Facetiae on Facebook
– A Case Study

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On Facetiae

Social media such as the popular site Facebook were originally designed primarily to help people find their friends online, stay in contact with them, and make new friends. They allow people to exchange short messages in real time with a community that includes both close friends and casual acquaintances, concerning events of a private (or even intimate) nature, as well as thoughts and opinions on current events in the sociopolitical sphere, and to exchange interesting content via hyperlinks. The ability to receive feedback instantly, which forms the basis for how such media function (in Facebook's case, by clicking the "Like" button [giving someone a "like" (n.)] or leaving a comment under someone's post), the concise and multimedia nature of the content transmitted, and the growing popularity of these pursuits have transformed social media from sites that help people stay in touch into tools used for marketing, disseminating ideas, political rivalry, and organizing social activism. These sites, particularly Twitter and Facebook, have also become platforms for various types of artistic or critical activity, including literary activity.[1] The presence of literature on Twitter has already been the subject of many critical studies, particularly in English[2] (the site apparently continues to be less popular than Facebook in Poland and to be viewed as primarily an IT tool[3]). In view of the brevity the platform imposes on utterances (each post can contain no more than 140

[1] The problem of how various literary and paraliterary forms function within social media is a very complex one, which furthermore, in view of the specific nature of the medium, can probably never be studied "in full." The above remarks thus cannot be deemed even a contribution to a general description of the phenomenon – they constitute only an attempt at a very abbreviated outline of the context of the phenomenon, to be discussed in the remainder of the present work.

[2] See M. Rudin, *From Hemingway to Twitterature: The Short and Shorter of It*, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jep/33364 51.0014.213?view=text;rgn=main (dostęp: 28.01.2016).

[3] See http://www.gemius.pl/reklamodawcy-aktualnosci/media-spolecznosciowe-jako-kanaly-komunikacji-charakterystyka-uzytkownikow.html (last accessed: 28.01.2016).

characters), some scholars have even spoken of a new literary genre – so-called *twitterature*. *Twitterature* is not only a term that defines the phenomenon of literature in social media, but also the title of a book published by Penguin Books in which 60 literary works from the canon of world literature were "rewritten" in a maximum of 20 140-character tweets. Therefore, not only is literature present in new media – new media, it turns out, are also "present" in literature, as a result of which the two phenomena interweave, allowing some intriguing forms of paraliterary games and diversions to take shape.

The principle behind the content published on the fanpage[4] I am particularly interested in, Facecje (Facetiae), active on Facebook since the end of November 2012, recalls to some extent the strategy of the creators of the book *Twitterature*. Patryk Bryliński and Maciej Kaczyński, the page's creators and administrators, have designed, in their own words: "a Facebook profile where conversations among historical and literary figures can be found, taking place in very contemporary contexts. Seventeenth-century still-life masters discuss instagram pictures of what somebody had for lunch; a drunk Romeo texts Julia from under her balcony at 4:00 AM; and [...] Mickiewicz, naturally, is bitter with Słowacki over some internet comments the latter has made [...]."[5] The page, now active for over 3 years (a relatively long time, if we take into consideration the ephemerality of internet content and the "flood of information" as well as the fact that little-known pages with few visitors or commenters simply disappear from the web), has 49,890 fans.[6] The most popular posts on the page can get as many as 5,000 likes and several hundred shares.[7] It is noteworthy and typical that the work of Facecje's creators extends well beyond this one page, and the realm of Facebook. Bryliński and Kaczyński also maintain a blog ("Zmemłani"[8]) and another fanpage – "Antkowi znów nie wyszło" (Antek Messed Up Again).[9] The Facecje page also has its own YouTube channel,[10] and has given rise to a print publication – *Facecje. #HistoriaCoachemŻycia* (Facetiae. #HistoryLife'sCoach).[11] All of these media can be accessed directly via the Facecje page – links are available in the Information section. Due to limitations on volume and the unfathomable array of interconnected associations that one faces when attempting to get to the bottom of any of these authors' communication platforms, I will constrain myself in this article to an analysis of certain aspects of the Facecje phenomenon, and only those present on Facebook, only occasionally referring to

[4] A fanpage, unlike a personal profile on Facebook, is a web page devoted to promoting a brand, idea, position, etc.

