



Paulina Chorzewska

Przemysław Kaliszuk

Ewa Kraskowska

Lucyna Marzec

Inez Okulska

fall 18 | 2019

# Interpoetics 2

Interpoetics encourages to explore the diverse doublings and complexities between poetics of pieces created in various media or genres. Transferring poetics to a different medium or launching a completely new dimension of poetics in a particular medium requires special, interpoetic study and analysis.



**Editor in Chief**

Prof., PhD Tomasz Mizerkiewicz

**Editorial Board**

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

**Publishing Editors**

PhD Joanna Krajewska  
MA Agata Rosochacka

**Linguistic Editors**

PhD Cezary Rosiński – Polish version  
MA Eliza Cushman Rose – English version

**Scientific Council**

Prof., PhD Edward Balcerzan (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland)  
Prof., PhD Andrea Ceccherelli (University of Bologna, Italy)  
Prof., PhD Adam Dziadek (University of Silesia, Poland)  
Prof., PhD Mary Gallagher (University College Dublin, Ireland)  
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)  
Prof., PhD Tvrtko Vuković (University of Zagreb, Croatia)

**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 Poznań, Poland

„Forum Poetyki | Forum of Poetics” fall 2019 (18) year IV | ISSN 2451-1404

© Copyright by „Forum Poetyki | Forum of Poetics”, Poznań 2019

Editors do not return unused materials, reserve rights to shortening articles and changing proposed titles.

[fp@amu.edu.pl](mailto:fp@amu.edu.pl) | [fp.amu.edu.pl](http://fp.amu.edu.pl)

# T A B L E O F C O N T E N T

## introduction

<i>Ed Sheeran and the Algorithm, or the Principle of Duality in Interpoetics</i>	s. 4
--	------

## theories

Lucyna Marzec, <i>Interpoetics of Correspondence: Figures for Constructing Presence, Fictionalization, and Disruptions of Presence Technologies</i>	s. 6
Inez Okulska, <i>GAN and GPT-2 Neural Networks, Worn Words and Creativity, Namely Literary Second-Hand</i>	s. 28
Joanna Sikorska, <i>Over the Inter-, in the Trance- Circle. Novelizations of Video Games as an Example of Transmedia Narratives</i>	s. 38

## practices

Paulina Chorzewska, <i>The Screenshot as a Poetic Device: Tomasz Pułka's Graphic Posts on the Cichy Nabiau Art-Blog</i>	s. 52
Honorata Sroka, <i>Autobiographical Interpoetics. Wartime Works by Franciszka and Stefan Themerson</i>	s. 66
Weronika Szwebs, <i>The Pleasure of the Intertext (in Translation): The case of Barthes and Lewańska</i>	s. 78
Przemysław Kaliszuk, <i>Boobalk, Schubert and Codes</i>	s. 88
Ewa Rajewska, <i>Tilden's Tildes</i>	s.104

## poetics dictionary

Nikodem Wołczuk, <i>The Variant</i>	s.112
-------------------------------------	-------

## critics

Ewa Kraskowska, <i>Between Theories</i>	s.118
---	-------

# Ed Sheeran and the Algorithm, or the Principle of Duality in Interpoetics

Tomasz Mizerkiewicz

ORCID: 0000-0002-4419-5423

*The second issue of the "Forum of Poetics" devoted to interpoetics formulates numerous questions that belong to it even more vividly and in a more multidimensional way than the first issue. First of all, it completes the problem of a particular duality, which is described by interpoetics studies.*

*What kind of experience does it become for the underage readers who choose to read - and do so on a mass scale - the popular novel series Diary of an 8-Bit Warrior by Cube Kid, a well-known novelization of the Minecraft computer game? The poetics of the game becomes the basis of the novel's poetics and in this form it acquires and tests its new possibilities. The Diary can be analysed as a separate work and the roles it defines for those who read it can be followed. It seems, however, that the series of novels about an 8-Bit Warrior is most often perceived in a different mode, i.e. as offer-*

*ing at the same time the poetics of a novel and the poetics of an iconic computer game. It is from this double interpoetological perspective that the series viewed gives unique, unrepeatable reading pleasure and opens a new receptive space, where the value becomes an innovative overlay of the world of the novel on the world of the game.*

*Interpoetics encourages to explore the diverse doublings and complexities between poetics of pieces created in various media or genres. Transferring poetics to a different medium or launching a completely new dimension of poetics in a particular medium requires special, interpoetic study and analysis. In this issue we offer several related articles. Inez Okulska shows how contemporary computer programs can generate lyrics in a particular poetics, which can be tested even with the lyrics of a popular song by Ed Sheeran. Lucyna Marzec draws up a project of a new study of traditional epistolography, which would analyze the combination of several dimensions, e.g. a written text supplemented with “material” extras in the form of stickers, colourful drawings, small items. Honorata Sroka directly refers to the Marzec’s project in an article on the interpoetics of autobiography, her interesting example being the verbal-visual compositions of a pair of Polish-British avant-garde artists, Franciszka and Stefan Themerson. The already mentioned problem of the novelizations of computer games in a comprehensive view is discussed by Joanna Sikorska. A fascinating case of the poetic creation by Tomasz Pułka has been analyzed by Paulina Chorzewska; the young artist has covered with artistic comments on the screenshots, i.e., the snapshots of websites where he has published his lyrical texts. Weronika Szwebs carefully examines the discrete problem of translation - the places where the Polish translator of *Le Plaisir du Texte* by Roland Barthes has chosen words that are strongly influenced by the Polish literary tradition, to which the French author did not refer. According to Szwebs, the “pleasurable” imperative of overlaying the poetics of Roland Barthes’s text on texts of Polish literature unknown to him worked in this case. Przemysław Kaliszek resembles an eccentric novel by Ryszard Schubert *Trenta Tre* based on references to neglected and marginal texts of culture, thus forcing a unique interpoetological interpretation conducted between noticeable and unnoticeable layouts. Ewa Rajewska analyses Freeman Tilden’s classic heritological study and reflects on the benefits for literary studies of his project of interpreting the ontologically complex cultural heritage objects. Nikodem Wołczuk defines “variant” in his traditional and neo-genetic approach. Finally, Ewa Kraskowska discusses an important and innovative monography by Anna Łebkowska on somatopoetics.*

*The interpoetics, a sample of which we present in this issue of “Forum of Poetics”, provides an insight into very contemporary processes of radical transformations of poetics. The analyzed artworks and experiments form part of these processes, their documentation and observance at the same time. And perhaps even interpoetics itself, as a research practice, must also vividly define and complicate its own ontological status.*

translated by Agnieszka Kocznur

# Interpoetics of Correspondence: Figures for Constructing Presence, Fictionalization, and Disruptions of Presence Technologies

Lucyna Marzec

ORCID: 0000-0001-6478-3997

Why do correspondents inform each other about the circumstances surrounding the process of writing and reading each other's letters, describe the act of closing the envelope and sticking the post stamp, mention the agitated waiting for the mailman, the moment of putting the letter into the mailbox, and absorbing the traces of someone's ink, kissing the envelope, unwrapping the package – so frequently and in such great detail? Why – through using the formula “when you will be reading these words” – do they predict and imagine their own and somebody else's future? Why do they describe how they imagine themselves and how they “hear” themselves? Or, to the contrary, they refer to the timeless, spaceless “here and now” of the exchange of pure thought, going beyond the physical barriers of the unchanging relationship? In the light of *Nowa teoria listu* by Anita Całek<sup>1</sup>, such writing practices are located in the very center of reflection upon the letter, because they touch upon the key question “of the letter as a unique form of expression, both constructing a dialogue and focused on the sender, who creates some communicative space through their monologue, creating themselves

<sup>1</sup> Anita Całek, *Nowa teoria listu* (Cracow: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2019).

and the addressee within it?”<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, they are related to the issue of auto-creation and auto-presentation of the correspondents and their relationality, the interactivity of correspondence. They belong to the whole range of strategies of constructing the presence typical for correspondence, to the set of basic epistolary gestures<sup>3</sup> and key correspondence figures, as discussed by Esther Milne in *Letters, postcards, email. Technologies of presence*<sup>4</sup>. Here I characterize the interpoetics of such practices.

This interpoetics is especially clear in the moments of disruption of the practice of constructing presence in a letter by the technology of presence of a different kind; in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was predominantly a phone call. In the epistolary poetics structure, this often disrupts the narration aimed at the absent, imagined (reminisced or projected) addressee, and is often related to some material trace, such as using ink of a different color, a change in the size of the handwriting, or introducing small capitals. The meaning of the interventions: the sound of a ringing phone, a voice, auditory sensations, a conversation, which is described in the seemingly “mute” and yet evoking the memory or an impression of a “voice”, tangible correspondence, should be juxtaposed with typical epistolary figures of constructing presence. The letter – understood as a medium that is paradoxical, transfer, fantasizing about its own *primum mobile* – reaches the peak of its power precisely in the practices of constructing the presence of the addressee and self through writing<sup>5</sup>. What is more, a lion’s share of correspondence is devoted to – or rather based on – exactly this fantasy.

The term *interpoetics* is far more adequate than *intertextuality* for the needs of correspondence conceptualization. Whether it is about letters, postcards, parcels, or visiting cards, they always have an intermedia character (print and handwriting, a drawing and a reproduction, paper and cardboard, etc.), textual and non-textual (a written message and a dried flower, a specifically selected post stamp or stamps arranged into some shape, a hand-made postcard: a collage, a photo, a newspaper clipping, etc.). Correspondence is not only read, but also touched (kissed, crumpled, torn), smelled, and even tasted – it can engage all the senses, mostly sight and touch. Its phonic quality stems from the fact that each written message is a recording of some voice<sup>6</sup>, and it is especially significant when the correspondents know each other’s voices. Correspondence is easier to capture at the moment when it is based on “writing out loud”<sup>7</sup> than literature, when it is in the state of a dialogue or semi-dialogue – in line with how former theories of letter defined epistolography. Thus, it approaches verbal communication based on a direct exchange, oscillating between orality and literateness<sup>8</sup>. However, the extent of this phenomenon is not as strong as promised by correspondence. The textual/correspondence will never substitute for the material and the oral.

<sup>2</sup> Całek, 173 [translation mine, PZ]

<sup>3</sup> Całek, 9, 82, 195-198.

<sup>4</sup> Esther Milne, *Letters, Postcards, Email. Technologies of Presence* (New York–London, Routledge 2010).

<sup>5</sup> CONS See also the genesis of the letter according to Joanna Correia de Magalhães, quoted by Całek, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Andrzej Hejmej, “W kulturze dźwięku. Słuchanie literatury”, *Teksty Drugie* 155, No 5 (2015): 88-102.

<sup>7</sup> Roland Barthes, *Pleasure of the Text*, translated by Ariadna Lewańska (Warsaw: KR 1997): 97-98.

<sup>8</sup> Agata Sikora, *List w Od aforyzmu do zinu. Gatunki twórczości słownej*, edited by Grzegorz Godlewski, Marta Rakoczy, Paweł Rodak (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego 2014): 247-252; Stefania Skwarczyńska, *Teoria listu*. Edition based on the Lviv original by Elżbieta Feliksiak (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku 2006): 32-52.

This rule works both ways; correspondence is a unique way of communication. One of the essential ways of creating the effect of presence is fictionalization, especially of the addressee<sup>9</sup>. Apart from materiality, it has the biggest influence on creating the effect of presence in correspondence. The coupled paradox of correspondence, i.e. the traditional theory of Stefania Skwarczyńska, is based on the materiality and virtuality co-creating this effect. Fictionalization is obviously not about detaching the correspondents from reality or discrediting the referentiality of their written (auto)creations, nor is it a way of incorporating epistolography into the literary work understood as fiction, although it does create such a possibility<sup>10</sup>. Fictionalization in correspondence means that the correspondents place each other in some “virtual reality”<sup>11</sup>, “imagined meeting space”, “culturally-created reality”<sup>12</sup> or “another reality”<sup>13</sup>, i.e. every discourse. This is the reason why interrupting the process of writing a letter, i.e. the process of creating some virtual reality by a phone call from the addressee – that is hearing the real (if distorted) voice inspires ambivalent feelings in the correspondents.

The heterogeneity of correspondence (and not just the letter as a genre, life writing) is strongly related not only to intermedia and the various discourse practices which it employs, but also to the complex materiality of epistolography. Thinking of correspondence as a purely written medium (also encouraged by edited volumes of letters) reduces its meanings. The value of the material, visual, and written aspect of correspondence is always the same. This is fully taken advantage of by artists representing Mail Art, a trend in modern art which uses the medium of anything sent through the postal service (parcels, letters, postcards) and the communicative character of the post as an institution<sup>14</sup>. The practice of sending art whose main material is wrapping paper securing a parcel of an irregular shape (such as the human body), or a canvas painting with post stamps arranged so that they become a part of it, stems from the twentieth-century movement of democratizing art, striving towards transgressing the utilitarian/high art purposes, recycling and creating artistic communities that go beyond political and national divisions<sup>15</sup>. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the global online network is an additional reference point: although virtual, it allows people to contact others quickly (*call for art works*, exchange of e-mail addresses) and to share a photograph showing the act of putting a letter/postcard in a mailbox (the *postcrossing* movement<sup>16</sup>). The international Mail Art movement has its earlier incarnations, related to the tendency to “personalize” letters and postcards by common users, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when mail communication developed

<sup>9</sup> Walter Jackson Ong, “Autor zawsze fikcjonalizuje odbiorcę”, in *Osoba, świadomość, komunikacja*. Antologia. Translated by J. Japola (Warsaw 2010: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego), 54-8; Józef Japola, “Między retoryką a głosem: Walter J. Ong a problemy komunikacji literackiej”, *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1997, z. 3, p. 152.

<sup>10</sup> See also Vincent Kaufmann, quoted in Całek, 38-39.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Hillis Miller, *On literature*, translated by Krzysztof Hoffman, Poznań: Wydawnictwo UAM.

<sup>12</sup> Całek, 82.

<sup>13</sup> See Całek 99-110 and Michael Fleischer, “Podstawy konstruktywistycznej i systemowej teorii kultury”, in *Język w komunikacji* Vol. 1. Edited by Grażyna Habrajska. Łódź: WSHE 2001: 83-104.

<sup>14</sup> Grażyna Bobilewicz, “Poszukiwania form komunikacji – sztuka poczty”. *Studia z Filologii Polskiej i Słowiańskiej*, [T.] 41 (2006), p. 225-237; Piotr Rypson, *Mail Art czyli sztuka poczty*, Warsaw: Akademia Ruchu 1985.

<sup>15</sup> The last international exhibition of Mail Art was organized at the New York MoMa between 1/10 and 10/12.2012. “Sieć analogowa. Mail Art. 1960-1999: <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/1482>

<sup>16</sup> See <https://www.postcrossing.com>



a communications network and it became affordable for people beyond the richest elites of European communities<sup>17</sup>.

There is one more argument in favor of interpoetics: a gradable, sometimes fine and blurred line between utility and literariness of a letter/postcard, a peculiar tendency of a letter to absorb other media and genres (short story, joke, anecdote), and to generate new genres (epistolary novel, poetic letter), and at the same time to adjust to the new media (e-mail, virtual postcard). It is especially clear from some distance: the letter has always been a mobile medium – on the one hand, an element of everyday life, and means of communication dictated by long distance, on the other, a part of literacy (e.g. biblical epistles, public announcements) – and finally, literature. The basic form of the letter – addressing someone who is physically absent<sup>18</sup> – has been taken advantage of on different grounds and circles of culture: from *Dangerous Liaisons* or *The Sorrows of Young Werther* to the cardboard record and rock ballad by PJ Harvey.

## Closeness in enclosure

Such collections of correspondence as the one between Wisława Szymborska and her partner, Kornel Filipowicz<sup>19</sup> (they became a couple in 1967 and stayed together until Filipowicz's death in 1990) or Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska and her third husband, Stefan Jerzy Jasnorzewski<sup>20</sup> (they were married from 1931 until the poet's death in 1945) allow an insight into the intermedia and inter-genre movements of the letter. It is possible to a limited extent: printed collections of correspondence are deprived of the illustrative material (completely, in the case of the Jasnorzewscy, and only partially in the case of Szymborska and Filipowicz). Editorial descriptions, such as "put in a box" or "a postcard with a bird's eye view of Łódź, next to the words «all rights reserved» with a note «for you»" – help to imagine something, but will not be a substitute for contact with the letters, envelopes and sheets of paper. Editorial preparation for print takes away the most important part of correspondence: the signature of a person marked by their handwriting<sup>21</sup>. A scan is only a flat picture, which deprives the object of its three-dimensionality and changes its proportions. What is more, the contents of parcels: food, clothes, money, and other gifts which are often the focus of the correspondence are affected by the passing time, and as such can be used up. This "deprivation of materiality" of correspondence is then related not only to the logics of print and editorial practice, but also to the nature of the matter and everyday practice, the most important environment for intimate

<sup>17</sup>See the history of decorated and "personalized" letters of the Tolhurst family, housed at the British Postal Museum: <https://postalheritage.wordpress.com/2014/12/04/the-mystery-of-the-tolhurst-envelopes/> and <https://postalheritage.wordpress.com/2015/06/29/the-mystery-of-the-tolhurst-envelope-case-closed/>

<sup>18</sup>Całek 9, Skwarczyńska 50-51, Sikora 247-251.

<sup>19</sup>Wisława Szymborska, Kornel Filipowicz, *Najlepiej w życiu ma Twój kot*, edited by T. Fiałkowski, S. Kudas, Kraków 2016. Henceforth "Najlepiej" and page number.

<sup>20</sup>*Z Tobą jednym: listy Marii Pawlikowskiej-Jasnorzewskiej i Stefana Jasnorzewskiego*, edited by E. Hurnikowa, Warszawa 2015. Henceforth "Z Tobą" and page number. See also Maria z Kossaków Jasnorzewska, *Listy do przyjaciół i korespondencja z mężem (1928-1945)*, edited by K. Olszański, Cracow 1998.

<sup>21</sup>Hence apologies for typing a letter, for example because of a disease, illegible handwriting or hurry, as well as attaching great weight to placing a handwritten signature. For example, Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna, who was blind, used a stamp with a facsimile of her signature to sign the letters that she dictated.

correspondence, in which parcels have a pragmatic goal, and words maintain this relationship. In both cases enclosures are of equal status to the written message. They go beyond textual figures of constructing presence and embodiment due to their materiality: when Filipowicz sends Szymborska raisins, and Jasnorzeski sends some coffee to his wife, those are real gifts rather than fantasies about gifts or visions of having dinner together. They do not substitute for the physical presence; they help (i.e. make easier, make nicer) everyday functioning, but their materiality goes beyond the written metonymy or metaphor, especially when it comes to food or clothes in short supply.

It is difficult to overestimate the meaning of the parcels which Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska and Stefan Jerzy Jasnorzewski sent to each other during the World War II food restrictions. They were separated by a seemingly short distance, and yet relatively long for the years 1940-45 – several dozen miles from Blackpool (Great Britain), where the poet lived, and the frequently changed air bases where Jasnorzewski was stationed as a liaison officer of the Polish air force. The couple could not meet often, but they remained in touch via post. Out of the whole collection, only a handful of letters are not devoted to matters such as mutual provisioning, news from their family, financial and emotional support. Those include: the issues of Jasnorzewski's censorship regarding the war-time poetry of his wife and Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska's developing cancer. According to Mitelle Bossis, the topic of health/physicality belongs to the fundamental figures of correspondence<sup>22</sup>. In this case, the poet tended rather to hide her real state from her husband, which was related to ill-information, the taboo surrounding illnesses, and – as suggested by the editor – her denial of the news of a fatal disease.

The materiality of the correspondence between Wisława Szymborska and Kornel Filipowicz is related to the provision enclosures. Mostly the couple sent each other illustrative drawings (especially Filipowicz: a view of a room, camping spot, a portrait of a cat), carefully selected and marking vintage postcards, which they both collected. Szymborska would insert newspaper clippings and various other small objects (such as a ribbon secured with a patch as a name day gift) into her letters, and she would also bestow upon Filipowicz hand-made collages or "scrap books"<sup>23</sup>. Actually, it is difficult to tell her collages from letters with newspaper clippings, if one thinks about them from the perspective of a significant medium, since they are an inseparable whole. For instance, one letter contains an inserted illustration with a bed, and the letter itself opens with the following words: "Kornel! Do not change this bed for a double one before I arrive!" (Najlepiej, 161-162). In another, similarly composed letter, Szymborska writes next to a newspaper clipping of a woman's leg in a stocking: "This is my first leg, which I am setting towards home. When I send you the second one, this will mean that I will be unconditionally coming back!" (Najlepiej, 135-136). Without the illustrations, the contents of the message are deprived of a mixture of tenderness and absurd humor, which is reinforced – apart from the hyperbole – by deictic pronouns referring to specific pictures.

<sup>22</sup>Mirelle Bossis, *Methodological Journeys Through Correspondences*. Translated by K. McPherson. "Yale French Studies" 1986, nr 71.

<sup>23</sup>Szymborska's "Scrapbooks" were also sent to her friends and have become the subject of study and international exhibitions. See Ryszard Matuszewski, *Wisława Szymborskiej dary przyjaźni i dowcipu. Teksty i wyklejanki poetki z kolekcji Ryszarda Matuszewskiego* (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza Auriga 2008); W. Szymborska, *Kolaże/Collages* (Cracow: MOCAK 2014).

## Nonfiction and metafiction of correspondence

The interpoetics of correspondence is expressed not only in the combination of the material and the textual, but also in epistolary social- and word-games. There are fictional characters in the letters of Szymborska and Filipowicz, who have their own voices; for instance, anonymous tipsters making spelling and grammar mistakes while informing the correspondents about their faults and flaws, or Gienia, a stubborn rival of Szymborska fighting with her over Filipowicz's feelings. However, the most important fictional characters are Countess Heloiza Lanckorońska and her proxy, Eustachy Pobóg-Tulczyński, the past "incarnations" of the couple. Their dialogue, written over a longer period of time, styled to resemble the language of the Polish aristocracy from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, "tells about" the adventures of the Countess, who is staying abroad, and her proxy, who is condemned to her whims while being responsible for her estate. In hindsight, this correspondence, while read in print, is not just a testament to Szymborska and Filipowicz's ingeniousness, but also "an epistolary novel printed as a collection of correspondence", an intimate *mise en abyme* of the correspondence of two people fully aware of the creative role of the letter, as well as epistolary and literary conventions. The performativity of the letter is combined rather than argues with the self-reflexivity of epistolary conventions and fictionality: each message is an invitation to the next round, which can be – but does not have to be – continued.

However, fictionalization is not a variant of correspondence as much as it is its key condition. The case of Szymborska and Filipowicz only highlights its mechanism of action due to using it as a part of a meta-epistolary game, self-aware in terms of its own rules and limits. Ong – and after him, Japola – explained the necessary fictionalization of recipients of any message in order to explain the effectiveness of communication in conditions which they later dubbed as "virtual reality", i.e. while writing a letter, we evoke and address not only a real person, but also their fictional persona, our fantasy of this person, reinforced by memory, but modified by various factors such as the distance separating us, the length of separation, mood, etc. Fictionalization is expressed in constructing a specific mood of a letter: from the initial form, which never sounds like a regular, verbal greeting; to the way in which we assign the addressee a place in our monologue<sup>24</sup>. The "virtual reality" of a letter works in a similar way to any other, such as literature, when it creates situations and imitates emotional states through words. Fictional addressees of the correspondence between Szymborska and Filipowicz are brought to life not only with names, and not only through stylization, but also through constructing the whole emotional landscape, inadequate for the real senders of the situation. Still, even without strictly fictional characters, the couple's correspondence creates a "virtual reality", in which the correspondents are both physically real persons who write material letters, as well as "virtual" (Ong would say "fictional") personas that exist as textual creations, and their origins are complex and heterogeneous, because it originates as a result of the layering and interactions between auto-presentation and auto-creation of the sender and projecting their fantasies on the addressee.

