Kenneth Goldsmith

Krzysztof Hoffmann

Ewa Kraskowska

Cezary Rosiński

Andrzej Skrendo

fall | 20**16**

POETICS
of Additions

What does a literary work add to a situation in which it has unexpectedly appeared via the form of an addition, as an addition? Possibility, agency, a chance, unimaginable without it, for transformation and transition to something entirely new.

Editor in Chief
Prof., PhD Tomasz Mizerkiewicz

Editorial Board
Prof., PhD Tomasz Mizerkiewicz, Prof., PhD Ewa Kraskowska, Prof., PhD Joanna Grądziel-Wójcik,
PhD Agnieszka Kwiatkowska, PhD Ewa Rajewska, PhD Paweł Graf, PhD Lucyna Marzec
PhD Wojciech Wielopolski, PhD Joanna Krajewska, MA Cezary Rosiński, MA Agata Rosochacka

Publishing Editors
PhD Joanna Krajewska
MA Agata Rosochacka

Linguistic Editors
MA Cezary Rosiński – Polish version
PhD Timothy WIlliams – English version

Scientific Council
Prof., PhD Edward Balcerzan (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland)
Prof., PhD Andrea Ceccherelli (University of Bologna, Italy)
Prof., PhD Adam Dziadek (University of Silesia, Poland)
Prof., PhD Mary Gallagher (University College Dublin, Irealnd)
Prof., PhD Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (Stanford University, United States)
Prof., PhD Inga Iwasiów (University of Szczecin, Poland)
Prof., PhD Anna Łebkowska (Jagiellonian University, Poland)
Prof., PhD Jahan Ramazani (University of Virginia, United States)

Proofreaders:
PhD Joanna Krajewska – Polish version
Thomas Anessi – English version

Assistant Editor:
Gerard Ronge

Cover and logos design:
Patrycja Łukomska

Editorial Office: 61-701 Poznań, ul. Fredry 10
Editor: Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland

forumofpoetics@gmail.com | fp.amu.edu.pl

Poetics of Additions

The concept of this issue of Forum of Poetics, the "poetics of additions", proposes a discussion of texts and non-texts that nowadays accompany the literary work. Until recently they were studied within two paradigms. Within structuralism, broadly understood, one generally acceptable model was Gérard Genette's formulation of "paratexts," whose various forms he carefully examined and whose relations with the main text he delineated. In post-structuralist studies, on the other hand, these paratexts were known as supplements, which in Derridean terms nullified the "closed" nature of a work, put into question the centrality of the main text, and deferred the moment of its' meanings' convergence idefinitely.

Contemporary relations between the main text and its paratexts would appear to possess a degree of intensity beyond any previously encountered, and that has now reached the critical point that begs for new theoretical analyses. On the one hand, the literary work has lost its inaccessibility and uniqueness, become fungible, compressible, capable of being replaced by gadgets, film trailers, or animated films. The production of additions is unflagging, and the literary work itself can also, naturally, be another addition, as for example when we read a novelization of a film. This relates primarily to brutal and often aggressive processes of commercialization, but sometimes involves the basic pleasure of using a beloved work's structure, developing its imaginative apparatus, and recoding it. On the other hand, that very process can be formulated in a completely different way. The work passing through various forms of additions into new places and situations is not only transformed, but also reveals its own ability to transform other things. No matter how it changes or becomes recoded, it often manages to become a causative factor, to exert influence and provoke to action. It is fitting now to read the testimony of poet Kenneth Goldsmith on his experience of deconstructing Williams's "Red Wheelbarrow" with a group of students and finding, in the end, that even the smallest fragment of the work continues to possess its own inexhaustible reservoir of activity and causative force. We can also mention the alternative history of mimesis described by Horst Bredekamp, who observed that sometimes the original loses nothing through being copied, but on the contrary, acquires new causative potential from its copies. And what does a work add to a situation in which it has unexpectedly appeared via the form of an addition, as an addition? Possibility, agency, a chance, unimaginable without it, for transformation and transition to something entirely new.

The rest of the articles in this issue can thus be read as documents of the contemporary clash between two completely contradictory aspirations – one toward reclaiming the energy involved in the production of additions, another toward its liberation and reactivation in unexpected places. Kenneth Goldsmith reconstructs our contemporary psychoparatextual life world before observing that reading James's Portrait of a Lady puts us entirely at the mercy of its transformative effects. Andrzej Skrendo analyzes the unusually creative practice of adding in the poetry of Tadeusz Różewicz, who was constantly experimenting with the capacity of a text to shift to new places. The new status of documentary film recordings accompanying events in the literary world (meetings with authors, poetry slams, and so on) allows Piotr Pławuszewski to consider those qualities of filmic additions that preserve the transformative energies of literature and those that squander their allotted chance at artistic expression. Konrad Dominas describes the functioning of the literary work in complex entertainment supersystems, the disquieting leviathans of the entertainment industry. Through analogy, however, that industry provides Inez Okulska with material for an astonishing glance at the problem of literary translation. Piotr Gorliński-Kucik shows the innovative use made of the concept of a work's creation via additions in the latest science fiction novel by Jacek Dukaj, which dispenses with the medium of the paper book. The problem of the addition is also the main question addressed by Stefan Szymutko's utopian (and to this day cognitively stimulating) scholarly project; Łukasz Żurek underscores the fact that the footnotes to Teodor Parnicki's historical novels obsessively developed by Szymutjo became the reason for his fascinating scholarly failure. Discussion, in the form of definitions, of the blurb (Ewa Kraskowska) or the book trailer (Cezary Rosiński), reveals old and new methods by which various media produce additions. Finally, reflection on the additional nature of episodes in older, classical poetics (Helena Markowska) collides with remarks on the latest theoretical proposal relating to the category of the "sequel" as applied by Paweł Mackiewicz in his book on the poetry of Marcin Sendecki (Krzysztof Hoffmann).

We thus see two kinds of poetics emerging today where additions are concerned: a "cultural VAT tax" poetics, i.e., focusing on value added by literature, and a "literary VAT tax" poetics that focuses on value added by literature's transformation.

The Psychoparatextuality of Everyday Life

Kenneth Goldsmith

A funny thing happened when I was flipping through my PDF of Genette's *Paratexts*. I was scrolling through the "pages" when suddenly, around page 160, the PDF stopped displaying text. The next three hundred pages were blank. It's hard to imagine this happening to Genette during the period when he was writing his book. If electronic glitches eradicated texts, only a few geeks knew about it; PDFs didn't even exist. Textual presence was something Genette took for granted: the simple fact that when you opened a book, the text would be there. That stability enabled his theory of paratexts. But what happens when the text vanishes? While paratexts can exist without text, a book without text was beyond Genette's purview. But I might be wrong—he might have discussed this in the last three hundred pages of his book. I'll never know. So in a sense, a big chunk of Genette's text has become paratextual to my experience of it. This condition turns out to be unintentionally prescient, for in the twenty-first century, text and its consumption might be the last thing we care about. Instead, the whole notion of textuality has itself become paratextual.

Then there is quantity. Perhaps Genette couldn't have imagined that we would possess great amount of texts without ever having read them on the scale we find ourselves in the digital age. While his purview was vast and scholarly, it was, understandably, limited, appearing to examine what his bookshelves could hold. Today, we find ourselves overwhelmed by vast amount of texts that we'll never read, creating a condition whereby reading itself is paratextual to the factualness of the artifact. Gazillions of unread PDFs and ePubs are strewn about my hard drive, downloaded because file-sharing offered them to me for free. I can't believe that they are there—things that I would've a decade or two ago paid dearly for—now available for nothing more than a click. Are they the best copies? Nope. Like my Genette PDF, they're flawed, but because they're free, I'll take them. The glitch is part of the free-culture ecosystem, one that implies use and indicates history. The marks of technology are marks of humanity,

paratextual elements appended to cultural artifacts. I might not be able to read my PDF but I am able to possess a version of it—flawed as it might be—thereby rendering reading (textuality) paratextual to the experience of downloading it.

Right now I'm listening to a Django Reinhardt track called "Improvisation" from LP rip called *Swing From Paris*. A search leads me to the paratextual discographical information, which tells me that the rip I've got is from a little 10" LP released on London Records in 1954, that some kind soul ripped to MP3 and uploaded to file-sharing. My recording is laced with glitches—crackles, skips, and pops. While they don't disappear the music in the same way Genette's PDF did, they do eradicate part of it (a skip will literally skip over part of the music) while the crackles and pops are a sonic layer underlying the entire recording, artifacts that Reinhardt didn't intend to be there. The 10" LP, in its original format, was loaded with paratextuality material—the record label that put it out, the cover art, the liner notes, and so forth—but all of those have vanished since I downloaded it as an MP3. "Improvisation" then, is a free-floating artifact, something that I've termed "nude media," bereft of provenance, ripped from its original context—that is to say, bereft of paratexts—which is the way that most of our cultural artifact arrives these days on our drives. But in those traditional paratextual absences, new paratexts emerge, those of the apparatus—networks, servers, distribution systems, and software.

When that artifact arrives on my desktop, it's inscribed with someone else's history. Every scratch and skip bespeaks of a spilled glass of wine or a fingernail running across the grooves while clumsily trying to hoist the LP onto a spindle. I can psychogeographically attempt reconstruct the history of this MP3—how it got scratched—but it's all fancy. I truly haven't a clue. My romantic reconstruction, and the memory rabbit holes I fall into as a result are psychoparatexts. In time, like psychogeography, those pyschoparatextual elements have merged with my own life. In time, the scratches on my copy of "Improvisation" have become my scratches. As Django's song has worked its way into my life—as a soundtrack for long bus rides or behind the conversation at a dinner party—those skips and scratches have become *my* skips and scratches, as if they had been created by circumstances in my own life. Those paratexts are now the soundtrack—front and center—for my own life. Since an MP3, once downloaded, is untamperable—I'm most likely not going to attempt to clean it up—those flaws are permanent features.

To take it a step further, those scratches are psychoparatextual portals to my own history, the sounds of my youth. When I was young, audio was never "clean"; cassette tapes melted on car dashboards on hot summer days, warping *Led Zeppelin IV* into Stockhausen-like polyphonies. AM radio blaring out the Ronettes was persistently filled with static; when I'd drive beneath a highway underpass, I'd lose the as sound entirely as I did the remainder of the Genette PDF. I'd stack my Beatles LPs upon one another on the turntable's spindle, causing them to destroy one another when they dropped the way Debord and Jorn's *Mémoires* destroyed the books next to them on the bookshelf. When *Revolver* fell on top of *Sgt. Pepper's*, the meeting of those two surfaces resulted in mutually assured destruction, almost like S&M, each happily bearing the scars of their consensual encounter. Were I to make my own MP3 versions of those records, their particular set of scratches would make them completely unique. When

official versions of *Revolver* are sold as MP3s, they are identically clean copies, lacking those rich paratextual ecosystems. The individual file-sharer's hand reinscribes paratextuality to the artifact through its flaws.

If this is the case, can we say that nostalgia itself is paratextual to any experience? I'm driving on Long Island, flipping through the radio dial and suddenly, out of nowhere, The Beach Boys' "Wendy" comes on. I'm instantly thrown from the text of 2016 back into my paratextuality of the summer of 1976. I'm still driving a car in 2016, but that has become paratextual / peripheral to the wave of nostalgia that this song has triggered, which is now front and center. Thoughts are racing through my mind, from the girl I was dating that summer to the saga of Brian Wilson to a recent interview I read with Mike Love that I found on Facebook. Two minutes and sixteen seconds later, I'm sort of back in the present with my eyes on the road and at the same time with "Wendy" still paratextually echoing through my head.

Could we say then that we are post-paratextual? We've ingested everything Genette has taught us—and yet still, we suspend our disbelief, and fall into the transparency of great art, while swooning to memory and nostalgia. A few weeks ago, I impulsively grabbed a hardback edition of Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady* off my shelf. I dove into it and haven't been able to put it down. But in spite of years of digital immersion and meta-critical commentary, I got lost in the book as if it were 1955. Sure, I kept my phone near me and glanced at my Twitter feed from time to time, but a century-and-a-half later, in spite of waves of critical theory and technological revolutions—most of which I've lived my life by—Henry James still knocks me out. In spite of all my critical skepticism, I still swoon in the face of great art. While any book can be deconstructed, certain works resist that kind of treatment. Once, with a group of students, we tried to destroy William Carlos Williams's "Red Wheelbarrow" by using online textual mangling engines. No matter how atomized we made the text, it still sang as Williams intended it to. While we could deconstruct it, we couldn't destroy it. Some works are simply resistant. Sometimes content is still content.

It reminds me of when my wife and I had our first child. In spite of my many years of feminism, when it came down to it, the essential differences in the sexes became apparent when you had a baby. All of that stuff, temporarily at least, got swept away and very traditional gender roles went into effect. We never forgot our feminism, and came back to it later when we could catch our breath, but for at least two years, we suspended our disbelief. While I could deny readability and context till I'm blue in the face, when it comes down to it, there are times when all of that dissolves. Can we say that we're not all one way or the other, but instead a mix of radically contradictory impulses? In spite of the tangle of delivery systems, technologies, and interfaces, Django Reinhardt's guitar and Henry James's words still hit us between the eyes, cutting through all the walls I've built up around it. Like Cage or Duchamp, Genette was essential in rendering that which was previously invisible visible. Yet like Cage or Duchamp, we can modulate the experiences of our cultural consumption, adjusting the dial as each experience requires. For all we know about Duchamp, we still piss in urinals; for all we know about Cage, we still fall in love with pop songs; for all we know about Genette, we still get lost in books. If my MP3 has been flattened of paratexts, can we say that the digital flattens palimpsests in favor of compression? Is memory a paratext of the artifact? (Perhaps it's always been so.)

Let's take this one step further and say that mobile technology renders meatspace into a paratext. The world recedes into the background, a humming engine, ancillary to the point where meatspace becomes an apparatus in service of the digital. What shows up on my screen is content and everything else—including the person beside me who is also lost in their smartphone—becomes paratextual. I'm much more interested in the person I'm texting with than I am in the person beside me, who has also paratexted me in favor of someone physically far-flung. Can we say then, that because of smartphones, three-dimensional space has become paratextual to two-dimensional space? In an unexpected victory for Greenbergian modernism, the flatness of the screen has become more real and more truthful than geography. The map has indeed become the territory. Information has displaced physicality.

I want to find a word to describe in meatspace the play between foreground (subject) and background (paratext) that happens in photography. There are certain lenses or filters that render the subject in sharp focus, while blurring the entire background which I think is a good metaphor for paratextuality beyond the page. The ability to modulate focus, between foreground and background, is moveable paratextuality. We're here, straddling the line between the informational and the physical. Right now I'm sitting in an airport lounge typing this essay on my laptop. The laptop, brightly illuminated, is the full focus of my attention, visually, physically, and intellectually. Yet this space is full of paratextual elements: the group of men chatting quietly next to me, the ambient sounds of the airport, the architecture of this space, the various decorative and lighting elements surrounding me and so forth, all the way down to the WiFi I'm connected to; eve the chair I'm sitting on are is paratextual to this essay. We live in an M.C. Escher drawing, inhabiting a fourth-dimensional cube which is folding in on itself while at the same time expanding. The play of signifiers and signifieds is ever-shifting, restlessly morphing from text to paratext, which leads us back to the flaw with Genette's theory, that is to presume the existence of stability of any sort. Instead, grounds are shifting beneath our feet and above our heads, as paratexts becomes texts, and texts transform into paratexts.

KEYWORDS

psychoparatextuality

ABSTRACT:
The article describes the experience of psychoparatextuality in contemporary everyday life. Using selected examples, the author shows how numerous individualized, often accidental supplements to works and texts that occur in copies become texts in themselves for someone else's life world. This allows us to make the further claim that in the contemporary media context the paratextual has become an entire reality vis-a-vis texts that appear on laptop and smartphone screens.

paratext

e v e r y d a y   l i f e

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:
Kenneth Goldsmith is the author of thirteen books of poetry. He teaches writing at The University of Pennsylvania. In May 2011, he was invited to read at President Obama's "A Celebration of American Poetry" at The White House, where he also held a poetry workshop with First Lady Michelle Obama. In 2013, he was named as the inaugural Poet Laureate of The Museum of Modern Art in New York. His most recent book is "Wasting Time on the Internet," a meditation on digital culture. |

Różewicz
– Practices of Addition

Andrzej Skrendo

Practices of addition? Perhaps better the reverse: practices of subtraction? What happens when Różewicz adds on? Does that addition add a sum susceptible to calculation, or does it rather engender differences? And how do those differences work? And why can the amounts not be summed up? These are a few questions that immediately arise. Let us take a different path, however: let us begin at the beginning.

Tadeusz Różewicz adds on. Nevertheless, if we take a good look, we cannot say what his additions consist of, what they add. If we don't know what, then gradually, together with what is being added, we find ourselves increasingly unclear about what is being added *to*. If we do not know or know less and less what he is adding to what, a suspicion begins to grow that he is not adding but subtracting. He adds, so he subtracts, and the more he adds, the more he seems to subtract. Thus, Różewicz subtracts.

Tadeusz Różewicz subtracts. Yet it is not clear from what. Since it is not clear from what, it slowly, together with subtraction, emerges that less and less is known of what is being subtracted. Since it remains unclear what he is subtracting, the question arises as to whether he is truly subtracting; could he be adding? He subtracts, so he adds. And thus – Różewicz adds on.

Once again: Różewicz adds on. He adds to his published poems photographs of their manuscripts or of their typescripts full of underlined and crossed-out passages. He adds to his published poems other poems published under the same title. He adds books of the same name to his books. To books of collected poems he adds other variants of those same collec-

tions. He adds photos and drawings to words. He adds voice to print. In effect, he subtracts. He subtracts because he adds in such a way that what he is adding to becomes similar to the addition. In attaching his addition (for example: an altered version of a previously published text), he makes what was being added *to* (we shall conditionally call it the original) disappear. Is it possible to subtract more? More deductively and more acutely?

What has decisive importance in Różewicz's practices of addition is not the fact that Różewicz often publishes pre-texts of his texts – that has been known to occur, though with other writers usually much less frequently; nor is it the fact that he published a book like *Historia pięciu wierszy* (The History of Five Poems, Wrocław 2011), in which he placed sets of manuscripts of several of his works – such bibliological curiosities are nothing out of the ordinary, either; nor the fact that he published *Wiersze przeczytane* (Read Poems, Wrocław 2014), a collection accompanied by a CD featuring the poems in the book read out loud by the poet – others had done that before, for example, Czesław Miłosz. All of these undertakings are of course relevant, they are significant, but they find their true meaning in juxtaposition with other activities on Różewicz's part. What is crucial is the fact – one stubbornly contrary to literary scholarly customs, textological tradition, and editorial conventions – that the publication of a work of poetry in book form does not end the author's work on that poem. It does not interrupt his work on the poem. It does not result in the abandonment of the poem, but quite the reverse, provokes a return to it. That is how its successive lines take shape, and are then published. And now we get to the important change: the lines following one after the other gradually cease to be lines and become something else. The problem is that we don't really know what that is. New originals? Perhaps – but then what happens with the old original? The two concepts – original and altered version – somehow seem to interweave in layers.

Of course, we could (though, to tell the truth, we really can't) settle the whole matter by stating that a great poet repeats himself, thereby becoming less and less great, and perhaps even less and less of a poet. But it is also possible to take a different route: to attempt together with Różewicz – and with his encouragement, for this kind of encouragement is what matters to Różewicz – to rethink once more what we consider the criterion for evaluation of an author's effort. In particular the categories of originality and derivativeness, rupture and continuation, experiment and tradition. A cursory glance at those three oppositions (and there could be many more) shows that what Różewicz is doing is not situated on the same side each time, or is difficult to place within the framework of such oppositions – a circumstance which should give us pause. Similarly, successive "versions" that Różewicz "adds" to a poem (I use quotation marks because we already know that this addition does not add up, but rather introduces differences) are generally not of lower artistic quality than that "original." Similarly, too, the printed manuscript versions sometimes, or in truth, quite often, seem at least as good as the poem in its revised, published form.

So what should we call this unnamed entity created by Różewicz's practice of addition? Perhaps – since it is a plural entity – *poem-bundles*? We would then be saying that a poem-bundle is a group of works joined by relations of family resemblance (kinship, but also affinity), linked to one another through various (sometimes ambiguous) authorial or editorial decisions and possessing the same rights. In such bundles, pre-texts can be found together with

not only post-texts, or different "versions" of a work taken from different editions, but also with translations. The status of the Różewicz original, or rather "original," is the same as the status of a translation – which, as we know, constitutes a series, and an open series at that.

This openness is of crucial significance. *Poem-bundles* are open, not only in the sense that while the author was alive, he could always add something on (or take something away); and not in the sense that there exists a number, a finite number, of such poem-bundles to be discovered or put together; but rather in the sense that the process of arranging and sorting them is, potentially and theoretically, just as open as the process of putting together new collections of poems. Because there is no clear boundary – though one can be established, albeit always more or less arbitrarily – between one such bundle and another.

Why is there none? For many reasons. Because Różewicz writes his books twice: he "rewrote" *Kartoteka* (The Card Index, 1960) as *Kartoteka rozrzucona* (The Scattered Card Index, 1997); *zawsze fragment* (always fragment, 1996) was "completed" or "developed" by the entitled *zawsze fragment. recycling* (always fragment. recycling, 1998); and *Płaskorzeźba* (Bas-relief, 1991) was "doubled" from within by the "addition" to each poem therein of its earlier, crossed-out manuscript version. Let us note the function of quotation marks in our description. Różewicz only writes that he "re-wrote" in quotation marks, because it is by no means clear that what we have in *Kartoteka rozrzucona* is the same play, *Kartoteka*, only revised, or a different play, only similar to *Kartoteka*. The books *zawsze fragment* and *zawsze fragment. recycling* are no doubt linked by something, but the decision as to whether in this case we are dealing with completion or development of the one by the other or with something completely different is far from self-evident. Not in the sense that the matter can ultimately be decided through careful research, and it only remains to undertake that research, but far from evident because it can only be justified, more or less ably, through an interpretation, which is always – being an interpretation – itself subject to further interpretation. To say that in *Płaskorzeźba* the original poems have had their manuscripts added is not – contrary to appearances and contrary to our habits – a description, but a far-reaching – and, in my opinion, not the best possible – interpretation. What is at stake in Różewicz's enterprise is our becoming conscious that it is not clear what is a reflection of what: the manuscript in the original or the original in the manuscript? And are we in fact dealing with a relationship of reflection here? The point is for us to consider that what is happening is not so simple (or just so; or basically so) as the idea that in "adding" to a printed verse its crossed-out manuscript or typescript (never, let us note, a fair copy in the poet's hand!), Różewicz wants to show us a "secret of the poet's craft." To bear witness to how difficult his work is. To teach writing. To encourage or discourage (so much work, so many corrections!) people to take up the work of literature. It is no accident, as we learn from Bogusław Michnik's foreword to *Historia pięciu wierszy*, that Różewicz rejected (as "rather immodest," 7) the idea of giving that book the title *Lekcja poezji* (Lesson in Poetry). He chose the word "history" because it is a neutral word, but also, we may conjecture, because history, contrary to widespread rumours, is something that has no end. So what is the heart of the matter? The point is for us to imagine that the manuscript with its crossings-out is not an earlier and less perfect version of the published work, but that the published work is in a way an impoverished form of the poem, one of several possibilities, possessing equal rights – among other manuscripts and other published "versions." Let us think differ-

ently than we normally do. Różewicz is considered a master of maximally condensed form, aiming, as it is often said, for silence – and that means that his work is based on purifying the poem of whatever is superfluous. So that the poem has attained perfection by the time it is published. And for that he receives praise. And keeps being praised for the same attainment when he further "purifies" and "smoothes out the rough edges" – in his ongoing work on previously published poems. But does the second bout of praise not nullify the previous one? Can he be praised for both activities at once? If not, then perhaps we need to change our perspective? And recognize that in reworking his published poems, Różewicz suggests that he reveals his manuscripts not in order to show how much he throws out, but rather that he would prefer not to throw anything out, but would like to hold on to everything – every line of poem. And that he does not choose between versions, except that he sometimes has no choice but to do so...

Perhaps Różewicz thus wishes to tell us something along these lines: my text is always *a multiple text*, in motion, but not forward motion, towards some goal, but in all directions simultaneously and unpredictably. That does not mean that this movement is chaotic, only that it goes through multiple resolutions. It should not be stopped, but instead its resolutions should be set down, its circumstances defined, its conditions written out. A manuscript is not the potency from which one tries to extract one particular, ideal form of the poem, but is an element in a kind of network, on the one hand, and a network of its own, on the other; a network in which meaning circulates. This circulation is not closed, but on the contrary: it changes at the slightest alteration of context. And I know how to change contexts, and like doing so...

If that is so, then we should now ask how the context changes and what its change changes – as well as how contexts are exchanged and what changes their exchange introduces? We face the first situation when, for example, the composition of a book of poems changes. We see the second when such a book (and this is particularly arresting when it happens in what is nominally a new volume) hosts a poem previously seen in an earlier book, and thus (nominally) old. Is the new "aged" by the old, or does the old regain its youth thanks to the new? Each time it is different, so there is no one answer – and we have seen a great many such cases. It is enough to mention the fact that from the book *zawsze fragment. recycling*, as reprinted in *Utworów zebranych* (UZ, Collected Works, *Poezja* 3, 2006), 19 poems from the 1998 first edition were omitted: thereby only 15 remained from that version, i.e., fewer than half of its contents. Sometimes an exchange of context signifies a transfer from genre to genre or from one form to another (and sometimes both: the poem "Od jutra się zmienię" [Starting Tomorrow I'll Change] from *zawsze fragment. recycling* was at first included in *Kartki wydarte z dziennika* [Pages Towarn from a Journal] – where it had the title of its first line "To się zaczęło 28 września 1992 roku" [It Began on September 28, 1992] – and then in the drama *Kartoteka rozrzucona*). This transfer sometimes elicits a need to "adapt" the poem to the new context: it thus becomes "corrected" (sometimes maintaining its original date of composition, however). Sometimes a kind of gap in the new whole seems to gape so wide that in order to "stop it up," Różewicz tears a fragment from another text, places it in the empty spot, and thereby makes a new whole from the fragment. This occurs, for example, in "Matka odchodzi" (Mother is Leaving). But these are mere examples. There is no way to list here all of the devices the

poet uses, but the fact is that there is no need to do so. I will not be out of order, I think, in declaring that now, almost every author writing about Różewicz must ask himself about the status of the text he is working on and determine with what kind of multiplicity he is working. Awareness of the peculiar status of a Różewicz text has become relatively widespread, although naturally various conclusions are drawn from it. In my view, they are not radical enough, but in any case they are certainly less radical than Różewicz's own.

And he also did other, quite astonishing things. In the poem "Drzwi" (The Door) he brought back into Polish a formula from an English translation of his own previous Polish text: "nic / nie widzę" (UZ VII, *Poezja* 2, 324), in English "I see / nothing"[1]; "widzę / Nic" in "Matka odchodzi" (UZ XI 63). He allowed his German translator, Karl Dedecius, to make such consequential changes in the form of his poems, which were then translated (back), that one might risk making the assertion that Dedecius in a sense provided his own originals.[2] Różewicz published three versions of "Twarzy" (Faces; 1964, 1966, 1968), three editions of the book *Na powierzchni poematu i w środku* (1983, 1989, 1998), and three editions of *Uśmiechy* (1955, 1957, 2001), not to mention the entire series of recycled books published in the last 25 years of his life, among which a special place belongs to the collective (in essence) anthologies *Matka odchodzi* (2001, 2004) and *Nasz Starszy Brat* (Our Elder Brother; 1994, 2004) – in so doing, he managed to obliterate completely the boundaries between a new volume of poetry, a reissue, a second (revised) edition, a thematic collection of poems, and an anthology. To say nothing of the successive editions, notorious for intersecting in various ways, of his plays, prose works, and essays (for example, consider the four editions of *Przygotowania do wieczoru autorskiego* [Preparing for a Public Appearance]: 1971, 1977, 1990, 2004). Such decisions make it uncommonly difficult to follow the chronology of Różewicz's writings and establish any kind of periodization, all the more so given that he was famous for taking decades to compose his texts. That means that Różewicz is saying to us: in my work there are no new or old poems; an old poem becomes new in a new context and a new one can at any moment turn out to be old, depending on its context. My poems, as they have no permanent single form, also have no permanent meaning, but become filled with meaning or have it hollowed out of them.

This constant movement of exchange of identities is in no way disputed by any of Różewicz's collected works. There have been three sets (*Poezje zebrane* [Collected Poetry], 1971 (2nd edition – 1976), *Sztuki teatralne* [Plays], 1972, *Proza* [Prose], 1973; *Poezja* [Poetry], vol. 1, 2, 1988, *Teatr* [Theater], vol. 1, 2, selected by the author, introduced by J. Keler, 1988, *Proza* [Prose], vol. 1, 2, 1990; *Utwory zebrane* [Collected Works, 12 volumes], 2003-2006), and each of them – particularly the third and last – became the occasion not for confirming some canonical embodiment of his work, but for radically questioning most certainties about it. Let us remember that Różewicz started out with the act of thoroughly reworking his literary debut, *Niepokój* (Anxiety; 1947).[3] His *Collected Works* thus do not so much close anything as open everything up: they do not end, but begin anew, though never from the beginning.

---

[1] Tadeusz Różewicz, *Selected Poems*, trans. A. Czerniawski, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 1991, 145.

[2] See the essay "Szczególny rodzaj nieprzekładalności" (A Specific Kind of Untranslatability) in my book *Przodem Różewicz* (Różewicz In Front), Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich, 2012.

[3] See my work "Przepisywanie 'Niepokoju' z Przodem Różewicz…" (Rewriting *Anxiety* with Różewicz in Front…).

The effect is extremely peculiar: poems in the form of *variants with no original*. Różewicz would seem to be the only writer of new Polish literature who consciously constructed his work in such a way that his poems appear with many versions of equal standing (they are thus no longer versions, but rather can at the outmost be called "versions"). This means that each reader can choose the edition he wishes to use, obtain the poem in the form that most pleases him – and write an essay about it, put it in an anthology, or send it in an e-mail to his beloved… Each version is equally good, at least presumptively, and each use we make of it – at least theoretically – equally authorized. Jan Stolarczyk, Różewicz's publisher, offers a singularly compelling description of the poet's strategy in the Editor's Note to *Historia pięciu wierszy*:

> Leaving aside *Historia pięciu wierszy* for a moment I will mention that the author sometimes re-inserts crossed-out words or larger units, and then takes them out again. It sometimes happens that after a certain time he adds something or strikes something out in the version he just found on his desk, creating yet another variant of the work. He has made a great many changes (including to titles) to older poems in the course of putting together his *Collected Works*. Publishers and interpreters have used various editions, so that in anthologies or readers one encounters different forms of the same work.

And next, perhaps even more importantly, Stolarczyk observes: "we are not dealing here with a process of 'fashioning' form, but with the renewal of one of the versions chosen earlier by the author."[4] To be precise, this remark in fact relates to the second edition of *słowa po słowie. nowego wyboru wierszy* (word by word. new selected poems, 2003), but it can unhesitatingly be applied to all of Różewicz's oeuvre.

There is no point in dissembling: I like Stolarczyk's rather nonchalant tone. Różewicz changes his poems – but that doesn't mean that he is pursuing an elusive ideal, rather that he is taking in hand whatever presents itself. He does not treat his revisions with unction: he makes them, then withdraws them, or puts them back, or sometimes keeps them, and sometimes not, for a longer or a shorter time… Who knows… One interpreter will take this form of the poem, a different one will take another… One anthologist will choose this one, another that one, but they will never consistently choose the same one… Even in readers for children, Różewicz's poems may appear in various variants; nowhere do they keep an invariable form, one not susceptible to change… There is no teleological process or even a process without a teleology that is revealed by Różewicz's multiple texts, but a capricious and stubborn *practice of renewal* that creates complicated structures. From renewal to renewal: that is Różewicz's rhythm.

And while we are discussing Stolarczyk, another question comes up: has anyone turned their attention to his "Publisher's Note" in successive volumes of the 12-volume edition of *Utwory zebrane* (Wrocław 2003-2006)? They are very interesting for two reasons: firstly, their status is atypical; secondly, they contain some memorable formulations. Concerning their status, we may note the following. The *Collected Works* was released in its entirety

---

[4] T. Różewicz*, Historia pięciu wierszy*, Wrocław: Biuro Literackie 2011, 100.

during Różewicz's lifetime, so we may assume that the form of all notes was accepted by him. These notes contain not only the basic principles and information about the edition, but also some interpretative pointers. The fact that we find these pointers in a statement from the publisher rather than the author makes their meaning considerably stiffer, limiting the reader's field of movement. Perhaps there is a kind of paradox in this, or perhaps not, but the writer's words, regardless of whatever the adopted conventions of the utterance, are always more subject to analytical and explanatory processes than the words of the publisher, which should be as impersonal as possible and more factographic in nature. With that in mind, let us note how seriously the publisher's notes written by Stolarczyk model a reading of Różewicz. In the note to *Przygotowanie do wieczoru autorskiego* (UZ III, *Proza* 3, 431) we read that that edition was "looked over, corrected and robustly altered." In the note to the second volume of *Poezja* (UZ VIII, *Poezja* 2, 423) we find the remark: "The author made many, sometimes serious, revisions to the texts." From the note to Volume 3 of *Poezja* (UZ IX, *Poezja* 3, 397) we learn that "As in previous volumes of *Utwory zebrane*, the author has made numerous textual and compositional changes." The note to *Matka odchodzi* (UZ XI, 141) informs us that all changes resulted from the fact that Różewicz "has for years had a <dialogue> with his own work." The note to the book *Nasz Starszy Brat*[5] contains an important note explaining what this "<dialogue>" is based on. On the fact that Różewicz makes abundant use of his old texts, and "Stary tekst kształtuje zależnie od artystycznych potrzeb [nowej] całości" (An old text shapes a [new] whole dependent on artistic needs, UZ XII, s. 263). How then, one wishes to ask, can Różewicza be published, since he does not leave a work behind him, but a recording of an interrupted – and particular, very radically understood – dialogue?