[5] P. Bryliński, M. Kaczyński, *Facecje. #HistoriaCoachemŻycia,* Kraków 2015, 12.

[6] Figure given for 28 January 2016. For comparison, For comparison, the similarly-focused but relatively new (active since August 2014) site *Nowe wiersze sławnych poetów* (https://www.facebook.com/Nowe-wiersze-s%C5%82awnych-poet%C3%B3w-1537027053184427/?fref=ts) has over 25,000 fans, while "Sztuczne fiołki" (Artificial Violets, https://www.facebook.com/SztuczneFiolki/?fref=ts)*,* which also appeared about 5 years ago – have nearly 150,000. The comparison is somewhat superficial, since each of these sites, similar in their erudition, collage techniques combining classical works with current events and contemporary cultural phenomena, has its own specific approach, and, by the same token, a distinct, different audience of readers.

[7] "Sharing" content on Facebook causes it to appear on the user's "wall," together with other content published by that person. Sharing is understood in the Facebook community to convey "ownership" of the content thus published to a higher degree than mere liking.

[8] http://zmemlani.pl/

[9] https://www.facebook.com/Antkowi-znowu-nie-wysz%C5%82o-111292382357281/ - this fanpage is less popular than Facecje (it has over 13,000 likes); the content published is satirical in nature, directed at hipsterism, which it mocks, in keeping with the "rules" of the new medium, using mainly memes.

[10] https://www.youtube.com/facecje

[11] P. Bryliński, M. Kaczyński, *Facecje.*

their printed form (the very problem of "transfers" of literary or paraliterary forms onto the pages of "code-books" is a phenomenon in itself deserving of in-depth discussion, in view of the number and complexity of changes that the change of interface in this case brings about). It should be noted, however, that authors who are primarily linked with new media are very often found to be present in different forums online (for example, the Grzegor Udański, the author of *Nowych wierszy sławnych poetów* [New Poems by Famous Poets], uses a similar strategy; he also disseminates his work on YouTube and through traditional media, reading his work, for example, on the TVN show *Szkło kontaktowe* [Contact Lenses]), enabling them to achieve greater popularity and also engage in a wide variety of multimedia activity.

Brylński and Kaczyński's internet Facetiae represent a fascinating entity even if considered purely from a perspective of formal considerations. The content the authors publish is a kind of multimedia collage which reveals multiple metatextual and metamedial layers. The verbal and visual compositions they present take the form of screenshots (shots capturing the display on a computer screen) with captured text message dialogues or, more often, Facebook interactions. Such content, whether comprised of real captured communications or those staged for humoristic purposes, is often disseminated on the internet via "vanity sites"[12] and social media. In the case of Facecje, the inauthenticity or artificiality of these conversations is obvious and constitutes an essential element in the game, in many cases being a basic source of their humor. As is clear from the self-description I cited earlier, the activities of the authors of Facecje are a kind of fantasia on the theme of how historical or literary-historical events and the figures involved might look transposed into the language of social media. We thus have, for example, Mary informing her social circle about the birth of Jesus using the function offered by Facebook of announcing important life events;[13] or the use of the Facebook questionnaire function to choose the most beautiful among the goddesses of ancient Greece;[14] or Filippides using the application Endomondo;[15] or Poland changing its "relationship status," on Independence Day, from "it's complicated" to "single" [in Polish, "wolna" = single/free—TDW].[16] This particular formula of telling history in a new way, replacing narrative threads with signs thoroughly familiar to contemporary internet users, fulfills primarily a ludic function. It enables us to refer to the classical definition of comedy as the combination of two mutually distant or incompatible orders. The surprise effect thus achieved is further intensified by the fact that the creators of Facecje move very comfortably through the space both of history and literary history on the one hand and that of the internet and new media on the other, building communication that can be interpreted on many levels, depending on the recipient's inventory of knowledge or their desire to expand it.

[12]This is the term applied by Magdalena Kamińska (*Niecne memy. Dwanaście wykładów o kulturze internetu* [Ignominious Memes. Twelve Lectures on Internet Culture], Poznań 2011, 65) to internet platforms whose main or exclusive purpose is providing entertainment to their users through the presentation of series of humorous images, or, as they are usually calles, "internet memes."

[13]https://www.facebook.com/Facecje/photos/pb.298816166891398.-2207520000.1454021298./313850278721320/?type=3&theater (last accessed: 27.01.2016).

