

# Dycio Generator.

## On the Variational Tendencies of Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki's Poetry

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Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki is not a new media poet. All attempts at conversion, convergence, or interpretation notwithstanding, Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki is not a new media poet. The aesthetics of error, glitch poetry, noises, clusters, strings, and, of course, cybernetic aesthetic categories, all find some justification here. But in this case it is the interpreter who is new media, not Dycki himself. Because Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki is not a new media poet.

Now that this statement has been repeated three times, at least three proofs are called for. And so, consider a question of primary importance: Dycki does not publish books of poetry within the space of the new media. His works are paper-based, and the pages arranged in a linear order, just as the poems are ordered with Roman numerals. Associative connections that subliminally imply a hyperlink structure inscribe themselves in a network of repetitions and differences typical of modern poetry in general – features mentioned by Bartmiński as hypertextual (ephemerality, spatial arrangement, emerging meaning, attention to language, a decentralized structure, local coherence, reading as aimless wandering, tinkering with heterogeneity, analogic thought, chaos [a self-organizing system], polyphony and dialogism, skips and discontinuity, parallelisms) can in fact be transcribed as features of poetry and counterpointed to the “textual” qualities of prose (durability, linear arrangement, definite meaning, attention focused on the represented world, a centripetal structure, global coherence, purpose-directed reading, a systematic approach, logical thought, order, monologism, continuity, sequentiality<sup>1</sup>). The publication context thus does not argue strongly for placing the poet in the category of new media.

Likewise, the language of his poems is heterogeneous and varied from beginning to end, drawing from diverse spaces within socioliterary communication – beginning with Old Polish, through the graphomaniacal *poetae minores* and kitschy hack writing, all the way to contemporary slang, pregnant with colloquialisms and vulgarisms. New media slang does not belong in the realm

<sup>1</sup> M. L. Ryan, quoted in: J. Bartmiński, S. Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska, *Tekstologia*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009, 69.

of colloquial speech; however, we find no references here to “pieseł” (the Polish equivalent of “doge”) or haters, or other popular Internet expressions and tropes (e.g. “taka sytuacja” – perhaps roughly equivalent to “that’s how I roll”); the (after-)images of memory do not mean that the poet wants to “save the moment to his hard drive [...]”.<sup>2</sup> His polyphonic language thus does not absorb the no-less polyphonic language of new media, it bypasses it completely. For the poet to translate “taka sytuacja” into his usual manipulation of the mostly substandard forms of language typical of marginalized, excluded groups and graphomaniacal texts would be all but indefensible – the slang of new media constitutes the “common” language that dominates internet space, but like Dycki’s language, is composed of a network of excluded, minority languages stuck together, taking aim at the centralized norms of official language. And in this sense, attempting to prove the new media nature of the poet’s work would present a thankless task.

Finally, there is a third argument: the lack of thematic material taken from new media. This absence is, furthermore, sealed by the abundance of props representing older forms of (once-new) media, among which pride of place undoubtedly belongs – ahead of print journalism, TV shows, or advertising – to photography; it stands out in the structure of the book itself as well, as Ewa Bieńczycka noted by calling the book a “poetry album of old photographs.”<sup>3</sup> Dycki’s reality thus appears exceptionally resistant to the influence of new media and to annexation of or by such media. There is no Internet here, there are no laptops, not even e-book readers. A computer appears once, in parentheses, in the poem “CCLV. Piosenka z okolic Lubaczowa” (CCLV. Song from the Lubaczow Vicinity):

nie znajdziesz we mnie śmierci choć wszystko inne  
znajdziesz kości jak szkło na swoim miejscu w starym  
kredensie (na którym teraz ustawiłem komputer)  
nie znajdziesz we mnie oczu oj nie znajdziesz

choć niewątpliwie natkniesz się na kieliszki  
pełne zapomnianych guzików ojej zapomnianych  
choćbyś wypatrzył we mnie parę lśniących oczu  
zamienię się z tobą na ten wielki guzik rogowy

którym Dycka zapinała się pod samą szyję by przetrwać  
po latach na fotografii jaką trzymam w ręku  
zwiedziony właśnie w ciemność ojej ojejku zwiedziony  
nic dziwnego był to najlepszy fotograf w miasteczku  
(1 VII 1988)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> S. Shuty, *Dziewięćdziesiąte* (The ‘90s), Kraków: Ha!art, 2013, 116.

<sup>3</sup> “From the muddled lines of portraits and pictures we get the fragments defining people who have gone, who are passing, staying in the author’s consciousness, but we do not know what to do with this poetry album of old photographs” (E. Bieńczycka, *Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki „Piosenka o zależnościach i uzależnieniach” Nominowani NIKE 2009* [Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, “Song of Dependencies and Addictions,” NIKE Nominees 2009], not yet printed [blog; 12 September 2009], <http://bienczycka.com/blog/?p=1506>).

