitted questionnaires (part of which are incomplete due, for example, to a refusal to respond, or inattentiveness or lack of motivation on the part of the respondent; the analyses presented below are based on 745 questionnaires and the percentages cited are calculated based on this number).

The survey discussed below was conducted through the collection of questionnaire data, that is, data of a quantitative nature. Regardless of this fact, due mainly to the non-representative nature of the selected sample, the results should generally be analyzed in an exploratory fashion and should lead to the posing of questions that warrant further examination. Possible future studies could involve testing hypotheses on yet-unavailable representative samples that reflect the general population of students of a given major or year. Earl Babbie goes as far as to recommend the "qualitative analysis of quantitative data,"[9] which suggests that the insight achieved from quantitative data can be of value even when we do not apply to it the instruments of statistical analysis. The analytical approach proposed herein lies within the boundaries of the sociology of literature, though it also allows us to reconstruct unconscious motivations, ones that are difficult to articulate, and to avoid the trap of self-presentation mentioned by Maciej Maryl,[10] citing the authors of the sociological work *Problematyka kształtowania się potrzeb czytelniczych* [*Reader Needs and Their Development*].[11]

One unquestionable limitation of the survey was its use of an international questionnaire that will someday allow an international team to compare the results from Poland with those collected in other countries, which will likely be analyzed in other articles in the upcoming years.[12] The questionnaire, while

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9   Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research* (Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2008), 438.

10   Maciej Maryl, "Antropologia odbioru literatury – zagadnienia metodologiczne," *Teksty Drugie* 1/2 (2009).

11   Elżbieta Wnuk-Lipińska and Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński, *Problematyka kształtowania się potrzeb czytelniczych, Biblioteka Narodowa* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Narodowa, 1975).

12   The international survey was conducted by a team supervised by Dr. Joe Karaganis of Columbia University. In Poland the project was implemented by a team that communicated with international coordinators and adapted the provided research tools (2012–2013): Dr. Mirosław Filiciak, Dr. Alek Tarkowski, Dr. Piotr Toczyski, in cooperation with Michał Kotnarowski, who conducted the statistical analyses (2013), as well Łukasz Anders, M.A., and Maciej Sopyłko, M.A., who worked in tandem to conduct most of the survey fieldwork.

extensive, did not permit the researchers to examine in greater detail every topic of interest, and thus limited the scope of their exploration.

Respondents and Their Convenience of Access to Texts

For the purposes of this article, I will examine the entire sample of 760 responses, including those which were incomplete that is a total of 745 typically, with the caveat that the results of a survey conducted in this manner apply only to this group of students, which is not representative of the Polish student body nor even the student population in the city in which the study was conducted.

The collected data will at this point be presented in a manner that reflects individual fields of study: imagine the respondents as a rather numerous yet arbitrarily (but, importantly, not randomly) selected academic community, one comprising young liberal arts majors studying in the second decade of our century that is digital natives. Anyone attending university in 2013 has spent most of his or her life with access to multimedia text. Such students escape traditional descriptions that were once applied to the process of studying at university. It appears that the convenience with which students access academic content was completely disregarded in typical descriptions of studying, the didactic process, and self-education. Meanwhile, from today's perspective, the omission of the subject of access in discussions on readership, particularly among students, seems significant. In the results presented below, the main subject of focus is precisely the practices associated with accessing required textual content.

While this approach is realized through the questionnaire method, it is essentially an application of the "turn to the recipient in the field of media studies and audience ethnography," cited by Maciej Maryl, a turn that postulates that we pay attention to the "biographically determined individual who reads texts in accordance with his or her own practical interests."[13]

The survey illustrates the way in which technological developments affect practices associated with access, rather than reading as such, within the field of education; in other words, the manner in which textual content is accessed. It is common knowledge that the Internet and the device through which it is accessed have changed the way in which people study. To better depict this obvious fact, let us listen to one critical voice in academia concerning not the dismal state of readership today, but the obstacles that once made academic content difficult to access. The surveyed students filled out their questionnaires at a moment that coincided with an interesting polemic between two

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13   Maciej Maryl, "Literatura i e-społeczeństwo," *Teksty Drugie* 6 (2012).

university professors in the media. Arkadiusz Stempin, responding to Jan Hartman's claims regarding the supposed "idiotization" of universities, observed in a piece published on the news site Tokfm.pl on May 14, 2013, that not only was the potential availability of academic material greater today than thirty years before, so was its potential usability. "I remember being required to read '50 pages per day' when attending the renowned Jagiellonian University. That was pure fiction. It was not just that we were lazy: we did not read that much because we did not have anything to read. There were no books, no photocopiers, no printers," he wrote.[14]

The results collected in the survey expand on this notion of books, photocopiers, and printers as contemporary attributes of the successful student. The change that occurred went by almost unnoticed. Meanwhile, these results allow us to examine the process of studying from the point of view of the convenience of the audience for which academic literature is published. Furthermore, this is likely the only perspective that enables us to understand most of the results presented below and to assemble them into a cohesive image.

The perspective of user experience management, a topic well known to large online publishers (or should we say broadcasters?), involves discussing informal access to content based on an existing empathetic understanding of the users – backed by studies or accurate intuition – and accepting their world. The potential reader is frustrated by the subjective cost associated with accessing content, just as the Internet user is frustrated by the need to go through one extra click or one extra page load, or even waiting a few seconds for a page to load.[15] This perspective brings us to three conclusions that can be formulated based on the results of the auditorium questionnaires mentioned above.

First Conclusion: Students Purchase Books when Photocopies or Electronic Versions are Unavailable.