[14]https://www.facebook.com/Facecje/photos/pb.298816166891398.-2207520000.1454021298./340103172762697/?type=3&theater (last accessed: 27.01.2016).

[15]https://www.facebook.com/Facecje/photos/pb.298816166891398.-2207520000.1454021298./373785972727750/?type=3&theater (last accessed: 27.01.2016).

[16]https://www.facebook.com/Facecje/photos/pb.298816166891398.-2207520000.1454021298./299874933452188/?type=3&theater (last accessed: 27.01.2016).

In discussing the form of Facecje, there is no way to avoid referring to the name of the site, which is simultaneously a play on words and a conscious form of play with genre convention. The first segment of the name, "face," is obviously identical with the first segment of the name of the web portal, Facebook, thus anchoring this form of artistic creativity firmly in the new medium, both in terms of its range of distribution and its material and essential themes. We also cannot overlook, however, the deceptive but direct reference to the traditional genre form of facetiae. The authors invoke that source for the name on one of the first pages of their book, citing the definition of the word from the PWN dictionary of Polish language. Their play with genre form is thus to a large extent a conscious process, at the onomastic level, in some measure pushing together the new (i.e. the name's [superficial in terms of etymology] overlap with the name Facebook) and the old, the traditional (full overlap with traditional genre designation), and thereby in a sense announcing the specific thrust of the page, but not only that. In defining the principles that guide the creation of facetiae, Łukasz Górnicki, whose reasoning is extensively cited by the author of the relevant entry in the dictionary of literary genres and types published by Universitas,[17] "the essence of their comic aspect appears to be found in the astonishment elicited by revealing the 'orderliness' of things seemingly 'disorderly.'" What is more, facetiae originally constituted an oral form, being simply a kind of anecdote with an amusing punch-line told in a social setting. The genre represented an important element of social life, and the art of telling facetiae was reckoned among skills to be desired. The apparent absence of a connection between this traditional form and the "invention" of Bryliński and Kaczyński, or rather, their loose connection at best, though presented as such by satirico-comic intention, should not be taken at face value. The ability to tell an engrossing, amusing story that not only wins the listener's rapt attention but also proves interesting enough to be repeated, passed on, and recreated, was historically very important, particularly during the heyday of aristocratic culture. Similarly, in our era, the creation of new content, meaningful from the perspective of the community of social media users, allowing the creation of an entourage of fans or faithful readers, who not only express their approval but also **pass the content along** using the "Share" function or tagging friends by name in the comments and so recommending it to them, may be recognized as equally important socially. The ability to create funny, riveting communicative utterances is crucial to life on the internet. As Anna Wileczek notes: "Humor is one of the most essential elements in communication among young users. Together with the phatic function of communication, it takes part in establishing a non-hierarchical (because ludic) community, intensifying both its human and social aspects. It provides access to a world of excitement, pleasure, and meaning, where constant creation occurs, or rather mixing of words, symbols, and images."[18] Moreover, the facetiae of earlier times likewise constituted important material for *silva rerum* texts, which, according to some scholars,[19] were to some degree equivalent to the "walls" of social media users, as the latter become the repositories of quotations and diverse kinds of content.

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[17] *Słownik rodzajów i gatunków literackich,* ed. G. Gazda and S. Tynecka-Makowska, Kraków 2006.

[18] A. Wileczek, "Mowa pisana. Pismo mówione… O 'konwergencji' (internetowej) młodomowy" (Written Speech. Spoken Writing… On the 'Convergence' of (Internet) Youth Speech), in: *Problemy konwergencji mediów* (Problems of Media Convergence), ed. M. Kaczmarczyk and D. Rott, Sosnowiec-Praga 2013, 173.

[19] See M. Kaźmierczak, "Użytkownik, nadawca i odbiorca w Web 2.0. Uwagi o różnych sposobach odnoszenia się do literatury w serwisie Twitter" (User, Sender and Receiver in Web 2.0. Notes on Various Ways of Treating Literature on Twitter), *Teksty Drugie* 2012, no. 6, 277 and passim.

