TRANSNATIONAL and translocal POETICS

The translocal poetics retains cognitive obscurity of the familiar, but also preserves fascinating mystery of unexpected and successful transmissions of the familiar into other places and spaces. Literature then reveals the ability to transfer one locality into the world of another, generating confusion and excitement, misunderstandings and discoveries, by means of which a creative transnational and translocal literary and cultural community is ceaselessly being built.

Transnational and Translocal

Poetics has joined the discussion developing around the ideas of world literature, post-colonial interpretations and reactions to the phenomena of globalization. Jahan Ramazani's book A Transnational Poetics *(2009) proposed a new definition of anglophone literature as the shared space belonging to many literary cultures, thereby highlighting the fascinating potential of the poetry analyzed in the book and delineating new areas of theoretical exploration. Rather than focus on recrudescent vertical tensions between literature perceived globally (cospomopolitan, easily transposed among diverse cultural realia) and local (convinced that rootedness constitutes a completely sufficient source of creative work, and one incomprehensible to outsiders), Ramazani pointed to the decisive importance of horizontal displacements. In them, the familiar retains its cognitive obscurity, while the process of unexpected and successful transmissions of the familiar into other places and spaces preserves its fascinating mystery. Literature then reveals the ability to transfer one locality into the world of another, generating confusion and excitement, misunderstandings and discoveries, by means of which a creative transnational and translocal literary and cultural community is ceaselessly being built.*

The articles in this issue test the usefulnessof the tools of poetics for describing such translocal displacements of literature. On the one hand, they reveal that poetics is deeply imbued with what is national, ethnic, and spatially defined (Edward Balcerzan), on the other hand, they defend a wide spectrum of efforts to capitalize on the transnational energy of literary texts. That is true of the socially engaged work of

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Dubravka Ugrešić, searching for a form of transnational poetics for the texts she interprets (Maciej Duda), as well as in the travel writing of Andrzej Stasiuk (Sławomir Iwasiów). A conspicuous feature of modernist literature is its translocalenergy, as we see in Franz Kafka (Verita Sriratana), and in writers of the Scandinavian fin de siècle and early 20th century (Marcin Jauksz discussing Lisi's book). Studies of early modern transnational poetics present a completely different horizon of knowledge, as a comparative exploration of Jan Kochanowski's poetry written in Latin and Polish shows (Agnieszka Kwiatkowska). For that reason, the problems of translocal poetics can motivate us to redefine such concepts as influence and sources (Ewa Kraskowska), as well as create new terms to describe various related developments, for example transfictionality (Paweł Marciniak). We would be remiss to overlook the relationships between transnational poetics and geopoetics (Elżbieta Rybicka's book reviewed by Cezary Rosiński). An opportunity arises to reconsider Balcerzan's remarks about "national poetics" when we confront the history of Polish studies in "autotematyzm," a concept which both resists and lends itself to translation into the categories of similar terms from abroad (Joanna Wójcik).

There can be no doubt that transnational and translocal poetics form only one of the possible intersections of poetics with contemporary studies of world literature, globalized literature, post-colonial literature, and so on. Perhaps in the end its most precious contribution relates to contemporary thought on spatiality in literature and scholarship on that subject.

The "Nationality" of Poetics

– Some Typological Dilemmas

Edward Balcerzan

1.

One reason for a change in the meaning of a literary term can be the reassessment of whether its current definition corresponds to the reality it refers to. This can be spurred on by new or newly interpreted literary trends, seasonal reconsiderations of artistic devices, the discovery of previously unseen configurations of elements in a work, and so on. We are familiar with these processes from time immemorial; it suffices to mention, for example, such storied keywords of the poetic lexicon as *metaphor*, *mimesis*, *form*, *tragedy*. The transformations of *metaphor* as an interpretative category speak volumes. Had the original sense of this term not undergone critical review and transfiguration over many centuries, we would have been condemned to intellectual stagnation where this area, so pivotal to our understanding of art, is concerned.

Analogous discussions arise, sometimes immediately, with regard to new writerly innovations in terminology (Viktor Shklovsky's *ostranienie*, or "making strange"; Roman Ingarden's "places of indefinition," Mikhail Bakhtin's "polyphony," and in the Polish context, Artur Sandauer's *autotematyzm* or "self-referentiality"). *Autotematyzm* can serve here as a most instructive example. I remember how in the 1970s, on the steps inside Staszic Palace in Warsaw, Artur Sandauer loudly inveighed against critics of his concept, his wrath aroused not so much by their polemical interventions as their "corrective" ambitions.

"Tell me, by what right does an Andrzej Werner become the owner of my concept of *autotematyzm*, rearranging its meanings and vectors?" This angry question was in fact addressed mainly to Janusz Sławiński, but since Sławiński remained impenetrably silent, I, being young, untested, and impetuous, took the liberty of remarking that one argument in favor of Werner's or other similar practices could be the value of discovering what emerges from the confrontation of a young concept with diverse literary realities...

"What realities?" the author of *Bez taryfy ulgowej* (Full Price of Admission) replied with indignation, not to say howled. "We are not living in the age of positivistic faith in objective, identically perceived realities!"

At that point, I thought to myself how true it is that we encounter not naked realities but our own interpretations of literary phenomena. But if that is true, the scholar has a choice between either rejecting another scholar's term and replacing it with his own, or partially remaking the borrowed concept according to his own personal vision of literature. (*Autotematyzm* has met and will continue to meet with both types of response.) Back then, on the steps of the Staszic Palace, I did not continue with that thread of discussion, understanding, a little too late, that in a clash with Sandauer, the safest option was to maintain, like Sławiński, a philosophical silence.

These days, I feel justified to some extent in defending the principle of the scholar's right to adapt others' new terms and reshape their concepts by the fact that my own ideas have been subject to analogous processes. Two in particular, "lyrical strategy" and "transposition series," have been revised, reinterpreted, expanded, inverted. Some interventions I am eager to dispute, others, quite a good number of them, I accept with humility. What is at stake is not an individual's attitude, but the semantics of names, which are scholarly tools. Their newness is generally a matter of degree, and this applies to both the *signifiant*, and the *signifié*. They are rarely neologisms with no relation whatever to existing, familiar words. Usually the new terms, formed in the scholar's native language or translated from a foreign tongue, are shaped from elements that have their own previous meanings, grounded either in everyday speech or in specialized codes of the discipline. They ought to be treated with respect. In proposing the category of "lyrical strategy," I have to take into account the polysemy of both component words, "strategy" and "lyric," and therefore be ready for someone to raise the issue of the meanings I have put aside; the collective memory of the various uses and contexts of "transposition" and "series," invited to make the compound "transposition series," will also inevitably take voice and make itself known.

2.

I was moved to make the preceding remarks by a discussion at the Department of 20th Century Literature, Literary Theory and the Art of Translation at Adam Mickiewicz University in January 2015 on the subject of the theses put forward by Jahan Ramazani in his book *A Transnational Poetics* (2009), moderated by Tomasz Mizerkiewicz, who had previously supplied us with photocopies of the book's first chapter (the rest of the book, together with responses to it, is available in the vast morass of the internet). In the discussion, all of the typical features I have sketched of the way we assimilate other scholars' ideas were enunciated. Diverse reading habits, divergent literary geographies, differences in approaches to poetics have brought about temporal and spatial shifts within phenomena perceived as transnational. What appears in the eyes of the architect of transnational poetics to be something new, driven by globalization and verified by Post-Colonialism, many of us believe to be shared with previous epochs, such as the Renaissance. Furthermore, it was difficult to assent to the claim that the area of poetry is currently going through singularly profound changes, ostensibly until recently a "stubbornly national" art form (in T.S. Eliot's words, quoted by Ramazani) and "the most provincial of the arts" (Auden, also quoted by Ramazani), and only recently become triumphantly hyper-intercultural; Polish Studies, with its memory of earlier poetic currents, constantly penetrating linguistic, cultural and national boundaries, could not assent to such a one-sided formulation; Ramazani's choice was not confirmed by observation of prose or dramaturgy, each of which comes in both "stubbornly national," strongly "provincial," incarnations and daringly borderless ones. And finally, ever greater political, attitudinal,

economic, and commercial obstacles (relating to the distribution of newspapers, magazines, and books) have, in the recent past, paralyzed communication within the sphere of Eastern European literatures (Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, and others), signaling a far less joyous perspective than Ramazani, watching the world from a different vantage point, would like to believe. All of the above, and several more, exaggerations of the initial watchword called for its reinterpretation. Works by Jan Kochanowski, Cyprian Norwid, Joseph Brodsky, Teodor Parnicki, and Tadeusz Różewicz, invoked in the discussion together with their authors' biographies, turned out to amount to something more than simply interchangeable examples of norms, neutral in relation to their model: they had in fact influenced the configuration of those norms. Incidentally, Ramazani's "transnational poetics" also has its antecedents, though none is identical with his project: reviewers of his book have called our attention to the writings of the American pragmatist Randolph Silliman Bourne, who in 1916, well in advance of the globalization we know today, wrote about a "Trans-National America."

3.

In Polish, the phrase "transnational poetics" automatically finds itself (in view of its morphology) among a special group of concepts belonging to literary scholarship: these concepts are two-layered; in them, the lower level of meaning is unavoidably complicated by the higher level. An analogous word-formation (and, simultaneously, semasiological, or meaning-creation) mechanism has generated numerous terms used in the humanities lexicon, often through the aid of the prefixes "trans," "neo," "anti," "extra," "para," "quasi," "re," and "post." When using products of this type, we should not pass over their etymological roots in silence. We cannot glean the meaning of the word "neo-Romantic" without some consideration of what is meant by Romanticism *tout court*. Likewise, we quickly get lost in the labyrinth if we attempt to grasp "anti-traditionalism" without a prior definition of "traditionalism." A similar succession of diagnoses is required in defining "judgment," "literature", "structuralism," and other words, conditioning our grasp of the (incomparably trickier and more nebulous) meanings of "quasi-judgment," "paraliterature," and "post-structuralism."

It follows from the above reflections that we should begin our analysis of "transnational poetics" with a clarification of what a "national poetics" means. If we managed to do that, we could attain– at a lower level of abstraction, closer to the very life of literature– the means to master the mechanisms that govern particular systems we would distinguish as Polish poetics, French poetics, Russian poetics, Portuguese poetics, and so on. It is only between or among systems thus designated that we can observe transfers, translocations, transfigurations of literary structures or fragments, perceiving the mechanisms and results of these displacements as the subject of transnational poetics studies. The trouble is that such an entity is difficult to describe. While many of us have no problem employing the concept of "national literature" or the "history of national literature," one would search in vain for its apparent twin concept, "Polish poetics," in the lexicons of Polish studies. There is, however, a whole range of related designations that refer to selected segments or aspects of poetics: versification, stylistics, genres. I have in mind Maria Dłuska's study *Próba teorii wiersza polskiego* (An Attempt at a Theory of Polish Poetry), Adam Ważyk's *Adam Mickiewicz a wersyfikacja narodowa* (Adam Mickiewicz and National Versification). Linguistics scholars are untroubled by any doubts as to the existence of not only "stylistics of Polish language" (Teresa Skubalanka), but even the wider field of "Polish

stylistics" (Halina Kurkowska, Stanisław Skorupka). There is further "Polish linguistic genre theory" and, of particular and pressing importance for our purposes, "Polish literary genre theory," on the title pages of an anthology edited by Romuald Cudak and Danuta Ostaszewska. Is it an accident that the "national" character of certain formidable sectors of poetics remains unquestioned, while at the same time poetics as a whole somehow eludes national quantifiers?

Let us observe, however, that in the examples mentioned above, the words "versification," "stylistics," and "genre theory" do not refer to the same kind of reality. They indicate intersecting, but far from identical orders dominating speech, literature, or literary studies. Some of them exhibit the internal features of (Polish) verbal art, others describe research projects of (Polish) literature scholars whose theories of versification or genre theory need not draw inspiration exclusively from domestic literary sources. So what, if we could call it into existence, would a "national poetics" entail, since its component parts, both "poetics" and whatever is "national," are conspicuously marked by a dizzying ambiguity?

It is at once clear that various iterations or states of this internally complex field will operate in our discussion. We will define poetics thus:

(1) the aggregation of tools used for distinguishing and delimiting recurring models of literary structures, components of works, or relationships occurring between or among individual components (literary terms plus their definitions);
(2) systems of organization of the utterance active in aggregates of literary works;
(3) the artistic organization of a particular individual work.

Like "poetics," the definition of that which is "national" is impossible to capture in a homogeneous paradigm. We become aware of the national character of literary phenomena, meaning their belonging to one national literature or other, through connecting together the following: (a) ethnicity, (b) culture, and (c) language. The categories mentioned are neither strictly separable or alternate, nor eternally bound together and mutually complementary. They are capable of falling into the one category as well as the other.

As should be clear, within the range of problems (and enigmas) delineated here, a uniform definition of poetics, encompassing all of its manifestations as well as its national or inter/supra/transnational characteristics, is hard to come by. The matter is in need of some sorting out. And because this "matter" is twofold, we must answer the question as to which territory here has primary, and which secondary jurisdiction. One can imagine an attempt at a genre study of the existing conditions of national literary cultures – considering the changing methods used in each for managing poetic resources. And it is tempting to consider a genre study of developments in poetics reflecting the experiences of national cultures and languages. In view of my goal being set within literary scholarship, I choose poetics, naturally enough, as the main object of my observations to follow.

4.

Poetics, understood as a lexicon of defined terms describing literary compositions, their component parts or relationships among elements in a work, is neither wholly transnational, nor composed

exclusively of national repertoires. It contains concepts known and tested with reference to all literatures, but also designations specific to local literary facts. Its elements (in the most basic, schematic sense) can be presented on a bipolar scale, between a group of concepts with universal scope and application and groups of terms that are local in origin and applicability.

UNIVERSAL TERMININOLOGY   •————•   LOCAL TERMININOLOGY

Within the range of universal terminology we find only certain categories from the area of poetics that have attained the status of basic coordinates of literature and model norms of literariness.

This statement leads to the fundamental question, who or what caused the choice of those categories, and in particular, whether the decisive criteria were qualitative, objective, essential, and impartial, or functional, pragmatic, and subjective. New doctrines of scholarship demand an unambiguous stance in the dispute between pragmatists and essentialists. In my opinion, literary phenomena are faced – in various circumstances and to differing degrees – with pressure both from the partisans of "essence" and the dictates of "existence," to use the dichotomy of Jean-Paul Sartre's famous aphorism. In the group of universal terms of descriptive poetics, this duality becomes potently clear. The fact that writers and scholars from near and distant times and places are able to understand each other's understanding of concepts as central to the writer's art as poetry, prose, poem, description, novel, narrator, lyrical persona, character, plot, narrative, style, and motif, constitutes an indirect, but significant proof of the existence of literature as one of the sovereign forms of interpersonal communication. From this perspective, we can speak of the non-arbitrary, qualitative nature of the group of universal terms. But because the notion of literature and the registers of its coordinates are subject to endless verifications, dependent in turn upon evolving methodologies, it is crucial to consider not only the qualitative but also the functional status of these terms.

From the historical point of view, universal poetics comes later than the various local versions. All of its lexicons have a local origin (beginning with the word "poetics," which was conceived in Greek antiquity), and all had to belong to local literary cultures as generalizations derived from the experiences of writers, readers and scholars; if it happened that the same features found themselves named and described in the lexicons of numerous temporal and spatial literary contexts simultaneously, like partial doppelgangers, still, none of these contexts was in any way deprived of its national peculiarities. Now these same concepts, perceived as universal, have either completely lost the memory of their own (linguistically hybrid designations aside) local beginnings, or that memory is, even to those who possess it, irrelevant and put to no scholarly use. Regarding this group of terms, we might say what Ferdinand de Saussure said about the system of language: that in the synchrony of speech, as in a game of chess, what matters is our current position, not the moves that put us there.

In the aggregations of terms with local origins, the link between names for particular literary structures or devices and the national cultural context remains known and active. For Polish writers and scholars of Polish literature, the following terms preserve the memory of the historical circumstances of their formation (and, often, the name of the creator of the concept or the inventor of the artistic form it describes): *fraszka* (a specific kind of epigram), *gawęda*

szlachecka (a tale of the aristocracy), *heksametr polski* (Polish hexameter), Tadeusz Peiper's *zdanie rozkwitające* (expanding sentence, related to Peiper's *układ rozkwitania* or system of expansion), Julian Przybos's *międzysłowie* (inter-words), Janusz Sławiński's *wiersz różewiczowski* (Różewiczean verse) and *poezja lingwistyczna* (linguistic poetry), and Wisława Szymborska's *moskalik* (an epigrammatic 4-line poem derived from a quatrain in Rajnold Suchodolski's 1831 poem *Polonez Kościuszki*). Undoubtedly certain among these names are nothing more than local variants of universal models: the fraszka is a version of the classical epigram, Polish hexameter is an adaptation of previous hexametric norms, Różewiczean verse has been proclaimed a Polish variation on *free verse*. Other concepts, such as *gawęda szlachecka*, nicely illustrate Lucien Goldman's theory of the homology of structures between genres and national customs. The newer of these terms (system of expansion, inter-words, linguistic poetry) are attempts to define devices that, in the Polish literary context, were discovered relatively recently.

In addition to universal (transnational) and local (national) terms, lexical elements from the poetics arsenal of local, but foreign, cultures also function in the glossaries of literary scholars who employ the language of poetics. These, too, have wide-ranging sources: from folklore (Ukrainian *dumka*, Russian *chastushka*) to fragments of historical poetics that demand recognition of their rights, sometimes after a period of dormancy (Provençal *alba, serena, stanza*; Russian *dol'nik* and *syuzhet,* German *bildungsroman,* English *Sternean narration*). These can be, like the Polish *gawęda*, inscriptions of the national culture's particular customs into a previously existing convention (as is also the case with Russian *skaz*). The richest group of concepts, it appears, are the names of artistic innovations that preserve the living memory of their conception: Breton's *écriture automatique,* Marinetti's *parole in libertà*, the Russian Futurists' *zaum*, the *nouveau roman* developed by French mid- twentieth century novelists, primarily Robbe-Grillet.

Where does such terminology, "cognizant" of its national provenance, belong on the scale between the poles of locality and universality? Its place is mobile, dependent both on the degree to which a given term has been disseminated, and its applications, as well as on whether the term continues to refer exclusively to writing practices of one literary sphere or is exemplified in an expanding range of languages and cultures of world literature. All different kinds of relations enter into the picture: bilateral, trilateral, and more. An example of this could be the term *вирши,* which functioned in Russian discourse on versification at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, at first signifying tonic verse (a concept imported from Ukrainian poetry), and later, a system of syllabic verse based on Polish poetry.

Our diagram thus needs to be diversified and made triangular:

UNIVERSAL TERMINOLOGY

LOCAL FOREIGN TERMINOLOGIES   •———•   LOCAL NATIVE TERMINOLOGY
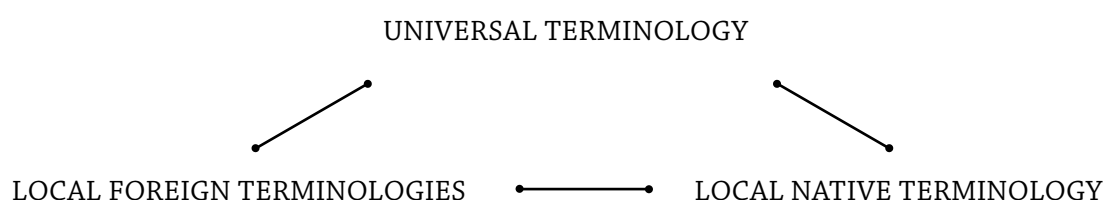
It is quite easy to perceive that local concepts from descriptive poetics (both native and foreign) can tend toward either the category of local terminology or that of universal. But is it possible,

as the diagram suggests, for concepts from universal terminology to become displaced into individual local terminologies? The answer to that depends on how we describe the items that are displaced. In lexicographical and didactic practice, concepts from poetics function as conjunctions of three elements: names, definitions, and exemplification. The three are not equally crucial in shaping the identity of the term. A change of name, when the definition and the nature of the examples remain the same, is merely a superficial innovation. The different names for the same phenomena in various languages have no effect on their meaning and function. A change in the exemplification may be important if the new examples reveal properties of the device that were absent in previous examples. The reconstruction of a term's definition has the most far-reaching results; especially because in literary studies, and therefore in poetics, a definition is a ready synecdoche for a theory, a condensed representation of a whole broader concept. If within a local school of literary studies the theory of some concept considered universal (for example metaphors) undergoes a fundamental revision (as has occurred in the work of Polish theorists Jerzy Pelc and Anna Wierzbicka), but the new view obtains immediate recognition only among the ranks of the theorist's compatriots, the concept is, for a time, "withdrawn" from transnational universal terminology and reattached to a local, national branch of terminology.

5.

The above observations, based on an overview of the terminological repertoires of descriptive poetics, are in some ways similar and in other ways markedly different from the conclusions that may be drawn from a survey of historical poetics, whether in its collective or individual manifestations.

The most consequential differences relate to the internal configurations of both kinds of poetics, and therefore the boundaries and scope of their activities. As I mentioned earlier, the basic determinant and final goal of any term in descriptive poetics consists of its definition, treated as *pars pro toto* of the theory of a literary phenomenon, while examples and the name serve the verification of the definition or theory. Here immanent poetics can save or degrade, modify or amplify the explanations of a formulated poetics' keywords.

In recognizing and distinguishing the forms of artistic organization of particular aggregations of works, we come into contact with other kinds of interdependence among them. A basic goal of scholarly endeavor becomes the maximally precise interpretation of the norms functioning within a given aggregate. If this aggregate has its own formulated poetics (whether in the artists' declared program or in the scholar's diagnosis), then those guidelines become instrumental and helpful, while particular categories may be selected or rejected according to how useful they prove in the reconstruction of internal artistic structures.

As a result, the semantic dimensions and functions of the names and definitions of these structures change. I have in mind such names – also titles of scholarly works – as Dmitrii Likhachev's *Poetics of Old Russian Literature*, Michał Głowiński's *Poetyka Tuwima a polska tradycja literacka* (Tuwim's Poetics and Polish Literary Tradition), Bożena Tokarz's *Poetyka Nowej Fali* (Poetics of the New Wave). Each of these titles functions as a signature code for a certain group of works, indicates the group's place in the agglomeration of literary texts, signals its position. The definitions of such disparate "poetics" are located in the sphere of theory, but above all they mark paths of interpretation of particular works and relation-

ships among them. In the course of an interpretation, a chosen aggregate of texts can be treated as a complicated, but to some extent coherent, literary composition, what I have in the past proposed we call a *multitext transmission*. The third component indispensable to the terminology structures of descriptive poetics, exemplification, here turns out to be either deceptive or in need of profound regeneration, for in fact a given group of texts does not exemplify devices external to itself, does not illustrate a separate, disposable poetics, but constitutes and simultaneously consummates a particular version of an immanent poetics.

The number of possible literary aggregates, and hence criteria for their differentiation and demarcation, would seem to be uncountable, and certainly unpredictable. Is each aggregate, sometimes called a "greater whole," capable of constituting the system of norms of its own poetics? Without a doubt the answer is no. Works by women authors, juvenilia, interwar publications, seasonal new releases, magazine poems, each of these and similar constellations can be set aside from the deluge of texts, and in each an internal artistic coherence can be intuited, yet the search for that coherence often ends in failure. Frequently disputes on the existence of shared poetics in particular aggregates remains undecided. This is especially true with regard to the inheritance of a literary period or epoch. The older the period, the less literary evidence available, the greater the likelihood of a common poetics for all its surviving works. This is the direction Likhachev was heading in with his work on the poetics of Old Russian literature. Let us observe that to recognize the literature written in one historical space as susceptible to definition within the rubric of a poetics demands the unification of all its artistic currents. Even in Old Polish times diverse forms of verbal art coexisted (Polish and Latin, secular and religious, court and folk); to attempt to capture that varied group under a common appellation would be a highly controversial decision. The closer one comes to modernity, the more difficult such unification of literary norms becomes. Even more questionable are attempts to standardize literary norms by generalizing from works written in the most recent, modern and postmodern, eras or systems.

As with lexically-based poetics, so in poetics oriented toward literary aggregates neither national nor transnational fields are dominant. Here we deal, on the one hand, with aggregates whose internal poetics are monolingual, monocultural, monoethnic, and thus national (in addition to Likhachev, Głowiński, and Tokarz, other examples we might mention would include Zofia Szmydtowa's *Poetyka gawędy* (Poetics of the Tale) and Mikhail Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, among many others). On the other hand, there are also genre-based poetics, functioning in a multiplicity of national milieux: Eugeniusz Kucharski's *Poetyka noweli* (Poetics of the Novella), Joanna Dębińska-Pawelec's *Vilanella. Od Anonima do Barańczaka* (The Villanelle. From Anonymous to Barańczak); let us consider the title of that work's first part, "Poetyka i dzieje gatunku" (Poetics and the History of the Genre), and its introduction, "Wprowadzenie do poetyki gatunku" (Introduction to the Poetics of Genre). We might further add the immanent poetics of artistic movements such as Romanticism, Expressionism, Futurism, and Surrealism, which cut across numerous cultures and languages. And, finally, we should not neglect the work of such bilingual authors as Stanisław Przybyszewski, Bruno Jasieński, Thomas Themerson, or Gennadiy Aygi. In this area transnationality appears to be a useful and incisive concept, as is the nationality of the various individual internal poetics of literary aggregates.

6.

Like the poetics of the aggregate the poetics of the individual literary work, too, is the result of an interpretation. To interrogate a work's "nationality" means to interrogate the presence in it of content relating to national consciousness and memory, variously valorized along a spectrum from ecstasy to disinheritance. This content manifests itself together with the material covered in a given work (ways of managing this material constitute the poetics of a work). When I refer to literature's material, I have in mind all of its values or content – everything transferred to the work by means of linguistic combinations. What we are dealing with is thus, naturally, not the contents of national consciousness and memory, but also what is philosophical, scholarly, imaginative, literary (stored in tradition), and so on. The fact that the above distinctions lack the desired "punch," and their immaculately "pure" hypostases are thinkable only in theory, does not mean we should renounce their use. The prose categories of socially engaged, psychological, political, or fantasy, and the lyrical categories of religious, metaphysical, patriotic, political, self-referential, pastiche (intertextual) evoke manifold doubts - considering their mutual permeation in literature (and in the human mind), and in general, aside from that, imperfect labelling makes it (even) more complicated getting around the landscapes of literature.

What is the place in the dense thicket of literary forms for national content or values? They can appear in each of the varieties of narrative or poetic literature indicated above (as well as dramatic and nonfiction forms). In view of the internal diversity of the category at hand, it is incredibly difficult to point to a work – socially engaged, self-referential, psychological – in which we don't find at least a trace of "that, which is national." It might be said, to quote Zbigniew Herbert's *Rozważania o problemie narodu* (Reflections on the Problem of the Nation), that in general, this is the last knot "to be broken free of by the prisoner." On the other hand, however, the neutralization, reduction or deconstruction of national values often becomes one of the goals sought after by the poetics of a work. What is national is opposed to what is human and universal, though not necessarily transnational.

The first part of this article discussed how the "nationality" of a literary work or group of works manifests itself in a variety of ways, in three not entirely identical and not entirely different contexts: linguistic, cultural, and ethnic. These contexts not only interpenetrate each other, but also enter into conflict with one another. They support or supplant each other. Tensions within what belongs to the national become noticeably activated within the structure of a work perceived through its numerous "layers."

A few examples. A sophisticated, bravura manipulation of Polish language, skirting the borderline of untranslatability, can serve to express a universal cosmological vision of the world, freed from all national characteristics (Bolesław Leśmian's *Eliasz*). A caricature, all but grotesque, at the level of representation, of cultural symbols of Polishness, can coexist with an apotheosis of the artistic possibilities of Polish at the linguistic level (Witold Gombrowicz's *Trans-Atlantyk*). A declared flight from Polishness ("Must I still be a Pole?") can be accompanied by "transparent" language, constituting an attempt to create an illusion of universal speech, unmarked by any nationality (Miron Białoszewski's *Klapa*). The typology of the totality of such combinations is a task for the poetics of the future. May it come swiftly!

The poetics of works that exceed the limits of monolingualism and national monoculturalism, especially works that represent ethnic conflicts or alliances, differ from the conditions sketched above in their degree of complexity. The category of "transnationality" seems pertinent and useful with regard to certain texts, but insufficient in relation to others. Transnationality comes into its own where the literary protagonist in an ethnically diverse world shifts between languages and cultures. Examples could be Białoszewski's *Wycieczka do Egiptu* (Trip to Egypt), *Obmapywanie Europy* (The Mapping of Europe), and *AAAmeryka* (AAAmerica). With regard to literary images of national slaughters, ethnic cleansing, pogroms, extermination, border struggles, and so on, the prefix "trans" fails to convey the intensity and stakes of the drama.

7.

Time for conclusions. The idea of a transnational poetics can be a positive impulse, awakening the imagination of scholars toward organizing the tools of their inquiries and the artistic devices of literary creation according to criteria that correspond to the actually existing state of literature in its many important sectors and phases. We must nonetheless anticipate the existence of works whose relationship to the categories of nationality and transnationality will be indirect, problematic, fluid, or neutral. The crucial problem is that both nationality and its emergent transnational superstructure are specific ways of branding descriptive poetics, the poetics of literary aggregates and the poetics of the single work. Like all such forms of branding, they are labile, situational, and gradual, to the point of oblivion or self-contradiction.

The theses and propositions presented in this article demand more extensive literary evidence and more detailed empirical justification. Due to lack of space, I will take the liberty of referring readers to some earlier works of mine in which these problems have been tackled with more precision. *Styl i poetyka twórczości dwujęzycznej Brunona Jasieńskiego. Z zagadnień teorii przekładu* (The Style and Poetics of the Bilingual Work of Brunon Jasieński. Problems of Translation Theory), Wrocław 1968. "Ekspresjonizm jako poetyka" (Expressionism as Poetics), in: *Kręgi wtajemniczenia. Czytelnik, badacz, tłumacz, pisarz* (Circles of Initiation. Reader, Scholar, Translator, Writer), Kraków 1982. "Polska Mirona Białoszewskiego" (Miron Białoszewski's Poland), in: Śmiech pokoleń – płacz pokoleń (Laughter of Generations – Lamentation of Generations), Kraków 1997. See also "Ojczyzna wobec obczyzny" (Homeland and Strange land) in the same volume. "Jednojęzyczność, dwujęzyczność, wielojęzyczność literackich 'światów'" (Monolingualism, Bilingualism, and Multilingualism of Literary "Worlds"), in: *Tłumaczenie jako „wojna* światów". *W kręgu translatologii i komparatystyki* (Translation as "War of the Worlds." In the Sphere of Translation and Comparative Studies), Poznań 2011. See also "Pola-sobowtóry. Rewolucja i komparatystyka" (Shadow-Fields. Revolution and Comparative Studies) in the same volume.

Keywords | Abstract | Note on the Author   ● ● ●

KEYWORDS

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Abstract:

Poetics understood as a lexicon of terms defined and illustrated by selected examples, describing literary compositions, their components, or relations between elements in a work, consists of concepts universal or local in scope; the local can be native or foreign. Perception of the genesis of terms changes during the course of literary history. "Nationality" or "transnationality," formulated as a feature of the poetics of a work or aggregate of works, has a similarly dynamic nature, manifesting in three systems which are neither fully identical nor completely distinct: linguistic, cultural, and ethnic. These systems are not only mutually interpenetrating; they also support each other and conflict with each other.

national/transnational
poetics

typology
of literary phenomena

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Dubravka Ugrešić.

The Writer and Deterritorialized Literature

Maciej Duda

> I dream that one day I shall remove the stickers that other people have assiduously attached to me and become just my name. Because that, just a name, is the greatest literary recognition that any writer can earn. For everyone else: Cyprus, five points, Poland, two points, Belgium, ten points...[1]

Dubravka Ugrešić wrote the declaration quoted above in 1999. Polish readers encountered it in 2004, thanks to Dorota Jovanka Ćirlić's translation. The author of *Thank You For Not Reading* wrote those words after eight years traveling back and forth between Europe and the United States. Her journey began with political emigration, departing from a country that soon thereafter ceased to exist.

[1] D. Ugrešić, "The Writer in Exile." KITCH, Institute for art production and research, Ljubljana, 2007-2010. http://www.kitch.si/livingonaborder/files/Dubravka%20Ugresic%20-%20The%20Writer%20in%20Exile.pdf. Last accessed November 6, 2015.

The quotation reveals a common theme in most of Ugrešić's writings – an urge to compare herself with others, to test how she is classified among writers and in the literary market-place.[2] Officially, Ugrešić is angry with the rules governing the market, and wishes to be free of them, to exist beyond them. Paradoxically, however, every text she writes concerning the condition of writer/artist and readers/audience is inscribed in that system, taking up a position assigned by others, whether publishers, readers, or critics. Thus this motif of checking and comparing her place, though uncomfortable and despite her efforts to distance herself from it by constantly making ironic allusions to the problem, becomes deeply internalized and impossible to get rid of. The desire for and even the declaration of unclassifiability, are not sufficient to transport her beyond the workings of literary market forces. Ugrešić dreams of her geographic displacement becoming linked to processes of national and political liberation, empowerment, emancipation, and renewed subjectivity.[3] Unfortunately, the system of market forces does not allow her full, autonomous resolution.

In examining the tension between the author's own and external market classification procedures, as well as comparative literature and other literary approaches, I would like to determine how Ugrešić's prose and essayistic writings have changed or are continuing to change as well as attempt to answer the question, whether the practice she dreams about, of rejecting national labels and being a writer who is "between," "beyond," "trans," is really possible? Does the idea of transcultural writing or authors exist in reality? To this end, I will contemplate the self-definition that Ugrešić has inscribed in her works and the reading matter that served as the inspiration for texts by the author of *Have a Nice Day: From the Balkan War to the American Dream*. A chronological view of her published works illuminates preoccupations that seem to fit with the designs for the theoretical project of transnational literature. The practice of such a project is given its fullest treatment in her essay "Karaoke Culture."

Song of Myself

"Yes, I'm Balkan," I sighed, resigned.[4]

"I don't know who I am any more, or where I'm from, or where I belong," said my mother once [...] when someone asks me who I am I repeat my mother's words: "I don't know who I am any more..." [...] Sometimes I say: "I am a post-Yugoslav, a Gypsy."[5]

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[2] The conception of culture and literature developed by Ugrešić takes into account the perspective of artist, receiver, and publisher. Their interests (in the sense of "self-interest") and expectations cannot fully coincide, however.