In the "Publisher's Note" to the first volume of the *Utwore zebrane*, we find a statement that in theory should not surprise us or stir an emotional response: "This will not be a critical edition; those require many years of preparation. We intend to provide a solidly edited collection of works carefully looked over by the Author himself" (UZ I, *Proza* 1, 387). However, in the context of everything we have said so far – as well as what Jan Stolarczyk said in his notes to successive volumes of the *Utwore zebrane* – this setting aside the publication of a critical edition until a later date sounds almost like a provocation. It is hard to resist a suspicion that such an edition would rather be an "uncritical" one... The notion arises, almost impossible to resist, that a critical edition of Różewicz's works, particularly his poetry, would somehow be unnecessary, even if it were possible... What would – perhaps – be possible would be a genetic edition, in a sense approximating the one familiar from the French tradition of genetic criticism. Though when we ponder whether that would be presented as a dynamic, diplomatic, or automatic edition, we quickly come to the conclusion that while invoking genetic criticism removes certain problems, it introduces others... Perhaps that is as it must be. For perhaps what Różewicz wants is impossible: he would like for his texts to work the way his manuscripts work; he wants his whole oeuvre to function that way; to constitute a kind of organic whole that expands like a rhizome, in all directions at once, utterly spontaneously, differentiating itself and multiplying in the course of renewed refer-

---

[5] The book was written by Tadeusz with this brother Stanisław, a film director. Its subject is the third Różewicz brother, Janusz, a talented young poet and conspirator killed by the Gestapo during the war.

ences, connections, and embranchments. There is probably no editorial technique that could illustrate or rather establish the equivalent of this Różewiczean semiosis of sense. Nonetheless, Różewicz persistently searched for such a technique. He searched for forms that could present the image of such semiosis and simultaneously (and probably primarily) constitute a part of it, its manifestation, or perhaps – to be as clear-cut as possible – the space hosting its new growths.

This search has its own history, and that history possesses many explicatory virtues. It begins with work on the book generally considered to be Różewicz's debut, *Niepokój* (1947). Różewicz recalls that the poems to be included in it had already gone through "between ten and twenty drafts" (*Wbrew sobie* [In Spite of Myself], Wrocław: Biuro Literackie, 2011, 332). At a certain point – it seems clear – the transition from this multiplicity of manuscript versions and the pristine final version published in magazine and book form began quite simply to get blurred, to the point where Różewicz's books – and later periodicals printing his work as well – began to feature (with gradually increasing frequency) prints of his manuscripts. At the same time, manuscripts, usually made public by the author, began to be worked on by scholars (including L. Śliwonik, T. Kłak, T. Drewnowski, and R. Przybylski). The turning point was *Płaskorzeźba*, in which the "practice of addition" became in a sense systematized. Though initially the peculiar shape of *Płaskorzeźby* was viewed – and continues to be, in some quarters, to this day – as a kind of experiment, driven above all by chiefly didactic purposes. Janusz Drzewucki wrote in his review of *Płaskorzeźby* (one of the best reviews, in fact), that the juxtaposition of so many manuscripts enabled "us to finally be convinced of the poet's expressive restraint, of his incomparable formal craftsmanship, to become conscious not only of the author's tremendous artistic work, both aesthetic and intellectual, but also to grasp the weight of his responsibility for each word."[6] That is all true, but the systematic meaning of Różewicz's practice – even if its meaning is essentially rather anti-systematic – remains beyond the reach of thought. Perhaps in 1992, when Drzewucki wrote those words, it was still too early... Later, Różewicz began playing his game in earnest. It has not been much remarked that he also doubled "nożyk profesora" (the professor's penknife, 2001). He placed two versions of that poem in the eponymous book, while two of the five poems in that book he had printed together with facsimiles of their manuscripts in the magazine *Twórczość* (Creativity).[7] This represents some form of doubling, though it is difficult to speak in an exact sense of a "double book"... Still, the history of the development of his practice of addition, or rather *practices* of *adding and subtracting* (for the practice is too varied to be named in the singular or kept separate from its opposite), must remain in outline. It is too tangled. Let us merely add that the auto-commentaries of Różewicz himself play an important role in it. They include some very arresting remarks. For example, in his *Dziennik gliwicki* (Gliwice Diary; the entry for June 15, 1957) we read: "What my ‹critics› or ‹writer colleagues› judged to be ‹repetition›... when they said: ‹Tadeusz R. is repeating himself› – was and perhaps still is the most valuable part of all my work. Obstinate reworking, repeating, recovering the same material and continuing ... to the end" (UZ XI, 91). As we

---

[6] J. Drzewucki, "Poezja jest jak śmierć" (Poetry Is Like Death), in: *Smaki słowa, Szkice o poezji* (Word Flavors. Essays on Poetry), Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 1999, 46.

[7] *Twórczość* 2000, no. 10.

can see, Różewicz very early became close to the thought that his work is a kind of circling around an ungraspable or absent centre, which is rather created extemporaneously than having a previous existence. Similarly, at the end of *Poemat otwarty* (Open Poem, 1956), we find the lines: "krążymy / dokoła / lecz nie ma środka" (we circle / about / but there is no centre; UZ VIII, *Poezja* 2, 19).

From the history of the formation of Różewicz's practice of addition, there emerge possibilities for conducting its continuation in various directions. What directions? Firstly, there is the art of editing or textology as traditionally understood. Secondly, we have the linguistic theory of the text, in particular the concept of its cohesion (here I have in mind the work of M. T. Mayenowa, T. Dobrzyńska, and others). Thirdly, there are the postmodern concepts of the text, including those of Derrida, Kristeva, and Barthes.[8] Fourthly, there is the idea of the text understood, using a term from the subtitle of John Mowitt's book, as an "antidisciplinary object."[9] Fifthly, in terms of connections with the category of the subject understood as the place of intersection or imbrication of text and body. There are many more or less obvious points of transition between the problem of text and the subject, we should point out, in Różewicz's work. I am not sure, for example, to which of those categories the motif of the hand belongs. Różewicz often speaks of his attachment to something he sometimes calls the manual vista. He underscores that he writes exclusively by hand, never using a typewriter or computer, and that his work on the poem is thus not only intellectual, but also bodily work. Moreover, in his poems we find, for example, images of a hand in some way freeing itself from the will of the author, resisting it, because it wants to write a poem but is held back by the writer's consciousness (as in "Wiersz," UZ, *Poezja* 3, 240-241).

A short observation concerning the first point. In fact, the question of the status of the Różewicz text cannot, in my view, be presented based on or described with the language of textology. At the moment of transition from the author's work on an unpublished text to the author's work on a published text, as it if it were a manuscript, textology would seem to become paralyzed. In any case, to the extent that we recognize its aim to be establishing a foundation for publication (with indications of changes to the text if necessary) based on the author's will, resulting from a strenuous reconstruction of his intention presented in various texts and utterances attributed to him, as well as in other forms of evidence. At the same time, it does not take great powers of discernment to notice that the intention – for all of the differences in how it is perceived – always appears on the basis of textology as a will to unity, i.e., hierarchy and truth.

Let us consider three passages from works by three outstanding Polish textologists. The first is Konrad Górski. In his *Tekstologia i edytorstwo dzieł literackich* (Textology and Editing of Literary Works) Górski takes no account of a situation in which the author's will would favour the destruction of the concept of a canonical text rather than its preservation. He goes only as far as accepting that sometimes situations occur in which the "writer's actual authorial intention" cannot be reasoned out. He then, significantly, invokes the legal principle of *im-*

---

[8] Jonathan Culler's essay "Text: Its Vicissitudes" in his book *The Literary in Theory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007, 99-116) provides a good introduction to this problem.

[9] John Mowitt, *Text: The Genealogy of an Antidsciplinary Object, Durham: Duke University Press 1992.*

possibilium nulla est obligatio, and states that "such borderline cases which force us to capitulate before difficulties do not authorize the conclusion that the insolvability of certain cases should be a rule and that for the sake of the safety and peace of mind of anxious intellects it is better not to introduce the difference between authorial intention and what passes for such an intention in certain people's eyes."[10]

Some equally powerful arguments are made by Roman Loth. In his *Podstawowe pojęcia i problemy tekstologii i edytorstwa naukowego* (Basic Concepts and Problems of Textology and Scholarly Editing) he writes: "There are some authors who constantly make improvements to their works, in each new published version, in each new edition. The editor, however, must find the point he considers to be basic to the work's impact and take the state of the work in that particular stage of its evolution for the finished form. At that point, the creative process is artificially cut short by the author – that precise point determines how the work will read in the main framework of the published edition; that point delimits the basis of its printed form. Everything that comes before and after that point reaches publication in a different form– in the form of work on other variants or alternate versions."[11]

For his part, Zbigniew Goliński observes: "the authorial text of a particular work may exist in numerous variants (as text) in both phases of its existence: before publication and after publication. In the first situation, the evolution of the text as it takes place in the course of the work's formation can be seen as a normal phenomenon, and then we speak of concepts, sketches, drafts, various versions, etc., whereas in the second situation, when the author changes the text of the work in successive published versions, we usually say that the author has a living relationship to his own work or to the piece of work in question, which amounts to something like a theoretical generalization."[12]

A brief comment is warranted. Górski perceives certain concerns, but that motivates him to make a greater effort. He strengthens editors' self-assurance by making them enforcers of the law, after which he expounds against "anxious intellects," i.e., those who lack the will to undertake the struggle for the sole and proper form of the text. Loth, as if warmed for battle, in a situation where the author scandalously renounces his right to establish the final version of the text or frivolously (or perhaps anxiously) forgets to do so (in the course of endlessly "improving upon" his work), hands more or less total authority to the editor. It is the editor who replaces the author, and in some sense acts in his name. Because clearly the editor, or the law, in the final analysis knows better than the author what the latter should want and what he should focus on. Next, Goliński designates the situation wherein the author changes the text after publication as abnormal (not in so many words, but opposing it, as "the second" situation, to the first, "normal" one) and (ironically?) describes it as a manifestation of the author's "living relationship to his own work [...]." He describes that definition (again ironically?) as "amount[ing] to something like a theoretical generalization."

[10] K. Górski, *Tekstologia i edytorstwo dzieł literackich*, Toruń: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 2011, 35.

[11] R. Loth, *Podstawowe pojęcia i problemy tekstologii i edytorstwa naukowego*, Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 2006, 59.

[12] Z. Goliński, "O problemie tekstu kanonicznego w edytorstwie" (On the Problem of the Canonical Text in Editing), *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1967, 4, 444-445.

Tadeusz Różewicz, then, is an author who "has a living relationship to his own work [...]." That could sum up this entire essay, and not strictly ironically. Let us add another reflection to that thought, however (we are discussing additions, after all). We asked earlier what Różewicz actually adds in his *practices of addition*, thereby suggesting that he adds as much as he subtracts in that process; or that he does two things simultaneously; or that the one activity cannot be differentiated from the other. At the same time, the first move, and thus in a sense the privileged one, is addition. Of these practices, the most important one is adding a different iteration of a poem to its existing printed iteration, so that it is no longer clear which one is the hypostasis. In a word: adding the same poem to the same poem causes the poem to begin to differ from itself. Różewicz's original, in other words, enters into relations with itself, and the whole situation resembles the relations that an original enjoys with its translations.

That original, when it enters into relations with itself, postulates a new language or a new textology. This is because the textology whose underlying concepts arose based on the relations existing *before* the publication of the canonical founding text cannot be transferred to the relations that develop *after* its publication. What was *before* and what is *after* are only superficially similar situations. But that does not change the fact that they should be considered together: and therein lies the trouble. Contemporary media scholarship could doubtless offer useful help here, but that is a separate issue.

Here I should address yet another kind of "addition": photographs and drawings. For example, the photograph of a young, naked, dead female prisoner lying in the snow before a camp barracks on the title pages of *nożyk profesora*, altered so that the title is contained within the photograph, which in turn begins to resemble a nude painting. Fortunately, the subject has already been written about, interestingly and incisively, and I can simply direct readers to those writings.[13]

Let us end with an anecdote. Różewicz tells it himself in his book *Margines, ale...* (Margin, but...; Wrocław 2011, 272): "I once asked Professor Tadeusz Kłak, if I could rewrite and correct my old poems... He replied with a smile: ‹A poet – while he lives – has the right to make changes, corrections, but... he shouldn't.› "Why?" I asked, "after all the original texts exist and are available to scholars and readers. To everyone. For example, I read the poem "Pożegnanie" [Farewell] – one of my favorite poems (I wrote it in '45 or '46): ‹Myślała / że świat jest smutny / dokoła / że kwiaty są smutne i deszcz / że smutek się zagnieździł / w szorstkiej wełnie / pachnącej rezedą› [She thought / the world was sad / all around / that flowers were sad and rain / that sadness held sway / in the rough wool / smelling of

[13]H. Marciniak, "Wizualna przestrzeń postpamięci. Poetyka sekundarnego świadectwa w 'nożyku profesora' Tadeusza Różewicza" (The Visual Space of Post-Memory. The Poetics of Secondary Testimony in Tadeusz Różewicz's *nożyk profesora*), *Wielogłos* 2013, no. 1; Marciniak, "Obraz fotograficzny – między archiwum a pozorem. Fotografie 'nożyka profesora' Tadeusza Różewicza" (The Photographic Image—Between Archive and Appearance. Photographs of Tadeusz Różewicz's *nożyk profesora*), *Przestrzenie Teorii* 2014, (21); Mark Zaleski's contribution to the discussion "Jak wyśpiewać sekcję zwłok?" (How to Sing an Autopsy?) *Res Publica Nowa* 2001, no. 7, 80; B. Krupa, "Ciało róży. Fotograficzne reprezentacje Zagłady w 'nożyku profesora'" (The Body of the Rose. Photographic Representations of the Holocaust in *nożyk profesora*), in: *Niepokoje. Twórczość Tadeusza Różewicza wobec zagłady* (Anxieties. The Work of Tadeusz Różewicz and the Holocaust), Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2014.

mignonette](I meant, not 'wool,' but woolen clothing). Years later, I changed mignonette to lavender, but a few months later I crossed out lavender and put back mignonette [...]."[14] It is a beautiful parable, we might say. Even more beautiful– and meaningful – in that it exists in two parallel versions.[15]

[14]Różewicz, *Margines, ale...* (Margin, but...), Wrocław: Biuro Literackie, 2010, 272.

[15]Here is the second one: "I once asked Professor Tadeusz Kłak, if I could rewrite my old poems... He replied with a smile: <A poet – while he lives – has the right to make changes, corrections, but... he shouldn't.> "Why?" I asked, "after all the original texts exist and are available to scholars and readers... as well as sleuths, judges and hangmen... For example, I read the poem "Pożegnanie" [Farewell] – one of my favorite poems (I wrote it in 1945 or 1946): <Myślała / że świat jest smutny / dokoła / że kwiaty są smutne i deszcz / że smutek się zagnieździł / w szorstkiej wełnie / pachnącej rezedą> [She thought / the world was sad / all around / that flowers were sad and rain / that sadness held sway / in the rough wool / smelling of mignonette](I meant, not 'wool,' but woolen clothing). Over the years I changed mignonette to lavender... not long ago – I crossed out mignonette and wrote in lavender, but a few months later I crossed out lavender and put back mignonette." See *Tadeusz Różewicz. Doctor honoris causa Universitatis Silesiensis. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1999, 32–33.*

KEYWORDS

edyting

Tadeusz Rożewicz

Abstract:

The essay focuses on the operations to which Tadeusz Różewicz submits his (poetic and other) texts. These involve various kinds of transformations, as a result of which Różewicz's poems become multiple texts and are revealed to be, in a sense, variants with no clear "original." Skrendo describes the ways in which these transformations take place and considers their consequences.

P   O   E   T   I   C   S

text

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:

Andrzej Skrendo is an historian and theo-
retician of literature, employed at the Uni-
versity of Szczeciń in the Institute of Polish
and Cultural Studies. He works mainly on
contemporary literature. |

The Text And Its Additions, Additions And Text

– From Entertainment Supersystem To Cultural Universe

Konrad Dominas

A literary text seems in contemporary culture to be endlessly mediated by new media, as well as popular literature and pop culture. These spaces change the tone of relations between a text and its environment, creating a new perspective on the question of what constitutes an addition to the text and what function it performs. As a result of these changes, a peculiar system of varied elements– literature, film, animation, internet services, social media, comics, etc. – has arisen, whose signature factor is the gradual effacement of borders between its constituent parts. The text is ceasing to be a point of reference in this system and is instead becoming, for example, an addition to a film or to a sequence of computerized animation.

Describing such relationships is not only a difficult task, but also a risky one. The most important problem we face in tackling it is the interdisciplinary nature of the phenomenon and the lack of a suitable methodology. Furthermore, representatives of various scholarly disciplines have attempted to develop a theory connecting literary texts, new media and popular culture and to endow them with a uniform character using various research tools. A typical feature of such theoretical endeavours is a certain kind of unification based on a terminology developed in order to cover the entire, complicated problem in its range. We thus have Marsha Kinder, who in her 1991 book *Playing with Power in Movies, Television, and Video Games. From Muppet Babies to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*[1] introduces two extremely significant concepts: the *supersystem of transmedia intertextuality* and the *supersystem of entertainment*. Then there is Henry Jenkins, who in *Convergence Culture. Where Old and New Media Collide* (2007)[2] uses the

---

[1] Marsha Kinder, *Playing with Power in Movies, Television, and Video Games: From Muppet Babies to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991. On the entertainment supersystem in the Polish literature on the subject, see A. Mazurkiewicz, "Teksty kultury cyberpunkowej w systemie rozrywkowym" (Texts of Cyberpunk Culture in an Entertainment System), *Studia Pragmalingwistyczne* 2011, year III, 30-50; Z. Wałaszewski, "Papierowy jednorożec, klubówka i Łowca Androidów. O powstawaniu supersystemu rozrywkowego" (The Paper Unicorn, the Club Party, and the Android Hunter. On the Emergence of an Entertainment Supersystem), in *Literatura i kultura popularna. Badania, analizy, interpretacje* (Popular Literature and Popular Culture. Studies, Analyses, Interpretations), ed. Anna Gemra, Wrocław: Pracownia Literatury i Kultury Popularnej oraz Nowych Mediów, 217-230.

[2] Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture. Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York: NYU Press, 2008.

term "transmedial storytelling," which he defines in later chapters of the book as synergic storytelling. In cultural anthropology, on the other hand, and in works devoted to popular literature and pop culture, we find the concept of a cultural universe being widely used.[3]

The choice of the terms used above is not accidental. They make up the following algorithm: intertextuality → supersystem of transmedial interactivity → synergic storytelling → cultural universe. In this article, I shall illustrate the first three elements in the group using the Wachowskis' trilogy: *The Matrix*, *The Matrix Reloaded*, and *The Matrix Revolutions*; the cultural universe I shall illustrate using a variety of examples from popular culture in its sense. The terminology I have proposed relates not only to processes that take place between texts and their environment, but also situates in a new framework the concepts of intertextuality, transtextuality, pantextuality and the relationships we may, following Ryszard Nycz, call text-text, text-genre, and text-reality.[4]

I will thus reveal the dependencies of text and addition or text and environment in a completely new context: the context of a system in which the text constitutes one of the elements, constantly referring to the other parts of the group, and vice versa, the other parts of the group are constantly supplemented by the text. It is thus a path which, even from the perspective of a scholar of textuality may appear the final stage in the text's metamorphoses.

From *The Matrix* to an Entertainment Supersystem

In one of the initial scenes of the film *The Matrix* (directed by Lilly and Lana Wachowski, Australia, USA 1999), Thomas Anderson, concealing himself under his hacker pseudonym Neo, receives three electronic messages: "Wake up Neo," "The Matrix has you," and "Follow the white rabbit."[5] Moments later the protagonist finds a book in which he hides devices containing illegally obtained data. For two thousand dollars, he hands over one of them to a contractor named Choi. The sequence concludes with a scene in a club where, amid psychedelic music, Neo meets Trinity. The sequence in question takes place between 7:00 and 12:00 in the film's playing time. In a span of barely five minutes, the viewer is faced with an unusually eloquent intertext, the decoding of which occurs on three levels and in two dimensions: that of meaning or semantics (interpretative) and that of media (mechanical).

---

[3] The concept of a cultural universe has been applied in various contexts and perspectives. See *Literatura i kultura popularna. Badania, analizy, interpretacje*; *Literatura i kultura popularna. Badania i metody* (Popular Literature and Popular Culture. Studies and Methods), ed. Anna Gemra and Adam Mazurkiewicz, Wrocław: Pracownia Literatury i Kultury Popularnej oraz Nowych Mediów, 2014; *Dawno temu w Galaktyce Popularnej* (Long Ago in a Popular Galaxy), ed. Albert Jawłowski, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2010; Jakub Z. Lichański, Wojciech Kajtoch, Bogdan Trocha, eds., *Literatura i kultura popularna. Metody: propozycje i dyskusje* (Popular Literature and Popular Culture. Methods, Proposals, and Discussions), Wrocław: Pracownia Literatury i Kultury Popularnej oraz Nowych Mediów, 2015.

[4] R. Nycz, *Tekstowy świat* (Textual World), Kraków: Universitas, 2000, 87-100. In the context of new analyses dealing with textuality, however, we should remember the words of Yury M. Lotman: "The development of scholarship at times puts certain words out; the avalanche-like growth of their frequency in scholarly texts is accompanied by a loss in necessary clarity of meaning. They do not so much function as terms for exact signaling of a scholarly concept as they signal the currency of the problem and point to the area in which new scholarly ideas are being born." Yury M. Lotman, "Текст в тексте," in *Чему учатся люди. Статьи и заметки* (What People Study. Articles and Notes), Moskva: Tsentr knigi VGBIL im. M. I. Rudomino, 2009. My translation—TDW.

[5] All quotations are taken from the following edition of the film: *Matrix*, DVD, Galapagos 2010.

The first level of intertextual references relates to the white rabbit presented in the form of a tattoo on the back of one of Choi's female partners. It is a direct and easily decipherable reference to Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The second level is connected with the title of the book in which Neo hides the stolen data. In the film, we see only its title: the book is Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*.[6] The third level exceeds the boundaries of the *Matrix* and involves the combination of some of the film's dialogue with music – the song "Du hast" by the German group Rammstein.[7] Significant here are both the text of the song and its video, directed by Philipp Stölzl.[8]

These references move in two dimensions. The semantic (interpretative) dimension permits the audience to perceive within the film its main premises and peculiar philosophy, located in between the mutually opposing concepts:

– Waking life-Dream: "You ever have that feeling where you're not sure if you're awake or still dreaming?" – spoken by Neo to Choi;

– Reality-Fiction – the book *Simulacra and Simulation*;

– Freedom-Servitude – the message "The Matrix has you" and later "They're watching you. […] Please just listen. I know why you're here, Neo. I know what you've been doing… why you hardly sleep, why you live alone, and why night after night, you sit by your computer. You're looking for him" – Trinity's words to Neo;

– Real World-World of Magic – the message "Follow the white rabbit"

The three-level deciphering of meanings is thus based on connections between particular moments in the film and references to familiar works of literature and music. In the first case we have the above-mentioned *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, in the second the works of Jean Baudrillard and the fundamentals of his philosophy, and in the third case allusions to the text of a song by the group Rammstein (the words: "Du…/Du hast…/Du hast mich…/Du hast mich…/Du hast mich gefragt/Du hast mich gefragt/Du hast mich gefragt und ich hab' nichts gesagt")[9] and to the memorably powerful video for the song, inspired by Quentin Tarantino's film *Reservoir Dogs* (US, 1992).

The media dimension relates to the mechanisms by means of which the audience is able to decode the meanings described above. Those mechanisms base themselves not only on the

---

[6] J. Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994. The French-language original was published in 1981 (Éditions Galilée), and the Polish translation in 2005 (Wydawnictwo Sic!).

[7] This song does not feature on the film's soundtrack but was included on the official soundtrack album *The Matrix: Music from the Motion Picture* (Warner Bros./Maverick, 1999) containing 12 songs relating to the Wachowskis' film.

[8] Rammstein, "Du hast," dir. Philipp Stölzl, official video webpage: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3q8Od5qJio, accessed: 4 June 2016.

[9] The song "Du hast" was released in 1997, and was produced by Jacob Hellner and Rammstein. Written by Till Lindemann, it was published by Motor Music.

viewer's knowledge (for example of who wrote *Simulacra and Simulation*), but also on their perceptivity and reflexes. It is those capabilities, in fact, that allow viewers to catch brief sequences in the film, lasting only a few seconds, if that. The media dimension thus demands that the viewer engage to the extent of multiple viewings of individual scenes, re-watching shot by shot or even frame by frame.

The most interesting aspect of these parts of *The Matrix*, however, is the function performed by the numerous quotations and references. The simplest way to explain the problem is to treat all of these allusions as signposts that serve to help find the answer to the question of the essence of the Matrix – a computer system that functions for the purpose of acquiring energy for machines. Morpheus asks, "What is the Matrix? Control. The Matrix is a computer-generated dream world built to keep us under control in order to change a human being into this," holding up a battery in front of Neo as he speaks the last words. The real world exists outside the system, and what the inhabitants of the Matrix are experiencing is a mere phantom generated by a computer program. The reference to the philosophy of Jean Baudrillard and the concept of simulacra is remarkably eloquent in this context. Thus, the decoding of individual clues resembles a game played by the screenwriters and directors with the audience. It is important, however, that we return to the media dimension of *The Matrix*. The combination of all of the elements in a logical whole demands the spectator view the film multiple times and then connect all of the information acquired with the worlds of music, literature, art, and so on.

The analysis above brings to mind the convention of palimpsest reading referred to by Gerard Genette in his discussion of the concept of hypertextuality.[10] It is hypertextuality as a particular kind of transtextuality that, according to Genette, has in its way much in common with bricolage;[11] "making something new with something old […]."[12] Going further in this direction, we might ask what in this convention constitutes hypertext, and what hypotext, and what relations occur between these separate elements? Various references in *The Matrix* can be read primarily as intertextual, though many scholars would no doubt propose a discussion focused on traditional literary studies of influences, dependencies, and comparativism.[13]. It should be noted here that most products of popular culture are treated as a mosaic of an enormous number of literary motifs and topoi, always viewed as derivative vis-à-vis the original.[14] All such references and quotations thus become one of the basic mechanisms of contemporary culture.[15]

---

[10]Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests. Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997, x.

[11]Genette, *Palimpsests*, x.

[12]Genette, *Palimpsests*, x.

[13]Henry Markiewicz, "Odmiany intertekstualności" (Varieties of Intertextuality), in *Wymiary dzieła literackiego* (Dimensions of the Literary Work), Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1996, 218. See Michał Głowiński, "O intertekstualności" (On Intertextuality), *Pamiętnik Literacki* LXXVII, 1996, no. 4, 76-77.

[14]See Anna Gemra, Introduction to *Literatura i kultura popularna*, 7-13.

[15]In the context of *The Matrix* references to cyberpunk literature are particularly prominent. See Adam Mazurkiewicz, *Z problematyki cyberpunku. Literatura – sztuka – kultura* (Problems of Cyberpunk. Literature, Art, Culture), Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2014, 337-340.

The Matrix has become a kind of cultural phenomenon, a cult sensation in the eyes of many. According to Marsha Kinder's conception, the film can be defined as an entertainment supersystem, or more precisely a *supersystem of transmedia intertextuality*. Kinder inscribes the concept of intertextuality within the context of media studies, despite the fact that the methodological section of her work begins with references to texts by Julia Kristeva.[16] According to Kinder, "intertextuality has come to mean that any individual text (whether an artwork like a movie or novel, or a more commonplace text like a newspaper article, billboard, or casual verbal remark) is part of a larger cultural discourse and therefore must be read in relationship to other texts and their diverse textual strategies and ideological assumptions."[17] *Transmedia intertextuality* is thus a kind of supplementation of intertextuality with a new system of signs: film, animation, computer games, morning TV shows, etc. A *supersystem of transmedia intertextuality* therefore signifies a new transmedial space of intertextuality, in which the process, mentioned in my introduction, of the gradual effacement of boundaries between particular elements in a system begins; this space is what Kinder calls an entertainment supersystem.[18] Its characteristic feature is the way all intertextual references rely on viewers' general knowledge. What is relevant is not so much the knowledge of a particular text as the ability to find it within medial space and connect it with other texts. It should be pointed out, however, that medial space, in Kinder's understanding of it, directs the reader primarily toward television and the world of computer games – *Playing with Power in Movies, Television...* was published in 1991, and therefore does not deal with the media that have emerged in relation to the Internet.[19]

From Entertainment Supersystem to Transmedial Storytelling

The original *Matrix* constituted a kind of self-contained whole, and its many references and borrowings, combined with special effects and the four Oscars it earned, made it one of the most popular cult films of the late twentieth century.[20] Unlike the first film, *The Matrix Reloaded* (directed by the Wachowskis, Australia, USA 2003) and *The Matrix Revolutions* (directed by the Wachowskis, Australia, USA 2003) give the impression of being unfinished and sometimes even incomprehensible. If we were to consider only the opinions of film critics, we

---

[16]Kinder, *Playing with Power in Movies...*, 1-2.

[17]Kinder, *Playing with Power in Movies...*, 2.

[18]In the course I have supervised called "Współczesna kultura jako supersystem rozrywkowy" (Contemporary Culture as Entertainment Supersystem), students of the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań suggested the following entertainment supersystems: Angry Birds, J.R.R Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, contemporary election campaigns, the TV series *Twin Peaks* (created by David Lynch and Mark Frost, USA 1990-1991), *Game of Thrones*, (created by David Benioff and D.B. Weiss based on books and characters by George R. R. Martin, USA 2011-). The course was held in the academic year 2015-2016.

[19]The most popular service existing today, the World Wide Web was developed by Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau in 1989 at the Center for European Nuclear Research (CERN). In 1993 the first web browser, Mosaic, appeared, and was indispensable for viewing websites. The application was created at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) and became one of the most important elements in the web's later commercialization. Only in 1995 did the American Federal Networking Council (FNC) introduce the definition of the Internet, while Google appeared on the WWW in 1997. See T. Berners-Lee, *The World Wide Web: Past, Present and Future*, https://www.w3.org/People/Berners-Lee/1996/ppf.html, accessed: 4 June 2016; http://www.google.com/about/company/history/, accessed: 4 June 2016; https://www.w3.org/People/Berners-Lee/1996/ppf.html, accessed: 4 June 2016; http://www.internetsociety.org/internet/what-internet/history-internet/brief-history-internet, accessed: 4 June 2016.

[20]In 2000 *The Matrix* received four Oscars, for the Best Special Effects (John Gaeta, Janek Sirrs, Steve Courtley, Jon Thum), Best Sound (David E. Campbell, David Lee, Gregg Rudloff, John T. Reitz), Best Editing (Zach Staenberg) and Best Sound Editing (Dane A. Davis).

would have to reckon that these films are typical instances of a failed continuation of the first part. Henry Jenkins, however, defends these productions. "I would argue," he writes, "that we do not yet have very good aesthetic criteria for evaluating works that play themselves out across multiplemedia. There have been far too few fully transmedia stories for media makers to act with any certainty about what would constitute the best uses of this new mode of storytelling, or for critics and consumers to know how to talk meaningfully about what works or doesn't work within such franchises."[21] In Jenkins's view, the Wachowskis' trilogy reveals a new type of narrative to viewers: transmedia storytelling, the essence of which is the fact that it develops on various media platforms, "with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole."[22] As a form of transmedial storytelling, *The Matrix* consists of the following elements: the three film productions already mentioned (1999-2003); the documentary film *The Matrix Revisited* (dir. Josh Oreck, US 2001); the computer games: *Enter the Matrix* (Shiny Entertainment, USA 2003) produced by David Perry, *The Matrix Online* (Monolith Productions, USA 2005) based on a scenario by Paul Chadwick, *The Matrix: Path of Neo* (Shiny Entertainment, USA 2005); a series of nine short animated films, entitled *The Animatrix* (Japonia, USA 2003)[23]; and a whole series of books and comics including *The Art of the Matrix* by Spencer Lamm (Newmarket Press, 2000), *Enter The Matrix: Official Strategy Guide* by Doug Walsh (Brady Games, 2003), and *The Matrix Comics* published by Titan Books between 2003 and 2005. As Jenkins writes, *The Matrix* "integrat[es] multiple texts to create a narrative so large that it cannot be contained within a single medium."[24]

The transmedial storytelling that Jenkins sometimes defines as synergic storytelling[25] is inscribed in the three main concepts of his book: media convergence, participatory culture and collective intelligence. The first of these terms encompasses various changes in technological, industrial, cultural, and social space that have led to a constant flow of information (content) between and among diverse media platforms.[26] Unlike earlier theorists of media, Jenkins treats convergence as primarily a cultural concept, involving untold multitudes of consumers in processes connected with archiving, commenting on, appropriating and redistributing

[21] Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 96.

[22] Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 95-96.

[23] The Polish version appeared in the same year. The series consists of the following episodes: *Final Flight of the Osiris; The Second Renaissance, Parts 1 & 2; Kid's Story; Program; World Record; Beyond; A Detective Story;* and *Matriculated*. For detailed information on the scenarists and directors, see http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0328832/, accessed: 4 June 2016.