The ludic and lighthearted intention that the authors of Facecje themselves indicate to be decisive in the introduction to their publication in book form ("Why and what for? Above all for the fun of putting together these little stories, which due to the characters who appear in them can take on a wide variety of meanings and shades of meaning…"[20]) is nonetheless not the only one. The quoted passage, after all, is followed by this one: "…As well as for the pleasure of feeding our idols and conducting them into a new, strange [for us too!] world, in which everything happens so quickly and chaotically."[21] The metacultural or metamedial intent is noticeable here – an attempt to master the "new, strange" world and tell some kind of narrative about it, through astounding juxtapositions, bringing into relief not only certain aspects of events from the past, but also, and perhaps more importantly, essential features of the new medium, which here, as I mentioned earlier, provides not just the vehicle for transmitting content, but also the artistic material and theme. The creators of the site also perceive changes in the scope of how social media and the internet in general function. As Kaczyński underscores in an interview for the portal *naTemat* (on the subject): "… people's relationship to content on the internet has changed. Sitting on the internet every day, we all have had enough of triviality and shallowness, we're looking for interesting, intriguing things. And there are more and more such things. I myself thought, a couple years back, that the internet was dull, because it's the internet. Well—I was wrong."[22]

This statement can be understood, up to a point, as ironic; there is no denying, however, that "decoding" and "interpreting" Facecje requires skills that might appear at first glance rarely to coexist. Because on the one hand, individual Facecje posts[23] demand genuine historical or literary-historical knowledge (not always easily acquired using internet sources), on the other hand – the humour and comedy of these forms is chiefly a result of their use of new medial tools which, in order to achieve the desired effect of "supplementing" some forms of content or "crashing together" others, demands a working knowledge of the communicative conventions in force on Facebook (not only the mechanisms of how "likes" work, but also hashtags, messages concerning important events, questionnaires, and more). The mixtures, collages and other activity located within the postmodern aesthetic whose aim is to allow interpenetration of different registers and erasure of the borders between them here still remain, despite their popular medium of distribution, to some extent elitist materials, through their sometimes multilayered intertextuality, intermediality, and metacultural potential, representing an interesting object of interpretation not only for specialists in the study of new media, but also for literary scholars.

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[20]http://natemat.pl/39201,zmemlani-tworcy-jbm-antkowi-znowu-nie-wyszlo-i-facecje-o-polsce-mozna-cos-powiedziec-na-luzie-i-z-usmiechem (last accessed: 27.01.2016).

[21]http://natemat.pl/39201,zmemlani-tworcy-jbm-antkowi-znowu-nie-wyszlo-i-facecje-o-polsce-mozna-cos-powiedziec-na-luzie-i-z-usmiechem.

[22]http://natemat.pl/39201,zmemlani-tworcy-jbm-antkowi-znowu-nie-wyszlo-i-facecje-o-polsce-mozna-cos-powiedziec-na-luzie-i-z-usmiechem.

[23]I use the names that the authors themselves gave their works, capitalizing the titles; it is difficult to unambiguously classify this form, whether in terms of type, genre, or even affiliation with a particular artistic discipline. The term that perhaps comes closest to describing them would be "image-text collage"; however, that also fails to convey the entirety of the complicated intertextual and intermedial relations that exist in certain Facecje posts.

Due to limited space, I have chosen to illustrate the Facecje phenomenon by making an attempt to interpret a relatively recent post (30.10.2015) by Bryliński and Kaczyński, which I find to be relevant in that it not only fully demonstrates the "poetics" of their facetiae that I outlined above, but also undertakes a critical and courageous, though humorous, dialogue with Polish national mythology.

"Wawel Crypts (closed group)"

One of the most typical elements of the formula for Facecje that I have described is the collision of orders that generates surprise or hilarity – classic literary characters (meaning not only characters from cultural texts that, assuming the legitimacy of such a division, we could assign to high literature – the site has also featured characters from George R.R. Martin's Game of Thrones and George Lucas's *Star Wars*) or important historical figures express themselves in a form typical for internet discussions on social media. The more the character is identified with the high style, the greater the effect of surprise. This strategy fits into the general strategy for internet humour as acutely described by Limor Shifman, based on his own close observation:[24] "Internet humor is based on visual collages of incongruous elements. The use of collage technique is self-conscious, as if the creators want to ensure that 'the process of "cut and paste"' underlying the joke remains evident." Among the characters who figure in this context on the Facecje page, Polish writers are especially popular, with the bards and virtuosos of the Romantic era standing out in particular. Bryliński and Kaczyński delight in referencing, for example, the famous dispute between Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki. To give a good example, one of the first Facecje posts published on Facebook was an attempt to transpose into internet realia not only the publication of *Pan Tadeusz*, but also the historical discussion of that work (which, in its "contemporary" version, ended with the following comment from Słowacki: "Go be a bard somewhere else, bra." – a direct reference to the popular series of mems circulating on the internet of the type: "Go be fat somewhere else."[25]).