[3] The term I have in mind is precisely *empowerment* [in English in the original—T.W.]. "The word can be understood in many ways, and is used with many different intended meanings. The concept appears in the social sciences (for example in battling discrimination, in social work, in psychiatry) and in management. This concept is also closely linked with feminism and emancipatory pedagogy. *Empowerment* refers, furthermore, to both the process of becoming empowered and its result. It designates a change at the individual and structural levels.
In its sociological sense, *empowerment* refers above all to members of minority groups, subject to discrimination and marginalization, excluded from decision-making processes, opportunities to influence outcomes, or wielding power, broadly understood (at the personal, familial, societal, or national level, among others)." Definition by Agata Teutsch, http://rownosc.info/dictionary/empowerment/, last accessed 27.07.2015. The website also features a list of publications on this subject.

[4] D. Ugrešić, *The Culture of Lies*, University Park Pennsylvania 1998, p. 42.

[5] Ibid, p. 7.

These declarations of Ugrešić's bring to mind a *matryoshka* doll. When we open up the first one, we find a smaller copy of it inside. The categories that the author designates in this series of essays are contained within each other or belong within her previous forms of self-definition, often imposed upon her from the outside. Yugoslavian women and Roma women are simultaneously Balkan hybrids. Likewise, being a Croatian woman will, for her, become a mere fragment of post-Yugoslavian and Balkan identity. All of these categories are impermanent for Ugrešić. Aware of a certain compulsion to do so, she tries them on, in order to become part of the globalized book market. Ugrešić knows perfectly well that market mechanisms demand she define herself in terms of nationality not in spite, but because of globalization. Earlier, politics made a similar demand on her. It is not by chance that one of her most important books bears the title *The Culture of Lies. Antipolitical Essays*. In her later work, Ugrešić deals with the identification experience of the Yugoslavian republics' coexistence and the consequences of their later political division. In view of those consequences, she chooses the particle "trans" to express her identity in place of any unequivocal nationality. Aside from her dream of avoiding labels and tags, she is perfectly well aware that a mere surname is insufficient. A surname, after all, does not offer the possibility of escape. The record of that name denounces her, and refers to a particular language and cultural region, which will restrict her work's meaning, potential, and most importantly, reading public. For that reason also, her name appears on different editions of her work in different iterations and variants. One difference consists in the presence or omission of diacritical marks: Ugrešić vs. Ugresic.[6]

"Only once did I see the word *transnational* in parentheses after the name of a writer, and I immediately envied him,"[7] Ugrešić writes. The writer does not wish to be in a particular place, but rather in between or outside places. Helena Duć-Fajfer writes that this desire "can eliminate the ambivalence that is often the share of people under the influences of divergent values and models. [Through being in between—M.D.] one achieves bivalence, the acceptance of one's own many-layered identification and free participation in a variety of national cultures, leading toward one's own creative synthesis of diverse cultural elements."[8] Duć-Fajfer highlights the term "in between," while Ugrešić uses the category "outside." The difference would appear to be located within the problem of influence. "In between" suggests a compulsion to choose, while "outside" indicates the possibility of rejecting that choice in favor of self-reliance and empowerment.

In one essay Ugrešić states that a whole range of literature is still unfairly and improperly defined with the labels "refugee," "ethnic," "migrant," "emigré," and "diaspora."[9] The reason for this is supposed to be the fact that descriptive language cannot keep up with quickly changing

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[6] In keeping with Polish reception of the writer, this essay uses the same version as most published translations of Dubravka Ugrešić's books into Polish. Of the 12 books published under her name in Poland since 2000, only three used the spelling "Dubravka Ugresic." Those are, in chronological order, *Baba Jaga zniosła jajo* (2004), *Forsowanie powieści rzeki* (2005), and *Kultura kłamstwa. Eseje antypolityczne* (2006). All were released by the same publisher, Czarne. [Translator's Note: Among English translations, *Baba Yaga Laid An Egg*, *Nobody's Home*, and *Karaoke Culture* notably feature the author's name sans diacritical marks. T.W.]

[7] D. Ugrešić, *Thank You For Not Reading*, trans. C. Hawkesworth, Dalkey Archive Press 2003, p. 140.

[8] H. Duć-Fajfer, "Etniczność a literatura" (Ethnicity vs. Literature) in *Kulturowa teoria literatury. Główne pojęcia i problemy* (Cultural Theory of Literature. Central Concepts and Problems), ed. M.P. Markowski and R. Nycz, Kraków 2006, p. 443.

[9] D. Ugrešić, *Nobody Home*, Open Letter Books 2008, p. 149.

reality. She herself, relying on the work of American academics, recognizes the term transnational as applying to her own work. Inspired by the thought of Azad Sehan, she characterizes transnational literature as follows:

> I understand transnational literature as a genre of writing that operates outside the national canon, addresses issues facing deterritorialized cultures, and speaks for those in what I call "paranational" communities and alliances. These are communities that exist within national borders or alongside the citizens of the host country but remain culturally or linguistically distanced from them and, in some cases, are estranged from both the home and the host country."[10]

Ugrešić does not, however, describe or analyze this simultaneous, twofold distance from the motherland and the country of exile. She does not reconstruct the system of concepts and influences affecting such artists, nor does she focus on the poetics of the transnational work. To find practical solutions to the problems defined by Ugrešić, then, we must consult her own texts. For in fact she indicates herself to be a prime example of a practitioner who functions or seeks to function outside national canons and touches on themes that are important to deterritorialized cultures.

Territory

Ramazani's concept of influence and drawing on suitable models relates to a range of problems beyond the need for self-definition. Above all, it is concerned with determining the shape and sources of the texts created by the writers we study. Ugrešić, as a literary scholar, engaged in the analysis of prose works by Russian authors. Her readings found theoretical support in studies by theorists hailing from or living in both Eastern and Western Europe. This does not, however, mean that Ugrešić's work made it possible for two separate cultures with different reading and writing practices to meet in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Community, understood as the possibility of influence or drawing from an example, and fashions (also in a way resulting in what we would now call glocal activity, or that we could define, following Bhabha, as the practice of mimicry[11]) have been demarcated by the transnational, transgeographical cultural categories of modernism and postmodernism. The difference between influence and appropriation can be expressed by the distinction enunciated by Andrzej Hejmej between the traditional comparative approach to literature based on "national philology" (national literature) and the "comparative cultural studies approach, which in the second half of the twentieth century and particularly in recent decades has been attempting to break with the study of influence ('arcades'[12]), with factual links [...], which questions the idea of comparison, highlighting instead the phenomenon of (in)comparability, which often contents itself with fortuitous juxtapositions or, in Spivak's words, 'affiliations.'"[13] It is precisely the

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[10] A. Seyhan, *Writing Outside the Nation*, Princeton University Press 2001, quoted in D. Ugrešić, *Nobody's Home*, p. 149.

[11] Compare with Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October*, Vol. 28, Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis (Spring, 1984), pp. 125-133.

[12] "Arcade interests me thus not in the Benjaminian, but in the van Tieghemian sense, that is, as the transfer of a given literature beyond its proper language borders (or rather, cultural borders), in the paradigm of influence studies." See A. Hejmej, *Komparatystyka. Studia literackie – studia kulturowe* (Comparative Studies. Literary Studies and Cultural Studies), Kraków 2013, p. 291.

[13] Ibid., p. 292. In the quoted passage the author refers to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Rethinking Comparativism" in *New Literary History*, Volume 40, Number 3, Summer 2009, pp. 609-626.

reflex of appropriation rather than influence that becomes the primary mechanism in building Ugrešić's first short stories. A selection of them appeared in Polish translations in the 2004 volume *Baba Jaga zniosła jajo* (*Baba Yaga Laid An Egg*). The publisher and translator took those texts from two previous books of short stories by Ugrešić: *Poza za prozu* (Posing for Prose, 1978) and *Život je bajka* (Life Is a Fairy Tale, 1983). Ugrešić's earlier stories are fixed within an interpretation that at first glance appears to advance the category of the postmodernist intertext.[14] Agnieszka Wolny-Hamkało has written that "this is a bold exploitation of literary history for her own frivolous use,"[15] because Ugrešić by means of various references to and intertexts from Russian literature shows off her background and erudition in literary scholarship. The category of postmodernism has in fact become the main obstacle to the reception of these texts,

> The concept had penetrated into my native literary environment from haphazardly translated foreign articles. For the local critics, postmodernism was something like gossip from a distant literary world, and so instead of adopting the concept itself they adopted *gossip* about it. Using my own Author's Notes as the only relevant source, critics concluded that this collection was a typical "postmodern construct," which at the time was merely a polite phrase for plagiarism.[16]

Ugrešić sums up in her "Author's Notes" to the Belgrade edition *Život je bajka* issued in 2001. The quoted commentary also appears in the Polish version, where it is amplified by an additional translator's note. Hamkało, writing of the "frivolous use" of literature, is simultaneously right and wrong, because the frivolousness she observes becomes manifest in a discussion of a book in terms of its erotic potential. The pattern (attributed to postmodernism) of using literature, intertextuality or borrowed characters does not itself, however, merely serve the purpose of literary games and amusement in Ugrešić's work. Instead, it thematizes the very lack she diagnoses. In her polemic with the critics, Ugrešić precisely states her motivation for writing: "Leafing through my native literature, I discovered to my astonishment that the only writers who spontaneously touch on erotic themes are children's writers. So I bravely took on the task of cultivating a new literary genre."[17] Here, the postmodern idiom of game-playing is replaced by a gesture of reproof for the absence of something, and Ugrešić functionalizes the very gesture of borrowing a character or copying a passage from a well-known text as a criticism of literary reality. She thus prioritizes ethical categories, and privileges the interpreting

[14]In Croatian literary scholarship, the category of postmodernism has had a complicated history, having been subjected to two major influences, fashion and politics. Julian Kornhauser describes its evolution in "Kategoria postmodernizmu w literaturoznawstwie chorwackim" (The Category of Postmodernism in Croatian Literary Studies), in *Kultury słowiańskie. Między postkomunizmem a postmodernizmem* (Slavic Cultures. Between Post-Communism and Postmodernism), ed. M. Dąbrowskiej-Partyki, Kraków 2009. Magdalena Dyras goes so far as to diagnose a case of literary-historical abuse. She demonstrates that the category of postmodernism appeared in Croatian literary discussions in the mid-1980s. Dyras writes: "the ennobling aspect of postmodernism's early presence in Croatian culture exerts influence on the interpretation of the entire phenomenon. I think that it has often led to typical overinterpretations and in some cases the attribution of a postmodern pedigree to entities which in fact have a particular, specifically Croatian nature." See *Re-inkarnacje narodu. Chorwackie narracje tożsamościowe w latach dziewięćdziesiątych XX wieku* (Re-incarnation of the Nation. Croatian Identity Narratives in the 1990s), Kraków 2009, pp. 138-142.

[15]A. Wolny-Hamkało, *Baba Jaga zniosła jajo*, http://wyborcza.pl/1,75517,2419044.html, last accessed: 18.07.2015

[16]D. Ugrešić, "De l'horrible danger de la lecture (Author's Notes)," in *Lend Me Your Character*, trans. C. Hawkesworth, London 2005, pp. 232-233.

[17]Ibid., pp. 233-234.

subject and his or her individual reading practices over the object of study.[18] Readers get acquainted with the "ingredients... mixed in the literary saucepan" one at a time.[19] We thus are able to confirm our hunch that "A Hot Dog in a Warm Bun" references Gogol's "The Nose" – it is in fact "an attempt to turn psychoanalytical-interpretative gossip about Gogol's 'The Nose' into literature,"[20] while other texts contain allusions to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (in her discussion of "Who Am I?" Ugrešić states that "20% of the text is taken from that book"[21]) as well as works by Robert Musil (*The Man Without Qualities*), Daniela Charmsa ("The Old Woman"), Fyodor Dostoyevsky (*Crime and Punishment*), Leo Tolstoy (*The Kreutzer Sonata*, *Anna Karenina*) and Jorge Luis Borges. Tropes from such works enter into Ugrešić's work in the form of a borrowed sentence, the inscription of a longer passage, the placement therein of a borrowed character or the permeation of an atmosphere recalling the writings of one of these authors. As such, Ugrešić reiterates, this is not supposed to be an ordinary game of "Lend Me Your Character," but to express themes that Ugrešić does not find in the work of her local colleagues.

Another important trope in Ugrešić's early texts is the sex of her characters. A female protagonist is often a figure that Ugrešić has resolved to rehabilitate by introducing her into literature and literary life as a thinking subject. Her collection of stories thus becomes an accusation against the existing reality of that time:

> That is to say, in the literary scene the men respect each other, polemicize with each other, test and measure themselves against each other, enthuse about each other, pat each other on the back [...]. They do not quote women writers, even famous foreign women [...] but they always refer to famous foreign men. Men are everywhere.[22]

Curiously, the accusation put forward in these notes does not have an equivalent in the author's fiction, where, even when borrowing female characters, she draws from works written by men, and does not refer to or quote from works by famous foreign women.[23]

The technique presented above, in which Ugrešić illustrates problems of the local literary scene by using literary devices typical of the transnational category of postmodernism, connotes a vision of culture that postulates the transparency of references, awareness of their sources and original versions, and knowledge of the author's immediate context of contemporary local literary life. Ugrešić thus binds together the universal and the local.

A survey of Ugrešić's later essays and feuilletons reveals her familiarity with journalistic and scholarly writings whose authors sought to study the intersection of the categories of nationality,

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[18] This is how Hejmej describes the "instability of comparativism," which leads to its reformulation. See A. Hejmej, *Komparatystyka. Studia literackie – studia kulturowe*, pp. 72-78.

[19] Ugrešić, "De l'horrible danger de la lecture," p. 235.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., p. 239.

[22] Ibid., p. 245.

[23] For more on this topic, see M. Duda, "Biblioteka Dubravki Ugrešić" (The Library of Dubravka Ugrešić), a paper I read at the conference *Czytanie... Kobieta, biblioteka, literatura* (Reading... Woman, Library, Literature) in Szczecin on 23-24 April 2015, Uniwersytet Szczeciński. A printed version is scheduled to appear toward the end of 2015.

origins, and the resulting dependent factors that shape the image of the representatives of a particular language and culture. This inclination can be linked to her biography and the political emigration mentioned earlier. Among the authors she cites are Milan Kundera, Nikolai Gogol, Il'ya Ilf, Evgenii Petrov, Ivo Andrić, Miroslav Krleža, Czesław Miłosz, and, later, Slavoj Žižek, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Terry Eagleton, Edward Said, Jean Baudillard, Umberto Eco, and Arjun Appadurai. Both of these groups constitute functional, significant paths for Ugrešić. They do not represent a place from which she reads, but rather a state of being[24] or a need that she meets by writing about those authors. The first group stands for longing and even melancholy; it connotes the reflexive examination of one's own interior landscape. The second group can be associated with the process of movement and change, looking at oneself from the outside, at a distance. The first row of names appears in Ugrešić's post-emigration narratives, where they are used by her as ironic figures vis-a-vis the external gaze of the Western reader attempting to pin down her work, to find an unambiguous classification for it.

Genre

Further reading of essays by the author of *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* reveal's Ugrešić's library to be a collection organized not by nationality or the authors and protagonists' sex, but by genre. It is not the name on a book's cover, the sex or background of the author that drives her choices as a reader. Those factors are relevant for her, but not front and center. The key to her choices and classifications becomes form. This is demonstrated perfectly by *Have a Nice Day: From the Balkan War to the American Dream*, a record of her process of getting to know and interpret American culture. In Ugrešić's choices of words and definitions to make up this imaginary dictionary, form is a privileged category. She looks through manuals, instructions, guides, and organizers, whose interpretative and explanatory function is not of primary importance to the emigrée writer. What is more important, for her, is the aspect of their popularity. On its basis, Ugrešić declares a culture of the manual, the "sacred handbooks or instructions"[25] that construct life; that understanding of culture, it appears, later becomes the point of departure for her codification of another ordering paradigm – the idiom of *The Culture of Lies*.

The most vivid example of Ugrešić indulging this fascination of hers – reading something that enjoys transnational success and offers a simple recipe for how to arrange one's life (these aspects can be understood as causally related) – is her reading books by Paulo Coelho. Ugrešić traces the motif of her interest in the phenomenon of the Brazilian author through two collections of her writings, *Thank You For Not Reading* (2003) and *Nobody's Home* (2008). Her first presentation of Coelho (written in 1998) was prompted by the phenomenon of the bestseller as "a space of ritualized collective innocence [...] a holy marriage between the text and the readers [...] a closed system of simple values and even simpler knowledge."[26]

Plunging into the crowd of vacationers on the Adriatic, Ugrešić grasps at the texts she sees in the hands of other holiday-makers on the beach; "I settled on a rock and tried to match my

[24]"[...] cultural comparative studies [...] represent less a scholarly method or procedure than a certain position, a certain human behavior, attempting to understand another human being, a text, or a group of texts." A. Hejmej, *Komparatystyka. Studia literackie – studia kulturowe*, p. 92.

[25]D. Ugrešić, *Have a Nice Day: From the Balkan War to the American Dream*, Viking, 1994, p. 46.

[26]D. Ugrešić, *Thank You For Not Reading*, p. 62.

own reader's pulse to the global pulse of the literary mega-market. I opened Coelho's book."[27] In the next several sentences Ugrešić performs a deft summary of the plot of The Valkyrie, after which she closes the book, "gaze[s] at the sky,"[28] and states that her hypothesis has been confirmed. A year later, she returns to Coelho in a text entitled "Alchemy." There, she associates the category of the bestseller as a genre with the word "shit"[29] and links its attractiveness with its availability. "Shit is accessible to everyone, shit is what unites us, we can stumble across shit at every moment, step in it, slip on it,"[30] Ugrešić remarks. She returns to Coelho once more, in March 2006. This time she is interested in the figure of Coelho as a writer. Passing over his writings, but not his market success, she examines his biography. Her source of knowledge is the website promoting his personality and books. This small shift– the change of medium, from paper publication to virtual reality, will in time become constitutive for another Ugrešić model of culture. For the time being, the life of Coelho fits perfectly into a series of memoir narratives of Western celebrities that she codifies in 2006. Their main distinguishing characteristic is popularity with the reading public. Not the author's sex, behavior, or language, but their market value and sphere of influence. This aspect leads her to uncover a pattern or at least a shared feature among the most widely-read works. Coelho's biogram serves as a perfect example of the "personal memoir"– "one of the most popular genres of our age"[31] and simultaneously the biography of a contemporary "saint, a prophet, a writer, a missionary, a benefactor, a stateman without a state, and a global guru. Coelho is a unique example of a writer who satisfies the whole gamut of criteria: he is respected on all continents, as are all the greatest prophets, and in all the religious zones; he is a spiritual leader to the famous and the anonymous, the rich and the poor, the young and the old."[32] The qualification of satisfying all criteria for everyone is the decisive factor in Coelho's mounting of his throne atop the world library. With no political borders, no difficulties in translation, no roots or alienation, no differences. Beside Coelho's books stand successive narratives that "follow a religious model," "display motifs from the religious repertoire: suffering, sin, forgiveness" and enlightenment,[33] are conventional stories of "achieving wisdom, serenity, harmony, and self-purification."[34] "Literary reflection is not Coelho's strong point, but in fact, he doesn't need it to be. Mega-popular writers (as celebs, or prophets) are mega-popular precisely because they offer their readers the illusion that literature (fame or God) can happen to absolutely anyone," judges Ugrešić.

The writer's interest in the phenomenon of Paulo Coelho exemplifies the work in her book written from October 2003 to July 2005,[35] *Nobody's Home.* In the book, she takes a practical approach to literary genres that function "outside the national canon, addresses issues facing deterritorialized cultures, and speaks for those in [...] 'paranational' communities and

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[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., p. 63.

[29]An important problem we encounter in reading Ugrešić consists of the author's reflexive irritation, her discontentment or disappointment masked with irony. For more on this topic, see: M. Duda, "Biblioteka Dubravki Ugrešić."

[30]D. Ugrešić, *Thank You For Not Reading*, pp. 78-79.

[31]D. Ugrešić, *Nobody's Home*, p. 187.

[32]Ibid., p. 189.

[33]Ibid., p. 185.

[34]Ibid., p. 186.

[35]Ibid., p. 192.

alliances."[36] Such genres fit, to some extent, the definition of transnational literature. Ugrešić operates in a similar way. She chooses the form of an essay or feuielleton in the newspaper, and writes about what is important for a community not defined by language, geography, or behavior. What distinguishes it from the previous example, and what in terms of any comparison of market positions and reach becomes a burden for Ugrešić, is the presence of "the key concepts and themes of transnational culture– archiving ethnic, linguistic and national memory; dislocation and displacement; cultural shifts and translation and transplantation of culture; the narratives of remembrance, bilingualism, or multilingualism, exile, etc."[37]

All Criteria and Everybody's Criteria

"[A]mateurs create their own culture, based on borrowing, expropriation, appropriation, intervention, recycling, and remaking; they are simulatneously the creators and consumers of this culture,"[38] Ugrešić writes in *Karaoke Culture*, released in English in 2011 and in Polish in 2013 (the eponymous essay, included in the collection, was first published in Serbian in *Napad na minibar* [Attack on the Minibar] in 2010). *Karaoke Culture* looked at in its entirety may be seen as an attempt to describe the new cultural paradigm. According to Alan Kirby, the new culture can for the time being be labeled pseudo-modernism. Ugrešić, for her part, consistently uses the title phrase: karaoke culture.

Easily applicable to non-musical activities such as film, literature, and painting, karaoke is the most simple paradigm [...]. This *soft* term is less restrictive than those which are currently in use, such as   post-postmodernism, anti-modernism, pseudo-modernism, and digi-modernism. All of these terms, including mine, are inferior to the content they try to describe. The content is new, and it's changing from one second to the next, so what we try and articulate today can disappear tomorrow, leaving no trace of its existence. We live in a liquid epoch.[39]

Of the subsequent chapters in the book, the most important one, for the purposes of my analysis in the context of transnational literature, deals with writing.

The belief in everyone's creative, writerly potential, of which Coelho serves as a demonstration, changes not only the shape of culture, but also the manner in which we use it. Hitherto culture was able to become a plane of discussion, the basis for a shared code, a reservoir of information. It also carried the possibility of conveying and completing writing, supplementing written works through the appearance of continuations of genres but also of plots, for example in the form of new installments of stories or other additions to them written by aficionados, known as *fan fiction*. The activities of these anonymous authors, following the pattern of borrowing characters and writing further developments and altered or alternate versions, even parodies, are nothing new. There have been unauthorized further adventures of Don Quijote, King Arthur and his knights, Sherlock Holmes, and Alice in Wonderland. The practice was based on a fixed relationship of the reader with the work and its author, which

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[36] A. Seyhan, *Writing Outside the Nation*, Princeton University Press 2001, quoted in D. Ugrešić, *Nobody's Home*, p. 149.

[37] D. Ugrešić, *Nobody's Home*, p. 150.

[38] D. Ugrešić, *Karaoke Culture*, trans. D. Williams (title essay), Open Letter Books 2011, Kindle edition.

[39] Ibid.

remained the transparent foundations for additions and subtractions to the narrative. Investigating fan activity in our multimedia culture, Ugrešić, and before her, publishers, observe that the practice of writerly interventions need not have anything in common with an earlier process of *reading* the works being referenced by the creators of the new post-fan fiction.

The publishing industry has swung into action in attempts to satisfy the enormous interventionist appetites of the potential reading masses, and the latest fashion– the production of "quirk books" – is in full bloom. The publisher Quirk Classics features novels such as *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* [...] and *Android Karenina*, the authors of which use "mash-up" techniques, inserting elements of popular culture [...] into classical canonical works. The spawn of such "mash-ups" include [...] *Mansfield Park and Mummies*, *Alice in Zombieland*, and *Romeo and Juliet and Zombies*.[40]

Though the authors of the books listed above call them adaptations, the signs of their readers' reception indicate a lack of knowledge of the originals. The order of dependence is here reversed; it is not *Anna Karenina* that forms the foundation, but the world of androids that is deeply familiar to the readers of these works. The title character is nothing more than a bit of variety thrown into the mix to spice things up, part of the "historical setting."[41] Thus "[m]odern technology has radically altered the structure of the text [...]. The balance of power [...] has been flipped in favor of the Recipient."[42] The relationship between author, work, and recipient has been reversed. It is no longer artists, critics, and authors who influence the shape of works and culture. It is the recipients or consumers who have becoming the haphazard builders of cultural artifacts. The field of reference is disappearing, becoming invalid. What becomes more important is the individual's virtual, and therefore trans-territorial, initiative. In addition to individual projects, there are others in this new paradigm whose authorship is collective.

[T]he spectre of the collective novel, a communist idea, still haunts the Internet. The site *The Autobiography of Pain* invites the people of the world to write "a community driven novel." The project initiators assure the artistically disenfranchised masses that *The Autobiography of Pain* project "belongs to everyone!" Although anyone can change whatever he or she wants, it hasn't yet occurred to someone to change the novel's title.[43]

It begs the question whether this collective project, made possible by the internet platform, does not represent the ideal, Utopian concept for constructing a transnational work. Created in the Esperanto of our time, English, it can blend all available poetic techniques. Its creators can draw from all possible cultural texts. Not constrained by influences and pressures, the work can be based on "individual interpretative practice [a practice also undergoing constant development --MD] in the field of new studies in translation, minority and ethnic studies,

[40]Ibid.
[41]Ibid.
[42]Ibid.
[43]Ibid.

women's studies, post-colonial studies, area studies, interdisciplinary and multimedia, etc."[44] The essential thing is that such collective projects offer readers, besides the possibility of being heard and leaving some trace of themselves (elements fundamental to karaoke culture according to Ugrešić, and linked by her with "narcissism, exhibitionism"[45]), a chance "to feel integrated in their community, to feel they belong to a culture."[46] She nonetheless finds the culture of karaoke – which in Japanese means literally "empty orchestra"— to be a menace: "This tectonic shift has changed the cultural landscape and wiped out many cultural species […], transforming perception, comprehension, and taste—in fact, the entire cultural system."[47] The one constitutive condition for building a literary community with the prefix "trans" is thus supposed to be the rejection of nationalistic categories and simultaneous preservation of ethnic memory. The transnational author should therefore function as a sign of what it means to be "outside," one both accessible to and yet separate from his or her primary cultural and philological milieu. Perhaps this is why Ugrešić's texts are so often encrusted with untranslatable English-language interpolations, and in her bylines and footnotes we often find her location at time of writing or her place of birth demarcated by city (Amsterdam and Zagreb, respectively) rather than nation. The interchangeable use of the two written forms of her name appears is no doubt also guided by such considerations. Still, the questions of reach and literary position remain problematic.

Presenting the position of an author-reader who seeks to understand her fellow readers, Ugrešić frequently changes the paradigm of the culture she is describing. Like human identity, culture is subordinated to a series of processes through which it passes. Unlike identity, this project is not constructed out of previously existing resources, experiences, and other content. Those are pushed off the shelf and rendered invalid at the moment of Karaoke Culture's codification. Ugrešić's readings reveal her reluctance toward further systems for organizing the library. Her road as a reader began with the library structured nationally, a system which has since been deconstructed many times, to be supplemented by the systems of sex, gender, genre (like the "culture of manuals") or replaced by the political system (*The Culture of Lies*). After that, the library is transformed into one from which author and work have disappeared– the Karaoke Culture, devoid of structure or organizing principle. At this point the author of *The Ministry of Pain* takes a step backward. It is revealed that neither the medium of the Internet, nor international mass celebrity at the level of a Paulo Coelho provides a proper basis for the conferral of her dream prefix "trans." Transnationality as an object of envy and desire is thus not stripped of organizing principles, it, too, constructs a hierarchy, just a different one than does the system of nationally-based influences. Like deterritorialization, which does not involve the absence of a permanent place, or rootlessness, but rather displacement and reshuffling of language and location. Ugrešić claims that "Franz Kafka (who lived in Prague, but wrote in German) is a symbolic literary figure of deterritorialized literature."[48] That example indicates that the category of "trans" need not be linked with the process of globalization, and

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[44]A. Hejmej, *Komparatystyka. Studia literackie – studia kulturowe*, p. 92.

[45]D. Ugrešić, *Karaoke Culture*.

[46]Ibid.

[47]Ibid.

[48]D. Ugrešić, *Nobody's Home*, p. 149.

"the notion of Deleuze and Guattari about 'minor literature' could be a productive theoretical formula," if perhaps not much more than that.[49] What is the substance, then, of Ugrešić's dream for the prefix "trans," and will it ever come true? Why, in her description of what is transnational – including such exemplars of the phenomenon as Paulo Coleho, Kim Kardashian, Elvis Presley, and Mother Teresa – and her dreams of sharing that label, does Ugrešić feel the obligation or desire to separate herself from them and take a position on the margins? Perhaps because, in spite of her distaste for repeating a gesture made by other scholars and referring to Goethe's term "world literature," when she uses a literary taxonomy of genres in which the bestseller is equal to the untranslatable concept of "shit," she indirectly references that classical category. The main difference is our experience of a new, faster mode of transfer of information and goods. The templates of poetics remain unchanged. They, too, are designated by the literary-historical hierarchy. Neither do the problems they define change; only their formulation does. The category of nationality yields to that of the individual, who in turn becomes universalized. That shift will have no effect on poetics either, though it may affect authors' feelings.

To summarize, it seems that in the case of Ugrešić's work, in place of the prefix "trans," the words "from outside" would make more sense, but should be applied to the writer's condition rather than to her work. The prepositional phrase "from outside" is more appropriate to describe the place from which she observes and writes. Such a formulation could also rescue her position as one who, loath to participate in the joustings of the market, pays close attention to the profits pouring out of it. The margin, for Ugrešić, is, unlike any other place, the locus of radical opening.[50] Margins allow her the possibility of being "outside," but not "beyond." |

[49]Ibid., pp. 149-150.

[50]See bell hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness," in *Yearnings: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*, London 1989.

KEYWORDS

tranculturality

transnational literature

comparative studies

Abstract:

Dubravka Ugrešić defines herself as a transnational writer. Her political, geographic and cultural dislocation constitute the main themes of her prose works written in the last decade of the twentieth century. In the subsequent decade, Ugrešić's essays took on additional themes relating to the European literary market. The author follows reading fashions and examines the shape and function of publications defined as European or world bestsellers. As a writer and scholar she is drawn to the concept of the transcultural, whose distinguishing characteristic she finds to be the experience of a new and faster mode of transfer of information and goods. The poetics of the work, however, will not be disturbed or changed. Similarly, the hierarchy established by the history and criticism of literature, setting the boundaries of culture and referred to with irony by Ugrešić in her reading of bestsellers, remains intact. This author-reader who seeks to understand her fellow readers often changes the paradigm she uses to describe culture. In her examination of the relations between author, work, and receiver, she delineates an emerging karaoke culture. It cannot, however, be designated as a transnational literature or culture. The literature created by Ugrešić eludes definition in a similar way. Analyses conducted in the text demonstrate that with regard to Ugrešić's work, the term "from outside" would function as a more correct label than the prefix "trans." It should be understood, however, as defining the condition of the writer more than of her work. The label "from outside" appears adequate for defining the place from which she observes and writes, not for the form of her literary output.

bestseller

Dubravka Ugrešić

g e n r e

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Maciej Duda – PhD in the humanities, has ties to Poznań and Szczecin, coach, lecturer (among other subjects, Gender Studies at AMU, post-graduate program in Gender mainstreaming at IBL PAN [Institute of Literary Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences]). Author of the book Polskie Bałkany. Proza postjugosłowiańska w kontekście feministycznym, genderowym i postkolonialnym. Recepcja polska (Polish Balkans. Prose from the Former Yugoslavia in Feminist, Gender, and Post-colonial Contexts. Polish Reception, 2013), co-editor of three volumes of the report on Gender in Textbooks (2015). Awarded a scholarship from the National Center for Scholarship (Fugue 3). Currently engaged in a research project entitled *Publicystyczna i prozatorska działalność mężczyzn na rzecz polskich ruchów emancypacyjnych i feministycznych w latach 1842- 1939* (Men's Journalistic and Prose Activity on Behalf of Polish Feminist and Emancipation Movements in the Years 1842-1939).

(Trans)national Journeys.

A Case Study Using the Example of Selected Prose Works by Andrzej Stasiuk

Sławomir Iwasiów

Travel writing is one of many literary genres. In it we further find the subgenres of the travel essay and the travel novel: thus it includes both the genre of literary fiction and that of journalistic nonfiction, not to mention biography and autobiography. Travel constitutes not only the theme of a given work but also its poetics – words, phrases, styles, characters, worlds, and so on. It is difficult to find a contemporary work, literary or non-literary, that does not at least obliquely reference the poetics of travel or the journey.[1] In Roman Zimand's ironic words: "A journey? There's nothing easier than a journey."[2]

This state of affairs – the accumulated fascination with travel, both in literature and in other areas of life – results from the fact that mobility nowadays is something more than engaging in the activity of moving from place to place. Mobility has various faces: as a way of organizing society, as an incessant flow of information in the globalized conditions we live under, as the basis of culture's functionality. If the shadow of a global catastrophe were to sweep over all human existence, it would undoubtedly involve this multi-layered movement coming to a sudden standstill. The earth cannot stop moving – for it to do so would, in all likelihood, amount to the end of civilization as we know it. "To travel means to live,"[3] Andrzej Stasiuk has rightly declared, and we would do well to take those words seriously.

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[1] On this subject, see: J. Sławiński, "Podróż" (The Journey) in M. Głowiński, T. Kostkiewiczowa, A. Okopień-Sławińska, J. Sławiński, *Słownik terminów literackich* (A Dictionary of Literary Terms), ed. Janusza Sławińskiego, Wrocław 1988, pp. 363–364. Dorota Kozicka has written on the genre of travel more generally in the context of Polish twentieth century literature. See D. Kozicka, "Dwudziestowieczne 'podróże intelektualne'. (Między esejem a autobiografią)" (Twentieth Century "Intellectual Journeys." [Between Essay and Autobiography]), *Teksty Drugie* (Second Texts) 2003, 2–3, pp. 41–59.

[2] R. Zimand, "Gatunek: podróż" (Genre: Travel), *Znak* (Sign) 1989, 10–12, p. 45. The text was first published in *Kultura* (Culture) in nos. 10-11, 1983.

[3] A. Stasiuk, *Fado*, Wołowiec 2006, p. 39.