<sup>4</sup> E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *Oddam wiersze w dobre ręce (1988-2010)* (I Will Leave My Poems in Good Hands, 1988-2010), Wrocław: Biuro Literackie, 2010, 290. All quotations from poems by Tkaczyszyn-Dycki (except “Imienia i znamienia” [Names and Characteristics]) are from this edition.

(you won't find death in me though everything else / you will find bones like glass in their place in the old / cupboard [where I have now put the computer] / you won't find eyes in me oh no you won't find / though you will doubtless bump into glasses / full of forgotten buttons oh no forgotten / though you strained a pair of shining eyes in me / I will trade them with you for that great button made from horn / with which Dycka buttoned up all the way to survive / after years in the photograph I hold in my hand / visited into darkness oh no oh dear visited / no surprise it was the best photographer in town / [1 July 1988])

The computer is separated from the space of the poem by its two parentheses, parentheses always encompassing the space “between” radically different elements; they may even be life and death, as Andrzej Sosnowski has observed.<sup>5</sup> In the poem above, they appear to delineate existential “being” and photographic “existence,” between the two of which is located the computer as a kind of interactive machine that operates in real time (life, being, fantasy) and a simulated<sup>6</sup> space of previously constructed representation (death, existence, film<sup>7</sup>). The phrase that begins the poem, “you won't find death in me,” then takes on a double meaning – you won't find death in the poet, because he is located in the parentheses “between” one limit (birth) and the other (death), he is the absence constituting the presence “in between”; but neither will you find the end in the computer, because its “in between” contains “everything else” – *everything*, which does not include the radical NOTHING of the parenthetical boundaries in their nothingness (neither one thing nor the other), *everything* possible only with the exclusion of the limit's destructive power, with its release into the space of absence.

Hence the “in between” of the computer's parentheses can also relate to “everything else” in its concrete materiality: bones, glass, the cupboard, eyes, glasses, buttons, photographs. This seemingly unrelated prop chest of antiques and trifles situates the computer in a very concrete space. The degrees of space are drawn hierarchically: first there is “me,” in which every-

<sup>5</sup> “Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki is a poet of elementary narration and multifaceted reflection. The elementary aspect consists in the fact that what the poet is telling – in colourful episodes, scenes, segments, and variants – happens in constant connection to the facts of birth and the gravestone. Dycki's poems regularly tilt toward the inevitable end or return toward the lost beginning, they are illuminated almost nonstop by the elementary light of these two utmost points. That illumination gives them an aura of the old poetry of simple and final things, a medieval or baroque resonance. The events of the beginning and the end establish two parenthetical curves – inside the parentheses there is a bit of place for the ‘debauchery’ of the temporary. Space limited in this way somewhat forces the claustrophobic repetitiveness of life's hurly-burly inside” (A. Sosnowski, “Liryzm Dyckiego” [Dycki's Lyricism], in: Sosnowski, “*Najryzykowniej*” [“The Riskiest”], Wrocław: Biuro Literackie, 2007, 10).

<sup>6</sup> Here is Baudrillard's understanding of simulation: “To dissimulate is to pretend not to have what one has. To simulate is to feign to have what one doesn't have. One implies a presence, the other an absence. But it is more complicated than that because simulating is not pretending: ‘Whoever fakes an illness can simply stay in bed and make everyone believe he is ill. Whoever simulates an illness produces in himself some of the symptoms’ (Littre). Therefore, pretending, or dissimulating, leaves the principle of reality intact: the difference is always clear, it is simply masked, whereas simulation threatens the difference between the ‘true’ and the ‘false,’ the ‘real’ and the ‘imaginary.’” (J. Baudrillard, “The Precession of Simulacra” in *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. S.F. Glaser, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994, 3). But that needs to be supplemented with Lambert Wiesing's work, which draws attention to the mechanism of how simulated realities (in defiance of entropy) generate their own rules (not necessarily in keeping with known laws of logic and physics) (L. Wiesing, *Artificial Presence: Philosophical Studies in Image Theory*, trans. N. F. Schott, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Lambert Wiesing formulates virtual reality as a combination of film perception (advance programming) and fantasy (construction of events) in the chapter “Virtual Reality: The Assimilation of the Image to the Imagination” in *Artificial Presence*.

thing else can be found (everything not-death); one of the elements of “everything else” consists of bones (a subset of “me”), bones are reminiscent of glass (a metaphor for bones), which can be found in the old cupboard (a superset of glass), on top of which stands the computer (a subset of the cupboard). Within the superset of the cupboard, the computer corresponds to glass, but with metaphoric displacement becomes the equivalent of bones, a subset of “me.” In both the former and the latter cases, the computer represents an element of “everything else,” and thus not-death.

The next line, the line that follows the parenthetical computer interpolation and is agitated by it, nonetheless brings a trade of death for eyes within the same sentence: “you won’t find eyes in me”; “everything else” is eliminated, since the element of “everything else” (eyes are not-death) can be ejected from “everything else” in order to be replaced by the single-element set of “everything else” (death establishes “everything else” as not-death; within “everything else” applied to eyes [not-eyes], death finds itself a place), then “everything else” can be absolutely everything as the reverse of any particular element within “everything else.” The boundary between what cannot be found in “me,” and what *is* found (you find it) in “me” washes away – each object can be found both here and there. No set has priority; it is unclear whether death creates not-death, or “everything else” expelled death from itself, in the process leaving bones as its element and – in so doing – subliminally indicating the construction of only an elementary hierarchy (why are bones not-death? who sets the boundary of death?).