87.2 percent of students have at some point purchased new study materials. The following table presents the number of respondents who provided particular reasons for purchasing materials, discussed below from the user convenience perspective.

14   Arkadiusz Stempin, "O zbaranieniu uczelni, czyli jak prof. Hartman zerkał na pomalowane paznokcie studentek [POLEMIKA]," accessed March 27, 2014, http://www.tokfm.pl/Tokfm/1,102433,13906492,O_zbaranieniu_uczelni__czyli_jak_prof__Hartman_zerkal.html

15   Piotr Toczyski, "Aktywni internauci – perspektywa zarządzania doświadczeniem," in *Obiegi kultury. Społeczna cyrkulacja treści,* ed. Mirosław Filiciak, Justyna Hofmokl, Alek Tarkowski (Warszawa: Centrum Cyfrowe, 2012).

Table 2. Reasons for purchasing new study materials (the number of respondents who provided a given answer to the question "Why do you buy new materials?" multiple responses were permitted).

Copies, used books, or library copies are unavailable or difficult to access	144
I want to own a current edition of a given title	142
I'm interested in the content of a given book or need extended access to it	128
I want to own a new copy of the book	79
Convenience	58
Low price of new books or photocopying is not worth the cost	27
The textbook contains exercises to fill out	13
I want to take notes in the book	12
I respect copyright	8
I believe in supporting the publishers and authors	7
Other reason	41
Other answer	27

While 58 respondents in this group do claim to buy new materials due to their "convenience," the remaining responses also indicate that convenience could be a reason for purchasing new study materials.

For instance, 144 respondents claim that they only buy new materials when it is difficult or impossible to access copies, used books, or library books. A comparable number of respondents, 128, claim to buy new books when they need to use the contents of a given book for an extended time or if they simply find it interesting. The purchase of new books is driven by convenience combined with thriftiness, where thriftiness can sometimes be an obstacle to full convenience. Such motivations as the desire to support the publishers or authors, a stated respect for copyright, or the option of taking notes on the pages of a new book are marginal.

Another reason to buy new materials marked in the questionnaire is simply "to own a new copy of the book" (79 respondents), which can be interpreted as a similar reason to "convenience." Such a comparison must come with the caveat that while owning a personal copy of a book required for a student's coursework is not necessarily synonymous with convenience, it can certainly spare him or her trips to the library and allows them to mark up the books. In an article sketching the scope of the change that occurred in the distribution of text, a piece foreshadowing this study, Mirosław Filiciak discussed a reading model that "legitimized market practices," one in which a person reads "the entire book, using an original copy – preferably one

personally owned by the reader, a copy with which he or she has an emotional attachment."[16] Such notions of the book held by modern-day publishers – if they do, in fact, reflect their actual notions – seem idealized, particularly with regard to materials used by students today. Even the literature of the subject is guilty of fetishizing books in an age of multimedia: Allessandra Pozzi even observes that it is in the context of the dominance of multimedia texts that traditional books acquire a particular totemic power.[17] Nevertheless, from the perspective of the student and book owner's convenience, the ownership of a book seems to be more closely associated with the experience of a convenient tool than the experience of a situation that is almost sacred in nature. This is not to downplay the topic of the book as a relic or object, which deserves to be examined separately; unfortunately, this exceeds the scope of the collected data.

The list of reasons for purchasing books presented in the table above reflects a desire for convenience, yet it is a desire that is limited by available resources. Only twenty-seven respondents chose the statement that combines the "low price of new books" and that "photocopying is not worth the cost," which indicates that they generally consider the price of books to be high and view photocopying as an economically viable option.

Photocopying books is itself inconvenient, although the opposite is likely true of a paper copy that one can mark up. Over half (61.4 percent) of respondents stated that they copy less than 20 percent of the materials required for their coursework from other students, if anything at all. At the same time, among the sources of texts listed by students, not one was mentioned more frequently than the filesharing website Chomikuj.pl, which was selected 506 times (as an "illegal" source) and 39 times (as a "legal" one). The legal classification was chosen by the respondents themselves.

The high percentage of students who use a single website that dominates the digital landscape and offers immediate access to academic content can also be interpreted within the assumed perspective as an expression of the users' desire for convenience. The second most frequently mentioned website, Rapidshare.pl, with 91 students listing it as an "illegal" source, also offers online access to content without requiring the user to install any additional software.

The presence of both sites in the results reinforces the interpretation of the data as an illustration of the users' desire for convenience. This is particularly

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16 Mirosław Filiciak, "Tekst jako plik. Techno-społeczne wymiary czytania na przykładzie przemian procesów dystrybucji tekstów," *Teksty Drugie* 6 (2012).

17 Alessandra Pozzi, "Reflections on the Meaning of the Book, Beginning with its Physicality: Instrument or Fetish?," *Italian Sociological Review* 1–2 (2011).

true in light of the stated reasons for using these websites: these include convenient access (mentioned by 43.6 percent of users), free or cheap access (26.8 percent), saving time and quick access (25.9 percent).

The results also indicate the respondents' perceived lack of a "legal" alternative (19.7 percent mention the "lack of access to legal sources") and, at the same time, the lack of a general conviction that the listed sites contain "a large quantity of useful material" (14.2 percent).

Second Conclusion: Academic Books Belong Among Online Multimedia Resources

Users are also familiar with the leading filesharing websites Rapidshare and Chomikuj in a non-academic context: for example, 58 percent of respondents claim to download music from "sites such as" the two mentioned, while 47.2 percent use them as a source of films and television programs. Other sites, including commercial and peer-to-peer services, are much lower on the list of providers mentioned by the students (iTunes, for example, is used for downloading music by 22.6 percent of respondents, while 11.9 percent of them use it to download films).