Mobility represents the *Zeitgeist* of the early twenty-first century. In Jahan Ramazani's book *A Transnational Poetics* (2009) we discover the following idea: literature, like the Earth itself, never stays in one place. Ramazani writes mainly about poetry and deals above all with the literary tradition of the English-speaking world, by its very nature open, international, and cosmopolitan. Therein lies the originality of Ramazani's book and conception, proclaiming a poetics that functions beyond national traditions. Literature thus "travels," and the directions of its peculiar displacements can be traced at various levels, in diverse contexts, in the work of particular authors who, writing in English, have invoked the theme of travel. Understood thus, literature knows no borders – chiefly thanks to the English language's role in breaking down cultural barriers in the age of globalizaton.[4] We must, however, remember, as Leela Gandhi points out in her book *Postcolonial Theory*, that travel features prominently in the culture of colonialism: "Indeed, […] the experience—and accompanying narrative—of travel" were essential to the shaping of imperial identity.[5] Edward W. Said, one of the unquestioned founders of Post-Colonial Studies, stated in *Orientalism* that: "Every European traveler or resident in the Orient has had to protect himself from its unsettling influences."[6] Power, then, is wielded by the traveler, and whoever has power is free to travel when and where he pleases.

To return to Ramazani's book, it is noteworthy that in the third chapter, entitled *Travelling Poetry*, the author presents several ways in which literature travels: firstly, authors travel; secondly, and rather obviously, literary works often record impressions from a journey, and thirdly, literature, thanks to the non-literal nature of language, has the power to cross many borders (cultural, national, and social). As Ramazani writes:

> A figuratively rich discourse, poetry enables travel in part by its characteristically high proportion of figures of thought, as well as figures of speech. Since *metaphor* derives from the Greek "transfer" or "carry across," it should come as little surprise that poetry's figurative language enacts geographic and other kinds of movement.[7]

The American scholar's diagnosis is astonishing in its simplicity: poetry is, in a certain sense, identical with movement. The language of poetry, like travel, relates to space; it allows free displacement at the level of imagination, association, and meaning. That is why poetry (literature) easily overcomes borders, and its language penetrates a wide variety of cultures and traditions. The same could be roughly said about any and every genre of writing – in that sense, Ramazani's analyses are perhaps less than revelatory, but they prompt us toward communicative resistance to national, ethnic and cultural barriers. At the same time we should

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[4] Among others, Andrzej Szachaj has written on multiculturalism in the age of globalization in his book *E pluribus unum?* In the chapter "Multikulturalizm jako reakcja na globalizację i odróżnorodnienie" (Multiculturalism As a Reaction to Globalization and Differentiation), Szachaj considers the reasons behind multiculturalism and the directions in which it has developed – taking as his main example the American tradition. In this perspective, multiculturalism is a result of the mass society, a reaction to globalization, an expression of the desire for self-differentiation in the homogenized culture of global capitalism. See A. Szahaj, *E pluribus unum? Dylematy wielokulturowości i politycznej poprawności* (*E pluribus unum*? Dilemmas of Multiculturalism and Political Correctness), Kraków 2010, pp. 131-134.

[5] L. Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory. A Critical Introduction*, New York 1998, p. 133.

[6] E.W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York 2014, p. 166.

[7] J. Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics*, Chicago 2009, pp. 56–57.

be wary of getting caught in the neoliberal trap that Homi K. Bhabha warned against in his preface to the Routledge Classics edition of *The Location of Culture*: "There is a kind of global cosmopolitanism, widely influential now, that configures the planet as a concentric world of national societies extending to global villages. It is a cosmopolitanism of relative prosperity and privilege founded on ideas of progress that are complicit with neo-liberal forms of governance, and free-market forces of competition."[8]

Nonetheless, theorists of mobility – including British sociologist John Urry, author of *Sociology Beyond Societies* (2000), *The Tourist Gaze* (2002), *Mobilities* (2007), and *Mobile Lives* (2010) – assert that traces of mobility mark everything relating to human activity, and not so much in the metaphorical sense of "life as a journey" (familiar going at least as far back as Homer's *Odyssey*), as in the literal sense of an existence governed in practical terms by movement, for all of its many-colored variety. We ourselves move in bodily ways (walking, driving, riding, flying), but so, too, do many other things: information, images, ideas, objects, works of art, money, garbage... The list could be extended into infinity, ascribing mobility to everything that we find in the panoramic landscape of human experience. "Cultures are themselves mobile as a result of the mobilities that sustain diverse patterns of sociality," Urry clains. The sociologist's vision, captured above all in *Sociology Beyond Societies* (2014), is attractive – everyone (and everything) travels, Urry seems to be saying, but we do not always manage to be aware of the social consequences of this phenomenon, among which one of the most important is the disappearance of uniform social structures.[9]

This does not mean, of course, that people did not travel (and write about their travels) in the past, but they never did so with such frequency and in so many different ways as in our time of *all-inclusive* package bookings and Facebook (options, we should remember, that are nevertheless not available to all). It is important to underscore that travel does not always mean unlimited freedom. Hanna Gosk considers this question in her introduction to the book *Narracje migracyjne w literaturze polskiej XX i XXI wieku* (Migration Narratives in Polish Literature of the 20th and 21st Centuries):

> Migration represents one of the most important existential experiences of the human being in the 20th and 21st centuries. Since it has often been imposed by political or economic circumstances, not desired but thrust upon people, stories on the subject have taken on the grim coloration of a reported trauma with all of the consequences that implies: gaps and things left unsaid in matters difficult to express, lacking models of storytelling technique. Migration is a challenge and a factor in the creation of identity. It can "open up" the subject to new experiences, inspire him or her to creative activity, or "shut up" the subject in imaginary space and the past tense ("there, then"), making contact with the new environment impossible, or keeping him/her in a state of suspension and indefinition ("in between").[10]

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[8] H.K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, New York 1994, p. xiv.

[9] J. Urry, *Sociology Beyond Socities: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*, New York 2012. Quoted passage from first page of Chapter 3, "Travellings," 49, and the entire chapter is relevant: pp. 49-77.

[10] H. Gosk, "Wprowadzenie" (Introduction), in H. Gosk (ed.), *Narracje migracyjne w literaturze polskiej XX i XXI wieku* (Migration Narratives in Polish Literature of the 20th and 21st Centuries), Kraków 2012, p. 7.

Is this equally true today? In Poland? In the city or in the countryside, in the space where we live? On the one hand, since 1990 Poles have been increasingly free to travel – in every sense of the word, in terms of communication as well (interpersonal, cultural, literary). On the other hand, the widely shared early 21st century experience of emigration is also common to the generation born around the 1980s – those who entered adulthood at the moment of Poland's accession to the European Union and the opening of Western employment markets are a generation of emigrants. And they do not always migrate freely. "Modern Western culture is in large part the work of exiles, émigrés, refugees,"[11] as the earlier-mentioned Edward Said wrote.

Andrzej Stasiuk has a prominent place among contemporary Polish writers – both among those reporting firsthand on, and equally among those analyzing, the mobility of people, things, and culture. In the first decade of the 21st century, Stasiuk's travel book entitled *Jadąc do Babadag* (Traveling to Babadag, 2004) received mostly enthusiastic or at least highly favorable reviews and was honored with perhaps the highest form of recognition possible for a Polish author, the "Nike" Literary Award, for 2005. Stasiuk's book was translated into a dozen or so languages, including into English by Michael Kandel as *On the Road to Babadag: Travels in the Other Europe*, published in 2011, and also the recipient of great critical acclaim throughout the English-speaking literary market (in the US, Canada and Great Britain). The English title chosen by Kandel is interesting, referencing Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and enunciating the aim of the work in its subtitle, the phrase "the Other Europe" promising a new and unknown experience, the revelation of some kind of secret. It further corresponds to Stasiuk's consistent effort to project the story of a close, personal, "familial" version of Europe. Hanna Gosk, mentioned above, wrote of his book *Moja Europa* (My Europe, co-written with Yuri Andrukhovych), juxtaposing it with Czesław Miłosz's *Rodzinna Europa* (Familial/Native Europe, published as *Native Realm*): "The possessive adjective 'my' in the title testifies to the desire to treat the topic from an individual, personal perspective."[12]

It may have been a coincidence, but it is hard to deny the symbolic significance of the fact that the original Polish version of *On the Road to Badabag* was released at the moment when Poland became a member of the European Union. In this connection, it is proper to consider the question of the popularity and "translatability" of this Polish author's works, but in the particular context of the literary lexicon, genre and theme of "travel." This problem has already elicited the following observation from Emilia Kledzik: "Andrzej Stasiuk's writing is adored by the European reading public for disseminating a different model of tourism than

[11]E.W. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays*, Granta Books, 2013, Essay 17, "Reflections on Exile." It is worthwhile to compare Said's assertion with a book by historian Jan M. Piskorski titled *Wygnańcy*. See J.M. Piskorski, *Wygnańcy. Przesiedlenia i uchodźcy w dwudziestowiecznej Europie* (Exiles. Displacements and Refugees in Twentieth Century Europe), Warszawa 2010. On page 58 of that work, the author writes, concerning the problem of migration in the early twentieth century, "In conditions of migration movement, belief in organizational-logistical and technical possibilities and also rising social and national tensions in the areas of empires ruling the vast spaces from the Baltic to the Balkans, in the heads of European politicians and planners, the idea was inevitably bound to arise of forced relocations, well-known from colonial practice."

[12]H. Gosk, *Opowieści skolonizowanego/kolonizatora. W kręgu studiów postzależnościowych nad literaturą polską XX i XXI wieku* (Stories of the Colonized / Colonizer, From Post-Dependence Studies of 20th and 21st Century Polish Literature), Kraków 2010, p. 91. See also the chapter in this book entitled "*Miejsce Kresów/pogranicza w 'rodzinnej'/'mojej' Europie*" (The Place of the Karsts / the Border in "My"/ "Familial" Europe), pp. 83–92.

the one popular at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries – conducted in places diametrically opposite to those seen in the colorful pictures of travel agency brochures."[13] We must also not forget that the enthusiasm for telling about his travels is rooted in the writer's biography. Stasiuk's experience behind bars, where he served a term for desertion in the 1980s (a fact reflected in his authorial debut, *Mury Hebronu* [The Walls of Hebron]), inspired him to write about his travels, first within his own country, in *Opowieści galicyjskie* (Tales of Galicia, 1995) and *Dukla* (1997), and later about his travels to more distant destinations in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and Asia.[14]

And so we have to ask, is it because what Stasiuk writes in the essays, stories, and feuilletons inspired by his travels, particularly in *On the Road to Babadag*, but also in *Fado* (2006), *Dojczland* (Doytchland, 2007), *Dziennik pisany później* (A Diary Written Later, 2010), *Nie ma ekspresów przy żółtych drogach* (No Express Lanes on the Yellow Roads, 2013) and *Wschód* (East, 2014) – is so original, that he often finds foreign publishers interested in his work? Or is it rather because the texts are so universal that they can be fairly easily presented to a readers not necessarily familiar with Central European literature and culture? Or is it, for lack of a better phrase, "transnational travel literature"?

From the beginning of his career as an author, Stasiuk has struggled with reality (the lived and experienced one as well as the literary, remembered and recorded one). Above all, as a traveler and writer, he possesses an awareness of his own failure to pay due attention to reality – coming across as if he never had quite enough time to carefully inspect observe and describe everything. For that reason, he abandons inquiries into the present and future and immerses himself in what has gone before. He rejects considerations of the future, which represents a kind of unwanted horizon:

> What is memory, anyway, if not the endless exchange of currency, a continual allotting and distributing, a counting in the hope that the total will be right, that what once was will return with no shortage, whole, untouched, and perhaps even with interest, through love and longing? What is travel, anyway, if not spending, then reckoning what's left and turning your pockets inside out? The Gypsies, the money, the passport stamps, the tickets, the stone from the bank of the Mát, the cow's horn smoothed by the Danube current in the Delta, *blok na pokutu*, the fine in Slovakia, *račun parkiranja* – the parking ticket in Piran, *nota de plata*, the bill at the pub in Sulina: two fried catfish, two salads, a carafe of wine, one Silva beer – in all 85,700 ...[15]

In *On the Road to Babadag*, from which the above passage was taken, the protagonist rushes constantly forward; he keeps "searching his pockets" and counting out places, faces, names,

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[13] E. Kledzik, "Pochwała imagologii. Rozważania o obrazie Romów w literaturze polskiej XX wieku" (In Praise of the Study of Images. Reflections on the Image of the Roma in 20th Century Polish Literature), in H. Gosk, D. Kołodziejczyk (ed.), *Historie, społeczeństwa, przestrzenie dialogu. Studia postzależnościowe w perspektywie porównawczej* (Histories, Societies, Dialogical Space. Post-Dependence Studies in a Comparative Perspective), Kraków 2014, p. 487.

[14] See J. Madejski, *Deformacje biografii* (Deformations of Biography), Szczecin 2004, particularly the chapter entitled "Autobiografia i więzienie" (Autobiography and Prison).

[15] A. Stasiuk, *On the Road to Babadag: Travels in the Other Europe*, trans. M. Kandel, Houghton Mifflin, 2011, p. 185.

objects, and landscapes. This point of view makes sense, because people tell about their travels in the past tense, as something finished, closed, lived through. Stasiuk complicates the perspective when he asserts that he has to continually invent his travels anew – his reconstruction of them is simultaneously a construction. The description of what he observed thus seems precise, but is it not at the same time, (re)contextualized constantly, a literary hybrid, in terms of Ramazani's reflections poetically hyper-organized? For example, in this passage:

> Three months later I was riding, at dusk, through the village Rozpucie at the foot of Słonne Góry, Brine Mountains. The cows were returning from the meadows and taking up the full width of the road. I had to brake, then come to a complete stop. They parted before the car like a lazy reddish wave. In the frosty air, steam puffed from their nostrils. Warm, swollen, indifferent, the animals stared straight ahead, into the distance, because neither objects nor landscape held meaning for them. They simply looked through everything. In Rozpucie too I felt the enormity and continuity of the world around me. At that same hour, in that same dying light, cattle were coming home: from Kiev, say, to Split, from my Rozpucie to Skopje, and the same in Stara Zagora.[16]

Driving in his car, the man sees these cows in the road, who, after the moment in which he must slow down, awaken inside him metaphysical inquiries about the meaning of existence. Stasiuk often escapes into the "poetic" layer of narration – here he looks from behind the steering wheel, and thus quite differently than one gazes, for example, through the window of a bus or a tram. Perhaps he has less time for looking around and for that reason resorts to stylistic devices that allow him to establish the mood of traveling through mountainous areas? Such "poetic" gambits are typical for Stasiuk. By poetic, I mean that in Stasiuk's writing, the places, events, and people he describes tend to come more densely packed with meaning than in reality – they become "poeticized," beautified, augmented. It is therefore possible to come away with the impression that the protagonist observing all of these landscapes is in fact creating them, and all the points that he ticks off on the map are, to a greater or lesser degree, of his own design. This is also what transnationality is all about – the ability to present one's own point of view as universal.

We see a similar phenomenon at work in Stasiuk's collection of travel prose entitled *Fado*, where the narrator, once again, observes the world through the windshield of his car:

> Four hours later I gave up. I did not feel like reading the map. I turned at the first exit and descended by the narrow serpentine to the bottom of the wooded valley. At the top ran a six-lane highway on gigantic concrete spans. The rays of headlights glimmered in the sky. The monotonous rumble of cars fell through the valley like heavy dust. A few minutes later everything had disappeared and gone silent. I was driving through the forest. Sometimes I passed buildings. They were dark. Everyone was asleep. I had no idea where I was.[17]

This passage is taken from Stasiuk's micro-essay "Highway." Such views observed through the window may seem exotic, but it is also not difficult to imagine these or similar scenes

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[16]A. Stasiuk, *On the Road to Babadag*, p. 27.
[17]A. Stasiuk, *Fado*, Wołowiec 2008, p. 7. My translation—T. D. W.

as a subject of conversation among people of diverse nationalities. The experience of travel has a universal quality and can bring about cultural barrier crossings. Crossings, but not the elimination of barriers – Stasiuk is not looking for homogenization, something he views with distaste. As Dorota Siwor has noted, the author of *On the Road to Babadag* "exhibits his esteem for the Roma, for Albanians, all the pariahs of civilized and well-ordered Europe."[18]

Traveling is also the guiding theme of *Dojczland*, an essay that tells of the fate of a literary gastarbeiter (guest worker) who wanders all over Germany. The main character stays a day or two in German towns, walks around, and observes. Besides the images, familiar from the previous books, of the vibrant metropolis, Stasiuk here describes his experiences traveling by train. A train journey provides good opportunities for looking at one's fellow passengers:

> The train [to Tübingen] was one of those commuter trains, crowded. The passengers were all young people. I was the oldest. Then a guy in a leather jacket got on. Under his arm he carried a registration card. He took out his phone and began speaking in Serbian, or possibly in Croatian, in any case some local language, He stretched his legs out in front of him and talked and talked and talked. I tried to look at the landscape, but the Serb, or maybe Croat, was distracting me. He chattered away as if he were at home, as if time did not exist, as if he were sitting in the shade somewhere, he drank, smoked, played the political pundit, philosophized about the nature of the world and the development of motor transport. Outside the window it was a November day in Bavaria, but I could feel summer in the Balkans.[19]

In the quotidian German reality the author-narrator perceives what he is familiar with from the Balkans – its particular, peculiar "je ne sais quoi" draws his attention, issues reminders of itself at every step, and entices. A Serb or Croat can be recognized only in close contact, such as for example on the train, in the compartment, when you can get closer to him, listen to his language, observe his typical behavior. There is a curious "tonal" shift here from the situation in the train to an imagined picture of the Balkans. For a moment the narrator describing this situation is on his way to Stuttgart, the next moment he is again traveling back to Babadag. Returning for a moment to Ramazani's book, we can state that this is another important feature of the transnationality of literature: in one sentence, in one short fragment, within the space of a phrase, it enables two opposing worlds to be shown and two cultures to collide.

In another story of travel, based on his own experiences, Stasiuk returned to the Balkans. *A Diary Written Later* opens with a short description of a trip by ferry to Vlorë in Albania:

> I'm here again. I took the ferry over from Brindisi. There was no window in my cabin. I took my roll mat and sleeping bag and went out onto the bow. The deck was vibrating and stank of oil. The sky was full of stars. I went to sleep immediately. I woke at dawn. The shore was visible. Men were standing on the side of the ship looking off into the misty hills. They stood separately, not speaking

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[18]D. Siwor, "Między obcym a innym – kilka portretów z tożsamością w tle (Nowak, Kornhauser, Stasiuk)" (Between the Foreigner and the Other— a Few Portraits Against the Background of Identity (Nowak, Kornahuser, Stasiuk), in P. Bukowiec, D. Siwor (ed.), *Etniczność, tożsamość, literatura. Zbiór studiów* (Ethnicity, Identity, Literature. Collected Studies), Kraków 2010, p. 151.

[19]A. Stasiuk, *Dojczland*, Wołowiec 2007, pp. 8–9. My translation—T. D. W.

to each other. Their faces were serious. They had sailed to the fatherland, but I could see no trace of excitement or joy there. Through the mist and through the golden light of the morning they saw the boundless sorrow of their country.[20]

Of one thing we can be certain: this is not a postmodern tourist's excursion to a sunny shore; the narrator of *A Diary Written Later* is not a typical foreigner in a Hawaiian shirt, complaining about the broken air conditioner, warm beer and cold water in the pool. This trip by ferry is not a sight-seeing attraction; it needs to be experienced, lived through, described, but the description, as we seem is fragmented and vague – the trip took place at night, there was not much to see, and short sentences written in a style recalling Miron Białoszewski's "anti-literature" convey the jumbled nature of the facts he remembers. Later we find another passage about the ferry ride:

> We got there [to Bajram Curri] by water. The ferry sailed via a long, narrow lake through the mountains and sometimes touched land. One or two people came out and moved along an unseen path toward a pass or ridge etched out somewhere under the open sky. In some places someone was waiting for somebody with a donkey. The name of the lake was Komani. It was artificial and reminiscent of a fjord. It stretched a few dozen kilometers wide. The Drin River was closed up with a dam, to generate electricity. To get to the station in Koman we took a black tunnel hollowed out in a rock. The tunnel looked like a natural cave. A delivery van would barely fit inside.[21]

The world seen from the deck of the ferry looks different than through the car windshield or the train window – particularly when there is nothing to look at because you are surrounded by only water. The narration becomes sluggish, as if unfinished (endless?), drifting along slowly. When reading Stasiuk's prose, one may also reach the conclusion that the journey, through Poland, the Balkans, Eastern and Western Europe, never ends, continuing like a traveler's restless dream in a foreign land.

Maciej Duda, interpreting the dialogical book Stasiuk co-wrote with Yuri Andrukhovych, whose full title is *Moja Europa. Dwa eseje o Europie zwanej środkową* (My Europe. Two Essays on the Europe Called Central, 2000), declared that "Stasiuk, describing the circumference of his Europe in a circle on the map, notes with relief that it includes neither Russia nor Germany."[22] Nonetheless, Stasiuk has also visited those two countries, between which Poland abides as if caught in their tight grip. In his books written in the second decade of the 21st century, Stasiuk presents different regions and quite distinct landscapes from those in his previous work. In the collection of feuielletons entitled *Nie ma ekspresów przy żółtych drogach* (No Express Lanes on the Yellow Roads) he leads the reader along winding roads still farther away than before: to China (including a riveting text about the figure of Chairman Mao), to Mongolia, and, in *Wschód* (East), he gives an autobiographical account of setting out into a land he had hitherto rarely visited:

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[20] A. Stasiuk, *Dziennik pisany później*, Wołowiec 2010, p. 9. My translation—T. D. W.

[21] A. Stasiuk, *Dziennik pisany później*, p. 12. My translation—T. D. W.

[22] M. Duda, *Polskie Bałkany. Proza postjugosłowiańska w kontekście feministycznym, genderowym i postkolonialnym. Recepcja polska* (The Polish Balkans. Post-Yugoslavian Prose in Feminist, Gender and Post-Colonial Contexts. Polish Reception), Kraków 2013, p. 35.

In 2006 I went to Russia for the first time, because I wanted to see the country in whose shadow my childhood and youth had been spent. I also wanted to see the spiritual homeland of my state-owned farm. I disembarked at the airport in Irkutsk after traveling for thirteen hours. The flight from Moscow was supposed to last five hours, but for unknown reasons we landed in Bratsk instead of Irkutsk and were told to exit the plane. A gray rain fell on gray concrete.[23]

It must be said, however, that many things change in this world, but Stasiuk's journeys, aside from the diverse points on the compass, are basically similar to each other. Ziemowit Szczerek was right when he wrote these words about the author of *East*: "Andrzej Stasiuk is like a record that I'm fond of: I grab one of his books, open up to any page and read a few pages just the way I would listen to a few tracks chosen at random."[24] Even in Russia the writer again finds similar places, similar people, and practically the same landscapes. In an interview in *Nowa Europa Wschodnia* (New Eastern Europe), he said: "Russia is most interesting where its Europeanness vanishes, where it borders with Asia. I find it really interesting, how this world is coming apart."[25]

Probably the most stirring moment in *East* is the narrator's meeting with his mother in her home. The rather restless and melancholy son, who would like to be on the move again, is unable to explain to the old woman where his need for constant travel comes from. "What agony, she says in the morning. She rasps and groans, as she opens the door and lets in the morning light. What agony? I ask. That you have to travel like that, she answers."[26] Can this compulsion to travel be a burden? Zygmunt Bauman perceived a tension between freedom and captivity in the figure of the postmodern tourist: "The tourists pay for their freedom; the right to disregard native concerns and feelings, the right to spin their own web of meanings, they obtain in a commercial transaction."[27] Stasiuk, however, is a completely different type of traveler, closer to the tradition of the American beatniks, like Jack Kerouac, than to the late capitalist consumer.

The essence of the newest travel writing is hard to pin down, and the example of Stasiuk's work demonstrates its elusive nature: it is found at the edges of country landscapes, in the centers of great cities, in the wilderness, under the mountains of garbage in the dumping grounds of Western civilization, in virtual reality, in trips to neighboring lands and faraway excursions. In movement and in stillness. In auto/bio/geo/graphies, to use the term concoted by Elżbieta Rybicka.[28]

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[23]A. Stasiuk, *Wschód* (East), Wołowiec 2014, pp. 20–21.

[24]Z. Szczerek, "Niechciana Polska" (The Unwanted Poland), *Nowa Europa Wschodnia* (New Eastern Europe) 2014, 6, p. 164.

[25]"Na Wschodzie bez zmian. Z Andrzejem Stasiukiem rozmawia Grzegorz Nurek" (All Quiet on the Eastern Front. Grzegorz Nurek Talks with Andrzej Stasiuk), *Nowa Europa Wschodnia* (New Eastern Europe), 2015, 1, p. 13.

[26]A. Stasiuk, *Wschód*, p. 44.

[27]Z. Bauman, "Vagabond and tourist: postmodern types," in Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, Malden 1993, Chapter 8, "An Overview: In the End is the Beginning," pp. 223-251.

[28]E. Rybicka, *Geopoetyka. Przestrzeń i miejsce we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach literackich* (Geopoetics. Space and Place in Contemporary Theories and Literary Practices) Kraków 2014, p. 282.

When Dorota Wodecka, a journalist for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, asked Stasiuk about the purpose and meaning of his travels, the writer replied: "Each time is different."[29] Reading his texts may be useful from the perspective of building a transnational poetics – if a collection or canon of international travel writing were to be assembled, Andrzej Stasiuk would undoubtedly represent Poland therein. He writes in *Fado*, after all – as if recalling the words of Zimand – "Because getting there is the least of it. The most important part begins after that, precisely now, when everything is motionless, paralyzed, and slowly turning into nothingness."

[29] *Życie to jednak strata jest. Andrzej Stasiuk w rozmowach z Dorotą Wodecką* (Life Is A Losing Game. Andrzej Stasiuk In Conversation with Dorota Wodecka), Warszawa 2015, p. 176.

Keywords | Abstract | Note on the Author ● ● ●

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Abstract:

The purpose of this article is to present travel themes in the work of Andrzej Stasiuk with reference to the theory of Jahan Ramazani, an American literary scholar at the University of Virginia, author of the book *A Transnational Poetics* (2009). Ramazani's theory can be summarized thusly: traveling is the essence of literature, and certain works (mainly of poetry) contain features similar to a journey: they are dynamic, variable, and cross borders. From this perspective Andrzej Stasiuk, author of travel prose, can also be presented as a (trans)national writer, specific and simultaneously universal. If one had to establish a (trans)national literary canon, Stasiuk could represent the area of Polish culture.

Central Europe

travel

p r o s e

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

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Transnational

Modernism and the Problem of Temporal Spatialisation in Franz Kafka's "The Great Wall of China"

Verita Sriratana

On the level of textual content, it can be said that modernist literature reflects a preoccupation with the change in one's views on and understanding of time and space in relation to human existence. The modernist project centres upon in-depth observation and representation of a distinct moment in time, rather than a chronological chain of events which has been understood to be the focus of literary realism. The transformation on the level of spatial and temporal conceptualisation is caused by socio-political, cultural and economic transformations in world history:

> The notion of time as a steady course of continuous moments and the sense of space as an objective and fixed phenomenon, but above all the distinctiveness of the temporal and spatial dimensions of reality were fundamentally disrupted. The establishment of an objective global dateline and new conceptions of space and time stressing their dependency on the observer and the contexts in which they operate radically undermined the certainties built on the idea of a stable universe and a rationally fixed perception of the world.[1]

Literary modernism puts to question the notion of "absolute space", or "[s]pace that exists as a background to events and processes and is not affected by objects or other entities in the universe"[2]. This concept of "absolute space", which led to the concept of time and space as mutually exclusive, was stipulated by the Enlightenment scientific principles based on absolutism and rationalism and, therefore, has been associated with René Descartes (1596-1650), who posited that space is infinite, and Isaac Newton (1642-1727), who stated that space and

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[1] "Modernism: Volume 1", ed. A. Eysteinsson, V. Liska, *A Comparative History of Literatures in European Language* 2007, vol. 21, p. 251.

[2] *A Dictionary of Science*, ed. J. Daintith, E.A. Martin, Oxford 2010, p. 3.

time are distinct entities. The transitional landmarks which contributed to the rethinking of time and space from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century was the relational theories of Ernst Mach (1838-1916) and the notion that time is the fourth dimension of space proposed by Hermann Minkowski (1864-1909). Mach's critique on Newton's concept of "absolute space", as well as Minkowski's notion of time as the fourth dimension, were the founding stones upon which Albert Einstein (1879-1955) developed his general theory of relativity, which was first formulated in 1905 and later revised in 1916. Einstein's theory refutes the notion of a fixed continuity of time and space by maintaining that time and space are relative to the individual observer. Influenced by Einstein, modernist literature thus calls into question the realist linear narrative and the notion of space and time as *tabula rasa* waiting to be defined or assigned meanings: "In the modern novel, the traditional symmetry of life and narrative—whereby the account of the former takes the form of the latter, whose logic basically parallels the temporal order of human life—has been broken up".[3]

On the level of theoretical periodisation, however, scholastic attempts to define and conceptualise modernism as an aesthetic and intellectual movement have proven to betray the spirit of modernist scepticism towards fixity of time and space, the experimentalist spirit which makes modernism unique, described by Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane as "the one art that responds to the scenario of our chaos".[4] How does periodisation of modernism go against its deconstruction tendency? Having been allocated fixed temporal borders which span from the 1890s to the 1940s, the accepted nominal "make it new" definitions of modernism are Western Eurocentric as they privilege Western Europe as the origin and kernel of the modernist movement. Even though there have been attempts to expand the period range of modernism, Susan Stanford Friedman nevertheless cautions that "the danger of an expansionist modernism lapsing into meaninglessness or colonizing gestures is real".[5] The expansionist attempts can only substantiate and solidify Western European modernity and modernism as the standard to which all other modernities and modernisms outside the West are measured. My argument finds its resonance in Friedman's "Planetarity: Musing Modernist Studies", where she advocates leaving the comfort zone of periodisation by rethinking its spatial politics which promotes the superiority of modernity and innovation of the West over the Rest:

> Could it be that the anxieties about the geohistorical and generic expansion of modernist studies represents an uncanny desire to re-establish a particular early twentieth-century Western aesthetic style as the *sina qua non* of modernism? What is the ethics of that interminably repeated comfort zone? How are we to break the hold of the old modernist mold?[6]

I propose in this article that modernism can be better understood as a transnational movement by means of examining the dangers of dwelling in the comfort zone of temporal spatialisation

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[3] "Modernism: Volume 1", p. 251.

[4] M. Bradbury, J. McFarlane, *Modernism 1890–1930. Pelican Guides to European Literature*, Harmondsworth 1976, p. 27.

[5] S. Stanford Friedman, "Planetarity: Musing Modernist Studies", *Modernism/modernity* 2010, vol. 17, 3, p. 474.

[6] Ibid.

on both the level of modernist literature's textual content and theoretical periodisation. The notion that modernism took place only in a fixed period of time fails to embrace the dynamism of change and transnational relativism which has made modernist literature "our art"[7], or the intellectual and aesthetic movement of the "new", the "here" and the "now". Focusing on the subversive aspects of modernism as a "break" with the old and the past in particular contexts will enable the existing yet, oftentimes, obscure multifarious modernities and modernisms in different places and periods of time to emerge.

To "de-spatialise" time is not an easy task as it is often understood that time can only be perceived in terms of space and that spatialisation of time limits the power of the abstract, or the virtual, by making it strictly dependent on preferable material conditions. It is difficult to deny the fact that one divides one's time in a day into terrains where goals and actions are planned. One might picture mornings, afternoons, late afternoons, evenings, and nights as empty spaces on paper. Each demarcated time is like a page or a section in planners and calendars to be filled with the tasks required to be done at a certain point in time. It is not so easy to deny that one regularly "spatialises" time, or thinks of time in terms of space, on a regular basis. *Temporal spatialisation*, as I have mentioned, is based on the notion that space is fixed, a *tabula rasa* that is always there waiting to be defined and assigned meanings as one charts and re-charts the cartography of activities in each passing minute, or even in each passing second. To de-spatialise time, or to dissect the spatial politics behind the mainstream concept of temporality, I propose that we start by examining the history of space as a concept.

The notion of space as a fixed container can be traced back to Aristotle's *Physics*. For Aristotle, space functions as a receptacle of smaller objects, a "form" which contains "matter": "Anyway, since place is separable from the object, it is not form; and since it is a container, it is different from matter. It also seems as though anything which is somewhere is not only itself, whatever it may be, but also has something else outside itself".[8] Thinking of time in terms of a vessel, Aristotle maintains that the past and the present can be understood in and through space: "Now, what is before and after is found primarily in place".[9] It is this Aristotelian conceptual paradigm, presuming fixity to be the essence of space, which has been widely accepted as *sine qua non*. However, modernist literature, through stylistic experimentation, opens up a creative possibility in its treatment of space and time: *spatial temporalisation*, or the art of depicting and perceiving space in terms of time. The speaker in Virginia Woolf's short story entitled "Flying over London", for example, gives an account of her aeroplane experience and describes her view of London from above. Temporalisation of space, as in seeing and experiencing London's landscape in terms of time by means of imagining its past, can be seen reflected in the following passage:

> Nothing more fantastic could be imagined. Houses, streets, banks, public buildings, and habits and mutton and Brussels sprouts had been swept into long spirals and curves of pink and purple like that a wet brush makes when it sweeps mounds of paint together. One could see through the Bank

[7] M. Bradbury, J. McFarlane, *Modernism 1890–1930*, p. 27.
[8] Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. R. Waterfield, Oxford 1999, p. 82.
[9] Ibid., p. 105.

of England; all the business houses were transparent; the River Thames was as the Romans saw it, as paleolithic man saw it, at dawn from a hill shaggy with wood, with the rhinoceros digging his horn into the roots of rhododendrons.[10]

The vertical distance between the plane and the ground offers a new perspective which invites the voyeur/voyageur to see place in historical terms. The speaker imagines the River Thames during the Old Stone Age and the Roman Empire, hence temporalising the landscape she sees. However, there is a paradox which must be addressed. In the process of thinking of the place one has never seen in actuality (since the place in question existed only in the past) in terms of time, as reflected in Woolf's short story, one is also inevitably engaged in spatialising time. It has become apparent that temporalisation of space is, in fact, based on spatialisation of time, and *vice versa*. Jacques Derrida defines this spatio-temporal (inter)reaction and logical co-signification as spacing (*espacement*): "Espacement names the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space, the fact of différance that renders any self-identity or absolute self-presence impossible and that haunts all difference and repetition of the same".[11] Espacement leaves undecidable yet repeatable trace. It is the necessary condition of trace: "Derrida defines the trace as the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space, which he abbreviates as spacing (*espacement*)".[12] The question as to whether the images of the River Thames in the Palaeolithic and Roman times in Woolf's short story are derived strictly from temporalising space or strictly from spatialising time is impossible to answer. The evidence is untraceable:

> **[**S]ince for Derrida the trace is always the trace of another trace, it does not give itself as simple origin. (For Derrida, trace is not a master word but an always replaceable term in an unmasterable series including différance, **supplement**, **writing**, **cinder**, and so on.) Nor can the trace be thought in terms of the logic of **presence**. Since every sign in its manifestation or apparent 'presence' always includes traces of others which are supposedly 'absent', the trace can be reduced to neither side of the presence-absence opposition so prized by the **metaphysical** tradition. The trace thus redescribes the entire field which the metaphysics of presence seeks to dominate throughout history. The trace names that non-systematizable reserve which is at once constitutive and unrepresentable within such a field.[13]

The term "trace" has been discussed at length in Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena*, a study of Edmund Husserl which was published in 1967:

> Since the trace is the intimate relation of the living present with its outside, the openness upon exteriority in general, upon the sphere of what is not "one's own," etc., *the temporalization of sense is, from the outset, a "spacing."* As soon as we admit spacing both as "interval" or difference and as openness upon the outside, there can no longer be any absolute inside, for the "outside" has insinuated itself into the movement by which the inside of the nonspatial, which is called "time,"

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[10]V. Woolf, *Flying over London* in *The Captain's Death Bed and Other Essays*, New York 1978, p. 204.