In the collage that I wish to examine more closely, the participants in the discussion are members of a "closed group" called "Wawel Crypts." Here we see a particularly clear manifestation of the specific type of humor and language play that the authors employ in almost every post. Groups on Facebook represent places where individuals who share certain interests or some common feature (e.g. the group "Poznań Mothers" or the group "I Will Read 52 Books in 2016) can exchange notes and opinions on that subject, look for assistance from others with similar problems, or simply meet new people. A very widespread practice is the creation of Facebook groups for, for example, particular student associations, classmates, or members of the same profession. Such groups are often "closed," meaning that

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[24]L. Shifman, "Humor in the Age of Digital Reproduction," *International Journal Of Communication* 2007, no. 1. This article is relatively old, given the specific nature of the object of research, but it seems to me that regardless of changes in the scope and popularity of the platforms Shifman studied, certain general conclusions can still be valid and provide an interesting foundation for further research.

[25]In a process typical for the development of internet memes, penetratingly described by Anna Gumkowska in the text "Mem - nowa forma gatunkowo-komunikacyjna w sieci" (The Meme, a New Genre / Communicative Form on the Web, *Teksty Drugie* 2015, no. 6), this meme was remade many times over, with the undesirable trait of excess fat being replaced by others valued negatively in a given context, e.g. "Go be a pinko somewhere else" or "Go rain somewhere else." The "meme" (like many others) is also often accompanied by a corresponding image.

they can only be joined by a new user pending the administrator's approval of his or her request. The authors of Facecje thus avail themselves of this practice, familiar to Facebook users (maintaining, crucially, the typical form of interface and graphic arrangement, which not only heightens the impression of "apparent authenticity" but also allows the discussion to be placed in a concrete context) to tell about an event from a completely different order – the transfer of Słowacki's ashes to the Wawel crypts. This is not, of course, the only way in which they use formulas typical for Facebook's interface and communication norms. Kamińska, writing about language on the Net, cites the findings of Jan Grzenia, author of *Komunikacja językowa w internecie* (Linguistic Communication on the Internet) with regard to its most typical components. In the web page under analysis, it is not hard to find many elements that demonstrate a kind of stylization of discussion participants' communication toward internet language. This involves more than formal gestures such as providing a visual form that evokes particular associations. We observe, for example, what Kamińska, quoting Grzenia, calls "written notation of nonverbal reactions" – "hehe," "haha," "bwahaha," "muahaha," the use of emoticons and other icons (not only the most easily recognizable ones, but also those that are harder to decipher, such as "xD"), whose "power" is multiplied by repetition of the sign (for example, "xDDD" instead of "xD"), as well as "hybrid forms joining text and graphics, such as signatures, avatars, electronic addresses or screen names"[26] – each participant in the discussion uses (typical of Facebook) not only their first and last name, but also a profile picture (the creators of Facecje notably use classical sources when finding "profile pictures" for their personae, using well-known, recognizable portraits. This could be interpreted as a way of simplifying interpretation for readers, but also as a particular kind of metatextuality or rather "metamediality" – the profile picture being what we consider in some way most representative of us, our visiting card or the foundation on which our identity is constructed – and after all, we "recognize" most historical figures from their most famous and widely reproduced portraits). The personae also use hashtags – category names, designated with the sign "#," which theoretically are supposed to simplify content selection in a given medium (mainly Twitter), and function as the vehicle for many jokes and satirical conceits (by clicking on the hashtag #media, which punctuates a post, the user gains access to all posts with the same hashtag. The jokes users engage in mainly involve creating highly complicated and elaborate hashtags which obviously do not serve the purpose of such categorization, but rather underscore that the originality and singularity of the post in question); their use of punctuation is casual, not to say careless (as is typical in quick communication on the internet, periods and capital letters are not used), and the language tends to be very informal: "Honeybunches, I would totally rot with you" (Mordeczki, totalnie pogniłbym z Wami).