Together with this maximal expansion of “in between” space, an expansion that eliminates limits, since any other element can replace them and establish new limits, further props are freed from hierarchic dependencies as extensions of the material foundations from the first stanza. The drinking glasses thus make glass present in a concrete physical form, and similarly, the button made from horn represents a functional extension of bone (horn becomes “externalized,” laid-bare bone), while the elements to which the computer corresponded in the first stanza evolve into practical concretizations. Their seemingly stable hierarchy (the buttons are located inside the glasses, and thus represent a subset of them) – as a victory over the equality among subsets in the first stanza – quickly becomes disrupted by the removal of one button (the one made from horn) from a glass and its placement in a new space, and thus in a new subset – the subset of a “living” situation (in fantasy) and a motionless photograph (film not brought to life), in which this concrete button exists; a removal which vividly reminds us of the removal of an element from the “everything else” which formed the whole set. The reality of this poem thus consists of entrances and exits, insertions and removals.

The strong (non-)boundaries of the hierarchy are finally obliterated together with the collision with potentially (non-)existing eyes as a synthesis, a metaphor (for example in Peiper’s formulation<sup>8</sup>) of two subordinately placed “computer” elements – the glasses (glass) and buttons (bone). From their interdependency arises a pair of eyes, shining like glasses and

<sup>8</sup> For more on the subject, see: J. Grądziel-Wójcik, „*Drugie oko*” Tadeusza Peipera. *Projekt poezji nowoczesnej* (Tadeusz Peiper’s “Second Eye.” A Project of Modern Poetry), Poznań: Uniwersytet Adama Mickiewicza, 2010.

rounded like buttons, which are neither glasses nor buttons but something “in between” them, following the axiom of the metaphor: “deszcz ognia a to / nie to samo co deszcz i ogień z osobna” (fiery rain is / not the same as fire or rain alone).<sup>9</sup> The eyes – in terms of their absent-present ontological status (because first “you won’t find eyes in me,” but then “though you strained a pair of shining eyes in me”) – exist always in potentiality; in a potentiality that can only be realized by putting another space into the self-propelling mechanism – the space of “you,” the Other (“though you strained”). Virtual (i.e., in Pierre Lévy’s understanding, as potential<sup>10</sup>) and phenomenologically underdefined eyes can only be made concrete through a context in which they could begin to “really” function. In other words, we can see our own face only through the gaze of the Other (mirror, reflection, person):

“But I never looked like that!” - How do you know? What is the “you” you might or might not look like? Where do you find it - by which morphological or expressive calibration? Where is your authentic body? You are the only one who can never see yourself except as an image; you never see your eyes unless they are dulled by the gaze they rest upon the mirror or the lens (I am interested in seeing my eyes only when they look at you): even and especially for your own body, you are condemned to the repertoire of its images.<sup>11</sup>

Thus we can only see (with shining eyes) our own face (as an object) through the gaze of the Other (’s shining eyes), i.e., in an interface which from my face (an object) and the face of the Other (algorithm, database), rejects a “common,” contextual result; through the power of metaphor: rain enters fire (the algorithm) and from their collision arises fiery rain. In this context, the “mirroring,” reflective character of the poem’s props (glass, glasses, buttons, eyes, a photograph, a computer) becomes understandable; these props appropriate for themselves what is reflected. The “me”-object before becoming concrete is purely potential – it exists independently (“you won’t find death in me”), but the set of its features (“everything else”) awaits being entered into a concrete algorithm, in which it will become “something else,” but no longer everything else. In every algorithm this “something else” is something else, hence the virtual object is always a network of objects, a variety of objects,<sup>12</sup> like the character (interchangeable with a Cleverbot) Samantha in Spike Jonze’s film *Her*, who communicates with several thousand individuals simultaneously, but with each one on a personal, intimate level. In other words, simultaneously authentically (for real) and inauthentically (artificially, virtually); in such a way as to convince each of them that he possesses her exclusively, as his own.

<sup>9</sup> E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, “CLXV,” 194.

<sup>10</sup> “[...] a *word* is a virtual ‘thing.’ The word ‘tree’ is always spoken in a particular place, on a particular day at a particular time. The speaking of this lexical element is its actualization. But the general concept, though expressed or actualized somewhere when the word is used, is torn away from concretization. Virtuality is real, though it cannot be assigned any space-time coordinate. A word really exists. *Virtuality exists, though it is not present here.* Let us add that ways of actualizing this same virtual ‘thing’ that actuality is never predetermined in virtuality. Therefore, from an acoustic point of view, as on the semantic plane, no one actualization of the word overlaps exactly with another actualization of it. An unexpected accent can always appear (the appearance of new voices) or an unexpected meaning (invention of new sentences). Virtuality is an infinite source of actualization” (Pierre Lévy, “Essai sur la cyberculture,” <http://hypermedia.univ-paris8.fr/pierre/cyberculture/cyberculture.html> (last accessed: 11.04.2016).