[11]S. Solomon, "L'espacement de la lecture: Althusser, Derrida, and the Theory of Reading", *Décalages* 2012, vol. 1, 2, p. 20.

[12]M. Hägglund, *Dying for Time: Proust, Woolf, Nabokov*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 2012, p. 15.

[13]*Trace* in *The Derrida Dictionary*, ed. S. Wortham, London 2010, pp. 229-230.

appears, is constituted, is "presented." Space is "in" time; it is time's pure leaving-itself; it is the "outside-itself" as the self-relation of time.[14]

Derrida here stresses the relative space-time paradigm, as opposed to the absolutist separation of space and time. When the external (Woolf's River Thames of her present) is internalised, the internal (Woolf's imagination of the River Thames in the past) is also simultaneously externalised, or re(-)presented in the form of writing. In connection with the concept of trace, Derrida also revises Husserl's concept of "augenblick".[15] The direct English translation of the word "augenblick" is "instant" or "moment". The literal meaning of the word is "blink of an eye". Husserl describes what he calls the "living present", the present that we experience right now, as being perception, and maintains that the living present is "thick". Why is it thick? The present is thick because the instant moment inherently consists of memories of the recent past, to the point that the past and the present become almost inseparable. Moreover, the present, as well as the past, is not a result of repetition or reproduction. Husserl's spatialisation of time results in the notion that "now", this very moment, is an instant point. For Derrida, on the contrary, "now" is not an instant point. The present itself is a reproduction.[16] Therefore, each slice of immediate experience is necessarily unjust or violent. The violence imposed by the "now" and "here" is stipulated in Derrida's *Specters of Marx* (1993), of which the title alludes to the opening statement made by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels at the beginning of *The Communist Manifesto*: "A SPECTRE is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the Powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre;…"[17] For Derrida, the spectre of Marxism becomes ever more hauntingly tangible after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The spectre which haunts Europe, an allusion to the spectre in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, is a reminder that time, as well as one's experience of time, is disjointed:

> GHOST
> Swear
> HAMLET
> Rest, rest, perturbed spirit. So, gentlemen,
> With all my love I do commend me to you,
> And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
> May do, t'express his love and friending to you
> God willing shall not lack. Let us go in together
> And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
> The time is *out of joint* [my emphasis]; O cursed spite
> That ever I was born to set it right!
> Nay, come, let's go together.[18]

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[14] J. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. D.B. Allison. Illinois 1973, p. 86.

[15] Ibid, p. 62.

[16] S.B. Rosenthal, *Time, Continuity, and Indeterminacy: A Pragmatic Engagement with Contemporary Perspectives*, Albany 2000, p. 33.

[17] K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, ed. F. Engels. Chicago 1906, p. 11.

[18] W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, London 2007, pp. 226-27.

In what ways is time "out of joint"?[19] When we stand in front of a mirror and look at ourselves in the mirror, we are "distanced" from the mirror. That distancing is a necessary condition. We must be "spaced" away from ourselves so that we can simultaneously look through the eyes of the voyeur and become the viewed. The space between us and the mirror, however, remains invisible, and because of that, like a blink of an eye, manages to blind our eyes in an instant. We see ourselves projected in the mirror and yet, that self over there is our "other". It is not possible to see ourselves as ourselves. This temporalisation of the spacing between us and the mirror is the "out-of-joint" blink of the moment, the untraceable trace left by the spacing between the living and the haunting dead, the voyeur and the viewed, the present and the past.

In this article, I propose that Franz Kafka's "The Great Wall of China" ["Beim Bau der Chine-sischen Mauer"], written in 1917 and published in 1931, is an example of a modernist writing which not only problematises the concepts of time and temporality as well as of space and spatiality, but also puts on centre stage the problem of theoretical periodisation of modern-ism. With its physical and ideological gaps and fragments, as well as traces of illusory and unfinished signification, the "piecemeal" construction of the Great Wall of China in Kafka's short story not only exposes the process of spatialising time, but also reflects the modernist subtle (re-)evaluation of such a conceptual paradigm.

To begin, in Kafka's story, the construction of the Great Wall of China is based on and driven by strong collective imagination. Workers and overseers labour unquestioningly with the im-age of a completed enclosing wall, the image of the future, constantly in mind. The wall's construction does not commence from point A to point B. It is intentionally carried out in fragments. Kafka here stresses the rationale behind the Great Wall's "piecemeal" construc-tion, as well as the controversy which ensues:

> But how can a wall protect if it is not a continuous structure? Indeed, not only does such a wall give no protection, it is itself in constant danger. These blocks of wall, left standing in deserted regions, could easily be destroyed time and again by the nomads, especially since in those days, alarmed by the wall-building, they kept shifting from place to place with incredible rapidity like locusts, and so perhaps had an even better picture of how the wall was progressing than we who were building it. Nevertheless the work could probably not have been carried out in any other way. To understand this one must consider the following: the wall was to be a protection for centuries; accordingly, scrupulous care in the construction, use of the architectural wisdom of all known periods and peoples, and a permanent sense of personal responsibility on the part of the builders were indispensable prerequisites for the work.[20]

The problem of discontinuity is the spectre which haunts the speaker in Kafka's story. The "how can a wall protect"[21] question is a rhetorical one. The speaker who asks this question is a Chinese historian. Looking back in history from the perspective of the present or, in

[19]Ibid., p. 227.

[20]F. Kafka, "The Great Wall of China" in *The Great Wall of China and Other Short Works*, trans. M. Pasley, London 2002, pp. 58-59.

[21]Ibid., p. 58.

fact, from the perspective of the "future of his past", to the time when the construction had just been launched and slabs of stone were still freshly installed, the speaker knows full well whether or not the wall has served its purpose: "For my own inquiry is a purely historical one; lightning no longer flashes from the thunderclouds that have long since rolled away, ...".[22] The answer here is: no, the wall has not served its purpose.

When we read Kafka's "The Great Wall of China", we also experience Derridean *espacement*. When we read the speaker's account of the past, it can be said that we automatically spatialise time, or think of time in terms of space, which is a normal reaction. However, as I shall explain, Kafka's story also subtly propels readers to do the opposite.

When one thinks of time in terms of space, in this case, in terms of the Great Wall of China, one tends to imagine the passage of time as a one-way trajectory. If the construction process of the wall from the beginning to the overall completion, albeit imaginary, resembles the process of time from the past, passing through the present, to the future, Kafka's piecemeal construction disrupts the gradual processing of time, as well as of the wall, itself. What propels workers and overseers to understand and undertake the project of the Great Wall is the image of the future. What motivates them is the "promise" that one day the wall will be completed in its entirety or, in other words, all the missing gaps filled and the fragmented wall rendered whole:

> This meant that many great gaps were left, which were only filled in by slow and gradual stages, and some indeed not until after the completion of the wall had actually been announced. It is even said that there are gaps which have never been filled in at all, and according to some people they are far larger than the completed sections, but this assertion may admittedly be no more than one of the many legends that have grown up round the wall, and which no single person can verify, at least not with his own eyes and his own judgement, owing to the great extent of the structure.[23]

Kafka's depiction of the piecemeal construction in "The Great Wall of China" therefore illustrates the disjointed time of the present. It shows that there is no such thing as a "present continuous" time setting. The notion of time as inherently "out of joint" is also put on centre stage in a parable within the short story. The parable, published separately in 1919 as "An Imperial Message" ["Eine Kaiserliche Botschaft"][24], depicts the story of a dying Chinese Emperor who whispered his last words to a messenger. The messenger was assigned to relay the Emperor's message to one of his subjects living in the farthest corner of the Chinese Empire: "but for the people in our village Peking itself is far stranger than the next world".[25] The more the messenger struggle to travel across the vast realm of the empire with the message, the more readers come to realise that his mission is an impossible feat: "Our land is so vast, no fairy tale can give an inkling of its size, the heavens can scarcely span it. And Peking is only

[22]Ibid., p. 63.

[23]Ibid., p. 58.

[24]R.T. Gray et al, *Eine Kaiserliche Botschaft* in *A Franz Kafka Encyclopedia*, Westport, Connecticut 2005, p. 156.

[25]F. Kafka, "The Great Wall of China", p. 68.

a dot, and the imperial palace less than a dot".[26] The message, delayed by the unfathomable distance and the passing time, can never reach the intended recipient. As the message of the dying emperor travels across the vast land of China, the promise of the letter's content remains, for the Chinese narrator in Kafka's story, a pledge made in the *future's past*. For Kafka the writer, this pledge, or Derridean promise, was made in the *past's past*. For readers, the imperial pledge was made in the *present's past*. China's vast landscape, which can be regarded as a metaphor for time's infinite boundaries, hindered the fulfilment of the Great Wall promise and obliterated the content of the Emperor's message. However, the act of working towards a promise and the act of travelling despite the looming failure of never ever reaching the intended destination can nevertheless prove to be a statement in itself:

> At once the messenger set out on his way, a strong, an indefatigable man, a swimmer without equal; striking out now with one arm, now the other, he cleaves a path through the throng; if he meets with resistance he points to his breast, which bears the sign of the sun, and he forges ahead with an ease that none could match. But the throng is so vast, there is no end to their dwellings; if he could reach open country how fast would he fly, and soon you would surely hear the majestic pounding of his fists on your door. But instead of that, how vain are his efforts; he is still only forcing his way through the chambers of the innermost palace, never will he get to the end of them; and if he succeeded in that, nothing would be gained; down the stairs he would have to fight his way; and if he succeeded in that, nothing would be gained; the courtyard would have to be traversed, and after the courtyards the second, outer palace; and again stairs and courtyards; and again a palace; and so on for thousands of years; and if at last he should burst through the outermost gate – but never, never can that happen – the royal capital would still lie before him, the centre of the world, piled high with all its dregs. No one can force his way through here, least of all with a message from a dead man to a shadow. But you sit at your window and dream up that message when evening falls.[27]

Like the piecemeal construction, the promise leaves traces of illusory and incomplete signification only to be completed by the readers' imagination: "Such was the world into which the news of the building of the wall now penetrated. It too came belatedly, some thirty years after it had been announced".[28] As readers reach these passages extracted from the parable within "The Great Wall of China", the Emperor's message had long been sent out to the intended recipient. The message's receipt was already delayed. The *espacement* readers collectively experience *within the walls of* the story and *as* the story itself, therefore, has already created gaps, or interstices, between the spatialised temporality of the distant past and the recent "past of our future" which, in fact, is the present. Moreover, the piecemeal construction and the espacement which ensues illustrate how the disjointed time of the present awkwardly awaits the filling of gaps through collective promise of the future. Readers in 2015 and beyond know, as Kafka knew in 1917, that the promise of the completion of the Great Wall would never be fulfilled. The sovereignty of spatialised time might only point towards an empty promise, as well as towards the obscure, even unknowable, content of the Emperor's

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[26]Ibid., p. 66.
[27]Ibid., pp. 66-67.
[28]Ibid., p. 69.

message. Piecemeal construction, on the other hand, invites readers to imagine the content of the promise, the impossible project of a finished Great Wall. Spatial temporalisation is a modernist device which transforms the passive *voyeur* into a committed *voyageur* who travels along the almost unimaginable expanse of the Chinese landscape and the great expanse of time. For Derrida, a "promise" is a performative act: "Even if a promise could be kept, this would matter little. What is essential here is that a pure promise cannot properly take place, in a proper place, even though promising is inevitable as soon as we open our mouths—or rather as soon as there is a text".[29] Since the promise that fulfils itself ceases to be a promise, it reflects a temporality which is "out of joint".[30] My argument finds its resonance in Martin Hägglund's statement in *Dying for Time: Proust, Woolf, Nabokov*: "The condition of temporality is, strictly speaking, 'undecidable,' since it consists in a relentless displacement that unsettles any definitive assurance or given meaning".[31] Also, a promise is structurally open to the possibility of an "other" beyond oneself, a heterogeneous "other" and "temporality" to come: "The promise responds to the **future** and the **other**, it is **performative** in as much as it entails a pledge, an **affirmation** or giving that is not simply identical to or exhausted by its specific content. Even if the promise is not kept, its gesture retains a certain significance".[32]

The context of Kafka's story reveals a particular modernity, which was an outcome of an unfulfilled promise of state security. The speaker of the short story, Kafka and readers of Kafka have the benefit of the hindsight of knowing the "future" of the Great Wall's "past", namely, the fact that the construction of the wall was never completed. Kafka and readers of his story might have learnt about the Chinese Revolution, known as the Xinhai Revolution, of 1911, which marked the end of over 2,000 years of imperial rule and the beginning of China's republican era. The fact that the overthrown Qing dynasty, China's last imperial dynasty, was of the Manchu ethnic minority reveals a deep irony. The Manchus are considered part of a nomadic ethnic group called Xiongnu. This nomadic group, portrayed by the authority as barbaric, was precisely the enemy from whom the Emperor in Kafka's short story built the Great Wall to defend his empire.[33] Time has proven that the wall was far from being an effective defence. While emperors and dictators took turns ruling China, the people remained violently and unjustly oppressed in the name of the imagined enemy:

> Against whom is the Great Wall supposed to protect us? Against the peoples of the north. I come from the south-east of China. No northern tribe can threaten us there. We read about them in the books of the ancients; the cruelties which they commit in accordance with their nature make us heave deep sighs in our peaceful bowers; in the faithful representations of artists we see these faces of the damned, their gaping mouths, their jaws furnished with great pointed teeth, their screwed-up eyes that already seem to be leering at the prey which their fangs will crush and rend to pieces. When our children misbehave we show them these pictures, and at once they fling themselves sobbing into our arms. But that is all that we know of these northerners; we have never set

[29] J. Derrida, *Memoires for Paul de Man*, trans. C. Lindsay, J. Culler, E. Cadava, New York 1986, p. 98.

[30] W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, p. 227.

[31] M. Hägglund, *Dying for Time*, p. 62.

[32] *Promise* in *The Derrida Dictionary*, ed. S. Wortham, London 2010, p. 146.

[33] *The History of Chinese Civilization: Vol. 2. Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, and the Northern and Southern Dynasties (221 B.C.E.-581 C.E)*, ed. Y. Xinpei et al, New York 2012.

eyes on them, and if we remain in our villages we shall never set eyes on them, even if they should spur their wild horses and keep charging straight towards us; the land is too vast and will never let them through to us, they will ride on until they vanish in the empty air.[34]

The *past's past* has left traces on the *present's past*. The Xinhai Revolution, which affected only the ruling class, was established on the fragments of its past. The fate of the common people had been sealed since the time of the Qin dynasty, when peasants were coerced and exploited in the construction of the Great Wall. The common people's poor condition of living remained untouched and unimproved through time.[35] Years under oppressive regimes under Shi Huang Di (also known as Qin Shi Huang), the first Emperor of China, and his successor led to inevitable repercussion: "The nature of man, flighty in its essence, made like the swirling dust, can abide no bondage; if it fetters itself it will soon begin to tear wildly at the fetters, rip all asunder – the wall, the binding chain, and itself – and scatter them to the four quarters of heaven".[36] The peasants successfully overturned the power of the Qin dynasty and ended its reign.[37] It is sadly ironic that the Great Wall's promise of security made to the people who built the wall and lived within its enclosure has proved to be nothing but a statement of tyranny and inequality. Likewise, the threat of a common enemy from the north proved to be a spectre of collective fear, which had been exploited to the fullest by emperors and noble elites. This spectre of the past returns to haunt the present day. This can be seen, for example, in the demonisation of Arabs and Muslims by the United States, particularly as part of the psychological warfare propagated by the George W. Bush's regime:

> A strange boatman – I know all those who usually pass here, but this one was a stranger – has just told me that a great wall is going to be built to protect the emperor. For it seems that infidel tribes, and demons among them, often gather in front of the imperial palace and shoot their black arrows at the emperor.[38]

Though Franz Kafka has been considered as quintessentially "one of the jewels in the crown of high modernism"[39] and of "German-language Modernism"[40] by many readers and scholars, the author and his works are rarely situated in the "particular modernity" of Austro-Hungarian Empire in which he lived and wrote. On the contrary, Kafka's stature as a writer has long been part of the Western Eurocentric theoretical periodisation of modernism, which demarcates modernism's temporal borders from around 1890 to 1940. "No, believe me, nobody would know Kafka today—", Milan Kundera insisted, "nobody—if he had been a Czech".[41] Kundera's scathing comment on the possibility of Kafka being demoted to a less known or obscure writer had he written in the Czech language and considered himself a Czech confirms the notion that modernist literature, as well as its teaching and learning, has been a product,

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[34]F. Kafka, "The Great Wall of China", p. 64.

[35]Y.F.L. Zhao et al, *An Outline History of China, China Knowledge Series*, Pekin 1982, p. 127.

[36]F. Kafka, "The Great Wall of China", p. 62.

[37]Jian B. et al, *A Concise History of China*, Pekin 1986, pp. 21-22.

[38]F. Kafka, "The Great Wall of China", p. 70.

[39]P. Bridgwater, *Kafka, Gothic and Fairytale*, Amsterdam 2003, p. 5.

[40]*From Kafka to Sebald: Modernism and Narrative Form*, ed. S. Wilke, London 2012, p. 2.

[41]M. Kundera, *The Curtain: An Essay in Seven Parts*, trans. L. Asher. New York 2006, p. 34.

as well as a promoter, of exclusionist theorisation and canonisation, against which Susan Stanford Friedman has emphatically cautioned:

> We need to let go of the familiar laundry list of aesthetic properties drawn from the Western culture capitals of the early twentieth century as *the* definitional core of modernism. I'm attached to that list, as I have confessed. But we need to provincialize it, that is to see "high" or "avant-garde" modernism as ONE articulation of a particularly situated modernism—an important modernism but not the measure by which all others are judged and to which all others must be compared. Instead, we must look across the planet, through deep time, and vertically within each location to identify sites of the slash—modernity/modernism—and then focus our attention on the nature of the particularly modernity in question, explore the shapes and forms of creative expressivities engaging that modernity, and ask what cultural and political work those aesthetic practices perform as an important domain within it.[42]

In order to de-spatialise the affixed time period of modernism, dismantling the notion of High Modernism as modernism's quintessence is needed as a necessary step. Kafka's work, written in a particular context of modernity experienced by a German Jewish writer living in Prague at the critical moments in the history of Austro-Hungarian Empire leading up to the Great War and its aftermath sufficiently proves that modernities and modernisms are multiple. I propose that by examining the "particular" one comes to see the overall montage of modernism's diversity and dynamism. Though oftentimes overlooked, such diversity and dynamism are inherent within the complex subjectivities of modernist writers and the untraceable "traces", or haunting undecidable spectres, of countless lives, thoughts and histories reflected in their works. In other words, a study of particular(ist) modernism reveals the indefinite versions and varieties of modernities which are deeply ingrained within the modernist movement from the beginning. To conclude this article, I shall briefly put my theory into practice in the following paragraph.

Franz Kafka wrote "An Imperial Message" at his sister Ottla's home on Alchimistengasse (known as Zlatá Ulička [Golden Lane] in Czech)[43], within the Prague Castle complex, in the spring of 1917. In the same year, he also rented a two-room flat in the Schönborn Palace in Prague's Malá Strana district.[44] From his flat, he could clearly see Laurenziberg, a hill known in the Czech language as "Petřín". Petřín hill is where the medieval Hunger Wall, [Hladová zed' in Czech], had been built in the fourteenth century by the orders of Charles IV (1316-1378), the first king of Bohemia to become Holy Roman Emperor. According to the legend, after the famine in 1361, the construction of the Hunger Wall was carried out only as a means to provide livelihood for the city's poor. This wall in Prague was therefore not meant to provide military protection, the purpose which most walls are expected to serve. Hence, the term "hladová zed'" has become a euphemism in the Czech language, signifying useless public work. Traces of the Hunger Wall can be found in Kafka's depiction of the Great Wall of China: "On the first

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[42]S. Stanford Friedman, *Planetarity*, pp. 487-488.

[43]Though the meaning of the lane's German name, Alchimistengasse, is "Alchemists' street", alchemists never lived there. There is a legend, however, that sixteenth-century alchemists came to this particular lane to look for a reaction to produce gold. Hence, the street became rightfully known as "Zlatá Ulička", or "Golden Lane".

[44]K. Wagenbach, *Kafka*, trans. E. Osers, London 2003, p. 112.

few pages of the so-called sixth octavo notebook begins the longish story 'The Great Wall of China', very clearly inspired by a historic site in Prague in the immediate vicinity of Kafka's apartment".[45] The similarity between the two walls in terms of being "hladová zed'", or walls of which promises were never fulfilled, becomes clearer when one also takes into account the particular context of world history in which Kafka lived and wrote. When "An Imperial Message" was written in 1917, it was several months *before* Kafka would come to know about his Tuberculosis condition. However, it was also several months *after* he knew that the Habsburg Empire's war bonds in which he had invested his savings would not turn profit as expected. His homeland had plunged into an impossible war following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife, Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg, in 1914. Franz Joseph I died in 1916. In the same year of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor's death, the Empire of China, an empire which a Chinese General named Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) attempted to reinstate in order to re-establish absolute monarchy in China after the 1911 revolution, had been brought to an end. Readers have the benefit of the hindsight to know the social and historical context of Kafka's "Great Wall of China", which reflects a sense of futility and despair on both personal and collective levels, as well as national and transnational levels. By avoiding the pitfall of temporal spatialisation which tends to label Kafka's short story as only a High Modernist metaphysical allegory, one might come to embrace the possibility that the depiction of the Chinese Emperor in the short story might reflect Kafka's perception of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire regime in passing. The people in Kafka's time, of our *present's past*, like the people in our time, *Kafka's future*, collectively yearned for the comforting words from the past which had already arrived and, at the same time, had already failed to arrive "at once the messenger set out on his way".[46]

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[45]Ibid., p. 113.
[46]F. Kafka, "The Great Wall of China", p. 66.

Keywords | Abstract | Note on the Author   ● ● ●

KEYWORDS

spatialisation of time

Abstract:

It is often understood that time can only be perceived in terms of space and that spatialisation of time limits the power of the abstract, or the virtual, by making it strictly dependent on material conditions. Modernist literature, it is often understood, appropriates this conceptual paradigm while hinting at a possibility that space can also be perceived in terms of time and that temporalisation of space deconstructs the façade of fixed and codified spatial meanings. Derrida defines this spatio-temporal (inter)reaction and logical co-signification as spacing (espacement). However, analysis of time and temporality, as well as analysis of space/place and spatiality, in modernist writing often falls into the pitfall of the problem of temporal succession and, subsequently, of the misconception that space is fixed. The problem of succession lies in the notion that time passes and ceases to be instant(ly), leaving only a Derridean "trace", which is spatial. This notion is problematic as it is based on the implications that space is firmly fixed and passive despite temporal "spacing", or succession, and that space is passively imprinted upon with traces of time. I argue that space is far from fixed and passive. Its dynamism renders spatialisation of time problematic. I propose that Franz Kafka's "The Great Wall of China" (written in 1917) is a fine example of a modernist writing which not only problematises the concepts of time and temporality as well as of space and spatiality, but also puts on centre stage the problem of spatialisation of time. With its physical and ideological gaps and fragments as well as traces of illusory and unfinished signification, the "piecemeal" construction of the Great Wall of China in Kafka's short story not only exposes the process of spatialising time, but also reflects the modernist subtle re-evaluation of such a conceptual paradigm.

MODERNIZM

Franz Kafka

temporalisation of space

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:

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Bilingualism

in the Writings of Jan Kochanowski

Agnieszka Kwiatkowska

Throughout all of Europe from the early medieval period to the beginning of the sixteenth century, literatures in Latin and in the local vernacular developed independently from one another, with their mutual interaction occurring only in a very limited range of contexts. Latin remained for a long time the domain of liturgy and works relating to religious ceremonies. Only in the fourteenth century did the first works of lyric poetry on religious themes begin to appear in Polish (the first among these, breaking open their path, was "Bogurodzica" [Mother of God], dating from the end of the thirteenth century), as well as the oldest books of sermons in Polish (among others, *Kazania świętokrzyskie* [the Holy Cross Sermons]). Hagiographies and historiographies, as forms demanding a more precise language, using a more abstract lexicon, were written and published almost exclusively in Latin even in the late medieval period. Many writers knew both languages, and used each to develop a different set of conventions and themes. That was the practice, for example, of Władysław of Gielniów, author of, among other things, a Polish alphabet primer and a Latin handbook for priests—also alphabetically ordered, but written in hexameter. The development of early Renaissance poetry in neo-Latin, which offered a form of intellectual entertainment, in no way undermined the separation between the literatures emerging in these languages. Latin remained the domain of humanists, focused on rhetoric and poetry, while Polish became the sphere of popular narratives and a burgeoning wealth of both works that were medieval in spirit and others reflecting the new post-reformation ethos.

An educated dweller in Old Poland could switch without difficulty from one code to the other, depending on the cultural situation in which he found himself or what was appropriate to the literary convention within which he had chosen to work. In a way that was typical for the phenomenon of bilingualism, the user's competencies remained narrowly defined: each language had a different, specialized purpose and had reference strictly to the particular sphere of the

bilingual author's life (or, for our purposes, creative activity) assigned to it.[1] Interference – the peculiar mutual interaction and influence between languages– took place at that time mainly through the influence exerted by Latin upon Polish (for example, in syntax), while there was almost no impact in the reverse direction. In Latin works of the Middle Ages, one sees little or no Polish influence; the works employ conventions that were universally established at that time, with very little penetration of cultural or linguistic interference.[2] In humanist poetry of the early renaissance, neo-Latin texts remain securely established in Polish culture, which had a considerable influence on the description of local elements, but one manifestation of the two systems' superimposition was the use of proper names, introduced into many works by Andrzej Krzycki or Konrad Celtis. Jan Kochanowski succeeded in joining the two currents together and giving expression in Polish to humanist thought that had hitherto been fully formulated only in Latin.[3]

The poet grew up in an aristocratic family that valued education and was keenly attuned to verbal culture. His mother, Anna of the Odrowąż line, was mentioned in Łukasz Górnicki's *Dworzanin Polski* (Polish Courtier) as a pacific-natured person with a good sense of humor ("a sedate lady and very salty"). The poet's father, Piotr Kochanowski, planned to send his sons away to get a university education, though like a typical merchant of Sandomierz he had consistently accumulated worldly goods, multiplied through marriages of convenience, prudent transactions and successful legal actions.[4] Among Jan's numerous siblings, Mikołaj translated Plutarch and was the author of *Rotuły* (minor elegies; the title comes from the Latin *rotulus mortuorum*), Andrzej translated the *Aeneid*, and one sister became "the inspiration and more or less co-author" of *Dziewosłąb dworski* (Matchmaker of the Manor).[5] There was no lack of talent in the next generation of Kochanowskis either – Jan's nephew Piotr became an outstanding poet and translated Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

Before Jan Kochanowski arrived at university, he had certainly mastered the basics of Latin grammar and knew how to read and write. We do not know whether he was taught with his brothers by the family tutor or went to the school run by the Benedictines in Sieciechów, but he must have already made his first attempts to read the classical Roman authors.[6] He had undoubtedly also encountered the folklore of the peasantry and the nobility, with the Polish-language oral literature of the sixteenth century, which coexisted harmoniously with the printed word. Janina Abramowska writes about the youthful literary experiences of Jan Kochanowski, citing the works he might have been acquainted with from an early age:

> Besides the "stories told by peasant women" there could have been threads that were literary in origin, from the *Stories of Rome* and Jan of Koszyczek's *Poncjan* to *The Life of Ezop Fryg* and a Polish

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[1] E. Kraskowska, "Dwujęzyczność a problemy przekładu" (Bilingualism and the Problem of Translation) in the anthology: *Miejsca wspólne* (Common Places), ed. E. Balcerzan and S. Wysłouch, Warszawa 1985, p. 195.

[2] See E. Kraskowska, "Dwujęzyczność a problemy przekładu," p. 185.

[3] J. Abramowska, *Kochanowski*, Poznań 1994, p. 16.

[4] Ibid., p. 9. J. Pelc suggests that Piotr Kochanowski was a "moderately wealthy landowner, a shrewd businessman." J. Pelc, *Jan Kochanowski poeta renesansu* (Jan Kochanowski, Poet of the Renaissance), Warszawa 1988, p. 23.

[5] See J. Abramowska, *Kochanowski*, p. 10.

[6] Ibid., p. 12.

version of Till Eulenspiegel called *Sowiźrzał.* All of these works had been published in Polish versions, available for sale or on loan, and no doubt the most memorable parts were retold orally. [...] It is therefore possible that Kochanowski already in boyhood knew humorous stories from having heard or read them, and he was doubtless no stranger to neighborly anecdotes and ribald facetiae. Thus he early on found himself in the realm of ludic culture, which knowledge, later increased in Kraków inns and Italian taverns, would play such an important role in his work.[7]

At the Academy in Kraków, whose years of greatness were then already behind it, Kochanowski deepened his knowledge of Latin language and culture – he attended lectures on Cicero's treatises, became acquainted with the works of Virgil and Horace, got access to the latest publications in the area of neo-Latin poetry, and awakened his yearning for further studies.[8] In Padua he chose the faculty of the humanities (universitas artistorium), rejecting law and medicine. He did not receive academic degrees but focused on widening his horizons and deepening his erudition, aware of the demands that the era placed on writers of literature, and seeking to embody the ideal of the poetae docti. Janina Abramowska writes thus on his reading habits of that time:

> Kochanowski's reading in the literature of antiquity encompassed mainly Roman writers: Cicero, Virgil, Seneca, Ovid, Lucretius, and above all, the poets: Horace, Propertius, Catullus. Greek literature he presumably knew more through Latin translations, though he did have some Greek, as his later works of translation demonstrate (Homer, the *Greek Anthology,* Euripides, Cicero's supplement to Aratus's *Phaenomena*). He most certainly read Renaissance humanists writing in Latin such as Girolamo Vida, whose heroic-comic poem *Scacchia Ludus* (The Game of Chess) he paraphrased in *Szachy* (Chess).[9]

There is no doubt that while studying in Padua, Kochanowski mastered Italian and read the poetry of Petrarch. The tribute he pays to the poems written in honor of Laura in his two Latin epigrams illustrates how highly Kochanowski esteemed the development of national literatures. In Renaissance Europe, Petrarch was famous chiefly as an author of Latin works, but he nevertheless decided to immortalize the *Canzoniere*, written in Italian, in the epigrams carved on his tombstone.[10]

The development of national literatures that was taking place in Europe must have suggested the idea to Kochanowski of introducing elements taken from classical antiquity into works written in Polish. This effort was tp help raise Polish literature to the level of Greek and Roman literature, as well as to enrich the Polish language and develop its possibilities. The principle of *imitatio* – mimicry of antique works or style – was fundamental to the culture of that time and was perfectly complemented by the postulates of *mimesis*. Ludwika Szczerbicka-Ślęk reminds readers:

> One way to recover antiquity, besides searching for ruins, their accumulation, conservation, examination, and in the case of literature, circulation in print-- the invention of the printing press being a great helper of Renaissance striving—was the imitation of literature written by the mas-

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[7] Ibid., 12.
[8] Ibid., 15.
[9] Ibid., 21.
[10] J. Pelc, *Jan Kochanowski poeta renesansu,* p. 35.

ters of antiquity– *imitatio*. The philosophical foundations of imitation were laid by the theory, developed by Plato and Aristotle, of *mimesis*, according to which art arises from the imitation of nature (though both philosophers defined nature and the results of its imitation differently). In the Renaissance, nature began to be understood as the world created by the poets of antiquity and their world became "second nature." It was likewise observed that as a result of a similar process, the Romans had, in their time, created great works of art by imitating their Greek predecessors.[11]

In implementing these principles, Kochanowski sought– as Janusz Pelc has written – to take on the role of

> a great and recognized, flawless poet, a new Orpheus, the creator of splendid works of his national literature, the equals of the masterpieces of antiquity, composed in his mother tongue.[12]

One of the means that was to aid him in obtaining that goal was the translation and paraphrasing of Roman poetry. Kochanowski's translations of Horace – published in his collection *Pieśni* (Songs) without attribution to the original author, in keeping with the convention of the time – did not help to overcome the communication barrier or to assimilate the achievements of Roman literature into Polish culture. Potential readers of these translations, educated people with a command of Latin, would certainly already be familiar with the songs of Horace, fundamental works of European classicism. The poet, in paraphrasing the ancient master, practiced his Polish phrasing and tested the possibilities of his native language, in order to lead the poetry of his land toward the heights of literary Parnassus. He frequently adapted the works he was translating to the realities around him and to his own biography. Sometimes he changed their tone, adjusting Horace's meaning to fit his own ideas. He always looked for bold translation solutions and was not afraid to translate even texts that, considering cultural differences, would appear untranslatable.

The most famous paraphrases of Horace's poetry include two of Kochanowski's works: *Pieśń XXIV* (Song XXIV) from the *Second Books*, beginning "Niezwykłym i nie leda piórem opatrzony..." (Equipped with an unusual and powerful pen...), and the fragment "Pieśń świętojańska o Sobótce" (Saint John's Eve Song About a Saturday Night Feast).[13] In the first of these, declaring the apotheosis of poetry and picking up the theme of *non omnis moriar*, the accomplished translator replaced the proper nouns designating tribes living outside the territory of the Roman Empire (Gaetulians, Colchians), used by Horace, with the names of contemporary nationalities, and invoked Myszkowski instead of addressing Maecenas. That passage differs from the lofty style of the work as a whole, as the reference to Myszkowski by name is informal and personal.[14] Likewise, the Saturday Night Song of the Twelfth Maiden is a fairly free translation of Horace's second epode (beginning "Beatus ille qui procul negotiis..."). The lines in praise of the countryside in the original and the translation are almost identical, with both poets enumerating the same virtues of country life and describing them in a similar fashion.

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[11]L. Szczerbicka-Ślęk, Introduction to: Jan Kochanowski, *Pieśni* (Songs). Wrocław 1998, p. lvii.