<sup>24</sup>Ong 54-85, Japola 152.

Szyborska and Zbigniew Herbert used the same fictionalization code in their correspondence<sup>25</sup>. If the authors' signatures were to be removed, their correspondence might be read as a collection of curious love letters incrustated with graphomaniac poems by one Frąckowiak. However, the exchange of letters makes it clear that the addressees adjusted themselves to their roles assigned by the senders, and it did not get in their way in dealing with some organizational matters. When Herbert donated one such letter to the Ossolineum library in 1984, he added a comment that "they should not be regarded in a different way than a friendly affection" [Jacyś złośliwi, 64]. A comment for outsiders might feel over the top, but humor and irony can be such well camouflaged codes that Herbert deemed it necessary to make sure that the letters would be understood well. Thus, the poet addresses the "third recipient" of correspondence, established by the tradition of letter studies – the editor, publisher, biographer, and finally reader – and highlighted the multidimensional character of the epistolary relationship [Całek 199-204], which was already extended with the presence of fictional characters in the original "dyad" between the correspondents.

There are many traces of similar epistolary-literary games. The postcards sent from Mrzeżyn from Stanisław Barańczak to his friend Lech Dymarski<sup>26</sup> every day of his three-week holiday in August 1975 create a valuable collection. The recto of all the postcards is the same: a colorful photograph of a Baltic sunset. However, each card is written as if it was the first and the only one, with an explanation why sending the card sooner was impossible as their common motif. A comical effect results from the incoherence of those two messages. But not only. Variations regarding the necessity of sending greetings from Baltic holidays are combined with "stylistic exercises", parallel to the famous collection of linguistic mutations of Raymond Queneau. What happens here is a modification of the form of description, as well as the sender and the addressee of the postcard. We are dealing with a double addressee and a double sender. The meta-epistolographic code is aimed at real persons, who will recognize the convention of writing holiday postcards. Their repertoire includes: a report card, solemn, oral-colloquial, boasting, telegraphic, etc., together with postcard clichés ("lovely weather", Mrzeżyno – the pearl of the Polish seaside", "the sea is wonderful", "we are coming back tomorrow"). The typical senders and addressees of holiday postcards which the real sender "personates" (for example writing "for" the son who is writing "for the father", resourceful scout girls, a "benevolent" informer, a tasteless joker) and the roles that he/she assigns to the addressee (a comrade, "my man", a culture expert) are subject to variation. Fictionalization (of second degree) of the correspondents is also revealed in apostrophes and signatures. We can find such pairs as: "Beloved Leszek – your aggrieved St.", "So Leszek – the Barańczaks", "Dear L., cher ami – Stanisław de B. avec sa famille"; or „Lech! Buddy – Stachu with wife, together with the Walczaks and Fela with mom and Zdzych". The existence of such specific textual (fictional or not) "avatars" of senders and addressees is essential for creating the effect of presence. Clichés become alive in the meta-epistolographic game of poets-friends also because they belong to real individuals. They are inconsistent with their everyday demeanor and typical forms of

<sup>25</sup>Zbigniew Herbert, Wisława Szymborska, *Jacyś złośliwi bogowie zakpili z nas okrutnie. Korespondencja 1955-1996*, edited by Ryszard Krynicki (Kraków: a5 2018). Henceforth: *Jacyś złośliwi* and page number.

<sup>26</sup>A collection of postcards from the private archive of Lech Dymarski. In 2014 the collection was exhibited in Wielkopolskie Muzeum Niepodległości in Poznań, and in 2015 at the AMU Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology.

communication, but at the same time, they are completely consistent with the tendency for linguistic games characteristic for poets.

The series of postcards which Barańczak sent to Dymarski corresponds with Georges Perec's experiment *Two hundred and forty-four postcards in real colors*, dedicated to Italo Calvino<sup>27</sup>. This coincidental convergence reveals a community of writers who are suspicious of language and have a tendency for combinatorial linguistic games. This time the game has only a literary character, and it is deprived of the material layer: postcards and handwriting, but also – significantly – the greetings do not have concrete senders and addressees. Perec's essay juggles cliché holiday greetings, although in this case each postcard is sent from a different location (i.e. holiday resorts and tourist attractions from all over the world). Seen as a whole, the contents of each postcard sound trite and predictable: information on the location or hotel in the first sentence, information on the planned return date, "warm greetings" or "hugs", information on various forms of spending time, sunbathing, food. There is no room for other content on holiday postcards. This variation of repetitions can be interpreted as an ironic comment: this is how humanity passes free time and informs about its customs. The "meaning" of the postcards sent from Barańczak to Dymarski is different, although it uses a similar glossary and stylization skills: it is an expression of devotion and affection. Postcards from Mrzeżyno are not only a literary game, as each one of them passes an additional message between the lines: "I am thinking about you every day", or maybe also: "I am bored". In the case of Perec, the weight of dedication is important – even fabricated holiday postcards are dedicated – and as such, metaphorically sent, to a specific person.

The Jasnorzewscy's correspondence is also based on the fictionalization of the sender and the addressee, often on the meta-level: the two correspondents are partners aware of the convention; they manage textual personae and epistolographic "avatars". This is related to the family tradition of the Kossaks of inventing affectionate, peculiar, and sometimes even bizarre nicknames for closer and more distant friends, and a peculiar family idiolect. The tradition is carried by the couple as a symbol of intimacy; it creates an atmosphere of affection, longing, closeness of their "virtual reality". When Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska writes to her husband: "Dear Loteczek – Kisses from your wife (for once she can be named as such). (...) Robaczkiewicz you v[ery] mine, thinking of you gives me solace. You understand me" [Z Tobą 115], or when Jasnorzewski writes to his wife: „Dear Person!" [Z Tobą 130] or „Why doesn't my Bajbeczka write to me?" [Z Tobą 150], the very act of naming the partner and oneself, using third person instead of first and second has both a performative and a fictionalizing dimension. It creates the sender and the addressee to the same degree as it expresses emotions. What is significant here is the interchangeability of names and nicknames related to gender roles. Jasnorzewska is sometimes referred to as male ("Panek"), and her husband as female ("Miss Bajbak"); however, this practice is only present in initial forms. The signatures are typically variations of the couple's names, i.e. Lilka and Lotek, as if the signature was supposed to be a guarantee of norm and constant identity. The

<sup>27</sup>George Perec, *242 postcards in real colors*, translated by Jacek Olczyk, in G. Perec, *Essays*, translated by Jan Gondowicz, Ewelina Kuniec, Monika Ławniczak, Michał Paweł Markowski, Anna Olczyk, Jacek Olczyk, Tadeusz Pióro, Agata Rębkowska, Ewa Wieleżyńska, Adam Zdrodowski. Edited by: Jacek Olczyk, Cracow: Wydawnictwo Lokator . 2012, s. 119-125.



mechanism of fictionalizing the addressee-sender in correspondence allows for such games with initial forms: no meta-knowledge is required here. It is enough to obey the rules of the “virtual reality” of correspondence, whereas the meta-epistolographic awareness allows for correct reading of letters-games.

### Long distance intimacy

Although reading couples’ intimate correspondence evokes intense sensations<sup>28</sup>, a mixture of a voyeuristic impression that one deals with “the naked truth” and “genuine” material with the non-reducible machine of “narrativization” of letters to make them similar to epistolary novels, neither collection generates the couples’ biography in a nutshell or offers the gist of the complex, years-long relationships, nor are they works of literary fiction.

Both pairs of correspondents: Szymborska and Filipowicz and Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska and Jasnorzewski shared close relationships, and the time span of their correspondence were of marginal importance in relation to the everyday closeness, even it is did not mean living together (as in the case of Szymborska and Filipowicz). In their case, fantasies of creating presence and forms of personifying the correspondent had strong fundamentals of past experiences and hopes for seeing each other soon. Milne analyzes somewhat different situations in his book; he typically describes correspondence relations which were not realized in reality, or an attempt at realizing them was unsuccessful (such as romantic epistolary friendships) or they are not realized at the moment (for example mailing lists or internet forum friendships). The physical distance – a necessary condition for starting an epistolary relation – is of temporary and special character in the analyzed collections of correspondence.

Due to the character of the relationship of the correspondents, the collections of letters are not huge, proportionally to the periods of time spent separately. Likewise, most letters are devoted to current, everyday matters, or the relations between couples. Their role is mainly to help keep in touch and not to allow the relationship to grow weak. For those reasons, the letters are short. Contents characteristic for the letter of permanently separated correspondents, whose relationship is based mostly on the epistolary contact or those who engage in an epistolary relation after years of separation will not be found here: detailed biographical descriptions (of the correspondents and their loved ones), ideological declarations, intellectual musings, descriptions of workshops and topics of artistic work, etc<sup>29</sup>. In the discussed cases, the correspondents that send to each other letters, parcels and postcards know each other well and so do not need to characterize each other. They report to each other in detail about what is different in the changed (by the departure) surroundings and highlight their constant

<sup>28</sup>See Janet Malcolm, *The Silent Woman. Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes*. Translated by Mira Michałowska. (Poznań: Zysk1998).

<sup>29</sup>There are numerous functions of letter-writing. In the case of artists and writers correspondence allows for an intellectual exchange (advise, admiration and criticism, comments on work, informing each other about books, writers, cultural events), dealing with professional and organizational matters (editorial, scholarships, translations).

feelings. In other words, the letters of Szymborska and Filipowicz do not tell us anything new about their everyday life in Cracow, habits, mutual inspirations and work, but rather reveal ways in which they kept in touch in the short periods of separation; they described the conditions of their temporary dwelling and the customs of a sanatorium or resort, their companions and friends. Likewise, the Jasnorzewscy's correspondence shows the couple during the extraordinary wartime separation.

I highlight the heterogeneity of correspondence and its non-reducible materiality because such an approach enriches the understanding of figures of constructing presence and embodying the subjects of an epistolographic discourse. A characteristic of the intimate affection of both pairs in the "extra-epistolary" dimension is also necessary in order to properly show the similarities and differences in my way of conceptualizing the strategies of constructing presence and Milne's proposal to – in spite of all reservations – show that in the deepest layer, the "technologies of presence" work beyond the rule of effectiveness and performativity, and despite the physically measurable reality.

Correspondence is based on the fundamental *belief* that there is an addressee out there, but in order to start a relation with this addressee, a fantasy supported by all forms of sensual and physical closeness is necessary. They evoke a sense of directness, intimacy, and presence<sup>30</sup>. In her monograph, Milne claims that all (popular and common) epistolary strategies of embodiment in fact work towards disembodying the correspondents<sup>31</sup>: both bringing the topic of body to the fore (which creates an effect of directness, as in the closing formula: "I am kissing the hands and feet of my beloved Lady"), and metonymic treatment of the physical aspects of the letter as the body of the correspondent (which is included in the practice of kissing, crying over and hugging letters). According to Milne, paradoxically, the closer to the body, the further away from it. What is more, the conviction that epistolary communication is more authentic and intimate than face to face communication and that it provides a stronger sense of presence is the primary fantasy of the epistolographic discourse<sup>32</sup>. Although this idea is rooted in the romantic vision of a direct meeting of two souls, its power has survived both modernist doubts and postmodernist deconstructions of the subject. Modern electronic correspondence, just like romantic letters, is based on similar assumptions and longings for creating intimacy, closeness and relations; despite the physical separation and absence, it employs similar formulae and strategies of constructing presence, and it gives the same empty promise that the presence of two writing people will fulfill the fantasies worked out during correspondence<sup>33</sup>. At the same time, Milne distances herself from hierarchization of epistolary and physical closeness. For her (and for Erving Goffman), performative gestures of creating "self" in "live" contact with others are comparable to written practices.

<sup>30</sup>Milne, 14. „a sense of immediacy, intimacy and presence”

<sup>31</sup>Milne, 2, 8-17: „The term disembodiment refers to two distinct but related desires: the desire to escape the corporeal human body and to eclipse the material technology of communication (...) The dream of transcending the corporeal body is informed by the dichotomy of mind/body; while the desire to eclipse or see through a particular technology of communication is underpinned by the binary of information/medium” Milne, 9-13.

<sup>32</sup>Milne, 16.

<sup>33</sup>Milne, 17.

By focusing on the lasting, years-long correspondence of the English romanticists, „uninterrupted” by rare face-to-face meetings, but at the same time filled with fantasies regarding the meeting of souls and keeping in touch through the materiality of the letter, Milne in some ways shares their belief that correspondence as a method of maintaining relationships is parallel to the physical (material) one, endangered by failure to the same degree as it has a chance to succeed and bring satisfaction to both sides<sup>34</sup>. In fact, many years-long epistolary relationships – not only from Romanticism – lasted in spite of (or even thanks to) rare face-to-face meetings. However, Milne stops halfway through, interpreting cases of failed epistolary friendships and romances, and likewise, she leaves an unfinished thought that the tension between the real, physical body of the correspondents and the personae that they fabricate for the purpose of the correspondence is necessary for achieving the effect of intimacy and presence in correspondence. My proposal is to take a broader look: the tension is eased through real, physical contact, because it does not allow one to maintain the fantasy regarding the “bodies of the correspondents”. And because those fantasies are typically idealized, closeness “beyond letters” does not work. The most commonly quoted example is the failed “epistolary romance” between Franz Kafka and Milena Jesenska. However, the collections of letters of the two couples that I analyze are equally strong proof. In these letters, the figures of constructing presence and embodiment are very frequent and intense, exactly because (or despite the fact that) the couples generally function in reality rather than through correspondence. Here, fantasies and visions have less to do with images that would be difficult to realize, and more with memory (longing) and realistic expectations. Moreover, in their correspondence, the aspect of constructing presence/embodiment of the epistolary “you” dominates over reports “from life” and various forms of problematizing the epistolary “I”.

The very fact that the sense of intimacy and authenticity of correspondence is based on various forms of „constructing the presence” and „embodiment” of the correspondents testifies rather to the primacy of fantasizing of contact which only the physical, bodily closeness can offer. It is rare for interlocutors who meet face to face to dream about corresponding with each other. And at the same time, exactly because of the fact that in the case of epistolary relationships fantasies of physical contact is only wishful thinking, such a relationship can last despite crossing the boundaries of *savoir vivre* of a given epoch. Its performativity is simply weak. The fantasy can be (but does not have to be) ignored without any consequences. It can be seen on the example of the correspondence of Mary Midford and William Elford interpreted by Milne<sup>35</sup>. The researcher describes in great detail the ambivalent feelings of the writer caused by a fantasy of her friend – 40 years her senior – in which, thanks to a magic talisman, he would transport into her room, where, while invisible, he would watch her: thinking, reading, writing. For Milne, the ambiguity of a dream is first and foremost a proof of intimacy which the correspondents created in spite of “intuitive” interpretation that would explain that it is a signal of the lack of physical contact, longing for it<sup>36</sup>. I agree with Milne, but I also understand the reasons for this state of affairs: precisely because of the fact that the intimacy of correspondents who do not have a parallel, “physical” relationship belongs to the discourse,

<sup>34</sup>Milne 51-90.

<sup>35</sup>Milne, 74-90.

<sup>36</sup>Milne, 82-87.

their fantasies expressed in writing do not have the power of strong performative acts and they do not significantly affect the real life of the correspondents. For intimacy is created in a relationship, whereas one can fantasize alone, and the physical presence of another person can both make them stronger and disrupt or even destroy them. The power of fantasy lies – among other things – in ignoring all those elements that may interrupt fantasies. When Milne quotes the declarations of the users of an internet forum who derive satisfaction from the friendships that they made there because they offer them a purely intellectual relationships, beyond the limitations of the body (such as ethnicity, skin color, sex), to my mind they indicate those factors that can make it impossible to establish closer relationships (due to discriminatory relationships). Internet forums, discussion groups, fandoms, player communities etc. offer such an opportunity not only due to producing the technologies of presence, but also thanks to the rudimentary machine of fictionalization of the sender and the addressee of correspondence and other “virtual worlds”. Physical absence allows to freely fictionalize and fantasize. However, one should not belittle congresses, conventions, and meetings of virtual groups, as well as various surprises (and failures) related to live meetings.

Extreme situations, such as the correspondence of two political prisoners, Zofia and Kazimierz Moczarscy<sup>37</sup>, are the best testament to this phenomenon. The couple kept in touch via letters for the period of 10 years of separation, out of which six were spent in prison. Their letters – written in an extreme situation, read by the prison censorship officers, and rationed depending on the prisoners’ behavior – also contain formulae of constructing presence, mostly based on memories. To some extent, this is similar to the relations described by Milne, but in this case, direct contact was impossible for reasons independent from the correspondents. Reading those prison letters is a shocking experience, although they are monotonous – they repeat the same memories (meeting for the first time, wedding, holidays) and declarations of mutual devotion and the strength of the relationship. Monotony suggests not only a hibernation of feelings and memories, but also the presence of censorship and physical immobility. This is why their letters change abruptly when Moczarska is released from prison and the spouses can see each other during visitations. The confrontation of those devastated, tortured (physically and psychologically) people who had not seen each other in years modifies the subjects of the letters, and it introduces another tone and mood, distant from the meta-physical “connection of souls”. The fact that the couple managed to sustain the relationship and continue it after both were set free is a remarkable phenomenon.

However, less extreme situations can also be telling. The letters of both couples continue to discuss the subject of meetings and longing for past physical presence. In one of his letters, Pawlikowski writes: “(...) I was very sorry to leave you, Miss. The farther I went, the more this sorrow grew, as well as a restlessness of a sort whether you, Miss, are happy and content with me” [Z Tobą 122]. Filipowicz to Szymborska, from a holiday camp: “(...) after your premature leave we are all very sad, especially the lodger of tent 4a. In the tent everything is as it used to: rabbit foot, broken mirror, mints, your read shoes are in the hall – only you are missing” [Najlepiej 313]. Szymborska to Filipowicz: “Dear Kornel! Tomorrow Adam is arriving and only then will I have

<sup>37</sup>Zofia and Kazimierz Moczarscy, *Życie tak nas głupio rozłącza... Listy więzienne 1946-1956*. Edited by Anna Machcewicz (Warsaw: Biblioteka „Więzi” 2015).

some news from you. Those three days without your letters nor the possibility to listen to your voice seem to me especially unpleasant and long" [Najlepiej 150]. Longing for physical presence and the fear of considering a meeting a failure in the situation of a longer separation is related to the situation of distance. The lack of connection enhances fantasies surrounding walking out on or causing disappointment. Obviously, it is very hard to tell to what extent they were present in the everyday life of the couples; however, the descriptions of such states occur more frequently in the correspondence when the separation is disrupted and the couples meet for a short time. Being used to separation works here – a constant feature of purely epistolary or virtual relations.

## The most commonly used figures of constructing presence

Despite obvious differences between the correspondence of people who form intimate relations based on presence and purely epistolary relations, similarities in evoking textual "constructions of presence" that Milne writes about seem the most interesting. They appear in spite of "context", "time", "space", the level of mutual affection of the correspondents. Obviously, all those factors influence the shape of the vision, but it does not explain the very occurrence of the figure of constructing presence or embodying. I would call them *topoi* and figures of correspondence. *Topoi* relate to continuously repeated pictures, topics, and motifs, such as: health, living conditions, weather, food. Figures relate to concrete, repeated formulae describing the act of reading, writing and sending letters, often related to imagining the sender/addressee and hypotheses regarding the functioning of post.

The practices of constructing presence rely on the transposition of writing of a person, as in one of the letters sent from Kazimiera Iłakowiczówna to her sister, Barbara Czerwijowska: "Your letters are so nice – as if you were here with me!"<sup>38</sup>. At the same time, such aspects as the quality of the writing paper, envelope, or the choice of illustration on the postcard are thematized. Those are material traces (handwriting, fingertips), as well as evidence of affection or attention. Extensive descriptions of preparations for reading the letter or opening the parcel are figures of presence. Szymborska jokingly writes to Filipczicz: "I know that you won't open this letter immediately – you will wait until afternoon, while lying on the sofa, with Kizia next to you, having read Echa and listened to afternoon news on the radio. Am I right?" [Najlepiej 387]. Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska describes the ceremony of opening a parcel from her husband in great detail:

My lovely Worm! The parcel arrived this morning. It was brought in by Ann, Mary's sister, so delighted as if the parcel had been for her. It's moving how kind-hearted those two Irish sisters are! Before opening, which is always connected to a sense of remorse that I am destroying the work of the skillful paws of Mr Worm, I kissed the dark blue seal. I can see that Bajbaczka likes me for he put so much effort into making me happy. I was very happy indeed. [Z Tobą, 176]

Here the dark blue seal is a metonymy of the sender, even if kissing the parcel was just a fantasy. The account of subsequent stages of the ceremony, tightly connected to senses:

<sup>38</sup>K. Iłakowiczówna, *Listy do siostry Barbary Czerwijowskiej z lat 1946– 1958*. Edited by L. Marzec. Poznań 2014, p. 257.



first watching the parcel being brought in by a friend, and then unpacking and touching, is more important. The sophisticated (or maybe just neat) packaging of the parcel is understood by the poet as a gesture of concern for her mood and an attempt at sustaining her affection. Opening the parcel – tearing the packaging) – is more than just a way of getting to the contents. The description of all the activities accompanying the reception of the parcel means “correct” understanding of the emotional code: affectionate words for affectionate gestures.

The same figure can be found in the letters sent from Wisława Szymborska to Kornel Filipowicz. For example, in the letter, written in a sanatorium in 1968 (in small caps, in order to highlight the significance of the message):

Kornel! Thank you for the nuts and sardines.

When i opened the parcel i felt warmth inside me. I hereby declare that your letters and everything you send to me is charged and it gives me comfort, and generally it feels as if you were here with me, my love. [Najlepiej, 105]

A detailed description of sensual impressions related to opening the parcel are a metonymy of physical closeness of the addressee. The tangibility of nuts and sardines (it is no coincidence that those are physical, food products) refers to the desired presence of Filipowicz.

Evoking an image of the correspondent and employing other senses (smell, touch, hearing) in an epistolary meeting is the most common strategy for creating an effect of presence in correspondence. Its romanticist version takes a form similar to the one found in the letter sent by the classic of romanticist correspondence, Zygmunt Krasiński to Konstanty Gaszczyński:

While I was reading your words yesterday I suddenly saw you with my heart's eyes in front of me, pale, bitter, morose in the face, and on the other hand and at the same time I saw another you, young, fresh, spirited and happy. It was you from the pipe era. And I was standing between the two of you, shaking hands with you and crying. And when this vision passed, I thought of God and I prayed for you, my dear. I prayed for remorse and longing to become a creative force, some fervor for intellectual work, for your torn soul. And for faith and trust that the one who leaves neither a bird nor a water lily will not leave us either in this loneliness of heart and spirit<sup>39</sup>.

An excerpt from Szymborska's letter to Filipowicz (sent while he was away fishing with his friends) offers a more modern example:

„Kornel! I think of you during various times of the day. I can see you at the water in this hat of yours! (...) Kisses! I press my cheek against your back! And I am not cheating on you at all, can you imagine? Wisława (Najlepiej, 249).

<sup>39</sup>Z. Krasiński, *Listy do Konstantego Gaszyńskiego*, edited by Z. Sudolski, Warszawa 1971, s. 285-286.