<sup>11</sup>R. Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, trans. R. Howard, London: Macmillan, 1977, 36.

<sup>12</sup>“A new media object is not something fixed once and for all, but something that can exist in different, potentially infinite versions.” (L. Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001, 36).

At the same time, “me” as an algorithm has its own independent existence, but awaits the insertion of concrete, idiomatic features in its operations – it waits for interlocutors who are always alone, even if there are several thousand of them at a time. Accordingly, the “me”-data (glass, bones, buttons) and the “me”-algorithm (cupboard, glasses, eyes) in isolation represent only virtual elements. The gaze with “shining eyes” and their insertion into the interface enable their activation.

The virtual status of the props as elements to be set in motion in particular interfaces, independent elements (as *lexias*<sup>13</sup>) with precise output data, and variational capability allows them to be freely put into any space. Only because of that freedom is replacing “death” with “eyes” possible, only because of that – after straining the reflecting eyes – can Dycki propose: “I will trade them with you for that great button made of horn” or better still, “zamienię siebie na ciebie / i ciebie na siebie niczego wszak / nie obiecując i nie osiągając” (I will trade myself for yourself / and yourself for myself nothing whatever / promising or attaining).<sup>14</sup> Thus the conclusion reached by Krzysztof Hoffmann in his analysis:

A comparative analysis of the changes introduced into the texts in revisions distinctly shows that words which would appear to be exceptionally freighted with meaning, such as “skeleton,” “sun,” “mortuary,” “matter,” “mouth,” “bones,” “dream,” “body,” even “putrefaction” are either mutually interchangeable or may be omitted [...] <sup>15</sup>

shows itself to be a splendid diagnosis of the linguistic space of Dycki’s poetry, in which each element – as an equal, non-hierarchical set of signs or data – is interchangeable with every other in the “great” algorithm of “me” (Dycki’s poetry), and the element that is not activated (because it is omitted) does not disturb the fluid movement of meanings.<sup>16</sup> That is what makes possible the subversive change in “Zaplecze,” ending with demystification: “Ilnicki to Dycki,

<sup>13</sup>A *lexia* (or node) is the basic unit of hypertext. [...] A *lexia* differs from a classically understood fragment. It must be characterized by coherence and more than relative autonomy. Authors of hypertexts must take into account that fragments of their works will be read in varied contexts that will change during the process of reading (through the placing of different *lexias* than the ones currently displayed. These contexts change not only as a result of the reader’s interaction with the text. Changes to them can also be elicited by a mechanism inscribed in the text, controlled by a computer program. [...] *Lexias* must therefore be coherent enough as self-contained wholes of text to keep the flow of reading from being disrupted together with the flow of narrative. A good model for this type of function is the Deleuzian rhizome, with its principle of meaningless disconnection” (“Leksja” (*Lexia*), in: “Techsty – Literatura i Nowe Media” [Techsty – Literature and New Media], <http://techsty.art.pl/warsztaty/lexia.htm> (last accessed: 12.04.2016).

<sup>14</sup>E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, “I. Dosłownie wszędzie spadają na nas pociski śmierci” (I. Missiles Will Fall Down on Us Literally Everywhere), *Inter- Literatura-Krytyka-Kultura* 2014, no. 1 (3), 39.

<sup>15</sup>K. Hoffmann, “Rekorekcje” (Recorrections), in: *Pokarmy. Szkice o twórczości Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego* (Victuals. Essays on the Work of Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki), ed. P. Śliwiński, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Wojewódzkiej Biblioteki Publicznej i Centrum Animacji Kultury, 2012, 151.

<sup>16</sup>A new, foreign, or even obsolete word does not activate operations between words– “nieczynne słowo nie wstrzymuje procesu zrastania się widzeń” (an obsolete word does not hold back the process of rising visions)– T. Peiper, “Komizm, dowcip, metafora” (Comedy, Joke, Metaphor), in: T. Peiper, *Tędy. Nowe usta* (Then. New Words), Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1972, 300. Similarly, in *Le spleen de Paris* Baudelaire writes: “Take away one vertebra and the two ends of this tortuous fantasy come together again without pain. Chop it into numerous pieces and you will see that each one can get along alone” (C. Baudelaire, *Paris Spleen*, trans. L. Varèse, New York: New Directions, 1970, ix.) This phenomenon marks the modular nature of new media: “If a particular module of a computer program is deleted, the program will not run. In contrast, as with traditional media, deleting parts of a new media object does not render it meaningless. In fact, the modular structure of new media makes such deletion and substitution of parts particularly easy” (Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 31).