[24] Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 95. Another example of transmedial storytelling could be Tarsem Singh's *Immortals* (US, 2011). Together with the film, Archaia Entertainment released the comic book *Immortals. Gods and Heroes* (Los Angeles, 2011) – a collection of nine stories divided into two sections: *Gods* (five stories) and *Heroes* (four stories). These stories not only develop plot threads from the film, but also modify and transform them. Only after reading the comic book is the reader fully able to understand the conflict between the Olympians and Titans. A scrupulous analysis of the film in the context of the reception of ancient literature and transmedial storytelling can be found in my article "Bogowie i herosi w kulturze popularnej na przykładzie produkcji Wolfganga Petersena 'Troja' oraz Tarsema Singha 'Immortals. Bogowie i herosi'" (Gods and Heroes in Popular Culture. Case Studies of Wolfgang Petersen's *Troy* and Tarsem Singh's *Immortals*), in *Fantastyczność i cudowność. „Homo mythicus". Mityczne wzorce tożsamości* (The Fantastic and the Marvelous. Homo mythicus. Mythical Models of Identity), ed. B. Trocha, G. Trębicki, H. Kubicka, Zielona Góra: Oficjna Wydawnica Uniwersytety Zielonogórskiego, 2014, 79-86.

[25] Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 100-107.

[26] Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 9. See also: http://henryjenkins.org/2006/06/welcome_to_convergence_culture.html, accessed: 7 June 2016.

media content.[27] His concepts are openly indebted to what is sometimes called the Canadian school of media studies (Harold A. Innis, Eric A. Havelock, Walter J. Ong, J. Goody, M. McLuhan, Derrick de Kerchove), and in a sense represent their embodiment, though it should be underscored that they do not share the technological determinism typical of McLuhan's thought.[28] Convergence is a paradigm shift based on the movement from content created within one medium toward information flows across various media channels.[29] These changes are happening because of consumers and interaction among them that are creating a grassroots participatory culture. Consumption is perceived by Jenkins as a collective process; following in the footsteps of French cybertheorist Pierre Levy, he subscribes to a theory that can be summed up in the following statement: "None of us can know everything [but] each of us knows something [...]."[30] That statement fully conveys the concept of collective intelligence, one of the pillars not only of Jenkins's views, but also of the whole Web 2.0 trend[31] or the paradigm shift referenced in the introduction to *Convergence Culture*.[32]

Transmedial storytelling thus joins together various media platforms into one shared organism, whose content is provided by consumers– system users. They work together through a constant exchange of information and collective intelligence. The condition for participating in the system is constant searching and engagement in processes of creating new content. Furthermore, each element in the group is equally important, and each should be fully recognized by every participant in the process.

Toward a Cultural Universe

Contemporary popular culture can increasingly be defined as a complex of interconnecting and mutually completing cultural universes. Examples of such universes may include: *Star Wars*, Marvel, DC Comics, Lego, Transformers and many more. These systems, which encompass an aggregation of varied elements, remain in an ongoing, perpetual state of indefinition, endowed with form by the receiver. It is therefore better to say "the Lego Ninjago universe" than "the Lego blocks universe." It is better to say "the Marvel universe" than to say "the Marvel comics universe," because that system creates films, animation, toys, books, and so on.[33] Blocks, which until recently were the main material produced by the Lego company, have now become part of a broader constellation. One of the latest proposals from the Danish company, the Lego Nexo Knights, includes, in addition to 28 sets: guides to the world of the

---

[27]Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 135.

[28]See Dieter Mersch, *Medientheorien zur Einführung*, Hamburg: Junius, 2013; Éric Maigret, *Sociologie de la communication et des médias*, Malakoff: Armand Colin, 2015.

[29]Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 243.

[30]Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 4. On the concept of collective intelligence, see Rafał Maciąg, *Pragmatyka Internetu. Web 2.0 jako środowisko* (Pragmatics of the Internet. Web 2.0 as an Environment), Kraków: Wydawnictwo UJ, 2013, 143-145.

[31]Web 2.0 is a trend relating to the range of how the Internet is used to create and manage content, the development of technologies and internet applications such as Ajax, Google Maps and others and the generation of profits through providing access to services for free. See Amy Shuen, *Web 2.0.: A Strategy Guide*, Sebastopol: O'Reilly Media, 2008, 13-16.

[32]H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 5-9.

[33]See Sean Howe, *Marvel Comics: The Untold Story*, New York: Harper, 2012. See also http://www.marvelcomics. pl/, accessed: 4 June 2016.

Nexo Knights, bestiaries, catalogues, comic books,[34] animated films[35] and an entire arsenal of marketing additions disseminated across all possible distribution channels, among which internet apps have been playing an increasingly active role.[36]

Up until now, studies have focused on one particular product of popular culture, and all of its various additions were treated as accessories. The main element in a universe (a film, a series of comic books, a set of Legos, a particular character, story, or text) constituted the nucleus around which later elements assembled, those being interpreted as derivative with regard to the original entity. A similar situation could be observed when a literary text, due to its growing popularity, was supplemented with a variety of additional works: films, comic books, advertisements, amateur fan films on YouTube, fan fiction, etc.[37]

The concept of the universe, understood by me as a system of communicating vessels, almost entirely eliminates the concept of the "accessory." An accessory can be, for example, an Optimus Prime T-shirt, mug, bed linens, watch, and so on. In a word, any form of the ubiquitous marketing that on the one hand promotes the product and on the other identifies the spectator with a concrete universe. If, however, the image printed on the T-shirt depicted a hitherto unknown adventure of the Autobot leader, then the T-shirt/accessory would cease to be an addition to the universe and would become a part of it – a text inscribed in the system and remaining in constant relations with other texts or elements in it.[38]

In *Convergence Culture* Jenkins claims that transmedial storytelling is the art of creating worlds. "To fully experience any fictional world," Jenkins writes, "consumers must assume the role of hunters and gatherers, chasing down bits of the story across media channels, comparing notes with each other via online discussion groups, and collaborating [...]."[39] Jenkins, citing Pierre Levy, invokes the concept of a "cultural attractor," which forms due to the obliteration of boundaries between authors and readers, producers and spectators, creators

---

[34]The copyright for publication of any materials relating to the Lego Nexo Knights belongs to Ameet Publishing. See http://www.ameet.pl/kategoria-produktu/katalog/lego/nexo-knights/, accessed: 4 June 2016.

[35]In 2015, the Danish-American animated series *Nexo Knights* was created; it is broadcast on Cartoon Network. The Polish version premiered toward the end of 2015.

[36]On the official Lego Nexo Knights website, users can not only get acquainted with the world of the characters in the series, but also play multimedia games, watch animated films and even join the Nexo Knights Academy. See http://www.lego.com/pl-pl/nexoknights/products, accessed: 4 June 2016.

[37]Particularly notable is the fan fiction discussed by Jenkins in the context of J. K. Rowling's series of Harry Potter novels. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 168-193. See also L. Gąsowska, *Fan fiction. Nowe formy opowieści*, Kraków: Ha!art, 2015.

[38]The Taiwanese company ASUS, a leading producer of computer equipment whose name comes from the mythical winged horse Pegasus, has joined classical mythology, Taoism (the five virtues of ASUS) and a corporate policy based on precepts of "lean thinking." On the company's website we read: "ASUS takes its name from Pegasus, the winged horse in Greek mythology that symbolizes wisdom and knowledge. ASUS embodies the strength, purity, and adventurous spirit of this fantastic creature, and soars to new heights with each new product it creates." http://www.asus.com/About_ASUS/The-Meaning-of-ASUS, accessed: 19 September 2016. For a precise analysis of this example in the context of the myth and its reception, see K. Dominas, "Internetowa recepcja mitu na przykładzie wybranych podań grecko-rzymskiej literatury" (Internet Reception of Myth: Case Studies of Selected Legends from Greco-Roman Literature), in *Studia mitoznawcze. Współczesna obecność mitu* (Mythographic Studies. Contemporary Presence of Myth), ed. I. Błocian, E. Kwiatkowska, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2012, 135-156.

[39]Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 21.

and interpreters.[40] Jenkins himself uses the word "consumer" much more frequently than "viewer," "reader" or "audience." The concept, for him, is a basic element inscribed in participatory culture and constitutes a fundament of collective intelligence.[41] Paul Levinson in his book *New New Media* goes yet one step further in this context. He proposes introducing a new paradigm based on the assumption that the foundation of contemporary changes in culture and society is the transition from the role of being a consumer of content to that of becoming a producer of it.[42] It is precisely that change, according to Levinson, that constitutes the main caesura between new media and new new media.

Unlike the entertainment supersystem and transmedial storytelling, the cultural universe is wholly mediated by new technologies, whose mechanisms and rules of functioning designate processes of creation, review, interpretation and dissemination of information. It is information, and not knowledge, that represents the point of departure for each analysis of the universe. There is no particular core (a text, film, or work of animation) around which all of the other elements revolve. This system presupposes only a beginning, which in the history of a given universe we may define as, for example, the premiere of the first film in the *Star Wars* series (*Star Wars*, dir. G. Lucas, US, 1977). A system user, who is simultaneously a receiver and transmitter, defines himself or herself the way the universe is built through the addition of successive parts of the aggregate. Among users there may only arise discussion concerning which of the products creating that discussion is canonical. The ability to combine those disparate elements, thanks to unlimited and multi-platform (computer, smartphone, television, and so on) access to computer networks, is becoming instantaneous. Everything can be checked and verified everywhere and at all times. Hundreds of places (digital spaces) exist where it is possible to publish, comment on, and create new parts of a system. Universes thus become both a new form of transmedial storytelling or of an entertainment supersystem, and their ultimate culmination.

---

[40]Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 95.

[41]The idea of collective intelligence has been criticized in the works of Andrew Keen and Wojciech Orliński. See Andrew Keen, *The Cult of the Amateur: How Today's Internet is Killing Our Culture*, New York: Random House, 2007, 7; Wojciech Orliński, *Internet. Czas się bać*, Warszawa: Agora SA, 2013, 119-147.

[42]Paul Levinson, *New New Media*, New York: Pearson, 2013. Levinson also considers the mutual, catalytic relations in spite of competition and the greater importance of new new media compared to the earlier services of web browsers and e-mail.

Keywords | Abstract | Note on the Author ● ● ●

transmedial storytelling

KEYWORDS

c u l t u r a l

u n i v e r s e

text

textuality

entertainment supersystem

intertextuality

Abstract:

The article sets out to analyze new forms of relationships between a text and its additions: an entertainment supersystem based on transmedial interactivity (a concept developed by Marsha Kinder); transmedial storytelling (a concept taken from Henry Jenkins); and the cultural universe (my own concept based on the rich literature on the topic). These theories are presented as a kind of process of obliterating the boundaries between textuality and mediality in contemporary popular literature and popular culture.

Note on the Author:

Konrad Dominas is an adjunct in the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He is an IT specialist and classics scholar. He has written and edited books dealing with the reception of the Greco-Roman heritage in new media and in popular literature and culture, including Antiquity in Popular Literature and Culture (jointly edited with E. Wesołowska and B. Trocha, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016). He is a member of the editorial committee of Literatura i Kultura Popularna. He is currently working on the book Internet jako nowa przestrzeń recepcji literatury antycznej (The Internet as a New Space of Reception of Ancient Literature). In daily life, Dominas is a popularizer of antiquity and a designer of web sites.

Not Just for the Archive.

On the Literary Event and Documentary Film

Piotr Pławuszewski

It is a truism to state that film culture, from the very earliest stages of its development, intersected with literary culture on many levels. The latter often functioned as an educator in this scheme (suggesting, among other things, storytelling conventions, narrative strategies, and dramaturgic devices), or supplied history (a gigantic realm of adaptation issues), but also worked as a mirror in many areas exceeding the bounds of the work of art itself (one example among many could be reflection on the audience for literature and film). A broader perspective, after over 100 years, allows us to remark that we are not dealing here with a unidirectional flow of "value". Film, whose means of expression (inspired by theatre, painting, and literature, but primarily created for the new medium itself[1]) have become richer with each passing decade, has taught the other arts, above all, how to react rapidly and creatively to contemporary sociopolitical realities – whether in the form of a feature film (as Chaplin was quick to convince audiences with his *Modern Times* [1936]), a cartoon (for example, Soviet propaganda productions from the 1920s and 1930s).or a documentary (consider the film chronicles from the Second World War, including *The March of Time* in the US and *The World in Action* in Canada). The last of these conventions is worth devoting more consideration to – while simultaneously returning to literary culture, broadly understood. For various reasons, the plane of encounter thus reckoned seems counter-intuitive. Firstly, however much definitions of documentary film may have varied and continue to do so (it would be difficult to sum up all of the discussions on the subject throughout the twentieth century), the tradition of film adaptations of literature, which still thrives in feature films and animation, remains outside its bounds.[2] Secondly, without ignoring the fact that literature (especially non-fiction) and

---

[1] In his well-known essay "The Cinema of Poetry," which problematizes the question of filmic expression in interesting ways, Pier Paolo Pasolini wrote: "It is true that after some fifty years of cinema, a sort of cinematic dictionary has been established, or rather a convention, which has this curiosity – it is stylistic before being grammatical." – Pier Paolo Pasolini, "The Cinema of Poetry," in *Movies and Methods*, vol. 1, ed. Bill Nichols, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, 545.

[2] An intriguing "variation" (though still a rare one) of the collision of literature and film thus imagined is the situation in which a particular book serves as the direct inspiration for a future documentary , (for example: the American historian Andrew Wiesta's book *Boys of '67: Charlie Company's War in Vietnam* [2012] gave rise to the documentary *Brothers in Wars* [2014] directed by Liz Reph; an analogous phenomenon occurred in the case of Margaret Atwood's book *Payback: Death and the Shadow Side of Wealth* [2008] and Jennifer Baichwal's film *Payback* [2012]).

the cinema of facts have, over the decades, reached some points of shared inspiration, it is nonetheless necessary to underscore the independent nature of documentary film's development as a form, compared to features. In Jack Ellis's words: "Documentary, then, as an artistic form, is a technique and style that originated in motion pictures"[3] (at the same time, he then adds, the achievements of nineteenth-century photography constitute another important component of its history, one that cannot be marginalized). Thirdly, where the phenomenon of books that arise from previously existing feature films (novelizations[4]) is familiar, facto-graphic films undergo such transformations considerably less often (one Polish exception that confirms the rule is Henryk Grunberg's *Dziedzictwo* [The Legacy, 1993], which followed in the wake of Paweł Łoziński's documentary masterpiece *Miejsce urodzenia* [Place of Birth, 1992]). The question then arises, where we are more likely to find the point of encounter, mentioned arlier, of literary culture and documentary film. The thought comes to mind that we should here highlight the indispensable (though not always actualized) function of the latter, which is – documenting or recording unscripted reality.[5] And yet exactly *that kind of* reality is *vouchsafed* to us as well by certain manifestations of literary culture, for example those that are "unrepeatable" in the particular form of a certain event or set of events. A poetry slam or a meeting with an author – these are precisely that kind of "event," clearly very different from each other, but also promoting us, within the framework of the problem under discussion, to outline certain analogies. Let them be illuminated by the more general thought (to be explicated in the course of our reflections) that a documentary film– if only the intention behind it is not limited to the desire for ordinary "archiving" of reality – can effectively transcend the role of a mere addition to an event in order to become, on the contrary, its careful interpreter.

At the beginning, we have the form of the poetry slam that developed in the 1980s: "the first poetry event that combined the elements of performance, writing, competition and audience-participation."[6] The hybrid nature of the slam, the dynamic of both human collectivity and each instance of performance before the group by a particular person, the dramaturgy inscribed in the formula of the competition (not to mention the potential literary value of the work presented there) – all undoubtedly present intriguing material for the documentary film camera. Significantly, that camera might, in accompanying the poet-contestants, transcend its role of simply being a recorder-archivist. This was demonstrated by Paul Devlin in his documentary *SlamNation* [1998], a full-length film about the National Poetry Slam (Portland, Oregon 1996), a festival several days long in which participants gather from all over the United States. Leaving aside the "humane" value of the film (competing in slams does not rule

[3] See Jack C. Ellis, *The Documentary Idea: A Critical History of English-Language Documentary Film and Video*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989, 1-14.

[4] J. Mahlknecht, "The Hollywood Novelization: Film as Literature or Literature as Film Promotion?", *Poetics Today* 2012, no. 22, 137-168.

[5] The author of the present work is fully aware of the extent to which each clause in such a sentence is open to a range of doubts or reservations. How can we hierarchize the functions involved in making a documentary film, if indeed it is at all possible? When does recording by means of a camera stop being simply a mechanical notation of a certain part of reality and acquire the name of a work of filmmaking? Does "unscripted reality" imply the assertion that any kind of mise-en-scene or organizational activity is forbidden in the context of making a documentary? Nevertheless, for the purposes of this text, which attempts to illuminate a very specific phenomenon on the boundary between literature and film, a basic and general idea of the documentary is understood to be accepted at the outset, with later paragraphs addressing these complex questions as needed.

[6] M. Bañales, "Slam Poetry," in *Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice*, vol. 3, ed. Gary L. Anderson and Kathryn Herr, Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2007, 1290.

out respect for rival poets), there are three matters worth considering: (1) the use of multiple cameras allows viewers to keep up, via montage, with the spoken word performance (and the director manages to convey the speed of the performance through faster cutting); (2) it is the documentary film that succeeds at moments in capturing one of the most important aspects of the poetry slam, its rather free relationship to the written text. Roger Ebert noted the importance of one shot in connection with this realization in his review of *SlamNation*: "Slams are essentially performance art, not literary art, and there is a shot of a New York book editor, sighing at his stack of slam manuscripts and observing that sometimes the poems don't translate well to the printed page"[7]; (3) a film like *SlamNation*, particularly the sequences featuring performances by poet-contestants, is able to minimize (if not repair) the loss situationally inherent in a poetry slam's reception when that reception is mediated – the viewer, naturally having the awareness of a "constructed view" (through the choice of lens, camera angle, montage, and so on) is then closer to many important qualities of the event than he or she would be in dealing with an audio recording. On the non-transferable value of the visual element in experiencing a poetry slam, Susan B. A. Somers-Willett has written: "Slam poetry's following has been gained not merely through the act of listening; although CDs and MP3s are a popular way of documenting slam poetry, such verse is created to be best understood in live performance. (…) Audiences don't merely listen to a poem; they react to an entire performance of verse, at times performing right back through applause, spiteful hissing, or comments shouted to the poet or slam host. Audiences receive performed verse by experiencing how the poet moves, appears, sounds, and physically embodies the poem."[8]

(from *SlamNation*, directed by P. Devlin)

Filmed recordings of poetry slams (but also of the "literary event" of a public meeting with an author, to be discussed in a moment) elicit fundamental questions about the status of audiovisual material. For example: woven into the in the fabric of Kordian Piwowarski's 2013 film *Baczyński*, joining together various conventions of presentation, are shots from a poetry slam organized in Warsaw in 2011, to mark the 90th birthday of the eponymous poet, at which the participants presented his poetry to the audience. It is certainly an important element in the film, since in a subtle way it allows viewers to ponder whether (to cite words spoken to the audience from the

[7] Roger Ebert, *SlamNation* (http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/slamnation-1998 [accessed: 06.06.2016 r.]).

[8] Susan B. A. Somers-Willett, *The Cultural Politics of Slam Poetry: Race, Identity, and the Performance of Popular Verse in America*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009, 17.

stage) "this poetry still lives today, whether it speaks to you in some way." For this text, however, what is more crucial is the question of how and whether that recording of a Warsaw slam could function outside of Kordian Piwowarski's *Baczyński* as an autonomous film – as something more than "purely archival footage, in which the point is simply to have the most basic record of the laying-on of the winner's wreath or his handshake with a dignitary."[9] That is a very complex question, particularly in the context of the many different aspects of the material in factographic film. For the purposes of this text, let us stick with the valuable observation (far removed though it be from simple guidelines) of Kazimierz Karabasz: "If [documentary footage – PP] is not to be a casual notation of facts, they must have at least two qualities: they must be professionally photographed (composition, angles) and have their own kind of 'inner energy.' The first quality is obvious, but the second? You have to observe a person (people)'s behavior very carefully during the shot. When their inner energy is 'charged'? It's a question of your sense of the temperature of the event taking place... The camera operator may want to turn off the camera too soon– the director has to be vigilant (and keep the camera from being switched off). Of course they can take another shot. But it will already be a different moment. About something else"[10] – there is also, of course, the montage phase, when the material gathered "must now finally be given some kind of shape."[11] Taking all of this into account, it is possible to imagine that the poetry slam parts of *Baczyński* – with their careful surveys of faces (and the emotions visible on them), differentiated by the perspectives through which they are seen, a colour scheme limited to black and white, precise convergence of soundtrack and image – could exist as a separate documentary film. A film restricting its represented world to the place of poetic rivalry, and only there seeking justification for its form and evoked meaning. An example of a work constructed in this way is the shot film *Poetry Slam* (2005, directed by Jordi Ortega), shot in Los Angeles. At the same time, it should be underscored that a much more frequent practice consists of the recorded poetry slam event becoming a part of a greater whole, which also includes, for example, interviews with subjects speaking directly to the camera or scenes from the protagonists' everyday life (such a broadly conceived horizon is provided to viewers in the German documentary *Dichter und Kämpfer: Das Leben als Poetryslammer in Deutschland* [2012, dir. Marion Hütter], and the highly intriguing film by American directors Greg Jacobs and Jon Siskel, *Louder Than a Bomb* [2010], which highlights the therapeutic dimension of spoken-word poetry, to name two examples).

(Frames from *Dichter und Kämpfer: Das Leben als Poetryslammer in Deutschland* by M. Hütter)

[9] K. Karabasz, *Odczytać czas* (Interpreting Time), Łódź: PWSFTViT, 2009, 20.

[10] Karabasz, *Odczytać czas*, 20.

[11] Karabasz, *Odczytać czas*, 24.

(Frames from the film *Louder Than a Bomb* by G. Jacobs and J. Siskel)

Irrespective of the form taken by the encounter between poetry slam and documentary film, that encounter is a fact worthy of scholarly reflection, one often artistically intriguing and rich in meaning. Another event from the space of literary culture with, it would seem, similar potential in collision with the documentary camera, is the public meeting with an author: at book fairs, in connection with the publication of a new book, at a literary festival, or elsewhere. "It would seem" because this potential we sense has never – at least in Polish filmmaking, with which the author of the present work is most familiar – been fully exploited.

Firstly, many issues come up here that already required our attention in the context of the poetry slam. One of them is the nature of the recorded material – in an age of widely accessible digital recording it comes as no surprise that for about a decade almost every literary festival has to some degree kept audiovisual documentation of its proceedings. Public meetings with authors that take place at such festivals are no exception – but in the overwhelming majority of such cases, we are dealing with a simple, static recording, whose functioning does nothing to transcend the (valuable) purpose of archiving a given event. Secondly, this static character of the recording has its obvious source in the specific nature of public meetings with authors: the participants (on either side of the table) typically do not change their position, and the customary components of the situation are fairly predictable (the host's conversation with the writer, a reading of excerpts from the author's work, questions from the audience, sometimes a signing of books by the author). There is no shortage of such examples in the audiovisual archives of literary festivals and events, where the camera mounted on its tripod not only remains in place, but also maintains the exact same view from beginning to end, not even panning from author to audience (the former, quite differently from the democratic setup of a poetry slam, here unquestionably plays the leading role). Thirdly, as emphasized earlier, a certain immanent dramaturgical value contained in slam poetry has no clear equivalent in the situation of the meeting with an author (which, in its standard formula, does not represent a build-up toward a point of culmination, such as, for example, that of the judgment of the competition; here the element of surprise can simply emerge from an unexpected turn of events[12]). Taking into account just those three aspects, we might consider whether the state-

[12]"The gray-haired gentleman in the first row looked at the ceiling, the girls were looking at me. The woman who ran the club was sitting stiffly, with furrowed brow; the librarian in her green sweater was smiling the whole time while I read. At a certain moment some ruffian opened the door, poked his head in and said: "Ewww…" Laughter erupted in the room and in the hallway. The young manageress went out into the hall, and the librarian stood up and silenced the room with her gaze. I kept reading, and when I finished, wide applause broke out immediately." (Kornel Filipowicz, "Moja kochana, dumna prowincja" [My Beloved, Proud Province], in *Biały ptak i inne opowiadania* (The White Bird, and Other Stories), Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1973, 277).

ment on the unexploited potential of the encounter between documentary and literary event is not somewhat exaggerated in this case. Some further thoughts on the subject follow below.

A public meeting with an author documented on film, like a poetry slam, undoubtedly contains scholarly potential. On a more or less basic level, such a meeting always, even in its crudest form, presents a historical source (Peter Burke is one author who has written inspiringly about film as a form of historical testimony in a broadly drawn context of the problem of visuality[13]). To take a step further, this potential, as overly general as it may sound, is contained within the recording of a segment of a certain sociocultural reality, which can offer valuable research material for practices of visual sociology or anthropology. This conclusion (constituting a problem that is *de facto* other) is not derailed by difficulties defining the sociological film or the ethnographic document, nor by discussions of treating audiovisual records as a scholarly utterance on an equal footing with written texts. As a supplement or complement to direct observation, "visual media providing access to the primary data, albeit in an intermediary form, is a distinct advantage that needs to be exploited whenever possible."[14] This statement by Luc Pauwels, applied to the question at hand, would permit us to reckon that a meeting with an author – if it has been documented with at least a basic knowledge on the subject of film technique and a scholarly intention (or – as Jerzy Kaczmarek writes in the context of sociology – with "sociological competency"[15]) – may yield intellectually interesting results, relating for example to the interaction between the audience and the author or hosts' styles of conducting conversations with authors. Judging by the fact that the overwhelming majority of such documents have been and continue to be limited to the function, mentioned above, of simple archivization (executed without interpretative scholarly intentions), it seems worthwhile to reference here another passage from Jerzy Kaczmarek's considerations: "a sociological film can also be formed from existing footage which the sociologist himself did not film, but where he either used already existing material or it was made on his recommendation. However, the determinative factor here is the fact that the scholar endows that material with an appropriate structure and in the process of interpretation, based on his sociological knowledge, creates a new scholarly utterance."[16]

Yet scholarly potential is not everything. Another of the practiced paths of creative use of audiovisual recordings of a meeting with an author is turning it into a component in a larger structure: a documentary film (not made for scholarly purposes in a narrow sense). So, precisely, a component. Because we are talking about a literary event, something which is very often subject to audiovisual archiving, frequently an active participant in co-creating the screen portrait of an author, but cannot properly be said to function in a capacity equal to that of an autonomous work. That may further give us pause since such "non-autonomous" fragments do not in any way prove that their semasiological value would be depleted outside of that larger work. Three Polish

[13] See Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Use of Images as Historical Evidence*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001, particularly the chapters: "Visual Narratives" and "From Eyewitness to Historian."

[14] Luc Pauwels, *Reframing Visual Social Science: Towards a More Visual Sociology and Anthropology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 275. See also Pauwels, "Taking the Visual Turn in Research in Scholarly Communication." *Visual Sociology* 15.1–2 (2000): [7–14].

[15] J. Kaczmarek, *Zobaczyć społeczeństwo. Film i wideo w badaniach socjologicznych*, Poznań: Wyd. Naukowe UAM, 2014, 203.

[16] Kaczmarek, *Zobaczyć społeczeństwo*, 202.

examples: *Dziennik pisany pod wulkanem* [Diary Written Under a Volcano 1995] by Andrzej Tit-
kow, includes several shots from a series of meetings with Gustaw Herling-Grudziński that took
place during his visit to Poland in 1994. The director does not slight the author, but he takes full
advantage of the possibilities offered by the medium, at times relaying the desire, accumulated
among readers over the years, to make contact with this writer (the image of him is accompanied
by several overlapping sound tracks with questions directed toward him), and at other times
focusing on a particular object (the author's wooden cane, a recurring image, or his pillbox).
Something relevant makes itself felt in these audiovisual details from meetings with the author
– perhaps a sense of how long the author and his Polish audience had to wait to meet each other
(Herling-Grudziński came to Poland in 1991 for the first time after 52 years of absence).

(Frames from *Dziennik pisany pod wulkanem* by Andrzej Titkow)

The use of some analogous shots follows a different principle in *Radości pisania* (The Joy of
Writing, 2005) by Antoni Krauze, a documentary on Wisława Szymborska. There, the meeting
with the poet, conducted by Teresa Walas and Ryszard Krynicki, takes place shortly before her
trip to Stockholm to receive the Nobel Prize. Of supreme importance are Szymborska's words
– forcefully testifying to the nontrivial burden the situation places on her, and the definite
challenge of remaining a "person" rather than becoming a "personality." Intriguingly, the same
meeting returns later for a few seconds, with a shot of the poet signing her books and react-
ing with distaste and disapproval to a cameraman who comes very close to the table. It is easy
to conjecture that the two corresponding shots, with their mutually illuminating verbal and
nonverbal elements, could by themselves become material for a very interesting documentary,
perhaps on the subject of that stubborn desire to remain a "person." That thought presents an
entirely logical bridge to our last example, this time connected with Sławomir Mrożek. "I re-
ject the police principle: that the interrogated subject sits on a chair or stands, the police team
shines a light in his eyes, and he must answer each question and has no right not to answer"
– the author says in the film *Sławomir Mrożek przedstawia* (Sławomir Mrożek Presents, 1997)
by Paweł Łoziński, making no secret of his antipathy for the question-answer formula. Most
documentaries about the writer, as if seeking to eliminate that situation, work on the basis of
compilation, assembling statements by Mrożek and those who know him taken from archives
or observational material. Paweł Łoziński filmed his whole documentary on the writer's Mexi-
can ranch. That allowed a highly intimate portrait to emerge, far removed from the basic as-
sumptions and aura of what a typical book signing or interview is usually like. Mrożek does not,
however, figure in this paragraph by chance, though the context may appear specific: I have in
mind the report on the playwright's visit to Poland in March 2012, published on the Internet by
Wydawnictwo Literackie. The plan must have been simple: to capture some documentary foot-

age at book signings in Katowice and Kraków (in the latter city, the ceremony where the writer was awarded the Ecce Homo Order). Though we are not talking about a "full-fledged" meeting with the author, and the addition of a musical track was completely unnecessary, it is worthwhile to assess other aspects of this short film, chiefly its observational dimension. "We look in on life as it is lived. Social actors engage with one another, ignoring the filmmakers. Often the characters are caught up in pressing demands or a crisis of their own. This requires their attention and draws it away from the presence of filmmakers. The scenes tend, like fiction, to reveal aspects of character and individuality"[17] – thus Bill Nichols writes on the observational mode of the film documentary, at the same time providing an accurate description of the shots depicting a series of readers asking Sławomir Mrożek to autograph their books in Katowice. One speaks of a mutual acquaintance who lives in Japan, another reveals the "presence of Mrożek" on the Polish Matura exam, and finally, someone boldly asks to shake his hand. And the writer, for all of his Stoic resignation, responds to these gestures with sympathy and patience. Discreet observation is invaluable here, as it allows the viewer a chance to glimpse "social actors" (the writer and his readers) and their truly nuanced interactions (admiration, nervousness, joy, curiosity…). Thus a few shots of reportage enable us to affirm the notion that a meeting with an author presents a documentarian-director with a potential source of much inspired film work.

To tentatively sum up and sketch out some general conclusions: a point of intersection of the paths of literary culture and documentary film worthy of consideration is an event or set of events incapable of repeating in the same form, represented in the text by the examples of the poetry slam or meeting with an author. Both of these "events" – though quite different in their specifics – are equally open to the possibility of a documentary camera, whose function need not involve either mere "notation" of reality nor subjecting it to various kinds of subjectivizing effects.[18] Evidence available from various filmic examples suggests that an effective method of capturing such events is attentive observation, with sensitivity to both image and, importantly, sound. An observer thus equipped with a camera can perceive and record a great deal, beginning with the temperature or reception of the word (both at a poetry slam, and during a meeting with an author). Much still remains to be done, however – the present work reveals only a small segment from a broader horizon of questions, and documentarians themselves still appear only partially to believe in the filmic potential of the phenomena from the literary microcosmos that I have evoked here.

One exception is Gur Bentwich, who several years ago resolved to accompany the writer Edgar Keret to a series of meetings with readers in New York. That led to the documentary *What Animal Are You?* [2012], which is held together by scenes from those meetings. The camera is often out of focus and lightly shaking, while Keret reads loudly, laughs, and tells stories not necessarily relating to his books. As a whole, these rough film notes form a key to the literary world of remarkable value. And it is hard to resist the impression that the work is co-created by the author and the documentarian portraitist.

---

[17] Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, Second Edition, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010, 174.

[18] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 32, 201-209 (Nichols's thoughts on the subject of the performative mode in the documentary film).

KEYWORDS

documantary film   interpretation

A D D I T I O N

video camera

                              observation

meeting

Abstract:

The article attempts to examine the meeting-point of documentary film and literary culture, understood here in the context of the "event" and its two concrete manifestations, i.e., the poetry slam and the public meeting with an author. In considering this problem, it is difficult to accept the conclusion that the documentary film camera, in following the competition at a slam or the meeting with the author, must limit its participation exclusively to a simple archival function. An analysis of chosen examples (it should also be immediately clarified that the list of film titles embodying the diagnosis here formulated is not extensive) shows that the "encounter" in question contains much broader potential: a documentary can, if nothing else, effectively capture the unique dramaturgy of the event, its semantics as inscribed not only in the word, but also in the image, and conceals within itself great interpretative possibilities. In other words, if we treat film documentarianism as an "addition" to the literary event, we can do so only with an awareness of these implications, which are not always obvious but are certainly significatively relevant.

d o k u m e n t a r i a n i s m

IMAGE

slam poetry

author

literary culture

word

l i t e r a t u r e

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:

Piotr Pławuszewski, PhD, is employed at the Department of Film, Television, and New Media at Adam Mickiewicz University; his research interests focus primarily on the theory and practice of documentary film and the history of Polish film. He has written a monograph on the work of Władysław Ślesicki (currently in the course of issue), and is co-editor of the volume Pogranicza dokumentu (Borderlands of the Documentary, Poznań 2012) and a thematic issue of Images. The International Journal of European Film, Performing Arts and Audiovisual Communication (vol. XIV, 2014). He has published work in journals including Images, Kino, Kwartalnik Filmowy, Pleografia and Ekrany. |

The Relocation of Literature

Piotr Gorliński-Kucik

The Poetics of the e-Novel

The bold, world-creating ideas of Jacek Dukaj and their bravura execution have made readers of his prose (most prominently, *Lód* [Ice]) begin to ask themselves more or less the following questions: "What will he think of next?" or "How far is he going to go?" These questions concern his work purely in terms of their literary qualities: the way he shifts the boundaries of what is imaginable, and shifts human language toward the boundary of the Other.