In response to this state of content consumption, the professors of 28.1 percent of respondents used "sites such as" Rapidshare and Chomikuj.pl to share materials with their students. This is comparable with the percentage of respondents who mentioned the use of Google Docs and Scribd (27 percent), but much lower than e-mail (64.3 percent of respondents, compared to 66.6 percent of respondents stating that their teachers used any of the listed means to share content). 17.2 percent of students reported that their professors used Facebook to share materials with students, while 11 percent did so using blogging platforms. Dedicated internal "virtual university" systems were mentioned by a negligible percentage of respondents (9.8 percent; it can be assumed that these responses pertained to the posting of course syllabuses on such sites). It is noteworthy, however, that 31 percent of respondents listed the filesharing system Dropbox as a method used by their professors.

However, when students share academic content among themselves, they most frequently use mailing lists or shared e-mail accounts (197 mentions among a total of 537) as well as social network groups (156 mentions among a total of 537). 59.1 percent of respondents stated that students had the implied permission of their professors to share course materials among themselves. Among the tools listed were e-mail (59.7 percent), platforms such as Dropbox and Chomikuj.pl (33.3 percent), and offline tools such as "hard drives and flash drives" (21.2 percent). These tools were also familiar

to respondents as ways of sharing music (28.7 percent) and movies (20.7 percent).

In order to understand the circulation of multimedia content online, it is helpful to "suspend one's moral judgment,"[18] which also facilitates describing the results from the perspective of convenience. When asked to provide the reasons for using sites that they themselves perceived to be "illegal" – a question listed on the international questionnaire – the respondents typically mentioned ease of use, free-of-charge access, and the broad range of content provided. This confirms the previously observed tendency on the part of the respondents to opt for convenience.

Table 3. Reasons for using sites containing course materials (the number of respondents who provided a given answer to the question "Why do you use them [online sources that you consider to be illegal]?;" multiple responses were permitted).

Ease of access	239
Free or low-cost access	147
To save time; quick access	142
Lack of access to legal sources	108
Large amount of useful material	78
They contain content posted by my professors	8
I want to have the text in electronic form	8
They contain content posted by other students	5

Third Conclusion: Academic Books are Read "Here and Now," Not Stored on a Bookshelf (Real or Virtual)

From our assumed perspective, the lack of an inclination to collect books should be associated with the involved lack of convenience. 25.1 percent of respondents owned their own personal library of digital books, while 73.6 percent explicitly claimed not to own such a library. When the question is modified, we learn that 47.8 percent of respondents own PDF files of academic articles or results of studies, while just over half of the respondents do not. One out of three respondents who own a collection of PDF files has ten or fewer, while slightly more than half have twenty or fewer (53.7 percent). Amassing larger collections thus appears to be an activity that limits the person's comfort.

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18   Filiciak, "Tekst jako plik."

72.2 percent of respondents are able to find the materials required for their courses at a library, while 50.2 percent feel that their access to class materials is practically guaranteed by their library. 51 percent occasionally borrow books from their university libraries, and a somewhat smaller percentage (47.4 percent) sometimes find the books required for their studies at other libraries. However, 41.2 percent of respondents locate most of the materials they need for classes online: these respondents state that six out of ten information queries they make for university courses are done on the Internet. 34.1 percent claim the same of six, seven or eight out of ten pieces of information, while 7.1 percent do so with regard to all of the information they need.

This is confirmed in the question regarding the use of online text databases when studying or completing assignments for classes: 54.4 percent claim to use such databases. Upon closer examination of the results, it appears that respondents understand such databases to include, in particular, Wikipedia (17.4 percent), materials located through Google (14.5 percent), and Chomikuj.pl (13.5 percent). The list also includes Facebook (2.1 percent). Local language versions of global online communication and information tools, together with local user-made repositories, appear to be convenient ways of accessing content, likely because users are already familiar with them from non-academic contexts. The list also includes specialized databases that are typical for particular university majors, especially legal databases. 37.9 percent of respondents confirm that the availability of digital materials has changed their reading practices, but must have observed no such change (43.4 percent). It can be supposed that this is a result of the fact that students belonging to the surveyed age groups have grown up in a digital environment and have no memory of an entirely "analog" world. When probed with an additional question, only 8.6 percent of respondents state they read less now than they did before.

Interestingly, and somewhat counterintuitively, given the popular beliefs regarding technologization, students appear to find reading on paper more convenient. This is the way in which 78.4 percent of respondents typically read, while fewer of them, 22.7 percent, read text mainly on computer screens (though some respondents listed both as their preferred medium). When asked how they usually read, and given the option of providing multiple answers, respondents say that they prefer paper, and list computer screens as the second most popular choice. Third on the list are other, mobile, screens: mobile devices (tablets, e-book readers, and mobile phone screens, each treated separately) were at the time of the study much less popular as a means of accessing academic materials.

This paper-digital image is therefore not unambiguous. Different means of access intertwine, and a given text's absence from the Internet does not

preclude attempts to locate it via other methods, for example by the traditional academic route of visiting the library. 73.2 percent of respondents claim that they can "usually find course materials at the library," while even more, 79.1 percent, sometimes borrow books from the university library. 63 percent of respondents use libraries other than the ones at their university. In that case, what part of their "search for texts or information required for their courses" do they do online? 62.5 percent of respondents claim that they find information they search for on the Internet in four out of ten cases. It would thus be incorrect to state that content will not be read if it can be found in the library, but not online. One might even consider whether the paper "interface" is simply a convenient interface for accessing content, and if it happens to be unavailable, prohibitively expensive, or inconvenient to access due to various factors that were not explored in the survey, this is compensated by more convenient access channels.