Dycki to Ilnicki” (Ilnicki is Dycki, Dycki is Ilnicki)<sup>17</sup>; this is what allows the presentation of “wilgoć w miejsce języka // oczu myśli” (moisture in place of language // eyes of thought)<sup>18</sup>; that is why “tak tak” (yes yes) so easily changes into (or is replaced by) “nie nie” (no no) (“a my tam i z powrotem tak tak / tam i z powrotem nie nie” [and we go there and back yes yes / there and back no no]<sup>19</sup>). Similarly, the phrase from an (authentic) Old Polish source, “nie narażaj się śmierci” (don’t get infected by death) develops into the derivative, multiplied admonition “nie narażaj się śmierci słońcu ciemności wodzie” (don’t get infected by the death of the sun of the darkness [in] water), “czyli każdej rzeczy którą masz w zasięgu ręki albo ci się wydaje że możesz ją osiągnąć gdy zaciśniesz pięść” (or each thing you have within reach of your hand or it seems to you you might have it when you make a fist).<sup>20</sup> Into the mathematical formula “don’t get infected with *x*” each and every (virtual, modular / sign) element may be entered, as in the algorithm of absence “you won’t find in me *x*” (death / eyes). Everything connects with everything else,<sup>21</sup> regardless of the features of particular objects and algorithmic processes – absence is equal to presence, and virtuality can be made concrete at any moment. Nothing is excluded from these processes – “no matter who attacks Dycio”<sup>22</sup> within IT commands and combinations.

And thus all elements within the space of language become equal in value – none are more predisposed to be entered into concrete contexts than others, since changing a few letters or numbers suffices to turn each object into an utterly new object. In the virtual realm, everything is “everything else” – each object is different from every other (has different features), yet all of them are identical and co-exist in their ontological structure. In the space of language “jedno i drugie znaczy tyle samo” (one and the other mean the same amount) – they have equal value and importance, although it is not true that “jedno i drugie znaczy to samo”<sup>23</sup> (one and the other mean the same thing), since they have different meanings; each object is a different object, though equal (alternate) in substance to each other through their shared modular-numeric / sign, discrete (non-continuous)<sup>24</sup> structure. Here the hyperreality of language, the universality<sup>25</sup> of simulated, single-use elements which are always Other, comes into play.

<sup>17</sup>E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *Zaplecze*, Legnica: Biuro Literackie 2002, 140.

<sup>18</sup>E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *XXI*, 30.

<sup>19</sup>E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *CCCLXVII*, 407.

<sup>20</sup>E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *CCCLXXI*, 411.

<sup>21</sup>“(…) everything is interconnected, and we are all caught in a web of various correspondences” (O. Tokarczuk, *Prowadź swój pług przez kości umarłych* [Drive Your Plow Through the Bones of the Dead], Warszawa 2009, 252). Peiper’s concept of metaphor functions similarly, based as it is on the principle: “there are no two words that cannot find themselves in a situation that would justify their combination through metaphor” (T. Peiper, *Komizm, dowcip, metafora*, 294).

<sup>22</sup>E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *CCL. Płaszcz przeciwdeszczowy* (Raincoat), 285.

<sup>23</sup>E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *CLXXVI*, 207.

<sup>24</sup>“A human language is discrete on most scales: We speak in sentences; a sentence is made form words; a word consists of morphemes, and so on” (L. Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 31).

<sup>25</sup>“Cyberculture is a manifestation of the creation of a new universality. It differs from previous forms of culture in that it uses the indefinite nature of any kind of general meaning. Really, the more cyberculture spreads and becomes ‘universal,’ the harder it becomes to totally capture the world of information. Universality deprived of totality is the paradoxical essence of cyberculture” (Pierre Lévy, “Essai sur la cyberculture”).

Those who participate in communication also belong to the sphere of poetic hyperreality. The reader receives a text generated individually for him, and from it – within an interface which is also always individual – can choose which elements to activate, which to strain toward (“though you strained a pair of shining eyes in me”), which to find (“though everything else / you will find”). The poem’s direct address using the informal second person singular “ty” implies the need for a constant renewal of engagement with the relationship: the insertion of the object (the text) into new receiving algorithms. A single-use text is formed, like a hypertext – the connecting of elements and their sequence of succession cannot be repeated; it is idiomatic each time. Among these idiomatic instances, none is better than another; each is equally (diversely) dependent on the network sequence of interpretative activities performed on selected elements:

Every hypertext reader gets her own version of the complete text by selecting a particular path through it. Similarly, every user of an interactive installation gets her own version of the work. And so on. In this way new media technology acts as the most perfect realization of the utopia of an ideal society composed of unique individuals. New media objects assure users that their choices – and therefore, their underlying thoughts and desires – are unique rather than preprogrammed and shared with others.<sup>26</sup>

The source text – the datum – goes through various transformations and transpositions in particular interfaces (free, random – “no matter who attacks Dycio”), so that it becomes a variation on its co-texts or inter-texts, which are different each time. The reader (co-)operates as author and the author as reader: “I will trade myself for yourself and yourself for myself [...]” A new composition develops from the collision of interfaces – the user, the prosumer (producer + consumer) who neutralizes the superiority (of the author, of the reader) and the inferiority (of the author, of the reader) through interchangeability, co-existence. The new media reader cannot be detached from the author, who is equally a creature of the new media; cybernetic categories (the aesthetics of error, glitch poetry, noises, clusters, strings) are categories developed by them working together. The text is created in the interface, the text belongs to the community (communicative and resulting from communication), variational, repeated and always single-use.