On the other hand, since Dukaj has become associated with Wydawnictwo Literackie, a gradual process of mutual interpenetration between his literary oeuvre and forms of expression belonging to other media has begun. Here I have in mind the book covers designed by Tomasz Bagiński and his film version of the story "Katedra," the publication of that text in a special edition, the subsequent appearance of *Wroniec* (Carrion-crow; with illustrations by Jakub Jabłoński that give the book the flavour of an illustrated fairy tale, or comic book), and finally, audiobooks and e-books.

These are not particularly innovative moves, of course – such techniques (aimed no less at drawing in new readers than at anything else) have been employed by other authors connected with mainstream literature, not fantasy writers. And adaptations, filmic or theatrical, are nowadays in no way necessarily dependent on the author. The new communications situation, caused in large measure by the development of social media, has made audio versions or electronic forms a normal part of the process of preparing a book. This is also undoubtedly a result of economic imperatives: the book must be sold, and additions or recherché forms of publication are a kind of advertising manoeuvre, one easy to deploy on the internet. Literature itself is not enough these days. The time of authors releasing twenty novels in a row in deceptively similar covers has passed. And perhaps new forms of promotion or advertising also demand some creative invention in these matters?

Recently a "fashion for reading" has arisen, fed by numerous book blogs (and literary criticism blogs, sometimes) and social media profiles[1] or, for example, "book challenges."[2] This is a sign of changes in the sphere of literary communication. Reading has become a hipster activity, and though this situation may well have given rise to "Empik readers" focused on reading as a form of participation in mass consumption, it has nonetheless to some degree corrected the state of reading in Poland, which in recent times had veered toward disaster.

Dukaj's next step, though – the release of *Starość aksolotla* (The Old Axolotl; literally "The Axolotl's Old Age"),[3] represented something more than merely a gesture of subscribing to an existing trend: the demarcation of a new trend, linked to literature's emergence beyond its natural surroundings – its relocation to a new place. Thus, this novel was not (and will not be) published in paper form – it was planned as an e-book from its very conception. That is an extremely important fact, with considerable influence on the novel's interpretation.

What is relevant here is not simply the text's publication in *epub or *mobi format, but the capitalization of the possibilities of this new form: the addition of graphics and above all hyperlinks, which refer the reader to notes explaining the novel's world and serving as footnotes. The book is nonetheless not a hypertext novel – Dukaj has not done away with the "hard bone of story" or turned (at least for now) toward non-linear narratives. In *Starość aksolotla*, references and graphics constitute a kind of supplementation of the represented world. The author of *Lód*, like most fantasy authors, has already explained his worlds before, but the descriptions of the laws that govern them were (as a matter of fact quite adroitly) woven into the narrative. The decision to move definitions into the footnotes gets rid of unnecessary baggage that slows down the narrative, but at the same time, the reader is able (perhaps even more than before) to reconstruct the author's thoughts.

As the author himself has explained,[4] something else is in play here, namely the creation of a poetics of the e-novel, and thus a multi-layered novel, i.e., one created with the intention of fully exploiting the possibilities offered by the digital medium. His footnotes (broadly defined, to include sound, image, and film) blur the boundary between the real and the virtual. Fantasy is probably particularly well-suited to that, since fantastic worlds in particular demand the reader's participation in "translating" them into thought, the concrete meaning of some elements being harder to firmly grasp. The books published in electronic form mostly belong to certain genres (mainly fantasy and detective or crime fiction); Dukaj lists several virtues of e-books, but probably their most important feature is the fact that a multi-layered novel ("the encounter with the text amid dozens of other information streams") broadens and extends the reading process. Though the human brain (unlike a computer) does not naturally lend itself to multi-task

---

[1] Such as: "Lubię czytać" (I Like Reading), „Nie jestem statystycznym Polakiem, lubię czytać książki" (Unlike the Average Pole, I Like to Read Books) or "Nie czytasz? Nie idę z Tobą do łóżka" (You Don't Read? I Wont Sleep with You).

[2] Including the challenge to read 52 books in the course of one year.

[3] Jacek Dukaj, *Starość aksolotla. Hardware dreams* (The Old Axolotl. Hardware Dreams), Allegro 2015. Pagination in the main text with *SA* subscript, when published in *pdf format. Translator's Note: This is the first book by Dukaj published in English translation. All quotations from *The Old Axolotl* are taken from the English translation by Stanley Bill, Kindle edition, Poznań: Allegro, 2015. It should be noted, however, that the translation lacks the hypertext feature. TDW.

[4] J. Dukaj, "Bibliomachia," in *Książki. Magazyn do czytania* (Books. A Magazine for Reading) 2015, no. 1. See also: "Wymyślić e-booka od nowa. Z Jackiem Dukajem rozmawia Michał Cetnarowski," in Nowa Fantastyka 2015, no. 4, 4-6.

functioning, the younger generation, raised and shaped through the use of digital artefacts, will perhaps in some way adapt to such functioning (this is camouflaged evolutionism, appropriate for Dukaj). Dukaj's text published in the magazine *Książki* is worthy of recommendation, and polemicizing with; the author concludes it with the statement that literature will manage fine without the form of the paper book. A statement which I find staggeringly resonant.

If *Starość aksolotla* does not quite signify an e-book revolution, it is, notwithstanding, an important and innovative step, which – if continued by others – may be a milestone in the development of a new genre. Of course, it could have gone a step further by joining filmed sequences and a soundtrack to the main file, as well as more graphics. But we should remember that that would entail enormous costs.[5]

I am positing the thesis of a synergy at work within a particular literary event (the publication of *Starość aksolotla*). I have in mind a special kind of "collaboration" among the problems addressed by the novel, the book's form, and an extra-literary text by Dukaj (the piece in *Książki*), which together have a cumulative effect that offers more than would be felt if they were approached separately. They speak of the transhumanist evolution of the human and to changes in the realm of literary communication (and thus include a metaliterary element). Let us examine the subject matter of *Starość aksolotla*.

Post-Apo

The first decade of the 21st century – in the sphere of pop culture, broadly defined – has been marked by the unmistakable presence of apocalyptic thought. Superheroes in science fiction or quasi-sci-fi films save the world from annihilation (or self-destruction), while in a new wave of horror movies they do battle with zombies. It thus would appear that post-humanism, whether in its "wet," proteinaceous or "dry" version (compare with *hardware/software*[6]) awakens our dread, as we sense an inhuman menace. That is clearly an oversimplified interpretation, since in truth these narratives speak primarily of the human "up against" challenges and deal with typically human problems. Curiously, a fascination with "hardware" – equipment, matter – appears for what is probably the first time in Dukaj's work. Perhaps the concept contains something from the third wave of post-humanism (the first being transhumanism, the second – ecoposthumanism) – the anthropology of the thing? Until now, hardware played only a secondary role in Dukaj's work – though it was essential to the extent that it was functionalized as a "transmitter" of humanity.[7] Here its role is primary and, at the same time, continues to be a "transmitter." Insofar as in zombie movies we are dealing with the return of (displaced) corporeality and death, in *Starość...* – the proteins are in retreat.[8] One sentence therein – "The bones of Japanese people

---

[5] The book is cheaper than previous novels (printed on paper) by Dukaj. The use of several dozen logotypes of guilds and alliances is a reference to the poetics of the computer game, which – by its very nature – operates graphic identification more easily than does (textual) literature.

[6] "Years before the Extermination, the programmers had reached such a level of harmony with the digital world that they had completely lost touch with hardware. This led to the emergence of a separate clan of IT whizzes, whose main task was to crawl under desks and grates and in whose heads the priceless knowledge of which cable went into which port and which cards cooled the best under which radiators was preserved." Dukaj, *The Old Axolotl*.

[7] In importance, this is analogous to the matter of which spirit is a reflection in gnostic systems.

[8] "Bartek liked to walk in his mech until the very edge of the rooftop, until his gyroscopes trembled from the slightest breath of wind. There he would observe the life of the dead city, the urban zombie [...]."

and the finer bones of electronic gadgets and plastic junk crunched under the metal tread of his feet" – brings to mind the famous opening scene of the film *Terminator*[9], in which the caterpillar track of a tank rides over human skulls, symbolizing the new era of domination by machines.

I think the symbolic scene of embodiment is the one where Grześ, for the first time as a machine, visits Vladivostok and finds the remains of a woman holding some machinery that continues to operate. He does not know how to use it, so: "Bartek reached for her hand and snapped off the mummy's index finger. Now he could use the finger to operate the tablet." When it then worked – "It was like a return to his homeland, like a view over the roofs of his native city, or the taste of the bread of his childhood. At that moment, Bartek could have dropped to his knees and kissed the Holy Land of Google." One form of (organic) matter yields to another (inorganic) – but the spirit lives on. On the internet.

In fact the scene uses the grotesque in the manner of Józef Baka: "He racked his brain (non-brain) over things, wobbling on his two wheels and squinting the camera around the street-morgue"; as well as grim horror: "A gust of wind blew a plastic bag onto her head, so that now it looked as if she were suffocating, gasping for her last breath under the plastic."

Dukaj thus fits nicely into this pop-culture current with his *Starość aksolotla*, except that he approaches the theme with characteristic originality. Since this is in at least some sense a post-apocalyptic novel, it begins with a catastrophe: a neutron wave destroys all organic matter, leading to the extermination of biological life on earth (more on this later). The only salvation is a rushed transfer to inorganic matter, or "hardware."

Such a transfer can be effected by "uploading," or scanning the "contents" of a human brain into a computer's memory. That is what the protagonist of the novel – Bartek (Grzesiek in the original), born in Poland – does. Digitalization is carried out only by those who actually have easy access to the right technology– the InSoul3 (for short: IS3, or colloquially, in the Polish, "ay-es-unek"). IS3 is the hardware needed for collating the contents of the brain to such an extent as to create a manoeuvrable avatar in virtual environments. The idea was finally rejected, but a black market of amateur code and solutions from "neurosoft" artists has blossomed in the depths of the internet. Thus salvation was easily accessible chiefly to teenage nerds. And already here, at the very beginning, we find allusions to the tech-gnostic view of evolution: "But your spirit, your spirit will survive."

Bartek and the other 18,000 survivors thus constitute society's new elite.[10] The action of the novel takes place in the near future. There are not many extrapolations into the future, but the few there are pack considerable heft. Let us take as an example the prognostication of Google's monopoly – the reader may receive the impression that that giant has taken over the virtual world entirely.[11]

---

9 *The Terminator*, dir. James Cameron, US, 1984.

10 That means barely 0.00025 % of society (reckoning by the figures for the year 2015).

11 Dukaj writes half-jokingly about marihuana: "the legal status of marihuana in the Republic of Poland reached the level of 'quantum law': marihuana is located in a superposition of legality and illegality – it is both permitted to possess and use it, and not permitted to possess and use it" (*SA*, glossary [not in the English translation]).

The remaining chapters of the novel take place in a post-apocalyptic reality. The few surviving "souls" have moved to various types of robots and are trying to organize their lives, and above all to ensure their survival. Interestingly, intellects deprived of biological bodies do not evolve (the most they can do is duplicate themselves), so that Bartek, as one of a handful of hardware specialists, finds his expertise much in demand. Fractions form among the survivors, generally in conflict and competition with each other (at this point, the footnote definitions become very handy, completed by a logo for each of the groups).

Dukaj's descriptions of "switching" from one form of functioning subject to another are intriguing.

> He woke up [...] without any senses, without a body, and with only his instincts and the threshold of pain intact. He thrashed about in that confinement cell for a true eternity– or more precisely, for four and a half minutes– until he found a crack no wider than a bit in the local Matternet and, slipping through it, entered the municipal CCTV network. Surveying the desolate streets, strewn with corpses, he fell into a depression and slowed to a hundred ticks a second.

Bartek is suffering from the same ailment as the protagonists of *Linia oporu – nolensum*, a particular kind of melancholy, and perhaps nostalgia – the longing for an older way of functioning and the sense of disjunction between one world and another. Previous novels by Dukaj were marked by ambivalence toward new stages in the development of *homo sapiens* – on the one hand, enthusiasm for evolutionary change; on the other, sorrow at the loss of humanity. This is probably most palpable and pronounced in *Starość aksolotla*. Bartek's depressive states abate when he installs a sleep simulation application. In any case, the description of the initial stages of his life as a transformer is styled after a mythic tale, a kind of hardware odyssey ("It had all begun with Bartek putting himself back together"). We should note that a "transformer" is someone with a changed or changing form – as a perfunctory etymological study shows. Dukaj's use of the term is clearly a reference to the intelligent race of robots who star in the eponymous films, TV shows, and comics (that is: it would be wholly within the realm of logic for the heroes of *Starość aksolotla* to have called themselves thus, being aware of that context).[12]

Dukaj's newest novel presents as its protagonists a group of individuals who have made an incomplete uploading procedure, which, though it shifted them to a new environment, also maimed them in a certain way. That is why:

> Steel fingers grip the delicate glass with surgical precision. There are special programs to support the motor skills required for vodka drinking. Of course, they cannot really drink vodka, and the drinks are mere mock-ups. They cannot drink anything, they cannot eat anything –quarter-ton mechs in the [...] bar. All they can do is perform these gestures of life, laboriously repeating the customs of bygone biology.

---

[12] "Beneath a two-storey billboard plastered with a poster for Michael Bay's *Transformers 9*, in the middle of the deserted commercial district of Tokyo, two manga sexbots boxed at each other's pouting polymer faces." Michael Bay did direct several blockbuster films about the Transformers – 2014 saw the release of the most recent installment in the series.

In other words:

> None of us would pass any half-decent identity test. We're transformers – and we don't even know what that means. We don't change, we don't learn. We don't sleep. We long for our bodies. We repeat ourselves mechanically, day after day, year after year, eternity after eternity. And through all this we have never managed to find any other life for ourselves but this awful parody of human life.

Allow me one more quotation: "The problem of epigenesis kept Bartek from getting any shut-eye at night (not that he had eyes to shut, but the feeling was the same)." Where in earlier novels descriptions of this peculiar melancholy were relatively sparse, in *Starość aksolotla* they take up a good deal of space, even becoming rather excessive.

From a sense of being crippled, a peculiar lack, there arises the idea of a return to biology, with a project "Genesis 2.0." Robots with human brains join in the reconstruction of the human being, equipped with a map of its DNA, and yet the result is unsatisfactory: "Well, the genome is the same. But the different types of gene expression – which genes activate, which don't, and at what stages – all that is stored outside the DNA, in the stream of intergenerational memory." Just as the human being who has undergone upload is not the same human being, so the person rebuilt from scratch, in the laboratory, is not the same person – every transition carries a heavy loss. But also the benefits that issue from such a reboot. Mechs (robots) finally build orbital stations, finding it easier now that "there was no need to design them as hermetic cans of warm air for protein wimps."

Dukaj also offers what seems to be a critique of capitalism: "Until now, it's always snuck up on us through the back door, together with all its ethics, aesthetics, mentalities, lifestyles, complexes, and dreams. Not because capitalism is a part of human nature, but because it makes for the simplest, most obvious solution to the problem of managing limited resources." People were happy (equal, free, healthier, knowing a social structure without much hierarchy) in the times before they began to farm, when they functioned within a hunter-gatherer culture; the discovery of the possibility of cultivating land was exile from paradise: "Civilization began, but with it the fall into capitalism and the slavery of work with its whole cultural superstructure." Human beings – even cursed with mechanical bodies – are unable to free themselves from the imperative of work: "Can you find any meaningful existence in doing nothing, in stagnation, in the vegetative passing of days and years?"; no, it is merely a "ghostly theatrical reenactment of human beings *working in order to live*." And so, Dukaj appears to be saying, capitalism is bad, but there is no other way – it is the only forward path for civilization (in previous novels, he wrote in a similar way about conservatism and hierarchal social structure).[13]

In any case, the world will not stand for stagnation, and the human beings created by the mechs – humanos (*ludziaki* in the original) – have begun to function in the new world, though that world is removed from the cultural continuum:

---

[13]If the mechs did not strive to pursue the imperative of capitalist growth, they would reach an impasse in their development.

> Then the mishmash began, like everywhere else: the humanos start to IS, transform, enter allianc-
> es, and give birth to their own humanos, this time on a heavily Hollywood-influenced epigenesis,
> and it all gradually eats into the Mother, vectors superimpose themselves on vectors – you hit fast
> forward and after thirty kilodays this is the paradise you get: *The Lion King*, a compendium of Dis-
> ney and Pixar, a kiddie park of cartoons and comics, more and more infantile with every generation
> and more and more disconnected from the truth about man.

Dukaj wouldn't be Dukaj if the characters in his novel did not try to find out how organic life on earth came to be exterminated, where the neutron wave came from and whether its aim was in fact the destruction of humankind. A chain of logical reasoning leads them to the conclusion that a highly technologically advanced civilization "cancelled" life on earth through the use of a *wormhole*, a space-time tunnel, in order to preventatively remove a threat (from the perspective of multiple millennia, *homo sapiens* could become one). Now knowledge is no longer increasing, since "[a]fter the Extermination, we've just been forced to use these tools *differently*. The Ray blasted us out of one-track complacency. The technology hasn't changed; only the aims and meanings we apply to it have changed." Questions that were asked before the extermination of the human race – for example, those regarding the limits of personhood – have lost their meaning; "We've dropped outside the old system of coordinates," one mech says to another.

We see here how the influence of intertext can operate in two directions. The first operates as it were within the novel itself – through quotations, allusions, and references to various cultural texts, functioning according to the laws of postmodern non-satirical parody. The second works centrifugally, moving from the text outward; it is intersemiotic and operates by means of images and even tactile means (if someone should bring a robot to life using a 3-D printer). Some elements manage to work in both directions, overcoming the closed aspect of the text and placing it in a broadly shared human universe of cultural texts. Here is one example.

I will take the risk of asserting that *Starość aksolotla* is probably one of Jacek Dukaj's most romantic novels, in the sense that it is exceptionally effective at ornamenting historiosophical theses with romantic contexts, while at the same time maintaining (or even intensifying) its patchwork, postmodern intertextuality.

Romanticism, to simplify somewhat, was a reaction against the norms of the Enlightenment, and thus, social rules, scientism and rationalism. It postulated a turn toward the invisible, while not refusing the aid of, in Mickiewicz's words, "lens and eye." Techgnosis is based on a similar principle – joining scientific knowledge with the mystical (extrasensory).

The novel ends with a poetic reflection on the passage of time from a cosmic perspective:

> [...] Life without life, and all the while there is no energy left even for astonishment, with the vec-
> tors, natures, dreams, and civilizations flitting past so rapidly, 200K, 300K, a million days after the
> Extermination, and another million, and 5M, 10M, and probably nobody even remembers the Exter-
> mination any more, probably nobody remembers man any more; with no power or resources left for
> memory, is there any point at all, there's no point, since there's really no difference, no difference, and
> you know with absolute certainty that only hardware remains. 100M, 200M, 300M, the joyful clock
> of the void ticks on, and in the cracked lenses of the rusted mech galaxies and universes rise and set.

The whole of the novel is bookended by quotations. At the beginning, there is an epigraph from Nikolai Berdaev ("These were times of such decline in philosophical culture that it was considered a serious argument against the existence of the soul that it was nowhere to be found during an autopsy"); at the end – two quotations from W. Olaf Stapledon's *Last and First Men* (the second reads: "… Indeed, only by some such trick could I do justice to the conviction that our whole present mentality is but a confused and halting first experiment"). Dukaj uses the epigraphs as a kind of framing device for his own reflections: firstly, he locates his novel as a link in a certain chain of thought, and secondly, he provides a kind of justification for showing only the first chapter in the evolution of *homo sapiens* (unlike Stapledon). For in fact, what use do such grand narratives serve for us nowadays?

Chapters within the book are heralded by juxtapositions of images and phrases which Dukaj calls "ex-librises": the textual fragments are parodies of familiar cultural texts, combined to form a kind of collage. Let us examine some. The first, "All that lives must die, passing through steel to eternity," is a paraphrase of Gertrude's words from an early scene in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "All that lives must die, / Passing through nature to eternity."[14] "Oh body! my homeland! thou art like steel" borrows from the opening of Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* ("Litwo! Ojczyzno moja!" [Lithuana! My fatherland]).[15] "Death is not the end" is the title of a song by Nick Cave.[16] The ex-libris "Bots may safely charge when the man guards them well" is a parody of the lines "Sheep may safely graze and pasture / Where a shepherd guards them well" in the well-known aria scored by Johann Sebastian Bach (the original German text is by Salomon Franck) in his cantata "Was mir behagt, ist nur die muntre Jagd" (The lively hunt is all my heart's desire).[17] "The show must go on" is the title of a song by the rock group Queen.[18] The phrase "Would you kindly… kill!" borrows from the computer game *BioShock*.[19] "The sky above paradise was the color of television, tuned to an axolotl channel" paraphrases the famous opening line of William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, "The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel."[20] There is even a paraphrase of the book of Genesis ("So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them," Genesis 5:2)[21] in the following: "So mech created man in his own image, in the image of gadget created he him: male and female created he them." "What immortal hand or eye could frame thy fearful symmetry?" is taken directly from William Blake's poem "The Tyger."[22] "War, war never changes" comes from the computer game *Fallout 2*.[23] "One must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star" are Zarathustra's words from the prologue to Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.[24] "All those worlds will be lost, like tears in rain"

[14]Translator's Note: Of course the term "ex libris" references the tradition of personalized labels for books in private libraries, with another layer of irony issuing from the fact that Dukaj's book is available only in electronic form. TDW.

[15]A. Mickiewicz, *Pan Tadeusz, czyli ostatni zajazd na Litwie*, Warszawa: Świat Książki, 2004, 5.

[16]Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds, *Murder Ballads*, Mute 1996.

[17]Translator's Note: This is a typically clever and agile solution by translator Stanley Bill; the original plays on a line from Mickiewicz's "Świtezianka." TDW.

[18]From the album *Innuendo* (1991).

[19]*BioShock*, 2K Games, 2007.

[20]William Gibson, *Neuromancer*, New York: Ace Books, 1984, 3.

[21]*Holy Bible*. King James version.

[22]William Blake, *Complete Writings: With Variant Readings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972, 214.

[23]*Fallout 2*, Black Isle Studios, 1998.

[24]Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufman, New York: Viking Press, 1954, 129.

is a paraphrase of a line of dialogue in the film *Blade Runner*, based on Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* ("All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain").[25] "The truth is out there" is the advertising slogan from the cult 1990s TV series *The X-Files*.[26] "Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth" is a line from Shakespeare's Sonnet 146.[27] And the phrase "The mech is not enough" appears to be riffing on the title of a James Bond film from the 1990s.[28]

This collage of phrases points us in two directions: toward science fiction texts, on the one hand, and toward texts of a mysterious, mystical, or Romantic bent, on the other. Each of them, moreover, illustrates a particular scene in the novel. The image components of these ex-librises are also significant and allusive. The image that accompanies "Death is not the end" is a combination of Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man and elements of traditional iconography depicting the formative beginnings of humankind (a tree and a fig leaf). The graphic component of "So mech created man in his own image, in the image of gadget created he him: male and female created he them" parodies Michelangelo's painting of the Creation of Adam (a robot offers an apple to a child).[29] It also, I believe, references Christopher Robin and Pooh's walk together through the Hundred Acre Wood. The graphic for "Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth," meanwhile, pays homage to images of the fall of Icarus.

This collage thus creates a fairy-like spectacle of references that give the impression of "intellect transfer" having already been felt as a premonition in various cultural texts – the same device employed by H+ narratives and techgnosis. Allusions to Romanticism and spirituality are, for their part, intended to show that such worldviews shape attempts to inscribe humanity into the laws of evolution, understood not so much in Darwinian terms as in categories of metaphysics, historiosophy, or even anthroposophy. They are suffused with mythization, but in a parodic, pastiche, cut-up form – seemingly half in jest, without serious intent (since sinking into pathos is not acceptable), and yet not entirely... This is the latent loftiness of postmodernity, hidden behind postmodernism's intertextual pastiche.

Multiplying Larva

Starość aksolotla is built out of: the main (body) text, two epigraphs, the title, chapter titles, ilustrations, ex-librises, footnotes (hypertexts), conceptual sketches of mechs and logotypes of alliances and guilds. One might in fact say that it is an illustrated novel with footnotes.[30]

And yet, the images do not function merely to stimulate reading as in illustrated books for children, nor do they constitute some form of *Biblia Pauperum*, in which images are supposed

---

[25]*Blade Runner*, dir. Ridley Scott, USA 1982. There is no such line in Dick's book.

[26]*The X-Files*, created by Chris Carter, USA, 1993-2002.

[27]Translator's Note: This is another agile transposition by Bill. The original quote is from Mickiewcz's *Dziady* (Forefathers' Eve). TDW.

[28]*The World is not Enough*, dir. Michael Apted, USA 1999.

[29]There is also a direct reference to the Pièta in the sequence beginning with the ex-libris "All those worlds will be lost...".

[30]Nonetheless, *Starość aksolotla*, as a science fiction novel, is not an allotopia, as that term has been defined by Krzysztof M. Maj. "Allotopia ($\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{o}\tau o\pi\iota\alpha$, other place) is a kind of fictional world (*storyworld*) based on an ontogenetic model of world-building that renders any plot development dependent on prior mediatization on an encyclopedic scale" (K.M. Maj, *Allotopie. Topografia światów fikcjonalnych*, Kraków: Universitas, 2015, 258.); it is worth noting that extensive footnotes here create something like an encyclopedia which is joined to the imagined world and allows readers to find their way through it.

to replace the text. They are meant to be an intersemiotic, immersive expansion of the literary world, as they represent a bow to early 21st century virtual graphic culture. They thus represent that second direction of intertextual influence mentioned above.

Thus, here we return to Dukaj's thesis that literature is translocative. The author of the present work is by no means an expert in the analysis or interpretation of computer games, but it is not necessary to be one in order to observe that elements of computer RPG (in particular) are increasingly being borrowed in literature. Not only at the level of craft (plot construction, narration, characterization), but also at the intertextual level, if we consider, for example, the *Wiedźmin* series (probably the most effective ambassador of Polish culture in our time). And so: certain computer games are becoming more and more "literary," and certain novels more and more "virtual." The borders between these orders are disappearing, but literature is present wherever you look.

The question thus arises of how this relates to intertextuality more broadly? I think methodological issues are more relevant here than changes in the "object of study." Why? *Starość aksolotla* is, on the one hand, merely an illustrated book with footnotes, while, on the other, it demarcates new trends in literature. But that is also a matter of perspective – a computer game can no longer be called a book with images. Taking economic issues into account, as mentioned at the outset, it was not possible to further expand the possibilities of *Starość Aksolotla* (with films, or an audio track). The producers of computer games, however, have a much greater budget at their disposal. Perhaps we should look forward to hearing that the author of *Lód* has begun collaborating with a studio that creates games (not that I am suggesting this happen…)? That would be one of the logical consequences of how Dukaj's craft is developing. For the moment, however, Dukaj has become involved in the Allegro-produced project *Legendy Polskie* (Polish Legends), which groups writers and filmmakers together under the direction of Tomek Bagiński, to create film parodies of Polish cultural texts.[31]

For now, let's get back to the text. The axolotl (*ambystoma mexicanum*) is a freshwater amphibian predator. It is an endemic species, occurring in one region only – lake Xochimilco in Mexico. The axolotl is affected by neoteny, meaning that at the larval stage (representing an early but post-embryonal stage in an animal's development) it has the ability to procreate. Neotony is caused by a lack of iodine in their natural environment. After being injected with hormones in a laboratory, the axolotl is capable of changing into a land creature. In the world of Dukaj's novel, within the framework of the Genesis 2.0 project, the *ambystoma* is able to regenerate easily, having been well-studied as an endangered species.

The analogy seems obvious: the human being (whether viewed as a species or an intellectual-spiritual construct) is an axolotl – an endangered, predatory species, which does not develop but, in spite of its immaturity, multiplies. Bartek has this to say:

> An entire life form from nothing, just for the hell of it, from a stupid impulse of evolution. What was meant to be a larval, transitional form ends up reproducing itself. And now look: the monster's entire adult life turns out to be completely redundant. Just a freak of nature. Why does it exist? Why?

[31]See: http://legendy.allegro.pl.

Everything fits into a whole: people give life to people, and thanks to the death ray – a particular hormone – they managed to create a higher form: transformers. "Because someone always, always has to come from outside, and only then are they ripped by force out of their axolotl-ness." The next stage of man is the mech; the proteinaceous human is merely a larval stage. The old age of the axolotl is sad – it is a superfluous, forgotten offshoot of evolution. For the moment we are multiplying larvae, waiting to be given a growth hormone.

Of course, Dukaj is not consistent – on the one hand he is interested in development, on the other hand, Bartek laments: "We should never have transformed. We injected the hormone – the IS – and what do we remember now of our humanity? What?" But it is the lament of a (progressive) conservative. Parenthetically, we can observe that at such moments of lamentation and nostalgia, Bartek's escape into dreams applies a higher dose of digital sleep from the Morpheus application.

The subject of Dukaj's novel always took the position that essence, substance, the centre (life, intellect, the human being – however we understand it) will finally outlast all change, even if the conditions in which it functions are also subject to change. In writing *Starość aksolotla*, he has added yet another argument: literature will manage without the paper book – it will survive whether in the form of e-book, computer games, or televisual series. It will, it goes without saying, change in the process, but will not disappear. And we can similarly say of our species that it will manage, even without its biological foundations. It will transfer to *hardware*, then to something else, it will undergo certain modifications, and its poetics (metaphorically speaking) will change, but will survive all kinds of change.

And this, I feel, is one of the most important lessons that can be drawn from reading Dukaj's novel. Life (broadly understood) is a mutual, synergic interaction of form and content, where one thing significantly influences another, and evolution, impossible to evaluate axiologically, ethically, or aesthetically, is progress, as a result of which (despite losses) both parties emerge improved with regard to prevailing conditions. "Content" will survive. And there is one more lesson: we are multiplying larvae, living with a hope of making it to the next round of "growth hormone."

To go one step further: if this analogy works, it means that literature has reached the moment of "growth hormone" applied externally. And it also is reaching a new level of quality. For that, we are sure to make it on time.

Keywords | Abstract | Note on the Author   ● ● ●

KEYWORDS

NEW MEDIA

e-novel

Jacek Dukaj

science fiction

ABSTRACT:

In this article, the author performs an analysis and interpretation of Jacek Dukaj's novel *Starość aksolotla*, in which Dukaj enacts his vision of the poetics of the e-novel, released directly in digital form, enhanced with many graphics and hyperlinks to footnotes that explain the represented world. The author puts forward his thesis on the synergy of elements in a literary event, such as the publication of this novel, resulting in the presentation of a well-argumented thesis on the transfer of literature outside its basic medium, the printed book (and simultaneously coherent with the views of the subject of Dukaj's novel on the transhumanist evolution of *homo sapiens*).

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:

Piotr Gorliński-Kucik (born 1987) – is a literary scholar who works on contemporary Polish prose; in 2016 the book TechGnoza, uchronia, science fiction. Proza Jacka Dukaja (TechGnosis, Refuges, Science Fiction. Jacek Dukaj's Prose), prepared by him, is being published.

From
Intersemiotic Translation to *tie-in* Products,
or Transmedial Storytelling as a Translation Strategy

Inez Okulska

Intersemiotic translation, alongside intra- and interlingual translation, was one of the three types differentiated by Roman Jakobson in his famous article "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation," and was meant to encompass a translation situation in which a transfer takes place between two different semiotic systems – natural and machine language, literary text and image, image and sound, etc. The development of new technologies, copyright (redefining such concepts as authorship, an original text, and licensing) and marketing strategies relating to products and their sale have caused the concept of intersemiotic translation to slip outside the bounds of its initial definition, but the phenomenon it describes will no doubt continue to intrigue scholars, including in wider contexts beyond what we know as translation studies. It interests me, as well. I intend to consider some translation situations whose point of departure involved an interlingual literary translation, yet where such a translation was not simply the final product, but rather a stimulus toward transmedial derivatives, which together constitute a transmedial translation series. Edward Balcerzan understood the latter concept as a series of literary translations of the same work made by various translators; I propose here to expand the concept to cover a series of translations that interpret the original in the space of various media, or that remain in a dependent relationship to each other, forming mutually interconnected links in a chain of inspiration. What is the function to be fulfilled in such a series by intersemiotic translation? In my search for an answer, I knock on my neighbour's door, for as we all know, economics is a friendly neighbour of the humanities, and I return having borrowed not sugar or flour but transmedial storytelling and tie-in products.