Examining the issue in this manner enables us to combine the aforementioned perspectives of the book as an "instrument" and as a "totemic" object. Both motivations can intertwine, and the more utilitarian one can stem from the inability to freely realize more the more fundamental motivation.

Conclusion

The data presented above illustrate the everyday practices of students and their notions of studying in an era of ubiquitous and new (is it still new?) interactive technology. While quantitative, the data has been analyzed with the goal of achieving at least some degree of qualitative insight. They have not been examined critically from an elitist point of view, but have been discussed from the perspective of convenience of access, user convenience, and what we might describe as "user experience management" for the reader, without rejecting more important topics, few of which fell within the scope of this study.

The quantitative data illustrate the crucial role played by seemingly secondary factors in driving academic readership among students. Content delivery methods built and developed with other multimedia content in mind and with the goal of maximizing reader convenience are particularly informative in the search for areas of readership growth. This information applies at least to the group studied through the questionnaire, though, as I mentioned at the beginning, we do not know what population it represents. The preferred paper form is nevertheless giving way to other access methods, thus demonstrating their potential.

The above results and the accompanying conclusions regarding the state of "the study of non-reading" is therefore largely practical in nature. The

combination of basic and applied research with international academic initiatives – reflected in the subject of study – should result in a redefinition of the current way of thinking about studying, the academic community, and the liberal arts. Examining these subjects by applying different categories does not necessarily entail a lack of critical thinking, but it should also be based in data acquired through questionnaire surveys, for example, as was the case with the presented study. In an era of online file-sharing and the desire for convenient access to text, driven by the development of the technology that allows users to copy and share content, traditional academic readership is simply undergoing a transformation, one that nevertheless gives text a new opportunity to influence the reader.

Translation: Arthur Barys

Olga Dawidowicz-Chymkowska

"Degenerate" Forum of Małgorzata Musierowicz's Fans as an Interactive Interpretative Machine: A Case Study

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Małgorzata Musierowicz's Fan Forum (FFMM) has been active at gazeta.pl for almost seven years now.[1] Between February 2005 and October 2012, its users generated an incredible 114,000 posts, which translates to an average of a thousand commentaries per month. To a casual observer, numbers such as these may seem quite shocking – why would adults[2] devote so much at-

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1 By the time this article was published [in Polish – Anna Warso] the forum changed its name to ESD – Eksperymentalna Strona Dyskusyjna.

2 A short characteristic of the users seems useful here. I cannot present an extensive sociological report based on hard numeric data (the changeability of the user group and inability to verify information provided by them makes such a report impossible). However, basing on what the forum participants write about themselves in the threads devoted to autopresentation: http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/w,25788,22323257,,Watek_wiekowy_.html?v=2, accessed October 15, 2012; http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/w,25788,48098795,,Powiedzmy_cos_o_sobie_.html?v=2, accessed October 15, 2012, and the discussions conducted in other threads, certain tendencies in the demographic composition of the forum become apparent. The majority of users is female (with only a handful of men posting on FFMM) and adult (teenagers are rare on the forum, and unlikely to actively participate in the discussions). Additionally, a large part of users has declared themselves as university graduates whose educa-

tention to an author of a dozen or so teen novels? To a literary scholar, they are intriguing. In fact, FFMM provides an exceptionally rich material for the research of various types of satisfaction obtained from discussing literature in the unique context of an internet forum, and an opportunity to investigate the latter as a special generator of interpretative text.

As a phenomenon, FFMM is interesting not only because of its longevity, but also because of the surrounding controversy. The intellectual level of the forum's discussion has been admirable,[3] but its users are also frequently accused of bad behavior.[4] Thus, an analysis of the forum may provide also an interesting perspective on several issues related to the ethics of interpretation.

In order to better understand the function of FFMM, one should focus not on particular utterances produced by the users, or their individual interactions, but rather on the mechanisms governing the development of long and extensive thematic threads (with dialogues branching out under a common title). I decided to base my analysis on one such thread, even though the only way I can present it in the following article is by providing a summary of the most interesting passages from the conversation, which in itself constitutes a certain kind of interpretation. Such a method of presenting the users' activity at least should shed some light on the specificity of their interpretative practice.

The following analysis focuses on a discussion thread under the heading "Chyba mi rozum odjęło"[5] ["I must have lost my mind"] triggered by a commentary containing a few critical remarks about one of Musierowicz's most recent novels. In response, other users constructed a kind of negative ranking of the author's latest additions to the cycle, supplementing their choices with short, but emotional justifications. Consequently, *Język Trolli* [*Trolla's Language*] was revealed as the least favorite novel among the fans, which led to further discussion focusing mostly on what the forum users saw as a pessimistic vision of social reality presented in the book. Ginestra, one of the more frequent commentators, initially expressed a degree of surprise about such

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tional background encompasses humanities, social sciences and science (language and literature, theater studies, history, sociology, economy).

3   Proposals have been made to publish the contents of the forum in print: http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/w,25788,137230116,137230116,mam_sugestie_czy_mozna_.html, accessedOctober 15, 2012.

4   Most severely on the Książki [Books] forum, referenced by the following article: http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/w,151,102767067,102767067,Wynaturzone_forum_fani_Malgorzaty_Musierowicz_.html, accessed October 15, 2012.