[12]J. Pelc, *Jan Kochanowski poeta renesansu*, p. 38.

[13]I here use the terms "translation" and "paraphrase" interchangeably, because in the works under discussion the boundary between these categories is effaced.

[14]L. Szczerbicka-Ślęk, Introduction, p. lviii.

Where Horace's poem concludes with an ironic punchline, however, completely changing the work's tone, Kochanowski appears to have missed the joke; in any case, he omits the twist. The lyrical persona of the Roman epode is not a country bumpkin praising the charms of village life in all sincerity, but the money-lender Alfius, who has left the city only because his business is in a stagnant phase, and who is ready to abandon provincial peace and quiet as soon as he sees a chance at some quick income.[15]

One of Kochanowski's most masterly paraphrases remains *Pieśń III* (Song III) from his *Księga Pierwsza* (First Book), beginning "Dzbanie mój pisany..." (My Fated Pitcher), a translation of Horace's famous ode whose first line is "O nata mecum consule Manlio." Piotr Wilczek defines this achievement in the following terms:

> a translation of a work which is untranslatable due to the depth of the differences between the two cultures. The set of cultural signs present in Horace's song [...] is so deeply and exclusively rooted in the mythology, poetics, history, and customs of the ancient Romans, that all attempts at translation of this song undertaken in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries successively documented the failure of the (often skilled) translators.[16]

Kochanowski left out playful allusions to the hymn to Bacchus, omitted mythological references, substituted the more generic "philosophers partial to wine" for "Cato the lover of mero," and in place of the friend whom Horace mentions by name put simply "guests." A glazed, decorated clay pitcher whose contents are not precisely defined took the place of the Roman amphora, filled with Massic wine. Yet in spite of these significant changes, the work manages to convey Horatian themes.

For Kochanowski, perfecting the poetic capabilities of his native language did not conflict with writing poems in Latin, nor did it imply making a radical choice of which language would dominate his work. Janina Abramowska, describing the bilingual nature of his works, notes the poet's consistent engagement, no matter at what stage in his career, with both forms of writing:

> Throughout his life, the poet joined the creation of humanistic poetry in the vernacular with writing poems in Latin, often writing parallel cycles (for example, foricoenia and *fraszka*s), developing his favorite themes in both languages [...]. It would be a mistake either to perceive this as either inconsistency or to attempt to find a line of development leading from Latin to Polish in Kochanowski's work. His Polish and Latin works are not only not in contradiction to each other, but they constitute the fulfillment of one and the same literary program, which represents a synthesis of goals of the first Polish-Latin humanists and those of the defenders of Polish language. [17]

The Latin writings of Kochanowski – in addition to a few disparate, singular works – are: *Lyricorum libellus* (published in Kraków in 1580), *Elegiarum libri IV* (Kraków 1584), and *Fori-*

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[15]The final lines of the epode are more faithfully translated by Józef Birkenmajer: "Thus spoke the money-lender Alfius. Now the village is fragrant to him / But the Ides have come, time to get paid! / So he plundered every penny from his debtors, in order to somewhere / Find it again."

[16]P. Wilczek, *Dyskurs - przekład – interpretacja...* (Discourse – Translaton – Interpretation...), p. 62.

[17]J. Abramowska, *Kochanowski*, p. 28.

coenia sive Epigrammatum libellus (Kraków 1584). The earliest works in Latin were rewritten and re-edited many times over – among others, the poems written in Padua were included in the *Elegii* (the two first books of Elegies probably appeared around 1559-1561), the *Lyrica* (Lyrics) contain later works, and the *Foricoenia*, containing fraszkas in Latin, appeared both during his studies in Padua and in later years.[18] His juvenilia written in Latin predate by only a short time his first Polish-language works, the poems *Zuzanna* (1561), *Szachy* (Chess, 1564), and *Satyr albo Dziki mąż* (The Satyr, or Wild Man, 1564). Kochanowski's first attempts to write poetry in Polish may have begun while living in Padua. His earlier poems include the hymn that begins "What Do You Want Of Us, Lord," which may have been written while in France in the late 1550s.[19] In subsequent decades, Kochanowski's most distinguished works appeared: *Odprawa posłów greckich* (The Dismissal of the Greek Envoys, 1578)*, Psałterz Dawidów* (David's Psalter, 1579), *Treny* (Laments, 1580), and the fraszkas and songs written over the course of his entire life, which came out in separate volumes in the years 1584 and 1586.

Kochanowski treated Latin and Polish works as two equal currents in his artistic output. Literary scholars have concentrated their efforts mainly on examining his Polish works, devoting much less attention to his Latin writings. Aside from the studies made by Alfreda Fei,[20] the sketches by Aleksander Brückner[21] and Wiktor Weintraub[22], and the work of Zofia Głombiowska[23] and Albert Gorzkowski,[24] there are few critical analyses or elaborations of the Latin poetry of the sage of Czarnolas and the issues raised by it, or of the relations between the two linguistic currents, their similarities, differences, or interdependence.[25]

The Latin poems of Jan Kochanowski enjoyed great popularity among his fellow Poles at the university in Padua and were known to people of other nationalities affiliated with that renowned seat of learning as well. One proof of such recognition is the fact that Kochanowski was entrusted with writing the epitaph for Kretkowski, carved on his headstone in the basilica of St. Anthony in Padua. Back in his motherland, too, Kochanowski longed to come into his own as a neo-Latin poet – an author of occasional works of a political nature, such as for example his Latin elegy celebrating the triumph of King Sigismund II Augustus in the Duchy of Inflanty (present-day Latgale, in Latvia—TDW.).[26] When he returned to Poland in 1559, Kochanowski had already authored many poems in Latin, such as the nearly-finished collection of elegies entitled *Ioannis Cochanovii Elegiarum libri duo*. He did not stop writing neo-Latin humanistic poetry either, how-

[18] J. Ziomek, *Renesans* (Renaissance)*,* Warszawa 1996, p. 256.

[19] J. Pelc, *Jan Kochanowski poeta renesansu*, p. 62.

[20] A. Fei, *Kochanowski polski i łaciński* (Polish Kochanowski and Latin Kochanowski)*, Pamiętnik Literacki* (Literary Monument) R. XXXII 1935, 3/4.

[21] A. Brückner, *Księga miłości Jana Kochanowskiego* (Jan Kochanowski's Book of Love), *Pamietnik Literacki* (Literary Monument), R. XXIX, 1933.

[22] W. Weintraub, "Polski i łaciński Kochanowski: dwa oblicza poety" (The Polish and the Latin Kochanowski: Two Faces of the Poet) in Weintraub, *Rzecz czarnoleska* (Czarnolas Composition), 1977.

[23] Z. Głombiowska, *Łacińska i polska muza Jana Kochanowskiego* (The Latin and Polish Muses of Jan Kochanowski), Warszawa 1988.

[24] A. Gorzkowski, *Bene atque ornate. Twórczość łacińska Jana Kochanowskiego w świetle lektury retorycznej* (Bene atque ornate. The Latin Works of Jan Kochanowski in a Rhetorical Reading). Kraków 2004.

[25] Z. Głombiowska presents the state of existing research in her monograph *Łacińska i polska muza Jana Kochanowskiego* (The Latin and Polish Muses of Jan Kochanowski), Warszawa 1988, p. 5.

[26] J. Pelc, *Jan Kochanowski poeta renesansu*, p. 34.

ever; in 1569 he wrote an elegy for the occasion of Filip Padniewski's accession to the bishopric of Kraków, dedicated an ode to Henryk Walezy, and in his long poem *Gallo crocitanti* answered the lampoon written by the fleeing king's court poet; in 1580 he prepared the book *Lyricorum libellous* for print, and in 1584 – a book containing the new edition of his *Elegii* (Elegies) as well as *Foricoenia*.[27] These hefty collections of poetry had an enormous influence on the reception of Kochanowski's work and on the perception of him by his contemporaries. Earlier, the poet had published single works and small collections of poetry, in which he dealt with occasional topics, chiefly political ones.[28] The concepts of the nation and the citizen, inscribed in similar ways in the Latin and Polish works of that period, indicate a level of coherence in Kochanowski's political views, his ethos of virtue and concord as the basis of a well-functioning society.

In the long poem *Zgoda* (Harmony, 1564) he appealed for national unity, assuring readers that harmony was the "guardian of republics" (line 3),[29] and that its absence brought ruin on a nation, thwarting the healthy functioning of the courts and weakening borders.[30]

> Niech się miasto otoczy trojakimi wały,
> Trojakimi przekopy i mocnymi działy:
> Kiedy przyjdzie niezgoda, uniżą się mury
> I wnidzie nieprzyjaciel nie szukając dziury.
> (Though a city be walled with ramparts threefold, / Threefold tunnels fortified to hold: / When discord comes, the walls will fall like sand / And the enemy enter without lifting a hand.)
> (J. Kochanowski, *Zgoda*, lines 7-10)

He expressed similar views in the song "Ad Concordiam," published in the collection *Lyricorum libellus* in 1580, praising the titular goddess as the giver of nation-state organization and the protectress of already existing nation-states.

> Tu salus rerum, dea, publicarum,
> Sola casuris inimica regnis
> Fata propulsas, tribuisque longam
> Prospera vitam.
> (You are the salvation of republics, goddess, / Only you spare kingdoms from their fall / And push back fate, granting / Long life.)
> (*Ad Concordiam*, lines 25-28)[31]

In Kochanowski's Sixth Ode "In conventu Varsoviensi" (also in the collection *Lyricorum libellus*), as in the Polish-language "Satyra" (Satire), the poet expressed his view that achieving

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[27]Ibid., pp. 54, 58, 62.

[28]In 1579 *Psałterz Dawidów* (David's Psalter), inarguably a hefty volume, but perceived as a translation rather than an original work, was released. Z. Głombiowska, *Łacińska i polska muza Jana Kochanowskiego,* p. 10.

[29]Quotes from Polish-language works are taken from the following source: J. Kochanowski, *Dzieła polskie* (Works in Polish), ed. J. Krzyżanowski, Warszawa 1969.

[30]Z. Głombiowska, *Łacińska i polska muza Jana Kochanowskiego*, p. 11.

[31]Quotations from Kochanowski's Latin works are cited from J. Kochanowski, *Dzieła wszystkie* (Complete Works), vol. 3, Warszawa 1884. English translation based in part on Głombiowska's Polish translation. Z. Głombiowska, *Łacińska i polska muza Jana Kochanowskiego*, p. 217.

harmony in a nation depends to a great degree on the rulers' stance and linked his notion of harmony with the concept of virtue. A virtuous person is capable of rejecting his emotions, defined in the Satire as "strange viragos" (line 357): excessive impulsiveness, desire, fear, sorrow, and immoderate joy. The Stoic origins of this reasoning are beyond any doubt and their influence can also be observed in his Latin works, such as the elegy addressed to Mikołaj Firlej.[32] Virtue defined in this way joins the good of the individual with the good of society and the nation. Zofia Głombiowska clarifies:

> The individual cannot achieve perfection in isolation from the nation, the individual's good [...] arises as a result of action on behalf of the nation's good and only thus. The individual thus is subordinated to the nation. [...] this theory of Kochanowski's exists not only in the world of abstraction, on the contrary, it is the basis of his assessment of the concrete reality of Polish life and his program for reforming the Republic.[33]

This coherent political conception is visible in both Kochanowski's Polish and Latin works; conscious of the constantly changing political situation, he saw the nation-state (in his time, the Rzeczpospolita, or Republic) – as the highest common good.

Kochanowski's first extensive collection of lyric poems, *Elegiarum libri duo*, dating from 1562, follows Roman models in telling a story of unrequited love. The focal character in the cycle, Ligia, first returns the lyrical persona's affection, before later perfidiously and treacherously bringing their romance to a decisive end. Elements borrowed from Roman love elegies are also found in Kochanowski's Songs, for example in Song XI from the First Book, consisting of a paraphrase of Horace's famous ode to a girl leaving a man.[34] In the *Pieśni* (Songs), as in the Elegies, love poetry is interwoven with civic and patriotic poetry, and the lyrical subject takes on various roles, like the poet's beloved Proteus, assuming the form of a lover, a patriot, a virtuous citizen, a Catholic, a poet, and Epciurean, or a Stoic.

Kochanowski found himself a student in Padua at the time when the theory of the literary genre was developing and solidifying, on the one hand firmly rooted in tradition, on the other subject to innovations of the period.[35] Mastering the conventions of the elegy, then already fully formed, made it possible for him to express his views on literary theory and his attitude toward

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[32]The relevant poem is Elegia (Elegy) IV 3, see Z. Głombiewska, *Łacińska i polska muza Jana Kochanowskiego*, p. 17.

[33]Ibid., p. 56.

[34]The popularity of this theme in ancient and Old Polish love lyrics, the humorous representation of a woman's flight from a man and the presentation of the final capture of the pursued woman as inscribed in the natural order and harmony of things, offers a powerful summons to contemplate the accepted ways, in the culture of that time, of overcoming amorous rejection (expressed toward a single man or all of his sex). A proof of this acceptance is the fact that the theme from Horace's erotic poem beginning "Vitas hinuleo misimilis, Chloe" (*Carmina* I 23), beginning in Włodzimierz Tetmajer's translation with the lines "Jako sarenka za matką trwożną / Uciekasz, Chloe, przede mną w bór" (Like a small doe fearful with its mother / You run away, Chloe, from me into the woods), paraphrased by Jan Kochanowski in Song XI from his First Book as "Stronisz przede mną, Neto nietykana, / By więc sarneczka, kiedy obłąkana / Macierze szuka po górach ustronnych, / Nie bez bojaźni i postrachów płonnych" (You avoid me, Neto untouched, / The way a small doe, when she loses her reason / Looks for her mother in secluded mountains / Not without fear and useless terrors) was also used in baroque religious poetry. In a poem by Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, the lyrical person, longing for a mystical feeling of union with Christ, says "Ty mnie unikasz, Chryste, jak płochliwa / Sarenka leśna..." (You avoid me, Christ, like a timid / Forest deer; *Lyrica* [Lyrics] II 17).

[35]T. Michałowska, *Poezja i poetyka* (Poetry and Poetics), Warszawa 1982, pp. 99-101.

elegiaca poesis through his poetic practice.[36] In his Latin works Kochanowski united two Roman models of the elegy – the Propertian and Ovidian – joining the lyric and epic natures of the two conventions. That allowed him to bring into high relief the melancholy tone of longing or contemplation of a described love object and also enabled him to transfer the ancient Latin phraseology and lexicon into a new context. In a Polish elegy (examples of which include some of the Songs, such as Song XXI or XXV from the First Books) it was impossible to maintain the stylistic properties of the Latin elegy, to a large extent bound up with its specific meter. In Polish elegies of a decidedly lyrical nature, the poet dealt almost exclusively with love themes, in a two-part composition revealing the happy past and sad present of the protagonists of his romance.[37]

The Polish language had not, by the time of the Renaissance, yet reached the stage of affording such sublime descriptions of lovers' games as Kochanowski proposed in his collection of Latin Elegies. The images of different types of love – sensual, tender, rapturous, transported by joy or ecstasy – were displayed in a series of deft comparisons and metaphors. For example, placing the magic of intimacy with his beloved above any material gain, the poet writes:

> Sed licet adverso carpentibus oscula rostro
> Indulgere omni tempore coniugio.
> Ah, lapis est, lucro quisquis mutavit amorem:
> Me socium facit non habet ille sui.
> (Two doves with beaks entwined enjoy a kiss, Tasting the fullness of conjugal bliss; That man's a stone, who would for lucre trade love; We'll not consort, nor my hand touch his suede glove.)
>> *Elegia 4, Księga pierwsza,* 19-22)

The existing state of Polish at that time was optimal, however, for creating festive poetry, connected with the native tradition, whose beginnings are found in Przecław Słota's poem "O chlebowym stole" (At the Bread Table). Anacreontic themes, present in the collection of fraszkas and *Foricoenia*, are evoked differently in the Latin and Polish texts, acquiring a more subtle and balanced quality in the Latin verses, where in Polish they are presented in a coarser, somewhat colloquial vein. For example, in his fraszka "Do Anakreonta" the poet writes:

> Anakreont, zdrajca stary,
> Nie masz w swym łotrostwie miary!
> Wszystko pijesz, a miłujesz
> I mnie przy sobie zepsujesz. [...]
> Dobra myśl nigdy bez ciebie.
> (Anacreon, back-stabbing friend, / Your roguery is without end! / You drink and drink, and love like the devil, / Bringing me down to your level. [...] A good thought never without you.)
>> (*Do Anakreonta* [To Anacreon], lines 1-4, 7).

A similar theme has a completely different function in the foricenium "Ad Philippum Padnevium," where the poet refers to Anacreontic verse in a more serious tone:

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[36]A. Gorzkowski, *Bene atque ornate*, p. 81.
[37]Ibid., p. 87.

Et nos, Philippe, Theiam
Anacreontis ad lyram
Non invenusta lusimus
Dictante Phoebo carmina.
(And we, Philip, on the lyre / Of Anacreon rhymes declaimed, / Not banal ones; to inspire, / Phoebus whispering to us came.)

(*Ad Philippum Padnevium,* w. 5-8)[38]

Albert Gorzkowski, evaluating the rhetorical beauty of Kochanowski's Latin poems, writes with enthusiasm of the artistry of his *Foricoenia*:

It is a rhetorically colorful work and a really well-developed (*eleborata*) one, a testament not only to the considerable craftsmanship of the poetic author of *Odprawa* (Dismissal)…, but also his excellent mastery of theoretical principles, whose practical implementation finds a reliable match in his dozens of inventive and eloquent *colores*, "flowers in the garden" to paraphrase Cicero, transparent, concise and sparkling speech.[39]

Kochanowski's bilingualism is both functional and creative.[40] The Sage of Czarnolas was fluent in Latin, the language of scholarship and the university; he translated Horace's poetry, translated foricoenia and elegies with rhetorical verve, moving freely within the framework of the genre. His knowledge of classical models made it possible for him to develop a modern model of lyric poetry in Polish as well. The interaction between the both languages and the collision of the two poetic systems finally gave birth to so many innovations in Polish poetry that it led to the formation of a new model of Polish poetic practice. The new face of Polish poetry, the multiplicity of options offered by its first numerical system, the introduction into Polish literature of many ancient genres and simultaneous adaptation of particular conventions to the needs and capabilities of Polish, modern themes expressed through a wealth of metaphors and similes: all of these developments were partly made possible by the poet's bilingualism. Thus not only did bilingualism become a fundamental part of Kochanowski's individual progression, but the mutual interaction of classical and neo-Latin culture with Polish humanistic thought had a considerable influence on the countenance of the Polish Renaissance and played a decisive role in the development of Polish literature.

[38]The poem quoted is *Foricoenium 38*. Leopold Staff's translation can be found in J. Kochanowski, *Z łacińska spiewa Słowian Muza. Elegie, foricoenia, liryki w przekładzie Leopolda Staffa,* Warszawa 1982, p. 161. Głombiowska offers a comparative interpretation in *Łacińska i polska muza Jana Kochanowskiego*, p. 157.

[39]A. Gorzkowski, *Bene atque ornate*, p. 171.

[40]See E. Kraskowska, "Dwujęzyczność a problemy przekładu."

KEYWORDS

neo-Latin poetry

foricoenia

f r a s z k a s

Abstract:

Jan Kochanowski was a bilingual artist– he wrote poems in both Latin and Polish. The choice of language in his work is determined by the circumstances in which particular works arose (in his Paduan period he wrote in Latin, after his return to Poland he turned to his native language) as well as the subject matter he deals with in different texts. A comparison of his foricoenia and fraszkas or Latin elegies and Polish songs demonstrates that he uses both languages to express a range of emotions and both allow him to employ diverse literary conventions.

BILINGUALISM

Kochanowski

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Influence

— (Latin: *influentia*, French: *l'influence* (f.), German: *der Einfluß*, Russian: ълияние) is one of the most intensively studied topics in studies of literature and a literary term with multiple meanings. Etymologically, the word "influence" means the movement of a liquid substance into a receptacle or container. In astrology, *influentia* meant the dependence of human destiny on the configuration of the stars. In medical discourse, beginning no later than the sixteenth century, the term *influenza* designated a contagious disease of the respiratory system (hence *flu*), since it was thought to be caused by the influence of the constellations. The word is thus, like many literary terms, a lexicalized metaphor with great cognitive and descriptive potential.

Reflections on the nature of influence go back to antiquity (Plato, Aristotle, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Horace, Quintilian) and are connected to the problem of imitation (*mimesis*, *imitatio*) understood not ontologically, but aesthetically. For the theorists of antiquity, *imitatio* meant making conscious references to previous works considered to be exemplary, not copying them. The creator-imitator was supposed to draw material for his own works from the models he followed, harmoniously joining together elements borrowed from them in a new artistic context. Jerzy Ziomek has placed the category of imitation (understood as a relationship to another author's text) among the basic dilemmas with which all structures or systems in literary history must reckon.[1] The system of classical or classically oriented works was governed by the precept of imitation together with the absence of a notion of proprietary authorship, although influence thus understood could take the form of emulation (*aemulatio*) or creative competition.[2] In twentieth-century classicist circles, the problem of influence returned in the form of reflection on tradition, for example in the work of T. S. Eliot and Osip Mandelshtam. The latter, in his manifesto "Слово и культура" (The Word and Culture, 1921) used the formula "the joy of repetition" and declared that "the poet is not afraid of repetitions. [...] The truth is always the same. [...] There is no point starting a new poetic school. There is no point in inventing one's own poetics".[3] The Romantic system, on the other hand, featured open imitation, while an author's unique, original expression acquired the highest artistic prestige. The concept of authorship itself began to be formally and practically protected, while the concealment of sources of influence could give rise to accusations of plagiarism. The nineteenth century saw the general dissemination of the concepts of the epigone and epigonism (from the Greek *epigonos* – born late; in Greek mythology, the name *Epigonoi* designated the sons of the leaders fallen in the battle of the Seven Against Thebes), applied to the works of secondary imitators of outstanding authors. In the construction of avant-garde works, the imperative to innovate culminated in a horror of plagiarism and a prohibition on imitation. Nonetheless, even such an avant-garde author as Aleksander Wat wrote in 1964: "[...] literature by its very nature, to be brutally frank, is plagiaristic. [...] Writers, at least contemporary writers, are recuited from among

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[1] J. Ziomek, *Prace ostatnie. Literatura i nauka o literaturze* (Last Works. Literature and Literary Scholarship), Warszawa 1994, p. 55.

[2] J. Ziomek, *Retoryka opisowa* (Descriptive Rhetoric), Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1990, p. 41.

[3] O. Mandelshtam, "Слово и культура" (The Word and Culture). Шум времени (The Noise of Time). Sankt-Peterburg 2012, pp. 193-4.

youthful, passionate readers, memory at that age is tenacious and the impression made on the young mind by one book or another is often stronger, deeper, and more enduring than one's own feelings. Originality is often, if not always, a rebellion against a model, its negation or polarity. This negative influence, more powerful than positive, generally escapes the attention of specialists in the study of influence. But for a scholar who wishes to know and present the internal mechanics of a work, establishing dependence and kinship is as indispensable as is setting the magnetic azimuth for a watchmaker".[4] In further pursuing Ziomek's guidelines with regard to periodicity, we may note that the system of postmodern literature reveals influence operating as the secondary use (recontextualization) of source material, but with imitation openly declared. A literary exploration of this theme is Jorge Luis Borges' famous short story "Pierre Menard, author of the Quixote," first published in 1939, and later interpretated through the postmodern paradigm by John Barth in his equally famous essay "The Literature of Exhaustion" (1967).

In a study written in 1921, *O wpływach i zależnościach w literaturze* (On Influence and Dependence in Literature), Wacław Borowy dealt with the growing interest in this problem in early twentieth-century Polish literary studies and in literary criticism. Where the former treated the search for "sources, literary influences, borrowings, filiations, that is, generally speaking, the dependence of certain poetic works upon others"[5] as a completely legitimate scientific method, critics and journalists reacted to such ideas with reluctance and distaste; they saw them as undermining the literary work's unique originality and weakening its power to affect the reader. In formulating the methodological bases for studying literary influence and dependence, Borowy used a wealth of examples to argue for distinguishing five categories among them: ideational, technical, thematic, stylistic, and phraseological. Without defining in greater detail the difference between influence and dependence, he used the former mainly with regard to the influence exerted by a foreign literary tradition on a given national literature (usually Polish), while using the latter term more frequently to discuss particular instances of intertextual relations. Borowy's study was answered with a polemic from the well-known literary and theater critic, Adam Grzymała-Siedlecki[6], responsible for the adoption in Polish literary discourse of the still-functioning neologism "wpływologia" (influenceology). The term's inventor intended it to ridicule the excessive zeal devoted by literary historians to uncovering connections between individual works of literature, suppressing their ideational and artistic value. In response to these accusations, Borowy pointed to the differences between a scholarly (genetic) and unscholarly (aesthetic, impressionistic) approach to literary works. He also underscored the importance of studies of influence and dependence in literature for understanding the psychology of creativity, the nature of literary-historical processes, and the social conditions governing literary communication. In this sense, Borowy's study may be considered a precursor to our contemporary sociology and anthropology of literature. This genial Polish scholar also managed to forge some deft descriptive tags, referring to "a reminiscent work" or "the literature of reminiscence."[7]

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[4] A. Wat, *Dziennik bez samogłosek. Pisma wybrane* (Diary Without Vowels. Selected Writings), vol. II, ed. K. Rutkowski, London 1986, p. 111.

[5] W. Borowy, "O wpływach i zależnościach w literaturze" (On Influence and Dependence in Literature), in *Studia i szkice literackie* (Literary Sketches and Studies), vol. II, Warszawa 1983, p. 7.

[6] Ibid., p. 44.

[7] Ibid., p. 38.

The term "influence," linked to the problem of connections between various national literatures, has become a favorite in comparative literary studies. A great number of methodological disputes have of course raged over the subject of this field, beginning in the twentieth century, and continue to. They have transformed the field from the empirically oriented study of influences, dependence, references and inspiration between or among sources and literary phenomena from diverse areas of culture including texts, themes, genres, currents, conventions, etc. into studies focused on the category of intertextuality, and also into a vast area of theoretical consideration and reading practices with permeable boundaries, whose keywords include canon, translation, world literature, and multi- or transculturalism.[8]

The intertextual current in literary studies was initiated by Julia Kristeva, drawing inspiration from the concepts of Mikhail Bakhtin[9], but developed far beyond what she had originally intended. The fundamental difference between traditional (positivist, geneticist) inquiries into sources, influences and dependence in literature and the new approach to the issue of connections between works is laid out in the following terms by Michał Głowiński, following a Structuralist view:

> The sphere of intertextuality is delineated otherwise: into its domain enter exclusively those relations with other works that have become a structural element, or, if one prefers, a semantic element, i.e., at the level of meaning, an intentional relationship and in some way or other visibly evident, one might say: intended for the reader. For example, the influence of Niemcewicz's ballads on those of Mickiewicz is not an intertextual fact, since there is no semantically marked reference to the works of the predecessor".[10]

Influence, intertextually understood, need not have a strictly personal dynamic, it may be the result of a reference by the author to particular elements of literary tradition (genre, convention, style, etc.). The problem of intention as an essential condition for the study of the relationship between texts is not central to comparative studies, however. Their scope and subject in fact vary depending on the geographical area where they are being conducted. In Continental Europe comparative literature is predominantly viewed as comprising the establishment, analysis and interpretation of empirically verifiable relationships between texts, motifs, currents, periods, and other units of literary history (treated diachronically as well as synchronically), while in English-speaking countries the field is usually linked with the study of world literature. Very often, in those and other countries, comparative literary studies fall within the purview of Post-Colonial Studies. The problem of influences and dependence is then interpreted within the framework of such categories as colonization, domination, power, symbolic violence, subordination, and mimicry. An example of such practices is the Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropófago*, published in 1928, but frequently invoked in our day, in reflection on literary translation among other contexts. De Andrade declared "cannibalism" to be a feature of Brazilian literature, in its creative "feeding on" (and thus reinforcement of) Western literature and culture. A further developer of de Andrade's

[8] J. Culler, "Whither Comparative Literature," in *Comparative Critical Studies* 2006, vol. 3, issue 1-2, pp. 85-97.

[9] J. Kristeva, *Sēmeiōtikē: recherches pour une sémanalyse*, Paris 1969, pp. 84-85.

[10]M. Głowiński, "O intertekstualności" (On Intertextuality), in *Intertekstualność, groteska, parabola. Szkice ogólne i interpretacje. Prace wybrane* (Intertextuality, Grotesque, Parabola. Loose Sketches and Interpretations. Selected Works), vol. V, ed. R. Nycz, Kraków 2000, p. 8.

thought is the poet and translator Haroldo de Campos, who has applied the metaphor of anthropophagy to describing the creative assimilation of a foreign tradition in the process of translation: "The philosophy of translation that he developed represents [...] a result of contemplating the state and position of Brazilian culture and emphasizes the need for transcendence of European models (and the logocentric myth of the 'mighty original') through creative translation of selectively assimilated cultural texts into Portuguese in its Brazilian idiom".[11] The history of the concept of influence in translation studies is in fact a matter for separate discussion and we will not here endeavor to examine it in any greater depth.

Beginning in the final decades of the twentieth century, the problem of literary influence has been associated above all with the person of Harold Bloom and his academic essay *The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry* (1973). This text elicited many responses and reverberations, both positive and negative; the author himself returned with further modulation of his theory of poetic influence in the book *The Anatomy of Influence. Literature as a Way of Life* (2011), published forty years later. In it (as in the introduction to later editions of *The Anxiety of Influence*) he attempted to clarify the misunderstandings to which his concept of anxiety of influence, usually interpreted (in accordance with Bloom's original formulations) in terms of the Oedipal model of rivalry between "precursor" and "adept," had given rise. Bloom, a remarkably erudite scholar, a venerator of masterpieces (particularly Shakespeare's) and foe of popular culture, wrote in his first book: "Poetic history, in this book's argument, is held to be indistinguishable from poetic influence, since strong poets make that history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves. My concern is only with strong poets, major figures with the persistence to wrestle with their strong precursors, even to the death. Weaker talents idealize; figures of capable imagination appropriate for themselves. But nothing is got for nothing, and self-appropriation involves the immense anxieties of indebtedness, for what strong maker desires the realization that he has failed to create himself?".[12] The term "misreading" has no negative evaluation attached to it here and refers to a "revisionist, creative, idiosyncratic reading made by a strong poet of his precursor, resulting from fear of being influenced".[13] The rhetoric of the agon which Bloom maintains throughout his academic writing led feminist critics Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, among other authors, to enter into a polemical dialogue with him. In their pioneering book *The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination*, Gilbert and Gubar opposed to what they considered the patriarchal notion of the anxiety of influence the female "anxiety of authorship," the result of many centuries of exclusion from full participation in literary communication. "For our purposes here, however, Bloom's historical construct is useful," they wrote, "not only because it helps identify and define the patriarchal psychosexual context in which so much Western literature was authored, but also because it can help us distinguish the anxieties and achievements of female

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[11]G. Borowski, "Transkreacja: myśl przekładowa Haraldo de Camposa" (Transcreation: the Translation Thought of Haraldo de Campos), *Przekładaniec* 2012 vol. 26, p. 95.

[12]H. Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry*, Oxford 1997, p. 5.

[13]A. Burzyńska, M.P. Markowski, *Teorie literatury XX wieku. Podręcznik* (Twentieth Century Literary Theory. A Handbook), Kraków 2006, p. 376.

writers from those of male writers".[14] In their framing, the woman author is not obliged to enter into rivalry with a strong precursor. She is, however, forced to engage in a struggle to define herself independently of gender roles imposed on her by the patriarchy. She is often aided in this emancipatory project by a strong female precursor and womanly sisterhood.

In response to such polemics, Bloom emphatically denied that his theory postulates an Oedipal rivalry between adepts and precursors as the main driving mechanism of the creative process. Without renouncing his vision of literature as an area of unceasing rivalries (in which he perceives the legacy of Greek civilization) he explained: "I never meant by 'the anxiety of influence' a Freudian, Oedipal rivalry, despite a rhetorical flourish or two in this book. [...] influence-anxiety does not so much concern the forerunner but rather is an anxiety achieved in and by the story, novel, play, poem, or essay. [...] What writers may experience as anxiety, and what their works are compelled to manifest, are the *consequence* of poetic misprision, rather than the *cause* of it. The strong misreading comes first; there must be a profound act of reading that is a kind of falling in love with a literary work".[15] This affective aspect (falling in love) is underscored with particular intensity in *The Anatomy of Influence* – the book declared by the octogenarian Bloom to be his swan song – wherein it encompasses not only poets, but also literary scholars and ordinary readers. "Sometimes in the long nights I experience as I recover from my various mishaps and illnesses, I ask myself why I have been so obsessed with problems of influence. My own subjectivity from the age of ten on was formed by reading poetry, and at some now forgotten time I began to puzzle at influences. [...] Influence stalks us all as influenza and we can suffer an anguish of contamination whether we are partakers of influence or victims of influenza. What remains free in us is the daimon".[16] The introduction to the book on love for poetry ends with the following gendered reflection from this incorrigibly androcentric, rather conservative old patriarch of literary criticism:

> There are many candidates for Freud's best book, yet I favor his 1926 revision of his earlier theory of anxiety, *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*. Here Freud gets free of his weird contention that all anxiety ensues from repressed desire and substitutes the fecund notion that anxiety is a signal of danger, related to the infant's terror at its own helplessness.
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> A potentially strong poet is never helpless, and she may never receive a signal of anxiety in regard to the literary past; but her poems will tally them.[17]

<div align="right">

Ewa Kraskowska

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[14]S. Gibert, S. Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Imagination*, New Haven and London 1979, p. 48.

[15]H. Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, p. xxiii.

[16]H. Bloom, *The Anatomy of Influence. Literature as a Way of Life*, New Haven and London 2011, pp. vii, xii.

[17]Ibid., pp. 14-15.

KEYWORDS

influence studies

i n f l u e n c e

imitatio

Harold Bloom

c o m p a r a t i v e   s t u d i e s

translation

intertextuality

Abstract:

The article presents a short history of the concept behind the word „influence" and the ways it is understood in various disciplines and currents in the humanities.

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Source

— a productive semantic homonym with various equivalents in Latin: 1) *fons* – a place, from which water flows out onto the earth's surface; a spring; a fount; 2) *radix* – root; core; line of ancestry; that which forms the beginning of something; reason; provenance; 3) *origo* – genesis, beginning, origin, reason, lineage; 4) *principium* – beginning, initiation. This multivalence is reflected in the variety of contexts in which this word is used. In scholarly discourse it functions as a polysemic term, essentially a lexicalized metaphor, whose use is more intuitive than precise, usually as an ingredient in a phraseological compound (for example "source of knowledge," "historical sources," "source of inspiration," "energy source"), often functioning as an adjective (for example "source books," "source texts"). The study of sources in the hydrological sense (springs) is spring hydrology – in Polish, "krenologia," from the Greek root *krene-*, meaning source or spring.