The traditional hierarchy and temporal order positing that literary works are adapted into the medium of film were disrupted by the idea of *novelization*, wilfully exploited by producers in the hope of intensifying the audience's emotional connection with the product on offer – if we were enchanted by the story on the big screen, we can also take in its literary version (though one almost feels compelled to place those words in quotation marks, given the frequently dubious artistic value of the products of this intersemiotic enterprise), the book adaptation of the film. This consumer accessory also serves a pragmatic purpose – as a cribsheet (relieving us of the need to rewind the movie when we want to find information about the plot, character names, etc.) or source for quotations from beloved dialogues, in addition to the emotional purpose of allowing the transmedial receiver's (the viewer's and reader's) bond with the initial product to be cemented and fortified. This type of product promotion does not arouse astonishment, any more than does the extremely elaborate marketing of gadgets that accompanies the release of media works based on narratives broadly understood (most often a film or book, but they may also accompany the publication of a comic book, a music album, the opening of an exhibition, or an aggressive new advertising campaign which becomes an autonomous product in terms of narrative – the vital point is not the medium but rather the potential for brand identification).

These additional products that accompany other media are called tie-ins, and though they can be purchased separately,[1] they remain ontologically linked in a relationship of hierarchical dependence, similarly to a translation with its original or epitexts in relation to the main text. Tie-in products can be narrative or non-narrative.[2] Non-narrative tie-in commodities can include objects for practical use (t-shirts, bags, illustrated mugs), fun gadgets (for example, a Darth Vader-shaped toothpick-dispenser – the toothpicks emerge where his light saber would be), or what are called "evocative artefacts," which Allison Thompson has written about in the context of Jane Austen fandom – lavender soap or quill pens that aim to create an atmosphere corresponding to the imagined represented world belonging to Austen and her characters: "Jane must have used a quill pen to write with, this fan thinks, so I will, too."[3] The most bizarre tie-in products include such specimens as ice cream popsicles shaped like James Bond in his Daniel Craig hypostasis, Star Trek-themed coffins, vibrating Harry Potter brooms, or coffee sold by the 7-Eleven chain under the *Sherlock* brand, which did not refer to flavour, aroma, or even any attractive features of the attached mug in its marketing, relying exclusively on textual presentation, with games and quizzes on the posters and stands selling the product asking "How much Sherlock is there in you?" and tropes from the semantic field typical for the character ("mystery," "investigation," "intrigue").[4]

---

[1] The first definitions of the tie-in marketing strategy involved a real relation of dependence, i.e., pre-conditioned sales– to buy one product, the consumer had to buy the other from the same manufacturer (see e.g. Burstein 1962: 68), for example, EPSON printers that only take toner cartridges made by EPSON. Nowadays, however, tie-in refers rather to licensing of authorized products thematically linked to a film, book or other artistic work. They may use the strategy of transmedial storytelling, and thus provide narrative or formal variations on the theme of that work or simply refer to a motif, characters, names or stylistic features of the original work without offering any additional narratives.

[2] See J. Helgason, S. Kärrholm, A. Steiner (eds.), *Hype. Bestsellers and Literary Culture*, Lund: Lund University Publications, 2014, 28.

[3] A. Thompson, "Trinkets and Treasures: Consuming Jane Austen," Persuasions On-Line, 2008, vol. 28, no. 2, http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol28no2/thompson.htm.

[4] K. Puchko, "12 Weird Movie Tie-In Products," Mental Floss, 16.02.2015. http://mentalfloss.com/uk/weird/27406/12-weird-movie-tie-in-products [accessed 05.06.2016]

The second type of tie-in products is the narrative type, based on the strategy of transmedial storytelling, meaning "integrated experiences across multiple media."[5] This expanded but coherent experience is made possible by "convey[ing] storylines over multiple platforms. For example, on one platform you can follow the main story, on another a minor character, but the overall theme remains the same."[6]

In 2003, Henry Jenkins clarified that "what is variously called transmedia, multiplatform, or enhanced storytelling represents the future of entertainment,"[7] due to, among other factors, the increasing convergence of media; transmedial additions accompanying the premiere of a film, book, TV series or other cultural phenomenon have now become a natural, that is, basic and essential, element in product strategy. For that reason, as Mittell has suggested, we should also keep in mind the differences between paratextual elements that serve exclusively to promote, arouse interest in, introduce, or invite discussion of the main text (websites, fanpages, trailers, posters, etc.), and those whose purpose is rather further elaboration of the narrative and the world within it,[8] as well as expansion of the field of engagement and experience of the receiver perceiving that narrative.

If, in keeping with these fundamentals, we treat the definition of the tie-in with appropriate comprehensiveness, as a licensed product timed to coincide with the premiere or sale of the main product, then we may define as narrative tie-ins such elements in promotion as book readings or signings involving author and translator (an ephemeral event, but still a product), or video materials (as in the case of the translation of Jakobe Mansztajn's book *Wiedeński High Life* [Vienna High Life], which was heralded by a film clip presenting the author, specially produced for the occasion by the publisher, OFF Press) and intersemiotic derivatives that arise from a translation.

These may have particular importance in cases where translations from niche languages are introduced on the market, works by authors unknown to the local audience or by exceptionally demanding ones, and with which an emotional connection needs to be created, or particular care given to recognition value.

When we refer to the latter, a good example of marketing activity bearing the mark of transmedial storytelling using intersemiotic translation is given by the publisher Biuro Literackie. In the years 2007-2013 that publishing house's new releases included Ukrainian prose, poetry and anthologies in Polish translation. Poems from these editions next became the basis for a contest announced in 2014 called Comic Book Poetry, which set participants with the task of translating a chosen poem (previously translated interlingually) into the medium of the comic book, with the winning entries to be collected in an almanac, *Komiks wierszem po*

[5] D. Davidson, *Cross-Media Communications: An Introduction to the Art of Creating Integrated Media Experiences*, Pittsburgh: ETC Press, 2010, 4.

[6] S. Kalogeras, *Transmedia Storytelling and the New Era of Media Convergence in Higher Education*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 21.

[7] H. Jenkins, "Transmedia Storytelling," *MIT Technology Review*, 1.01.2003, https://www.technologyreview.com/s/401760/transmedia-storytelling/ [accessed 25.05.2016]

[8] J. Mittell, *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling*, New York: NYU Press, 2015, 293.

ukraińsku (Comic Book Poetry in Ukrainian), released in the publisher's bookstore in January 2015. In the blurb reviews of the finished product we can read that "when new realities begin to form around poems, [...] that means a return to ambiguity, discovering deeper and deeper meanings behind every sentence" (Andrij Lubka) and that "the idea of joining the comic book with poetry is a perfect way to bring poetry back from neglect" (Natalia Marcinkiewicz), so that this transmedial derivative is shown to be an all but indispensable addition, being not only complementary but meaning-creating and ennobling. On the one hand, it remains in a relationship of dependence – also because the poetics of the comic book incorporates words taken directly from the original (translated) poem – and its derivative, translational nature is blatantly underscored; on the other hand, this binding (in the sense of a tie-in) is a function of marketing strategy for a product, which not only demands but in fact requires such an addition in order to fulfil its obligations on the market.

The situation appears in a different light where the case of a literary classic is concerned; in that case, the function of the addition becomes a chance at a new commercial life and possible attainment of the hitherto unreachable target group.

David Damrosch, chair of the Comparative Literature department at Harvard, several years ago stressed the scholarly potential presented by the expansion of the field to include new media in which we find incarnations of motifs and characters from the world literature canon. Although in his reasoning, Damrosch focuses mainly on questions of geopoetics and the universality of what he calls global figures, together with archetypes and motifs originating in or popularized by classic literature and reproduced in other media, which he describes from the perspective of comparativism's tasks and opportunities rather than those of translation, the examples he notes are no less interesting for the purposes of the current argument, since all of the instances described take as their source some sort of translation (literary as well as intersemiotic).

Among translations of this type, the most intriguing appears to be the case of Dante's *Inferno*, including in terms of how its reception defies categories of time. In 2010, the American company Electronic Arts released a computer game called *Dante's Inferno*, consisting of a very loose translation of the poem into the language and visual possibilities of the game medium. An adaptation of this type would not itself represent anything particularly spectacular, since games as tie-in additions are a popular product, discussed and classified by media scholars:

> Tie-in games typically follow the two options outlined for novels for what narrative events will be told. The first is to retell events from the source material, allowing players to participate in the original core narrative - this strategy is common for film tie-ins, as most games from franchises such as *The Lord of the Rings* and *Toy Story* vary little from the original film's narrative events (...) More common to television tie-ins is treating the game as a new episode in the series, depicting events that could feasibly function as an episode from the series but have not.[9]

---

[9] Mittell, *Complex TV*, 302.

What set *Inferno* apart from other adaptations was its marketing strategy, which proclaimed its product using a special kit released three months before the game. The kit, sold in a box decorated with the same illustration as the game packaging (Dante depicted as a warrior, shirtless, in a helmet) to build brand identification, in addition to a 16-page booklet with images from the game presenting a visual interpretation of the literary classic, an introduction by the game's executive producer and an academic interpretation of the work, contained a print edition of Dante's *Inferno* in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1867 translation. Thus, a marketing addition to a transmedial derivative, resembling those created through tie-in licensing, is in fact nothing other than the genuine "original," which is itself a translation; indeed, its translation aspect is highlighted by the prominent display of the translator's name both on the box and in the blurb, which runs as follows:

> All hell is breaking loose. Electronic Arts' thrilling video game Dante's Inferno has exploded on the scene and this is the book that provides unique insight into its creation. Go back to the source with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's celebrated translation of Dante's epic poem. Presented in its entirety, here is the foundation and inspiration for the game.[10]

Despite these direct and overt references to the source, perhaps due in part to the increasingly widespread use (as remarked above) of a marking strategy that spins literature from popular narratives, some users reacted with aloofness or even some level of aggression ("WTF is this shit?"[11]) to this source-addition, treating it rather as an incidental by-product of marketing for the game itself, a tacked-on prequel, than as an autonomous literary work meriting twofold consideration and esteem for having been the ultimate source of direct inspiration, the point of departure for subsequent transmedial narratives. A similar effect of hierarchy-reversal between translation and source results from the selling of literary classics in editions licensed as tie-ins to Hollywood film renditions (again, most often based on literary translations of foreign works from the world canon) – on the cover of one such edition, of *Anna Karenina*, we find the somewhat ambivalent paratext "Now a major motion picture / Starring Keira Knightley and Jude Law." The typesetting and the presence of the actors' names and a still from the film might suggest to an uninitiated reader that Leo Tolstoy is the director or perhaps producer of the film rather than the author of a literary work which has undergone adaptation to film. The inclusion of the film's screenplay as an appendix may further undermine the integrity of the original, and again advance the erroneous notion that the tie-in edition is a "novelization," an extra added on top of the scenario. Not to mention the apparent illusion that Leo Tolstoy wrote in English:

---

[10]D. Damrosch, "Geopoetics: World Literature in the Global Mediascape," in: Christian Moser and Linda Simonis, eds., *Figuren des Globalen. Weltbezug und Welterzeugung in Literatur, Kunst und Medien*, Göttingen: Bonn University Press, 2014, 209-230.

[11]Damrosch, "Geopoetics," 215-16.

The examples listed above relate to real marketing strategies initiated by publishers. But the metaphor of transmedial (transgenre) storytelling would appear operative in defining less typical situations as well, where the translator becomes the initiator of the production of derivative tie-ins, including those resulting from intersemiotic translation.

After nearly ten years of work, Krzysztof Bartnicki finished and published his full translation of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. The interlingual translation by itself, considering the wealth of languages used in the source, presents an unusually vast area of research for translation studies specialists, but I intend to leave aside the poetics of literary translation for now, in order to focus on the work's creative potential for transmedial storytelling. A few months after the release of the translation, the Ha!art publishing concern came out with a book bearing the mysterious title *Fu wojny* (Fie on War, 2012), in whose preface the publisher and author both asserted that it was a collection of translations of ancient Chinese texts on translation strategies, featuring examples from *Finnegans Wake*, presented in the manner of allegorical fables of war and tactics. The whole work was eventually revealed to be a remarkably deft translation mystification, prepared in consultation with Sinologists (it included, for example, "original" phrases written in Chinese characters), which exposed itself in part through its overly contemporary approach to problems of translation.[12] That published work may be considered a narrative, translational, and translation studies tie-in to *Finnegans Wake*, of the spin-off type, which takes as the main protagonist of its narrative a side thread from the original work – in this case the very process of translation. The medium also changes (in this case, the genre of text) – instead of a translation of a literary work, we get a pseudo-translation of a work of literary nonfiction. As was quickly revealed, that was only the beginning of the production of transmedial tie-in additions put forward by translators that expanded the horizon for experiencing the base product, i.e., Joyce's work – in Polish translation or the English original. A year later, a book appeared on the market (this time in fact released by a different publisher, Sowa, but in any case at the author's behest) entitled *Da capo al finne*, consisting of a translation of *Finnegans Wake* (importantly, working once again from the English original) into a musical cryptogram. The book's title, referencing Joycean wordplay, plays on the musical term "da capo al fine," meaning from beginning to end.

NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE
STARRING KEIRA KNIGHTLEY AND JUDE LAW

ANNA KARENINA

LEO TOLSTOY

THE OFFICIAL TIE-IN EDITION
INCLUDING THE SCREENPLAY BY
TOM STOPPARD

---

[12]See I. Okulska, "Przekład – wojna – koń trojański," in: *Przekład – kolonizacja czy szansa?*, ed. P. Fasta, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Śląska, 2013, 93-104.

The addition of a second "n" makes it possible to read it in a free interpretation as meaning "from the beginning to *Finnegans Wake*" or "from A to F," which in turn might be read half in jest as referring to Bartnicki's creative and translatorial work – wherever it may begin, it definitely ends with *Finnegans Wake*. More than 130 pages of the book feature a sequence of letters in small print, without spaces, divisions or other differentiation, which Bartnicki has referred to as a "monobloc":

```
eeeaedefheaheheheeeegaggegadeaagecehegeeaBeefIaaaggedaaefecdeab
eehecadecgeaeadefheheafcaeadecaedeheAeadhebafefghgeeadehedeecee
edefheDeeaadhecefheeheeahhadeedhbbbegadheehacagheahadefheabedeh
chcedfheeaaadeeabehgheeahgfheffbhaehagaeeheeegaheehadeeaeafehea
aefefeheaheaeaadffeeadgehfheaehaaedheecahaeggchechgacffeegeaeef
faeheegfeabccefhbehdadeheeeeefhecdabaeadeeeecefhebeafahadadeaff
ahehaefaebeeaceecgedfededfaeaeeefefheehacahacahaehabefhachchchg
addheagefGCdeefabeheghgchabbadgaheebecaefedadaghheaaedgadbeeaad
eagfhchagecahcheefhgbhaeaccbbeagheaeaghhaeedhaehechagefaedcceab
haheeaddghahahedahbachecdddeefhafhaaaeheafaeadfeCahheheBhheBehh
adedadaedhafheaheeccaedececaheaedeeddbegedHeahaahaehehaechahgah
eaheeachacefaaedcaceaheeabeaheeehebbeeecaeeaaggebegededdafeadaa
dfhehaehaefeadaceehgefadeeecebeeehgadaghchghaehaebbachebadhheea
aeecebefeefeedgadheHeaaehchaefdfgagaadhgceacedheaggaehbecaeagec
aadfhghaebahadeahaheheefheghafhhefheaebhedggdheadffachffhedFhec
hagehcheacfaegehaagageaaefhedadeghafagadhhgeafacefheheheahededa
eeeaeahaeheaghaaccabeadeagagdeegchehgheaedhagecdeahegfafeeadhef
eaefheDBaeaheadhebahdhchhedfeedhefheadhCaaaghadheheGdaagedadafe
heaCaaBaccadffacedbeaheeaeedeeebeaefeafaeffaeaAdaadEeaeebhegace
fgaeeaeheadeaegehdedaheeDecaeeehfefheecffeadhheheeebebacheachhe
beaGabaechdadeaeghfghbghahaeebGeagdeHedhfaaheedheabeadheedhcaaa
```

This text consists in its entirety of eight letters repeated in widely varied combinations, though their sequence is not random, but dictated by the order they follow in the original text. Such a radical reduction might be considered a (risky) textual operation, and its claim to intersemiotic status deemed negligible, were it not for the fact that the remaining letters correspond to musical notes and the entire book is a musical score intended to be played. The translator has himself provided the proof thereof, sharing his own sound recording of *Da capo* on the website SoundCloud: https://soundcloud.com/gimcbart/, and further asserting that Joyce's book contains encodings of national anthems and folk songs, not to mention the Imperial March (Darth Vader's theme) familiar to fans of *Star Wars* and the waltz from *The Godfather*. Though a translation of this type does not represent the most obvious forms of the poetics of transmedial storytelling (given that its narration relies on individual letters generating sounds) it certainly does carry out the basic functions of such a poetics – tying in to the base product and expanding the scope of how it is experienced by audiences, as confirmed by one reader (or listener)'s review:

> Joyce's text began to make sound, to make noise with all kinds of different sounds. (...) I felt as if I were descending into the category of the subjective pre-text, into the archetypal language values contained within the sounds emitted, those acoustic tremors of air, deviating from sense and hitting their unknown receiver in a meta-dimension. (...) Bartnicki achieved a deconstruction of "Finnegans Wake" through sound, completing its comprehensive dismantling and simultaneous immortalization. From an impossible text he created a potential, imaginable one.[13]

[13] http://lubimyczytac.pl/ksiazka/157361/da-capo-al-finne

The tie-in addition produced by the translator is thus shown to be not merely offering an optional experience, but providing a key to the perception of *Finnegans Wake*, and its presence becomes a condition of reading the base product, through which process the addition adheres to the original principles of tie-in strategy.

Among the many definitions and classifications of intersemiotic translation, the one proposed by Teresa Tomaszkiewicz appears to fit Barticki's design perfectly, since – rather ironically in this context – it focuses less on the formal aspects of the transfer and more on the need for the transfer to take place:

> The sender, when he or she states a certain real or hypothetical lack of perfection in communication by purely linguistic means, expresses a certain meaning, using elements of linguistic code, which becomes encoded differently.[14]

Her thought-provoking formulation, which pragmatically posits that intersemiotic translation occurs where language fails, dovetails with Bartnicki's motivation as translator, because he makes no secret of the fact that although *Finnegans Wake* fascinates him, it "disappoints as literature". He then adds:

> Joyce's plan to convey the voice of humanity misfired. (...) The aesthetic force of the work, or at least of some passages, can nonetheless be affirmed without reservations. Those who cannot understand *FW* at the level of lexicon or semantics are still able to enjoy the melodic charm of an unknown dialect in recitation, the potency of its rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia, euphony, nearing the power of song, or music more generally. But nevertheless, in competing for melodic thrills, literature performing the role of music cannot defeat music performing its own role.[15]

Another important task of transmedial storytelling is raising the level of interactivity for the receiver through the presentation of the base narrative (or its derivative in the form of a spin-off) using other, multifunctional forms. In the case of *Da capo* a musically literate reader is supposed to generate his own interpretations, interpreting pauses, lengths of tones, etc. in his or her own way, contributing successive new links to the chain of tie-in products. This chain was well described by an announcement for the premiere of the remix (*Finnegans Wake Remixed*, vividly displaying a typical fan fiction mechanism, whereby a work begins to take on a life of its own through the active engagement and invention of its audience) on the Alternator radio channel: "Joyce turned into finnegans wake. finnegans wake turned into letters. letters turned into notes. notes turned into midi. midi turned into mix. mix on the radio [listen, listen!]."[16]

In a conversation after the publication of *Da capo*, Bartnicki, encouraged by positive reactions to the work (including invitations to collaborate with musicians), said "I think this is the beginning

---

[14]T. Tomaszkiewicz, *Przekład audiowizualny* (Audiovisual Translation)*,* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2008, 73.

[15]K. Bartnicki, *Da capo al finne*, Warszawa: Sowa, 2015, 4.

[16]M. Gliński, "Polak złamał kod Joyce'a," *culture.pl* 27.01.2014, http://culture.pl/pl/artykul/polak-zlamal-kod-joycea [accessed 04.06.2016].

of musical experiments with Joyce." We may state with certainty that it is anything but the end, not only of musical experiments, but also transmedial ones, since this narrative with its impossible and total language, the still-unfathomed brilliance of its author and its expansion of the boundaries of reading is continuously being retold anew by Barticki, as he offers audiences new products from this series, which remains for better or worse a translation series.

In the meantime, Barticki, working in a duet with a graphic artist, prepared a book in the form of a rolodex, containing over 600 pages. This translation into verbo-visual code[17] required, as in the case of the musical score, that certain selections and reductions be made. The narrative in this version is strongly personalized as it focuses on characters – these figures were taken from each page of *FW* and events built around them, so that they could each be presented in the form of individual calling cards. Telephone numbers and addresses naturally represent a code maintained in the spirit of the numerical enigmas encoded in the original by the author. The cards also feature original quotations, but as the translator himself has emphasized, these are not intended to be a primary element, but rather to be overshadowed by visual interpretations.[18]

source: culture.pl

[17]M. Sowiński, "Conrad Festival: dzień trzeci," *Tygodnik powszechny*, 21.10.2015, online edition, https://www.tygodnikpowszechny.pl/conrad-festival-dzien-trzeci-30772, accessed 01.06.2015.

[18]See M. Gliński, "Finnegans Wake Rolodexed," *culture.pl* 08.06.2015, http://culture.pl/en/article/finnegans-wake-rolodexed, accessed 29.05.2016.

Due to the unusually time-consuming preparation process required to produce a single prototype, there is to date only one in existence; it was presented in an exhibition called "Krzysztof Bartnicki & Marcin Szmandra. Finnegans Meet." The opening was held on December 5, 2015 at CSW Kronika in Bytom, and was curated by Stanisław Ruksza. Curiously enough, this narrative addition is totally analogue in form, though intended for interactive, spatial reception. The slogan that announced the exhibit could serve equally well to announce a typical tie-in in the form of a computer game: "Turn to watch; watch to turn (yourself around) and get to know a whole multitude of bizarre individuals and other oddities of the Finnegan universe." The two-part structure, on the other hand, is somewhat reminiscent of the Oulipo game of Cent Mille Milliards de Poèmes, since by randomly flipping the cards of the rolodex, the user destabilizes the initial narrative setting and begins to create a new one of their own.

For as long as studies of intersemiotic translation have been conducted, they have faced the challenging task of developing a means of description that would transcend definitional ambivalences (of whether adaptation is intersemiotic translation, to what degree liberties can be taken in such a translation, and so on). I therefore suggest we examine the narrative potential of such translation in the context of marketing strategies of transmedial storytelling, in which we deem each change of format a medium – even if on a micro scale, i.e., genre of text, if that carries with it important narrative changes and remains in a relation of dependence on the original of the same kind as licensed tie-in products have with their source products. Then such translation can be included within the translation series of tie-in products whose function is to tell the same story or spin-off derivatives using other semantic structures for the purpose of expanding the range of available experiences, intensifying the affective potential, aiding brand identification or increasing the interactivity of communication. And if at the foundation of the base narrative we further find a literary translation, the series becomes that much richer and more interesting.

KEYWORDS

new takes on translation

transmedial storytelling

Abstract:

Using examples from literature, film, music, and some that elude unambiguous genre classification, the article presents translation series understood as groups of works (or rather products) interpreting an original work (or each other) using other media. The traditional notion of invoking intersemiotic translation in cases of non-linguistic translation is here enhanced to include the marketing and capitalistic motivations for a variety of translation operations that fall under the rubrics of transmedial storytelling and tie-in strategies for selling products.

intersemiotic translation

TRANSLATION SERIES

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:
Inez Okulska is an adjunct at the Polish-German Research Institute at Adam Mickiewicz University in Słubice, a theoretician and critic of translation, and author of short stories and feuilletons. She did a post-doctorate practicum at Harvard and escaped unharmed. Her research focuses on the sociological and market aspects of translation, the role and function of the translator, translation borderline cases and anomalies. More recently, Okulska has also been working on connections between literature and new media as well as technology broadly understood. She translates prose, poetry, and scholarly texts from foreign languages; she also knows programming languages.

Additional Problems
with Stefan Szymutko's
History

Łukasz Żurek

Stefan Szymutko, as can be judged from declarative statements found in some of his writings, never wanted to be a "literary theoretician," understood (very selectively and unfairly) as someone who in Heideggerian terms "talks away" the work of literature, keeping its truth from being voiced.[1] Readers should not be swept away by the rhetorical force of such declarations, however. The distaste he expresses for theoretician-interpreters, who "would find it more convenient if the work did not exist,"[2] has served the Silesian literary scholar in defending his own theory of the literary work, which is bound to a certain philosophy of literature and philology. This theory at first related exclusively to the historical novels of Parnickim,[3] but was then was expanded to encompass an ontology of literature[4] and the world and a concept of subjectivity.[5]

Still, why would anyone take on the concept of the "source" which Szymutko only presented in one article,[6] never reprinted in any of his books, instead of simply describing this Silesian scholar's entire polyphonic project, which combines literary

---

[1] The most flamboyant declaration of Szymutko's ostensibly "antitheoretical" stance is the essay "Po co literatura jeszcze jest? Na motywach książek Janusza Sławińskiego 'Przypadki poezji' i 'Miejsce interpretacji'" (Why Is Literature Still There? Thoughts on Janusz Sławiński's *Przypadek poezji* [The Case of Poetry] and *Miejsce interpretacji* [The Place of Interpretation]) in *Teksty Drugie* 2007, no. 3, 142–153.

[2] S. Szymutko, "Po co literatura jeszcze jest?...", 146.

[3] S. Szymutko, *Zrozumieć Parnickiego* (Understanding Parnicki), Katowice: FA-art, 1992.

[4] S. Szymutko, *Rzeczywistość jako zwątpienie w literaturze i literaturoznawstwie* (Reality as Despair in Literature and Literary Scholarship), Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1998.

[5] S. Szymutko, *Nagrobek ciotki Cili* (Aunt Cilia's Tombstone), Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2001.

[6] S. Szymutko, "Źródło, czyli tekstu historii ciąg dalszy: na przykładzie 'Końca «Zgody Narodów»' Teodora Parnickiego," (The Source, or the Text of History Continued: the Case of Teodor Parnicki's *Koniec «Zgody Narodów»* [The End of the «Harmony of Nations»]), *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1994, no. 2, 62–94.

scholarship, philosophy, and autobiography? The article "*Źródło, czyli tekstu historii ciąg dalszy…*" (The Source, or the Text of History Continued…) functions at the absolute margin of Szymutko's work, reception of which has already been sufficiently dominated by the themes of Silesia and autobiography. As I will attempt to show, reconstructing the concept of the source is a task worth undertaking for at least three reasons.

Firstly, that concept is developed on the basis of a meticulous reading of a particularly literary work, which describes or creates[7] a certain phenomenon situated on the border between Genettean paratexts and "hipotext-hypertext" relations, and as a result, problematizes a series of poetological concepts. Secondly, it represents a revealing example of the interaction mentioned above of the various sources of inspiration that determine the idiomatic and polyphonic character of Szymutko's work. Thirdly, the Silesian scholar's concept enables us to understand the writing and methodology problems he encountered in his work putting together editions of Parnicki's novels (*Koniec "Zgody Narodów"* and *Słowo i ciało*) with exhaustive commentaries intended to elucidate all the intricacies of those texts and allow other readers the "pure pleasure of studying decipherment."[8] Like the philosophers read by Jacques Derrida, who misguidedly introduced into their own texts concepts that dismantled the systems they had created, Szymutko created something that at a certain moment made his work practically impossible, while simultaneously impelling it forward.

Before we can approach the problems mentioned above, however, we must first briefly describe the theory of the novel that extrapolated from the novel *Końca "Zgody Narodów"*, the subject of his doctoral thesis.

"The Text of History" Between Hypo- and Hypertext

According to Szymutko, previous interpreters of Parnicki's mature work (beginning with *Koniec "Zgody Narodów"*) tended to avoid precise explication of them, settling for generalizations that hypostasized the situation in the represented world of a novel ("cognitive chaos," "the labyrinth of history," "the endless chain of signifiers") into reading strategies. In that approach to Parnicki's prose, Szymutko sees an attempt to mask the failure to understand the text at an elementary level. He therefore sets as the aim of his work the creation of interpretative tools enabling him to newly define the author's work:

> Only a comprehensible work can be the foundation for a profound reading experience, and fully exhibit the value of writing. (…) The conventions for reading which I have proposed constitute an

---

[7] Looking at concepts developed by Szymutko in terms of their performativity is a topic for another article. At this point I can only signal my awareness of the problem.

[8] S. Szymutko, "Na czym utknąłem? Pokaz bezradnej lektury 'Słowa i ciała'" (Where Did I Get Stuck? Demonstration of Perplexed Reading of *Word and Body*) in *Tajemnice "Słowa i ciała"* (Secrets of *Word and Body*), ed. Tomasz Markiewka and Krzysztof Uniłowski, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2008, 11.

attempt to adapt the language of the receiver to the language of the sender and are based primarily on the view that Parnicki created his own novelistic language.[9]

A basic operation that a reader of a Parnicki novel who wishes to understand its language must perform is, in Szymutko's view, observing that the whole form of the narrative of *Koniec "Zgody…"* (the lack of a clear semiotic framework;[10] the elliptical character of the narrator's utterances in contrast with the long, analytical debates in the dialogues; the consignment of the most important events in the novel's plot to the backstory; the narrator's failure to explain the novel's basic historical context; a surfeit of proper names that are not explained) is meant to indicate a certain horizon of speech, which Szymutko calls "the text of history."

Szymutko takes the concept of the "text of history" straight from Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge*,[11] more specifically – from the end of the chapter "The Discursive Regularities," in which the French philosopher attempts to resolve the misunderstandings that may have formed around the fundamental concepts of his work up to that point. In that chapter, Foucault explains that what is hidden by the objects of the analyses he has carried out – systems that make final forms possible – is not life itself, but a "tight group of multiple relations" that he calls "prediscursive," with the caveat: "only if one admits that this prediscursive is still discursive […]."[12] This area before discourse, which nonetheless forms a part of discourse, is what Szymutko calls the "text of history" – "the development in language of an entire set of events which the text of the work treats in abbreviated form,"[13] a complex of political, religious, cultural and economic factors which must necessarily be reconstructed, exceeding the boundaries of the text of the work (in this case the text of the novel *Koniec "Zgody Narodów"*), but constituting the reason for the diffusion and complication of the text of the novel. Importantly, Szymutko underscores the fact that

[9] S. Szymutko, *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, 8. I have written about the connections between the methodology proposed by Szymutko and those of Warsaw structuralism, negative hermeneutics, and Silesian semiotics in the article "Ku innemu poststrukturalizmowi. Literaturoznawstwo według Stefana Szymutki" (Towards a Different Post-Structuralism. Literary Studies According to Stefan Szymutko), in *Literatura – kultura – lektura. Dzisiejsze spojrzenie na teorie i praktyki badań literackich i kulturowych* (Literature, Culture, Reading. Current Views on the Theory and Practice of Literary and Cultural Studies), ed. M. Błaszkowska, M. Kuster, I. Pisarek, Kraków: Wydział Polonistyki Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2015, 109–133.

[10] Understood in Maria Renata Mayenowa (and Boris Uspienski)'s terms as a metatextual, information-bearing "element of the structure of the text whose function is setting a given text apart from others, showing it as a definite whole." M.R. Mayenowa, "Tekst literacki – pojęcie całości i pojęcie ramy" (The Literary Text—The Concept of Wholeness and the Concept of Framing), in *Poetyka teoretyczna. Zagadnienia języka* (Theoretical Poetics. A Problem of Language), Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1974, 271. We will return to the complications introduced by Szymutko's "source addition" into semiotic and structural understanding in a later section of this article.

[11] Judging by how frequently Foucault's works are cited in *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, he represented probably the greatest philosophical inspiration for the scholar during the phase of working on his doctoral thesis and up until the mid-1990s. From the mid-1990s on, i.e., during the period of the height of Bogdan Baran and Janusz Mizera's activity as translators of Heidegger, Foucault yields to the author of *Being and Time*. See Janusz Mizera, "Uwagi o recepcji i przekładzie tekstów Martina Heideggera w Polsce" (Notes on the Reception and Translation of Martin Heidegger's Writings in Poland," *Argument* 2013, no. 2.

[12] M. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, New York: Pantheon Books, 1972, 76. It is worth noting that the book ends with a fictional dialogue between Foucault (the "archaeologist" attempting to think about historu differently than the representatives of the "Annales" school) and someone who clings tightly to French structuralism (199-214). This basically corresponds to the approach of *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*: establishing Szymutko's position in relation to Warsaw structuralism and Polish post-structuralists (Krzysztof Uniłowski, Krzysztof Kłosiński, Ryszard Nycz).

[13] S. Szymutko, *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, 128.

> [t]he text of history (…) does not permit one (…) to penetrate from name to object. In combination with the text of the work, it merely indicates the tension between language and reality; authentic events are only the horizon of the utterance.[14]

Let us here note the methodological undecidable that Szymutko hits upon. The text of history is simultaneously a hypotext preceding the text of the work, determining its shape, and something presented as the product of a certain transformational practice, closest to one of Genette's types of serious transposition, expansion "through… specificity."[15] We will return to this undecidability in a later part of the present article.

The text of history introduces a fundamental change into Janusz Sławiński's concept – undoubtedly representing a point of departure for Szymutko[16] – of the poetic function of the prose work. As we remember, that Warsaw structuralist held that the individual word which is activated semantically in a poetic work at all levels of organization, must be effaced in prose, absorbed by segments at a higher level: first by the sentence, the elementary unit in the construction of prose communication,[17] next by great semantic figures, etc. Within the framework of the poetics of Parnicki's novel constructed by Szymutko, the individual word is not an inactive intermediary for the synthesization of semantic figures, but due to its obligatory link with the text of history, requires exhaustive commentary, which in addition must be verified together with forward progress in reading and further readings (for it is clear that Parnicki, in Szymutko's view, foresees multiple readings in his strategy for the reception of his works[18]).