The two visions are significantly different from each other, yet there are some similarities between them. Krasiński imagines two Gaszyńskis with a flourish: a happy one, known from memories, and a present one, older, bitter, and he writes about this in terms of a *vision*, a fantasy. God is the point of reference in this sentence: a source of religious visions, the addressee of wishes for a better fate for Gaszyński. This “great absent person”, “perfect recipient” to whom one dedicates poems, prayers and letters (as well as letter-poems, such as Barańczak’s *Widokówki z tego świata*) never answers them, which, however, does not discourage the efforts of subsequent generations from writing and sending letters to him (the subject is undertaken by Marcel Łoziński’s documentary *Poste restante* from 2008 on the Department of Undelivered Letters sent via Poczta Polska). One would think that Szymborska, known for her mistrust of any metaphysical systems, would not be keen on visions of closeness and extrasensory contact, and yet the way in which she evokes an image of Filipowicz is similar to how Krasiński imagined his friend. The two visions are written in obviously different styles: pompous and solemn in the case of Krasiński, ironic and humorous in the case of Szymborska. Still, even Szymborska writes about a “vision” evoked by Filipowicz’s description of the camping spot and physical contact, impossible due to the physical separation, yet still desired. Images and fantasies strive towards visions of making them true through sensual contact.

Descriptions of the process of writing letters and plans concerning sending them – an auto-comment of a sort, which becomes the only message, and so both an “insufficiency” and a “surplus” of the letter – are also important in creating the effect of presence. From Jasnorzewski’s letter to his wife: “I finished writing that letter about the whole story (...), and now just a few words. I am not sure whether I will send this letter today, because I need to find an adequate envelope. But it will rather be sent tomorrow morning. Meanwhile lots of kisses, greetings and hugs (...) (Z Tobą 159). From Jasnorzewska to her husband: “I am writing to you although it has only been three hours since you left” [Z Tobą 196]. Szymborska to Filipowicz: “I am writing now, i.e. at noon, still before breakfast, but having already been to a second-hand bookshop” [Najlepiej 15]. Filipowicz to Szymborska: “I am writing still today, before the arrival of the letter that you announced, to which I will be able to reply only tomorrow evening” [Najlepiej 33]. They are often related to asking for letters and signs of anticipation (“I am waiting for your letter”, “Write to me”, “Please reply”, “Write often”), as well as highlighting the circumstances surrounding sending the letters. The amount of details of those descriptions is characteristic, often accompanied by descriptions of conditions in which the letter was written (location, weather, time).

The functioning of post as an institution is an important point of reference, especially when it does not work as smoothly and efficiently as the correspondents would like it to. This allows us to extract an elementary (next to absence) quality of correspondence: the incompatibility of the time of writing and the time of reading. Filipowicz to Szymborska: “At Wieprz, near Łysobyki (this is a genuine name!). God knows where and when this postcard will be posted” [Najlepiej 26]. Szymborska to Filipowicz: “I am writing from Chochołowska Val.[ley] and I am about to throw this postcard into a mailbox, which looks as if it was emptied only at the end of the year. So maybe I should wish you a Happy New Year?” [Najlepiej 219]. Time references which have a real meaning for the sender, typically referring to the future (“in a moment”, “tomorrow”) are outdated when the letter is delivered, and for the addressee they are traces of the past. For a per-

son writing a letter, the “here and now” of writing is important, when he or she always leans out towards the future and the epistolary you: “when you will be reading those words”.

Stefan (Lotek) Jasnorzewski was a master of “the technology of presence”. He wrote on “Thursday, 12.30, 17-18 IV 1942” to his wife:

Dear Miss Bajbas! And what is this squeaking supposed to mean. Who was supposed to write every day? Who? Who received academic droppings for squeaking, me or you? What for, what for? I am asking bitterly.

I wanted to write to you this afternoon, but I was too sleepy – although I feel very well, last night I could not sleep at all. I went back to work at 5 o’clock and I had a nap, and later I order a phone call to you, but you did not answer, so I told them not to call you at 12.00 for fear of waking you up and scaring you at night.

I am writing this letter lying comfortably in my bed, I will post it tomorrow. (...)

I haven’t got my uniform yet, but I got the registered letter and its contents. Thank you for already and for more, and please write as much as possible. Even just for practice, maybe eventually you will learn and become a writer (...) [Z Tobą 98]

The whole letter consists of formulae of constructing the wife’s presence and embodying self: apart from demanding more letters, descriptions of writing to Lilka, an account of attempting to contact her by phone and thanks for the parcel, there is “nothing” here. Exactly this “nothing” allows for and legitimizes all the strategies for constructing the presence of and embodying the correspondent, which Jasnorzewski takes advantage of. For this “nothing” is their extra-epistolary contact – years of living together and sharing experiences to which the husband refers, phone calls and face-to-face meetings, unrecorded and as such, lost to us. Their absence highlights the relation character of correspondence and its strong relationship with everyday life, including a complete lack of care for creating a complete (in terms of narration, facts, descriptions) of a relationship and self<sup>40</sup>. The Jasnorzewscy’s idiolect (squeak – write; academic droppings – i.e. Złoty Wawrzyn Akademii Literatury, Golden Laur of the Academy for Literature, an award which Jasnorzewska received in 1935) breaks down fossilized compositional formulae of the letter and stereotypical phrases. However, this idiolect was not created for the purpose of correspondence; it reflects the everyday language of the couple and their loved ones.

## Disruptions of fantasies of constructing presence: phone ring

The meaning of correspondence is produced over the course of the relationship between the two correspondents, but the figures for constructing presence are produced while one is

<sup>40</sup>Obviously this is not the only model of correspondence. See also O. Szmidt, *Korespondent Witkacy*, Cracow 2014.

alone, through daydreaming and writing. The act of writing takes place in a concrete, real moment of time, although it refers to both “the time of correspondence”, past and future. This is also why disrupting the process of writing with a phone call (especially when the caller is the addressee) creates a sense of incredibility. This complex situation, in which two means of communication over a distance overlap was expressed by Adam Zahajewski in his poem *List. Oda do wielości*:<sup>41</sup>

Twój telefon przerwał mi pisanie listu do ciebie.  
Nie przeszkadzaj mi, gdy  
z tobą rozmawiam. Dwie  
nieobecności krzyżują się,  
jedna miłość rozdziera się  
jak bandaż.

Translating the poem into the situation of writing a letter would be more or less as follows: the disorientation of the lyrical “I” results from being interrupted during the process of fictionalizing the addressee and fantasizing about her by direct contact (phone call), i.e. two ways of keeping in touch in the situation of physical absence. When one is interrupted by another, it creates a cognitive dissonance. Why does it mean to be lost in love to the lyrical I? This opens the field for interpretation.

In the Jasnorzewscy correspondence, the subject of phone calls is rare, which resulted from the war and living conditions of the couple. The already quoted letter about a failed attempt at a phone call is an exception. However, for Szymborska and Filipowicz, this is an important, recurring subject, best evidenced by the following excerpt from Filipowicz’s letter:

You invented a kind of emotion, to which I am (always have been) especially sensitive, but I think that such emotions are wasted on me **then a phone rang and I heard your voice. I am absolutely confident it was your voice, but recorded on a tape (foreign, obviously). There are truly no limits to human imagination! Soon we will be able to have a date via TV. But I prefer with you in a more conventional way, and I am looking forward to the moment when it will be possible.** [Najlepiej 142; color changed by Filipowicz, and later by the editor].

This case could confuse the writer far more than a phone call, for he was listening to a recording, i.e. a voice recorded at a different moment than when he listened to it. At the same time, he was unable to answer the message; the contact was as “one-direction” and based on absence as writing a letter. This is why Filipowicz described this experience using a different color. Highlighting is necessary for distinguishing the moment when Szymborska’s voice “disrupted” the process of writing a letter to her. From the point of view of the composition, it would not be required. After all, one can finish a letter as if the situation never took place and then maybe describe it or tell about it during a face-to-face meeting. However, the experience

<sup>41</sup>Letter. Ode to multiplicity. Your phone call interrupted me while writing a letter to you // Don’t interrupt me when // I am talking to you. Two // absences overlap, // one love tears // like a Band-Aid [translation mine, PZ]

of “overlapping absences” is too strong to be ignored. Filipowicz’s letter recreates the event almost in real time, during which he was distracted from the act of constructing presence and fictionalizing the correspondent.

Usually, mentions of phone calls do not have such an incredible aura. First, they explain why phone contact was not fully satisfactory, first and foremost because of the lack of intimacy. For example, when Szymborska was in the common room at the sanatorium (“Kornel! My love! I can’t tell you on the phone how sad and empty it is here without you” [Najlepiej 238]), and Filipowicz had guests over (“Dear Wisława! Forgive me that during our last phone conversation (two hours ago) I didn’t tell you anything nice – but St.[aniśław] R[ózewicz] was here (...)” [Najlepiej 269]). A phone call can be a failure to a far greater extent than correspondence; among other things, because it does not allow for unlimited fantasizing and it limits fictionalization. Being confronted with a voice can be disappointing or worrying, as can be concluded from Szymborska’s letter to Filipowicz: “It’s been two hours since our phone conversation and I came to the conclusion that I still want to talk a bit. If only because I don’t want you to ask me why my voice was somewhat different and if anything changed. Whereas the only thing that changes is the fact that I am more and more missing you!” [Najlepiej, 137]. If writing is an extension of talking, then it refers to the verbal communication and dialogue, but only as their image. It takes the form of a monologue about what could happen if the correspondents could continue the interrupted phone conversation. The imagined and fictionalized Filipowicz is given the role of an adversary, to whose potential accusations Szymborska replies. This is the language of longing characteristic of a love letter [Barthes *Fragmenty* 227]. In response to this letter, Filipowicz writes, indicating another disruption in the process: “In this place I got a phone call from you. This time your voice was very nice, causing no suspicions or doubts...” [Najlepiej 139]. It is impossible to tell whether Filipowicz listened to a voice recording, or whether he actually talked to Szymborska. The next letter from Szymborska demands – jokingly – confessions: “I wanted to ask you over the phone, but decided it would be better to get a written response” [Najlepiej 140]: as if some matters (next to timbre and sound of the voice, expressing emotions, also open declarations) were possible to thematize only through a specific medium, handwriting and letter. It would seem that a phone conversation is more direct than letters, because the physical separation is reduced by the opportunity to talk and refer to each other directly. However, it turns out that voice properties, deprived of the context of other non-verbal properties of “body language” such as gestures and facial expressions, together with the conditions surrounding the conversation, as well as the very situation of “incomplete” communication, cause the directness to multiply together with “the overlapping of absences”.

The completeness and the ideal to which Szymborska and Filipowicz, Pawlikowska-Jasnorzevska and her husband refer is supposed to be provided by the physical presence of the interlocutors. And yet the awareness of closeness and realizing this ideal rarely stops the correspondents from writing, especially writing about writing, writing about phone calls, and writing about meeting: “My love! This card is water under the bridge again, because it will reach you on Monday, and on Saturday I will allow myself the pleasure of talking to you” [Najlepiej, 169]. “Kornel! Prince! I am writing on Saturday, so just before my Sunday call to you and that is why I am not asking how you are, because I shall know soon” [Najlepiej 189]. Justifying



the seemingly pointless letters, greetings and questions is both paradoxical and necessary. It inherently accompanies letter writing as an act of establishing a correspondence situation and fictionalizing the addressee/sender. In the figures of epistolary construction of presence, the very act of constructing presence, not performative, aimed at action and future result, but rather related to the necessary fantasizing about the correspondent and producing the chronotopic “here and now” of the person writing a letter. Constructing presence is a requirement for writing letters, the same as the physical absence of the correspondents.

## Summary

My goal was to present three fundamental and inseparable aspects of correspondence: 1) the material tangibility of letter and the weight of various enclosures: parcels with food, clothes, collages, scrapbooks and others, means of co-creating the message and medium; 2) fictionalizing the addressee in the “virtual reality” of epistolary discourse and related meta-epistolary games; 3) textual figures and topoi of constructing the presence of the correspondents and the way in which they can be disrupted. The starting point, and the conclusion, was the conviction of the primacy of fantasy about physical contact between the correspondents, which generates all strategies of constructing presence is a by-product of the situation of absence, key to correspondence, and at the same time a requirement for generating presence figures which function in the time and space of letter writing specific for correspondence.

translated by Agnieszka Kocznur

## Bibliography

- Barthes, Roland. *Fragmenty dyskursu miłosnego*. Translated by Marek Bieńczyk. Warszawa: Alatheia 2011.
- *Pleasure of the Text*. Translated by Ariadna Lewańska. Warszawa: KR 1997.
- Bobilewicz, Grażyna. „Poszukiwania form komunikacji - sztuka poczty”. *Studia z Filologii Polskiej i Słowiańskiej*, [T.] 41 (2006): 225-237.
- Bossis Mireille. *Methodological Journeys Through Correspondences*. Translated by Karen McPherson. *Yale French Studies* nr 71 (1986): 63-75.
- Całek, Anita. *Nowa teoria listu*. Cracow: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2019.
- Hejmej, Andrzej. „W kulturze dźwięku. Słuchanie literatury”, *Teksty Drugie* 155, No 5 (2015): 88-102.
- Herbert, Zbigniew. Szymborska, Wisława. *Jacyś złośliwi bogowie zakpili z nas okrutnie. Korespondencja 1955-1996*. Edited by Ryszard Krynicki. Cracow: a5, 2018.
- Iłakowiczówna, Kazimiera. *Listy do siostry Barbary Czerwijowskiej z lat 1946– 1958*. Edited by Lucyna Marzec. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Biblioteki Publicznej i Centrum Animacji Kultury, 2014.
- Japola, Józef. “Między retoryką a „głosem”: Walter J. Ong a problemy komunikacji literackiej”. *Pamiętnik Literacki* 88 No 3 (1997): 141-156.

- Jasnorzewska z Kossaków, Maria. *Listy do przyjaciół i korespondencja z mężem (1928-1945)*, edited by Kazimierz Olszański. Cracow: 1998.
- Kraśiński, Zygmunt. *Listy do Konstantego Gaszyńskiego*. Edited by Zbigniew Sudolski. Warsaw: PIW 1971.
- Miller, Joseph Hillis. *On literature*. Translated by Krzysztof Hoffman. Poznań: Wydawnictwo UAM, 2014.
- Milne, Esther. *Letters, Postcards, Email. Technologies of Presence*. New York–London, Routledge 2010.
- Moczarska, Zofia. Moczarski, Kazimierz. *Życie tak nas głupio rozłącza... Listy więzienne 1946-1956*. Edited by Anna Machcewicz. Warsaw: Biblioteka „Więzi” 2015.
- Ong, Walter Jackson. „Autor zawsze fikcjonalizuje odbiorcę”, in *Osoba, świadomość, komunikacja*. Antologia. Translated by Józef Japola. Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2010.
- Perec, George. *242 postcards in real colors*, translated by Jacek Olczyk, in G. Perec, *Essays*, translated by Jan Gondowicz, Ewelina Kuniec, Monika Ławniczak, Michał Paweł Markowski, Anna Olczyk, Jacek Olczyk, Tadeusz Pióro, Agata Rębkowska, Ewa Wieleżyńska, Adam Zdrodowski. Edited by: Jacek Olczyk, Cracow: Wydawnictwo Lokator 2012.
- Rypson, Piotr. *Mail Art czyli sztuka poczty*, Warsaw: Akademia Ruchu 1985.
- Sikora, Agata. *List w Od aforyzmu do zinu. Gatunki twórczości słownej*. Edited by Grzegorz Godlewski, Marta Rakoczy, Paweł Rodak. Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego 2014.
- Skwarczyńska, Stefania. *Teoria listu*. Edited by Elżbieta Feliksiak. Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku 2006.
- Szyborska, Wisława. Filipowicz, Kornel. *Najlepiej w życiu ma Twój kot*. Edited by Tomasz Fiałkowski, Sebastian Kudas. Cracow: Znak 2016.
- Z Tobą jednym: listy Marii Pawlikowskiej-Jasnorzewskiej i Stefana Jasnorzewskiego*, edited by Elżbieta Hurnikowa. Warsaw: W.A.B. 2015.

# KEYWORDS

p r e s e n c e

l e t t e r

*M A T E R I A L I T Y*

**MARIA PAWLIKOWSKA-JASNORZEWSKA**

**ABSTRACT:**

The paper discusses the benefits of conceptualizing correspondence as an interpoetic medium. It presents an analysis of textual and visual ways of constructing the presence of the addressee and the sender in letters, and the disruption of constructing this presence caused by interrupting the writing process by a phone call. The paper indicates the fictionalizing role of the addressee and the sender as the condition for creating the “virtual reality” of a letter. It presents basic figures and topoi for acknowledging the presence in correspondence based on the collections of correspondence between: Wisława Szymborska and Kornel Filipowicz, Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska and Stefan Jasnorzewski, Stanisław Barańczak and Lech Dymarski, and Zofia and Kazimierz Moczarscy.

STANISŁAW BARAŃCZAK

KORNEL FILIPOWICZ

Wisława Szymborska

meta-epistolography

*Z b i g n i e w   H e r b e r t*

**NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

Lucyna Marzec – assistant professor at the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology, editor of *Czas Kultury*, member of Rada Naukowa Interdyscyplinarnego Centrum Badań Płci Kulturowej UAM (AMU Scientific Council for the Center of Research into Gender). Her research interests include biographical writing, feminist criticism, and the literary life of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Contact: [lucyna.marzec@amu.edu.pl](mailto:lucyna.marzec@amu.edu.pl).

# GAN and GPT-2 Neural Networks, Worn Words and Creativity, Namely Literary Second-Hand

Inez Okulska

ORCID: 000-0002-1452-9840

‘Everyone writes, but nobody reads’, ‘if you want to write well, first you have to learn the classics, see what the others have created’; these or similar statements have been with writing enthusiasts for a long time. And when I say “old”, I mean really long centuries, because when literary translation did not emancipate itself into a particular genre, it often served as the basis for creative activity. Among the classics, one could call on Jan Kochanowski, Łukasz Górnicki or Adam Mickiewicz, for example, who, inspired by reading others, sat down to create their own works by more or less literally drawing on foreign, already existing works<sup>1</sup>.

Then, how does creativity relate to it?

Without a doubt, we learn about existing works to get inspired; that is, to soak ourselves in patterns, ready-made components, even of the slightest measure, and make new ones out of them. We get to know the existing pieces in order not to euphorically discover something which has been already long ago discovered long ago. Then, finally, we explore existing works in a specific critical context, placed in trends and tendencies, in order to gain taste and distinguish between a work of art and a wreck, between creativity and creature. In this type of reflection, there is always a hopeful question about the possibility of creating something completely new, about the definitions and boundaries of this innovation and, of course, about connections with other artworks.

In the era of art with new and even more recent media, Julia Kristeva’s intertextuality is now replaced by interpoetics, where not only the text, but also the structure, mechanism and algorithm can be a quotation. But even on the level of “usual” human writing, where the material

<sup>1</sup> This has already been mentioned by many, but recently also by Małgorzata Łukaszewicz in her book. Małgorzata Łukaszewicz, *Pięć razy o przekładzie* (Kraków: Karakter, 2018)



is language, its words, phrases, syntax, Mikhail Bakhtin has dispelled all hope: almost every word in the work is its own incarnation, the sum of contexts and meanings it has gained earlier, in other pieces, on different lips. A masterpiece of literature is therefore most frequently an exceptional mixture of old elements, not to say 'hackneyed' ones:

Each statement is associated with "one language". (with centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time with social and historical plurilingualism (centripetal forces, which stratify language). It is the language of the day, of the epoch, of the social group, of the species, of the direction, etc. (...) Every concrete word (statement) finds the object to which it is directed, always, so to speak, already debated, discussed, judged, hidden in a distant fog or, on the contrary, approximated by the light of the words spoken about it earlier. This object is entangled and permeated by common thoughts, views, other people's judgments and accents. A word turned to this object integrates into this dialogically activated and moved environment of other people's words, evaluations and accents, integrates into their complex mutual relations, resembles one another, contrasts with the other, and even crosses with the other<sup>2</sup>.

If the substance, from which we are to create, is limited and still in use, then it appears that 'creativity is not an integral activity, but a relative one. We can be creative within our culture and within our frame of reference'<sup>3</sup>, as the famous mathematician Marcus de Sautoy wrote in his reflections on digital art. In the 1970s, Stanley Fish already pointed to the limitation of creativity associated with immersing oneself in a particular set of cultural references, speaking of interpretative communities<sup>4</sup> that can be explained as follows:

We are what the school, peer group, local authorities, lectures given to us, views recognized by influential representatives of our profession, etc., will make us. Therefore, the protocols of our individual interpretation strategies are always written by the hand of the interpretation community with which we identify ourselves<sup>5</sup>.

It is true that we are only referring to interpretation, i.e. reception, but the same applies to the process of creation, because when we create, we constantly refer to poetics already taught (and expected). The relation, the position taken towards these poetics - approval, contraposition, reduction, contamination, transformation, etc.; that is, all the 'complicated mutual relations' that Bakhtin wrote about - is basically creative.

GAN (Generative Adversarial Networks<sup>6</sup>) is an ideal digital interpretation of creativity defined as creative movement in a specific area of patterns and expectations. The architecture of this type of network implies the existence of a creative duo, from which one network, like an internal child, free of any predefined framework of assumptions, starts to create. This act means a few stages

<sup>2</sup> Michail Bachtin, *Problemy literatury i estetyki*, transl. Wincenty Grajewski (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1982): 102–103

<sup>3</sup> 'Creativity is not an absolute but a relative activity. We are creative within our culture and frame of reference' Marcus du Sautoy, *The creativity code. How AI is learning to write, paint and think* (London: Fourth Estate, 2019): 13.

<sup>4</sup> Stanley Fish, *Interpretacja, retoryka, polityka*, ed. Andrzej Szahaj, introduc. Richard Rorty, transl. A. Szahaj (Kraków: Universitas 2002): 63

<sup>5</sup> Leszek Drong, 'Od konwencjonalizmu do normatywizmu. Kilka uwag o ewolucji poglądów teoretyczno-literackich Stanleya Fisha', *Er(r)go: Teoria-Literatura-Kultura*, Vol.12, nr 1(2006): 25-37.

<sup>6</sup> Find more about architecture of these texts in: Rohith Ghandi, "Generative Adversarial Networks – Explained", access 8.05.2019, <https://towardsdatascience.com/generative-adversarial-networks-explained-34472718707a>

of filtering and arranging random elements (elements of a random vector  $z$ ), which result in the creation of a work of art. It is interesting to wonder, what would Witkacy himself say about such a pure form? Unfortunately, this purity is only temporary and, for the recipient of the final effect of the network operation, unavailable, because, as I have already mentioned, GAN is a duo. The generator creates, but the Discriminator criticizes, and this with the power that many critics could only dream of: the feedback from the twin censor has an immediate impact on the dynamic process of improving the original work. This procedure is repeated as long as the critic is content.

This approach to the creative process involves two sensitive issues: first, the artist is a slave to his critic. Secondly, the critic (and ultimately also the creator) is a slave of the existing, expected patterns, because the censorship network bases its expertise on the 'knowledge' gained from the collection that it learns, i.e. millions of samples of existing "works" (these can be texts, photographs or music or video, depending on what the network is supposed to be specialized in). And the constant struggle between the two networks is that the Generator is trying to create something new that is convincing enough to deceive a critic who will consider them 'real', i.e. most highly probable. A discriminator, therefore, accepts only those works that fit into the patterns known to him. In other words, works that are nothing more than a centenary, a work composed entirely of creatively selected and interconnected quotations, elements that had already existed somewhere in the past. Although the resolution here is slightly different, because the features distinguished in the vector of  $z$  (these "quotations" from taught works) are almost inaccessible to a man (the logic of dividing and separating is far from the natural human categorization into words, objects, colours or shapes), the structural assumption is the same.