In the humanities, sources are most frequently referred to in history and historiography– one of the oldest areas of human cognitive activity conducted scientifically, that is, with the intention of obtaining objective and truthful knowledge of the object under study. (The terms "objective," "truth," and "knowledge" will not be separetly defined here, since that would call for an extensive philosophical, theoretical, and methodological discussion.) The object of historical research is the past, to which we have no direct access, but which can be excavated (discovered, reconstructed) from the testimonies and relics that have been preserved. In traditional historiography, sources thus understood have been treated (and largely continue to be treated) as material to be used in establishing the course of past events, while methodological reflection on the subject of sources themselves was long in coming, remaining until recently in the stage of intuitive gestation. The fundamental task of the historian remains research into, critical analysis and interpretation of sources, but the understanding of the concept has changed significantly, as has the approach to these related procedures. As a result, the question of sources is today the chief problem of contemporary methodology in historical studies.

R. G. Collingwood, a British specialist in the philosophy of history, defined the old method of using historical sources with the term "scissors-and-paste history".[1] On the traditional understanding of what sources mean, he wrote: "a source is something from which water or the like is drawn ready made; in the case of history, something from which the historian's statements are drawn ready made".[2] For a scholar using such a method, historiography is the repetition of assessments made by others in the past. The privileged status of credibility is accorded to all types of written evidence (chronicles, official documents, diaries and memoirs, stenograms, and so on), in recent times frequently replaced or supplemented by audiovisual or digital recordings. Iconography and different kinds of artifacts and natural specimens were also capable of fulfilling this function. Oral transmissions, due to their ephemeral nature, were more the domain of tradition and memory than of historiography; only recently did they attain the rank of sources, mainly in the developing category of oral history. Scholarly use of sources is focused above all on their critical analysis, since in K. Bartoszyński's words, – "the value… of a text as a source lies not in what it communi-

[1] R.G. Collingwood, The Idea of History, ed. W. J. van der Dussen, Oxford, 1994, p. 33.
[2] Ibid., p. 31.

cates, but in the informational resources that can be extracted from it".[3] The typology of historical sources, their origin, editing, the methodology of their study, and the possible ways of protecting and preserving them are the business of the area within the field of history called source studies.

The paradigm shift in the historiography of sources is connected to the development of a narratological approach to studies of the past and the belief that, as Nietzsche argued in the late 19th century, there are no facts, only interpretations ("[...] gerade Thatsachen gibt es nicht, nur Interpretation").[4] History is thus an interpretation of the past constructed by the scholar. A point of view currently becoming increasingly widespread among historians postulates that historiography is a form of literature, and consequently the analysis of written historical sources may be approached in a manner analogous to that of literary texts, that is, using the tools of poetics for their interpretation.[5] On the other hand, a literary work can also be treated as a historical source, which calls, however, for the scholar to confine his or her perspective to the text's referential dimension. In the opinion of J. Topolski the immediate value of literature as historical source is primarily found in literary works' function as references, documenting (e.g. sociologically) the period in which they were written.[6]

The French thinkers Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida played key roles in the transformation of how we treat historical sources. The former, in his concept of the "archaeology of knowledge," drew out the relative, discursive, and non-essentialist character of all materials used as sources, thereby underscoring their function in the construction and legitimation of knowledge. It was under his influence that a critique of sources based on the critical analysis of discourse and the utterance was mounted, in which the tools of rhetoric and poetics figured crucially. Foucault also gave new meaning to the term "archive," in traditional historiography the place where sources were preserved and worked on. For Foucault an archive is neither the institution, nor the sum of documents from the past that a culture preserves, but a general "system of formation and transformation of utterances".[7] Only a partial description of such an archive is possible, and it directs the scholar toward "the historical *a priori*," that is, toward the "history of things actually said" on a given subject.[8] Foucault's own works provide examples of such investigations of the past; they include *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, *Discipline and Punish*, and *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*.

Like Foucault, Derrida emphasized the analysis and critique of power structures, especially those hidden within systems of knowledge. The concept of a source is strongly linked with authority and authoritarianism, since traditionally understood historical sources provide the

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[3] K. Bartoszyński, "Aspekty i relacje tekstów. (Źródło – historia – literatura)" (Aspects of and Relations Between Texts [Source, History, Literature]), in *Dzieło literackie jako źródło historyczne* (The Literary Work as Historical Source), ed. Z. Stefanowska, J. Sławiński. Warszawa 1978, p. 79.

[4] F. Nietzsche, *Pisma pozostałe* (Uncollected Writings) *1876-1889*, trans. B. Baran, Kraków 1994, p. 211.

[5] H. White, *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination In Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore, 1975.

[6] J. Topolski, "Problemy metodologiczne korzystania ze źródeł literackich w badaniu historycznym" (Methodological Problems with Using Literary Sources in Historical Research), in *Dzieło literackie jako źródło historyczne* (The Literary Work as Historical Source), ed. Z. Stefanowska, J. Sławiński, Warszawa 1978, p. 13.

[7] M. Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir,* Paris 1969, p. 171.

[8] Ibid., p. 125.

scholar with definitive authority and validity. Derrida tied this problem to his critique of what he called the metaphysics of presence and logocentric thought, typical for the rational foundations of modern Western culture. For him, a source is one of the forms of metaphysical presence (like the concepts of truth, meaing, or causation) that require deconstruction through destabilization. M. P. Markowski has summed up the logical procedure through which this is done in the following words: "The source exists only to that extent that it contains something other than itself. The beginning exists only to that extent that it is followed by something that contradicts it. Both source and beginning thus exist to the extent that they are inscribed in something else".[9] Derridean deconstruction of the concept of sources is derived from Nietzschean deconstruction of causality, a reversal of the hierarchy in the scheme of cause and effect in which it is not the cause that precedes the effect, but vice versa: the presence of the result creates the cause.[10]

Historical sources are the material foundation of historiography generally and in particular the history of academic disciplines and the arts. For literary historians, studies of sources relate to the sense of a literary work's artistic specificity and problems of literary communication, and the concept of the source therefore acquires many uses in their discourse besides those discussed above. The act of interpretation, which itself is usually a creative act, represents a particular use of the literary text as a source of meanings and values. Individual methodological orientations mark the center of meaning-production at diverse points (it can be the author, the text, or the reader), as a result of which questions about the limits of interpretation have become one of the most contentious topics in contemporary literary scholarship. In linguistics, the category of the source is linked to etymological studies. The purpose of such studies is to establish a word's *etymon* (root word), thus determining the original word or element from which a given word was formed.[11]

The word "source" and its derivatives play an extremely important role in translation studies, and have also undergone a fundamental revision by means of developments in that field. The word is closely linked to the concept of the original and appears in such terms as "source-text," "source-language," "source text/language/culture," bound by a binary opposition to the terms "target text," "target language' and "target text/language/culture." In traditional (philological, linguistic, and structuralist) reflection on the phenomenon of translation, the original holds the status of primary text and constitutes the main point of reference for the translated text, treated as secondary and dependent ("bound," in Barańczak's term).[12] In this view, the gauge of the translation's value is the degree of its equivalency to the original. What is being called the cultural turn in translation studies has led to a revaluation of the opposition original-translation and a focus on the second member of the dyad, with a simultaneous devaluation of the first, similar to the process that took place earlier with regard to deconstruction's destabilization of the source. The authority of the original as the ultimate source of meanings gener-

[9] M.P. Markowski, *Efekt inskrypcji. Jacques Derrida i literatura* (The Inscription Effect. Jacques Derrida and Literature), Bydgoszcz 1997, p. 112.

[10] J. Culler, *On Deconstruction. Theory and Criticism After Structuralism*, Ithaca New York 1982, p. 86-87.

[11] S. Urbańczyk et al., ed. *Encyklopedia języka polskiego* (Encyclopedia of the Polish Language), Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1992, p. 77.

[12] S. Barańczak, "Przekład literacki jako 'samoistny' i 'związany' obiekt interpretacji" (Literary Translation as an "Autonomous" and "Bound" Object of Interpretation), in *Z teorii i historii przekładu artystycznego* (From the Theory and History of Artistic Translation), ed. J. Baluch, Kraków 1974.

ated in the translation has been undermined, a development that would appear favorable to the role and position of the translator. Looked at in this way, a translation is treated as an autonomous phenomenon, and the focus of scholarly interest is shifting to the way the new text functions in the target culture and its multifarious social, political, and cultural contexts.[13]

[13]M. Heydel, "Zwrot kulturowy w badaniach nad przekładem" (The Cultural Turn in Translation Studies), *Teksty Drugie* (Second Texts) 6, 2009, p. 23.

Foucault

historiography

source

KEYWORDS

Translation Studies

Derrida

Abstract:

This survey of the career of the word "source" presents various aspects of this versatile, multivalent concept, and the forms of its use in the humanities, particularly in historiography and translation studies

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Transfictionality[1]

1 Intertextual Genesis | There is no doubt that French literary scholarship advanced the concept of intertextuality considerably in the second half of the 20th century. In 1966, in an issue of the legendary magazine *Tel Quel*, Julia Kristeva published an article entitled "Le mot, le dialogue, le roman" (Word, Dialogue, and Novel) in which readers found a statement revolutionary for its time: "tout texte se construit comme une mosaïque de citations, tout texte est absorption et transformation d'un autre texte" (each text is constructed like a mosaic of quotations, each text is the absorption and transformation of another text).[2] In Kristeva's view, intertextuality encompassed all texts, and her proposal should therefore be understood in all its totality: a text is incapable of not being an intertext, as a result of which the intertextual sign remains always present. This direction in scholarship found acceptance from Roland Barthes, who defined the intertext as composed of multi-layered, perhaps even multi-dimensional production from elements of culture understood in its diachronic development.[3] At the other end of the spectrum we encounter the limiting concept of Gérard Genette, which significantly narrows the concept of intertextuality. To meet the needs of poetics as he saw them, Genette introduced the term transtextuality, and together with it, five types of intertextual relationships. In this way intertextuality becomes merely one of several such relationships and describes the mutual coexistence of at least two texts by means of quotation, allusion, or plagiarism. Modification of a text then belongs to the domain of hypertextuality, which covers the devices of parody and pastiche.[4] And hypertext, with all of its transformative potential, may in fact overlap at times with the phenomenon of transfiction.

From these roots of intertextual theory, a new practice is coming into being, in both reading and writing, called transfictionality. It was proposed by Richard Saint-Gelais in his book *Fictions transfuges. La transfictionnalité et ses enjeux*. The concepts of quotation, absorption, and transformation mentioned above are key terms for some unusually personal intertextual theories. They have nothing, however, in common with transfictional processes. Hypertextual enterprises, in which we deal with imitation or transformation in the sphere of relations between texts, must needs be distinguished from transfictional ones, involving the migration of elements that constitute an integral part of a given narrative space.

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[1] This article attempts to introduce a concept developed by Richard Saint-Gelais into the Polish literary scholarly scene, using parts of his comprehensive study entitled *Fictions transfuges. La transfictionnalité et ses enjeux*.

[2] J. Kristeva, «Le mot, le dialogue et le roman», *Semeiotike: recherches pour une sémanalyse*, Paris, Seuil, pp. 82-112.

[3] "Each text is an intertext; other texts are present in it, at various levels, in more or less recognizable forms: texts of the preceding and surrounding culture; each text is a new tissue of recycled quotations." Roland Barthes, "Texte (théorie du)," Encyclopædia Universalis, 1973. Online edition. Last accessed October 2, 2015. http://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/theorie-du-texte/

[4] T. Samoyault, *L'intertextualité*, Nathan 2001, pp. 18-23.

Saint-Gelais attempts to explain all of the differences between these two concepts by means of an analyses of some passages from *Pastiches et Mélanges* – a book by Marcel Proust published in 1919. In examining this example of a collection of pastiches, we can observe a certain dissonance. Proust organized these texts around a single occurrence – *l'affaire Lemoine* – relating to the fraudulent production of diamonds; he retells the same story from the perspective of, among others, Flaubert and Balzac. Here, a hypertextual reading would boil down to registering all of the formal distortions in these texts. For a transfictional reading, what is crucial is the fact that Proust uses a variety of styles to tell a single story, and thus each of these texts has elements in common – characters, locations, sequences of events – and concerns the same narrative space. In this sense, the pastiche of Balzac is exceptional – characters from *La Comédie humaine* are spliced into the Lemoine affair, thereby creating a double dimension of transfictional reading. The first dimension is external; it includes all of the pastiches devoted to the same occurrence. The second, involving only the specific pastiche of Balzac, can be defined as the internal dimension, within which there occurs a migration of elements from the work of the author being imitated.[5] The text is therefore an occurrence in two (non-cohering?) worlds, a fact which in a sense touches on a practice of transfictionality to be addressed in due course.

2 Terminological Clarifications | Our awareness of the provenance of

transfictionality in intertextuality allows us to see it as a transition to a more incisive – though naturally far from exhaustive – analysis of the same problem. Richard Saint-Gelais defines it as follows: I propose […] to add a term to the already abundant panoply in literary studies and particularly poetics. By *transfictionality* I understand the phenomenon by which two texts, of the same author or different ones, relate together to the same fiction, whether by reprising the same characters, continuation of a foregoing plot, or sharing the same fictional universe.[6]

Saint-Gelais also points to the fact that his concept of transfictionality in a certain sense undermines our basic categories of thought about the text. Intertextuality has turned out to be inadequate for dealing with works whose essence did not amount to quoting or deforming a previous text, but to renewing, continuing, or undertaking a new approach to particular fictional elements of that text, such as the further lives of certain characters or elements of the plot. How do we explain the relationships between the many stories and novels about cases solved by Sherlock Holmes, in view of the fact that Arthur Conan Doyle, Holmes's creator, is not the only author of stories about Holmes's life? Intertextuality does not appear to be the precise prism for investigating this type of problem, so that in the end, the development of the new scholarly project of transfictionality was well-nigh unavoidable.

Here, it befits us to mention that in his formulation of transfictionality, Saint-Gelais sees the text with "a broad compass, also including films, TV, comic books, etc. in its range."[7] The text

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[5] R. Saint-Gelais, *Fictions transfuges. La transfictionnalité et ses enjeux*, Éditions du Seuil 2011, pp. 11-13.

[6] Ibid., p. 7. All translations are my own. Timothy Dwight Williams.

[7] Ibid.

thus functions as a cultural (not only literary) text, but Saint-Gelais deals only with narrative texts. He also signals that these other domains have yet to be properly analyzed. Given such a wide area of interests, transfictionality seems and is an unusually capacious and fluid concept, impervious to all dogma, which is why Saint-Gelais is rather attempting "to raise a certain number of questions that arise as soon as one interrogates the nature, status and limits of this practice."[8] One of these deals with the way and extent that readers are capable of uncovering transfictional connections between texts. The act of reading is to a great extent dependent on the act of writing. Saint-Gelais also turns our attention to what may be called the transfictional potential of the fictional character. These individual characters provide the best way to orient the reader's consciousness toward the initial text. If an author places some furniture from the house of Mmlle. Vauquer inside the plot he is creating, there is little chance that the reader will construct a transfictional bridge to *Père Goriot*. Introducing the person of Rastignac, however, and making him, importantly, an active part of the narrative, does not leave any doubt as to the connection with Balzac's work.[9] A transfictional relationship comes into being when Rastignac becomes a participant in events taking place in a given narrative. Only the establishment of his presence as an element in the fictional world of that narrative space permits us to talk about the transfictionality of the text under analysis. He cannot be someone from the outside, remaining only a figment of other characters' imagination, as he would if one of them merely talked about Rastignac or, as might happen, read *Le Père Goriot*.[10] In such a case, the figure of Rastignac as a purely imaginary character within a given fiction would not suffice for establishing a transfictional connection.

The migration mentioned earlier of information between narrative spaces is tightly connected with the idea of encroaching boundaries. Saint-Gelais indicates the paradoxical aspect of transfictional connections when he reviews the semantic formation of the French verb *traverser*, which can refer not only to communication but also to cutting.[11] And it is precisely from all of those "torn" places – gaps that need to be filled – that opportunities arise for the creation of transfictional texts, gratifying the reader's curiosity and encroaching in various ways the boundaries of the book, its plot, or even its authorship.

3 Transfictional Practices | By what means can these boundaries be transgressed? In his book, Saint-Gelais analyzes numerous examples of transfictional activity, treating such well-known works of world literature as *Madame Bovary*, *Don Quijote*, and the exploits of Sherlock Holmes. The problem of authorial ownership appears to be the least complicated one. A text that produces transfictional relationships may be the work of a single

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[8] Ibid., 19.

[9] Ibid., 20.

[10] Saint-Gelais refers to an example from *Madame Bovary*: "When we read in *Madame Bovary* that the young Emma is reading *Paul et Virginie*, it is clear that the characters of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre are for her, as they are for us, imaginary beings, with whom no interaction is conceivable, since they are held inside the borders of *another* text, from which they have no way of escaping." R. Saint-Gelais, *Fictions transfuges*, p. 23.

[11] "Traverser: … Couper (une voie de communication), aller d'un bord à l'autre" (*Traverser*: … to cut (a path of communication), to cross from one side to the other). *Le Nouveau Petit Robert de la langue française 2009*, Paris 2009, p. 2612.

author (for example, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) or multiple authors, employing plot elements from a previously existing corpus of work (such as all of the stories and novels about Holmes that were written after Doyle's death). This second possibility seems even more clear-cut, since the idea of transgressing a boundary is embodied at the level of authorship as well.

Saint-Gelais designates *expansion* as one of the most important (and probably one of the most popular) transfictional practices: "The simplest kind of transfictional relationship, and certainly the most frequently encountered, involves the idea of expanding a previous fiction through a transfiction that prolongs it on the temporal or, more broadly, diegetic plane."[12] This expansion concerns not only the successive addition of new extensions. A passage within a text can also constitute an expansion, by creating a narrative about what happened earlier or presenting a story in a simultaneous fashion. Interestingly, expansion does not necessarily have to intervene in the plot of the initial text, it only needs to relate to that text's fictional creation. Saint-Gelais illustrates this using the following example: "J. K. Rowling's brochure on the history of Quidditch, *Quidditch Through the Ages* (2001), is not a narrative expansion of the Harry Potter series, but an introduction to the history, rules, and subtleties of the imaginary sport."[13] A text of that type would appear to be a kind of transfictional annex or appendix. However, the practice of expansion need not always generate transfictions that meet with general approval, though continuations, for example, of novels originally containing open, deliberately indefinite endings might do so.

We should remember that transfictionality applies not only to prose; examples can easily be found in the forms of poetry and drama as well. One example here would be the work of Jacek Kaczmarski, who after all wrote not one but four versions of the song "Obława" (Wolf Hunt). The second, third, and fourth iterations may be read as expansions of the first, and the element that allows us to reconstruct the transfictional connection is the wolf, unremittingly pursued by men, whose hate and fear for his tormentors grows with every verse. The "Obława" cycle must be classified as a transfiction, being an expansion within the oeuvre of a single author. The poetry of Kaczmarski, author of *Wojna postu z karnawałem* (The War Between Lent and Carnival) is altogether uniquely dialogical and intertextual, and one can also find other transfictional relationships therein, in which Kaczmarski functions as the second author building on another's work. A fine example of this is the libretto to the opera *Kuglarze i wisielcy* (Jugglers and Hangmen), in which one finds many characters, passages, and the basic plot of Victor Hugo's *L'homme qui rit* (The Man Who Laughs). Kaczmarski sometimes turns the narration over to certain characters, and also radically changes the ending. That, however, amounts to a different kind of transfictional practice.

Richard Saint-Gelais defines that kind of practice as *versions*. That method concentrates on attempting a new presentation of and at the same time modifying a story already known to readers. This can take place through a change in perspective, when selected episdoes are retold by a different character than previously. Saint-Gelais here uses the famous example from Conan Doyle of Sherlock Holmes's return to London after his apparent death. In a book called *La Vendetta de*

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[12]R. Saint-Gelais, *Fictions transfuges*, p. 71. The temporal or diegetic plane = narrative space.
[13]Ibid., p. 74.

Sherlock Holmes this episode is presented from the point of view of a certain Ugo – a character who does not figure in Conan Doyle's version – and the narration of events entrusted to him. It is from his perspective that the reader views the amazing reunion of Holmes and Watson.[14]

Two other intriguing types of operations are *croisement* and *annexions* – crossings and incorporations. They reveal transfiction's capacity to "join together two (or more) fictions which the reader had hitherto every reason to consider unrelated, and which now find themselves conjoined in a third text."[15] The reader's consciousness does not work in a mode of simultaneity while reading – especially where two authors are concerned – and the reader therefore does not ask himself hypothetical questions about various fictions. He will not be interested in a coincidence that could lead to a meeting between Emma Bovary and Stendhal's Fabrice del Dongo, nor what their relationship might look like, were they to meet.[16] Only a text that would fuse the two separate narrative spaces together could establish a transfictional connection between them and orient the reader's consciousness towards it.

The concept of transfictionality can also be applied to popular culture, in which the possibilities for discovering crossings, expansions, and new versions are practically unlimited. Transfictions also operate retroactively, and instances of advanced transfictional practices can be found in literature from previous eras, for example in the work of baroque and classical writers.

4 Comment | Transfictionality is a complex and heterogeneous term, and the transfictional practices presented in this text naturally do not exhaust the subject; they merely offer an outline, while at the same time showing the potential this concept contains. The main idea was to conduct a preliminary discussion of the most important principles, key to grasping this phenomenon, as it developed in Francophone literary scholarly circles and opened up a new field for interdisciplinary studies.

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Paweł Marciniak

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[14]Ibid., pp. 142-143.
[15]Ibid., p. 187.
[16]Ibid., pp. 63-64.

KEYWORDS

expansion

Richard Saint-Gelais

intertextuality

incorporation

crossing

versions

FICTION

transfictionality

Abstrakt:

This article attempts to introduce and explain the concept of transfictionality. The scholarship in this area developed in francophone literary studies. The main reason for its formation appears to have been the need for a new concept that would develop and supplement the theory of intertextuality. In that theory's collision with certain literary phenomena (though all domains of art can be taken into consideration here) the intellectual perspective exhausted itself and its tools ceased to be effective. The text focuses on the book Fictions transfuges by Richard Saint-Gelais, and attempts to sketch out and discuss such procedures as expansion, versions, crossings and incorporations. Not only the examples provided by the Canadian theorist, but also their substance and heft, are outlined. The author of this article has initiated the active use of a new terminological constellation in Polish literary studies.

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Literature's
Perpetuum Mobile,
or A Few Words on Self-Referentiality

Joanna Grądziel-Wójcik

Autotematyzm (hereafter "self-referentiality") belongs to the particular type of concept in literary theory that, created by one thinker, evolved in scholarly thought and in the course of its development through new contributions and polemics from others, came to define its own history. The term was proposed by Artur Sandauer, who refined its meaning in three works written over twenty years: *Konstruktywny nihilizm* (Constructive Nihilism) in 1947, "O ewolucji sztuki narracyjnej w XX wieku" (On the Evolution of Narrative Art in the Twentieth Century) in 1956, and *Samobojstwo Mitrydatesa* (Mithrydates' Suicide) in 1967.[1] Sandauer traced the problem of self-referentiality from Romantic irony and Byronic auto-irony, following its transposition from the nineteenth century novel in verse to early twentieth century prose, its transformation from an extemporaneous device into a technique of composition whose purpose was to highlight the act of narration and thematize the process of how a story is told. Sandauer simultaneously linked the origins of self-referentiality in modern prose with the secularization of art, the idea of progress and the potentializing of the creative personality. Understood in this way, self-referentiality was both a reaction to the naturalistic artistic current of the nineteenth century and a response to the actual practice of writers, especially avant-garde writers, who were experimenting with form and seeking new means of expression. Sandauer cited such works as Karol Irzykowski's *Pałuba*,* André Gide's *Les faux-monnayeurs* (The Counterfeiters) and the poetry of Paul Valéry. He

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[1] See A. Sandauer, *Liryka i logika. Wybór pism krytycznych* (Lyric and Logic. Selected Critical Writings), Warszawa 1971, p. 61. [Translator's note: "Self-referentiality" is, to say the least, a very approximate equivalent. I am indebted to, and strongly recommend, Dieter De Bruyn's effort to deal with the term *Autotematyzm* in his paper "The Problem of *Autotematyzm* in Polish Literary Criticism, or How to Immobilize a Perpetuum Mobile of Nothingness" in *Perspectives on Slavic Literatures. Proceedings of the First International Perspectives on Slavistics Conference*, D.S. Danaher and K. Van Heuckelom, eds., Amsterdam 2004, pp. 127-139. T. D. W.]

*Translator's note: the title of this work is highly ambiguous and multi-layered; following the English-language critical tradition (see C.T. Sen, "Karol Irzykowski's *Pałuba*: A Guide book to the Future" in *SEEJ*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1973), I have refrained from trying to translate it. T.D.W.

employed the term *autotematyzm* (self-referentiality) with reference to the newest developments in literature, but also to non-representative, functional art – architecture, dance and music, which he opposed to other-referential, externally directed art. Self-referentiality in literature was for him something like abstract art, rejecting the choice of a subject, focused on itself and formal questions, making its material shape or the work's own meaning its theme (the *samosłowo*, self-referential language with regard to form, or *samotreść*, self-referential language with regard to content).[2] In postulating its inward-directedness, Sandauer at the same time designated a condition for an impossible literature, quite consciously building an unachievable horizon of self-referentiality as a-referentiality.

In *Constructive Nihilism* yet another term appears, *samotematyzm* (self-thematicity):

> I aim to describe the adventure of one who is tempted, having rejected all events thrust upon him by the external world and the imagination, to create poetry not about what is seen or thought, but about the very concept of seeing and thinking, a pure drama, destitute of all of the incidental content of consciousness.[3]

Sandauer thus shifts focus: what should be more important than the content presented is the structure of a work and its own genesis, which "should serve as story and commentary, closed in a perfect and self-sufficient circle, a *perpetuum mobile* of nothingness."[4] We are struck here by the way, typical for the critic's analyses, in which he uses a negative means of definition, accenting the absurd and unattainable goal of self-referentiality – Sandauer refers to a "vicious circle" and a fundamentally impossible "communication that communicates nothing"[5] and "disinclination toward self-definition"[6]: "The impossibility of fulfillment, the vain efforts and horror of the failed work will be the subject of the realized work, focused on non-existent means, organized around the suction of a central void"[7]; while in another passage we read: "the disinclination toward self-definition tells the poet to move the work back to that preparatory stage where opposites are joined, where the refusal to choose is a choice, the absence of a subject itself a subject, barrenness creativity."[8]

Precisely this negative mode of formulation provokes discussion from scholars who, seizing upon the term, will redefine and complete it, treating it simultaneously as a watchword for a broader range of creative problems. Sandauer's term turned out to be contentious and productive, both revelatory and reverbatory, considering its successive theoretical mutations, especially heightened in the late 1960s and early '70s. Polemicists' arguments at that time moved in several directions at once: challenging the thesis of such literature's barrenness or indefinition and attempting to escape the trap of tautology that Sandauer imposed on its understanding, they sought above all to narrow the definition of the concept while expanding its range,

[2] A. Sandauer, *Liryka i logika*, p. 387. [See D. De Bruyn, "The Problem of *Autotematyzm*," 130. T. D. W.]
[3] Ibid., p. 39.
[4] Ibid., p. 44.
[5] Ibid., p. 386.
[6] Ibid., p. 70.
[7] Ibid., p. 44.
[8] Ibid., p. 68.

placing it within a historical and cultural context. Participants in the discussion of what self-referentiality meant included Edward Balcerzan,[9] Danuta Danek,[10] Michał Głowiński,[11] Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska,[12] Ewa Szary-Matywiecka,[13] Andrzej Werner,[14] Kazimierz Wyka,[15] and Stefan Żółkiewski.[16] These scholars proposed terms that were related or were potential alternatives to self-referentiality, such as "the statement in the work about the work," "the metapoetic function," "novelistic methodology of the novel," "quasi-novel about the novel," "signalling of authorial commentary," "workshop literature," and "symbolism of artistic creation." The development of the concept also encroached on neighboring territories – it analyzed authorial commentary, the question of works' genesis, pure poetry, literary communication, metatextuality and intertextuality, revealing a whole series of related issues in literary theory. The negative framing of Sandauer's term first drew opposition from Andrzej Werner, who claimed that the self-referential technique enabled "the fullest and most exact possible definiton in relation to known reality," becoming "precisely a form of 'workshop' literature, specific to the twentieth century, experimental literature, testing the expressive and cognitive possibilities of existing literary conventions."[17] He proposed calling self-referentiality "the quasi-novel about the novel, – a reflection expressed in and woven into the fabric of the novel on the creative process and on the creation of literary fictions."[18] In the process, the term ceased to be understood as tautologically or inwardly turned – "it is not an escape from having a theme, into the sphere of writing about nothing, about writing; it defines not the artist's psyche at the moment of creation, but quite the contrary, it places the accent on the external theme, enabling the most perfect possible development of it."[19] Self-referentiality thus crossed beyond the closed circle of artistic problems, becoming more tightly connected with social activity and context, with cultural communication, unavoidably entering the realms of psychology and sociology of literature. Stefan Żółkiewski used the term "workshop literature" from the perspective of culture and history in presenting the transfiguration of the nineteenth and twentieth century novel: in each new literary era, the novel would avail itself of that era's critical potential. Ewa Szary-Matywiecka analyzed self-referentiality from a communications perspective, treating it as a way of playing with the binding canons of literariness. Szary-Matywiecka particularly emphasized the critical role

[9] E. Balcerzan, "Zagadnienie ważności elementów świata przedstawionego" (The Question of the Importance of Elements of the Represented World), in *Styl i kompozycja* (Style and Composition), Wrocław 1965.

[10] D. Danek, "Wypowiedzi w dziele o dziele (w formach narracyjnych)" (Utterances in the Work About the Work [in Narrative Forms]), *Pamiętnik Literacki* (Literary Diary) 1968, p. 3.

[11] M. Głowiński, "Powieść jako metodologia powieści" (Novel as Methodology of the Novel), in *W kręgu zagadnień teorii powieści* (In the Sphere of Problems of Theory of the Novel), Wrocław 1967.

[12] M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, "Symbolika kreacji artystycznej" (The Symbolism of Artistic Creation) in *Młodopolskie harmonie i dysonanse* (Harmonies and Dissonances of Young Poland), Warszawa 1969.

[13] E. Szary-Matywiecka, *Książka – powieść – autotematyzm (od „Pałuby" do „Jedynego wyjścia")* (Book – Novel – Self-referentiality [from *Pałuby* to *The Only Way Out*]), Wrocław 1979.

[14] A. Werner, "Człowiek, literatura i konwencje. Refleksja teoretycznoliteracka w „Pałubie" Karola Irzykowskiego" (Human Beings, Literature, and Conventions. Literary Theory in Karol Irzykowski's *The Deck*), in *Z problemów literatury polskiej XX wieku* (Some Problems of Twentieth Century Polish Literature), vol. 1, Warszawa 1965.

[15] K. Wyka, "Wstęp do 'Pałuby'" (Introduction to *Pałuby*), in *Modernizm polski* (Polish Modernism), second edition, Kraków 1968.

[16] S. Żółkiewski, "Powieść polska w 1961 roku" (The Polish Novel in 1961), in *Przepowiednie i wspomnienia* (Prophecies and Reminiscences), Warszawa 1963.

[17] A. Werner, "Człowiek, literatura i konwencje," pp. 344, 345.

[18] Ibid.," p. 334.

[19] Ibid.," p. 345.

of self-referentiality as a term that problematizes the place and role of literature: "the essence of these functions is an active, critical relationship to cultural empiricism."[20] "Writing about nothing" is thus revealed in the perspectives provided by the comments cited above to be: not a refusal to participate, but an act of engagement with thought on the state of culture, writing about how it is understood, and communicative mechanisms. Analyses of self-referentiality in the '60s and '70s confirm the productive dynamism of the issues referred to and problematized at that time, when they were located at the center of structuralist thought, drawing together exploration of artistic and scholarly cognition, sensitive to the discursiveness of literary texts and simultaneously injecting greater rigor in the scholarly approach to the study of language in the literary utterance. For scholars, questions on scholarly thought in literature itself and the relationship between theory and literature, demonstrated by those formulations that privilege the methodological aspect of the utterance over the work within the work – for example, Michał Głowiński and Edward Balcerzan's proposals to conceptualize corresponding operations in prose and poetry respectively.

The problem of self-referentiality also relates to the scope of the practice's use in literature. We find ourselves confronted with the assertion that self-referential literature can be defined historically as well as the belief that it has been a permanent, fixed feature of culture. The question arises whether self-referentiality is a particular case, relating to the choice of a definite problem, or a potential state of every text – "the ostentatious manner in which other-reference reveals itself: making distinctions, which is the basis of every authorial practice."[21] Because in fact self-referentiality, despite being historically connected to the modernist turning-point, and especially with twentieth century avant-garde movements, can be considered a wider phenomenon, present across many centuries in literature's self-reflexive gestures. Edward Balcerzan claims that its nucleus is found in even the most other-referential works:

> Self-referentiality reveals the potential musical score, present in every literary work, for the "scholar." Each poetic text, being a realization of the basic rules of poetic language, can be treated as a model of poetry "in general." [...] The orientation toward a text as a discourse on poetry is precisely, one might say, a search for the "scholar" in the "reader."[22]

Sandauer was aware of the impossibility of fully relinquishing other-referentiality, and later explications of self-referentiality assert no such aim – since there is no way to eradicate narrative entirely; the methodology of the novel's creation, externalized in the novel itself, invariably carries other themes with it. As literary practice has shown, there is no shortage of the traditional elements and tropes of romance, adventure, morals, or suspense in "workshop" novels, while the specifically "'workshop' themes exist and in some way are 'tested' within those contexts."[23]

[20]E. Szary-Matywiecka, *Książka – powieść – autotematyzm*, p. 7.

[21]Ibid.

[22]E. Balcerzan, *Przez znaki. Granice autonomii sztuki poetyckiej. Na materiale polskiej poezji współczesnej* (Through Signs. The Boundaries of Autonomy of Poetic Art. A Study in Contemporary Polish Poetry), Poznań 1972, p. 77.

[23]E. Szary-Matywiecka, "Autotematyzm" (Self-referentiality), in *Słownik literatury polskiej XX wieku* (A Dictionary of Polish Literature of the Twentieth Century), Wrocław 1992, p. 60.