5   http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/w,25788,86972827,,Chyba_mi_rozum_odjelo_html?v=2, accessed October 15, 2012.

interpretations (she herself remembered the novel differently) only to discover upon another reading that she indeed found in the novel what the other readers did, namely, a bitter portrayal of present reality. Contrary to the other commentators, Ginestra saw it as one of the book's merits. In a meticulous analysis that followed, she presented *Język Trolli* as an insightful diagnosis of Polish reality from a few years ago and referred to her second reading of the book as a deeply moving process and an impulse to recognize and realize fully her own experiences from that period. This provoked several responses from other commentators, sharing their experiences and describing states and feelings both echoing and opposing those mentioned by Ginestra. Users posting in this part of the discussion did not seem to try to unify these narratives, but rather believed that such diversity allowed for a more complete picture of reality. One should also add that this part of the discussion thread was based on an underlying agreement as to the meaning of the referenced book passages.

Ginestra's commentary resulted also in a disagreement concerning her suggestion that one of the novel's characters (Fryderyk) wants to convince his girlfriend (Róża) to have an abortion, which according to Ginestra can be deciphered from the allusions found in Fryderyk's conversations with Róża's grandfather (Ignacy). This interpretation became the starting point for a parallel sub-thread devoted to an analysis of the dialogue (read closely and several times, sentence after sentence). Some of the commenters agreed that it contains an indirect suggestion of abortion, while others believed the discussion concerns only the question of whether Fryderyk is going to look after Róża and the baby in the future or ignore the responsibility and focus on his own academic career.

Some of the users viewed Ginestra's reading as an over-interpretation, one that was either impossible to defend considering the novel's intended reading group (teens) or lacking sufficient textual evidence (one of the users argued that if readings based on such weak premises were to be allowed, anything could be proven and followed with an analysis presenting the discussed dialogue as containing allusions to Fryderyk planning to kill Ignacy). However, none of these charges proved convincing enough to discourage further discussion and analysis.

Both the abortion hypothesis and the competing interpretations of the dialogue were judged according to their power to explain the characters' actions within the frame of the entire cycle. The users also reflected on how well each of the proposals fits the overall character of the discussed novel. Reaching any sort of conclusion proved difficult as individual readers not only selected various textual passages as crucial for analyzing the book, but also interpreted those passages differently.

Differences emerged already on the level of language and there were several arguments about the meanings of particular words used by the characters. "Getting rid of the problem" in the context of an unwanted pregnancy was seen by one group as an obvious reference to abortion, while other users offered more neutral interpretations. Readers also disagreed about the principles underlying the protagonists' worldviews; for instance, what kind of behavior toward a potential abortionist should be expected from the Catholic characters in the light of the entire Christian doctrine.

This discussion resulted in another hypothesis about the analyzed dialogue, namely a proposal to see it as a special (tragic) comedy of errors where Fryderyk never suggests abortion, but his words are misinterpreted by Ignacy who appropriately adjusts his replies. Assuming such interpretation of the passage in question, *Język Trolli* would reveal itself first and foremost as a book about the problems resulting from the lack of communication between characters using different languages and unaware of those differences. This could radically change the general reading of the novel: Ignacy can no longer be viewed as the key voice conveying the book's educational message and a defender of threatened values, but rather serves as proof of how an attitude of mistrust toward others may ultimately reveal itself to be potentially dangerous.

Finally, near the end of the discussion, one of the participants suggested that even if neither of the characters speaks consciously about abortion, the question is still present in the language of the novel: Ignacy's rhetoric summons it somewhat despite himself. His utterances were read as containing so many rhetorical gestures and referencing so many interpretative contexts (including references to various ideological disputes held in recent years) that it renders a coherent interpretation of his words impossible.

This proposal paradoxically became even more popular after a successful attempt was made to solve the issue by addressing the source (one of the discussion participants e-mailed the author asking about the presence of the controversial allusion in the dialogue and the answer was clearly negative). *Roma locuta, causa finita*, one could say but it was not the case this time. The writer's response did not change the position of the "abortion hypothesis" supporters. Commentaries were posted in reply, suggesting that the author had no power to determine the meaning of the text and to stop the process of interpretation.

An analysis of the conversation allows us to distinguish the presence of two coexisting types of discussion about literature on the forum. We can clearly see, especially in the early stages of the debate, characteristics typical of non-professional readers of book clubs as described by Elizabeth

Long.[6] This type of discussion is characterized by the free expression of emotions evoked by the analyzed text, a search for references to the reader's own life, treating the text as a starting point for a conversation about social problems, and an easy acceptance for differences in reception. However, another type of discussion can also be seen on the forum, a type where the participants attempt to establish the limits of allowed interpretations and which entails a responsibility: to locate in the text sufficient evidence to support one's interpretative conclusions and to carefully use suitable methods of analysis. Long observes that the latter type, resembling discussions held by professionals, was rare among the groups she observed which consisted of book club attendees. Moreover, the absence of those mentioned responsibilities among book club readers is viewed by Long as an important condition for deriving pleasure from the act of reading, which leads her to suggest that these two types of discussion about literature are to a large extent mutually exclusive.[7] Clearly, this mechanism of exclusion is not to be found on the forum presented in this article.