Consistently indebted to Foucault's early work, Szymutko defines his analysis of the relationship between the text of the work and the text of history with the terms "murderous, detailed, 'microphysical,'" and as early as the first sentence of *Zrozumieć Parnickiego* he pronounces the whole enterprise "boring."[19] Why? Szymutko's view of

---

[14]S. Szymutko, *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, 51.

[15]G. Genette, *Palimpsests. Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997, 261.

[16]It can never be underscored enough that after Parnicki, Sławiński is the author to whom Szymutko has devoted the greatest number of his writings– four works in all (*Ciało profesora Sławińskiego* [Professor Sławiński's Body], *Teksty Drugie* 1994, no. 4; *Bycie humanistą. O artykułach Janusza Sławińskiego w "Tekstach" (1972–1981)*(Being a Humanist. On Janusz Sławiński's Articles in *Teksty*, 1972-1981), Pamiętnik Literacki 1990, no. 1; a review of *Teksty i teksty* (Texts and Texts), *Ruch Literacki* 1991, 4; and *Po co literatura jeszcze jest?*).

[17]J. Sławiński, "Semantyka wypowiedzi narracyjnej" (Semantics of the Narrative Utterance), in *Dzieło – Język – Tradycja* (Work, Language, Tradition), Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974.

[18]I am borrowing the concept of "multiple readings" from Kazimierz Bartoszyński. See Bartoszyński, "Problem lektury wielokrotnej"(The Problem of Multiple Readings), in *Powieść w świecie literackości. Szkice* (The Novel in the World of Literariness. Essays), Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, 1991. Szymutko's copy of *Koniec "Zgody Narodów"* provides material testimony to the length of time he invested in studying the novel. The book is falling apart, the notes in the margins (because of their accumulation) are practically illegible, and the pages, from being turned so many times, have begun to be transparent.

[19]Szymutko, *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, 7. Foucault writes about the "micro-physics of power" in the first chapter of *Discipline and Punish*. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York: Vintage Books, 1995, 26. The conception of "micro-physics" itself, as the name for a certain branch of physics, also indicates the link Szymutko observes between the post-Einstein natural sciences and twentieth-century literature and philosophy. See Szymutko, "Historia – powieść historyczna – krytyka. Lata 1945–1960" (History, Historical Novel, Criticism in the Period 1945-1960), in *Rzeczywistość jako zwątpienie w literaturze i literaturoznawstwie.*

Koniec "Zgody Narodów" as a "synecdochical work," a "maximal abbreviation of what can and should be 'told'"[20] that points toward the endless space of historicity, relates to certain definite consequences for the character and amplitude of the analyses that a reader wanting to "understand Parnicki" must carry out. So the disproportion between the text of the work and the text of history means that, to be sure, the "area of a [Parnicki] work[21] is closed: nothing can be added to it," yet "[t]he text of history (…) has no boundaries (…)."[22] This unbounded nature of the text of history signifies, for its commentator, primarily the fact that each word in a novel of over 600 pages (as is *Koniec "Zgody"*), represents a potential "sign of a certain historical reality."[23] In Szymutko's view, the "multiplicity and complexity [in *Koniec "Zgody Narodów"*] are themselves the essence of it. That is why, instead of evading them, we must open their anatomy (…). Unfortunately, that kind of approach to multiplicity and complexity increases the bulk of the interpretation that desires to describe them."[24]

Opening the text of history is thus linked with the necessity to create footnotes, i.e., paratexts, "irregular, divided, fragile, not to say: resembling dust; often so closely linked with a particular detail of a specific text that they have, as it were, no independent meaning (…)."[25] Footnotes to individual words occupy enormous amounts of space in Szymutko's work, making it practically incomprehensible to readers who attempt to read *Zrozumieć Parnickiego* without some knowledge of *Koniec*. As we can see, making the relationship between the text of the work and the text of history the central point of his analysis has the effect that Szymutko's work itself begins to perform a function similar to that of footnotes: its addressees are exclusively those familiar with *Koniec*.[26] The proliferation of footnotes was probably the reason why Szymutko's doctoral thesis was considerably longer in its original version than in its published book form – according to Marian Kisiel, it initially "had over 600 pages of unstandardized typescript and took up two fat white folders."[27] With that in mind, the title of the thesis makes a lot of sense, suggesting its size and complexity: *Wielość i wielkość. O "Końcu «Zgody Narodów»" Parnickiego* (Multiplicity and Magnitude. On Parnicki's *Koniec "Zgody Narodow"*).

After the brief description above of Szymutko's general methodological postulates, which has allowed us to notice both its originality and the impossibility of working out those postulates in their entirety, let us move on to the introduction of his 1994

[20]Szymutko, *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, 37.

[21]All comments in parentheses are mine – Ł.Ż.

[22]Szymutko, *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, 36.

[23]Szymutko, *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, 36.

[24]Szymutko, *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, 9.

[25]G. Genette, *Paratexts. Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 319. Importantly, in Genette's concept of what makes a given text a footnote, a functional criterion is decisive – a one-word commentary on a particular quotation embedded in the main text is also a footnote.

[26]Genette, *Paratexts*, 323. "The addressee of the note is undoubtedly, in theory, the reader of the text, to the exclusion of any other person (to whom […] the note might well, most often, make no sense)."

[27]M. Kisiel, "Literatura: Marzenie i śmierć. O Stefanie Szymutce" (Literature;/ Dream and Death. On Stefan Szymutko), Śląsk 2014, no. 2, 10. Jerzy Paszek, one of the thesis's readers, is said to have written in his review: "Stefan Szymutko's thesis may be bloated, but it is not sluggish [*jest opasły, ale nie ospały*]."

article, in which Szymutko expands the relationship between the text of the work and the text of history to encompass another concept, one which still further complicates his reading of *Koniec*.

Source as Addition to the Drama of the Scholar

The article "Źródło, czyli tekstu historii ciąg dalszy…" is most probably a properly refashioned portion of Szymutko's doctoral thesis. That is indicated by the fact that in two footnotes from *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, the author directs readers to that earlier text, with the added information that it is "(being prepared for publication)."[28] The introductory part of the text published in 1994 is, however, marked by Szymutko's move (which I mentioned in my introduction) from theory of the novel inspired by philosophy to philosophy practiced via theory of the novel and philological commentary, constituting a typical feature of his texts written after the book on *Koniec*.[29] There are no references yet to Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl, Derrida, or Georges Bataille – regular partners in Szymutko's later essays – but a certain direction of thought, which will find its strongest expression in the introduction to *Rzeczywistości jako zwątpienia…*, is already noticeable.

The article's starting point is the following thesis, expressing Szymutko's opposition to pantextualism in the humanities:

> (…) we are unable to point at the reality that is imitated [in literature]; we are, on the other hand, absorbed by (…) the ways of imitation, especially linguistic ones. In other words: agreeing that the text tells about a world, we deal exclusively with the text; even that represented world – what is worst – we consider as text. Existence is, for us, only the "presupossition of existence."[30]

Szymutko also belongs to the community whose collective consciousness he defines in the quoted passage, as is shown by his use of verbs in the first person plural form ("we are unable," "we deal," "we consider"). He is talking not about a circle of Polish literary scholars who share a certain view, but rather about a certain épistème[31] which is characterized by the reduction of ontology and epistemology to rhetoric and the loss of hope for "extra-textual experience of that [past] reality" while at the same time resisting "the invalidation of (…) thought about it."[32]

[28]Szymutko, *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, 99, 170.

[29]A kind of philosophy, let us add, that is conscious of its non-professionalism. "I know that I am using phenomenology as a tool not designed for performing this activity: I am using a scalpel to open a jar. I apologize for the terminological inexactitude, the general lack of precision, the hurried clumsiness of my theoretical argument and my ignoring of subtleties and phenomenological divisions (…) I use phenomenology and need it because it points toward a meaning which is not based in language (…) I am misappropriating [it], because I am more interested in the set of events, chance, accidental meaning (…)." Szymutko, *Nagrobek ciotki Cili*, 52.

[30]Szymutko, "Źródło, czyli tekstu historii ciąg dalszy," 62.

[31]Szymutko makes direct use of this Foucault concept three years later. See Szymutko, "Parnicki: między historią a literaturą. Od 'Aecjusza ostatniego Rzymianina' do 'Słowa i ciała'" (Parnicki: Between History and Literature. From *Aecjusz ostatniego Rzymianina* to *Słowo i ciało*), *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1997, 1, 79.

[32]Szymutko, "Parnicki. między historią a literaturą," 63. Szymutko once again chooses Michel Foucault as the spokesman for his concept, once more referring to the quotation from *Archaeology of Knowledge* mentioned earlier (64–65).

Szymutko seeks not so much to overthrow philosophical, historiographic or literary theory concepts that have arisen within the context of the textualist épistème (as he admits, "[a]t the theoretical level such a view cannot be overthrown") as to show their circularity ("remaining further at this level can only yield new indications of the vicious circle of textuality"[33]) and to defend that "something" that resists the authority of language over reality, to "examine the value of the desire to make historical existence a factor in discourse."[34] In Szymutko's critique of the épistème of textualism as a "vicous circle", putting an end to reflection on the subject of history, one senses an allusion to Fukuyama's "end of history," a concept at the centre of heated discussions in Poland in the early 1990s[35]:

> Those who declare the inescapability of textuality unconsciously assume that progress in tech-
> niques of [historical] discourse ended in the nineteenth century; in fact history, as we can see, has
> not yet exhausted its possibilities and new ways of speaking are being developed in order to face
> new problems.[36]

Up to this point, Szymutko's views are astonishingly convergent with the critique of the "end of history" made around the same time in neo-Marxist terms by writers such as Frederic Jameson,[37] and from a deconstructionist perspective by Jacques Derrida.[38] In contrast, however, to those authors, Szymutko is not interested in the "way out of the impasse" (of the textual concept of cognition or Fukuyama's teleology of history) as a political problem,[39] but rather as a problem of poetics – he seeks to demonstrate that the poetics of reception of the Parnicki novel is marked by "heightened consciousness of the autonomy of historical reality, its independence from formulation in language."[40]

It is worth noting that the title of the article problematizes the ambiguous status, mentioned earlier, of the text of history. It turns out that that text does not constitute by any means the only point of reference by which it becomes possible to establish what whole is indicated by the synecdochical text of the work. In his article, Szymutko defines the text of history as an "implied and reconstructable addition to the text of the work" or a text that is "complementary" in relation to the novel – since another source precedes it.[41] Let us remember: in *Zrozumieć*

---

[33]Szymutko, "Parnicki: między historią a literaturą," 64.

[34]Szymutko, "Parnicki: między historią a literaturą," 63.

[35]"At the beginning of the '90s, after the political turning point of 1989, the theme of the past, of memory, of history became frozen in the theater, but also in public debate. (…) But the final version of history was, naturally, te death of history – the Polish reception of Francis Fukuyama's famous book (…) had that subtext as well." M. Kwaśniewska, G. Niziołek, "Introduction," in *Zła pamięć. Przeciw-historia w polskim teatrze i dramacie* (Bad Memory. Contra-History in Polish Theater and Drama), Wrocław: Instytut im. Jerzego Grotowskiego, 2012, 10. An obvious point of reference here is Maria Janion's essay "Zmierzch paradygmatu" (Twilight of the Paradigm) in her book *Czy będziesz wiedział, co przeżyłeś?* (Will You Know What You Lived Through?), Warszawa: Sic!, 1996.

[36]Szymutko, "Parnicki: Między historią a literature," 64.

[37]F. Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.

[38]J. Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: l'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale*, Paris : Galilée, 1993.

[39]The political implications of Szymutko's theory of the novel and its related ontology and epistemology do become more resonant in his texts about Silesia.

[40]Szymutko, "Źródło, czyli tekstu historii ciąg dalszy," 94.

[41]Szymutko, "Źródło, czyli tekstu historii ciąg dalszy," 65.

Parnickiego the tension between the text of the work and the text of history, the necessity for one to be confronted with the other, merely pointed toward the horizon of the utterance, which consists of the extratextual "past tense." Despite the strenuousness that this vision of reading assumes, the theoretically unbounded text of history was connected with what was written in the novel. To express it in the lexicon of Warsaw structuralism: the interpretation of implied information was always linked with thematized information and did not reach beyond it, regardless of how much the conclusions reached by Szymutko contradicted the letter of the text. In fact, Szymutko, too, closed himself within the "vicious circle of textualism," as he made a shift from text (pointing with its form toward the text of history) to text (explaining the obscure parts of the text of the work).

The means for modifying the "vicious circle of textuality" is supposed to be the inclusion of the historical and historiographical sources from which Parnicki drew inspiration while writing his novels within the novel's semiotic framework[42] and their linkage with the text of the novels through a set of relations similar to those that join the text of the work to the text of history. Confronting the novel with the source (or rather reading both texts parallel to each other) thus does not constitute an optional path of intertextual interpretation in which the hypotext "modifies the semantic and aesthetic reception"[43] of the work:

> The information obtained in the course of studying sources confirms or expands the text of history, reconstructed over the course of arduous multiple readings of Parnicki's novel. (…) The source helps in the laborious and never completely successful effort to reach historical being, in the creation of the text of history and only in its framework does it become an element in the work's aesthetic reception.[44]

We may thus venture the hypothesis that according to Szymutko, the scheme through which Parnicki created his novels (in the reverse direction likewise the scheme of their model reading) had the following design: "historical and historiographic sources => text of history => text of the work." The reader must quite literally assume the role of the historian, first confronting the text of the work with the unspoken but implied set of events conditioning its shape, in order to then define the relation of a whole thus reconstructed to its sources. The concept of the source stabilizes the undecidability, mentioned earlier, of the status of the text of history (which is now only "an addendum to the text of the work"[45]), but a careful reading of the article generates a different kind of doubt: where should this additional interpretation of Parnicki's novel end?

---

[42]The "textual boundaries of Parnicki's historical novel are practically nonexistent– sources, together with the work, create textual constellations around what really happened (…)". Szymutko, "Źródło," 67. This represents an expansion and radicalization of the theses of Tadeusz Bujnicki, whose article on the role of the source in the historical novel Szymutko cites in presenting his own concept. See T. Bujnicki, "Źródło w narracji powieści historycznej" (The Source in the Narrative of the Historical Novel), in *Sienkiewicz i historia. Studia* (Sienkiewicz and History. Studies), Warszawa: PIW, 1981.

[43]H. Markiewicz, "Odmiany intertekstualności" (Forms of Intertextuality), in *Literaturoznawstwo i jego sąsiedztwa* (Literary Studies and Their Neighbors), Warszawa: Państwowe wydaniectwo naukowe 1989, 213.

[44]Szymutko, "Źródło, czyli," 67.

[45]Szymutko, "Źródło, czyli," 65.

In the case of *Koniec "Zgody Narodów"* the main source-addition that expands the boundaries of Parnicki's work and "extends novelistic play beyond the novel"[46] is William Tarn's 600-page monograph *The Greeks in Bactria and India*. This means that the task of multiple readings of a (difficult) historical novel also includes reading a scholarly work of nearly equal length. It would be a mistake to treat that work on the Greco-Byzantine Kingdom as an addition to *Koniec "Zgody Narodów"* written by someone other than Parnicki, a very large introduction (in Genette's terminology, that would be a special kind of allographic preface[47]). As Szymutko shows, the relations connecting the two texts are very subtle and differentiated, and a general understanding of Tarn's monograph is unfortunately not adequate – the direct dependencies between *Koniec* and *The Greeks in Bactria* are visible at the level of individual sentences, phrases, or words, which once more complicate (but do not render impossible) a synthesization of larger semantic figures.[48]

It was hard for us to imagine how an analysis of *Koniec "Zgody Narodów"* could end when we were focused on the additional/source text of history; it is even harder when we see the constellation of novel and source which together create the text. To take the level of complication of our analysis to a truly absurd level, Szymutko suggests adding a consecutive element:

> Listening to the voice of the source, one can (…) create a substitute epilogue for the work.[49]

> Parnicki signals that the fall of the nation of the Eutydemides is the subject for a possible other novel (…) the new work would have to undertake an equally or more complicated problem.[50]

The novel whose semiotic framework has been expanded by historical and historiographical sources can, in the light of this conception, pull into its orbit other Parnicki novels related to it via characters or the period depicted as well.[51] Where *Koniec* is concerned, the relevant one is the *Koła na piasku* (Circles in the Sand) from 1966: a considerably shorter novel, but no less formally complicated. The minuteness of the connections between the two texts, going as far as individual quotations and shifts of meaning between concepts, means that for a reader who wishes to understand this novel, it is not enough to recall the plot of *Koniec*, inevitably allowing the memory of particular elements in the work to be lost. "Extending novelistic play" through successive additions in the form of other Parnicki novels demands meticulous simultaneous reading, taking into account the need to reconstruct texts of history, confronting

---

[46]Szymutko, "Źródło, *czyli*," 68.

[47]Genette, *Paratexts*, 263–275.

[48]"Often a sentence from a novel corresponds to a sentence in a historiographical work" (Szymutko, "Źródło, *czyli*," 76); "After reading a historiographical work it turns out that there are no 'non-signifying' names in a novel, that each of them has some pedigree – some curious past or future" (Szymutko, "Źródło, *czyli*," 79).

[49]Szymutko, "Źródło, *czyli*," 83.

[50]Szymutko, "Źródło, *czyli*," 84.

[51]According to other Parnicki scholars, his work is governed by the principle of "ramified cohesion": the aggregate of references necessary to interpret successive works is found "within the entire authorial oeuvre of Parnicki"– let us add in the context of the concept of the "source"– all of Parnicki's historical knowledge. See S. Cieślikowski and T. Cieślikowska, "Teodora Parnickiego pomysł powieści nieskończonej. O niektórych listach i o prozie z lat sześćdziesiątych" (Teodor Parnicki's Idea of the Infinite Novel. On Certain Letters and on the Prose of the '60s), in Świat *Parnickiego. Materiały z konferencji* (Parnicki's World. Materials from the Conference), ed. J. Łukasiewicz, Wrocław: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Polonistyki Wrocławskiej, 1999, 21.

each of them with their specifically designated historical and historiographical texts, which in turn amounts to a continuous deferral of closing our interpretation.[52]

<div align="center">***</div>

The theory of Stefan Szymutko presented above gave rise to several doctoral theses in Silesian Polish Studies circles devoted to particular novels by Parnicki. Their authors were, it stands to reason, Szymutko's pupils: Ryszard Koziołek wrote about *Twarz księżyca* (The Face of the Moon),[53] Ireneusz Gielata on *Rozdwojony w sobie* (Divided Within),[54] Filip Mazurkiewicz on the first volume of *Nowa baśń* (The New Fairytale),[55] and Paweł Tomczok on *Muza dalekich podróży* (The Muse of Distant Travel). In all of those works, the relationship of the text of the work, the text of history, and the source, while constituting the point of departure, is treated with a proper lack of deference toward its creator – those doctoral theses being primarily original enterprises.

Why none of Szymutko's students was willing to fully embrace the method described in the article will become clear if, at the end of this article, we trace the fate of his footnotes to Parnicki's *Słowo i ciało*, to the preparation of which he devoted at least thirteen years of his scholarly career.[56] At a discussion during the conference on "Parnicki's World" in 1997, Szymutko announced:

> I am preparing what is called a critical edition of *Słowo i ciało*, an epistolary novel: in draft form, the last of Markia's letters has almost 2500 footnotes. Therefore please do not be alarmed that the book will bear the same inscription for all who are interested: "the work of a madman, with commentary by a lunatic."[57]

The number of footnotes Szymutko cites is overwhelming, but the work appeared to be nearing completion (I refer to the "draft" of the last letter from Markia). In a footnote to the paper Szymutko delivered at that conference, he further claimed: "The text

---

[52]Szymutko himself was conscious of the enormous investment of effort that such an approach to reading Parnicki demanded– toward the end of the article, he mentions the necessity to integrate the work of the literary scholar with that of the historian (Szymutko, "Źródło, czyli," 92). See also such declarations by the scholar as the following: "What we need above all are proficient analyses of individual works [by Parnicki], showing what is going on (…)." "Perspektywy parnickologii. Dyskusja" (Perspectives on Parnicki Studies. Discussion), in Świat Parnickiego, 110.

[53]R. Koziołek, *Zdobyć historię. Problem przedstawienia w "Twarzy księżyca" Teodora Parnickiego* (To Conquer History. The Problem of Representation in *The Face of the Moon* by Teodor Parnicki), Katowice: Gnome, 1999.

[54]I. Gielata, *Nad studnią Ateny. O "Rozdwojonym w sobie" Teodora Parnickiego* (Over the Athenian Well. On Teodor Parnicki's *Divided Within*), Bielsko-Biała: ATH, 2006.

[55]F. Mazurkiewicz, *Podróż na Atlantydę. O I tomie "Nowej baśni" Teodora Parnickiego* (Journey to Atlantis. On Volume I of Teodor Parnicki's *New Fairytale*), Katowice: Wydawn. Uniw. Śląskiego, 2012.

[56]During the period 1995–2008 Szymutko published a total of four articles in which he gave an account of his work on the commentary to the novel: *Czytanie Parnickiego (na przykładzie "Słowa i ciała")*(Reading Parnicki [a Case Study on *Word and Body*]), *FA-art* 1995, no. 2; "Poza pociechą logosu (w stronę interpretacji "Słowa i ciała" Teodora Parnickiego)" (Beyond the Consolation of Logos [Toward an Interpretation of Teodor Parnicki's *Word and Body*]), in Świat *Parnickiego. Materiały z konferencji*, ed. J. Łukasiewicz, Wrocław: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Polonistyki Wrocławskiej, 1999, 49–57; "Ten nudzący się Chozroes, ta nudna Markia… Nuda w "Słowie i ciele" Teodora Parnickiego"" (That Bored Chozroes, That Boring Markia… Boredom in Teodor Parnicki's *Word and Body*), in *Nuda w kulturze* (Boredom in Culture), ed. P. Czapliński, P. Śliwiński, Poznań: Rebis, 1999, 199–215 (the three texts listed above were reprinted in: *Przeciw marzeniu. Jedenaście przykładów, ośmioro pisarzy* [Against Dreaming. Eleven Examples, Eight Authors], Katowice: Wydawn. Uniw. Śląskiego, 2008); "Na czym utknąłem? Pokaz bezradnej lektury 'Słowa i ciała' Teodora Parnickiego," in *Tajemnice "Słowa i ciała"*, 11–24 (the first and last of these texts were reprinted in: *Po co literatura jeszcze jest?*, ed. G. Olszański, M. Jochemczyk, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2013).

[57]Szymutko's contribution to "Perspektywy parnickologii," in Świat Parnickiego, 117.

I am presenting is **part of a larger, emerging whole**: it will be an explication of Part Two of *Słowo i ciało*."[58] The commentary presented by Szymutko is apparently unreadable for anyone who does not know the novel, like *Zrozumieć Parnickiego*, but the interpretation therein does aim in a definite direction: the scholar wishes to show that the author of the letters to Chozroes in Part Two of *Słowo i ciało* is not Markia, but Akwilia.

Over a decade later, work on the footnotes was still continuing, and their end seemed only to keep receding further. Finally, in 2008 at the conference on "Secrets of *Słowo i ciało*" Szymutko admitted the failure of his scholarly project, defined outright in the title of his presentation: "Na czym utknąłem? Pokaz bezradnej lektury 'Słowa i ciała'" (Where Did I get Stuck? Demonstration of Perplexed Reading of *Word and Body*).[59] The footnotes to *Słowo i ciało* presented by Szymutko in 2008 are significantly different from those he showed in 1997: they are intricately layered, complex hyperlink-commentaries on individual words, referring the reader to their separate elements and to previous or forthcoming passages in the novel. Instead of the "pure pleasure of studying solutions"[60] (i.e., what Szymutko called "aesthetic reading"), the rhizomatic footnotes effectively render reading even a short sentence of the novel more difficult. The article itself – a series of footnotes to two paragraphs from the novel – performatively bears witness to Szymutko's failure, brought on by the imperative to expand the semiotic framework of the novel and the continuous development of the text of history: it is just as unreadable as *Słowo i ciało*; it explains nothing.[61]

Perhaps the failure of an ambitious undertaking in literary scholarship was seen by Szymutko as a victory of extralingual existence over the "vicious circle of textualism" and a proof of the exceptional nature of Parnicki's writing, his stubborn insistence on "writing about reality, when it is no longer possible."[62] It certainly testifies to the uncommon originality of the work of Szymutko himself, for whom concepts of poetics were interwoven with the most important problems of philosophy and historiography of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

[58]Szymutko, "Poza pociechą logosu," in Świat Parnickiego, 49. In Szymutko's last book published in his lifetime, *Przeciw marzeniu. Jedenaście przykładów, ośmioro pisarzy*, this article was reprinted with a significant change. The methodological remark in the footnote moved into the main text in the following form: "The text I am presenting is **part of a larger whole which somehow is unable to emerge** (...)." Szymutko, "Poza pociechą logosu," in *Przeciw marzeniu*, 84.

[59]Szymutko, "Na czym utknąłem?", 11.

[60]Szymutko, "Na czym utknąłem?", 11.

[61]The English-language abstract accompanying the footnote-article, on the other hand, contains the following reflection, departing so far from the letter of the text that its author would appear to be someone other than Szymutko: "The footnotes were supposed to refer mainly to the intricate plot of the novel, but soon it turned out that almost every word requires a detailed commentary (...). The number of footnotes scared the commentator himself – what was planned as facilitation, became a sheer evidence of the difficulty of reading the text, an arduous reconstruction of chains of events and their possible senses, meaning, or, quite often just a disclosure of the interpreter's perplexity." Szymutko, "Na czym utknąłem?", 23.

[62]Szymutko, "Na czym utknąłem?", 11.

Keywords | Abstract | Note on the Author   ● ● ●

KEYWORDS

Teodor Parnicki

STEFAN SZYMUTKO

historical novel

ABSTRACT:

The main purpose of the article is to reconstruct the concept of the "source" that Stefan Szymutko presented in his article "Źródło, czyli tekstu historii ciąg dalszy: na przykładzie 'Końca «Zgody Narodów»' Teodora Parnickiego" and to make a thorough study of what consequences its use implied for Szymutko's scholarly practice. Doing that requires a short presentation of the concepts of "the text of the work" and "the text of history," fundamental to Szymutko's theory of the novel, together with their contexts and implications in philosophy and literary theory. Finally, the author shows that the interpretative complications introduced by the concept of the "source" have effectively made it impossible for Szymutko to finalize one of his most significant scholarly projects – a critical edition of Parnicki's *Słowo i ciało* (Word and Body).

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:

Łukasz Żurek – born in 1991, currently a doctoral candidate at the Department of Poetics, Theory and Methodology of Literary Studies at the University of Warsaw and editor of the scholarly-cultural magazine *Tekstualia*. His articles have been published in *Przegląd Filozoficzno-Literacki* (Philosophico-Literary Survey) and *Tekstualia* and his essays in literary criticism in *Dwutygodnik* (Biweekly), *Kultura Liberalna* (Liberal Culture), *Niewinni Czarodzieje* (Innocent Sorcerers) and *biBLioteka*. In 2015 he won first place in the contest "Krytyk z uczelni" (A Critic from Academia), organized by Biuro Literackie as part of the 20th Port Literacki (Literary Port).

|

Blurb

– the word was invented by the American poet and art critic Gelett Burgess (1866-1951), though the practice to which it refers existed much earlier. Burgess wrote chiefly humoristic and nonsense verse; his works included the popular "Purple Cow" (translated into Polish by Stanisław Barańczak). In 1907, Burgess published a work entitled "Are You a Bromide?" featuring collected "bromidioms" – commonplaces used in conversation by persons lacking in imagination – and presenting the concept of two personality types: the Bromide and the Sulphite. The widely-read book had a picture of a fictional Miss Belinda Blurb on the back cover "in the act of blurbing," with a text underneath it that parodied the exaggerated paeans printed on mass-produced literary fare for advertising purposes. In a short time, the neologism Burgess had created became very popular and to this day it is the functioning term in the jargon for the type of paratexts used in the marketing of books, music, films, etc. Including blurbs among paratexts, Gerard Genette defined them as "[p]ress quotations or other laudatory comments about earlier works by the same author or, indeed, if it is a new edition or if the publisher has been able to obtain such comments before publication." The French equivalent of the blurb is called a "bla-bla" or a "baratin."[1]

Traditionally (though it is by no means obligatory) blurbs appear on the back cover of the book, where they may adjoin a bibliographical or biographical note about the author and his or her photograph, information about other releases from the same publisher or volumes in the series (if the book in question happens to be part of one). If the book has a hard cover with a dust jacket, the blurbs are printed on the back flap of the dust jacket as well. The placing and look of the blurb are of crucial importance to the book's overall graphic design; short blurbs, in an appropriately distinctive font, may appear on the front cover, while longer ones that inform about the books contents are shown on the back cover. A derivative of "blurb" is the noun "blurber," meaning a person who specializes in providing blurbs.

These days blurbs play an enormous role in promotional activities, as a result of which the space they occupy in a book or outside it (for example on the web pages of bookstores) has grown significantly in size. Furthermore, thanks to the opportunities created by the internet, particularly social media and what we now call the blogosphere, the writing of blurbs has ceased to be reserved for experts (such as literary critics, renowned authors, authoritative scholars) and books are increasingly promoted using the published opinions of everyday readers. These blurbs can often be quite extensive and contain information regarding the book's content, with the exception of spoilers, phrases which may give away the ending or an unexpected plot twist. Professional blurbs, on the other hand, are generally short, often one sentence long or taking the form of exclamatory elliptical sentences such as "A wonderful tale!", "The perfect read!", etc., since in such cases what matters is not information value, but the name of the opinion-giver, itself constituting a trademark. As they promote new star authors, the promotional departments of publishing houses make

---

[1] G. Genette, *Paratexts: Threshold of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Ewin, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 25.

an intensive effort to obtain blurbs from personalities whose fame is well-established. For example, on the front cover of a crime novel by Katarzyna Bonda entitled *Pochłaniacz* (Absorber; Warszawa 2014) there looms a blurb signed by another best-selling author in the genre, Zygmunt Miłoszewski: "Remember her name. Katarzyna Bonda is now the queen of Polish crime fiction."

The poetics of the blurb is not complicated and depends on the themes and genre of the book being promoted: one set of laws governs the blurb advertising belles-lettres, another set those for scholarly works, and yet another applies to the blurbs we see, for example, on the cover of a cookbook. Nonetheless, in each case a central role is played by three factors: succinctness, communicativity, and the rhetorics of praise, wherein hyperbole is used with particular frequency.

Genette singles out a category of paratexts that he defines with the term allographic, that is, signed by the author.[2] They include *le prière d'insérer* ("please insert"), whose marketing-based character reveals a similarity to the blurb. In the past, these were a kind of insert: loose sheets of paper with a short original promotional description (for example a partial summary of the work), included with reviewer copies of the book and intended to encourage experts to write reviews of it for publication in a well-known magazine. Since they were not an integral part of the book, but merely an addition to it, Genette finds them to be a form of epitext: "any paratextual element not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely, in a virtually limitless physical and social space";[3] moreover, as he underscores, this initially external element can become incorporated into the book in later editions.

It is mostly beginning authors who are expected to provide descriptions of their works themselves, while for new releases from established authors, the promotional department of the publishing house handles this aspect of the book. On the internet, one finds many instructional guides to writing (self-)promotional descriptions. Although in Anglo-American book culture such descriptions are also usually called blurbs, in the Polish and some other European contexts there is a tendency toward strict separation of these two categories of paratext. The poetics of the description has been described as follows by Agnieszka Łasek of Wydawnictwo Czarne: "A lot of facts, a dash of mystery, a hint of something left unsaid. And atmosphere. If it manages to convey the mood of the book, that means the description is a success. There is no guarantee of growth, a description must primarily be truthful. We want readers to trust us and keep coming back." In descriptions accompanying novels, particularly in the area of genre literature, this dramatic effect sometimes takes a maximally condensed form, as a result of which its effectiveness is intensified; Bonda's *Pochłaniacz*, mentioned above, featured the following sentence in addition to Miłoszewski's blurb: "Only a scent remained at the scene of the crime," and beneath the title of another work by the same author, *Okularnika* (Cobra), we read: "No body, no crime." A blurb can sometimes be a collector's item – some books or even their covers or dust jackets are especially valuable because of the cover,

[2] Genette, *Paratexts*, 111.

[3] Genette, *Paratexts*, 344.

or rather the signature found there. A famous example of this is the copy of the second edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* from 1856, which has the following words written by Ralph Waldo Emerson printed on the spine: "I Greet You at the Beginning of a Great Career." It is a quote from an enthusiastic letter that Emerson sent to Whitman, after he received a copy from Whitman of the book's first edition (1855), published at his own expense (the entire letter was printed in the second book as a kind of appendix). Whitman's decision was criticized by literary circles at the time, particularly since the text of the letter was used without the knowledge or permission of the sender.

The future of the blurb is uncertain. Perhaps with the spread of e-books and microblogs (such as Twitter feeds) it will cease utterly to be materially linked with books and will be transferred entirely to the realm of the internet. On the other hand, for traditional book publishers, the blurb may become an increasingly important element in attracting the attention of potential buyers, with the result that both its verbal and visual shape will be explored more inventively than they are today.

Ewa Kraskowska

Keywords | Abstract | Note on the Author

KEYWORDS

book

BLURB

marketing

ABSTRACT:

This definition of "blurb" presents the origin of the term, a sketch of its history, and some of its contemporary uses.

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:

Ewa Kraskowska – literary scholar, professor at the Institute of Polish Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, scholar of women's writing and problems of literary translation. Kraskowska is head of the Department of Twentieth Century Literature, Literary Theory and the Art of Translation. She recently edited the collective volume *Polskie pisarstwo kobiet w wieku XX: procesy i gatunki, sytuacje i tematy* (Polish Women's Writing in the Twentieth Century: Processes and Genres, Situations and Topics; Poznań 2015).