The communication in these posts is seemingly slapdash, because many of them are based on linguistic play relating to the situation they present. The use of the phrase "closed group" itself can also refer to the space of a crypt, to which (as in the group) only a select few have access. The proposal to "liven up this dead atmosphere" or to "throw a bone to the faithful

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[26]M. Kamińska, *Niecne memy*, 46.

followers," the phrase "EAT DIRT,"[27] the word "cryptocommercial" and the exhortation to "stretch out comfortably" are all clear linguistic references to "last things," more precisely: death, dying, and decomposition. It is, however, worthwhile to consider not only jokes based on the device (very widespread in culture) of domesticating cultural taboos through laughter, which are easily understandable to most readers, but also more complicated, intertextual jokes and literary or paraliterary references. For example, the members of the "closed group" include, instead of Cyprian Kamil Norwid, "Earth from Norwid's grave." This is because that particular bard, rather than being buried in the Wawel crypts, lies in a collective grave in Paris, but there is an urn in the Wawel with earth taken from that collective grave. In an intriguing twist, one follower of the Facecje page, a writer active on Facebook named Jacek Dehnel, posted a comment reproaching the creators of the page for a lapse in historical exactitude: "Hey you guys, I like Facecje [...] but I also like my nonsense to be based on historical accuracy. Julek [is noted on the page as having] joined the closed group in 1927, when the earth from Norwid's grave could only dream of doing so."[28] The earlier-mentioned member, "Earth from Norwid's grave," in a comment referring to the poet's most famous poem, writes "that friend will fall here like Chopin's piano," and Fryderyk Chopin himself "left [his] heart in Warsaw" (referring to the burial place of the composer's heart). He ends his post with the hashtag #Suchot, a play on words in Polish with a cultural dimension, combining the word "suchar" (literally, biscuit or cracker; a slang word for a hackneyed, unfunny joke) and the archaic term for tuberculosis ("suchoty," a more archaic equivalent of "consumption"). We should note that the language used by the personae on Facecje does not in fact contain a lot of archaisms (while the use in online humour of words deemed to belong to a high or archaic style is very frequently encountered elsewhere, i.e. in the meme cycle "Zaiste, zacny suchar, milordzie" [Forsooth, a most noble cracker, milord]) – it therefore seems that what is being pastiched or parodied here is not the writers or other persons buried in the Wawel crypts, but rather the specific style of communication peculiar to social media.

The final comment, whose "author" is Jan III Sobieski, is also symptomatic: "Welcome to the company of the great and dead! Stretch out comfortably and watch what those upstairs do with your image and who will put you on their banner. You'll be rolling over with laughter! xDDD." The comment concludes with an emoticon that signifies tremendous mirth, though it seems to also carry a more serious undertone. In the context of the frequent controversies over the burial places of prominent Poles and who should be considered "worthy" or "unworthy" of inclusion in the Wawel's "closed group," we may read this comment as satirical social criticism. As the writers themselves observe in their interview for *naTemat*: "...people are kind of sick of those [weak] jokes and want a bit more. A joke on a high enough level that it can say

[27]Simultaneously exemplifying the use of capital letters to represent raising one's voice, also mentioned by Grzenia (see M. Kamińska, *Niecne memy*, 46). [I have translated some of the jokes fairly freely to preserve some of the humor – TDW.]

[28]https://www.facebook.com/Facecje/photos/a.298817113557970.58639.298816166891398/753 031404803203/?type=3&theater, In their reply, the authors of Facecje admit: "The one thing we were not sure of but did not check due to lack of time. We can only lower our heads in shame and admit our mistake. As penance, we will spend the weekend poring over books instead of going out to clubs." Curiously, one commenter, developing the thread, refers back to the wordplay in the main text, writing "They'll remember that lesson 'til their grave!"

something clever in between the lines [...] you can say something about Poland or Mickiewicz in front of people and with a smile." Facecje is thus not merely a satirical page; its authors also want to "say something about Poland" and comment not only on events from the past while unmasking the communicative techniques used in new media by using them in parodic forms of literary work, but also to react to current events and weave more or less readable references to them into these works, making Facecje a multi-layered verbal-visual-interface collage open to a wide range of readings.