A question thus emerges concerning the possibility that FFMM, seemingly more conducive to the coexistence of various types of discussion about literature than the book club meetings investigated by Long, owes its character to the particular conditions of interaction offered by the Internet forum, and if so, what exactly characterizes those conditions. Part of the answer can be found in the specific mix of oral and written communication features typical of the online environment.[8] The specificity of each of these communication forms seems to privilege drawing slightly different types of satisfaction from discussing literature. The fact that the forum offers both *quasi*-orality and a chance for *quasi*-meetings, allowing for spontaneity of utterance, focus on exchange, a high level of emotionality and an acceptance for digressions in the debate structure, is conducive to pleasures indicated as crucial for the book club readers: for them, the text is an opportunity to get to know each other, to self-reflect and to recognize social issues viewed as important by the group members. Importantly, we are talking about *quasi*-orality and *quasi*-meetings, imitated by contact actually taking place through writing, and while this may impede related satisfaction to some extent, it may also, paradoxically, facilitate

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6   Elizabeth Long, *Book Clubs: Women and the Uses of Reading in Everyday Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

7   Ibid., 144-146.

8   Walter Ong, *Oralność i piśmienność – słowo poddane technologii* [*Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*], trans. Józef Japola (Lublin: RWKUL, 1992); Alina Naruszewicz-Duchlińska, *Internetowe grupy dyskusyjne. Analiza językowa i charakterystyka gatunku* (Olsztyn: WUWM, 2011), 243-250.

it, since Internet communication is reported as conducive to presentation of the true self and expressing emotions.[9]

Written interaction and the related absence of face to face contact, and the lack of temporal limitations to the conversation, offer other possibilities as well. Allowing for an extensive, logical and ordered presentation of one's argument, giving time to reflect on the opponent's responses and to evaluate their validity through another reading of the discussed text, facilitates concentration on the ideas presented by the discussion participants instead of participants themselves, creating good conditions for using the literary text as a riddle which can be solved collectively, or a foundation for a kind of game whose participants compete in putting together all elements of the puzzle in the best possible way. Those opportunities offered by the written form seem to correspond well to certain aspects of oral communication, especially its agonistic character, allowing to better determine the principles of competition and increase the sophistication of the interpretative game.

Importantly, online interaction is not only characterized by features conducive to each type of the discussion (both types can coexist relatively seamlessly within one forum or even one thread). The interaction can be facilitated by another feature of the Internet forum, namely, the possibility to simultaneously conduct several conversations and to include an unlimited number of participants in every conversation even though there is no obligation to participate actively in any of them. Conditions such as these make it easier to find partners for various types of literary games and limit, to a certain degree, the users' disposition to streamline their needs and determine acceptable activities.

What is worth emphasizing about FFMM is not only its potential for providing the users with various types of satisfaction from talking about literature, but also its role as a platform for interpretative work and an incubator of interpretative ideas. It may thus be interesting to recognize in the analyzed material certain mechanisms of obtaining interpretations which seem to result from the specific rules of interaction of the forum's participants.

Let us first take a look at the first sub-branch of the discussed thread. Ginestra's use of *Język Trolli* to shed light on a period from her personal history and to transform her auto-narrative (i.e. her recognition of a certain moment in

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9   Krzysztof Krejz and Izabela Krejz, "Ja w sieci – sieć we mnie. Zależności pomiędzy doświadczeniami relacji w internecie a reprezentacją obrazu siebie," in *Społeczna przestrzeń Internetu,* ed. Dominik Batorski, Mirosława Marody and Andrzej Nowak (Warszawa: SWPS Academica, 2006); John A. Bargh, Katelyn McKeena and Grainne M. Fitsimons, "Can You See a Real Me? Activation of Expression of the True Self on the Internet," *Journal of Social Issues* 58 (1) (2002).

life as a part of a particular collective experience) could be viewed as being of key importance for this part of the forum discussion. Notably, her experience was born not only from an individual act of reading, but it was rooted in the need to negotiate her own interpretation of the text with the one proposed by the group while the previous commentaries from the participants clearly influenced her new reading, both through the addition of a certain emotional value and by highlighting particular elements of the narrative.

The fact that Ginestra's reading both resulted from a dialogue and became a part of it multiplied the potential of *Język Troli* as a specific narrative pattern. Due to the diversity of narratives provoked by Ginestra's post, Musierowicz's novel was recognized as a pattern equally useful for producing stories which confirmed it and those opposing the pattern. It served as a center for contradictory social narratives of Poland's recent history.

What we seem to be dealing with here is a type of interpretation particularly valued by Richard Rorty – an interpretation which does not classify the work (i.e. treat it as an example of this or other phenomenon) but one where the readers use the text to transform themselves or their vision of the world.[10] Discussed interpretation seems even more attractive in this regard, as such use of text took place both in the individual and the collective dimension, and consequently (which the philosopher would certainly appreciate), it contributed to a recognition of the diversity of experiences among the involved group, increasing their awareness of the limits of their own experience and leading to an emphatic attempt to understand the discovered differences. Analyzed discussion is also a good example of how those interpretative effects emerge from a close relation between the users' need to find in the text elements which resonate with them on the personal level and their willingness to negotiate interpretations with other participants of the discussion.[11]

In the case discussed above, this relation was of a very special nature. The most interesting interpretative discoveries were developed in a process of inscribing the method of reading, already established by the group, into the context of subjective biographical experiences of its individual members. However, the discussed thread contains yet another mechanism of producing interpretations resulting from the clash of subjectivity and the search for a consensus: in the following parts of the forum discussion, one may note

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10   Richard Rorty, "Kariera pragmatysty," ["The Pragmatist's Progress"] in *Interpretacja i nadinterpretacja*, trans. Tomasz Biedroń, ed. Stefan Collini (Kraków: Znak, 1996).

11   The notion of limiting the freedom of interpretation by relating it to the interpretative community, found in Rorty, was indicated by Andrzej Szahaj as important and still requiring a more precise formulation. See Andrzej Szahaj, "Granice anarchizmu interpretacyjnego," *Teksty Drugie* 6 (1997).

a somewhat reverse situation, an interpretative engine fueled by an effort to move from the contradictory, individual readings to a meaning universally accepted by the members of the discussion.