Book Trailer

– is a concept imported from cinematography into literary life – a short film promoting a book. It is composed of dynamically edited images, with information about the author and the book itself, and often arrayed with advertising slogans.[1] Unlike a film trailer, it is not presented on cinema screens, but only via the internet. The book trailer has dropped its connection with numerous synonyms typical of its filmic model, such as the German *Vorspann*, English *preview of coming attractions* or French *avant-coureur*; what remain are the recognizable terms of book trailer and teaser-trailer.

In the Beginning Was the Film

It is not possible to discuss the book trailer without taking into account its background in film history. Devised in the United States during the early days of silent film as an effective way of reaching the largest possible audience, trailers were initially presented in the form of stills (projected as slides) with images of the actors and selected scenes, displaying the film's title. Originally these trailers were shown after the projection of the main feature, thus separating successive showings from each other. 1912 is considered the moment of the film trailer's birth; specifically, a showing in Rye Beach, NY of an episode of the serial drama *The Adventures of Kathlyn*, which ended with a short fragment from the next film in the series, with the aim of encouraging viewers to continue following the heroine's adventures.[2]

The form of the film trailer was influenced by the dynamic development of the film industry. The emergent form became the area of increasingly conscious use of advertising techniques, greater creativity, and higher levels of stylistic refinement. There was an increasing tendency to underscore the stature of the work being promoted, with evocation of the notable artists participating, awards attained by the film, and quotations from enthusiastic reviews. The first trailers, initially juxtaposing scenes from the film and explanatory titles, quickly became considerably more sophisticated. In the 1930s, a well-constructed trailer contained close-ups of the actors, graphic elements, and dynamic action scenes. With the growth of Hollywood production budgets, trailers ceased to be composed primarily from parts of the finished film (or footage deleted from it but still usable) and began to use material specially shot for their purpose.[3]

---

[1] Definition taken from the article "Zwiastun filmowy" (Filn Trailer), in *Encyklopedia kina* (Encyclopedia of Film), ed. T. Lubelski, Kraków: Biały Kruk, 2003.

[2] See J. Mostowska, "Zwiastun: fragment historii kina, jeden z gatunków filmowych, element kultury filmowej" (Trailer: Fragment of Film History, Film Genre, Element of Film History), *Kwartalnik Filmowy* (Film Quarterly) 2007, no. 57-58, 182.

[3] Alfred Hitchcock provides a perfect example of this approach by a director to promotional materials. He created some advertisements himself and supervised the production of others. Peggy Robertson, his assistant for many years, recalled that Hitchcock was responsible for 99.9% of each film, including much of the promotional material. Quoted in: M. Sadowski, "Trailery, zwiastuny, forszpany – historia i rozwój," http://www.audiowizualni.pl/index.php/promocja-filmu/reklama/7085-trailery-zwiastuny-forszpany-historia-i-rozwoj, accessed 3.06.2016.

The Art of Advertising

The trailer is one of the most important elements in marketing strategy, and its production is guided by a purely utilitarian goal. That goal is, of course, to attract attention and to persuade viewers that the film being advertised is the one they should watch. Jadwiga Mostowska observes that the construction of a trailer is driven by eliciting certain emotions rather than maintaining a cohesive, transparent narrative.[4] Lisa Kernan, author of the book *Coming Attractions. Reading American Movie Trailers*,[5] manages in her analysis of 27 American film trailers to identify three main rhetorical strategies that govern their structure: appealing to the audience's interest in film genres, the story told in the film, and its stars. It is thus not surprising that one of the key strategies is to highlight the image and accomplishments of the actors who appear in the film. In the age of the Internet, the trailer serves yet another function: it gives the audience the opportunity to participate in the reality surrounding the film and develops their attachment to its characters, creating and simultaneously satisfying needs among viewers.[6]

It is important to remember that the trailer is a form that exists on the borderline between film and advertising. A trailer is not, of course, a self-contained phenomenon, but forms as a derivative element during the work on the film itself. That presents no obstacle, however, to the increasing tendency to regard a trailer as a form of short film, even a separate film genre. This view is supported by the trailer's conventional structure, in which emphasis is placed either on the linearity of the narrative, which the director closes by means of lacunae, or on presenting spectacular shots created using special effects. Functionality, rather than originality, is the principle that governs the production of trailers. A rapid and intense audience response in a short time demands a repeatable combination of elements. The presence of the trailer in popular culture is not limited only to its being watched and its function as another form of entertainment. The various ways in which trailers are travestied is proof of that fact: for example, fake trailers, for films that do not exist, referencing narrow genre expectations of films, or "spoofs," fan-produced parodies of popular trailers.[7] Trailers are also becoming the subject of specialized analyses, and serving as material for comparative studies in sociology and cultural studies.[8]

Trailer as Implant. Problems with Literature

According to Piotr Kowalczyk, the book trailer is an example, like the e-book, audiobook, or book excerpt published in blog form, of the Book 2.0; all of these are forms of the book that

---

[4] See J. Mostowska, "Zwiastun, 183-4.

[5] L. Kernan, *Coming Attractions. Reading American Movie Trailers*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004.

[6] Maja Strzelecka discusses instances of how marketing ties viewers to characters in "Tajemnice filmowych zajawek" (Secrets of Film Trailers), http://wyborcza.pl/1,75410,4719896.html, accessed: 3.06.2016.
On the promotion of films using doses of suspense provided by trailers, see R. Kulczyk, "Sztuka ekstraktu" (The Art of the Extract), http://kultura.newsweek.pl/sztuka-ekstraktu,29286,1,1.html, accessed 3.06.2016.

[7] See M. Walkiewicz, "Tajniki filmowej gry wstępnej" (Secrets of Filmic Foreplay), http://film.onet.pl/wiadomosci/tajniki-filmowej-gry-wstepnej/8h6c4, accessed 3.06.2016.

[8] See J. Mostowska, "Zwiastun," 181.

present a more contemporary update from the paper version.[9] The trailer is closely linked with the cultural space of the Internet. It does not occur at all outside the sphere of the worldwide web (for example, attached to a book, the way film trailers appear on VHS tapes or DVDs), but owes its existence to the medium of the Internet, and therefore meets the criterion set by Piotr Marecki for "web literature" which he calls the "liternet."[10]

Nina Metz holds that the book trailer is a counter-intuitive formula.[11] It would seem that in a reality where an increasing number of readers rely on the Internet as their main source of information about literature, reading reviews, buying books, and seeking out interviews with authors on the net, the trailer should fit comfortably into the equation. Metz claims that that has not happened for several reasons. The first is their execution; book trailers are cheaply made, often home-made.[12] What readers receive is usually a fairly literal representation. The form is similar to a film trailer, with actors enacting scenes from the book, animation, or a series of stills shown with a music track and a spoken word text relating the narrative, but it is usually made on video, with unknown actors dressed up as characters, a comic strip or what was extremely typical for earlier trailers – a montage of photographs of the book itself and its author.

The difficulty with reception of a trailer which is neither an interview with the author, nor a recording composed from fragments of filmed material wherein the artist speaks of his work, nor a video-review available on the website, blog or vlog, is based on the mechanical duplication of the method used to promote film art, and thus the lack of consideration for the specificity of literature as a medium. A trailer is inherently assumed to precede the reader's first contact with the book and stands in contradiction to the picture-generating powers of the imagination. The act of reading is a private activity, and any kind of earlier visual presentation of a book carries the characteristics of commonality.[13] Another difficulty is thus the kind of automatization that in the case of a film trailer is justified since it does, after all, duplicate images from the film, featuring fragments of it; but in the literary

[9] P. Kowalczyk, "W stronę książki 2.0" (Toward the Book 2.0), https://pl.scribd.com/doc/16628606/W-stron%C4%99-ksi%C4%85%C5%BCki-2-0-prezentacja-na-Bookcamp-09-1, accessed 3.06.2016;

[10] *Liternet. Literatura i internet* (Liternet. Literature and the Internet), ed. P. Marecki, Kraków: Rabid, 2002, 7. It should be noted that the first attempts to advertise books with trailers came slightly earlier: one example could be the television spot advertising John Farris's book *Wildwood* from 1986. The popularity of the book trailer is, however, closely linked to the possibilities created by the Internet and goes back some fifteen-odd years, making it coeval with net phenomena such as the blogosphere, publishing and book portals; it is now aided by the service BookReels, started in 2014, which allows publishers and authors to release all kinds of multimedia content relating to books.

[11] N. Metz, "Super sad book trailers. The conundrum of online book advertisements – and why they usually fail," *Chicago Tribune* 6.06.2012, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-07-06/features/ct-prj-0708-book-trailers-20120706_1_book-trailers-publishers-videos, accessed 3.06.2016.

[12] A separate phenomenon consists of how-to books on self-publishing, in which creating a book trailer expands to truly become worthy of being considered its own art form: see S.C. English, *The Book Trailer® Revolution*, 2008, http://www.cosproductions.com/pdf/BookTrailerRevolution_DigitalVideoMarketing.pdf, accessed 3.06.2016; J. Deval, *Publicize Your Book (Updated): An Insider's Guide to Getting Your Book the Attention It Deseres*, New York: Penguin Random House, 2008; M. Raymond, *Everyday Book Marketing: Promotion Ideas to Fit Your Regularly Scheduled Life*, Ashland: Ashland Creek Press, 2013.

[13] Nina Metz quotes Peter Mendelsund, a designer of book jackets, who says: "In a way, that's the key to jacketing books: You have to respond to what the key themes of the book are, what the author's project is, but you cannot give too much away. You have to respect the fact that people's imaginations are deeply private."

context, the trailer becomes a new creation, the first reading, a partial adaptation or inter-pretation.[14]

The final obstacle presented by the trailer is the fact that it is called that. Preview, trailer, promo – all such terms immediately connote the film industry rather than publishing and promise a number of well-known strategies and expectations justified with regard to films, but not with regard to books. Such marketing is thus something derivative, imposing an external, alien order on literature. The question remains open as to how the reading experience can be enhanced by visual means without reducing a book to its narrative layer, and how an immanent form of advertising can be created with new media.[15] A modest answer might be the "video blurb" – a transfer of the typical literary form of book recommendation from the jacket to a short promotional film, in which well-known personalities speak with conviction about the book and their own reading experience.

The book trailer is one possible way of promoting literature in the new media environment using digital techniques. Producers of book trailers invariably face the challenge of how to present a volume containing hundreds of pages, full of complex descriptions and characters and interwoven threads into a thirty-second (or less) film. It must be acknowledged that the greatest stumbling-blocks to this conceptualization are its dependent relationship to the film trailer and the competition it faces from other visual forms of presenting literature.

<div align="right">

Cezary Rosiński

</div>

[14]The works that have been undertaken to classify the different types of book trailer are worth examining. The author of one such typology is the blogger who writes the blog *Pierogi Pruskie*. Taking advantage of the specificity of the internet diary format, she joins critical discussion with humoristic onomatology. She differentiates the following types of book trailer: "gee, look what a real trailer I am!"– featuring a quick montage of various illustrations, the presence of a voice-over and information about the book's upcoming release; it is created by a certain idea of books which is closer to film; "this is what you want? This is what you get" – a filmed adaptation of a scene or several scenes from the book being advertised, typically using slow editing and long takes, and sometimes also featuring the book's narrator, who leaves the represented world to come nearer to the viewer; "let me read you the cover" – a trailer that takes the form of a multimedia presentation involving text and computer graphics, mainly based on presenting the book's cover; "I'm advertising a book, but I'd rather advertise a film"– a trailer strongly resembling the filmic model, using a series of filmic devices to visualize the represented world, thus replacing the reader's imagination—this kind directly reveals the transposition of literary reality into the realm of film, disregarding the differences between the two artistic processes; "why should they know what the book is about, better to listen to the adjectives that go with it!"–constructed from a series of shots of one-word blurbs meant to convey the book's emotional level (for example, "hate, aggression, frustration, lust" in the trailer for Zygmunt Miłoszewski's *Gniew* [Rage]) and playing on the public's associations with the genre; "I'll boost, but let's not play games– I'm a book trailer and I'm on a shoestring budget"– this kind of trailer, based on the concept of literature and using its specific qualities, is formally similar to a gossipy conversation, as it attempts to sum up the book's basic problem; "it's really all about the moving pictures, right?"– gives away a large part of the plot and uses film clichés, again making a book trailer closely resemble a film trailer; "a book is still a different medium when it comes down to it" – takes the textual nature of literature into account and like a *literal music video* (a parody of an official music video, in which each shot corresponds to the literal text of each line in the song); "I'm part trailer, part review" – a trailer in the spirit of a *video blurb* (a recording using the positive assessments of the book that usually are placed on the first several pages), focused on the reception rather than the book itself. See http://pierogipruskie.blogspot.com/2015/03/o-zwiastunach-ksiazek-albo-o-problemach.html, accessed 3.06.2016.

[15]Metz suggests that the first order of business should be to come up with a new name for the phenomenon, that would convey its separate, literary nature. In her article, the proposal to use the term "bideo" is mentioned. See Metz, "Super sad."

<div align="right">

</div>

KEYWORDS

book trailer

NEW MEDIA

Abstract:

The article presents a book trafiler as a new form of promotion literature and puts this term into a context of poetics and cinematography.

m o v i e t r a i l e r

marketing

Note on the Author:

Cezary Rosiński – doctoral candidate in the Department of 20th Century Literature, Literary Theory and the Art of Translation at the Institute of Polish and Classical Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. His scholarly interests include recent Polish prose and the question of old age and space in literature. His literary criticism has been published in the magazines Nowe Książki and Odra. His book *Ocalić starość. Literackie obrazy starości w polskiej literaturze najnowszej* (Saving Old Age. Literary Depictions of Old Age in Recent Polish Literature) was recently released. |

„Additions"
and the Category of Unity in the Poetics of Post-Stanisław Classicism

Helena Markowska

When we read classic texts[1] devoted to the theory of poetry, we find the idea of the status of being an addition in relation to a more fundamental part of a literary work ascribed primarily to certain passages from within a work, referred to as episodes or, more often, digressions (*ustępy*). The term "episode" is defined as follows by Józef Franciszek Królikowski in the short glossary at the end of his book *Wzory estetyczne poezji polskiej* (Aesthetic Patterns in Polish Poetry, 1826):

> Episode – [...] is the name in a drama for scenes set in between choruses, for this word at first signified something after singing or between singing parts. Now those scenes that play during intervals in the action are called episodes, that is those not necessarily connected with the main subject, called [also] digressions.[2]

In keeping with etymology and with the word's historical meaning, used in relation to the ancient Greek theatre, Królikowski explicitly links the notion of the episode with drama by defining it as a "scene" and referring to the "action," constituting the subject of dramatic mimesis in the tradition going back to Aristotle's *Poetics*. However, in texts from that period dealing with literature, the word "digression" (*ustęp*) is much more frequently used with reference to the epic. If we take into account that the heroic epic poem would also deal with "ac-

---

[1] I use the term classicism, referring to what has generally been called Post-Stanisław Classicism, in a broad sense, encompassing texts from the period 1795-1830, frequently joining the tradition of classicism to influences from Sentimentalism, Rococo, and Pre-Romantic developments. See P. Żbikowski, *Klasycyzm postanisławowski: doktryna estetycznoliteracka* (Post-Stanisław Classicism: An Aesthetic-Literary Doctrine), Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1984.

[2] J.F. Królikowski, *Wzory estetyczne poezji polskiej w pięknościach pierwszych mistrzów naszych z przyłączeniem teoryi wystawione* (Aesthetic Patterns of Polish Poetry in the Beauties of Our First Masters with an Appendix of Theory Presented), Poznań 1826, 106. All translations of quotations are my own unless otherwise noted. TDW.

tion," and that dramatic tension ought to be one of its properties, especially in parts where the characters speak in direct discourse, Królikowski's definition of an episode as a "scene" can be applied to the epic as well.[3] It may be that the lack of connotations connecting it with the drama weighed decisively in favour of the greater eagerness to use the term "digression," whose semantic field includes the sense of a momentary departure from the matter at hand or a suspension of action[4] (its larger sense in the Polish language at that time was "deviation to the side, sideways," and thus, for example, a break in a legal trial).

Królikowski also writes about the heroic epic poem: "Despite the unity of action, there may here be digressions, which lend variety to the long, monotonous telling of tales."[5] Similarly, in lecturing on the general features of the epic, Euzebiusz Słowacki declared: "a poet can make digressions, or introduce episodes, but those, arising from the more prominent thing, should not take attention away from it."[6] Observations concerning particular such scenes frequently occur in so-called dissections, evaluative analyses of the structure of works conducted in, for example, academic lectures. Ludwik Osiński speaks of the episodes in the *Iliad*: "All ornaments and digressions are here directly linked to the main matter,"[7] and writes in more detail about the episodes in Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*:

> But whoever is aware of the digression of Olindo and Sofronia [...] will no doubt feel how only a genius [...] could express in one conception the wildness of superstition and hell and the pathos of the sight of a pair of [...] lovers.

Many similar comments were made on Polish literature by Kazimierz Brodziński. For example, he states, with regard to Samuel Twardowski's *Władysław IV*: "Book Three of this work can be called a total digression,"[8] and of Krasicki's *Wojna chocimska* (The Chocim War) he writes:

> Given the dryness of his story, Krasicki felt the need for digressions. The digression of the farewell between Judge Chodkiewicz and his new bride gave him a way of presenting a Polish woman [...] overcome with deference for a leader in Christian and national affairs. The judge's dream [...] is at least somewhat more relevant as it honours the ancient heroes of the nation and its future fate. Finally, the digression during the mission to the approaching Władysław in the hermit's house is reminiscent of old romances and is neither absorbing nor has any connection with the poem as a whole whatsoever.[9]

---

[3] On the relationship between the epic and the drama, see M. Piechota, *Żywioł epopeiczny w twórczości Juliusza Słowackiego* (The Epic Element in Juliusz Słowacki's Work), Katowice: Śląsk, 1993.

[4] S.B. Linde, *Słownik języka polskiego* (Dictionary of Polish Language), vol. 6., Warszawa: PIW, 1951, 182.

[5] J.F. Królikowski, *Rys poetyki wedle przepisów teoryi w szczegółach z najznakomitszych autorów czerpanej* (Outline of Poetics According to the Rules of Theory in Examples Taken from the Best Authors), Poznań 1828, 75-76.

[6] E. Słowacki, "O poezji," in *Dzieła z pozostałych rękopismów ogłoszone* (Works from Other Manuscripts), Wilno 1826, 98–99.

[7] L. Osiński, "Wykład literatury porównawczej" (Lecture in Comparative Literature), in *Dzieła* (Works), vol. 2., Warszawa 1861, 26. The lectures were given at the University of Warsaw beginning in 1818.

[8] K. Brodziński, "Literatura polska. Odczyty uniwersyteckie" (Polish Literature. University Readings), in *Pisma* (Writings), vol. 4., Poznań 1872, 194. Brodziński's lectures began in 1822.

[9] Brodziński, "Literatura polska," 333.

The professor-poet is more flattering in his words about the *Jagiellonida* by Dyzma Bończa-Tomaszewski: "The digressions are compelling because they are taken from current events and from the author's own land. I find the digression in the second canto to be excellent."[10] On the other hand, that work was criticized – according to classical assumptions about the principles of construction for the epic – by a young Adam Mickiewicz:

> as much as they [the digressions] lend spice and charm to the main action when mixed in with it, yet yet they themselves cannot comprise an epic, since such an epic, devoid of all interest, would be, as Voltaire says, like frames in which digressions in the form of pictures were placed according to one's fancy and from which they may be taken out according to one's fancy. Indeed, an example of doing just that is on display in the *Jagiellonida*.[11]

It is not difficult to observe that the shared feature of the remarks cited is their normative character. The theorists I have quoted on the issue of digressions are interested in finding the answer to the question of when and how episodes can usefully be introduced in a work.

In order to understand the answers they provide, we must give some attention to the aesthetic category according to which the question of "adding on" passages "not necessarily relating to the main subject" was considered: the category of unity. That leads us back to the drama, because in the history of literature what has stuck in our memory most are the three unities that figured so prominently in the polemics between Romantics and Classicists.[12] Ranking the rule of the three unities as a "law" (Maurycy Mochnacki wrote that they are "crutches for the mental debility of bumblers"[13]) makes it easy to treat them as a purely technical category. Thus, for example, Stanisław Pietraszko, in his reconstruction of the literary doctrine of Polish classicism, claims that as a discretionary rather than a creative rule [jako reguła dyspozycji, a nie inwencji,] it was in fact secondary.[14] Pietraszko nonetheless underscores the fact that not all of the three unities were of equal importance – more important than the other two, undoubtedly, was the unity of action.[15] It was the only one drawn straight from Aristotle's *Poetics*, whereas the other two had been extrapolated by modern theorists from the practices of the Greek theatre, a fact which also provided a strong counter-argument to their opponents, such as Franciszek Wężyk:

---

[10]Brodziński, "Literatura polska," 410.

[11]A. Mickiewicz, "Uwagi nad Jagiellonidą D. Bończy Tomaszewskiego" (Remarks on the *Jagiellonida* by Dyzma Bończa Tomaszewski), in *Dzieła* (Works), vol. 5., *Proza artystyczna i pisma krytyczne* (Artistic Prose and Critical Writings), Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1996, 82.

[12]To give an example, in the *Słownik terminów literackich* (Dictionary of Literary Terms) the entries for "unity of time," "unity of place," and "unity of action" (there is no separate entity for "unity" tout court) refer the reader to the joint entry for the "three unities" (*trzy jedności*). *Słownik terminów literackich*, ed. J. Sławiński, Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1988, 207.

[13]M. Mochnacki, "Niektóre uwagi nad poezją romantyczną z powodu rozprawy Jana Śniadeckiego" (Some Notes on Romantic Poetry in Response to Jan Śniadecki's Paper), in *Rozprawy literackie* (Literary Papers), ed. M. Strzyżewski, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolińskikh, 2000, 87.

[14]S. Pietraszko, *Doktryna literacka polskiego klasycyzmu* (The Literary Doctrine of Polish Classicism), Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1966, 317.

[15]Pietraszko, *Doktryna literacka*, 319: "The rule of unity of action, the most important, because formulated already in antiquity and furthermore binding in poetry of all genres […]."

> French critics, who insist so forcefully on keeping the three unities, claim that they spring, together with other rules for art, from the Greeks [...]. We shall not dwell on the matter, since according to Schlegel Aristotle says nothing in his Poetics about the unity of time, and wrote nothing about the unity of place, and according to the French writers, that sage and critic dispensed clear and irrevocable rules in this regard [...] if we allow that the Greeks kept these or similar rules, we should first like to show the difference between the Greek drama and our own.[16]

As Dobrochna Ratajczak observes, there was growing tension in the eighteenth century between theatrical practices that availed themselves of new technological possibilities, for example changes of scenery, and literature, which persisted in maintaining the unity of time and place.[17] The discussions that raged at that time led to the position taken by many Polish theorists of the post-Stanisław era who held that while in truth, each act of a play should take place in one location and cover the same period of time as its performance, yet on the basis of an agreement between author and audience, a certain amount of time could be understood to pass during intermissions, allowing for the characters' movement to a different place. On this subject, Wężyk writes:

> for unity of time, a dramatic work is best if it last not longer than the time required for the performance; this matches the nature of things in the theater of today, too, that takes the same number of days [in the action] as it has acts; [...] I think that when places at least do not change in the individual acts, one of them can take place in a palace, another in a garden, another in a church.[18]

Even Osiński, who passes for an intransigent classicist, postulates thus:

> let us make an effort to condemn less severely works whose author presents in a space not too immense all of those places where his actors must of necessity act and the audience must of necessity be present.[19]

This position is a result, it seems, not only of changes in the European theatre and the emergence of new aesthetic models (above all the work of Shakespeare, of whom Wężyk was an admirer, but whom even Osiński praised, albeit selectively). Two of the unities – those of time and place – can indeed be considered guidelines relating to the artist's "discretion." Not arbitrary, however, but issuing from the more general principles of verisimilitude and "the

[16]F. Wężyk, "O poezji dramatycznej" (On Dramatic Poetry), in *Archiwum do Dziejów Literatury i Oświaty w Polsce* (Archive on the History of Literature and Education in Poland), vol. 1., Kraków 1878, 284.

[17]D. Ratajczak, *Polska tragedia neoklasycystyczna*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988, LXXVI.

[18]Wężyk, "O poezji dramatycznej," 286. Euzebiusz Słowacki takes an analogous position: "this rule of unity of place has been somewhat relaxed by the best dramatic poets. Shifting the scene from city to city and from country to country is not allowed, [...] but if circumstances call for it and verisimilitude is not hampered, a change of scene from one act to another is not forbidden, as long as the place is close enough that it would be possible to move there during the time that could have passed between acts according to the poet's postulates. [...] Between the first and second act there may pass several or a dozen hours, a morning, an evening or an entire night" (E. Słowacki, "O poezji,"122–123) as does Józef Korzeniowski: "A change of scene between acts does not disrupt even the sensory illusion [...]. The extension of time may occur by means of a change in decor, particularly during intermissions, since the lack of activity during these breaks leaves time unregistered" (J. Korzeniowski, *Kurs poezji*, Warszawa: N. Glücksberg, 1829, 213–214).

[19]L. Osiński, *Dzieła*, vol. 3., 43.

most aesthetically flawless presentation."[20] It was the precedence given to these two factors that allowed those two unities to be treated somewhat flexibly during the period in question.

Placing the matter of the unities in this perspective enables us, in my view, to test the truth of one other belief frequently voiced in discussions of the classicist approach to tragedy. According to this notion, the formulation of historical material into a tripartite unity (all three rules are, in this case, treated as necessarily joined) had as its purpose the universalization of the subject of art. The application of eternal rules was to bear the work into eternity. The unity of time and place in particular were supposed to have the effect of transporting events in the drama into a time beyond history. That is how the problem is treated by Ryszard Przybylski, for whom the rule of unity is "metaphysical" in nature, though the consciousness of that nature present among seventeenth-century French classicists was obliterated in the eighteenth century.[21] Ratajczak comes to diametrically opposite conclusions, writing that in the seventeenth century classicist drama "took care to elicit the illusion that its created world was real. That was precisely the purpose of the notorious 'cage' of the three unities,"[22] further observing, notwithstanding, that as a result of changes in theatrical art "threefold unity became an expression of the author's effort to endow the work with enduring features by submitting it to the eternal laws of literature, freeing it from the influence of the merely temporary laws of the theatre."[23] In the end, both scholars tend toward seeing in classicist Form either a manner of defence against the chaos of history (Ratajczak[24]) or the disintegration of the individual through the spirit of mathematics (Przybylski[25]). Without settling the matter with regard to French tragedy, or pronouncing an opinion on the final result that was achieved in works of classicism through the adoption of these rules, it should be underscored that no such understanding of the rule of the three unities was expressed in Polish theoretical texts during the period when Polish classicist tragedy was taking shape (the beginning of the nineteenth century). Besides the statements quoted above, indicating the importance of adopting such rules for the creation of theatrical illusion, we may here cite Królikowski's textbook:

> The spectators should be witnesses to the whole action, and so it should therefore take place in one, consistent place, in order for the illusion not to be suddenly interrupted. [...] The action should take place, in its initiation, complication and resolution, over the course of a few hours before the eyes of the viewers, such that artificial shortening of time would not weaken the impression, which is supposed to work on the mind of the viewers.[26]

---

[20]The principles of verisimilitude and "the most aesthetically flawless presentation" are mentioned by Piotr Żbikowski among those that create a common foundation for Post-Stanisław Classicism's literary theory of rules that are "practical and simultaneously normative and obligatory instructions, [...] defining above all the structure of the represented world and the relations connecting it with what we call real reality" (P. Żbikowski, *Klasycyzm postanisławowski: doktryna estetycznoliteracka*, 81).

[21]R. Przybylski, *Klasycyzm, czyli prawdziwy koniec królestwa polskiego* (Classicism, or the True End of the Kingdom of Poland), Gdańsk: Marabut, 1996, 259.

[22]Ratajczak, *Polska tragedia neoklasycystyczna*, LXXV.

[23]Ratajczak, *Polska tragedia neoklasycystyczna*, LXXVI.

[24]Ratajczak, *Polska tragedia neoklasycystyczna*, XLII.

[25]Przybylski, *Klasycyzm*, 62.

[26]Królikowski, *Rys...*, 94–95.

Or the rhyming manifesto *Sztuka rymotwórcza* (The Art of Rhyming) by Ludwik Kropiński:

> One place make the scene, or very few.
> And mind that the audience be not aware
> That all that's being said and done's a snare.
> Grip fast to your art their hearts and minds,
> Sure that delusion is the tie that binds.[27]

Everything appears to indicate that the unity of a dramatic work, and thus the absence of sudden temporal transitions or episodes occurring in other places, was intended primarily to enable the spectator to feel he or she was participating in a specific series of events, physically occurring in a particular place and time, not at all to propel him into the sphere of the eternal.

How, then, can we understand the category of unity in such a way as to avoid treating it as a purely technical demand, made anachronistic by developments in the art of set design and finally enfeebled and annulled, while also refraining from ascribing metaphysical properties to it? What seems crucial here is the difference referred to above between unity of action and the unities of time and place joined to it, in texts from that time as well, most often to simplify instruction and because of the slickly memorable and recognizable sound of the "three unities." Let us here cite Euzebiusz Słowacki:

> Unity should always be a significant attribute of any kind of poetic matter, but because in dramas a thing is not only described and told but is even presented before the eyes of the viewers, the poet, in order to create an effective illusion for the viewers, is not only obligated to maintain the most narrow unity of action, but even to maintain unity of place and time: and that is what we have taken to calling the threefold unity in dramatic poetry.[28]

In the case of a work performed in the theatre, rules that served to create a convincing illusion for the spectator were of particular importance in that "the most aesthetically flawless presentation" was being created before the spectators' eyes, not only in their imagination. From the quoted passage, we see that the unity of action – directly linked with the rules concerning the practice of interspersing episodes within a work – is a high-ranking principle (ranking with the principles mentioned above of verisimilitude or aesthetically flawless presentation) and a concept whose significance reaches well beyond the area of the drama.

The theorists of that era repeat in unison that unity is a basic feature of the well-constructed epic. "The most important attribute of the subject that is the material of an epic should be unity," declares Euzebiusz Słowacki.[29] Ludwik Osiński chimes in: "Without a certain thematic unity there is, strictly speaking, no [epic] poem."[30] Królikowski writes:

---

[27]L. Kropiński, *Rozmaite pisma* (Miscellaneous Writings), Lwów 1844, 129.
[28]Słowacki, *Dzieła*, 119.
[29]Słowacki, *Dzieła*, 98.
[30]Osiński, *Dzieła*, vol. 2., 10.

> [...] the theme of the epic poem should itself be one whole arising from many parts joined together. The poet should always remember to form a cohesive design not only in the occurrences, but also in the personalities, passions, and activities of his characters.[31]

Unity should also be a typical feature of the ode (Korzeniowski writes on this theme: "Thus each poem, including odes, should have the attribute of unity, its parts should constitute one whole and be connected with each other"[32]), didactic poetry ("such a poem should have a main subject and a coherent theme as a whole, that is, all the parts of its truths and lessons should strive toward one purpose"[33] – Królikowski states), and even smaller works such as fairy tales (from the same author, we read: "Unity of theme in a fairy tale results when the different circumstances and parts in it agree toward one purpose"[34]). Unity should be observed not only in writing poetry, but also, as Stanisław Kostka Potocki says, "unity should be the historian's first concern."[35]

The definition of this unanimously postulated unity remains very general. It involves subordinating all activity to one purpose, making sure that all elements in a work are indispensable, and that the work is in some way indivisible. Euzebiusz Słowacki writes:

> All who have written about beauty find unity to be its principle and its characteristic feature. Unity makes diverse and plentiful things become parts of one thing, which depends on such a combination of the parts that the combination does not let us take one thing from among them as a completely separate thing.[36]

It is much easier to define unity with reference to particular genres. The three highest among them in particular demand consideration for unity. In the epic it is based on presenting one action, from which all other events arise. The theme of a heroic epic poem should be uniform enough that it can be summed up in a few lines of invocation. In that sense, the device of beginning the work by defining its theme is not only motivated by tradition, but also represents a confirmation of the poet's constructive skill. Ludwik Osiński writes about the opening of the *Iliad*:

> These words contain the whole substance, the whole structure of the poem. The wrath of Achilles lays the foundation of the *Iliad*, its point is not the capture of Troy, or even avenging Agamemnon's brother. But all of those factors, the whole battle and controversy of the warring nations, their destiny, their history, their personalities, the many great images of warriors, I will go further and say humanity and the gods, truth and falsehood, error and knowledge, family ties, the hidden parts of human hearts laid bare, in a small foundation, in one particular action are shown.[37]

---

[31]Królikowski, *Rys...*, 75.

[32]Korzeniowski, *Kurs poezji*, 81.

[33]Królikowski, *Rys...*, 34–35.

[34]Królikowski, *Rys ...*, 52.

[35]S. Potocki, *O wymowie i stylu* (On Speech and Style), vol. 4., Warszawa 1815, 72–73.

[36]E. Słownacki, "Teoria smaku w dziełach sztuk pięknych" (Theory of Taste in Works in the Fine Arts), in *Dzieła z pozostałych rękopismów ogłoszone*, vol. 1., Wilno 1827, 55.

[37]Osiński, *Dzieła*, vol. 2., 13.