Interpreting Facecje thus requires not only some level of competency in the ability to grasp linguistic or intertextual play (without which it would be difficult to understand most of the jokes), but also the ability to recognize the communicative conventions in force on Facebook (as part of the phenomenon of "cyber-writing" broadly understood – "communicative competency in things electronic"[29]) and awareness of the current socio-political situation. Thus the immediate addressees of this type of text, those who find such images amusing, are to some extent a limited group. Such humour is directed primarily at people who are young but also well-educated, for whom the two orders are not foreign, so that their combination elicits laughter or reflection rather than confusion or indignation. The acceptance and popularity of this kind of creative work has, on the one hand, been brought about by the rise of Lessingian **remix culture**,[30] a phenomenon rooted in both new media as such and in the moods and thought of postmodernism. On the other hand, the current phase in the development of social media is also relevant here: no longer a fascinating novelty, these media have already begun to elicit impatience and a sense of information overload, as well as fatigue from continual repetition of the same content. From that perspective, as Wileczek stresses, "emotional, creative productions take precedence [...] In this connection, strategies are employed which aim to make written forms less bookish or book-centred, to make them a code of shared participation and thus inter-relatedness [...]. Other linguistic registers (such as artistic style) or languages are treated as resources for free linguistic creation."[31] The point is to create something new, something creative, which is perhaps somewhat more demanding, but also – attracts attention. The poetics of free, unconstrained play with conventions, elements, patterns, and figures seems to offer in some sense unlimited possibilities, while punchlines and juxtapositions based on the classical understanding of humour ensure that the Facecje emerges from various perspectives as a phenomenon of more than passing interest.

The presence of literature on Facebook, if only in the form of intertextual and intermedial play, is an important development and demands further consideration and more thorough study. As Kaźmierczak correctly noted, through its entry into the space of social media, literature is becoming "part of the fabric of everyday experience" – the images created by the authors of Facecje, the collages by the creators of "Sztuczne Fiołki" or "Nowe wiersze sławnych poetów," appear on the "walls" of Facebook users beside content of a personal nature (photos or news about happy relationships or failed exams), as well as IT, practical, or

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[29]M. Kamińska, *Niecne memy*, 50.

[30]L. Lessig, *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy*, London 2008.

[31]A. Wileczek, "Mowa pisana," 172.

purely recreational material (memes, clips), marketing announcements, and so on. Not only each individual post (or "facetus"), but also the wall on which the posts appear, is a kind of textual conglomerate that calls for a different, non-traditional code of reading and reception. On the one hand, this form of reading demands more active work, and is interactive up to a point (with its likes, comments, shares, recommendations, and so on). On the other hand, it differs in many other respects from the reading that the traditional code demands. The situation can be evaluated in diverse ways, but it is hard to miss the changes that are taking place. Maciej Maryl was apt in his summing-up of the phenomenon when he noted that "Literature today is not the main instrument of socialization and acculturation, though to continues to fulfil important functions in society. It is precisely defining and studying this peculiarity of literary culture next to other media systems (film, television, internet, computer games...) that would seem to be the most urgent task facing scholars of literary culture [...]."[32]

[32]M. Maryl, "Literatura i e-społeczeństwo" (Literature and E-society)*, Teksty Drugie* 2012, no. 6, 9.

KEYWORDS

Literature on Facebook

Abstract:

Beyond being a tool for maintaining interpersonal contact, social media have now become a platform for the dissemination of literature, as well as a topic of literature itself. Among the class of texts that use new media not only as a vehicle for transmission but also as material and subject matter, the Facecje (Facetiae) page on Facebook, published since November 2012, cannot be overlooked. The site offers a kind of verbal-visual collages, which "rewrite" important historical events or literary works in the language of new media, using them as the substructure for cycles of comments (in graphics that perfectly duplicate the real Facebook interface) or text message dialogues. To interpret these facetiae, not only historical knowledge and competency are needed, but also knowledge of "cyber-writing" and awareness of the specific nature and context of the medium. Though positioned as satire, the humour of Facecje also conveys reflection on how social media function. The site also offers a more demanding alternative for internet users who are bored with the low level of many jokes circulating on the internet.

social media

Facecje

literature and new media

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