This task itself, an attempt to determine whether the text contains an allusion to abortion, proved to be both ambitious and impossible. Instead of a resolution, the debate brought the forum users to discover that they were unable to find a single common criterion to collectively accept or reject the controversial interpretation. As more aspects were included in the discussion, more differences surfaced. Readers disagreed about the boundary conditions of interpretation (how far could one go reading between the lines of what the characters say). They learned about the traps of the model reader category (some of them believed a teenage novel cannot include allusions to abortion as that would be neither proper nor decipherable for the target group; others argued that the presence of allusions not meant for teenagers and undecipherable for them testified to the novel's wider target audience). Such vicious circle – inevitable, as the model reader is a function of the text – was part of the process through which the participants discovered that the text contained no single element crucial for the debated issue which all of them could interpret identically (from the words uttered by the protagonists to the principles of their worldviews) and, consequently, there was no single element which could be treated as a point of reference for further analysis which could realize a desired resolution.

What was produced in the course of this discussion was another interpretation, projecting the readers' problem onto the characters (who also were unable to communicate), removing some of the contradictions remaining from the previous interpretations but also opposing them. This increase in irreconcilable readings was probably the main reason why the initial goal – learning the author's intention and thus finding the winner of the interpretation game (someone whose interpretation would be accepted as valid by the group) – lost its appeal, and even perhaps sense, to at least some of the participants. They moved, maybe against their own will, from a search for the author's intention to an almost deconstructivist[12] understanding of the text as not only ambiguous, but also hampering a complete reading and bursting from its internal contradictions (these two positions were mediated by psychoanalytical readings).

It turns out that the attempt to determine the meaning of the novel was initiated by a group with no shared set of norms regulating their interpretative

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12   Almost in the sense that it recognized the presence of an *aporia* in the text and viewed it as crucial for interpretative work; however, the readers saw them rather as a sign of writer's negligence than an imminent quality of the text itself.

procedures or (as it is common in modern society) similar world view; in other words, it was a group consisting of several intersecting interpretative communities, which necessitated the use of heuristic methods which could increase their semantic openness. We are thus witnessing an experiment confirming the connection between the functioning of a community and the definition of literature the community in question finds useful.[13]

In fact, mechanisms governing the analyzed material may be more interesting than the very effects of interpretation. After all, the "new" understanding of the text obtained in the final parts of the discussion remains only a certain, incomplete reflection of what had been already repeatedly said by professionals (notably those forum users who were educated in the humanities did not so much discover, as recall and take this into account when the seemingly easier, more "natural" reading of the text through the prism of the author's intention proved insufficient). The lack of obligation to include the knowledge of literary studies in their reading means that the questions and solutions proposed by the forum users were, in most cases, unoriginal.

However, the true potential of the analyzed discussion lies in the ways in which the methods of interpretation, which emerged as the conversation developed, were applied to particular literary texts. Analyzing references to contemporary reality found in *Język Trolli*, FFMM users definitely went beyond the most obvious approach to popular literature as a supplier of easily determined patterns of social narrative. Struggling to reconcile their differences in reception, forum users performed a thorough analysis of the novel's structure and language which resulted in positioning it as a text participating in several contemporary debates (as it proposed certain worldviews and entered a dialogue with opposing ones) as well as a text whose very language and narrative structure was an arena for those debates.

Consequently, the potential of literature as a basis for dialogue (and the subsequent attempt to recognize and understand visions of the world different from one's own), was utilized here to an even greater extent than in the initial stages of the discussion. Notably, at least some of the commentators viewed the discussion as interesting and fruitful even though the meaning of the novel was never discovered and the winner of the interpretation game never revealed. This in turn seems to confirm the role of literary interpretation as a "school of pluralist thinking."[14]

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13   A connection discussed in the context of literary interpretation by Andrzej Szahaj, see: Szahaj, *Granice,* 23-24.

14   Erazm Kuźma, "Interpretacja jako wiedza radosna," *Teksty Drugie* 6 (1997): 72.

Such understanding of literary interpretation as a way to enter a dialogue, one taking place not even above but across divisions, can be easily attributed with ethical value. And the relations among the readers are not the only ones to be evaluated in this regard; the issue of loyalty of the interpreter to the text and its author are no less important, and charges relating to the later issue resurfaced frequently among the FFMM users.

One of the frequently repeated accusations concerns the discrepancy between sophisticated interpretative methods used by some of the users and the convention and genre of Musierowicz's novel, which was viewed by other forum members as a misuse of those methods.[15] This places the interpretations, presented above, in the context of doubts and questions characterizing the so-called ethical turn in literary studies. What may be seen as threatened here is the symmetry of the relation between the interpreter and the interpreted.[16] The readers' rejection of the limits inscribed in the convention of the analyzed work and their posing of questions which the text itself "does not pose to its model reader"[17] propels the work into a dialogue it is unprepared for, forcing it to compete in the wrong category, although it may increase the social and intellectual importance of the work. By ignoring the rules of fair play, the interpreter gains an intellectual advantage over the interpreted. One may also wonder if there really is nothing wrong, or at least nothing "tactless", about interpretations created against the presumed (or even known) intention of the author.[18] In other words, we are witnessing the emergence of the question whether interpreters successfully combined invention and responsibility in their reading.[19]

Doubts of this kind, ones that many contemporary interpreters struggle with today, are even more serious in the case of FFMM, because many

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15   See for instance http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/w,25788,122541484,,chyba_przesadzacie. html?v=2, accessed October 15, 2012.

16   Danuta Ulicka "«Zwrot» etyczny w badaniach literackich," in *Polonistyka w przebudowie: literaturoznawstwo – wiedza o języku – wiedza o kulturze – edukacja* ,vol. 1, ed. Małgorzata Czermińska (Kraków: Universitas, 2005).