Both the concept itself and its evolution are closely linked to literary empiricism – "posing the problem and naming it as *pałuba*" was Irzykowski's contribution, while Sandauer's was "the first 'critical' reading of this problem and its second naming," Szary-Matywiecka underscores.[24] The intuitive symbol was thus replaced by the controversial term, a perfect example of how close reading brings theory and practice together: depending on the interpreted material, there follows a revaluation of self-referentiality, understood as workshop literature, or in other readings as metatext or metalanguage, or heightened authorial self-consciousness and self-reflexivity. At the same time, in the reflections of these diverse scholars we see a distinct division into formulations oriented toward the novel or toward prose, with the preponderance in the first category. An exceptional entry among the work done in the late '60s and early '70s on self-referential prose is Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska's 1970 article "U źródeł dwudziestowiecznego autotematyzmu (ze studiów nad poezją okresu Młodej Polski)" (At the Roots of Twentieth Century Self-Referentiality [From Studies on Poetry of the Young Poland Era]). Podraza-Kwiatkowska offers a different and broader understanding of self-referentiality than scholars who treat the novel as "a phenomenon of heightened creative self-consciousness expressed in a literary work, whether in the form of a direct utterance or in the way a work is shaped, or also through a layer of symbolism."[25] Podraza-Kwiatkowska looks for the source of the twentieth century turn to self-referentiality in the lyric poetry of the Young Poland period, and finds the following propitious factors: the autotelic understanding of art, the aspiration to autonomy, the break with mimesis, and the development of critical, theoretical and programmatic literature.

Scholars have certainly devoted more work to prose, however, and explored it in greater depth, in studies of the phenomenon of self-referentiality within the context of twentieth century literature: Szary-Matywiecka claims that the turning points in the development of this type of novel are Irzykowski's earlier-mentioned *Pałuba* (1903), Wilhelm Mach's *Góry nad czarnym morzem* (The Mountains Over the Black Sea, 1961) and Jerzy Andrzejewski's *Miazga* (Pulp, 1982) – novels that indicate the varied functions and, consequently, modify our understanding of the practice of self-referentiality.[26] In addition to pre-war literature (chiefly the work of Irzykowski, Gombrowicz, and Schulz) works from the period after 1956, what Bogusław Bakuła called the "decade of self-referentiality" in Polish postwar prose.[27] Works by Kazimierz Brandys, Teodor Parnicki, Tadeusz Breza, Wilhelm Mach, Adam Ważyk, Andrzej Szczypiorski, and Jerzy Andrzejewski provided the impetus toward refining and replenishing the ambivalent concept of self-referentiality. Bakuła underscored the importance of prose experiments, combining fiction with autobiographical and workshop elements: these novels "tell about the artist, the writer and his art, they are autobiographical or cryptobiographical in nature, containing many kinds of reflections on the craft, entangled in literary polemics."[28]

[24]E. Szary-Matywiecka, *Książka – powieść – autotematyzm*, p. 13.

[25]M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, "U źródeł dwudziestowiecznego autotematyzmu (ze studiów nad poezją okresu Młodej Polski)" (At the Roots of Twentieth Century Self-Referentiality [From Studies on Poetry of the Young Poland Era]) in *Problemy literatury polskiej lat 1890-1939* (Problems of Polish Literature in the Years 1890-1939). Series II, ed. H. Kirchner, Z. Żabicki, assisted by M. R. Pragłowskiej, Wrocław 1974, pp. 225-226.

[26]E. Szary-Matywiecka, "Autotematyzm," p. 59.

[27]B. Bakuła, *Oblicza autotematyzmu. (Autorefleksyjne tendencje w polskiej prozie po roku 1956)* (Faces of Self-Referentiality [Self-reflexive Tendencies in Polish Prose After 1956]), Poznań 1991, p. 7.

[28]Ibid., 7.

The wave of self-referentiality in the '70s was no less intense, embodied in what Ryszard Nycz called modern incarnations of the *silva rerum* (home chronicles / scrapbooks kept by the old Polish nobility) and in the self-reflexive novel – the rough draft novel, diary, notebook or chronicle, strongly accenting the autobiographical and non-literary aspects of the utterance. Shifts in the understanding of self-referentiality bring it closer here to issues of intertextuality, which reveals itself to be a more expansive and inclusive concept than self-referentiality and appears to appropriates some of its meanings. The authorial practices of the '70s and '80s clarify distinctly how:

> the collision [...] of the novelistic code with the autobiographical-documentary one, the focus of their protagonists not so much on writing a particular literary work as in engaging in the rudimentary activities themselves of writing, recording, description and so on, engaging in work that is quasi-creative, more personal than "artistic" or "literary."[29]

At the same time, there are starkly visible changes in the definition of and terminology related to self-referentiality. Sandauer spoke of composition methods and self-referential technique being dependent on the presence in the work of references to the writing of said work, as well as to the problems of writing and to the self-referential sign, referring to itself, weakening or contradicting – in an impossible gesture – referentiality. In successive studies, the notion of technique is increasingly replaced by the form or type of literature, whose genre attributes scholars attempt to determine based on the emerging contemporaneous phenomenon of self-referential novels. Where poetry is concerned, however, the process is less intertwined with categorical boundaries – for example, Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska uses self-referential symbols, while Edward Balcerzan uses a self-referential conceit. Meanwhile, in prose we see the appearance of the workshop novel, the self-referential novel, and the novel-about-itself (*autopowieść*). Michał Głowiński proposes – using the example of the *nouveau roman* – forms of the novel that function as their own methodologies, or "a group of concepts consciously included, openly or concealed in the work, referring to the literary devices used therein and the form of their use."[30] These texts are thus theoretical utterances about themselves, and "the most important issues play out in them not at the level of plot or style, but at the level of metalanguage."[31] Turning his attention to narrative experiments, Głowiński at the same time underscores the authors' reflections on literature in literature, thus bringing his interpretation of self-referentiality closer to the theory of the metatext. Ewa Szary-Matywiecka devoted her book to the self-referential variant of the genre novel, whose plots not only represent a reality, but also "the conditions that determine the formation of those plots as a kind of authorial practices."[32] Bogusław Bakuła, in his analysis of self-referential prose, went beyond matters of technique toward "the individual poetics of the self-referential work, but in reference to the aesthetic perspective outlined in it" – he understood self-referentiality as "the exposure of the referenced process of creation together with its entire literary psychology and philosophy or metaphysics, or historiosophy, thus revealing the flickers of intertextual

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[29]E. Szary-Matywiecka, "Autotematyzm," p. 57.
[30]M. Głowiński, "Powieść jako metodologia powieści," pp. 82-83.
[31]Ibid., p. 83.
[32]E. Szary-Matywiecka, *Książka – powieść – autotematyzm, p.* 6.

relations at various levels of the text."[33] Departing thus from device, method of composition, or poetics of the self-referential work, we arrive in the process at perspectives that surpass poetological boundaries, placing the emphasis on the worldview hidden behind them, culturally marked contexts, and the valuation of self-referential writing.

What seems crucial is this shift in the understanding of self-referentiality from a narrow meaning, relating to texts that exhibit the process of those texts' writing to the concept's expansion to include all works that deal with the role of literature and its authors, poems and novels that thematize the literary programs contained within them. Texts that concentrate on themselves and take an interest in their own language, revealing the process of their formation, are self-referential in the narrower sense; works that have something to say about literature in general, whose action is set in a literary-artistic context, whose protagonist is a poet or novelist, or that present a literary program, are self-referential in a wider sense. Thus adjacent to self-referentiality in its larger sense of "literature-referentiality,"[34] introducing some distance toward literature and its forms, traditions and conventions, and dealing overtly with literature, the writer, and culture, we have self-referentiality *sensu stricto* – concentrating on the work within the work or the text within the text. The boundaries between self-referentiality and the related literary theory concepts of metatextuality, self-reflexivity, and intertextuality also remain permeable and uncertain. For Andrzej Niewiadomski, who, following Głowiński, treats the phenomenon we are discussing as "immanent literary methodology," a more convincing notion than self-referentiality is the category in poetry of "metapoeticism, because it constitutes [...] the broadest formula for capturing the question of self-consciousness, and all related concepts are subordinate to it."[35] Self-referentiality, inscribed in the framework of metatext, intertextuality or poetology, remains nonetheless at the center of those problems, though metapoetic reflection, as defined by Niewiadomski (and reigning supreme in the study of poetry), in a certain sense takes the place of broadly understood self-referentiality:

> 1) the subject admits to being a poet or poeticism becomes manifest as an attribute of the poet's self; 2) the subject references the situation of writing 3) the subject speaks out on the topic of the creative process, reception, mechanisms of creativity or the work being written (self-referentiality); the function of poetry and the tasks of poetry; 4) the subject constructs a poetic program (poetology) and theorizes on the topic of programmatic formulations and the essence of poetry.[36]

Thus our understanding of self-referentiality describes a circle, returning to its beginnings – narrowly grasped, it remains close to the meaning intended by Sandauer. The fluid and simultaneously rapacious nature of terminology is here apparent – under the influence of changes

[33]B. Bakuła, *Oblicza autotematyzmu*, p. 33.

[34]Ibid., p. 29.

[35]A. Niewiadomski, Światy z jawnych słów i kwiatów ukrytych. O refleksji metapoetyckiej w nowoczesnej poezji polskiej (Worlds From Words Seen and Flowers Unseen. On Metapoetic Reflection in Modern Polish Poetry), Lublin 2010, p. 11. On problems with defining these concepts in relation to poetry, see also: A. Kluba, *Autoteliczność – referencyjność – niewyrażalność. O nowoczesnej poezji polskiej (1918-1939)* (Autotelicity – Referentiality – Inexpressibility. On Modern Polish Poetry [1918-1939]), Wrocław 2004; J. Grądziel-Wójcik, *Poezja jako teoria poezji. Na przykładzie twórczości Witolda Wirpszy* (Poetry as Theory of Poetry. A Case Study of Witold Wirpsza's Work), Poznań 2001.

[36]J. Grądziel-Wójcik, *Poezja jako teoria poezji*, p. 18. See also Bakuła's definition of self-referentiality, *Oblicza autotematyzmu*, pp. 22-23.

in literature and the languages used to describe it, reorganization and redefinition of related terms, absorbing self-referentiality or oscillating in its orbit, has taken place.

The development of self-referentiality as a concept may be understood as a result of the linguistic turn that reclaimed the structure of a work and its linguistic form of expression as priority concerns: in literature and cognition there is nothing that can originate outside of language, or in other words, to cite the self-referential poet *par excellence*: "You've got to examine the language, the language will tell you everything."[37] Self-referentiality also encouraged autonomous, non-instrumental aesthetic goals in art, pursued and implemented above all by the avant-garde visions of modernism: the cult of experimentation and tendency to provide theoretical justification for works of art, the rejection of mimesis (embodied by nineteenth-century realism and naturalism) and the treatment of a work as a carefully and deliberately organized product. That concept problematizes like no other the opposition between construction (form) and subjective, individual expression at the heart of modernism, bringing into sharp relief its dominants such as essentialism, relationism, conventionalism, poeticism and constructivism.[38] The act of directing the audience's attention to the conventional nature of artistic creation is also self-referential and modernist, as is the opposition to naturalist conceptions in favor of understanding art as a document or diagnosis of the crisis of representation of reality, and the emphasis on forms that highlight subjectivity. Self-referentiality brings into focus the basic problems of modernism, becoming an operative tool of interpretation of modernity, testing the self-consicousness of twentieth-century art, for which it constitutes one of the central questions. And all of this takes place, importantly, in literature itself, as it becomes a meta-utterance, encapsulated theory, resolving or posing general problems in a given text.

Self-referentiality as a distinct term functioned beautifully within the framework of Structuralist studies, but its attractiveness decreased – while never disappearing – after the Post-Structuralist breakthrough, and the revaluation it accomplished with regard to subjectivity, its redefinition of the relationship between literature and life. For it seems that self-referentiality these days functions in the orbit – not to say the shadow – of the autobiographical, a phenomenon now singled out for its own "turn." These two concepts have always been mutually complementary, but the protagonist in the contest between them has changed. In all of its iterations, beginning with Sandauer's conception, self-referentiality problematizes the relationship between realism and the autobiographical, postulating a change in the convention of how the world is mirrored – from objective to subjective. The author of *Constructive Nihilism* spoke of the tension or barrier between author and work, of the unmasking of the antiquated, naïve notion of the "true story," and the undermining of the fictionality of the realist novel by interrupting the act of narration and exposing the curtain: "it is an attempt to connect fiction with authenticity."[39] Self-referentiality thus defies the separability of author and work, simultaneously drawing the author out into the foreground and underscoring the subjectivity of

[37]W. Wirpsza, "Dzieje rymopisa czasu swego" (The History of a Rhymesmith of His Time), *Kultura* (Paris) 1981, 7/8, p. 172.

[38]See W. Bolecki, "Modernizm w literaturze polskiej XX w. (rekonesans)" (Modernism in Twentieth Century Polish Literature—a Reconnasissance), *Teksty Drugie* 2002, p. 4.

[39]A. Sandauer, *Liryka i Logika*, p. 69.

textual cognition – the artist, in writing, seeks to show himself: "self-expression henceforth becomes his purpose, to which all others are subordinated."[40] That which is realistic turns out to be fabricated, made, filtered through the consciousness of the writing subject – it is thus, as jest Sandauer claimed, as much fictional as it is mental and psychological. An unmistakable stress on subjectivity is also found in Podraza-Kwiatkowska's conception, which accents the self-consciousness of the writer, and in her analysis of architectural symbols in the poetry of Young Poland defines self-reflexivity as "the type of self-reflexivity in which the problem of the consciousness of some kind of artistic activity is indivisibly linked with attempts to probe the depths of one's own psyche."[41] In the novel as well, self-referentiality is connected with the widespread tendencies toward the autobiographical after 1956, becoming an inseparable result of the interaction between fictional and documentary, essayistic and autobiographical discourse. The fact that the self-referential is thus always to some extent autobiographical concerns the category of the author and related questions.

In modernist literature, the text in its autonomous relationship to reality became dependent on the figure of the author and the method of his utterance as the source of creation. Self-referentiality was therefore, from its beginnings, a form of testing the potential for the autobiographical in the text. Despite all number of shifts in the definition of self-referentiality, this thread that privileges subjectivity in the thought about it will always remain present, though simultaneously dependent on the vicissitudes of subjectivity in literature and its definition – the author wants to express himself or create his persona, or finally – through storytelling – to construct and confirm his identity.

Self-referntiality and the autobiographical seem to be two sides of one problem. Małgorzata Czermińska, for example, undesrcores how the expansion of non-fiction forms in recent decades has been accompanied by:

> self-referentiality and overt metaliterary reflection, the presence of which always brings in its wake thoughts about the text's generation. The autobiographical and the self-referential appear to originate from opposite poles. Writing about oneself calls (in a state of primary naivete) for a non-fictional document (a utopia of sincere confessions), whereas writing about writing, placing the illusionist plot in quotation marks, lays bare literariness, thickening it into an extract of metaliterariness, creating art for art's sake. In fact, however, many autobiographies of late modernism manifest a conscious creativity, frequently transforming from confession into confrontation, ambiguously playing with the reader through self-referential digressions. On the other hand, in certain late twentieth century novels, the self-referential threads often drift from meditations on the writing process toward the person writing and elements of his biography, known to the reader from other sources.[42]

Czermińska proposes a self-portrait as an example of an "overtly autobiographical" work, meaning one in which the presence of the author's person is thematized, linking itself this

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[40]Ibid., 63.

[41]M. Podraza-Kwiatkowska, "U źródeł dwudziestowiecznego autotematyzmu," p. 249.

[42]M. Czermińska, "Autor – podmiot – osoba. Fikcjonalność i niefikcjonalność" (Author – Subject – Person. Fictionality and Nonfictionality), in *Polonistyka w przebudowie. Literaturoznawstwo – wiedza o języku – wiedza o kulturze – edukacja* (Polish Studies Under Reconstruction. Literary Studies – Linguistics – Cultural Knowledge – Education). vol. I, ed. M. Czermińska, S. Gajda, K. Kłosiński, A. Legeżyńska, A. Z. Makowiecki, R. Nycz, Kraków 2005, p. 212.

time not with psychologizing, but with the problem of representation. A self-portrait thus understood therefore has immanent self-referential features, and as a verbalized gesture of exposing the author in the text becomes a kind of self-reflexivity. Likewise Ryszard Nycz, tracking transformations of subjectivity in modern literature, points to the connection between fiction and autobiographical writing in illustrating two tendencies he designates in literature: the fictionalization and the empiricization of the authorial voice, between which self-referentuality can play a mediating role, constituting the explicit textualization of the subject:

> the impersonal subject of fiction turns out – seen from behind the curtain of the artist's presentation – to be held together by personal empiricism, the result of the objectivization and universalization of the existential experience of the writing individual. Seen in this same perspective, the subject of the autobiographical utterance in turn reveals fictional features, or rather the features of a deliberately designed construct. Textualization thus endows the sense of a totality of life actions, imposing selection and order, which mask and deform the source "selfness" of the individual.[43]

Nycz does not use the term self-referentiality, but writes about "the process by which personality is constituted" and ties it to "the process of discursive articulation" and "the act of self-creation on the stage of writing, [...] which makes accessible, activates, and complicates narrative, symbolic, and social models of personal integration and identification."[44]

It is important, in understanding and reformulating the points of emphasis in the domain of self-referentiality, to see its criticism of the relationship between literature and reality, not susceptible today to being defined in the categories of opposition or alternatives: "once the person appears in the text, the boundary is broken and obliterated,"[45] and likewise the situation and comprehension of self-referentiality itself, though it remains a relevant context for problems of subjectivity and identity, must change. If each literature reveals itself to be to some degree autobiographical, each can also be made self-referential (in a broad, non-Sandauer sense). The thematization of creative activity these days works toward the expression of the writer's subjectivity - "the narrator here thus becomes a character in the story, separable neither from his experiences nor from the thread of the narrative; in this process ensuring a feeling of the duration and integration of one's own person, one's empirical identity."[46] Perhaps self-referentiality, like autotelicity or intertextuality, needs to be seen as a certain state of literature in general, a *perpetuum mobile* of self-conscious creation, effacing the boundaries between life and fiction, exposing the syllepticity of the contemporary subject, who exists, when he writes; who exists, because he writes.

[43]R. Nycz, "Osoba w nowoczesnej literaturze: ślady obecności" (The Person in Modern Literature: Traces of Presence)*, in Osoba w literaturze i komunikacji literackiej* (The Person in Literature and Literary Communication), ed. E. Balcerzan, W. Bolecki, Warszawa 2000, p. 16.

[44]Ibid., p. 17.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid., p. 19.

KEYWORDS

Artur Sandauer

twentieth-century Polish literature

ABSTRACT:

The article presents a short history of the development of the concept of autotematyzm, a term proposed in the mid twentieth century by Artur Sandauer, referring to a kind of self-referentiality, that evolved considerably in scholarly thought in subsequent decades. Problems in defining the term relate to both its terminological fluidity and the scope of its use, dependent on the influence of literature as it changed and the languages used to describe and analyze it. The author proposes to formulate the development of the term as a result of the linguistic turn and thus situates it at the center of modernism, whose dominants it expresses, becoming an operative tool for the interpretation of modernity. At the same time, she directs readers' attention to the current that privileges subjectivity in the reflection on self-referentiality, and its close connection with autobiography, particularly visible after the post-structuralist rupture.

autobiography

self-referentiality

MODERNISM

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Marcin Jauksz

Along the Margins.
Leonard F. Lisi's *Marginal Modernity*

In Duino in 1913, as Rainer Maria Rilke was beginning work on his elegies and finishing *The Notebooks of Male Laurids Brigge*, he underwent a singular experience. A composition describing the experience was inscribed within his diary a year later, in early 1914, and made public still later, in 1919. The protagonist of this tale, several pages long, told in the third person (the tension between the work's smallness and the narrative breadth and mythic scope suggested by the term "tale" is here deliberate) yields to the strange temptation, during his customary stroll with a book, to lean "into the more or less shoulder-high fork of a […] tree."

> And in this position he immediately felt himself so pleasurably supported and so deeply soothed that he remained as he was, without reading, completely absorbed into Nature, in a nearly unconscious contemplation. (…) it was as if almost unnoticeable pulsations were passing into him from the inside of the tree; he explained this to himself quite easily by supposing than an otherwise invisible wind, perhaps blowing down the slope to the ground, was making itself felt in the wood, though he had to acknowledge that the trunk seemed too thick to be moved so forcibly by such a mild breeze. What concerned him, however, was not to pass any kind of judgment; rather, he was more and more surprised, indeed astonished, by the effect of this pulsation which kept ceaselessly passing over into him; it seemed to him that he had never been filled by more delicate movements; his body was being treated, so to speak, like a soul, and made capable of absorbing a degree of influence which, in the usual distinctness of physical conditions, wouldn't really have been sensed at all. (…) Nevertheless, concerned as he always was to account for precisely the subtlest impressions, he asked himself insistently what was happening to him, and almost immediately found an expression that satisfied him as he said it aloud: he had passed over to the other side of Nature. As happens sometimes in a dream, this phrase now gave him joy, and he considered it almost completely apt.[1]

The year 1913 and its margins represent, as Piotr Szarota's recently published, fascinating book on Vienna in the period has shown,[2] a unique juncture in European history, and, more specifically, the crest of the wave of modernist cultural transformations. Rilke's intimate observation may be recognized as no less significant in defining the then-receding generation and the literature of the post-World War I era than Hugo von Hofmannsthal's "The Let-

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[1] R.M. Rilke, "An Experience," in: *Ahead of All Parting. The Selected Poetry and Prose of Rainer Maria Rilke*, ed. and trans. Stephen Mitchell, New York 2015 (electronic edition).

[2] P. Szarota, *Wiedeń 1913*, Gdańsk 2013.

ter of Lord Chandos," singled out by Richard Sheppard as "encapsulat[ing] the crisis of modernism as a whole," summarizing modern man's drive "to rethink his understanding of reality, himself, and his relationship with reality"[3] – especially in the context of an attempt at a scholarly description and assessment of Leonard Lisi's book *Marginal Modernity. The Aesthetics of Dependency from Kierkegaard to Joyce*.[4] Both Rilke and Hofmannsthal are important figures in the book. And though Lisi writes mainly about the *Duino Elegies* and *Malte Laurids Brigge* in the book's final essay, without even so much as mentioning "An Experience," that work may serve as a splendid introduction to the exercise in cartographical revision that Lisi aims to perform on the map of European modernism.[5]

The experience in the title of Rilke's work is not so much an epiphany itself, as the ability to tell about it, a satisfaction with the words that manage to grasp the essence of the matter. This stands in contradiction to the central experience of modernism, which is the effort to deal with the situation of existential and communicative anxiety resulting from the crisis of naming things and phenomena described by Hofmannsthal in "The Letter." Lisi, in interpreting the latter work, unequivocally opposes the emphasis (placed by, among others, Sheppard) on the part devoted to the inadequacy of operative semiotic codes, drawing readers' attention instead to the closing sections of the work, in which a hope is expressed for the possibility of learning a language, of which the author of the titular letter knows not yet a word, but one "used by the dumbest of things in speaking with [him]" and in which "perhaps, [he] will someday be called to account for [himself] from [his grave] before an unknown

judge."[6] A positive alternative to the critique of modernity contained in the Hofmannsthal text discussed by Lisi [MM 219] is also found in Rilke's text and in the other texts interpreted in Lisi's book, by Ibsen, Henry James, and Joyce. The protagonist of "An Experience," having encountered the "other side of nature" and able to tell about it is a poet who affirms the possibility of transcendence and simultaneously of expression. These possibilities are connected with relinquishing the logical categories of what is known and defined by rational thought and the willingness to embrace what is non-human, that with which man appears to communicate in his dreams.

In Lisi's scholarly project, his analysis of the transformation of man's image at the end (or at least the turning) of centuries focuses on the revaluation of values in the literature of Modernism the revelation of their attainability through the acceptance of new ways (though these, according to Lisi, were actually found in textual interpretation throughout the ages) of modeling the world thanks to innovative aesthetic principles. Lisi departs from the concept, central for scholars of modernism, of "autonomy," equally important for those who consider it the key to modernist aesthetics (as a concrete artistic practice) and those who meet the notion with opposition and promote the principle of fragmentation proper to avant-garde tendencies that negate autonomy as such. Lisi suggests that since the artistic reaction to the transformations of modern reality takes place along these two lines (of autonomy and fragmentation), as long as no one has admitted that they encompass all the possibilities for describing artistic developments of the period, we can expect delineation of other aesthetic structures that do not fit into the above taxonomy to be possible and should find it desirable. These structures do, as Lisi shows, reveal a great deal about the world of humanity:

> If we define the aesthetic organization of text-immanent elements […] as the artistic enactment or representation of fundamental forms of knowledge and experience, and thereby of the fundamental conditions for our being in the world, then an examination of the philosophical origin of our aesthetic categories

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[3] R. Sheppard, *Modernism – Dada – Postmodernism*, Evanston 2000, 99.

[4] L.F. Lisi, *Marginal Modernity. The Aesthetics of Dependency from Kierkegaard to Joyce*, New York 2013, p. 6. Further quotations from this volume refer to it by the abbreviation "MM," followed by the page number, in brackets.

[5] Modernism, when capitalized by Lisi, refers to the entire period from the mid-19th century until after the Second World War. He distinguishes this from modernism written lower-case, by which he means the literary current marked by certain artistic features. These features distinguish modernism from realism and bring it closer to the avant-garde. What distinguishes modernism from the avant-garde are certain principles concerning the structure of the artistic text which modernism shares to some extent with realism (the organic structure of the work of art). See MM, pp. 4-6.

[6] H. von Hofmannsthal, *The Lord Chandos Letter*, trans. R. Stockman. Marlboro 1986, 32; quoted in Lisi, MM, p. 207.

serves to elucidate the conceptions of experience and knowledge that these contain. [MM 8]

Lisi's own "aesthetics of dependency," proposed as a rival contender with these two most popular models, is drawn from the "margins" of European Modernism to which the title of his book also refers. Lisi looks to the philosophy of Kierkegaard and the oeuvre of Ibsen for the sources of a new artistic practice, within which we find organized typically Modernist "technical devices (anti-mimesis, semiotic ambiguity, fragmentation, etc.)" as well as "conceptual and thematic preoccupations (epistemological skepticism, crisis of modernity, relativity of values, subjectivity, modern urbanization, politics, etc.)" [MM 6]. That list of concepts demonstrates the cohesion between the experience recorded in the texts of Kierkegaard and Ibsen, on the one hand, and other modernist works, on the other, enabling Lisi to state in aesthetic terms the distinct quality of the modernist quest in its Scandinavian version. Lisi finds that "the cultural setting of Scandinavia provided a particularly apt context for the development and dissemination of this aesthetic form" [MM 271]. The exhaustion of the idealist paradigm that, linked by Johan Ludvig Heiberg with a particular political and social structure, became the object of criticism from Scandinavian authors in the late 1860s and early 1870s (as Lisi shows when he interprets Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* and cites the importance of Georg Brandes's printed lectures), which in turn created the field for a new way of mediating and organizing the artistic reaction to the experience of the modern world. They turned out, in Lisi's view, to be so attractive that the authors whom he considers the central figures of modernist discourse gravitated toward their use.

Located in between the aesthetics of modernism and the aesthetics of the avant-garde, the aesthetics of dependency

> like the aesthetics of the avant-gardes, it presents the work's constitutive parts as ultimately irreconcilable, but like the aesthetics of autonomy, it insists that these parts must nevertheless be purposefully related. [MM 6]

Consequently, "mediation without unification" must take place, an operation that becomes possible, Lisi asserts, through the formulation "the principle according to which the work must be organized in terms incompatible with that work's own representational and thematic structures" [MM 6]. This concept is taken directly from the writings of Kierkegaard, primarily from *The Sickness unto Death*. The definition of personality developed in that work becomes for Lisi a model for intratextual relationships in works more or less directly referencing the works of the Danish philosopher. In his reflections on despair, Kierkegaard writes that "[t]he self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is that the relation relates itself to itself."[7] The relation that takes place between different levels of the self must lead to a synthesis; this will not occur, however, unless a decisive condition is met. "The self," Kierkegaard continues, "is the conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude that relates itself to itself, whose task is to become itself, which can be done only through the relationship to God."[8] Quoting this last fragment, Lisi underscores:

> The various phenomenological distinctions between different kinds of selves that Kierkegaard maps in *The Sickness unto Death* ultimately depend on the differing relations to this fourth term, which stands outside and apart from the other three as their ground and possibility. [MM 43]

The principle of the aesthetics of dependency thus makes

> making the purposeful relation of its parts depend on an interpretative perspective not coextensive with the logic of those parts themselves. The aesthetics of dependency in this way both provides a specific standard of measurement for how the work must be unified and prevents that unity from occurring by figuring it as wholly other to the structures at hand. [MM 6]

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[7] *The Sickness unto Death: A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening, in Kierkegaard's Writings*, ed. and trans. by H.V. Hong and E.H. Hong, Princeton, NJ 1980, 19, 13. Quoted in Lisi, MM, p. 42. Lisi designates this quotation as having been slightly modified by himself.

[8] *The Sickness unto Death*, pp. 29-30. Quoted in Lisi, MM, p. 43.

Adroitly maneuvring between the modernist ambition toward unity and totality in a work and the crisis of that dream shown by the particularism of early twentieth century avant-garde currents, Lisi proclaims himself in favor of the artistic dream of fulfillment, the ambition of so many writers mentioned in his book; together with Kierkegaard, the scholar seeks formulas for a dynamic relationship that would give the fullest expression to the specific substance of idealism and rescue the belief in a transcendent order of things that endows life with meaning – even if it is to be merely an order of aesthetic things (and furthermore, an entirely new order).

The philosophical foundations of Lisi's book are remarkably intriguing; deftly handling the category of experience and reminding readers of the importance of aesthetics as a form of human reflection (before it was replaced by theory in the twentieth century), he builds a matrix of dependency where the subject can find alleviation for the anxieties of modernity in practices aimed at opening a perspective that would enable us somehow to reconcile the contradictory currents of modern life, in which, as Marx stated in 1856 and Marshall Berman reiterated in the early 1980s, "everything is pregnant with its contrary."[9] One tendency that we number among the forms of reaction to this modernist anxiety was decadence, firmly set on a foundation of epistemological skepticism (also marked by Lisi as one of the foremost problems of the modernist era). The vexing status of knowledge at the end of the nineteenth century, Lisi writes, could elicit extremely varied reactions. As in the case of skepticism,

> the organizing principle of the aesthetics of dependency abstracts from the conditions operative in normal interactions with the world […]. But unlike skepticism, the aesthetics of dependency does not conclude from this negation of the grounds of human knowledge that all knowledge is impossible and that we can never know anything at all (or that all knowledge is equally valid). Rather, in the absence of a ground of knowledge coextensive with and immanent to the normal organizations of the world, the aesthetics of dependency posits a ground that

is transcendent and absolute. Akin to Kierkegaard's redefinition of the nature of truth and experience as a process of appropriation, it is in the striving toward such a determinate, if absent, standard of meaning that knowledge properly consists. [MM 162]

Two earlier works that underscored the importance of Scandinavian authors and their works for the development of modernism are significant touchstones for Lisi: Toril Moi's *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism*, published in 2006, and Arnold Weinstein's *Northern Arts*, released two years later. The former volume in particular is crucial, from Lisi's perspective, because its author "seeks to rethink the nature of Modernist aesthetics more generally" [MM 10] through her analysis of Ibsen's oeuvre.[10]

Moi, whose book brought Ibsen's work back into the modernist canon, proposes a program which clashes with Lisi's interpretation, though he has not clearly stated the fact. What the author of *Marginal Modernity* calls "aspects of idealist aesthetics […] very different from those studied here," emphasized in Moi's reading of Ibsen [MM 10-11], in fact represent a completely distinct vision of the reception of Ibsen's work. Moi's highly provocative study lifts the bar for all subsequent attempts to examine Scandinavian modernism, inasmuch as her ambition is not to build an entirely new model of modernist aesthetics (as Lisi wishes to do). Moi's work confines itself to advancing Ibsen into a slightly reformed modernist canon, in accordance with most of the principles that constitute that canon. Her project involves revealing Modernism to be an attempt at a rupture not so much with Romanticism (a claim she finds easily falsifiable), but with idealism (in both its Romantic and moralistic meanings). Moi is skeptical towards the argument made by Frode Helland, in her view a typical spokesperson for Jamesonian reconstruction of the "ideology of modernism," claiming that Ibsen believed in the autonomy of the work of art in an orthodox modernist sense and inclined

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[9] M. Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air. The Experience of Modernity*, New York 1988, p. 22.

[10] T. Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism. Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford 2006. The first chapter has been translated into Polish by M. Borowski and M. Sugiera as "Ibsen i ideologia modernizmu" (Ibsen and the Ideology of Modernism), published in: *Ibsen. Odejścia i powroty* (Ibsen. Departures and Returns), ed. M. Borowski, M. Sugiera, Kraków 2009, pp. 25-52.

to believe Ibsen when he downplays the affinity between his works and Kierkegaard's thought.

Ibsen, in defending his intellectual and artistic independence, can in fact function as the hero in both of these literary-historical narratives. Moi and Lisi are both equally qualified to expand the horizon of nineteenth-century Europe in a northerly direction, and the reader need not choose a single path, though he must be aware of which Ibsen to choose. For alongside the old, rejected Ibsen whom both scholars seek to recontextualize within modernism, their analyses also open our eyes to different versions of his oeuvre, though these are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Those readers who choose Moi's Ibsen will no doubt have an easier time reconciling him with the program of modernist rebellion of the *fin de siècle* in the 1890s, thereby also fortifying the nineteenth century's beachheads of modernity; those who follow Lisi's tracks will get a chance to discover new interpretative perspectives by tracing the reception of Kierkegaard, Brandes, and Ibsen, and to begin reconstructing the literature of that time in terms of its Northern inspirations (when it comes to Poland, we do so in defiance of Przybyszewski, who swore that he had taken nothing from the Scandinavians).