The process of creation based solely on new elements and new juxtapositions of already existing elements and referring only to a limited set of expected results may, of course, be rather fatal in the long run, due to the almost exponential development of 'inbreeding'. If networks for generating, editing (such as external Grammarly, built-in functions in text editors) and translating texts are taught on certain corpuses of the texts that meet standards of correctness and style, and are increasingly used by human authors, they can lead to an increasing number of stylistically 'standardised' texts. The release of these texts, however, will increase the probability of their inclusion in the body of teaching data for subsequent networks, and so, step by step, the percentage of participation of this norm in the pool of inspiration will rise, translating into an impoverishment of the range of stylistic or lexical diversity, creating a horrible vision of looping Bakhtin's dialogism<sup>7</sup>.

Fortunately, however, the generation of texts based on this mechanism is not the only form of textual expression, neither machine nor human. Cognitive activist Margaret Boden has distinguished three types of creativity<sup>8</sup>:

1. exploratory, i.e. one that makes it possible to explore existing creations in search of border alternatives while not breaking the rules that have been adopted;

<sup>7</sup> It refers to the modernist idea of "literary language" as correct, normative, sometimes transparent, in the fear of collapse. Such an attitude was visible in the long tradition of translations, which raised the register and smoothed out the original roughness of classical works, which entered into the workflow of inspiration in such an unnecessarily impoverished, normalised form.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret A. Boden, *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms*, (London: Routledge, 2004): xxx

2. combinatory, which allows you to combine elements previously considered to be absolutely irrelevant to each other;

3. transformational, i.e. one which results in real transformations and when the elements considered previously as indisputable change - materials, tools, styles of reception.

The last type seems to be a mixture of juxtaposition and exploration while crossing borders and breaking rules. The key to a creative success powered by this type of creative behaviour is, however, as du Sautoy<sup>9</sup> points out, preparation for failure, because a real breakthrough is usually the last stage of a long journey of completely wrong ideas. Emotional connection with the artwork, the unquantifiable cost of the creative process for a human being often prevents such a cold, almost calculating approach to his own failure, which makes him treat it only as a source of direct information about the course to be taken in the next iteration. Such an approach is what Artificial Intelligence adaptive systems are specialized in.

Since neural network learning for natural language processing is usually an extremely time-consuming process of great processing complexity (often impossible on a regular PC), but also because of the direct benefits of an extended set of learners, pre-trained models are available on the network. Under intriguing names, (such as Transformer, BERT, ELMo, Flair and others) there are models that have already been designed with the right architecture, parameters and huge text corpuses (e.g. current information from all over Wikipedia). Some are designed for a specific task (e.g. sentiment analysis of a text, i.e. whether a statement is positive, neutral or negative); others, such as Google's BERT hybrid, are made for multi-tasking.

Especially in the last case, it is interesting that the teaching sets designed to solve one problem can be used for another, and considering that the problem of prompting words, translating or generating whole texts uses the knowledge of the context and possible combinations distilled from millions of samples of existing texts, it will turn out that quotations from one type of text are successfully used to process another type of text. In other words, following a strictly literary metaphor, it is like a writer writing a fragment of prose using words, expressions, relations and structures derived from poetry, drama or other genres. Which, of course, is a natural mechanism of creation in contemporary literature, where one talks about 'listening' to idiolects, 'street' speech, references to the poetics of new media and the like. Many authors and their critics intuitively felt long ago that such interpoetics, an open and inviting gesture of the artist, bring us closer to good literature and promise a text of good quality. And the AI with its action only proven measurable advantages of this opening to others - models trained on non-specific data sets (i.e. thematically or stylistically corresponding to a given task) generate clearly better results. The transfer of structures can take place not only at the level of the text on which the network learns to create, but also at the level of the architecture of the network itself, so not only the material is borrowed<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Du Sautoy, 39

<sup>10</sup>Marius Pompescu and Radu Tudor Ionescu wrote about the applications of machine learning solutions from the area of image analysis to automatic text analysis; *Knowledge Transfer between Computer Vision and Text Mining*, Bucharest: Springer, 2015, Springer 2015; on the issue of method transfer within the different tasks of natural language processing Lili Mou and al., 'How Transferable are neural networks in NLP applications', *Proceedings of the 2016 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP)* (2016): 478-489.

The GPT-2 model developed by OpenAI was designed to impress with the quality of its work, which focused primarily on generating text completion, machine translation, and question answering. The last task consists mainly of parsing the text, extracting information and reasoning, and will not be crucial for our deliberations, while both the generation of text and the generation of translations are tasks based primarily on intelligent and creative use of billions of quotations, their fragmenting and creative re-composition.

GPT-2 must first identify the poetics of the given fragment and then, in the middle of the “read” (previously learned), identify the poetics of the given fragment and find possibly equivalent poetics, from which it creates a new work corresponding to the style and content of the first paragraph of a text written by a human being. And this model is extremely ‘well-read’, as it uses as much as 40 GB of text data from a total of 45 billion pages (and subpages) published on the Internet. This includes all text genres, from blog posts and portal articles to comments, recipes, consumer reviews and manuals, with the exception of Wikipedia, which has been completely removed from the collection (as it has been too often used by other models). The action of the whole model (whose creators protect, because - as they brag - it is so good that it could be used for some unwanted aims, such as creating very convincing fake news) is really impressive.

The actual entry<sup>11</sup> on the GitHub profile, a social network platform for exchanging files, projects and publishing the code, here from the help file commenting on the configuration of the development environment, has been loaded into the model. The task was to complete this text as much realistically as possible. The result of the algorithm below (original man-made text in blue, added by AI in black):

In Cygwin on Windows I found that I could not set the permissions of my `./ssh/` folder to be 0600, as is required for ssh to allow you to use keys. The symptom I had was that I no matter what I did, it always modified the owner and the group, making these files read-only. I tried just starting ssh and using a program like `passwd` which modifies the owner/group to 0644 permissions, but it didn't work. It was annoying but not nearly as bad as it could be, just annoying to have to fiddle with permissions. So I decided to do this as the reverse: For each `./ssh` folder in your Cygwin directory, set the permission of each file and directory to 2644. Then start ssh with: `ssh-add ./ssh`<sup>12</sup>

The creators of the model claim that it is able to continue the text in a chosen style and indeed, if it was not for the colour of the text, the whole thing would have calmly passed the Turing test, and the place of the fusion would have completely escaped the human eye and ear. As you can see, the algorithm easily ‘felt’ the author, further enclosing his personal self; it also used the words ‘annoying’ and ‘nearly’, which appear in the original document and probably gained priority importance as use-worthy stylistic markers of the author.

<sup>11</sup><https://github.com/lelandbatey/configDebDev/blob/master/helpFiles.md>

<sup>12</sup>Alec Radford i in, “Language Models are Unsupervised Multitask Learners”, technical report, access 20.07.2019, <https://d4mucfpksywv.cloudfront.net/better-language-models/language-models.pdf>

To create this text, however, it was not enough to create a single sample of a given writing, nor to create many works by its author, but this synthetic work consisted of hundreds of thousands of entries from other people, most probably also from the GitHub platform and the absolutely necessary knowledge based in the ‘programming self-help’ mode, i.e. StackOverFlow. It is a platform where users answer each other’s questions about specific problems, often describing their own experiences in an informal and emotionally distinctive way (after all, there are moments when, after many hours of trials, the program becomes jammed and keyboards fly on the wings of frustration).

GPT-2 is also great at dealing with fiction, generating text whose style and imaginativeness could embarrass not only graphomaniacs:

In a shocking finding, scientist discovered a herd of unicorns living in a remote, previously unexplored valley, in the Andes Mountains. Even more surprising to the researchers was the fact that the unicorns spoke perfect English. The scientist named the population, after their distinctive horn, Ovid’s Unicorn. These four-horned, silver-white unicorns were previously unknown to science. (...) Dr. Jorge Perez, an evolutionary biologist from the University of La Paz, and several companions, were exploring the Andes Mountains when they found a small valley, with no other animals or humans. (...) Dr. Perez believes that the unicorns may have originated in Argentina, where the animals were believed to be descendants of a lost race of people who lived there before the arrival of humans in those parts of South America. (...) However, Perez also pointed out that it is likely that the only way of knowing for sure if unicorns are indeed the descendants of a lost alien race is through DNA. ‘But they seem to be able to communicate in English quite well, which I believe is a sign of evolution, or at least a change in social organization,’ said the scientist<sup>13</sup>.

The text uses reported speech and independent speech, there are characters and relationships between them, there are authorities and difficult words, there is magic and mystery, and the world is shown in a colorful way like the rainbow land of unicorns. In the last sentence, there is also a good substitute for humour: a structurally convincing punchline based on a surprising, not evident (and therefore creative) juxtaposition of the development of speech in unicorns with a social organization, which is smuggled in under the cover of a cause and effect conclusion, so suitable for an expert quotation from an archetypical researcher. The network apparently topped the unicorns, because it not only spoke with perfect English, but also with British humour.

The same model was also used to generate a text to be a continuation of the first sentence from Orwell’s novel *1984*<sup>14</sup>. The network was intelligent enough to ‘sense’ a subtly futuristic style:

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.

I was in my car on my way to a new job in Seattle. I put the gas in, put the key in, and then I let it run. I just imagined what the day would be like. A hundred years from now. In 2045, I was a teacher in some school in a poor part of rural China. I started with Chinese history and history of science.

<sup>13</sup>Radford

<sup>14</sup>‘New AI fake text generator may be too dangerous to release, say creators’, *The Guardian*, online article dated 14.02.2019, access 20.07.2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/feb/14/elon-musk-backed-ai-writes-convincing-news-fiction>

Ivana Kajić, a PhD candidate in IT from Waterloo University in Ontario, decided to test the officially available, simplified GPT-2 model on song lyrics<sup>15</sup>. She gave the network, among other things, the first two verses of Ed Sheeran's song *Shape of you*:

The club isn't the best place to find a lover  
 So the bar is where I go  
 Me and my friends at the table doing shots  
 Drinking fast, and then we talk slow

And you come over and start up a conversation with just me  
 And trust me, I'll give it a chance now  
 Take my hand, stop  
 Put "Van the Man" on the jukebox  
 And then we start to dance  
 And now I'm singing like

In the scene there is an indication of a bold interaction between men and women, but there is still a jukebox playing and a desire to dance; the meeting of bodies will be non-literal, with a hint of Irish datedness. In the further part of the original, yes, there are more and more direct images, but within the framework of the assonances and metaphors. The fragment added by the web introduces a completely new poetics, shorter, with a more rhythmic phrase and a stronger subject, and although rhymes are not to be found here in any way, the power of expression (including the surprising 'you better get dressed', suggesting that the situation was more rapidly-developing than we initially thought) is more similar to the lyrics of rap songs:

You know what I mean  
 That's the way it is  
 So please, I know it's weird  
 But I know it's right  
 Because I just tell it  
 And I say 'Hi, nice to meet you  
 You better get dressed'

The text inspirations resulting from the mentioned wide, non-specialized 'erudition' of the web were thus reflected in the work. This model is a reduced version of his genius brother and this reduction manifests itself most clearly in a greater tendency to follow the patterns learned earlier, while at the same time being less able to 'feel' the style of the given fragment, which eventually results in an interesting mix of poetics and a creative exploration of broader possibilities (one step ahead of Chomsky's furious dream of green ideas).

<sup>15</sup>Ivana Kajić, 'Alternate endings: Lyrics completion using GPT-2', access 15.07.2019, <http://www.ivanakajic.me/blog/2019/03/31/alternate-lyrics>



\*\*\*

Generative approach, juggling with quotes, unrestrained style of using various lexicons - brave representatives of OuLiPo, the French school of automatic literature from the 60s, apparently have quite worthy descendants, although it will be rather difficult to describe the life vicissitudes of machines, in vain search of the impulse of heart, broken nerves, bad choices, happiness and everything else that is part of the creative process.

And the real artwork really pleases with the potential of this process. I do not know what the artist felt when he was creating, but how nice it is to assume that he could have felt something at all. Art created by artificial intelligence still appears as "artificial", because it is deprived of this potential; in a word - completely inhuman.

translated by Agnieszka Kocznur

## Bibliography

- Michaił Bachtin, *Problemy literatury i estetyki*, translated by W. Grajewski, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1982
- Margaret A. Boden, *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms*, London: Routledge, 2004
- Leszek Drong, „Od konwencjonalizmu do normatywizmu. Kilka uwag o ewolucji poglądów teoretyczno-literackich Stanleya Fisha”, *Er(r)go: Teoria-Literatura-Kultura*, Vol.12, nr 1(2006): 25-37.
- Stanley Fish, *Interpretacja, retoryka, polityka*, editorial and foreword Andrzej Szahaj, introduction by Richard Rorty, translated by Andrzej Szahaj, Kraków: Universitas, 2002
- Rohith Ghandi, „Generative Adversarial Networks – Explained”, access 8.05.2019, <https://towardsdatascience.com/generative-adversarial-networks-explained-34472718707a>
- Ivana Kajić, „Alternate endings: Lyrics completion using GPT-2”, access 15.07.2019, <http://www.ivanakajic.me/blog/2019/03/31/aiternate-lyrics>
- Agata Kazimierska, „Prawdziwe kłamstwa”, *Tygodnik Powszechny*, online article dated 15.04.2019, access 20.07.2019, <https://www.tygodnikpowszechny.pl/prawdziwe-klamstwa-158508>
- Małgorzata Łukaszewicz, *Pięć razy o przekładzie*, Kraków: Karakter, 2017
- Lili Mou i in, „How Transferable are neural networks in NLP applications”, *Proceedings of the 2016 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP)* (2016): 478-489
- “New AI fake text generator may be too dangerous to release, say creators”, *The Guardian*, online article dated 14.02.2019, access 20.07.2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/feb/14/elon-musk-backed-ai-writes-convincing-news-fiction>
- Marius Pompeşcu i Radu Tudor Ionescu, *Knowledge Transfer between Computer Vision and Text Mining*, Bucharest: Springer, 2015
- Alec Radford i in, „Language Models are Unsupervised Multitask Learners”, technical report, access 20.07.2019, <https://d4mucfpksywv.cloudfront.net/better-language-models/language-models.pdf>
- Marcus du Sautoy, *The creativity code. How AI is learning to write, paint and think*, London: Fourth Estate, 2019

# KEYWORDS

*literary criticism*

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

*machine learning*

**ABSTRACT:**

Is creativity only a human domain? Can a neural network, even the most sophisticated architecture, fed with material created and chosen by man, be creative, and even if it is not a work of art secondary to human beings? Or maybe, as Bakhtin, and behind him Kristeva, wanted, each of our expressions is still destined to be secondary, because this is the nature of language? What is creativity, what can artificial intelligence do, what critical literary reflections can its work induce, especially in the context of intertextual and interpoetic relations? In the article I am searching for answers on the example of functioning of neural networks type GAN and GPT-2 model. Apart from fragments of analyzed texts and references to the theory of literature, there is also an introduction to the structure and essence of the analyzed technological solutions.

## CREATIVITY

*creative writing*

## INTERPOETICS

## INTERTEXTUALITY

### NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:

Inez Okulska - doctor of humanities in the field of literary studies. After going through a colorful humanistic journey (which involved, among others, linguistics, literary comparative studies, cultural studies, philosophy), which ended with a postdoctoral internship at Harvard University, she took up a master's degree in Automatics and Robotics at the Warsaw University of Technology. Currently she is a PhD student at the TIB Doctoral School of the Polish Academy of Sciences in the field of technical computer science. Artificial intelligence methods, and particular methods of natural language processing, which are currently being scientifically researched at the NASK State Research Institute, perfectly combine these distant fields, especially since these methods are most frequently applied from the analysis of literary material.

She published in "Przekładaniec", "Literatura na Świecie", "Czas Kultury", "Poznański Studia Polonistycznych", "Forum Poetyki", and has also presented the results of her research at several national and foreign conferences, both humanities and technical. |

# Over the *Inter-*, in the *Trance-* Circle. Novelizations of Video Games as an Example of Transmedia Narratives

Joanna Sikorska

ORCID: 0000-0002-1345-3979

## Introduction

The aim of this article is to present a novelization of video games as an important element of contemporary, transmedia narrative practices. I present, in the first part of the text, the characteristics of the novelization, taking into account their place in the dynamically changing convergence media landscape, and I consider what functions they play in relation to their audiovisual (in the case of film novelizations) and interactive (in the case of video game novelizations) prototypes. In the second part of the article, these recognitions allow us to reflect on the world-forming potential of the novelization, and in particular on its role in shaping, developing, and expanding, as well as in processing and deforming digital narratives. I present a typology of video game novelizations and indicate that their different types have different functions in creating storyworlds. In examining this hypothesis, I analyse selected examples of novels based on the digital prototype. I limit the research material exclusively to the so-called official novelizations (i.e. written either at the request of developers, who have copyrights and proprietary rights to the game, or with their consent), skipping unofficial novelizations (i.e. created by fans). However, I would like to point out in conclusion that the findings and presented typology can also be used for researching fan novels and stories.

## Convergence and transmediality of the novelizations

Novelization is a process of transforming<sup>1</sup> an audiovisual prototype (film or video game) into a verbal form - into a literary fiction. The authors of the novelization create complex, usually multithreaded plots by repeating and transforming narrations developing in the space of audiovisual media<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, novelizations can be treated as one of the examples of contemporary convergence culture: they are a clear manifestation of the flow of content between the various media (characterized by different ways of representing narration in the world of text<sup>3</sup>) and define new ways of communication with the audience, the participants in popular culture<sup>4</sup>.

The novelization, as one of the forms of convergence culture, is also part of the transmedia marketing strategies, which consist in narrating the text in different media platforms (internet, television, press, etc.). Novelizations are an example of a product which is tied to another product (tie-in<sup>5</sup>) in a sale. They are usually distributed on the market in parallel to the release of a film or video game, accompanied by a related literary message (e.g. Assassin's Creed novels appeared on the market with the distribution of subsequent game titles under the same title). Like other tie-in products, such as figures, posters or t-shirts referring thematically to a film or video game, the novelizations are addressed primarily to the fans of the original text and extend the experience related to it to other aspects of art and life. However, they are characterized by a much greater degree of narrativity than the aforementioned products<sup>6</sup>. Because they are complex narrative forms, they can function independently of their audiovisual prototypes<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In this article I consider the novelization as an example of transformation of an archetypical text into a medium which is different from the original one. I perceive the transformation as Dudley Andrew's preservation of the most important elements of the narrative of a given work, while adapting it to the specific nature of the medium. Dudley Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Kate Newell, *Expanding Adaptation Networks: From Illustration to Novelization* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2017), 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ewa Szczęsna notes that "the narrative (...) is a disposition which can be activated by various signs and which finds its multiple representations in the world of text". In literature, narrations are activated primarily by verbal forms, in film by audiovisual forms, and in video games by interactive forms. Ewa Szczęsna, *Narratologia transmedialna. Teorie, praktyki, wyzwania*, ed. Katarzyna Kaczmarczyk (Kraków: Universitas, 2017), 254.

<sup>4</sup> The convergence culture - as Henry Jenkins, the author of this terminological proposal, points out - is characterized not only by the constant, dynamic flow of content between media platforms, but also by the fact that these contents influence their audience in various ways (among other things, they influence the process of crystallization of fandoms). Henry Jenkins, *Kultura konwergencji. Zderzenie starych i nowych mediów*, trans. by Małgorzata Bernatowicz, Mirosław Filiciak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2007), 9.

<sup>5</sup> Kamilla Elliott, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 127.

<sup>6</sup> Inez Okulska points out the high level of narrative in the novelization, juxtaposing it with other tie-in products, such as figurines that are non-narrative in its approach („Od przekładu intersemiotycznego do produktów typu tie-in, czyli transmedialny storytelling jako strategia tłumaczenia”, *Forum Poetyki*, nr 6 (2016): 56-67). Although I agree with the author that figurines or posters referring to source texts are less narrative than novelizations, it is questionable to completely negate their narrative potential. A figurine presenting, for example, the protagonist Assassin's Creed or the McDonald's set containing a toy referring to a particular audiovisual text may, I presume, have a discursive potential, and therefore „have the ability to produce a thought stream in the perceiving subject, in which each subsequent event is read as dependent on the previous one and as a condition for the next” (Szczęsna, *O myśleniu narracyjnym i jego cyfrowej reprezentacji*, 254-255). This happens, for example, when the viewer - interacting with an object - recreates a sequence from a game in which a particular hero appeared in memory, or interacts with him/her in a ludic way, e.g. pretending that he/she interacts with a specific reproduction of a character from the game. In the above cases, figurines/toys imply the development of a narrative concerning a specific video game (or film or novel), and thus have a narrative potential.

<sup>7</sup> Newell, *Expanding Adaptation Networks: From Illustration to Novelization*, 198.

The high level of narrativity, being a normative quality of the novelization, determines their species boundaries. These are novels (published in paper or electronic form), whose authors present multithreaded plots in various ways transforming the plots of archetypical texts. Novelizations, however, are not xenoencyclopedias<sup>8</sup> and lexicons of diegetic worlds, which primarily have an informative function, extending the knowledge about these worlds<sup>9</sup>.

Novelizations, considered as narrative transformations of the audiovisual prototype, are examples of texts that are not so much intermedial as transmedial. Their creators use only literary means of expression and ways of expression (the novelizations do not fit into the 'phenomena of exchange [means of expression] between different media'<sup>10</sup>, which defines intermedia strategies), in order to develop the story within the space of a medium other than the one in which the novelized text originally manifests itself. In other words, the novelization is about creating transmedia and trans-discursive narratives, narratives that develop not so much between (inter)the media as within the media, „penetrating through and through”<sup>11</sup>. In this way, they complete the audiovisual text in the medium of literature.

Transmediacy and convergence of the analysed phenomena is particularly evident in the case of the latest version of the novelization, namely the novelization of video games. Not only do they transfer the archetypical text to another medium (which is also a quality of film novelizations), but they also reformulate the ways of communication with the audience, the fans of the text. The interactive variation story, which is co-shaped by the user of video games, in the novelization becomes non-interactive and not reconfigurable<sup>12</sup>. The normative quality of the reception of printed text is linearity<sup>13</sup>. This means that the reader cannot decide about the course of the narration and thus participate in the process into which he or she is “included” by interactive narrations. The novelization, a complete, non-ergodic text, therefore performs different communication functions from the video game it transforms.

<sup>8</sup> The xenoencyclopedia, as Krzysztof M. Maj points out, referring to the recognitions of Richard Saint-Gelais, is „a collection of extra-diegetic materials containing additional data that enrich both the text itself and the encyclopedia of a particular genre” (Krzysztof M. Maj, „Ucieczka od linearności. W stronę światocentrycznego modelu narracji transmedialnych”, w *Narratologia transmedialna. Teorie, praktyki, wyzwania*, ed. Katarzyna Kaczmarczyk (Kraków: Universitas, 2017), 302). The key word in this case is “extra-diegetic” - in contrast to the novelizations that transform the plot of an archetypical text, xenoencyclopedias transmit information about the structures and principles that construct the represented world, but do not develop or modify the plot.

<sup>9</sup> Gary K. Wolfe, *Critical Terms for Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 1986), 83.

<sup>10</sup> Yvonne Spielmann, *Intermedialität. Das System Peter Greenaway* (München: Verlag Wilhelm Fink, 1998), 31-32. Polish translation by: Konrad Chmielecki, „Intermedialność jako fenomen ponowoczesnej kultury”, *Kultura Współczesna* 52, nr 2 (2007): 118-137.

<sup>11</sup> Maj, *Ucieczka od linearności. W stronę światocentrycznego modelu narracji transmedialnych*, 288.

<sup>12</sup> Lev Manovich points out that the receptiveness to reconfiguration, i.e. variability, is a distinctive feature of new media (the author does not use the term interactive media, replacing it with the term new media). The researcher explains that: „A new media object is not something fixed once and for all but can exist in different, potentially infinite, versions”. Lev Manovich, *The language of New Media* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2001), 36.