The poetic hyperreality thus outlined excludes all exclusions – since each is interchangeable with every other and can function in its place (though always differently, unrepeatably) within an indistinguishable greater category (such as form,<sup>27</sup> being,<sup>28</sup> sign), all possible

<sup>26</sup>Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 42.

<sup>27</sup>“Everything in the world is alive and everything has its value. What is not alive does not exist, and what does not exist has neither form, nor color” (T. Czyżewski, “Tytus Czyżewski o ‘Zielonym oku’ i o swoim malarstwie (autokrytyka – autoreklama)” (Tytus Czyżewski on “The Green Eye’ and on His Painting [Self-criticism – Self-advertisement]), from the book *Noc – dzień. Mechaniczny instynkt elektryczny* (Night-Day. The Mechanical Electric Instinct), 1922, quoted in: Czyżewski, *Wiersze i utwory teatralne* (Poems and Theatrical Works), introduction by J. Kryszak, ed. J. Kryszak, A. K. Waśkiewicz, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Słowo, 2009, 112).

<sup>28</sup>The category of “being” neutralizes the distinction between human and animal beings and absorbs all creatures into its area.



evaluative distinctions, all possible hierarchies<sup>29</sup> lose their reason for existing. In Dycki's linguistic space all props and flying ("no matter who attacks Dycio") accretions thus become weightless (as word-stars, toward which systems are oriented – according to Barthes' concept in *S/Z*<sup>30</sup>), and thus equally, identically important or unimportant, incorporated on equal footing into metaphorical relationships.<sup>31</sup> All "great" divisions, evaluations, delimitations lose their justification – *Sekrety białołowskie* (Secrets of the Fairer Sex)<sup>32</sup> are as good and bad as Nałkowska's *Medaliony* (Medallions); poetry is equal to prose, photography, a fine-feathered country-fair cock,<sup>33</sup> a necrologist, a reality show, a street or a computer; a quotation from an academic study is not basically different from a "splendid," "lengthy"<sup>34</sup> quotation from Wikipedia. Białołowski's "double vision"<sup>35</sup> absorbs everything overheard,

<sup>29</sup>"But in the case of hyperlinking as implemented by HTML and earlier by Hypercard, no such relationship of hierarchy is assumed. The two sources connected through a hyperlink have equal weight; neither one dominates the other. Thus the acceptance of hyperlinking in the 1980s can be correlated with contemporary culture's suspicion of all hierarchies, and preference for the aesthetics of collage in which radically different sources are brought together within a singular cultural object." Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 76.

<sup>30</sup>Barthes R., *S/Z*, trans. R. Miller, New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.

<sup>31</sup>"(...) today's metaphor is most often a wrecking of the emotional hierarchy that a person has so far transferred to particular areas of the world. Great things are reduced to small, small things are raised to the great. Ceremonial or sacred things are juxtaposed with common everyday things move in between solemn and sanctified things. Objects reluctantly seen, coming from those areas of the world and life from which the aesthetic sensitivity of the average person turns away, are amalgamated with objects with emotional resonances, based deep inside the human being" (T. Peiper, "Metafora terażniejszości" (Metaphor of the Present), in: *Tędy. Nowe usta*, 57).

<sup>32</sup>And other – old and recent, mostly not particularly excellent, even graphomaniacal – books discussed by Dycki in *Zaplecze* (for example *Matka świętych polska albo żywoty dla zbudowania żyjących i potomnych, dla pociechy duchownej swoich krewnych* [The Polish Mother of Saints or Lives of the Saints for the Edification of the Living and their Descendants, for the Spiritual Comfort of Their Relations], by F. J. Jaroszewicz; *Ondyn nad Niemnem* [Ondine on the Niemen], by Jadwiga Badowska; *Paniątko* [Little Miss Lady], by Z. Sawicka; *Onanizm, czyli roztrząśnienie chorób pochodzących z samogwałtu, przez Pana Tyssota sławnego doktora po francusku napisane, a na polski język przełożone [...]* [Onanism, or a Discussion of Diseases Caused by Self-Rape, by Lord Tyssot, the Celebrated Doctor, Written in French and Translated into the Polish (...); *Dzień bogomyślny* [God-fearing Day], by Leon Pyżalski).

<sup>33</sup>E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *Piosenka o jarmarcznym kogutku* (Song about a Country-fair Cock), 121.

<sup>34</sup>Terms used in *Zaplecze*. In *Zaplecze* Dycki revealed thinking in quotations as a governing principle of literary (co)existence, distinguishing his poetry as well (and perhaps above all); the project of writing as reading or collating.