17   "Overinterpretation" as proposed by Jonathan Culler is also a great intellectual opportunity, see Jonathan Culler "Obrona nadinterpretacji," ["In Defence of Overinterpretation"] in *Interpretacja i nadinterpretacja*.

18   Danuta Szajnert, "Intencje autora i etyka interpretatora," ["The Author's Intentions and the Ethics of the Interpreter"] in *Filozofia i etyka interpretacji,* ed. Andrzej Szahaj (Kraków: Universitas, 2007).

19   Michał Paweł Markowski, "Zwrot etyczny w badaniach literackich," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1 (2002).

discussions taking place on the forum still today frequently combine thorough textual analysis with very harsh criticism, to an extent much greater than in the presented material. This makes various "over-interpretations" far less innocent.

But the critical forum users also present arguments in support of their actions, suggesting that they do not wish to engage in an empty play of meanings or malicious manipulation of the novels' message. What they seek is to engage in a discussion with this message, seeing their methodical analyses as a means to address the matter in a more precise manner. Conducting close readings provide them with a better orientation with regard to the differences in the system of values presented by the author and their own, and help to show where the novels' message appears self-contradictory – whether because it rests upon an indefensible vision of reality or because of the internal inconsistency of the conveyed world view.

What provokes particularly strong objections among the critical readers of Musierowicz's work is its proclaimed high esteem for openness to others on the one hand, combined with what is seen as an unwillingness to enter into a dialogue with anyone representing worldviews other than the author (evidenced by the writer suppressing and silencing the voices of protagonists who represent "improper" views or lifestyles, and resorting to caricature and mockery.)[20]

But accusations of disrespect for the Other are directed also at the readers themselves, including "degeneration" mentioned in the article's title. Some forum members are accused of reading Musierowicz simply with bad intentions, a reluctance to accept any aspect of the views presented in her work, and even, symbolically, of refusing the author the right to write in a particular way or promote particular positions. The fact that the tendency to criticize the writer harshly can be found among the majority of active forum users gives rise to the charge that they have turned criticism into a group norm[21] and a means for binding their community together instead of actually trying to communicate with the author or those readers who are less likely to judge her so harshly.

Regardless of the validity of such charges, the very fact that they have arisen allows one to approach FFMM discussions not only as an opportunity to observe how interpretations of literary texts may be used as a starting point

20   For instance http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/w,25788,49046847,49122779,Re_Po_pierw szym_czytaniu_.html, accessed October 15, 2012; http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/w,2578 8,49260437,49260437,Wychowawczy_przekaz_Polewki.html, accessed October 15, 2012.

21   http://forum.gazeta.pl/forum/w,25788,105476791,106265286,To_ja_teraz_powiem_ cos_strasznego.html, accessed October 15, 2012.

for a dialogue between various worldviews, but also to recognize the difficulties that such an endeavor may encounter.

Finally, it may be worthwhile to return to the ambiguous position occupied by online discussions about literature among other discourses of the type. As has already been stated, situated between the written and the spoken discourse, as well as somewhere between a seminar talk and an informal conversation among book lovers, online discussions about literature do not fit certain important distinctions. Furthermore, online commentaries are positioned also on the border of the private and the public spheres, somewhere between an informal discussion and a published article.

Twenty years ago, Erazm Kuźma had no difficulties distinguishing between the "interpreters" – negotiators of meaning belonging to a community of literary scholars who also exercise control over it by publishing their interpretations as part of a social and economic game – and the "readers" who remained outside the game, because their readerly experiences took place in the private sphere and their knowledge never left this intimate space.[22]

The Internet has largely blurred the clarity of this division. The fact that FFMM users authored what is probably the richest collection of interpretations of Małgorzata Musierowicz's work in existence makes them actual participants of the interpretative game. At the same time, forum members, publishing anonymously and independently from the procedures regulating professional publications, never enter the professional circle. They join the interpretative game based on their own separate rules.

Consequently, as players they are new and unpredictable, and their special status has its advantages and disadvantages, frequently described today by the enthusiasts and critics of non-professional creative activities performed online[23] (although literary interpretation is discussed rarely). On the one hand, free from the limitations restricting the professionals, forum users may create new, untypical and inspiring interpretations. On the other hand, however, weaker mechanisms of selection as well as the spontaneous and personal character of the utterance may not facilitate balanced judgments, while the friendly atmosphere easily created online is likely to decrease the awareness of the public character of conducted discussions and the sense of

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22   Erazm Kuźma, "Spór o wartość i zasadność interpretacji literackiej," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 3 (1989): 15-16.

23   See for instance Chris Anderson, *Długi ogon: ekonomia przyszłości – każdy konsument ma głos* [*The Long Tail*], trans. Bolesław Ludwiczak (Poznań: Media Rodzina, 2008); Andrew Keen, *Kult amatora: jak Internet niszczy kulturę* [*The Cult of the Amateur*], trans. Małgorzata Bernatowicz and Katarzyna Topolska-Ghariani (Warszawa: WAiP, 2007).

responsibility for one's words, which in turn may result in the increased ease of voicing critical opinions.

Both the potential and the dangers which accompany new players as they join the interpretation game gain a particular clarity in the case of the internet forum, as they are multiplied through group interaction. This interaction comes with a certain creative potential but it may also add strength and radicalism to the expressed opinions surpassing the intentions of the individual users (both because certain views are expressed simultaneously by a large group of people and because of the tendency for radicalization of opinions which can be found sometimes within groups). The interpretative machine of the forum may be thus viewed both as creative and difficult to control, as successful as it is dangerous.

Translation: Anna Warso

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