<sup>13</sup> Szczęsna, *O myśleniu narracyjnym i jego cyfrowej reprezentacji*, 266. Obviously, there are examples of non-linear printed texts, such as the *A Hundred Thousand Billion Poems* by Raymond Queneau, but they are a kind of avant-garde, a literary experiment, not a publishing standard. In a similar way, there are examples of interactive novelizations online (e.g. *Mass Effect: Pick Your Path*, mentioned in this article), but they are mostly created by fans, so they do not fit into the „official” novelizations circulation.



The enjoyment of a game user comes from the ability to communicate with the software<sup>14</sup>. The player gives commands to the system (which “revises” these commands, either filling them in or rejecting them) and thus influences the shape and the progress of the game. Navigation in interactive reality enables the occurrence of immersion phenomena: the impression of non-mediatized involvement in the diegetic world and engagement in this world<sup>15</sup>. The purpose of the novelization, in turn, is to simulate the experience of being immersed in the world presented outside the act of playing; the recipient (fan) experiences the world of playing as if outside its digital source. The novelization of video games can be considered a form of world-forming practice. It consists of updating digital narratives in literature. Such novelizations are therefore an important composite of contemporary transmedia worlds.

### The typology of novelizations of video games

The practice of novelization of audiovisual texts, the origins of which date back to the 1920s<sup>16</sup>, is nowadays extremely popular, especially in the United States. Novelizations are an important element of American cultural industries<sup>17</sup>. Their creators propagate the discourse about audiovisual texts through literature. They make narrations more appealing because they complement them (e.g. they present completely new characters, locations and events<sup>18</sup>) and expand them with new contexts (e.g. they explain the genesis of the presented worlds or build their mythology<sup>19</sup>). It also means that novelizations - using the language of transmedia narratologists - develop the world of storyworlds<sup>20</sup>.

As Piotr Kubiński pointed out, referring to the recognition of researchers such as Marie-Laure Ryan and David Herman:

<sup>14</sup>Andrew Mactavish, „Technological Pleasure: The Performance and Narrative of Technology in Half-Life and other High-Tech Computer Games”, w *Screenplay: Cinema/Videogames/Interfaces*, ed. Geoff King, Tanya Krzywinska (London: Wallflower Press, 2002), 47.

<sup>15</sup>Piotr Kubiński, *Gry wideo. Zarys poetyki* (Kraków: Universitas, 2016), 44.

<sup>16</sup>It is also important to mention that the film novelizations were initially published in the form of episode novels reprinted in the press. They began to be distributed as printed books only at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s. One of the first novels of this kind was a novel based on French New Wave film *The 400 Blows* by Francois Truffaut (1959). Newell, *Expanding Adaptation Networks: From Illustration to Novelization*, 27.

<sup>17</sup>The term “culture industry” was first used by Theodor W. Adorno in his book *Dialectics of Enlightenment* published in 1947. The author wanted to draw attention to the progressive fusion of culture and entertainment, the consequence of which is the marketization or commercialization of culture. The novelizations are a vivid example of cultural industries, because they do not hide their commercial character, nor do they predestine them to be works of literary art. Researchers usually classify them as examples of secondary texts (because they copy archetypical texts) and non-authors’ texts, which results from the fact that novelizations are often written by ghostwriters. Jan Baetens, „From Screen to Text: Novelization, the Hidden Continent”, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, ed. Deborah Cartmell, Imelda Whelehan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 226-227.

<sup>18</sup>see. e.g. the novelization of *Dead Island: The Book* (Mark Morris, 2011), *Deus Ex: Black Light* (James Swallow, 2016).

<sup>19</sup>see. e.g. analysed in this chapter novelization of *Bioshock: Rapture* created by John Shirley (2011).

<sup>20</sup>The polish translation of storyworld („światoopowieść”), which I use in this article, is the first terminological proposal of Piotr Kubiński presented in the work „Gry wideo w świetle narratologii transmedialnej oraz koncepcji światoopowieści (storyworld)”, *Tekstualia* 43, nr 4 (2015): 23-36.. For more on storyworld concepts in the research of transmedia narratologists, see, among others, *Narrative across Media: The Languages of Storytelling*, edited by Marie-Laure Ryan (Lincoln-London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004) and *Storyworlds across Media. Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, edited by Marie-Laure Ryan, Jan-Noël Thon (Lincoln-London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014).

The term storyworld refers to the world evoked by the narrative text - it is therefore a global cognitive representation of events and their broad context (...), which is reconstructed on the basis of the indications contained in the text<sup>21</sup>.

The specificity of the story lies in the idea that its individual elements ("events with their broad context") can be transformed by various media (film, video games, comics, literature, music, theatre, visual arts, etc.) in any way they want. For example, the "settling" characters are an important element of the world-story. In video games, the user usually plays the role of a specific hero (the player's avatar), through whom he navigates the diegetic world and participates in events taking place in virtual reality. It may happen, however, that in the novelization of the video game this hero will be replaced by a whole new protagonist<sup>22</sup>, which will have a major impact on the evolution of the narrative of this storyworld. The storyworlds therefore change dynamically. They are shaped by various texts that describe the same world of narration, but in a different way (which is partly due to the specificity of the medium in which the text has been produced) and in different contexts.

The creators of video game novelizations use various types of them to explain, supplement, process and expand the storyworlds. The novelization, treated as a world-forming practice, is not homogeneous. There are three main types of novelizations of video games that have different functions in the creation of the storyworld:

- a) explanatory novelizations;
- b) alternative novelizations;
- c) simultaneous novelizations.

**a) explanatory novelizations.** Transformations of digital texts into literary language usually have explanatory functions. They present the origin of the events in which the user participates during the game (e.g. *Dragon Age: The Stolen Throne*, David Gaider, 2009), supplement the information on the fate of the avatar before the game (e.g.: *The Stolen Throne*, David Gaider, 2009; *Deus Ex: Icarus Effect*, James Swallow, 2014) or after events in the game (e.g. *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood*, Oliver Bowden, 2010) and expand one's knowledge of the presented world - its history, mythology, politics and economy (e.g. *Bot Colony*, Eugene Joseph, 2010). Such novelizations therefore explain the narratives and extend the storyworld with new plots. They can take the form of a prequel, which is the most popular version of explanatory novelization, or a midquel or sequel.

The use of non-linear narration in video games allows users to have personalised, diverse gameplay. Individual plots as well as the ending of the game change depending on the decisions made by the player during gameplay<sup>23</sup>. The variability of narration means that developers of non-linear

<sup>21</sup>Piotr Kubiński, „Cyfrowe światopowieści. Narracyjność gier wideo”, in: *Narratologia transmedialna. Teorie, praktyki, wyzwania*, red. Katarzyna Kaczmarczyk (Kraków: Universitas, 2017), 318.

<sup>22</sup>This is the case, among others, in *Dishonored's* novelization *The Return of Daud* (Adam Christopher, 2018). The protagonist in the video game *Dishonored* (Arkane Studios, 2012) is the imperial governor Corvo Attano, while in the novel, the author presents individual events (both those presented in the game and those completely new) from the perspective of Dauda, one of Corvo's antagonists and opponents.

<sup>23</sup>I perceive *gameplay* as a set of rules and mechanisms enabling the user to interact with the software and, consequently, navigate in the virtual reality. Nick Iuppa, Terry Borst, *Story and Simulations for Serious Games: Tales from the Trenches* (Burlington-Oxford: Focal Press, 2007), 17.

video game novelizations usually describe events that predate the game plot (see *Borderlands: The Fallen*, John Shirley, 2011; *Mass Effect: Revelation*, Drew Karpysyn, 2007). Referring to the events that the user co-creates during the game, results in the necessity to choose one of the many possibilities of development and game ending. If this is not the ending the player experienced during the gameplay, the novelization loses its explanatory potential. It does not explain individual aspects of the story but creates alternative versions. Therefore, the novelizations of non-linear games most often have the character of prequels, which broaden the boundaries of knowledge and understanding of various narrative worlds. These are kind of literary preludes that explain and specify particular models of „dynamically changing situations<sup>24</sup>„ that make up the storyworld.

For example, in the game *BioShock* (2K Boston, 2007), a player travels through the man-made underwater city of Rapture. Built in the 1940s, the metropolis is self-sufficient, geothermally powered and located on the seabed of the Atlantic Ocean. The idea of its designers was to realize the vision of absolute utopia - it was inhabited by people who were considered virtuous, empathic and guided by the principle of social equality. The user travels through the Rapture at a time of its greatest crisis, when the paradise city is being transformed into a war-torn, corrupt and dangerous place (*BioShock* is an example of a fantastic scientific anti-utopia). The player's goal is to investigate the current situation in the metropolis and find out why the residents of Rapture stopped contacting people on the surface of the earth. During the gameplay, the user finds audio recordings that gradually explain the reasons for the destabilization of the city. Finding the recordings is facultative<sup>25</sup> and is not a condition for finishing the game, so the player can skip the search for them during the game or find only part of the audio content. In this situation, the player will not gain knowledge about the social, political and economic situation of the Rapture. Moreover, even if he discovers all the sound clips, he will only learn about the events that took place in the last months of the game world and that directly led to the crisis in the underwater arcadia,- but he will not be able to learn details about the origin of the city.

*BioShock Update: Rapture* presents the background to the construction of a metropolis, the ideas behind its creation and how their first inhabitants have been chosen. Its author, John Shirley<sup>26</sup>, fills in the narrative gaps; it updates the events that in the video game were the source of the “incomplete determinacy<sup>27</sup>” of the narrative, and thus adds what was only suggested in the digital original. In this way, the novelization expands the *BioShock* storyworld: it constructs the history and legend of Rapture, and thus contributes to the establishment of the canons of the existence of this world.

<sup>24</sup>Marie-Laure Ryan, „Story/Worlds/Media: Tuning the Instruments of a Media-Conscious Narratology”, in: *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan, Jan-Noël Thon (Lincoln-London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 33.

<sup>25</sup>The audio clips in the *BioShock* game play the role of a so-called pickups. Pickups are interactive objects that have been placed by their creators in specific locations within the game. Their discovery can - as is the case with *BioShock* - complement the knowledge of the world presented or increase the level of experience of the characters (e.g. *Tomb Raider*, Square Enix, 2013), or provide extra-energetic information (e.g. finding conceptual sketches in the game *Wolfenstein: The New Colossus*, MachineGames, 2017). However, collecting pickups is not necessary to achieve the end of each stage of the game. Rudolf Kremens, *Level Design: Concept, Theory, and Practice* (Massachusetts: Tylor & Francis, 2009), 286.

<sup>26</sup>It is also interesting to note that John Shirley is an author who specializes in writing novelizations. He has novelized both video games (apart from *BioShock*'s novelization *Rapture*, *Borderlands: The Fallen*, 2011 and *Halo: Broken Circle*, 2014) as films (e.g. *Constantine*, 2005).

<sup>27</sup>Leszek Brogowski, „Struktura konkretności i miejsca niedookreślenia u Ingardena”, *Teksty Drugie* 21, nr 3 (1993): 63-80.

Explanatory novelizations, especially prequels, describe the genesis of the world presented (or the characters inhabiting this world and the events taking place in it) and root the world-story in a network of transmedia narratives. They allow the audience (fans) to feel the world more clearly (using the term Mikhail M. Bakhtin<sup>28</sup>) or „worldness”<sup>29</sup>. In this way, they stimulate the imagination and immerse the audience in the story beyond the interactive medium of a video game, complementing their knowledge of the reality presented by means of a highly narrativised form of presentation.

**b) alternative novelizations.** The way of developing the storyworld in explanatory novelizations is closely related to the canonical work. Their creators refer to the archetypal text - they supplement and explain its individual aspects, but they do not change or deform individual variants of the plot. Change and deformation, as a way of influencing the narrative, are characteristic of alternative novelizations. They update the storyworlds (especially its key elements, such as characters and individual events), and thus thoroughly re-model the canon. Alternative novelizations create semi-cansons<sup>30</sup>; they construct storyworlds that show a different (often optional and facultative) version of the plot.

The novel *Alan Wake* (Rick Burroughs, 2010), based on a video game under the same title (Remedy Entertainment, 2010), provides a notable example of an alternative novelization. For the most part, it repeats events in which the user participates during the game. It tells the story of Alan Wake, an acclaimed horror writer struggling with writer's block. The protagonist, together with his wife Alice, travels to the small town of Bright Falls to find inspiration for the new novel. Shortly after arriving, Alice disappears in mysterious circumstances and Alan tries to find her, struggling with the dark forces that successively overtake the town. The author of the novelization initially makes slight changes in relation to the plot of the game; first of all, he develops the stories of independent characters<sup>31</sup>, giving them more important functions in the novel in relation to the role they play in the game. The alternative character of the novel is fully revealed at the end of the novel; it is different from that which is presented in the video game. The plot of the game ends with a scene in which Alan sacrifices himself, voluntarily giving himself up to the dark forces of Bright Falls to save his wife. The author of the novelization, on the other hand, made a significant difference in the end, thereby changing the focalizer of the story.

The perceptive subject „who filters out the world represented by his/her consciousness and fills it with sensual data”<sup>32</sup>, is in Alice's last chapter. A woman, immersed in meditation, stands on the shores of a lake, where she meets the sheriff of Bright Falls. During the conversation, Alice reveals to the sheriff that she has a feeling that Alan will never come back to her again.

<sup>28</sup>Bakhtin M, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's poetics*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

<sup>29</sup>Maj, *Ucieczka od linearności. W stronę światocentrycznego modelu narracji transmedialnych*, 294.

<sup>30</sup>The term *semi-canon* was proposed by Jason Mittell in relation to film novelizations. I believe, however, that this concept is so universal that it turns out to be functional also in the research on the novelizations of video games. Jason Mittell, *Strategies of Storytelling on Transmedia Television*, in *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, edited by Marie-Laure Ryan, Jan-Noël Thon (Lincoln-London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 258.

<sup>31</sup>*Non-player characters* is a general term for all software-controlled heroes in video games. Kathryn E. Merrick, *Computational Models of Motivation for Game-Playing Agents* (Canberra: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 45.

<sup>32</sup>This is how Robert Birkholc - referring to the concept of Mike Bal - characterizes the category of a focalizer. Robert Birkholc, „Subjectively mediated narration. Around the issue of „seemingly dependent speech” in film”, *Studia Europaea Gnesnensia*, no. 14 (2016), 143-158.

The different, unclear ending of the novelization does not negate what the player had experienced during the gameplay, but gives this experience a new interpretative context: perhaps what happened to Alan was just an image in his mind, an idea for a book that the protagonist was looking for in Bright Falls. Above all, however, the change of the focalizer in the epilogue of the novel is intended to stimulate the emotions of the audience. The above solution can be treated as a defamiliarization<sup>33</sup>; through it, the author reorganizes and reinterprets the existing structure of the text in order to induce certain effects in the readers, such as uncertainty (did the events presented in the game/book really happen?), surprise (was Alice never kidnapped?) and intrigue (what really happened to Alan?). An important element of alternative novelizations is therefore a peculiar game with reception habits. They create semicanones - they develop the storyworld in a different, unexpected direction. Thus, they serve a fuller, more emotional immersion of fans in the transmedia narrative.

One of the key mechanisms of immersion is the recipient's ability to feel compassion with characters and events. Readers/users/viewers design their own emotions and experiences for the presented reality, which makes them engage in it emotionally. Semicanonic alternative novelizations create various illusions that encourage the viewer to take specific emotional attitudes<sup>34</sup>. They reformulate, deform or reinterpret individual plot motifs and thus question the previous habits of reception, often causing effect of discomfort<sup>35</sup>, shock and astonishment. The main function of alternative novelizations in creating the world of the story is, therefore, on the one hand, to go beyond the boundaries of canonical narrative and, on the other, to provoke discussion on possible ways of its development.

**c) simultaneous novelizations.** The plots of simultaneous novelizations develop simultaneously to the plots of archetypal texts. Simultaneousness in this context means that novelties of this type are closely connected with the digital prototype by space-time dependencies (events in the novelization take place in the same space-time continuum as events in a video game). In other words, the chronotope of the novel is identical to the chronotope of the game that the novelization transforms<sup>36</sup>. The authors of simultaneous novelizations create novels that have a repetitive

<sup>33</sup>I refer to the concept of defamiliarization [*ostranienie*] by Viktor Shklovsky. The researcher pointed out that such ways of organizing a literary text that make it difficult to perceive it can be considered as tricks. By means of tricks, the authors process the form of a work, and the aim of their application is to make the existing motifs, themes and images seem unconventional to the reader because they are presented in an original way. Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique". *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1998.

<sup>34</sup>Edgar Morin, *The Cinema, Or The Imaginary Man*. Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2005, 220.

<sup>35</sup>Therefore, the novelizations that change and process the individual elements of the digital original often meet with criticism from fans who do not agree to include them in the official canon. See, among others, the discussion on the novelization of *Mass Effect: Deception* by William C. Dietza, 2012.

<sup>36</sup>Chronotop is a term proposed by Mikhail M. Bakhtin, who defines it as follows: „We will give the name chronotope (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. This term [space-time] is employed in mathematics, and was introduced as part of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. The special meaning it has in relativity theory is not important for our purposes; we are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely). What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space). We understand the chronotope as a formally constitutive category of literature; we will not deal with the chronotope in other areas of culture. In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope." Bakhtin Mikhail M., „Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel". In *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: Univ. Texas Press, 1981, 84–85.

character (they repeat a digital story in the medium of literature, e.g. *Ico: Castle in the Mist*, Miyuki Miyabe, 2011) and complementary (they present new characters, absent from the game, whose stories develop in the same time-space as the game's action, e.g. *Dead Island: The Book*).

Simultaneous novelizations usually follow - as a related literary product - video games, in which gameplay becomes more important than telling stories. These include logic games (e.g. *Ico*, *Team Ico*, 2001), where the player solves complex logic puzzles and action games (e.g. *Dishonored*; *Dead Island*, *Techland*, 2011) - designers of such games create complex gameplay mechanics<sup>37</sup> that enable various interactions with the software. The limited storyline in these types of games is compensated for by the possibility of reconfiguration of individual elements of virtual reality. The purpose of simultaneous novelizations is to fill in the narrative gaps and to clarify the variety of feature information that appears as a result of the concentration of game creators on gameplay.

In the Japanese game *Ico*, the user controls the title character, a boy who, due to horns growing on his head, is banished from his village and imprisoned in an abandoned castle. He meets Yordda, the daughter of a demonic queen, who wants to use the girl's body to extend her own existence. The user's goal is to get the protagonists out of the castle. In order to achieve epiphany<sup>38</sup>, the player must solve a number of puzzles correctly. The above plot - referring to Japanese folk tales and legends - is barely outlined in the video game and has been significantly expanded in the novelization *Ico: Castle in The Mist*.

The author, Miyauki Miyabe, has focused on describing the evolving relationships between protagonists, as well as complementing the story world about the context of Japanese mythology. The above novelization is characterized by repetitiveness (it repeats the plot themes that exist in the game), but also completes the narration (e.g. the reader learns about the attitude of the protagonists towards the events they participate in). More detailed history, nuanced psychology of characters and comparison with real myths of Japanese culture make the storyworld plausible and achieve a peculiar effect of reality<sup>39</sup>. The novelization not only complements the numerous places of uncertainty that appear in the digital narration, but also allows to create an illusion (defined by Barthes as a referential illusion<sup>40</sup>) that the viewer has to do with a believable simulation of reality.

Thus, the narratives of simultaneous novelizations have the character of peculiar iterations. They repeat specific plots and motifs of an archetypical text in the medium of literature. Just like explanatory novelizations, they have cognitive functions: they complement individual world stories with new epistemic and interpretative contexts. In contrast to the first type of novelizations, how-

<sup>37</sup>The term *gameplay mechanics* describes the individual rules and mechanisms that make up the gameplay.

<sup>38</sup>Espen Aarseth calls the obstacles appearing in video games aporias. The author considers the category of aporias in a philosophical context, pointing out that it is a seemingly unbearable difficulty, but it can be solved in various ways. Gameplay consists of a series of aporias, and the appropriate use of gameplay mechanics by the player leads to a reduction in the number of aporaries and thus enables a gradual solution to further avatar problems. Once the user has overcome the difficulties, epiphanies are achieved. Aarseth thus determines the satisfaction that a player feels in achieving his gameplay goals. Espen Aarseth, "Aporia and Epiphany in Doom and The Speaking Clock: The Temporality of Ergodic Art", in *Cyberspace Textuality: Computer Technology and Literary Theory*, edited by Marie-Laure Ryan (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999), 37.

<sup>39</sup>I consider the „effect of reality“ (*l'effet de réel*) the same way as R. Barthes did in his article. Roland Barthes, „L'effet de réel“. *Communications* 11, no. 1. (1968): 84-89.

<sup>40</sup>Barthes, 124-125.

ever, simultaneous novelizations develop in the same space-time continuum as video game plots. The aim of using an identical chronotope is not so much to create completely new models of story-worlds as to increase their emotional expressiveness. Simultaneous novelizations create more colourful, fuller (especially in terms of character psychology) and often more courageous narrations than those types of video games in which designers focus on gameplay rather than storytelling.

## Conclusion

The practice of novelizing audiovisual texts highlights the tendency of convergent contemporary culture to develop narratives on different media platforms. Film and video game makers aspire to intensify the flow of content between different media. This is due both to economic issues (the novelizations are, after all, examples of tie-in products) and to the aspirations of film producers and video game distributors to unite fans around particular narrative worlds.

Literary novelizations, interpenetrating the media landscape with audiovisual and interactive texts, are a form of world-forming practice. They transform specific elements of various transmedia worlds. They allow particular aspects of the world of stories (events, characters) to develop dynamically and fluidly beyond the archetypical text. This kind of world-forming strategy, consistently “practiced” by video game producers, gives them some control over the shaping of fandom. They supervise the development of the world-story, and thus stimulate the immersion of fans in narrations beyond their source: they extend the discourse about a given text to other aspects of the life of the audience.

Of course, equally important in the landscape of contemporary transmedia narratives is the „grass-roots” novelization movement, i.e. a scenario in which the fans - on their own initiative - supplement the world stories in the space of literature. The typology presented in the article can also be used to study fan novelizations. These include simultaneous novelizations (e.g. *Mass Effect: Pick Your Path*, Mike Kayatta<sup>41</sup>) as well as explanatory and alternative novels (an interesting combination of both types of novelizations is the *Fallout - Novel project*, i.e. a book published on the Internet, consisting of twenty chapters, was written by a Polish anonymous author and refers to the game *Fallout*, Interplay Productions, 1997<sup>42</sup>). In this article, I concentrated on official amendments, to present how they transform (shape, complement, transform, and deform) various storyworlds, and to indicate how the medium of literature is used for the development of transmedia narratives. I believe, however, that in future research on the novelization of video games (especially in the Polish context, where this phenomenon has not been subject to a comprehensive analysis), it is worth looking at fan novelizations and their role in shaping the storyworlds. Especially interesting in this context are the interactive novelizations (e.g. the aforementioned *Mass Effect: Pick Your Path*), which come into being in a way at the meeting point of video games and literature and use the means of expression appropriate for both media. They are therefore an example of not only trans- but also inter-media practices.

translated by Agnieszka Kocznur

<sup>41</sup>The novel *Mass Effect: Pick Your Path* is accessible at <http://www.escapistmagazine.com/articles/view/video-games/columns/pickyourpath/9514-Pick-Your-Path-Mass-Effect> [access: 5.10.2019].

<sup>42</sup>*Fallout - Novel* is accessible at <http://fallout-novel.blogspot.com/> [access: 5.10.2019].