<sup>35</sup>T. Sobolewski, *Człowiek Miron* (Miron the Man), Kraków 2012. Igor Piotrowski produced an interesting description of the phenomenon: "One might say that Białołowski was interested in the manifold consequences of 'the flight of a place through the centuries': psychological, social and artistic, hence also the approximations and comparisons whose purpose is to strengthen the context of the image of the street. In theory 'Maratończyk' [Marathon Man] serves this purpose just as well as the Bible, and Jan Matejko's 'Gallery of Polish Kings' lends itself to such operations to the same degree as baroque oratorios or vespers heard in church. This is Białołowski's particular method, underscored by many observers (Tadeusz Sobolewski, in his book 'Miron the Man' calls it 'double vision') – it is the way his creative *imaginarium functions, based on associations of separate layers of cultural traditions with ordinary banalities, seeing everyday life through the prism of internalized content*: literature, art, etc. This type of metaphor becomes the principle of how his world functions and he draws out of it deep dramaturgical consequences, multiplying associations or building new narratives along that parallel. Białołowski cannot stop playing with associations, which sometimes cause an avalanche, creating a self-propelling mechanism (Jacek Kopciński wrote in 'Grammar and Mysticism' of the 'scheme of associative autoplay'). Białołowski has absorbed literature, films, painting, and music, and now goes about the world and interprets everyday life based on what he has read, watched, and heard. We all do that, but not all of us do it so persistently and not all of us transform it into literature." (I. Piotrowski, *Alef. Ulica Chłodna jako pustka i złudzenie* [The Aleph. Chłodna Street as Emptiness and Illusion], *Dwutygodnik* [Bi-weekly] 2014, no. 124, <http://www.dwutygodnik.com/artukul/4973-alef-ulica-chlodna-jako-pustka-i-zludzenie.html>). In the quoted passage, in place of "Białołowski" – according to the principle of verbal exchangeability – we could, with some validity, read "Dycki."

and consists of a series of accidental<sup>36</sup> (“each thing you have within reach of your hand”) foresights and mishearings:

This Polish writer who, according to Wikipedia, and according to me as well, deserves to be defined, is someone who undoubtedly has issues with identification and identity, with linguistic identity if nothing else, someone who constantly seeks confirmation for his identity in the use of Polish language, whether in language or in whatever Polish book falls into his lap. That is how it was with me, that I reached for whatever Polish book I could find. I always had a problem with worseness, I told myself that I am a great big Polish man, but that worse one, because my Polish language, undoubtedly that worse Polish, appeared in my use of Polish in about 1978.<sup>37</sup>

Yet by the same token, any worseness in his language is neutralized precisely because it becomes a universal worseness – there is no element that cannot become Other (idiomatic, non-normative, unrepeatable, erroneous – from the perspective of the hierarchy of “betterness”), so that everyone is equally worse – and better. The second flood is the flood of infinities of communicating arks and always innovative combinations of selected beings, objects, elements in their spheres, in their (data)bases<sup>38</sup> – a flood of variations (deviations) in a boundless range of endless repetitions, with differences in the repetitions that neutralize themselves and each other. Everything is Other, the Other is everything – “everything else” propels the poetic hyperspace, which

assembles all heresies helter-skelter. It performs a thorough mixing-up of citizens and barbarians, supposed ignoramuses and the learned. In contrast to classical universalism, its boundaries are unclear, mobile, and temporary. But the trend toward contact that characterizes the current universalism is based on inclusion.<sup>39</sup>

Hyperreality is possible precisely because it constructs its own space within a separate interface using hypo- features, idiosyncratic and irrational (even insane), transgressive of norms (as potentialities). Dycki’s linguistic algorithm, the *Dycio Generator*, receives everything (you will find everything else in it) and everywhere, creating unrepeatable and constantly newly repeated metaphorical communities, stylistic constructions. It is the hyperspace of hypospace, in which each Otherness is equal to every other Otherness, and their coexistence is organized by an idiomatic creation in the interface. All ontological distinctions lose their

<sup>36</sup>Accidental by virtue of having been formed by the randomness of “reality” (“akurat tego, a nie innego dnia” [exactly that day, and not another]), in which the text was overheard, but also the randomness of the combinations of these overheard fragments with fragments of “torn-out” text: “I must tear out, with irritation, individual sentences, meanings, images, glue them together with something that was said exactly that day, and not another day” (E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *Pójście za Norwidem* [Following Norwid]).

<sup>37</sup>E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, “Piosenka o zależnościach i uzależnieniach,” *Przystan! (Stop!)* [21 May 2010], <http://portliteracki.pl/przystan/teksty/piosenka-o-zaleznościach-i-uzależnieniach-2/>.

<sup>38</sup>“The ark of the first flood was singular, hermetic, closed, totalizing. The arks of the second flood sail together. They exchange signals and animals. They impregnate each other. They contain small wholes, they make no claim to universalism. Only the flood is universal. But there is no way to grasp it as a composite unity” (P. Lévy, “Essai sur la cyberculture”).