In tragedy, the essence of unity inheres in the capacity of each scene to thrust the action forward, such that, in Piotr Żbikowski's words, its essence is the principle of the "absolute necessity of the individual […] elements and their ties of cause and effect."[38] Korzeniowski expounds this concept in the following way:

> […] persons figuring in the drama may have diverse intentions and purposes, but they should be joined with the main intention by either identity or opposition; they should serve to accelerate or delay the denouement and converge at one point in such a way that they might all be ruptured by one catastrophe.[39]

Osiński, in his criticism of Schiller's *Maid of Orléans*, observes: "It is not enough to create a beautiful scene; one must also make an effort for the scene to be required."[40] And finally, in the ode, unity relates to the feeling that represents the entire poem's emotional dominant ("Unity of theme, that is unity of the feeling imparting inspiration to the poet, is an important condition of the ode,"[41] – writes Korzeniowski).

In terms of generic differentiation of ways to achieve unity in texts, we can then ask what constitutes the unity of the category of unity itself. As it happens, in all the types of works mentioned, unity is desired out of considerations of the receiver, who aims to perceive a work as a single object. At the same time, these theorists write primarily about the effects on the receiver of failure to maintain unity. The striking concord among their theses and their lack of self-evidence for the contemporary reader invite a close juxtaposition of a series of citations, to be collectively commented upon below:

> Słowacki: So that when we do not find unity in a thing we are contemplating, we experience distaste and pain rather than a pleasant feeling and such a thing cannot please us.[42]

> Osiński: Two actions, says one of the scholars, conducted together and in the same poem would of necessity either be equally absorbing or surpass one the other. In the first case, the spectator's heart would be stuck in unpleasant incertitude about which purpose to bind his feelings to. In the second, the less absorbing matter would cede precedence to the more important one, and that would have to become nasty for the same, that it interrupts and dampens the more important concern.[43]

> Wężyk: A double action must disrupt the spectator's attention, and bring his uncertainty and hesitation as their consequences. But the propulsion of all persons toward one purpose […] outdoes such attrition of feelings and struggle of passions, when the undivided heart follows the object of its admiration, accompanies it in all actions, suffers or acts with it, and rejoices or saddens.[44]

[38]Żbikowski, *Klasycyzm postanisławowski: doktryna estetyczna*, 265.

[39]Korzeniowski, *Kurz poezji*, 207.

[40]Osiński, *Dzieła*, vol. 3., 14.

[41]Korzeniowski, *Kurs poezji*, 79.

[42]Słowacki, "Teoria smaku…," 55.

[43]Osiński, *Dzieła*, vol. 2., 14.

[44]Wężyk, "O poezji dramatycznej," 283.

Królikowski: If poetry is to move us, allure us, its action should be singular, which depends either on the theme itself or on the ways used to reach the goal: unity keeps our attention. Excessive complication hinders, excessive singularity bores, situations and personalities that are too mono-chromatic are distasteful, too extreme or strange circumstances are less satisfying; the soul, once roused, does not like to be moved away from its aim.[45]

Korzeniowski: It is unpleasant to deal with small or comic circumstances at the moment when one is yielding to amazement or admiration, when his heart is overfilled with tender or exalting feelings.[46]

Beauty should thus elicit in the beholder a feeling of pleasure, while the lack of unity in a work leads us to experience vexation (suffering, exhaustion). In the opinion of the theorists cited here, that sense of vexation is a result primarily of the need to divide our attention, followed by an inability to emotionally engage with the work, or from the need to change the object of our interest during our reception of the text.

Statements regarding the category of unity are, as we can see, deeply rooted in the theory of perception, or even more generally the theory of cognition. In Słowacki's opinion it is our nature to attempt to grasp everything supplied to us by our senses by means of reason. For that purpose we create an "ideal model" of what we judge a perceived object to be. This model must be characterized by unity; in other words, each singular model corresponds to a single object, since, as the professor from Wilno writes, "unity is a form of human thought."[47] Hence the vexation that accompanies the inability to create for ourselves on the basis of a work of art, one ideal model to fit the work, and thus a concept of it as a single object, results from the unfulfilled desire to know what the work in its essence is. Potocki declares: "Reason can never be attentive clearly and distinctly but when it has only one object."[48] In the declarations cited above, we find the Cartesian foundations of classicism's aesthetic theory, which in relation to the theory of the drama were summarized by Stanisław Pietraszko as follows:

The continuity of mental activity in the process of cognition, so often underscored by Descartes as the condition for achieving certainty in cognition, related to this type of induction as well: the reception by a theatrical spectator of the course of the developing "matter" of a drama. He found therein the application of another postulate, that the intellect, supposed to use imagination to express an idea, reduced the "multiplicity of objects" of that idea that corresponded to representative singularity.[49]

This interpretation of the sources of the category of unity applied to literary works allows us, I believe, to underscore how it is directed toward the receiver and his or her cognitive satisfac-tion, which assures the adoption of certain rules for the construction of texts, and thus not to lose the philosophical meaning of this category – which, however, is not metaphysical, but epistemological.

[45]Królikowski, *Rys...*, 12.
[46]Korzeniowski, *Kurs poezji,* 18.
[47]Słowacki, "Teoria smaku...," 55.
[48] Potocki, *O wymowie i stylu*, 54.
[49]Pietraszko, *Doktryna literacka polskiego klasycyzmu*, 330.

It is now becoming clear that the evaluation of all "digressions" present in a work had to depend in each case on the answer to the question of whether or not they disrupted the unity of the work. Looking at the indications that were to help authors introduce episodes into their texts, we find them differentiated in a manner similar to what was observed in stating the forms of unity in various literary genres. The theorists thus are in agreement that in a dramatic work, particularly in a tragedy, there should be no episodes at all.[50] The main thread should reach the receiver "unweakened by peripheral activities and digressions,"[51] and because each scene must push the action forward, passages that "are not connected, even in the fifth act, to the main action are always out of bounds"[52] (like Chekhov's pistol which should not hang on the wall if it is not going to be fired).

An analysis of two different uses of the same metaphor taken from August Schlegel may lead us to interesting conclusions concerning the differences between the status of digressions in the drama and in the epic; Schlegel said that episodes in a work should be like arms of a river – separating from it, but falling into the main current upon their return. Franciszek Wężyk cites the remark disapprovingly and claims, continuing to use Schlegel's metaphor, that an arm, once it flows too far away, has no chance of returning to the river where it began.[53] Euzebiusz Słowacki, on the other hand, approves and develops the metaphor in a different direction (while not referring directly to Schlegel): "It [a river] divides into various arms, it clasps in them islands, brooks, streams and takes new rivers into its bosom, but whether it flows into the Ocean through one outlet or many, it is always one and the same river."[54] In noting the difference of opinion, we should also note that Wężyk is writing about the drama, while Słowacki is using the borrowed metaphor to describe the properties of the epic.

In the epic, he claims – and this notion was widespread – digressions are not only permissible, but even desirable. That is due to the very length of the work, and, what follows from that – a kind of reception diametrically unlike that of the drama. The spectator watching a play does not want anything to interrupt the main intrigue, which he follows with interest, and everything that occurs on the stage, being visually represented, must have a powerful draw on his attention. In the epic, on the other hand, a simple but comprehensively told story could grow tiresome if it were not for the episodes introduced in the work as "breaks and rests"[55] that

[50]Wężyk – a very liberal theorist of the drama for his time – writes: "Digressions (episodes), allowed in other kinds of poetry, do not accord with the nature of dramatic poetry" (F. Wężyk, "O poezji dramatycznej," 283).

[51]Królikowski, *Rys*..., 94.

[52]Królikowski, *Rys*..., 97–98. An interesting example of criticism of a particular drama, with a demonstration as well of which scenes are superfluous in terms of the development of action, is the review of J. U. Niemcewicz's *Samolub* (The Egoist) by Leon Borowski; see L. Borowski, "Rozbiór „Samoluba", komedii w V aktach wierszem J.U. Niemcewicza" (Analysis of *Samolub*, a five-act comedy in verse by J. U. Niemcewicz, in Borowski's *Uwagi nad poezją i wymową i inne pisma krytycznoliterackie* (Notes on Poetry and Speech and Other Literary Critical Writings), Warszawa: PIW, 1972. Many other analyses made from that standpoint are contained in Osiński's book *Wykłady z literatury porównawczej* (Lectures in Comparative Literature), frequently cited in the present article. Most of them are devoted to the drama; they include analyses of *Macbeth*, *Le Cid*, *Horace*, and *Maid of Orléans*.

[53] Wężyk, "O poezi dramatycznej," 283.

[54] Słowacki, "O poezji," 99.

[55]Korzeniowski writes, comparing the epic and tragedy: "Since the action of the epic holds a much greater number of incidents, its progress may be slow, allowing even for certain interruptions and rests, in which the poet is permitted by readers to place episodes or general remarks inspired by the subject, or even something of himself, his thoughts and feelings" (Korzeniowski, *Kurs poezji*, 152).

endow it with "variety."[56] In a text intended to be read, the author is able to obtain the result that even while reading the episodes, the audience will continuously keep in their memory the main thread of the work, as happens, according to Osiński, in the *Iliad*:

> We are amazed by the variety of incidents, speeches, battles, feelings, personalities and customs, charmed by the richness of so many digressions, but we are most captivated and bound by the fact that nothing in the whole length of the poem lets us forget our main object, which is the image of Achilles.[57]

Besides the analysis of perfect models such as the *Iliad*, and general observations, someone seeking the principles for properly introducing digressions into an epic work could also find concrete guidelines. Korzeniowski presents them in his *Kurs poezji*.[58] Firstly, digressions should issue naturally from the plot of the poem, and the less they are connected with it, the shorter they should be. Secondly, their themes should differ from those of the passages preceding and following them, since otherwise they do not provide the rest for the reader that they are supposed to (thus "a martial episode amid a war would be out of place"[59]). Thirdly, they should appear where a certain interval occurs in the flow of the main action, or where events take place which the poet does not wish to present, not in a place where they would suddenly interrupt the flow of the narration. Finally, Korzeniowski emphasizes that an episode must be carefully worked out artistically, because its main purpose is to add ornamentation to the poem. It is also noteworthy that Korzeniowski introduces the term "additional events" (wydarzenia przydatkowe) to refer to the individual incidents that make up the main narrative thread. Thus, for example, the duel between Paris and Menelaos in the *Iliad* is a "additional event," because it belongs to the chain of events of the war, though it is a separate scene; while Hector's farewell with Andromache is an episode, because it could be omitted without hindering the main action of the work.

This relatively simple definition of an episode, formulated with reference to a narrative work, cannot be applied to the ode – descriptions of which often feature the term "digression," however. "Digressions and deviations, or episodes [...] have a decent place in this kind of versification,"[60] writes Słowacki. It must be remembered that the unity of a work of lyric poetry was based on the unity of feeling motivating the speaking subject. In the ode it should be a strong passion that propels thoughts so fast that the poet cannot manage to write all of them down. Such a theory of the ode in essence leads to its being composed from a series of image-digressions, since:

---

[56] This is Królikowski's take on episodes in the epic: "Despite the unity of action, there may here be digressions, by which to the long and monotonous subject of the story can be added variety, but these digressions should be extracted from the main theme itself or circumstances relating to it, and amplify the effectiveness of the main subject" (J.F. Królikowski, *Rys...*, 75–76). Variety was one of the aesthetic categories frequently invoked in discussions of the epic. See Słowacki, *Teoria smaku...*, 59.

[57] Osiński., *Dzieła*, vol. 2., 13.

[58] Korzeniowski, *Kurs poezji*, 154–156.

[59] Korzeniowski, *Kurs poezji*, 155.

[60] Słowacki, "O poezji...," 76.

> Intermediate thoughts, which are frequently linked to one another, but which lack the highest degree of vitality, the poet omits, leaving them to the reader, and only thereby arises the seeming disorder that we ascribe to the ode. That remark indicates the kind of comparisons, digressions and peripheral images allowed in odes, which of them ought to be merely touched on in broad outline and how best to avoid letting thoughts stray from the main subject.[61]

In this way, through consistency of theme and the feeling (it can change intensity, but not general "tone") evoked by the theme, a well-constructed ode also strictly maintains the principle of unity.

With reference to each of the genres discussed here, then, a "digression" or "episode" was understood somewhat differently; it could be an unacceptable element, a welcome one, or even strongly desired. There is no doubt, however, that both terms functioned in the period under discussion in texts about literature and were linked to a whole series of constructive rules that defined how such additional fragments should be introduced into the contents of a work. These rules were not arbitrary; they were drawn exclusively from literary tradition or even from particular "exemplars," but subordinated to the guiding principle of unity. Yet unity itself – in what seems the most important conclusion to be drawn – was not an autotelic property. Although, in the formulation of the classicist theorists of the early 19th century, it naturally existed in immanent form in a work of art, being objectively manifested as a feature of the work's composition, that aim was tied to the text (or performance)'s effect on the receiver. Unity, in the view of the aesthetic theorists of that time, constituted both a condition of imagining, and thus understanding, a work – in the version of the theory focusing more on intellectual reception, and – for those placing more stress on the emotional nature of the encounter with art– a condition of that receiver's emotional involvement. Hence also, though unity was a binding principle for all literary genres, the principles of its effectuation were defined differently depending on the type of text being discussed. That was by no means a consequence of the alleged fetishization of genre divisions and obligatory rules in individual genres, but rather resulted from the awareness of the diverse functioning of particular types of texts, various models for their reception, and varying expectations held by their audiences: different, for example, when seeing a play in the theater compared to when reading an epic. A work of art, whether ethical or aesthetic, whether instructive or pleasurable, could not work without unity, a fundamental condition, according to then-current beliefs about perception, for producing either effect.

[61]Brodziński, "Literatura polska," 287.

KEYWORDS

episode

digression

three unities

ABSTRACT:

The article deals with the theory of "epssodes" in Polish poetics in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. It offers an analysis of texts from the school of Post-Stanisław Classicism, containing guidelines concerning the introduction into a literary work of passages not connected to its main current, called digressions. For the purpose of creating a theory conditioning the functioning of these peculiar "additions," an analysis of one of the basic aesthetic categories of that era, the category of unity, proves necessary. That analysis is connected with a theory of the perception of the work of art, popular at that time, with roots in Cartesian philosophy. Thus reflections on episodes and unity become a point of departure for testing current beliefs about the arbitrariness of classicist "rules."

Post-Stanisław Classicism

E P I C

Note on the Author:

Helena Markowska – is a doctoral student in the Department of Poetics, Literary Theory, and Methodology of Literary Research at the Institute of Polish Literature of the Faculty of Polish Studies at the University of Warsaw; she holds a degree in Polish Studies and Cultural Studies (focusing on Mediterranean Civilization) from the College of Inter-Area Individual Studies In the Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Wrocław. Markowska is interested in the literature of the Romantic era and the later Enlightenment. She is currently working on the literature of the turning point of the Enlightenment and Romanticism and the beginnings of Polish academic literary scholarship at the Universities of Warsaw and Wilno (today's Vilnius). Juliusz Słowacki also occupies a special place in her range of scholarly interests (her article "Bezsilne przekleństwa Juliusza Słowackiego. O bezbożności dramatu Mindowe" [The Impotent Cursing of Juliusz Słowacki. On the Godlessness of *Mindowe*] was published in *Przegląd Humanistyczny* [Humanities Survey] 2012, no. 4) as does Lithuania. Markowska's MA thesis discussed the figure of Mendoga in Polish literature.

Krzysztof Hoffmann

In Praise of Philology
– Paweł Mackiewicz's
Sequel. O poezji Marcina Sendeckiego
(Sequel. On the Poetry of Marcin Sendecki)

In Marcin Sendecki's book *Opisy przyrody* (Descriptions of Nature), published in 2002, there is a minimalistic poem called "Czynności" (Activities). The two-line poem is dedicated to "*Świe*" (do we dare decode this as short for Świetlicki?) and runs as follows: "Jaki świetny świat. / Zdradzamy objawy?" (What a great worFld. / Do we show the signs?)[1] Structural parallels between the lines deftly convey the dialectic in which anyone writing about Sendecki becomes entangled: the tension between grasping at reality (and thus referentiality) and unceasing reflection on the conditions in which we place the world in a poem (and thus an autotelic condition). The first line could be an exclamation – it is a declaration that begins with an interrogative pronoun; the second line could be a statement – only punctuation signals that it is a question. Between the two modes of affirmative statement and doubtful interrogation, we find the "activities" of Sendecki's poem taking place. The question about symptoms is in fact both a question about why the world is "great" and about how those words came to be in the poem at all. This property of the poetic works of Sendecki, author of *Przedmiar robót* (Bill of Quantities)

can doubtless be contained in Piotr Śliwiński's synthetic formula, which defines those works using the term "concentrated conciseness."[2]

The peculiar condensation of that work has also given no small amount of trouble to readers who approach contemporary poetry with suspicion. As Anna Kałuża has correctly observed, "Marcin Sendecki's books of poetry have for some time offered a provided a pretext for comments about the deepening hermeticism of Polish poetry."[3] We do not have space here for a discussion of hermeticism, which, first of all, has been well-documented (accusations by Jacek Podsiadło, Tadeusz Dąbrowski, and Andrzej Franaszek have been repeatedly commented upon), secondly, does not contribute much (the rebuke of hermeticism is based on a reflexive disapproval of the legacies of various avant-garde movements), and thirdly, often leads to superfluous polarization of the small poetic universe. The point is that here, we finally have the first monograph devoted to the

---

[1] M. Sendecki, *Opisy przyrody* (Descriptions of Nature), Legnica: Biuro Literackie Port Legnica, 2002, 26.

[2] P. Śliwiński, *Horror poeticus. Szkice, notatki* (Horror Poeticus. Essays and Notes), Wrocław: Biuro Literackie, 2012, 109.

[3] A. Kałuża, *Wielkie wygrane. Wspólne sprawy poezji, krytyki i estetyki* (Great Wins. Common Concerns of Poetry, Critics, and Aesthetics), Mikołów: Instytut Mikołowski, 2011, 126.

"activities" of Sendecki's poetry, a publication joining in a conversation already under way.

The book at hand is Paweł Mackiewicz's *Sequel. O poezji Marcina Sendeckiego*.[4] If the task of a monograph is to place its protagonist on the map of literature, it should be stated straight out that Mackiewicz does so with expertise, unforced passion, and an erudition which is frequently impressive. To put it slightly differently, as a voice in matters of importance for the reception of this poet, certain answers are not given unambiguously (the question of that alleged hermeticism is not treated exhaustively – perhaps the right choice, when all is said and done). In fact, for someone in search of a guide to Sendecki's oeuvre, certain parts of the book evoke a feeling of shortfall, eliciting a hunger for further development, saying what was left unsaid, or complicating what was not.

* * *

The main quasi-category addressed by Mackiewicz is the splendid metaphor of the title: the sequel. It fits into a series of intersemiotic explicative metaphors which, using the logic of the supplement, the significative surplus, or trans-formation, already function in the discourse of poetics: others have written about *covers* (Andrzej Sosnowski or, quite differently, Darek Foks) resampling, and the remix (let us take Adam Wiedemann as representative).

The sequel is, of course, a term taken from the language of cinema, especially the Hollywood variety. Consider, to name a few examples, the endless adventures of Captain America (grown out from the subsoil of comics), successive episodes of *Die Hard* with Bruce Willis (the Polish title, *Szklana Pułapka* [The Glass Trap], is a classic example of the Polish sense of humor in translating titles), the desperate attempts to revive the one-trick pony that was *The Matrix*, and so on and so forth. Their box-office receipts show convincingly that predictability

and repeatability are signature features of art made to fit the cut of the public's jib. For sceptics of cinema, a film sequel appears to be nothing more than a warmed-over slice of last summer's pizza.

Mackiewicz's title refers, however, not to the dubious axiology of the category of the sequel, but rather the structural mechanics of the sequel based on repetition through variation. Furthermore, it remodels and expands the boundaries of the concept, examining it in four mutually complementary domains. Firstly, "the sequel in its most basic form should be detected un Sendecki's work at the foundations of language. The poem is revealed to be a tool of modernization. It is also a cognitive instrument" (S, 7). Secondly, the sequel is a figure of autorepetition. For the work of Sendecki, that means a critical reworking of "ideas, themes, authors, and poems that at some point influenced his earlier work in a particularly strong way" (S, 7). Thirdly, a sequel signifies a recontextualization of something from the past. In the case of the author of *Błam*, that means the avantgarde and neo-avantgarde traditions of the twentieth century. And in the end, fourthly, a sequel is never an exact repeat of what came before. It is tied to change and the resultant category of the game – in this sense, Sendecki enters into dialogue with works firmly grounded in the tradition of reading.

The four chapters of Mackiewicz's book correspond to the four semantic fields of the sequel. The opening chapter, "Nie ze słów (trzej panowie S.)" (Not from Words [The Three Mr. S.'s]) places Sendecki alongside the poetry of Piotr Sommer and Andrzej Sosnowski. In this triangle, not all sides are of equal length: Sosnowski is shown to be closer, and that is due to his relationship with language, which is treated "as a medium set in controlled motion, but never fully predictable" (S, 43). The second part, embarking on a conversation with poetic sources, attempts to situate Sendecki's work in the context of the accomplishments of the New Wave poets (though these are considered not as a literary group but rather as presenting separate literary practices). After reading their work, the elements that emerge as vital are mistrust and a constructivist approach to poetry. That is probably the most straightforward and powerfully argued case for assigning these poems to the constructivist camp. The

---

[4] P. Mackiewicz, *Sequel. O poezji Marcina Sendeckiego*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo WBPiCAK, 2015. Further citations from the book will refer to Mackiewicz, S, followed by the relevant page number.

third chapter compares Sendecki with American poets (mainly James Schuyler). And the closing segment of these meditations on sequeltude is an analysis of intertextual connections with the late poetry of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz and the works of Polish Romantics. In it, an attempt is made to "show the sequel as a form of seizing possession" (S, 148), and thus – to use the rhetoric of Harold Bloom's revisionist tropes – putting on another's voice to thereby make it one's own. The final sentences also speak of the fact that such a device can function as a defense from the charge of hermeticism.

What is the image of Sendecki, the author of *22*, that emerges from this composition? Mackiewicz at a certain point uses the metaphor of a palimpsest city, worth quoting in entirety for its rare beauty: "Iwaszkiewicz Square at the centre, the riverbank quarter of the New Wave, the winding Marcińska Street (also called the Street of the Three Marcins), the Old Town with Słowacki Street and Mickiewicz Lane, the Frank O'Hara promenade frequently visited by out-of-towners, the Karpiński Villa, the bandshell on Sosnowski Green, the OuLiPo bowling alley, the of campus the James Schuyler Memorial Foreign Language School, Foks Point" (S, 81). This urban design is truly intricate. Some parts of it have been described,[5] but to move freely from one nook to another demands a high level of mastery. Mackiewicz does it with great skill, often with enviable professorial loquaciousness on esoteric topics of contemporary Polish poetry, building rich literary contexts, which in the final reckoning serve one purpose – the patient reading of a poem. Drawing a map may be of value in itself, but in the case of poetry the categories used for cataloguing always have a certain amount of inherent arbitrariness. The final gauge is a question concerning the text, which for the author of *Sequel* means a question in equal measure concerned with the hermetically understood category of sense. Mackiewicz is most interesting, when he makes point-by-point analyses of even the most enigmatic poems (for example the highly elliptical work "[Ce]"; S, 136-138).

---

5 Compare with, for example: A. Świeściak, "Sendecki i awangarda" (Sendecki and the Avantgarde), in: *Świat na językach* (The World in Languages), ed. P. Śliwiński, Poznań: Wydawnictwo WBPiCAK, 2015, 63-74.

The final chapter, in which the category of the sequel no longer occupies the foreground, goes against the grain of the overall tendency by closing the book rather than summing up, and is therefore the most intriguing part. The chapter is entitled "'Aż zrobią się całkiem ciemne, juczne'. Wokół metafory Marcina Sendeckiego" ("They're Going Completely Dark, the Beasts of Burden." On Metaphor in Marcin Sendecki) and is devoted to a less relational reading, focusing rather on the poetic technique itself. Mackiewicz asks a very important question, namely whether "an uncompromising approach to semantic overload […], and constant breaking of contact with the reader always and everywhere works to the benefit of Sendecki's poetry?" (S, 149). If each reading of a poem called for bottomless expert knowledge, that would lead to a communicative impasse. Mackiewicz asserts, however, that there is a more or less universal key, a common and historically non-contingent principle of composition. "This principle may be called reductive associativity. It is based on […] the combination (association) of at least two different, unrelated imaginative orders" (S, 149). And thus: in the poem "Niedziela" there is an encounter between painting and eroticism; in the poem "[Czerw]" – between fruit-farming and medicine; the piece entitled "[Kre]" creates a collision of the funereal and mercantile orders; in "[Trap]," ritualism enters the life of harbour workers.

This other approach to Sendecki's poetry, more immanent, drawing its categories directly from the poems, also holds promise for the possibility of a different way of reading. Mackiewicz uses his philological sensibility to build a poetological narrative not from a traditionally literary perspective, but rather from the perspective of readerly practice (for purposes of argument I am stipulating that the two can be separated). It is as if the ending were intended to say that nothing is certain yet, that what we have seen so far was little more than loosely trying things on, a mere instalment in a series of tales about the author of "[Trap]." For my part, I confess that I would be more than happy to read another book on Sendecki if it started out with the strategy adopted on the final pages of the book we have been discussing.

* * *

I took as my conditional point of departure the problems that Sendecki's poetry falls into in relation to the world. Mackiewicz cannot in the slightest be accused of ignoring them. Nonetheless, working with a fairly traditional understanding of the concept of the literary work's "mimesis," he does not bring us to a more complicated view of that category, nor (on the Hegelian model) to its demolition. Upon subjecting his explications of poems to scrutiny, we find ourselves faced at times with mutually conflicting difficulties. Analyzing the differences in how optic-solar metaphors are used in the first published version of the poem "Niedziela" (Sunday) and the anthologized version, Mackiewicz states: "the poem became more mimetic, though more terse and less detailed in its telling" (S, 112). In another place, he speculates on the effects of an intertextual connection therein with O'Hara and declares: "The linguistic effect of 'Niedziela' is of course illogical and non-mimetic: nobody imagines the organ [the heart – KH] lying before the owner as he regards it. Such an operation is only possible in language" (S, 150). As a result, his reading of the poem "Niedziela" is caught in the struggle between two forces set on the same axis: language / world. Perhaps an approach that problematized that opposition (fundamental as it may be to the art of late modernity) would make it easier to understand his interpretative decisions.

The category of "mimesis" is thus a litmus-paper indicating a certain (tempting?) conservatism in the position presented by Mackiewicz. Simply put, in *Sequel* we find a very traditional view of the literary scholar's profession and its duties. At the level of style (which I use synecdochically to represent the whole), this is evident in his manifest penchant for an archaicizing and register-raising conjunction ("atoli," equivalent to "howbeit" or "withal").[6] The point here is not to dwell on such items, however, but rather to address the programmatic, sui generis old-fashionedness that they signal – which at the same time should not be understood as being behind the times, and which, in the portions devoted to textual analyses, manifests itself as a strong belief in classical literary scholarly tools, particularly the analysis of rhythmic structures.[7] This belief can, at first, create the impression of near-obliviousness to changes in the study of literature over the last several decades, but in the end, it rather constitutes an articulate scholarly position, whose fundament is – potentially allied with Stanley Fish, who has complained about the eroding boundaries between disciplines – a perspicuous effort at a professionalized discourse.

The author in fact takes an unequivocal stance with regard to knowledge when he states that anyone who fails to perceive the Barańczak hypotext of one Sendecki poem, "does not have […] and adequate grasp" of it (S, 79). Hiding under double cover (in a footnote and through a quotation) he comments: "'I know I'm giving myself away like this as hopelessly behind methodologically, but if you're born to be hanged…'" (S, 79, przyp. 110). It appears that Mackiewicz, though he never states it directly, considers the solution to the dethroning of literature's function (and that of poetry's within literature) to lie, not in placing the literary medium amid broader cultural processes (as, for example, Anna Kałuża does in her books on contemporary Polish poetry), but rather – on the contrary – strengthening its autonomy.

---

[6] Here are three quite randomly chosen examples from early in the book: "Howbeit Sendecki is not particularly interested in language as an abstract system, a kind of self-driving machinery" (S, 29); "Howbeit, one can judge that […] the replacement of the music from 'Techno' [by Sosnowski] with silence in 'Tango' [by Sendecki] overestimates the originality and the weight of the difference between the two poems" (S, 39-40); "Howbeit contrary to the oversimplifications and claims of the reception of a fundamental part of the New Yearlings' work, it is not limited, obviously, to poetic promotion and civic-consolatory poetry" (S, 56).

[7] For example, in his analysis of the poem "[Proszę]" ([Please]), it is shown to be important that "it is an exact hypercatalectic iambic tetrapody, with a few initial substitute feet, natural to the flow of iambs in Polish language" (S, 68). It should be noted that analyses of this type are not merely showing off phonological expertise and do find their reflections in his interpretations of texts. Furthermore, some of them are daunting in their level of detail – discussing Iwaszkiewicz's poem "Ostatnia piosenka wędrownego czeladnika" (Last Song of a Wandering Journeyman) Mackiewicz writes: "The whole poem draws attention to itself by the length of its lines – they span from 15 to 17 syllables. […] The first stanza, a quatrain with regular ABAB rhyme pattern, partially grammatical in its clausulae, is formed, without exception, from sixteen-syllable lines, with regular caesurae after the eighth syllable. […] In the first stanza, two kinds of feet appear – not counting the substitutional trochee at the beginning of the post-caesura (clausula) part in the third line mentioned above, these are iambs and anapests. We can thus speak of logaedic rhythm (iamb + anapest), typical for Polish poetry. If this logaedic rhythm is not entirely typical, that is only because in logaedic verse, formed from precisely such feet, iambs are most frequently divided from anapests by the caesura." This is only a sample of a longer argument concerning the first stanza. The full rhythmic analysis takes up more than two pages (S, 140-142).

Acting somewhat in defiance of that proposal, moving rather in the direction of methodological expansion, the temptation arises to ask how the titular metaphor might function in a broader context. Mackiewicz treats a sequel as an authorial, self-contained, poetological concept. Yet wit would seem that examining Sendecki's poetry as a form of printing plate on which the state of the culture is exposed, could allow a chance for the sequel to play out as a multi-functional tool for describing contemporary art. 2015 also saw the appearance of *Widmontologia* (Spectrontology) by Andrzej Marzec, which indirectly proposes such a development. If the sequel in the popular understanding is primarily the continuation of a film, a re-creation of something well-known, its operation is based on supplementation of something bygone. "Contemporary […] culture can be called reality, part two,"[8] Marzec argues, invoking the Derridean interpretation of the spectre. A culture that cannot separate from its own past must continually return to it, but not to invoke its full presence, only as a visitation impossible to complete, an after-image of its earlier manifestation. Marzec reads the craze for retro and vintage styles this way, but he also applies that interpretation to the category of the sequel. The anachronistic spectres or phantoms that pop up in contemporary culture appear "among other places, in quotations, reinterpretations […], phenomena such as: sampling, remix, 'cut&paste' techniques, 'covers,' mash-ups in music and found footage, remakes, and sequels in film."[9] The potential of the sequel as spectre seems all the more to cry out for deployment as Mackiewicz's book opens with a fantastic quotation from Kazimierz Wyka (dating from 1946!): "That which is renounced and bygone comes back,"[10] which could be a quote from Derrida. Or is the reverse true? Perhaps in Derrida's words from 1993, what matters is "[a] question of repetition: a spectre is

always a revenant […] it *begins by coming back*,"[11] we should hear an echo of Wyka from across five decades?

Those words should not be read as a demand for a methodological perspective which does not fit the readerly sensitivity presented in this book on Sendecki. The question remains, nonetheless, whether it might not be more effective, if we are to approach the sequel spatially (not through distension of the term to the point where it becomes inoperative, but rather inscription within the frames of a larger discourse), to let the work of one of the most interesting and boldest contemporary Polish poets (as shown by Mackiewicz's book), a voice with much to say on the contemporary state of culture, do so for us?

[11] J. Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, New York: Routledge, 2012, 11.

[8] A. Marzec, *Widmontologie. Teoria filozoficzna i praktyka artystyczna ponowoczesności* (Spectrontology. Philosophical Theory and Postmodern Artistic Practice), Warszawa: Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, 2015, 251.

[9] Marzec, *Widmontologie*, 251.

[10] Quoted in: S, 5 (K. Wyka, "Ogrody lunatyczne i ogrody pasterskie" (Sleepwalking Gardens and Shepherd Gardens), in: *Wśród poetów* (Among the Poets), selected by K. Wyka, with an introduction by M. Stala, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2000, 16).

KEYWORDS

contemporary Polish poetry

supplement

Marcin Sendecki

L'HANTOLOGIE

Abstract:

The article offers a critical commentary on Paweł Mackiewicz's *Sequel. O poezji Marcina Sendeckiego* (2015). The author recognizes the pioneering role of the first monograph on Sendecki, in its effort to situate the poet within literary tradition (both the Polish and the world traditions), and simultaneously addresses certain limitations that result from the reading strategy Mackiewicz chooses to adopt. A "conservative" position vis-à-vis the scholarly tasks presented by Mackiewicz is underscored. The article poses the question of whether it is possible to expand the titular category of the sequel (for example in the context of the deconstructionist notion of *l'hantologie*) in such a way that it might become a tool for the description of cultural phenomena.

Note on the Author:

Krzysztof Hoffmann is a critic, translator, and adjunct at the Institute of Polish Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He has published the following books: *Dubitatio. O poezji Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego* (Dubitatio. On the Poetry of Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, 2012); and the Polish translations of Julian Baggini's *Atheism. A Very Short Introduction* (together with W. Szwebs, 2013) and J. Hillis Miller's *On Literature* (2014); he also co-edited *Umaszynowienie* (Machinization, 2009) and *Wiersze dla Piotra* (Poems for Piotr, 2012). In 2014, he was a Fulbright Visiting Professor at the University of Michigan. He is secretary of *Przestrzenia Teorii* (Spaces of Theory), and an editor at *Czas Kultury* (Time of Culture). |