## Bibliography

- Aarseth, Espen, „Aporia and Epiphany in Doom and The Speaking Clock: The Temporality of Ergodic Art”. In: *Cyberspace Textuality: Computer Technology and Literary Theory*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan, 31-41. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999.
- Andrew, Dudley, *Concepts in Film Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Bakhtin Mikhail M., „Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel”. In *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: Univ. Texas Press, 1981.
- Bakhtin Mikhail M., *Problems of Dostoyevsky's poetics*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Baetens, Jan, „From Screen to Text: Novelization, the Hidden Continent”. In: *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, ed. Deborah Cartmell, Imelda Whelehan, 226-238. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Barthes Roland, „L'effet de réel”. *Communications* 11, no. 1. (1968): 84-89.
- Birkholc, Robert, „Narracja subiektywnie zapośredniczona. Wokół zagadnienia „mowy pozornie zależnej” w filmie”. *Studia Europaea Gnesnensia*, nr 14 (2016): 143-158.
- Brogowski, Leszek, „Struktura konkretności i miejsca niedookreślenia u Ingardena”. *Teksty Drugie* 21, nr 3 (1993): 63-80.
- Chmielecki, Konrad, „Intermedialność jako fenomen ponowoczesnej kultury”. *Kultura Współczesna* 52, nr 2 (2007): 118-137.
- Elliott, Kamilla, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Iuppa, Nick, Borst, Terry, *Story and Simulations for Serious Games: Tales from the Trenches*. Burlington-Oxford: Focal Press, 2007.
- Jenkins, Henry, *Kultura konwergencji. Zderzenie starych i nowych mediów*. Trans. Małgorzata Bernatowicz, Mirosław Filiciak. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2007.
- Kremens, Rudolf, *Level Design: Concept, Theory, and Practice*. Massachusetts: Tylor & Francis, 2009.
- Kubiński, Piotr, „Cyfrowe światopowieści. Narracyjność gier wideo”. In: *Narratologia transmedialna. Teorie, praktyki, wyzwania*, ed. Katarzyna Kaczmarczyk, 309-336. Kraków: Universitas, 2017.
- Kubiński, Piotr, „Gry wideo w świetle narratologii transmedialnej oraz koncepcji światopowieści (storyworld)”. *Tekstualia* 43, nr 4 (2015): 23-36.
- Kubiński, Piotr, *Gry wideo. Zarys poetyki*. Kraków: Universitas, 2016.
- Mactavish, Andrew, „Technological Pleasure: The Performance and Narrative of Technology in Half-Life and other High-Tech Computer Games”. in: *Screenplay: Cinema/Videogames/Interfaces*, ed. Geoff King, Tanya Krzywinska, 33-49. London: Wallflower Press, 2002.
- Maj, Krzysztof M., „Ucieczka od linearności. W stronę światocentrycznego modelu narracji transmedialnych”. In: *Narratologia transmedialna. Teorie, praktyki, wyzwania*, ed. Katarzyna Kaczmarczyk, 283-308. Kraków: Universitas, 2017.
- Lev Manovich, *The language of New Media*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2001.
- Merrick, Kathryn E., *Computational Models of Motivation for Game-Playing Agents*. Canberra: Springer International Publishing, 2016.
- Mittell, Jason, „Strategies of Storytelling on Transmedia Television”. In: *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan, Jan-Noël Thon, 253-277. Lincoln-London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014.
- Edgar Morin, *The Cinema, Or The Imaginary Man*, Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2005.
- Newell, Kate, *Expanding Adaptation Networks: From Illustration to Novelization*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Okulska, Inez, „Od przekładu intersemiotycznego do produktów typu tie-in, czyli transmedialny storytelling jako strategia tłumaczenia”. *Forum Poetyki*, nr 6 (2016): 56-67.
- Ryan Marie-Laure, „Story/Worlds/Media: Tuning the Instruments of a Media-Conscious Narratology”. In: *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, ed. Marie-

- Laure Ryan, Jan-Noël Thon, 25-49. Lincoln-London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014.
- Katarzyna Kaczmarczyk, 253-282. Kraków: Universitas, 2017.
- Spielmann, Yvonne, *Intermedialität. Das System Peter Greenaway*. München: Verlag Wilhelm Fink, 1998.
- Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique". In: *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 1998.
- Szczęsna, Ewa, „O myśleniu narracyjnym i jego cyfrowej reprezentacji”. In: *Narratologia transmedialna. Teorie, praktyki, wyzwania*, ed.
- Wolfe, Gary K., *Critical Terms for Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 1986.

## The quoted novelizations

- Bowden, Oliver, *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood*, London 2010.
- games/columns/pickyourpath/9514-Pick-Your-Path-Mass-Effect [access: 5 października 2019].
- Burroughs, Rick, *Alan Wake*, New York 2010.
- Miyabe, Miyuki, *Ico: Castle in the Mist*, San Francisco 2011.
- Christopher, Adam, *Dishonored: The Return of Daud*, London 2018.
- Morris, Mark, *Dead Island: The Book*, London 2011.
- Dietz, William C., *Mass Effect: Deception*, New York 2012.
- Shirley, John, *Bioshock: Rapture*, New York 2011.
- Fallout – Novel*, access <http://fallout-novel.blogspot.com/> [access: 5 października 2019].
- Shirley, John, *Borderlands: The Fallen*, New York 2011.
- Gaider, David, *Dragon Age: The Stolen Throne*, New York 2009.
- Shirley, John, *Halo: Broken Circle*, New York 2014.
- Joseph, Eugene, *Bot Colony*, New York 2010.
- Swallow, James, *Deus Ex: Black Light*, London 2016.
- Karpyshyn, Drew, *Mass Effect: Revelation*, New York 2007.
- Swallow, James, *Deus Ex: Icarus Effect*, London 2014.
- Kayatta, Micke, *Mass Effect: Pick Your Path*, dostępne pod adresem <http://www.escapistmagazine.com/articles/view/video->

## The quoted video games

- Alan Wake*, Remedy Entertainment, 2010.
- Ico*, Team Ico, 2001.
- BioShock*, 2K Boston, 2007.
- Tomb Raider*, Square Enix, 2013.
- Dead Island*, Techland, 2011.
- Wolfenstein: The New Colossus*, MachineGames, 2017.
- Dishonored*, Arkane Studios, 2012.

# KEYWORDS

novelization

CONVERGENCE CULTURE

transmedia narration

**ABSTRACT:**

The article consists of two parts: in the first, theoretical part, the author characterizes the novelizations taking into account their place in the contemporary cultural and media landscape. In the author's view, the novelizing, i.e. transforming audiovisual texts into a medium of literature, is an example of transmedia and convergent world-forming practices. In the second part of the article, the author presents a typology of video game novelizations (exploratory, alternative and simultaneous novelizations). She analyses chosen examples of novelizations, and on this basis, she concludes about the functions that their particular types perform in the creation of storyworlds.

*w o r l d - c r e a t i o n*

## VIDEO GAMES

*s t o r y w o r l d*

### **NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

Joanna Sikorska - born 1990; PhD; Assistant Professor at the Institute of Film, Media and Audiovisual Arts at the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań; her research interests include widely defined relations between video games and film, in particular the ways of using and reinterpreting film poetics in digital games; author of articles on film science and horror published, among the others, in „Images. The International Journal of European Film, Performing Arts and Audiovisual Communication”, „Studia Europaea Gnesnensia” and „Perspektywy Ponowoczesności”. |

# The Screenshot as a Poetic Device: Tomasz Pułka's Graphic Posts on the *Cichy Nabiau* Art-Blog

Paulina Chorzewska

ORCID 0000-0002-9524-1944

All collections of poems published by Tomasz Pułka during his lifetime and posthumously present the artist's oeuvre as purely "analogue," thus obliterating the important cultural context associated with the functioning of his poetry on the web. The poems that Pułka originally published on the Internet<sup>1</sup> were later republished (partially in altered versions) in printed books. However, other Internet works (including musical, textual and graphic publications on the *Cichy Nabiau* blog, three personal blogs,<sup>2</sup> the website [niedoczytania.pl](http://niedoczytania.pl) and the autobiographical column *Impresje rudnickie* (Rudnik impressions) published on the website of the publishing house Ha!Art have not been analysed by critics in more detail.

<sup>1</sup> Pułka published his works under many pen names (Tomaszek Halfka, [ftnsdh76aa9 dnh6sa789](https://www.ftnsdh76aa9.dnh6sa789), page down, halfka, ida niespój, Fernando Pessoa, Kopcimy Cygaro, Joachim Jernev) on [poezja-poska.pl](http://poezja-poska.pl), [nieszufłada.pl](http://nieszufłada.pl) and [liternet.pl](http://liternet.pl).

<sup>2</sup> See: [www.insertjazz.blogspot.com](http://www.insertjazz.blogspot.com), [www.techwych.blogspot.com](http://www.techwych.blogspot.com), [www.wehleiderrang.blogspot.com](http://www.wehleiderrang.blogspot.com) [date of access 28 April 2018].

What essentially justifies the practice of reading Pułka's digital and analogue works concurrently, i.e. interpoetically, are his graphic posts (screenshots) on the *Cichy Nabiau* art-blog, in which the poems interact with digital interfaces. Pułka tested the meanings of his poetry, placing it in the textual and graphic context of the user's interface. He would then take a screenshot of the interface. This strategy, in which two metaphorical planes, the language of poetry and the language of the interface, intertwine, inspires reflection on the relationship between textuality, digital image, the cultural significance of photographic practices and the status of the screen as a tool and creative space for writing poetry.

## The screenshot as a poetic device

The screenshot may be compared to the photograph taken in virtual space. What is displayed on the screen at the time of the screenshot is reduced (both technically and culturally) to graphics only. In addition, the photographed screen is "frozen" and the user cannot interact with the interface shown in the digital image. The hypertext, the deep structure of the dynamic screen, is flattened out.<sup>3</sup> Taking a screenshot is tantamount to "cropping" and saving a specific element of space; it expresses the subjective, individual view of the user who is constantly aware of the existence of "the space of the screen" and what remains outside.<sup>4</sup> Lev Manovich, commenting on the computer screen, points out that we refer to what we see on the screen in real time as an image only conventionally.<sup>5</sup> The screenshot is based on reversing this principle; it is an operation that allows one to freeze the selected image. While the screen in real-time still shows the present, it becomes readable again in the future, acting as a "visual souvenir."<sup>6</sup>

In order to describe the relationship between text, image, and technicalities involved in their coexistence on the screen, it is necessary to pay attention to the seemingly invisible and symbolically neutral element: the interface. The dictionary of media terminology defines the interface as "a device, an electronic system or a software used to exchange information between computer components, programs or between the computer and the user."<sup>7</sup> In the context of Pułka's poetic screenshot, this concept refers to different (inter)dependencies and meanings: the photographed screen is an "input-output device" and thus may be classified as a man-machine interface,<sup>8</sup> while taking the screenshot is the result of using the in-

<sup>3</sup> Lev Manovich, *The language of new media* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), 76-77.

<sup>4</sup> See: Manovich, 91. Manovich emphasizes that the interface is non-transparent not only at the level of program design and data organization, but also at the level of usability. He calls the screen an "aggressive" medium: "It functions to filter, to screen out, to take over, rendering non-existent whatever is outside its frame;" see: Manovich, 100.

<sup>5</sup> Manovich, 112.

<sup>6</sup> Janusz Musiał, *Fotografia jako przestrzeń kulturowa. Obraz – media – autor*, Ph.D. thesis supervised by Andrzej Gwóźdź (Katowice: Wydział Filologiczny UŚ, 2008), p.121.

<sup>7</sup> Jasionowicz Marcin, "Interfejs" [Interface], in: *Słownik terminologii medialnej*, ed. Walery Pisarek, (Warsaw: Universitas, 2006). Piotr Kubiński emphasizes that "the advantage of this broad definition is that it brings out the communicative aspect of the phenomenon in question," see: Piotr Kubiński, "Graficzny interfejs użytkownika jako zjawisko semiotyczne," in: *Przekaz digitalny: Z zagadnień semiotyki, semantyki i komunikacji cyfrowej*, ed. Ewa Szczęsna, (Warsaw: Universitas, 2015), 68.

<sup>8</sup> Manovich, 80.

terface.<sup>9</sup> Most importantly, when we consider the poetic aspect, the screenshot often shows the interface of a particular software, for example, Microsoft Paint or a popular browser.

In the case of Tomasz Pułka's poetic screenshots, we can talk about a juxtaposition of two metaphorical planes: the language of the poem and the language of the interface (specifically the metaphors used for its design, which, just like natural language, give rise to certain models of the world).<sup>10</sup> Manovich, in the context of the language of cultural interfaces, gives examples of metaphors encoded in the digital culture at the level of interface design. The scholar distinguishes between the hierarchical model, based on logic; the network, hypertext, and centerless model, which is "based on metonymy;"<sup>11</sup> and the database model, which is based on the metaphor of the catalog.<sup>12</sup> Commenting on the graphical user interface, Jay David Bolter talks about the metaphor of the desk, emphasizing that the desktop "gives us the world as an information processing environment – an efficient office in which documents and data are effortlessly produced and digested."<sup>13</sup>

Bez tytułu [Untitled] (processed poem:  
Solec zdroj (2) from the collection Zespół Szkół [School])

The first version of the processed poem *Solec zdroj (2)* was published on [nieszufłada.pl](http://nieszufłada.pl) in February 2010.<sup>14</sup> Already after five minutes, Pułka added a comment in which he referred to the screenshot: "I did not paste it well. You can find the correct version here." The poem, which had been posted on the webpage five minutes earlier, was presented in the context of the user interface. The same graphic was also (half an hour later) posted as a separate entry on the blog *Cichy Nabiau*.<sup>15</sup> A poem with the same title (which was nevertheless partially rewritten) was included in the collection *Zespół Szkół [School]* (June 2010).<sup>16</sup>

A webpage devoted to poetry, as a communication space, was presented using the image of its interface (a communication tool), which draws attention to the communicative aspect of the poetic practice and internal ways of communicating meanings in the poem, but also the way poetry and the poet function in the collective imagination. The screenshot posted by the author documents the poem in a specific moment in time; it shows the poem just before its publication, where the poem is ready, but not yet accessible to a wider audience. By taking the screenshot of the [nieszufłada.pl](http://nieszufłada.pl) interface, Pułka shows not only his "workshop," but also the limitations that the poetic interface poses for the author at the time of writing.

<sup>9</sup> Manovich writes that "HCI also includes ways of manipulating this data, i.e. a grammar of meaningful actions which the user can perform on it", 80.

<sup>10</sup> Manovich, 90.

<sup>11</sup> Manovitch.

<sup>12</sup> Manovitch, 101.

<sup>13</sup> Jay David Bolter, *Writing space*, (New York: Routledge, 1991), 51.

<sup>14</sup> Kopcimy Cygaro [Tomasz Pułka], *Solec Zdrój (2)*, [www.nieszufłada.pl/klasa.asp?idklasy=143808&idautora=10461&rodzaj=5](http://www.nieszufłada.pl/klasa.asp?idklasy=143808&idautora=10461&rodzaj=5) [date of access 08 May 2018].

<sup>15</sup> PUŁKA\ [Tomasz Pułka], *Bez Tytułu*, [www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/2010/02/blog-post\\_13.html?zx=5b2de8a8703e2d5a](http://www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/2010/02/blog-post_13.html?zx=5b2de8a8703e2d5a) [date of access 8 May 2018].

<sup>16</sup> Tomasz Pułka, *Solec Zdrój (2)*, in *Zespół Szkół*, (Kraków: Ha!art, 2010), 37.



This screenshot demonstrates that the poet, while writing, is limited by the “grammar of meaningful actions that the user can perform”<sup>17</sup>, defined by the traditional poem. An avant-garde approach to the poetic tradition and the focus on the role of the poet and poetry are common themes in Pułka’s poetry.<sup>18</sup> The screenshot with the poem *Solec zdroj* (2) is a visual rendition of this reflection. The text of the poem is surrounded with all that is usually invisible in a paper volume, which is nevertheless rooted in thinking about a classic poetic text. This function is fulfilled by showing the image of the poem with the interface windows: the title is framed (it is worth paying attention to the spatial metaphor of the frame which points to the notions of bordering, limiting, closing). The title is placed above the text, but it must be definitely shorter; the text must be read vertically.<sup>19</sup> The title must be expressed by words (and not, for example, rendered by means of images or sounds). One can also decide not to provide the title, as indicated by the comment “if the text has no title, leave this field empty.” There is no such commentary next to the “Text” field, where one types in the main, obligatory, part of the poem. Pułka frames the screenshot so that the message “Record file (mp3)” is still visible. However, we do not see an empty field; Pułka merely demonstrates that there is such a possibility, thus referring to the oral tradition of poetry and to the fact that the interface of *nieszuflada.pl*, but also the poet’s interface, conditioned by traditional practices, allows one to recite or sing poetry.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, poetry can be recorded, but what caused Pułka’s “error” is that it cannot be drawn or photographed. Only in the commentary does the author post the “correct” version of the poem in the graphic file. The error, caused by the limitations of the webpage, illustrates that it is not possible (or at least it is not possible at first) to show the image as seen through the eyes of the other participant in the communicative act. Pułka’s poetical practice may be described by means of the metaphor of the reverse, which appears in the title of the poet’s debut collection of poems.<sup>21</sup> The poet shows the reverse of the interface, the communicative space as seen through the eyes of the creator. Also, in the text of the poem, sensual perception and emotional reactions (“tenderness”) have been inverted (shown “in reverse”). Their “value” is reversed as well. Pułka postulates checking one’s point of view, “copying eyewitnessing,” and questioning one’s perspective.

The next reversal, showing the reverse, takes place in the next part of the poem. Two lines placed at the bottom of the screen may exemplify how the perception and the method of “constructing” the text postulated in the first part can be practically implemented. The sen-

<sup>17</sup>Manovich, 90.

<sup>18</sup>See: Tomasz Pułka, “Manifest dobrodzieja”, in *Cennik*, (Poznań: Wydawnictwo WBPiCAK, 2012), 32-33.

<sup>19</sup>Pułka questioned the basic principles of writing poetry. It is exemplified by a poem in which the title is at the end. See: Tomasz Pułka, “Tytuł na końcu” in *Wybieganie z raju. 2006-2012*, ed. Joanna Mueller, Krzysztof Sztafa, (Stronie Śląskie: Biuro Literackie, 2017): 238. Antoni Zając wrote about the nonlinear character of Pułka’s poems. See: Antoni Zając, *Światło rozgaszone do białości. Poet(e)ologia Tomasza Pułki – uwagi wstępne*, [www.malyformat.com/2017/08/swiatlo-rozgaszone-do-bialosci-poeteologia-tomasza-pulki-uwagi-wstepne/#\\_ftnref1](http://www.malyformat.com/2017/08/swiatlo-rozgaszone-do-bialosci-poeteologia-tomasza-pulki-uwagi-wstepne/#_ftnref1) [date of access 14 May 2018].

<sup>20</sup>The opposition between seeing and hearing as well as the motif of the seen word and the written word are strongly present in Pułka’s posthumous collection of poems *Cennik*. See: Pułka, *Cennik*.

<sup>21</sup>Tomasz Pułka, *Rewers*, (Nowa Ruda: Mamiko, 2006). Igor Stokfiszewski wrote about the notion of the reverse; see: Igor Stokfiszewski, “Tezy o postpoezji”, in *Zwrot polityczny*, (Warsaw: Krytyka Polityczna, 2009), 113-131.

tence "Martwa natura przedstawiająca naczynia suszące (bierność) swojej mokrości" [Still life showing dishes drying (the passivity of) their wetness] describes a certain image (the content is available thanks to the sense of sight). However, both the still life and the dishes are subjects that have been partially, at least at the level of language, personified by grammatical forms ("showing" and "drying"). The ambiguity of the word "showing" is also interesting in this context. One can show oneself to others or show something to someone. Something can be shown in the picture. Subsequent layers of meaning are revealed after combining "showing" with "eyewitnessing." Both words suggest visual perception, the perception of what is visible. In Polish, both words also involve a spatial context, as indicated by the forms "pre-" in "przedstawiać" [showing] and "na-" i "naoczność" [eyewitnessing]. The last sentence reads "Czego nie wywołasz wymieni osnowę" [What you won't call, will change the warp]. It refers to the language of computer science (one can call a command or call a software function), but it refers to the metaphor of the reverse. The content will change depending on the meaning you choose. Your recommendations (as the subject endowed with agency) and your decisions will "change the warp." In this context, it is worth paying attention to the opposition of sight and speech. "Calling," which results in the loss of agency, the loosening of the "warp," refers to shouting and to emotional, uncontrolled, anxious and loud speech. "Eyewitnessing," in opposition to "calling," symbolizes looking and perception over which one may have control. It is "checked by copying."

Pułka also suggests reversal by graphic means. The single empty parenthesis that separates the words "(situation)" and "(passivity)" in the printed volume has been multiplied to fifteen in the digital version. In the screenshot, this graphic element resembles a road, a tunnel, or a channel – it makes communication and movement possible, but also suggests semantic distance between both concepts. The words "situation" and "passivity" can be treated as keywords, summaries, or notes on the margins of the main text of the poem. The graphical arrangement of the words suggests that "situation" may turn into "passivity." The brackets indicate that both spatial and temporal (in the digital version of the poem the temporal aspect is "multiplied") conditions are necessary for such a transition.

The poem printed in the traditional book form was deprived of one more textual element. The fragment "Łuszcz jak i pozostali członkowie grupy Kaliber 44 był uzależniony od marihuany" [Łuszcz and other members of the hip-hop group Kaliber 44 were addicted to marijuana] serves as a motto and a quote. It appears at the very beginning of the text. Putting quotation marks around the sentence without providing the source seems intriguing. If we copy and paste the sentence into Google, it turns out that the quote comes from Wikipedia – an online encyclopedia with numerous anonymous contributors meant to promote the sharing of knowledge.<sup>22</sup> Pułka introduces the context of psychoactive substances, which is inscribed in the poem read *à rebours*. Psychedelic substances may be the gateway to sensual feeling in reverse. The motto/quote, which only appears in the digital version of the poem, was inserted

<sup>22</sup>In the current version of the Wikipedia article, the sentence reads: "Łuszcz, as well as other members of Kaliber 44, abused marijuana." See: [www.pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magik\\_\(raper\)](http://www.pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magik_(raper)) [date of access 11 May 2018]. However, on the Internet, we can find the version of the sentence used by Pułka. See: [www.photoblog.pl/raptownerealia/52754482/26-s-p-magik.html](http://www.photoblog.pl/raptownerealia/52754482/26-s-p-magik.html), [www.f.kafeteria.pl/temat/f1/jest-tu-jakis-fan-hiphopu-kto-to-byl-magik-i-jak-zginal-jakis-kaliber44-p\\_4247091](http://www.f.kafeteria.pl/temat/f1/jest-tu-jakis-fan-hiphopu-kto-to-byl-magik-i-jak-zginal-jakis-kaliber44-p_4247091) [date of access 11 May 2018].

into the text by means of the copy-and-paste operation. It further highlights the motif of copying and fragments related to programming language. Pułka thematizes the manner in which he creates text. He does not copy anything in the printed version of the poem, thus emphasizing the unique status of the text in digital space.

Strajk Śmieciarzy [Garbage strike] (using poems *Ambitna* [Ambitious] and *Groźna* [Dangerous] from the collection *Autarkia* [Autarky])

In his graphic post *Strajk śmieciarzy*,<sup>23</sup> Pułka posted two poems from *Autarkia*, which follow one other in the same order as in the printed version.<sup>24</sup> In the digital version, Pułka did not include the titles of the poems (*Ambitna* and *Groźna*<sup>25</sup>), extracting them from the coherent<sup>26</sup> conceptual space of the entire collection. However, (as the title *Autarkia* suggests), we are still dealing with the questions of economy, the individual, and society.