<sup>39</sup>P. Lévy, “Essai sur la cyberculture.”

justification<sup>40</sup> – a human being is just as “worse” as an animal, a machine, or an object, and death can be replaced with eyes. Limits, or death, are neutralized (“you won’t find death in me”), since they are subject to not being found to the same extent as anything else is (“you won’t find eyes in me”). The indistinguishable “in between” autonomous and contextually engrafted elements stretches out “as far as the eye can see.”<sup>41</sup>

Computer parentheses thus move the autotelic hyperreality of mutually interchangeable, equally valued signs “in between” their limits. With sampling and quantumization, however, parentheses can also variationally be replaced by words or numbers and neutralize their own limit function. That is how Dycki’s poetry works – within the cybernetic generator, it absorbs everything as “everything else” and thus does not consent to sign hierarchies that would establish strong boundaries or limits.

That is why Dycki’s poetry is new media poetry through and through, and that is why you will not find elements from new media spaces in it, because it creates (absorbs) them itself, equally good ones and worse ones, in its own realm, semiotically and stylistically impossible to counterfeit, of the simulated hyperspace of “me”; an ingenious, unrepeatable, idiomatic hyperspace, but one that also exchanges (communicates) with every other and can be exchanged for every other (for example the space of new media) in a particular context (of publication). Thus the features of hypertext mentioned by Bartmiński are not only features of Dycki’s poetry, but also features of poetry in general, and thus of each particular poetic “ark” – features always executed in a different way, but shared, non-evaluative; the heterogeneity of language is not only the single-use heterogeneity of Dycki’s poetry, but also the heterogeneity of all languages, and thus of every particular language – a heterogeneity always executed differently, but shared and non-evaluative. Only then, only in this utopia (of simulation) is a reality without disconnects or exclusions possible, and thus without worseness or violence of language; only then is the exchangeability of *kuban* and puddle, *zhmeni* and fist, *kiczki* and thatched roof possible:

To see the world in its shapes, in its shape, I would propose giving up on any kind of aggression, or from any kind of relation with an aggressive meaning. Let us not say I am better because I speak Polish very well, let us not say: he is worse, he doesn’t know the Polish word for fist. Or he doesn’t know the Polish word for thatched roof, or he doesn’t know the Polish word for jasmine, or he doesn’t know the Polish word for puddle. I learned those words as a fifteen year-old, and it was a deathly blow for me, a deathly stroke, because I believed in my own worseness,

<sup>40</sup>“All divisions have been canceled by virtual internet life as it leaves its imprint on real life. The world filtered through a network of cultural texts appears as a database from which we can select elements in order to deform and mix them. What is more, it is a digitalized world – in the Internet, Mickiewicz and the neighbor from your apartment building who puts his own videos on YouTube are equals” (U. Pawlicka, *(Polska) poezja cybernetyczna. Konteksty i charakterystyka* [(Polish) Cybernetic Poetry. Contexts and Characteristics], Kraków: Halart, 2012, 211).

<sup>41</sup> E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, CCCLXVI, 406. In Polish, Derrida’s famous statement that “Il n’y a pas de hors-texte” (There is no outside-text or There is nothing outside the text) was translated as “Tekst jak okiem sięgnąć” ([There is] text as far as the eye can see). See Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967, 227. See also Bogdan Banasiak, *Filozofia „końca filozofii”. Dekonstrukcja Jacquesa Derridy* (The Philosophy of the “End of Philosophy.” Jacques Derrida’s Deconstruction), Warszawa: SPACJA 1997, 111.

I didn't know that *kuban* is a puddle, that *zhmeni* is a fist. I didn't know that *kiczki* is a thatched roof, and I was told, you Dycio are worse, because you don't talk like us. You don't want to talk the way we talk.<sup>42</sup>

And so, Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki is not a new media poet, because he does not want to talk the way we talk. Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki is not a new media poet, because he is a poet of limits. Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki is not a new media poet because he is – equally (variously) different, equally (variously) important, equally (variously) language-oriented and simulated, but always Other – like *everything else*.

<sup>42</sup>E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, "Piosenka o zależnościach i uzależnieniach."

# KEYWORDS

h y p e r r e a l i s m

algorithm

**Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki**

**ABSTRACT:**

The article, beginning with an interpretation of the poem “CCCLXXI” from *Piosenki o zależnościach i uzależnieniach* (Songs about Dependences and Addictions), presents the new media, variational structure of Tkaczyszyn-Dycki’s poetry, in which each word can be replaced with any other word within its linguistic algorithm. Sign equivalence (the sign code proper to each form) constitutes, in the framework of Dycki’s poetry, a hyperreal space of identity (corresponding to a new media numerical representation) that is always Other (single-use, in a concrete interface and concrete hypertextual operations). The virtual space thus outlined operates as an autotelic surface with weak, even non-existent, (non)boundaries and differences (amounting to non-entities), and thus without ontological exclusions – a utopia.

# the Other

## IDENTITY

### *variational tendencies*

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