The place where the reader's choice plays out between the two conceptions of Scandinavia's entry into modernism is the fragile boundary between stage and audience, used by Moi in her book to show how irretrievably submerged in their world Ibsen's characters are. This represents a weighty element in the essential polemic of Lisi's book with Moi, so I will first quote Moi before returning to Lisi's argument :

> I once saw a production of *The Wild Duck* that took place in a ballroom where the chairs were distributed in two rows along the walls. I was seated in the front row, so close that I could easily have touched the actors. After the intermission, the actor playing Gregers Werle came on stage with a long white thread stuck to the back of his dark jacket. The thread was distracting, and the temptation to stretch out my hand and take it off was immense. Yet I didn't. I simply *could not* do it, and the thread stayed where it was.[11]

In writing that she "*could not*," Moi invokes the interpretative principles of Stanley Cavell, whose reading of *King Lear* defines the theater as the art of the boundary, declaring that the character is not and cannot be conscious of the presence of any audience members.[12] The essence of theatrical space is revealed in the existential drama of Julian, the protagonist of *Emperor and Galilean*, a creature incapable of creating a community and condemned to a separate, lonely, ridiculous existence…

Moi's interpretation of *Emperor and Galilean* depends on upholding barriers between audience and actors, to the same extent that Lisi's reading of *A Doll House*, is dependent on breaking the fourth wall and revealing the moment in which the spectator becomes equally a chosen character in the world of the play. Moi tells of modernist diagnoses present in what she finds to be Ibsen's key work; he attempts to reconstruct Ibsen's plays by redefining the ontological status of the characters and the audience. Lisi starts with the controversial ending of *A Doll House*, which already in Ibsen's time led to Arthur Jones's 1884 restaging and Henry Herman's *Breaking a Butterfly* with the ending changed. Lisi argues persuasively that the impulse to change the plot results from a lack of motivation (in the context of social relations among members of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie) for Nora's dramatic decision. That decision is, rather, justified at other levels of the text.

Lisi creates a special kind of map, using potential levels of dependency, of the understanding between the characters and the audience watching them – including the audience within the play: Torwald and Miss Linde, watching Nora dance, make a peculiar audience for her performance, as well as the audience external to the represented world: the theater spectator's observation of the actor portraying the dancing Nora during her dance and in the final act, when according to Lisi, she ostentatiously changes her dress to an ordinary one, resigning from her role as a creature whose task is to provide aesthetic satisfaction for her husband. While, as Lisi builds up towards saying, the differences between Miss Linde, Torwald, and Doctor Rank can exist in terms of the semasiological log-

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[11] T. Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism*, pp. 206-207.

[12] Ibid., p. 206.

ic typical for the "well-made play" and the logic of a world in which the past motivates characters' actions,

> Nora's final perspective […] cannot be derived from these, does not find its semiotic motivation from their terms, and thus remains inherently other to them. In Ibsen's text, this is not so much to say that through Nora we come to know a nonhuman form of life (as would be the case for Kierkegaard) but that the notion of humanity is radically revised. […] The aesthetic function of Nora's departure is thus to give us the experience of what it means to be confronted with a condition for the ways in which we mean and determine the world different from our own […]. [MM 154-155]

In this interpretation, Ibsen generates an effect of Nora's total otherness, a fact of which Lisi is aware, and one of great importance to him:

> first, by instituting a radical rupture with the conditions that govern the construction of semantic space before her final departure and, second, by placing us in continuity with those conditions in withholding the principle for her use of language and making us spectators of her departure along with Torvald. [MM 156]

By suggesting the metatheatrical effect of this ending, in which the inadequacy of representative models of the "well-made play" and back-story as characters' motivation is revealed, Lisi suggests that those are imperfect formulas because they are unable to capture what Nora becomes at the end, the new measure of humanity, which in this new perspective becomes precisely that need expressed in the line "I must try to become a human being."[13] The Kierkegaardian expression and the drive toward transcendence that Lisi here invokes impressively punctuate his reflections on the meaning of "the most wonderful thing,"[14]

[13] See MM 160. In the Polish translation by Jacek Frühling, the meaning of necessity conveyed by the Norwegian word "skal," preserved in the English translation and duly noted by Lisi, becomes rather muffled as Nora says she "wants" to try (lub co najmniej chcę spróbować nim zostać). H. Ibsen, *Wybór dramatów*, ed. O. Dobijnaka-Witczakowa, Wrocław 1983, p. 173.
[14] See MM pp. 135, 136.

the words spoken by Nora in the first act to define Torvald's promotion, in the second act express her opposition to her husband's potential sacrifice on her behalf, before finally becoming Torvald's eloquent, bitter reaction faced with the emptiness left by Nora's departure. The combination of wonder and otherness for Lisi justifies using the word "magical"; it does not entirely cohere with Kierkegaard's concept of the indescribable, but splendidly indicates the substance of the transformation that Ibsen is supposed to lead toward as a pioneer of the aesthetics of dependency. Those among the spectators or readers of the drama who join Lisi in judging that they know enough to join in the life of the play's characters, will be astonished (and enraptured) to observe the birth of a new (aesthetic) order of things, in which Nora's decision is no longer absurd.

The concept of magic, invoked by Lisi in order to end part one of his study on a spectacular note, allows us to have a little fun by taking him at his word. The transformation Lisi describes in his analysis of the final scene of A Doll's House involves nothing other than the reading method that he proposes to apply to important works of Modernism in part two: James's *Wings of a Dove*, von Hofmannsthal's "Letter," Joyce's "The Dead," and Rilke's *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigg*. The essence of these readings consists of discovering two semiotic orders within the work that finally become harmonized by means of an attempt to look at events and the manner of their presentation from the outside, free of the limitations to which the characters find themselves condemned (as well as readers who trustingly follow familiar conventions and are ill-prepared to cope when the action develops differently from the formulas they know from previous texts).

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It would be difficult to defend the thesis that Søren Kierkegaard drew up the program for European modernism. There is no doubt, however, that his perception of the relationship between the human being and the absolute gnawed at the European consciousness of that era and combined with the Romantic sensibility of awe before the Other could have inspired and did inspire people to search for meaning outside the work itself. Lisi's goal of showing the connections between the modernists

who figure in his book and Kierkegaard's writings by doc-umenting the reception of those works may be read, we conclude, less as an instance of scholarly rigor than as an effort to stem the flow of interpretative freedom that, based on a belief in interpretative possibilities concealed within a work that vary from the authorial intention, de facto allows any meaning whatsoever to be freely con-ferred upon the work. Lisi wants the current of modern-ist aesthetics he is reconstructing to retain the memory of its source and he attempts this even when he finds little direct evidence of reception (as in the case of Hof-mannsthal), or when, unable to document Kierkegaard's influence, he emphasizes writers' fascination with Ibsen (in the cases of James and Joyce); the Scandinavian pe-riphery expand through this desire to designate observed influence in this area crucial to Modernism, which may well result in whetting scholars' appetites to explore other provinces in modern literature's kingdom and redefining their importance in the annals of literary history. Revers-ing previous vectors of influence (which Lisi is engaged in when he polemicizes with the theses put forth in Pas-cal Casanova's book *The World Republic of Letters*) and demonstrating the falsity of the assumption that only the mighty center can exert influence on the periphery and that reverse processes are unheard-of and impossible, renders the map of modernist Europe suddenly much more intriguing (at least potentially) than it was before.

Lisi in *Marginal Modernisty* seeks out examples of this reverse direction of influence (for instance, in his con-sideration of the significance of James's criticism in the discussion of the "scandalous" early twentieth-century London productions of Ibsen, or in his analysis of the Scandinavian heritage's penetration of Rilke's work). In decisively demonstrating the threads of Kierkegaard and Ibsen's reception, Lisi is not proving the reception of an aesthetic model developed on the strength of a structure of identity; he is, however, showing its un-doubted incompatibility with leading modernist thought currents about non-human perspectives on human struggles with the existing world. That means that the experience of transformation that Kate decrees at the end of *The Wings of a Dove*, the hope for a new lan-guage expressed by Hofmannsthal's Chandos letter, or Gabriel's thoughts as he looks at the falling snow in

The Dead, underpinned by Kierkegaard's metaphysical exploration or the techniques for unmasking nineteenth-century social dysfunction that we find in Ibsen's dramas, complete our understanding of the multi-layered nature of Modernism, whose consistent ambition is to move out-side the structures of circumstance and the breathless longing to be something more than creatures defined by contemporary social attitudes. From the Polish perspec-tive, such an attempt to magnify our vision of European culture by examining the Scandinavian contribution sets a powerful precedent. It allows us to think a bit more am-bitiously about the European significance of Polish works of the 1880s and '90s and also those from the dawn of the twentieth century; it forces us to consider what aes-thetic models have germinated in Poland's finally no less specific cultural climate, as well as whether and by what avenues they may have reached the cultural centers of modernism.

Here, it is worth taking another look at Rilke and his "Ex-perience." Considering that the narrative of Lisi's book closes not with Joyce (who is mentioned in the title), but precisely Rainer Maria Rilke, whose *Malte Laurids Brigg* is the last modernist work to be analyzed, we may observe, referring once again to that short prose work quoted at the beginning, that the way its protagonist feels "within him the gentle presence of the stars" and a "sweet flavour […] added to […] existence"[15] belongs to the repertoire of affect shared with other sensitive souls of that tumultuous time. The sense of plenitude an-nounced in that work is the same phenomenon traced by Lisi in *Malte Laurids Brigg*. The dialogue between the two texts, placed in proximity to each other by their dates of origin, appears to confirm that possibility of coherence in the world where nothing had been perceived as lasting, where nothing definite could be experienced or grasped in words… This feeling of unity with creation is, in Rilke's work, the result of solitude perceived positively, in this context deserving to be called independence or freedom:

> A gentle something separated him from his fellows
> by a pure, almost apparent, intermediate space,

[15] R.M. Rilke, *Where Silence Reigns*, trans. G. Craig Houston, New York 1978, p. 36.

through which it was possible to pass single items but which absorbed any relationship into itself—and, being saturated with it, intervened like a dark, deceptive vapour between himself and others. He did not know yet to what extent his separation was sensed by others. As far as he was concerned, it gave to him, for the first time, a certain freedom towards men [...], a peculiar ease of movement amongst these others, whose hopes were set on one another, who were bound together in death and life.[16]

The aesthetics of dependency does not heal the individual's relationship with society, nor indeed, in light of this passage, should it. Expanding the spectrum of aesthetic reactions within the modernist corpus, Lisi follows his protagonists in allowing us to perceive what Rilke also noticed about isolation – the potential to discover the meaning accessible to an individual who transgresses barriers of accepted convention (social, communicative, philosophical) and activates new areas of self-exploration. Although, as Kierkegaard wrote in his diary: "[i]t is dangerous to cut oneself off too much, withdraw from the bonds of society,"[17] the peculiar aspect of modernity (in its Scandinavian as in every other regional iteration) enables us to see that the permissible degree of separation is a value open to negotiation; useful and desirable at those moments when in rare communion with nature, with a book under his or her arm, one tries to find the source of that strange trepidation that rises in the trunk of the tree of knowledge that grows in solitude. Lisi's book, in many places challenging to the existing order of things and in some places inspiring in its blasphemy, presents an important lesson in the historical method, too often ignored in recent times, of textual interpretation and cross-sectional thought. Lisi introduces a theoretical model from texts written over a century ago and thereby reminds us that modification of petrified concepts of historical transformation spells hope for catching a glimpse of important and previously ignored elements within wholes we know only superficially.

[16]Ibid., p. 37.

[17]S. Kierkegaard, *Papers and Journals: A Selection*, ed. and trans. A. Hannay, New York: 1996, p. 52.

m o d e r n i s m

KEYWORDS

O R I G I N A L I T Y

influence

Scandinavia   *Ibsenism*

Abstract:

The topic of this review, Leonard F. Lisi's book Marginal Modernity. The Aesthetics of Dependency from Kierkegaard to Joyce, is an ambitious attempt to reconstruct the cartography practiced by scholars of European modernism. Examining the northern periphery of the continent, Lisi tries to show how an aesthetics of dependency, formulated within the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard, was disseminated in Western literature, chiefly through the reception of Henrik Ibsen's plays, influencing the perception of art, humanity, and our place in the world in the works of such artists as Henry James, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Rainer Maria Rilke.

Note on the Author:

Dr Marcin Jauksz is an assistant professor at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. He earned his PhD based on a book *Krytyka dziewiętnastowiecznego rozumu. Źródła i konteksty „Pałuby" Karola Irzykowskiego* (The Critique on the Nineteenth-Century Reason. The Sources and Contexts of Karol Irzykowski's "The Hag"). The study earned a prize at Konrad and Marta Górski's Thesis Award in 2011. He had gained scholarship of the French Government in the years 2008-2009. His current projects include research in relations between social studies and the changes in the rhetoric of the novel as well as in the poetry lost on the "margins of civilization" in the late nineteenth century. He has published his papers in "Wiek XIX", "Porównania", "Lampa" and "Polonistyka" among others.

Cezary Rosiński

Geoculture(?)

c r i t i c s :
Elżbieta Rybicka, Geopoetyka. *Przestrzeń i miejsce we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach literackich* (Geopoetics. Space and Place in Contemporary Literary Theory and Practice), Kraków 2014.

Thanks to the work of Elżbieta Rybicka, use of the term "geopoetics" has been active in Polish literary scholarship for at least several years, chiefly because of the article "Geopoetics (On the City, Space and Place in Contemporary Literary Theory and Practice)" included in the book *Kulturowa teoria literatury* (Cultural Literary Theory).[1] The three areas delineated in the article title back then have now been reduced in the book *Geopoetyka. Przestrzeń i miejsce we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach literackich* to the last two. The central concept, however, has expanded rather than shrunk. In the 2005 article, Rybicka stipulated that geopoetics could be applied to both artistic practices and theoretical reflection about them, but kept the focus of the concept limited to topographies, understood as places inscribed in cultural texts.[2] In the 2014 book, geopoetics has become a concept-in-use, actively and decisively influencing and reshaping local contexts.[3] That means that geopoetics, as a traveling concept, has in a few years managed to precisely define the field of its explorations, while at the same time its base has grown considerably.

Rybicka divides her book into six parts, among which we find chapters devoted to the transition from the poetics of space to the politics of place, where the central

topic becomes the categoria of the spatial and topographic turns in literary studies; geopoetics as a scholarly orientation, treated as a collective and organizing term encompassing a whole group of ideas connecting concepts from geography, literature, and culture more broadly; an attempt to create a new lexicon of concepts to accommodate the interdisciplinary interest in space; an anthropology of place that takes into account the experience of space in the perceptual, emotional, and autobiographical registers; how place, memory, and literature are connected; and finally, the new (postmodern) regionalism and local narratives.

Geopoetics is, for Rybicka, primarily a scholarly orientation, aiming toward the complex and multifaceted project of analyzing and interpreting all kinds of interactions taking place between literary creation (and related cultural practices) and geographic space. This extremely wide formulation carries with it the real risk of becoming a totalizing, universal approach. Rybicka, aware of the fact, steers clear of such ambitions, but her scholarly practice and the scope and variety of the questions she deals with reveal geopoetics in terms of general theory. Geopoetics can be perceived here to be claiming its right to analyze all kinds of questions relating to spatiality, understood as an irreducible ingredient in every artistic experience and practice; questions previously explained away by the oversimplification that everything has to take place in some kind of space. The conceptual scope and the contexts dealt with go far beyond any short explanation of the term and occupy a space in between, covering all intersections of "geo" and

[1] E. Rybicka, "Geopoetyka (o mieście, przestrzeni i miejscu we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach kulturowych," in *Kulturowa teoria literatury* (Cultural Literary Theory), ed. M.P. Markowski, R. Nycz, Kraków 2006.

[2] Rybicka, "Geopoetyka," pp. 479, 480.

[3] I use a term developed by Mieke Bal in *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide*, co-written with Sherry Marx-MacDonald, Toronto 2002, p. 52.

poesis, geography and poetics, concrete topographical designations and the creative act, as well as, finally, a separate scholarly discipline with its own history and methodology and the aggregate of analytical tools used in studying the literary work, viewed as the conceptual poetry of geography itself and the inherently geographic thrust of the poetic impulse. This basic rule of geopoetics allows, Rybicka claims, for balance and tension between and among the subject representing its biography, reality geographically presented, and language, specifically in its incarnation as literature.

The main topics of geopoetics remain space and place. Rybicka traces the long process of how the semantic range of these terms was formed up to their current configuration. What the book offers readers is more a record of changes in meaning and a juxtaposition of several competing projects than an authorial conclusion. There is a traditional procedure in the humanistic treatment of geography that divides and opposes space and place, attributing abstraction and generality to the former and keeping concrete topographic localization as the domain of the latter. After the spatial turn, the initially universal and impersonal space, formerly seen as a neutral container of events, acquires an active role as a tool, a means, a goal and a method, but is nonetheless treated as socially constructed. In another part of the book Rybicka observes that place (but not space) was treated by the dominant theories of the cultural turn as a construct of social practices. Objectified thus, place becomes indistinguishable from space and on that basis it is difficult to draw a boundary between these two spatial categories. The line of change remains clearly marked, however: the fixity and neutrality of spatial localizations yields to a productive formulation, but contemporary conceptions are in turn altering the picture still more drastically – moving from radical social constructionism to a vision closer to non-anthropocentric currents in the human sciences, accenting the dynamic agency of non-human actors and underscoring the active role played by places. It will therefore be no exaggeration to state that the relationships between subject and space are beginning to be characterized by a certain mutability, the subject is becoming spatialized, and space – subjectivized, though it is notable that Rybicka

does not go so far as to make such a bold proposition. The place (now probably interchangeably with space) will 1) function as a form of localization, placing within a locality and referring to the material shape or meaning of a place, as well as 2) encompassing the affective sphere and defining a person's relationship to a given *loci.* The category of place is increasingly understood geographically, directing our attention to the concrete, material, and situated, at the cost of a universal order of spatial theory. To grasp the problem a different way: perhaps the most successful attempt to describe place in literary scholarship is the metaphor of the constellation, making possible various kinds of connections with personal experience, the annals of culture, and the imagination, in which connections locality becomes the central category, though Rybicka approaches it with some mistrust and always interprets it in relation to globality.

I would like to examine these so far casually outlined problems in a different context. It will not address – something otherwise worth noting – the thought expressed in the double motto that adorns the book. In this formulation, geopoetics can turn in two possible directions: one is embodied by the work of W.G. Sebald, dealing with the experience of concrete topographical and geographical space, immersed in direct contact with it and shaped by certain narrative practices relating to that place. The other is the textualization of space found in the work of Michał Paweł Markowski, and the examination of space using the conceptual tools of literary studies and the agency of literature. Only a concept of the heterogeneity of place that recognizes it as both participant in and area of relations between literature and geographic space and the potential of geopoetics as a strategy for interpretation of artistic work with particular attention to the artistic process enables it to be presented via the following four aspects: 1) poetological, covering the traditional topics of poetics, including language, character, genre theory, and reader reception, 2) geographical – dealing with geographical issues most frequently involving maps, places, imagined geographies (seen from a literary perspective) 3) anthropological – due to the crucial role played by the experience of places and space (the perceptual and affective aspects of literature) and last but not least, 4) performative

– observing literary creation as a causative activity with the potential to initiate further activities, world-creating, event-creating and meaning-creating action. This four-fold division proposed by the author will serve as my template for reflections whose aim is to reveal all of the contexts discussed by Rybicka.

Geopoetics as poetics will perhaps be the most important aspect of this system from the point of view of literary scholarship, ennobling the arsenal of poetological instruments and generally offering a strategy that parallels their revelatory work with literary texts. In this formulation of her strategy, Rybicka shows and highlights the geographical aspect and takes into account topographical factors. From precisely that angle she seeks to examine language: as rhetorical pathways in literary topographies, as geographical proper names or, finally, as locally marked vocabulary. Of particular interest is her treatment of the study of genres, since literary genres in connection with place create something like a geo-theory of genres, a specific type of supplement to Jahan Ramazani's concept of transnational poetics.[4] In keeping with this proposition, Rybicka considers such genres or subgenres as are tied to the specific character of a place or geographical region. The interpretative capacity she foresees for this program is virtually guaranteed by its dynamic grasp of the relationship between literature and place, in terms of both local variations of the descriptive or "touristic" poem, but also such genres as the dumka, bylina, or haiku, that emerged from local or regional cultures. These in turn have the potential for transfer or, to refer again to Ramazani, transnationality. The question arises, however, whether the theory of genres is in fact dependent in a certain way on concrete geographic localization, since it can be transferred from one place to another. Perhaps this relates to a kind of repeatability in a territory's geographic structure, which can with much greater ease be discovered in another, similar place.

We are certainly much indebted to Rybicka's book for its popularizing tendencies: the number of theoretical concepts unfolded for or introduced to the Polish reader here is truly impressive. Particularly noteworthy

are some remarkably interdisciplinary concepts she discusses, among which the most interesting are Bertrand Westphal's notion of geocriticism, a scholarly method focusing on interactions between geographical spaces and their representations in literature, art, photography and film, and geohumanities, an American project that joins together the scholarly traditions of urbanism, literary studies, the visual arts, and the natural sciences. Rybicka's introduction and analysis of Polish spatial positions are most remarkable: from the work of her compatriot colleagues, she adduces two lines of development of the problem of space in literary studies.[5] The first, of which Janusz Sławiński's writings are emblematic, posits the dominant of ergocentricity: a focus on the text itself and its morphology, internal cohesion within the discipline, and the treatment of literature as a linguistic phenomenon. The second dominant, traceable to the scholarship of Andrzej Borowski, attempts to juxtapose problems of language and stylistics with geographical and historical connections, and is also marked by a more open approach to the question of where the discipline's boundaries lie. This is how Rybicka sees the division between these two paths, though we should note that the complex and varied work of Sławiński, the author of "Przestrzeń w literaturze" (Space in Literature), is here reduced to a basic structural and text-centered perspective (one shared by Rybicka), though in Sławiński we also find such propositions as the following: "Poetic or narrative transcriptions of cultural models of experiencing space are found in a wide array of forms that are analogous in that respect, including geographical notations, historiographical texts, or theological treatises, to name only a few. One should go further: the problem under discussion goes beyond the world of verbal compositions, because it feeds no less on ritual manifestations, ceremonies, etiquette, games, architecture, urban studies, and also the distinct sphere of visual images: paintings, drawings, films […]."[6] This in fact sounds very similar to some of Rybicka's statements.

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[4] J. Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics*, London 2009.

[5] We must also note that the following scholars are mentioned: Wincenty Pol, Stefania Skwarczyńska, and Kazimierz Brakoniecki.

[6] J. Sławiński, "Przestrzeni w literaturze" (Space in Literature), in *Próby teoretycznoliterackie* (Literary Theory Challenges), Warszawa 1992, p. 175.

I would like to examine geopoetics as geography from two perspectives: on the one hand, as a place where two separate fields, literary studies and geography, meet; on the other hand, as an opportunity to develop a shared terminological base. Geopoetics in this view, creating new areas of consideration, naturally offers and provides new terms for literary studies (including poetics). Among these, the most intriguing are very likely narrative mapping, the literature of idiolocality, literature and reading as geographic events, literary geography of the senses, literature as a place of memory, the textures of place, and auto/bio/geo/graphy. This last category goes beyond the limits of the areas reserved for literary studies and geography, thereby proving the expansive potential of this entire scholarly approach. Auto/bio/geo/graphy situates the meaning of the experience of places and spaces for the purpose of self-knowledge at the center of its inquiry, and a singular role is played here by the tension created between localizaton and dislocation within a life's trajectory, the role of autobiographical places as places of both individual and cultural memory. Auto/bio/geo/graphies are situated at the heart of Rybicka's study, because they ask a question about the relationship between the local and global, the periphery and the center, movement and habitation, the areas she has explored most deeply. The concreteness of place, postulated repeatedly by the author of *Przestrzeni i miejsca we współczesnych teoriach i praktykach*, begins to slip away as space and place begin to function more like frame and instrument, taking on greater transferability and becoming submerged in constant movement.

It is thus unusually difficult to have a full, challenging and extended experience of such space, since geopoetics is also anthropology. From this perspective, two basic oppositions, habitation-movement and local-global, are inscribed in Rybicka's book, and the motto for this part could be Salman Rushdie's line, quoted by Rybicka, that "[e]verywhere [is] now a part of everywhere else."[7] Beginning with the first pair of concepts, the dichotomy first becomes apparent in a discussion of Kenneth

White's geopoetics, a pivotal moment for Rybicka's conception. To explain the central concept, Rybicka quotes several statements by the Scottish poet, which I will permit myself to quote here: "Geopoetics […] is the **field** of potential convergence of science, philosophy, and poetry"; "[geopoetics] means: poetics of the earth. [...] How human beings will desire and be able **to live** on earth"; "The word geopoetics contains the idea that we can **find a place for** philosophy, join **territory** with thought, nature and culture […]."[8] Rybicka draws out from White's discourse those features of geopoetics that consist of intellectual nomadry and convergence as well as interdisciplinarity, the concept of place in movement, transnationality, the rejection of the concept of identity, ecological thinking and the need to encompass the non-human. Only certain terms relate to the opposition of habitation and movement, but this effort she engages in suffices to clearly define the position that Rybicka is going to choose. It is worth noting that this vision of the nature of geopoetics is very selective and closer to the source of White's artistic practice, involving travel from Scotland through the Atlantic Pyrrhenees and the north coast of Brittany to the wild regions of the Americas and Asia, than his theoretical writings. The concepts that inform White's work: territory, area, and above all habitation and location, are extremely static; the aim is not to question spatiality, grasped as processes and relationships, but transferring those categories to an extended if epehemeral version of space that absorbs the subject and therefore expands in his or her vision.

Rybicka seems to surrender to the compulsion of movement.[9] The increased possibilities of translocation that result from developments in technology lead to a compression of space. That, according to Peter

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[7] S. Rushdie, *Shalimar the Clown*, New York 2006. Kindle edition.

[8] K. White, *Le lieu et la parole. Entretiens 1987-1997*, Cléguer 1997, p. 49; *Le poète cosmographe. Entretiens*, ed. M. Duclos, Bordeaux 1987, p. 123; *Poeta kosmograf*, trans. K. Brakoniecki, Olsztyn 2010, p. 68. Emphasis mine – C.R.

[9] P. Sloterdijk, I*n the World Interior of Capital: Towards a Philosophical Theory of Globalization*, Cambridge 2013. Sloterdijk writes: "in the crystallized world system, everything is subject to the compulsion of movement. Wherever one looks in the great comfort structure, one finds each and every inhabitant being urged to constant mobilization [...]." Chapter 20, "The Uncompressible, or: The Rediscovery of the Extended," p. 247.

Sloterdijk, author of *In the World Interior of Capital*, was supposed to be the point of the spatial revolution that shortened the way from here to there to a mere remnant and in the process brought consequences for intermediate spaces. For the German philosopher, space, as a result of this process, is treated as a dimension of negligible value, while constant motion and the demand for speed mean that the only good space is a dead one, so that space's imperceptibility and failure to register in our senses becomes its primary virtue.[10] The disregarded space, seen as a distance whose only purpose is to be overcome, countries' cultures existing only to be mixed with others, finally, space as a nothingness between two electronic places leads to a situation of which Rybicka is certainly aware, but which she does not feature as a scholarly interpretation of space and place in her catalogue. What is at stake here is of course resistance to the process of reality being made unreal, the experience of what is expansive, defending ourselves against the effects of compression, abbreviation, and superficiality.[11] Space thus needs to be connected with the natural process of expansion.[12] "The new spatial thought is the revolt against the contracted world."[13] That revolt can take place through suspension, backing up the opposition outlined by Rybicka, or as a new discovery of slowness, with the potential to reconcile the two opposing categories, and thus making use of the conjunctive aspect of geopoetics.[14]

[10] Ibid., p. 249.

[11] Sloterdijk also refers here to the culture of presence, which needs to take a stronger position vis-a-vis the culture of imagination and memory. I reserve the term "culture of presence," however, for the work of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, who places it in opposition to the culture of meaning. See ibid., p. 252.

[12] See ibid., p. 252.

[13] See ibid.

[14] The phenomenon of nomadry is interesting to consider in this context. Sloterdijk writes: "... even those who change their residence frequently cannot avoid a habitus of dwelling on their way." (ibid., p. 255.) This corresponds to White's proposition that farmsteading does not rule out movement, although Rybicka understands that idea to reveal the lack of an established relationship between habitation and stabilization and as basing the idea of place on movement and flow. We should here remember another idea from Sloterdijk, who in fact observed "mobile cocooning" among nomads, captured in the notion that travel is home (ibid.).

The second pair of concepts in a way represent consequences of the first pair. Rybicka, in her commentary on Piotr Piotrowski's conception, in which he attempts to describe the dynamics of artistic geography, demonstrates an ability to negotiate between local knowledge and global knowledge based on the transitivity and openness to diverse currents that are thought to typify places and space in contemporary culture. In the spatial turn, Rybicka sees the dependence of locality on relations with globalization processes, probably best captured in Doreen Massey's phrase "a global sense of place." Sloterdijk observes that misunderstandings relating to the expression "local" arise from its faulty placement as an antonym of "global" or "universal."[15] The localness that the author of *Geopoetics* is writing about, as a reaction to globalization processes, should in fact emphasize not dependency, but full asymmetry; the local is one's first experience, so that the return thereto is "an intellectual event of some consequence."[16] The emphasis on the local means that power shifts to internal expansion. The individual place because of its concreteness and uniqueness acts against the encroaching decontextualization, compression, and neutralization of space, and also against mapping[17] understood as the projection of spatial organization of territory based on selection, by definition postulating incompleteness. Interestingly, Rybicka's belief in the homogeneously transitive and migrational nature of space collapses in the face of numerous challenges. This results from her acceptance of a twofold image of space in light of her previous categorization of it as a transitional, nomadic entity. Her retreat from the nomadic is visible in her reflections on the category of the fictional character within the poetological aspect of geopoetics.. Rybicka proposes to look at contemporary nomadic protagonists who return to the places they came from and thus decide on stability, giving up their previous lives of displacement. This happens in the works of Joanna Bator, Inga Iwasiów, and Huberta Klimko-Dobrzaniecki. Similar conclusions can be observed in Rybicka's commentary on the ideas of Anna

[15] Ibid., p. 253.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

Nacher, for whom the growing role of geomedia and literary cartography and their influence in both theory and cultural practices represents "a return to location and the concreteness of real localization." Finally, localization triumphs due to the practicality of geopoetics understood as an active approach by readers in connection with localized reading. This model of reception is grounded in the geographical context, and the text and its reception become a geographical event and indissolubly linked with the local.

Geopoetics as performativity in the end accents the creative potential of literary *poesis* and its capacity to elicit change; geopoetics deals with three aspects: world-creation, relating to the production of both worlds both real and fictional, meaning-creation, developing interpretations that facilitate a spatial orientation, and event-creation, for situations in which the act of reading becomes a geographical occurrence. World-creation, since it is not a consequence of the meaning-creating aspect of geopoetics, allows the demarcation of a clear division. If the meanings created by and surrounding us do not form our reality, world-creation may be juxtaposed with the concrete materiality and presence of the subject in the world. This Bergonesque sketch shows that meaning-creation based on the culture of meaning and logos will have different sources than world-creation viewed as the creation of a certain real event based on contact, palpability, and above all, simultaneous and topographically identical presence of subject and place. Such a formulation corresponds to the distinction between the cultures of meaning and presence proposed by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, creator of a literary studies project that examines literature as a kind of "product of presence." It is thus possible to link this idea with Rybicka's scholarly approach. The culture of meaning, as represented by her, would thus confront the individual with a world converted into signs, positing existence in that world as an unending process of interpretation that explicates the relations connecting individual elements. The culture of presence, on the other hand, does not look for meanings, but desires to experience presence: in place of plot tensions and the link between cause and effect, we are given the opportunity to experience

the simultaneity of certain phenomena.[18] In the context of geopoetics, this will involve direct, intense contact with a particular place, and also encountering its presence as multiple layers, through the palimpsest aspect of space. This will, then, entail the revelation that what is experienced is not only a sign, but beyond its sign-value constitutes something substantial, material.[19]

We find one example of such an articulation in the book *Ghosts of Home. The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory*[20] by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, in which Hirsch, who developed the concept of post-memory, visits her parents' native city, but in fact primarily completes a journey between concept (the culture of the sign) and experience, the latter in this case including a physical process of overcoming the intergenerational transmission of a traumatic past (the culture of presence).[21] The practical aspect, corresponding to the principles of geopoetics, here signifies the desire to inscribe memory in a particular topography, a feeling of communion with historical space that awakens a need to return to the source. It thus turns out that cartography, an area belonging to the culture of the sign, is an uncertain and illusory source of knowledge about the structural dynamics and shape of a city, which becomes completely unidentifiable.[22] Walking practices of the type developed by Michel de Certeau are closer in spirit to play, and thus duplication of presence, than to language. Presence can thus be linked to the bodily; in her commentary on *Ghosts of Home*, Aleksandra Ubertowska, notes how closely linked Hirsch's anthropology of memory is with the body – the memory of a place, but more broadly, of the experience of a place, becomes much more prominent than narrative in "somatic writing": in the sensation

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[18] See H.U. Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence, What Meaning Cannot Convey*, Stanford 2004 and T. Mizerkiewicz, *Po tamtej stronie tekstów. Literatura polska a nowoczesna kultura obecności* (Beyond Texts. Polish Literature and the Modern Culture of Presence), Poznań 2013, pp. 180-181.

[19] See Mizerkiewicz, *Po tamtej stronie tekstów*, pp. 189-190.

[20] M. Hirsch, L. Spitzer, *Ghosts of Home. The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory*, London 2010.

[21] See A. Ubertowska, "Praktykowanie postpamięci. Marianne Hirsch i fotograficzne widma z Czernowitz" (Marianne Hirsch's Practice of Post-memory and the Photographic Phantom from Czernowitz), *Teksty Drugie* (Second Texts) 2013, 4, p. 269.

[22] See ibid., p. 274.

of hands touching a tile stove or the feeling of fatigue after a visit to a cemetery lasting many hours.[23]

In *Geopoetics* we find examples of that kind of non-textual and non-semasiological approach to space. One of them is certaily Tadeusz Sławek's concept of *genius loci*, by which he proposes "making space a partner in my existence; what is more, in this 'silent' conversation it often becomes clear that spaces do not need me and my order of things."[24] The exciting and dizzying simultaneity of so many phenomena exposes the inadequacy of anthropocentric categories, and the culture of the sign is, after all, a pre-eminently human achievement. Place is shown as an active partner in an encounter, which may be resistant to semiotic ownership, even rendering it impossible. That is the gist of the most contemporary reflection on the topic of geo-*poesis* understood as two-sided, human-spatial causative activity.

[23]See ibid., p. 276.

[24]T. Sławek, "Genius loci jako doświadczenie. Prolegomena" (Genius Loci as Experience. Prolegomena), in *Genius loci. Studia o człowieku w przestrzeni* (Genius Loci. Studies on Humanity in Space), ed. Z. Kadłubek, Katowice 2007, p. 5.

KEYWORDS

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Abstract:

This review traces the recent vicissitudes of the term "geopoetics." The purpose of the article is to situate the scholarly concept developed by Elżbieta Rybicka in the context of previous studies of space. Using her proposed framework of geopoetics, theoretical work on space is broken down into its poetological, geographical, anthropological, and performative aspects. Geopoetics becomes juxtaposed with the spatial thought of Peter Sloterdijk (proliferating space) and Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's "culture of space," allowing reflection on space to be expanded to include a non-anthropocentric interpretation of the humanities.