Glitch aesthetics,<sup>27</sup> the fact that the file posted by Pułka is broken, draws attention to the graphic elements of the screenshot. The texts of both poems are blurred. It means that reading them is not an obvious perceptual choice. The user “reads” the text as an element of the picture, which draws attention to the materiality of the language sign. Pułka’s *screenshot* has been titled twice. The title of the blog post is *Strajk śmieciarzy*, while the file attached to the blog entry is titled *funkcja2* [function2]. The title of the file can be compared to a note that helps one catalog digital elements in a personal archive (due to the fact that it is not directly visible to the reader of the blog, but also due to the very functionality of file names). In contrast, the file name *funkcja2* does not directly duplicate other titles or lexical elements from the quoted poems; instead, it refers to relations between work (function as a position which involves performing specific duties), unnecessary matter, and the economic system (function of a given program), which regulates relations between these elements.

Pułka took a screenshot of a TV series. The poet did not take the screenshot of a specific interface that is easily recognizable to other users, but of a “general” application used for playing or editing video files. Due to the subjective and “cropped” framing, it is difficult to determine the relationship between the text and the video image in the interface. Poems pasted by the poet may, for example, be in a place intended for the subtitles or description of the film. By taking the screenshot of the interface, including the icons by means of which one can edit the film, Pułka shows the video screen in the interactive environment of the computer screen. Manovich, writing about the dynamic (cinema, television) screen, drew attention to

<sup>23</sup>PULKA\ [Tomasz Pułka], *Strajk śmieciarzy*, [www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/2011/04/strajk-smieciarzy.html](http://www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/2011/04/strajk-smieciarzy.html) (date of access 20 May 2018).

<sup>24</sup>Pułka, “Ambitna”, “Groźna”, in: *Wybieganie z raju 2006-2012*, 343-344.

<sup>25</sup>In the original Polish text, the titles of the quoted poems are distinguished by their female grammatical forms. Other titles in *Autarkia* do not imply a female subject.

<sup>26</sup>Paweł Kaczmarek emphasized the conceptual nature of *Autarkia* in his critical commentary. See: Paweł Kaczmarek, “Sinusoida: O metodzie poetyckiej Tomasza Pułki”, in: Pułka, *Wybieganie z raju. 2006-2012*, 406.

<sup>27</sup>See: *Glitch art is dead*, ed. Aleksandra Pieńkosz, Piotr Płucienniczak, (Web / Cracow: Rozdzielczość Chleba, 2016).

“the viewing regime,” which “is possible because a single image (...) occupies the screen.”<sup>28</sup> “A screen’s image strives for complete illusion and visual plenitude, while the viewer is asked to suspend disbelief and to identify with the image.”<sup>29</sup> Pułka took the screenshot of the opening scene of a popular TV series, whose title explains the title of the blog post: “Mr. Monk and the garbage strike.”<sup>30</sup> In the scene, a TV reporter is walking through a city full of waste and garbage and talking about the longest garbage strike in the history of San Francisco. The context of the dynamic screen in Pułka’s screenshot, the theme of TV reporting, and a pop-cultural take on a social problem point to the relationship between the message of the media and the garbage strike, which is a visible (manifesting itself in the garbage seen on the streets) breakdown of the economic system.<sup>31</sup> In the series, the garbage strike is presented not as a problem of the employees, but as a problem of the people of San Francisco; the city, quite unexpectedly, has become a hostile space. The TV reporter in the opening scene says that “so far the people of San Francisco can be very proud of themselves. No one is panicking. In fact, it seems everybody is rising to the occasion, coming together and taking this latest crisis in stride.”<sup>32</sup> Detective Monk, who is trying to reassure the striking garbagemen, says: “I am not technically a sanitation worker although I have always felt like one in spirit.” He later adds: “I know money is important. But that’s not why you guys became garbage men, is it? You’re doing God’s work out there. You’re keeping the streets clean for the people. Right? You do it, say it with me, ‘for the people.’”<sup>33</sup> At the end of the episode, the smiling and hard-working garbagemen are praised for their great work by the detective who solved the case, restoring peace in the city. Then, the garbagemen thank Mr. Monk, saying, “Anything you want, Mr. Monk, you let us know.” Thanks to his excellent memory and his analytical abilities, Mr. Monk has improved the lives of San Francisco residents, restored order and averted the crisis. The same ease in manipulating the problem shown in the TV series is suggested by placing the image of the effects of the strike in the context of the interface that may be controlled intuitively. This is further emphasized by the fact that the icons (i.e. the tools that allow you to control the image and thus the problem) are the sharpest and the most legible element from all the elements visible in the screenshot.

In *Strajk śmieciarzy*, Pułka does not frame the image evenly and does not erase unnecessary elements of the interface. Although the poet does not directly refer to creative techniques used in glitch art, when analysed in the context of the theme of the poems and the scene from *Mr. Monk*, the poor quality of the graphics posted on the blog and the uneven framing of the screenshot (the screenshot does not even show some of the icons in full) imply glitch aesthetics. It manifests itself in blurred graphics and pixelated images. The authors of critical texts collected in the anthology *Glitch art is dead* point out that glitch exposes the “seams of technology,”<sup>34</sup> “reflects (...) the knowledge of technology operates and reveals (...) how limited

<sup>28</sup>Manovich, 96.

<sup>29</sup>Manovich.

<sup>30</sup>*Mr. Monk and the Garbage Strike*, season 5, episode 2, dir. by Jerry Levine, written by Andy Breckman, Daniel Gaeta, 2006.

<sup>31</sup>See: Piotr Płucienniczak, “Control Cannot Hold: Polityka hałasu, ekonomia usterek”, *Ha!art*, no. 37 (2012): 66-76.

<sup>32</sup>*Mr. Monk and the Garbage Strike*.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup>Jakub Mihilewicz, “Glitch is dead”, in: *Glitch art is dead*, 72.

it is.”<sup>35</sup> A glitch “makes the invisible visible.”<sup>36</sup> The *glitched* image of a street flooded with rubbish demonstrates the seams of the waste management system, the seams of the economic system and the seams of the urban ecosystem. In this context, living in a metropolis is similar to using a computer, a technology in which “hardware disappears,”<sup>37</sup> similarly to how all actions that help maintain order are no longer visible for the people. Both glitch and garbage are by-products.<sup>38</sup> The blurry pixelated graphic file is e-waste, “garbage without matter,” a worthless digital object.<sup>39</sup> The double title, *Strajk śmieciarzy* and *funkcja2*,<sup>40</sup> seems to suggest that the digital and systemic glitches are not worthless.

The texts of the two poems in the screenshot seem to confirm the interpretative tropes related to glitch aesthetics and pop culture. The two-verse poem, which reads “Naprawić rude miasto, truje się „Czytelnik”/kropla rosy jak mój sąsiad robi z tego notatki” [Fix the red city, it is poisoning itself like the “Reader”/ a drop of dew as my neighbor is taking notes], can be read in direct reference to the episode of *Mr. Monk*. The first half of the first verse sounds like a postulate, the problem that is discussed in the TV series. The verb “fix” suggests the existence of a glitch, while the mention of the “red city” can be linked to industrial production, and thus also environmental pollution, rust, and dirt. In the second part of the verse (it is poisoning itself like the “Reader”), the image of a corrupt city is maintained, by means of references to environmental pollution. The protagonist of the poem, “the Reader,” may refer to the potential viewer of the pop-culture product. The viewer/ the “Reader” realizes what the problem is which is. It is commented on in the next verse, which reads: “a drop of dew as my neighbour is taking notes.” Dew symbolizes the beginning of a new day, cleansing, and natural order; when combined with taking notes, they indicate the beginning of noticing (realizing) that the problem exists. Taking notes involves using words, but also (just like reading) it is a “personal” action – which refers us to the title of the collection: *Autarkia*. By placing quotation marks around the word reader, Pułka distances himself from the quoted word. In connection with “poisoning,” Pułka further poses questions about the (personal) practice of reading, suggesting that it may be harmful. The questions of community and individuality return in “my neighbour.” The possessive pronoun and the noun that is associated with the physical everyday “togetherness” in space is contrasted with the practice (as individual as reading) of writing or taking notes.

Literary meta-reflections in the context of social problems also appear in the second poem included by Pułka in the screenshot. The subject in the first two verses presents himself by means of description, outlines his position, comparing himself to a jumping lamb. When

<sup>35</sup>Matthew Austin, “We can be heroes”: On the nature of glitch art,” in: *Glitch art is dead*, 83.

<sup>36</sup>Austin, 82.

<sup>37</sup>Mihilewicz, 71.

<sup>38</sup>Tomasz Misiak writes about noise as a product and noise as excess: Tomasz Misiak, “Pięć pojęć szumu: Audiowizualne gry w Compression Sound Art Johannes Kreidler”, *Halart*, no. 37 (2012): 76-82.

<sup>39</sup>Aleksandra Kil, “Teoria cyberśmieci: O napięciach między materialnością i niematerialnością w refleksji nad nowymi mediami”, *Teksty Drugie* no. 3 (2014): 162.

<sup>40</sup>The title of the file (*funkcja2*) can be read as a meta-creative commentary on recycling artistic waste e-matter. Piotr Pułdzian Płucienniczak thus writes about glitch: “It is undoubtedly a kind of alternative economy – it is as if we are bartering trash found in the opencast mine or building a house from bottles, artificial flowers, and tires.” See: Płucienniczak, 70.

read literally, it creates an energetic image. When read in the context of religion, it is a rather mocking vision. The subject is "Ocalony dzięki kwalifikacjom" [Saved thanks to qualifications], i.e. professional skills, and "wiesza porządkowe / przesłaniem estetyki" [hangs the order / by the message of aesthetics], which can be read as sentencing people who care about order (municipal services) or more abstractly, ordinal (hierarchical) numbers, to death. Therefore, the message of aesthetics is a tool for killing hierarchy and order. The speaking "I" seems to be inconsistent. He "chełpi się stratą" [boasts of loss], thus claiming that he is better than others and emphasizes his importance. However, Pułka plays with the ambiguity of the word "loss," which refers to the loss of something valuable, an emotional loss, suffering, but also a material loss, or negative financial results. Meanings collide further. "we / wczesnych spiżowych zjednoczeniach" [in / early bronze unions] brings to mind an image of an armed struggle which takes place in the common interest of united subjects. In the context of the subsequent meta-reflections, Pułka's "bronze unions" bring to mind Horace's "monument more lasting than bronze." Pułka again uses other people's words and quotes the phrase "Neither art nor literature," which is also quoted in other poems in the same collection. The speaking "I" offensively responds with a disrespectful, broken, though poignant question: "So what?" This strange dialogue can be interpreted as a conversation about the function literature plays, especially as regards its role in social criticism (which often corroborate accusations of "engaged" texts being non-literary). The answer reveals Pułka's ironic approach to the social image of literature. The ironic clash consists in the ambiguity of the words used in a sequence: "Kieliszek, wpływ, gest" [Glass, influence, gesture]. They all treat literature as entertainment. The last two words particularly show the relationship between the language (and functioning in society) of literature and economy. Pułka presents these relationships at the level of specific words that are usually used to comment on art. The word "influence" (in addition to assuming a hierarchical order) refers to the relationship between artists: one of them has power and authority; the other is influenced. The other meaning of the word "wpływ" in Polish is also "income" or "a sum of money paid into the cash register."<sup>41</sup> The gesture of the poet or artist is often said to describe the purpose of his artistic activity as well as the unique nature of his performative work. The word "gesture" also means "a generous act"<sup>42</sup> which echoes the moment of "bragging" we have witnessed before. In the broader context of Pułka's poetry, it is worth noting that the original meaning of the word "gesture" is the movement of the hand.<sup>43</sup> The final verse of the poem is even more bitter: "Projektant kobiecych porozumień" [Designer of women's agreements]. It suggests the superiority of a single entity over a collective entity that is supposedly self-governed and amicable. He, the "Designer" (in the singular), prepares a plan that is to be executed by others.

The digital version of *Strajk śmieciarzy* creates a new aesthetic context for Pułka's texts. *Glitch*, defined as visual stylization, but also a crack in the economic system, error, dirt, and digital waste, draws attention to other cracks also found in the poems *Ambitna* and *Groźna*.

<sup>41</sup>*Słownik języka polskiego PWN*, ed. E. Sobol (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2006), 1165.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibidem*, 228.

<sup>43</sup>Paweł Kaczmarek writes about the connections between the hand, the leg, and the head as one of the interpretative concepts for the analysis of Pułka's poetry. See: Kaczmarek, "Sinusoida: O metodzie poetyckiej Tomasza Pułki", 408.

The graphic posted by Pułka on the blog allows you to read poems in terms of oppositions: dirt - cleanliness, individual - community, waste - something valuable, hierarchy - network, art - economy.

## Conclusion

The analyzed screenshots in which Tomasz Pułka quoted his own poems are but two examples; there are many more similar works. I have found at least three online. Pułka used three poems from the collection *HWDP jako miejsce na ziemi* in the *Wiersz Polecenia* [Command Line] series.<sup>44</sup> It was published on the *Cichy Nabiau* blog<sup>45</sup> and on *liternet.pl*<sup>46</sup> in the form of screenshots. Conceived of as a dialogue, it was copied stanza after stanza to the Windows command line interface that allows you to communicate with the operating system.<sup>47</sup> The poem *Dla Alberto Caeiro*<sup>48</sup> [For Alberto Caeiro] in the digital version was published as a screenshot. We can see the Google Translate interface and the automatic translation of Pułka's poem into Portuguese. Fragments of one of Pułka's poems, *Łuk* [Arch] from the collection *Zespół Szkół*,<sup>49</sup> were copied to a hypertext post entitled *Casanova*.<sup>50</sup>

In the case of Tomasz Pułka's artistic practice, the dialogue between the poem in the screenshot and the poem in the interface takes place between the text of the poem, the text of the interface, the possibilities of the image of the interface, and the emerging metaphors. Pułka transfers the text of a poem from the printed page into digital interfaces, platforms, and files, showing the computer in the era of post-media<sup>51</sup> and commenting on the image of virtual reality experience by the user who is aware of technological limitations. A look from the perspective of the software reveals metaphors contained in seemingly neutral and transparent communication systems.

The screenshot "documents" a temporary and elusive virtual experience by means of an operation that can be performed only at the level of the operating system. Taking screenshots of Google Translate as well as video and text editors on the webpage devoted to poetry is the only way of recording these experiences. The interfaces of these programs do not allow one to save the digital image. Pułka takes screenshots of tools, of what can be called a digital transition space. The juxtaposition of the original and the translated text in Google Translate is usually not a final product, but a merely a draft. The act of typing the text of the poem into the interface of *nieszuflada.pl* is also a transitional step. The final product, the publication of

<sup>44</sup>Pułka, "Wiersz Polecenia (1,2,3)", in: *Wybieganie z raju 2006-2012*, 266-270.

<sup>45</sup>See: [www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/2012/03/?guestAuth=APWGbHphitIX0bxkR1ari\\_hu\\_UbmlO8gL7Ge0cVajkpDhliFZ4Ft5u9m7rCfoCr1a2EEqUrOarNyGJEBsGA4CpdEOR7V](http://www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/2012/03/?guestAuth=APWGbHphitIX0bxkR1ari_hu_UbmlO8gL7Ge0cVajkpDhliFZ4Ft5u9m7rCfoCr1a2EEqUrOarNyGJEBsGA4CpdEOR7V) [date of access 20 May 2018].

<sup>46</sup>[www.halfka.liternet.pl/teksty](http://www.halfka.liternet.pl/teksty) [date of access 06 July 2017].

<sup>47</sup>See: Paulina Chorzewska, *O trzech plikach .jpg Tomasza Pułki*, [www.malyformat.com/2017/08/o-trzech-plikach-jpg-tomasza-pulki](http://www.malyformat.com/2017/08/o-trzech-plikach-jpg-tomasza-pulki) [date of access 20 May 2018].

<sup>48</sup>Pułka, "Dla Alberto Caeiro", in: *Wybieganie z raju 2006-2012*, op. cit., 299.

<sup>49</sup>Pułka, "Łuk", in: *Zespół szkół*, 21.

<sup>50</sup>PULKA\ [Tomasz Pułka], *Casanova*, [www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/search?q=casanova](http://www.cichynabiau.blogspot.com/search?q=casanova) [date of access 12 June 2018].

<sup>51</sup>See: Piotr Celiński, *Postmedia: cyfrowy kod i bazy danych* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2013).



the poem on the webpage devoted to poetry, is usually more significant. Such an approach coincides with several characteristics of Pułka's poetry (distinguished by critics): the destruction of subjectivity<sup>52</sup> and the use of parallax. Paweł Kaczmarek thus comments on the latter: "for Pułka, on the most general level, it is a synonym of the necessary (or rather inevitable) linguistic and cognitive distortion as well as the non-translatability of perceptions and experiences into an idiolect, a poetic gesture or a communicative act."<sup>53</sup>

In his screenshots, Pułka presents poetry in a digital, hypertext, network, and interactive writing field,<sup>54</sup> only to reduce it to graphic images: the flattened screen arrests the temporality and spatiality of the computer screen. The visual space within which the poem functions emphasizes certain interpretative tropes, but it does not change it dramatically. Rather, it duplicates, strengthens, and visualizes communicative structures. As has been demonstrated, it introduces a self-referential context, which also involves engaging with the social functioning of literature and the expectations we have of it.

translated by Agnieszka Kocznur

<sup>52</sup>See: Eliza Kącka, *Ja, którego nie ma*, [www.malyformat.com/2017/08/ja-ktorego-nie-ma/](http://www.malyformat.com/2017/08/ja-ktorego-nie-ma/) [date of access 30 Oct. 2019], M. Koronkiewicz, "Posłowie" in: Tomasz Pułka, *Podczas siebie: Wybór Wierszy* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo WBPiCAK, 2018), 117-127.

<sup>53</sup>Paweł Kaczmarek, "Wzdłuż linii załamania", *Dodatek LITERAcki* no. 8(9) (2011): 16.

<sup>54</sup>See: Bolter

## Bibliography

- Austin, Matthew. "We can be heroes": On the nature of glitch art." In *Glitch art is dead*, edited by Aleksandra Pieńkosz and Piotr Płucienniczak, 78-89. Web/Cracow: Rozdzielczość Chleba, 2016.
- Bolter, Jay David. *Writing space*. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Celiński, Piotr. *Postmedia: Cyfrowy kod i bazy danych*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2013.
- Chorzewska, Paulina. *O trzech plikach .jpg Tomasza Pułki*, [www.malyformat.com/2017/08/o-trzech-plikach-jpg-tomasza-pulki](http://www.malyformat.com/2017/08/o-trzech-plikach-jpg-tomasza-pulki) [date of access 20 May 2018].
- Glitch art is dead*. Edited by Aleksandra Pieńkosz and Piotr Płucienniczak. Online / Cracow: Rozdzielczość Chleba, 2016.
- Jasionowicz Marcin. "Interfejs". In *Słownik terminologii medialnej*, edited by Walery Pisarek, 84. Warsaw: Universitas, 2006.
- Kaczmarek Paweł. "Sinusoida: O metodzie poetyckiej Tomasza Pułki", in Pułka, *Wybieganie z raju. 2006-2012*, 397-408. Stronie Śląskie: Biuro Literackie, 2017.
- Kaczmarek, Paweł. "Wzdłuż linii załamania". *Dodatek LITERACKI* no. 8(9) (2011): 16-17.
- Kącka, Eliza. *Ja, którego nie ma*, [www.malyformat.com/2017/08/ja-ktorego-nie-ma/](http://www.malyformat.com/2017/08/ja-ktorego-nie-ma/) [date of access 30 Oct. 2019].
- Kil, Aleksandra. "Teoria cyberśmięci: O napięciach między materialnością i niematerialnością w refleksji nad nowymi mediami". *Teksty Drugie* no. 3 (2014): 162.
- Koronkiewicz, Marta. "Posłowie" in Tomasz Pułka, *Podczas siebie. Wybór Wierszy*, 117-127. Poznań: Wydawnictwo WBPiCAK, 2018.
- Kubiński, Piotr. "Graficzny interfejs użytkownika jako zjawisko semiotyczne". In *Przekaz digitalny: Z zagadnień semiotyki, semantyki i komunikacji cyfrowej*, edited by Ewa Szczęsna, 67-74. Warsaw: Universitas, 2015.
- Manovich, Lev. *The language of new media*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001.
- Mihilewicz, Jakub. "Glitch is dead". In *Glitch art is dead*, edited by Aleksandra Pieńkosz and Piotr Płucienniczak, 71-76. Internet / Cracow: Rozdzielczość Chleba, 2016.
- Misiak, Tomasz. "Pięć pojęć szumu. Audiowizualne gry w Compression Sound Art Johannes Kreidler". *Ha!art*, no. 37 (2012): 76-82.
- Musiak, Janusz. *Fotografia jako przestrzeń kulturowa: Obraz – media – autor*. Ph.D. thesis written under the supervision of Andrzej Gwóźdź. Katowice: Wydział Filologiczny UŚ, 2008.
- Płucienniczak, Piotr. "Control Cannot Hold. Polityka hałasu, ekonomia usterek". *Ha!art*, no. 37 (2012): 66-76.
- Stokfiszewski, Igor. "Tezy o postpoezji". In *Zwrot polityczny*, 113-132. Warsaw: Krytyka Polityczna, 2009.
- Zając, Antoni. *Światło rozgaszone do białości. Poet(e)ologia Tomasza Pułki – uwagi wstępne*, [www.malyformat.com/2017/08/swiatlo-rozgaszone-do-bialosci-poeteologia-tomasza-pulki-uwagi-wstepne/#\\_ftnref1](http://www.malyformat.com/2017/08/swiatlo-rozgaszone-do-bialosci-poeteologia-tomasza-pulki-uwagi-wstepne/#_ftnref1) [date of access 14 May 2018].

# KEYWORDS

TOMASZ PUŁKA

*digital literature*

glitch aesthetics

**interface**

**ABSTRACT:**

I analyze graphic posts by Tomasz Pułka (posted by the author on the *Cichy Nabiau* blog) which also contain Pułka's poems published in printed poetry collections. I examine two medialities of Pułka's poetry, concentrating on the screenshot, a digital artistic practice used by Pułka to introduce his poetry (i.e. metaphorical texts) into the spaces of various interfaces (which are also metaphorical in their design).

*L i t e r n e t*

SCREEN

contemporary poetry

*screenshot*

**NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

Paulina Chorzewska (b. 1996), student of Polish Philology at the University of Warsaw, editor of the literary magazine *Mały Format*. She is interested in the relationships between literature and the new media.

# Autobiographical Interpoetics.

## Wartime Works by Franciszka and Stefan Themerson

Honorata Sroka

ORCID: 0000-0002-3505-1604

Intermediality and intertextuality are probably among the first words that come to mind in the context of the artistic work of Franciszka and Stefan Themerson. The issue has been undertaken by a number of researchers<sup>1</sup>; however, the purpose of this paper is to pay attention to yet another heterogeneity of those writers. I would like to investigate their intimistics, and so, at the same time, their artistic activity. Their autobiographical practice is understood here in a dual way: on the one hand, as a form of compensating of the intellectual and physical absence of a loved one (documents are a substitute for physical closeness), and on the other hand, as an experience of a break in the work model, which they had been working out for over a decade since 1929, and which relied on the feeling of community as a creative method, understood both as co-creation (children's books, movies) and co-establishment of the ideological fundamentals for artistic work. Separation caused by war is replaced with an autobiographical practice, characterized by interpoetics, i.e. simultaneous preference for numerous formal and discourse organizations within one textual-visual entity. Examples of

<sup>1</sup> See Beata Śniecikowska, „Obraz – dźwięk – słowo – ruch. Intermedialność sztuki Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów”, in *Słowo – obraz – dźwięk. Literatura i sztuki wizualne w koncepcjach polskiej awangardy 1918-1939*, (Cracow: TaiWPN Universitas, 2005); Agnieszka Karpowicz, *Kolaż. Awangardowy gest kreacji: Themerson, Buczkowski, Białoszewski* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2007); Adam Dziadek, “Themerson i Schwitters”, *Teksty Drugie*, No 4 (2006); Ewa Kraskowska, „Tyłem, ale naprzód”. *Studia i szkice o Themersonach*, (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2018); Artur Pruszyński, *Dobre maniere Stefana Themersona* (Gdańsk: słowo/ obraz terytoria, 2004).

this phenomenon include both the preserved documents housed in the Themersons' archive<sup>2</sup>, and a book including a selection of their works from the years 1940-1942 (*Niewysłane listy*<sup>3</sup>). I read this book as a secondarily aesthetized example of an intimistic realization, i.e. a form of subjective interpretation of sources, a kind of representation of war experience of those avant-garde writers<sup>4</sup>. I believe that apart from the first (already mentioned) form of representation in today's autobiographical practices, two other strategies of intimistic realizations can be mentioned: documents (manuscripts, typescripts, original e-mails) and stylizations (mail-art, epistolary novel). The urgent need to highlight these three formulae of representation stems not from the desire to point out methodological differences, but rather the cultural dynamics of intimistic genres.

In my analysis of selected examples, I follow a thought already expressed elsewhere in this volume<sup>5</sup>. However, I need to extend Lucyna Marzec's assumption regarding a description of a letter that the character of epistolography can be defined by considering it to be a mobile medium able to: 1) blur the lines between referentiality and fictionality (user, literacy), 2) absorb other genres (short story, anecdote) and generate completely new ones (epistolary novel), 3) adjust to the new media (e-mails, e-postcards). For the analysis of the Themersons' autobiographical experience, I assume that genre dynamics is an issue that refers to all forms of autobiographical writing (letters, diaries, calendars, autobiographies, CVs, journals, medical records, footnotes, postcards, telegrams, etc.). Moreover, it is also assumed that in the case of personal writing, we can observe the functioning of a text in different functional forms, which is a convention of simultaneous encoding of meanings in many registers. In other words, the meaning of those genres develops within some semantic range related to both the paper medium (written text), parol (a phone call urging to reply a letter), and reading letters out loud, dictating, etc., as well as the whole intimistic ritual, in which a text plays a predominantly performative function (acting for the self, in reference to another person). Continuing this line of thinking, one should also add that intimistic writing can be realized visually (documentaries), digitally (blogs, social media posts, online calendars), and orally (voice recordings of those who cannot write), as well as secondarily aestheticized (edited volumes based on documents).

The indirectness of those two poetics in the case of personal documents can be discussed both on the inter- (between-, co-), as well as trans- (layering, infiltration) levels of formal organization. I will focus on the analysis of examples of the former type, to which I include secondary aestheticizations, or all publications which borrow the form of authentic autobiographical experience through a change of context, reforming the base text into an edited representa-

<sup>2</sup> The major collection belongs to the Department of Manuscripts and Old Prints of the National Library in Warsaw where they function under the name "Archiwum Themersonów". Moreover, a relatively small number of documents are also available at the Museum of Art. In Łódź. It is also known that some documents belong to private collections. Letters and journals from the discussed period have been digitalized and are now available at [polona.pl](https://polona.pl/search/?query=themerson&filters=public:1): <https://polona.pl/search/?query=themerson&filters=public:1>.

<sup>3</sup> Franciszka Themerson, Stefan Themerson, *Niewysłane listy. Dzienniki, rysunki, dokumenty 1940-1942*, (Gdańsk: słowo/ obraz terytoria, 2019).

<sup>4</sup> Although a large number of people worked on this edition, I believed that the most substantial contributions were made by Jasia Reichardt, Nick Wadley and Pedro Cid Proença.

<sup>5</sup> Lucyna Marzec, „Interpoetics of correspondence: figures for constructing presence, fictionalization, and disruptions of presence technologies”, *Forum Poetyki*, nr 18 (2019).

tion. The second type of indirect distribution of autobiographical writing, in which we can observe not only a change of the medium, shifting meanings from one status to another, but also a semantic transformation and enrichment of the functioning of a document, lies beyond the scope of this paper. Such phenomena can be observed in mail-art or in the modern artistic practices diagnosed by Hal Foster as an “archival impulse”<sup>6</sup>, i.e. within a primarily artistic activity using a document as a medium. The difference would thus lie in the change of the means of communication. In other words, transliteration, an edited volume of letters, is a form of translation aiming at increasing the legibility, highlighting the values operated by the editor, whereas including a document into artistic practice changes the basic rule of functioning of a record, subjecting it to new fictionalization within aesthetic rather than intimistic functioning.

By assuming such a method of reading personal writing, I will highlight the rich and varied creative practices of the Themersons from the years 1940-1942, which lie somewhere between autobiographics and artistic activity, revealing a kind of relationship between art and intimistic experience, characteristic for the couple. First and foremost, an analysis of their activity, both documentary (manuscripts, *Niewysłane listy*) and the process of artistic activity (drawings, sketches of notes), as well as consituation<sup>7</sup> (political events, personal temporary caesurae) will be of utmost importance in those aims. Conducting those observations according to the principles of autobiographical poetics stems mostly from the conviction that those organizations complete each other semantically, and capturing them in an intimistic community creates a space for a broader analysis of relationships which take place in different forms of an autobiographical text.

## Secondary aestheticization

The co-existence of textual and visual orders is the fundamental rule of organization of *Niewysłane listy*. It is a collection of letters (sent and unsent), drawings (from the cycle collected under the same title, *Niewysłane listy*), telegrams (in French), postcards, drawings, footnotes, photos, journal entries, excerpts from short stories, official letters, medical records, or – from another perspective – transliterations and reproductions. The rule of combining many poetics into one is done based on putting together selected works by the couple written over the period of two years. The period which defines the senses encoded here is mostly 1940-1942, i.e. a short period of separation between Stefan (who at the time was in France) and Franciszka (who was staying in the UK shortly after being separated from her husband). The year 1938 (i.e. when they arrived in Paris) is present here through the context referred to in the beginning, similarly to the three final years of war (1942-1945).

The caesura of personal chronology – unsurprisingly in the case of intimistics – do not match the default image of a war, dominated by political history. In the case of this pair of artists, the

<sup>6</sup> Hal Foster, “An Archival Impulse”, *October*, No 110 (2004).

<sup>7</sup> I use this term in the meaning proposed by Jan Trzynadlowski, which he defines as an opposition against context (a collection of facts accompanying the production of a text, common qualities of numerous works from a given historical period and place). Consituation is a collection of individual circumstances affecting only intimistic texts. It is a personally experienced expression of culture, social, political, material factors leaving an individual, one-time mark on every record in a different way. See Jan Trzynadlowski, *Małe formy literackie*, (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1977).



years 1939-1945 do not constitute the frame of their lives; instead, there are three other moments, depending on specific, transgression experiences: 1938 (leaving Poland), 1940 (separation) and 1942 (the beginning of living together in London). The chronology related to the life of the Themersons in Poland, which functions here mostly in the form of textual footnotes, and in letters – only when the spouses inform each other on receiving (or not) postcards from Warsaw and Otwock – is less highlighted, but still present within the edited volume. There are three more important dates of their intimistic practice: 25<sup>th</sup> January (Stefan's birthday), 22<sup>nd</sup> June (their wedding anniversary), and 28<sup>th</sup> June (Franciszka's birthday). In one of her letters, Franciszka writes directly about the incompatibility of the personal sense of time and the objectified order of the calendar: "In fact I am writing continuously, because I measure time from one letter to the next, received and written"<sup>8</sup>. The regular rituals related to the celebrations of wedding anniversaries are also characteristic: "I don't know whether you will receive this letter by June 22<sup>nd</sup> [their wedding anniversary]. We start measuring time with anniversaries"<sup>9</sup>. In a different place, the writer replies: "My love, only a few words so they reach you faster. I thought we would be together on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, but now I know it won't be possible. My love, buy yourself some flowers and some gift from me, please. And for your birthday [28<sup>th</sup> June]"<sup>10</sup>.

However, this string of personal events is interrupted by political ones, evident in the contents of documents; for example, a letter from Franciszka from 1<sup>st</sup> September 1941 states, "A date which is so difficult to forget, my love. – How long, long and hard those past two years have been"<sup>11</sup>. Also footnotes, to whose unobvious shape we shall pay attention later, create some space for joining political and personal orders. "In the August of 1941 Hitler declares that «any necessary preparations for the global solution to the Jewish issue in the German area of influence in Europe» shall be undertaken. The policy of exterminating Jews will be implemented first in France, in the spring of 1942: as a result of the Germans' actions one third of the French Jews shall lose their lives"<sup>12</sup>. The juxtaposition of those two excerpts highlights yet another dissonance: what remains in between is the space of the correspondents' awareness, and what I would describe as a historically updated comment present in the footnote. When writing about the Nazi invasion of Poland, Franciszka obviously does not use the later nomenclatures, such as "World War II". For her, the military conflict in question is mostly related to the endangerment of her family in Poland, her own dilemmas concerning going back, being separated from her husband, and a sense of destabilization in her own life, as well as limitations concerning her work. In this sense, the analysis of wartime letters does not fully take in the perspective of images, sensations and knowledge (historical, political, scientific, medical, etc.) close to the recipient, but in a conventional way adjusts the extent of awareness to the editor.

As already mentioned, the footnotes of this edition are a somewhat interesting editorial choice. The strategy applied for them shifts the concept of the functions of references taken in publications. For instance, we will not find there any biographical notes of the persons who appear

<sup>8</sup> Themerson, Themerson, *Niewysłane listy*, p. 289.

<sup>9</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 216.

<sup>10</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 348.

<sup>11</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 248.

<sup>12</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 235.

in the contents of the letter or extensive descriptions that would acquaint the reader with the specificity of source texts. Such a form of footnotes directs us towards fictionalization and takes us away from the traditionally understood—for this space—agreement with the recipient of the poetics of the concrete, precision and detail. The typological arrangement is also important: instead of placing two footnotes at the bottom of a page (which is common editorial practice), the editors incorporated footnotes into the main text, in a slightly less obvious way than transliterations. In the introduction, Jasia Reichardt writes directly that: “The title of the story is *Niewysłane listy* because this is how Franciszka called a series of her drawings”<sup>13</sup>. The word “story” repeated several times sets the reading frame for this book; it is not an attempt at a transparent expression of some experiences represented by documents, but rather a narrative based on a source. The footnotes are the most obvious example of this approach. Similarly to the movie technique, they resemble “off camera narration”, which leads the reader through the experience designed within the book: „For now Sewek remains outside of the Warsaw ghetto, but in the October of 1941 he goes there to be with his family”<sup>14</sup>, or “Stefan still makes lists of topics which he could use in his writing or movies – but «Szkice» from the journal play the role of first-draft notes to the poem *Croquis dans les ténèbres* [Sketches in Darkness]”<sup>15</sup>.

The organization of this volume is based predominantly on its biographical multi-genre character, with its own internal hierarchy. All the forms of creative expression function here in a complementary way, and although epistolography is the most represented genre compared to others, one can only understand the intimistic and artistic dimension of the wartime artistic activity of the Themersons only after juxtaposing all their written and visual autobiographical practices.

## Wartime artistic activity of the Themersons

The subject of World Wars – both I and II – is a recurring element of the Themersons’ writing. The question of the issue of trauma in Stefan’s texts, analyzed by Justyna Jaworska<sup>16</sup>, among others, gives some idea of the importance of this problem and its materialization in his artistic space. What interests me is not the issue of the access point undertaken by Jaworska (autobiographical elements in the works of both spouses), but the starting point (raw forms of conceptualizing experiences). For me, this issue is a borderline problem between art and autobiography; however, I do not see those relationships in a direct way, as a space of transgression tension, mixing of two orders, but rather as an autonomous register, which had never been there before nor after in the artistic work of the Themersons. The autobiographical interpoetics of the Themersons is a kind of compensation, a temporary solution, which is closely related to their methods of work (multi-media, community), as well as their own concepts of the role of artistic activity. Let us start from reconstructing the last of those issues. To my mind, excerpts from Franciszka’s letters are the most significant in conceptualizing the autobiographical and artistic practice of the Themersons:

<sup>13</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 158.

<sup>15</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 158.

<sup>16</sup> Justyna Jaworska, “Co niesie czarny pudel?”, *Literatura na Świecie*, No 9–10 (2013).

It's actually funny what autobiographical *ferydurkisms* I wrote here. You know, a bit like a beginner writer. Sometimes something hits me in the gut, and sometimes it is so naïve that I can't even look at it<sup>17</sup>. (...) I got stuck with my drawing. What I have done so far has been rather characteristic, as if an analytical (very uncontrolled and discursive) autobiography. I wanted to leave this circle, I am not satisfied with it – but it's not easy<sup>18</sup>.

And in another place:

We need to understand that talking just like that is not our business. That one sense of communicating with people is greeting them with the written word or a visual form, allowing to find somewhere and sometime the true, close reaction<sup>19</sup>. (...) Don't tell me, my love, that you would like to do ordinary, utilitarian things. I understand this crisis, I often experience it myself. But knowing that you are there, working for yourself, that you know, feel and understand that you have the same truest truth as me – this gives me so much strength, my love<sup>20</sup>.

We can find similar thoughts in Stefan's letters:

How much time will it last. So much time has passed in inaction. I am terrified that I have never done anything of any worth<sup>21</sup>. (...) My love, I am so happy that you're working, truly. Despite our separation, I am only when I am reading your letters, and beyond that I do not exist, and in spite of this – and precisely because of this – I am so much happier than all those people around me<sup>22</sup>.

The issue of everyday artistic attempts is intensely described throughout the entire correspondence between the spouses. The topic of sending their work to each other, as well as drawings and poems, is also a recurring theme; Stefan's recurring question about one of his short stories that he sent to his wife, to which she never replied, is symptomatic of this issue. Worried that she had not received he sent the short story again, and only when Franciszka shares her opinion of the story does the topic end.

In my analysis of the wartime artistic work of the Themersons, I assume that it is firstly, a unique moment in their work (the rare separation, a sense of danger), which is reflected in the visual aspects of their work, significantly different from what they produced in the 1930s, as well as from their later work from late 1940s, and secondly, that their autobiographical practice from the years 1940-1942 favors autothematic-artistic goals at a cost of losing the original self-reflective and intimistic functions combined with the *life-writing* activity. In other words, I want to show that in the case of the Themersons, the borders within one medium (written, visual, and later also oral) are suspended, and that combining numerous poetics within one autobiographical experience is a result of the progressive and searching model of activity of those artists. For this reason, I see various examples of their activity against the such-constructed

<sup>17</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 297.

<sup>18</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 349.

<sup>19</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 279.

<sup>20</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 298.

<sup>21</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 286-287.

<sup>22</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 293.

paradigm, as a compensatory activity, a substitute for the real artistic needs, an activity performed in separation from the world and self, using autobiographical genres in the process of problematizing artistic topics (notes, sketches, drawings), as well as working out new aesthetics over the course of the intimistic practice, to be later developed in their future work.

### Autobiographical spaces: *Niewysłane listy*, *Muzyka*, *Calling Mr Smith*

Characteristic for the whole post-war work of Franciszka Themerson is the use of lines, both in her drawings (thin, black) and in paintings (carved in paint)<sup>23</sup>. However, regardless of whether we treat wartime works as separate from her other artistic works, or assume that they share some relationship with them, composition based on lines is absent from her pre-war works<sup>24</sup>. The utilitarian character of her work up until the end of the 1930s is also significant. At the beginning of her artistic work – among those works which have survived until today – she focused mostly on book illustrations (Porazińska, Brzechwa, Duninówna etc.) and books for children, co-created with Stefan<sup>25</sup>. However, even taking this into consideration, there is a stark contrast between the cover of “Płomyczek” and, for example, “Alice in Wonderland” (1942<sup>26</sup>).

The series of drawings *Niewysłane listy* is, then, a unique record compared to Franciszka Themerson’s artistic work; on the one hand, it is obvious on the basis of the difference in aesthetics between her earlier and later works, and on the other, on the strong autobiographical character, which is also peculiar compared to her other works. The category of intimacy can be interpreted in many ways. First and foremost, the wartime works are a reaction of a kind, a consistently expressed political attitude. On the other hand, it is a laboratory, getting to know one’s own identity during extraordinary circumstances, and finding a way to express a personal change, affected by various stimuli. Those drawings also uncover her privacy in terms of emotions related to the feeling of loneliness, fear, and helplessness. Finally, they can be perceived as a kind of work preceding later artistic forms, if we pay attention to her strategy of using a black line on a white background for the first time.

Similar anticipations can be discussed also in the example of Stefan Themerson’s autobiographical writing, for whom the autobiographical character was both utilitarian (the need of constant representation through words, literary sketches in his journals), as well as therapeutic (self-reflections on painful experiences in his journal, correspondence with his wife). It is hard to discuss any fundamental poetics of those records, whose dynamics are especially obvious in the case of journals, whose construction heavily depends on the moment of migration in which Themerson remains, rather than authorial choice. In this sense, short, one-sentence records limited to expenses or places where he stayed develop into several pages long narratives cre-

<sup>23</sup> See *Franciszka Themerson (1907-1988): paintings*, preface by Nick Wadley, (London: Themerson Estate, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> I came to this conclusion with the help of Joanna Błachnio and Paweł Polit, whom I would like to thank for our conversation and their valuable observations from the October of 2019.

<sup>25</sup> See Beata Gromadzka, *Themersonowie dzieciom*, (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2019); Beata Śniecikowska, „Interaktywne jaskółki intermedialności? O Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów książkach dla dzieci, *Pl.it./ rassegna italiana di argomenti polacchi*, No 9 (2018).

<sup>26</sup> See Gromadzka, p. 139.

ated when he was staying at a refugee center. What transpires from those records (to my mind, not always consciously) is the expression of his own political attitudes, which are expressed even more strongly in his post-war artistic work<sup>27</sup>. His poems from that time, very political, are interesting in this respect. The relationship between personal notes and Themerson's artistic work would be a transfiguration of a kind, as evidence for example by the poem *Muzyka* (Music):

Grubo muzyka gra  
nikt jej nie chciał – na co komu muzyka  
co tak rzezi i jęczy i łka.  
Już nie skrzypki, nie bas, nie harmonia  
a organy, te najgrubsze, grzmią.  
Po lekarsku to się zwie – agonia,  
politycznie – okupywać krwią.

Po księżowsku – zwie się: kara boska,  
w podręcznikach zaś – szkolnych – ku chwale!  
familijnie: zmartwienie, cios, troska,  
a muzycznie – nie nazywa się wcale<sup>28</sup>.

At least two issues refer the reader of this poem to the Themersons' movie *Calling Mr Smith*, released three years later, in which (in my opinion) the ideological engagement of the artists is expressed to the fullest. I should probably add here that despite the numerous yet marginal political concerns in his post-war texts, in which he undertakes those topics regularly yet incidentally, the issue of politics was also undertaken by the couple before the war, as evidenced by the movie *Europa*, found in 2019. However, going back to the poem quoted above, first of all, it should be admitted that the message of *Calling Mr Smith* is the same as *Muzyka*; although in the visual version, as opposed to the literary work, art has the basic power to make things happen, it is a functionalized way of doctrine-enforcing methods in fascism. What also attracts attention is the verse *but the organs, the thickest, rumble*, which can be understood in juxtaposition with a motif shown in the 90<sup>th</sup> second of the movie, in which we can see the instrument in question in dark colors. The sound is also important, as the scene is accompanied by music that inspires anxiety, i.e. the beginning of Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor".

If we compare those examples with another excerpt from a letter to Franciszka: „I am working a bit, I am only writing poetry – I «lirise» myself so much, and loose notes, which will be of use later once they set like wine”<sup>29</sup>, we will see clearly that the written and visual wartime practice of the Themersons is such a kind of activity which, by taking different genre forms (biographical as well as artistic), is a record of transformations of mentality and sensitivity of an individual and a place of experiencing one's own subjectivity during a moment of intense

<sup>27</sup> See Stefan Themerson, *Wiersze wybrane 1939-1945*, edited by Jasia Reichardt, (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2003).

<sup>28</sup> Themerson, p. 23. The music is playing heavily / nobody wanted it – who needs music / that ruckles and moans and cries. // Not the violin, the basse, the harmony / but the organs, the thickest, rumble. / A doctor would say – agony, / a politician – paying with blood. // A priest would say – divine punishment, / and textbooks – to glory! / a family: worry, blow, concern / and in terms of music – it has no name [translation mine, PZ].

<sup>29</sup> Themerson, Themerson, *Niewysłane listy*, p. 151.

experiences. Themerson recorded the pragmatic aspects of his life (recording expenses, places where stayed for the night, meals), as well as ideas, thoughts, sensations from everyday life, and also his observations of different people's characters made over two years of migrations. Those records have a character of constructive action founded on the conviction of the truth within those observations and its transfiguration potential. Likewise, drawings, telegrams, auto-letters and epistolography sent from Franciszka to her husband – although they belong to different communicative and aesthetic orders – remain consistent in terms of the experiences they describe, such as the lack of a dialogue model of work, a sense of danger caused by the war, growing and fading hopes for living together, both existentially and professionally.

## Conclusion

It may turn out that after all this we are not the same enthusiastic people whom you knew in Paris. For sure we are much older. I really don't know how we would get through all that if we weren't together now. It was a lot<sup>30</sup>.

In August of 1942, the Themersons met in London, where Franciszka had been staying for two years. After a short time, she published a book of her drawings, *Forty Drawings for Friends London 1940-42*<sup>31</sup>. Also in 1943, the couple completed their movie, *Calling Mr. Smith*. The period of war, with a clear caesura in the form of a two-year separation, had its closure not when the couple first met in the UK or when the capitulation of the Third Reich was signed; it was rather dependent on the gradual awareness of the radical change in the world order<sup>32</sup>, and it had consequences in the process of the final resignation from the strategy of expressing directly their attitude to politics and trauma. In my opinion, this gradual erosion can be seen over the years 1944-1948. Jasia Reichardt openly writes about it: "Stefan tells me that you can either live in the past or in the future, and there is no doubt regarding which one of those options is possible. From now on the future will be my major interest and passion<sup>33</sup>". The poetics of wartime poems, as well as journalism and narrative forms found in the volume *General Piesc i inne opowiadania*, the movie *Calling Mr. Smith*, and Franciszka Themerson's drawings are on the one hand examples of the most openly formulated attitudes of political engagement, and on the other hand, an original (in comparison with works from other periods) reflection of self-analytical activity of the artists.

translated by Agnieszka Kocznur

<sup>30</sup> Themerson, Themerson, p. 365.

<sup>31</sup> There were only five issues released in the 1940s, but later reproductions are easily available.

<sup>32</sup> The main context here is that the Themersons lost almost all their family and friends from Poland.

<sup>33</sup> Jasia Reichardt, *Piętnaście podróży z Warszawy do Londynu*, (Warszawa-Łódź: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, Museum of Art in Łódź, 2018).

## Bibliography

- Archiwum Themersonów (The Themersons' Archive), Polona.pl: <https://polona.pl/search/?query=themerson&filters=public:1>
- Dziadek Adam, "Themerson i Schwitters", *Teksty Drugie*, No 4 (2006).
- Foster Hal, "An Archival Impulse", *October*, No 110 (2004).
- Franciszka Themerson (1907-1988): *paintings*, preface by Nick Wadley, (London: Themerson Estate, 2013).
- Gromadzka Beata, *Themersonowie dzieciom*, (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2019).
- Jaworska Justyna, "Co niesie czarny pudel?", *Literatura na Świecie*, No 9–10 (2013).
- Karpowicz Agnieszka, *Kolaż. Awangardowy gest kreacji: Themerson, Buczkowski, Białoszewski* Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2007).
- Kraskowska Ewa, „Tyłem, ale naprzód”. *Studia i szkice o Themersonach*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2018).
- Pruszyński Artur, *Dobre maniery Stefana Themersona* (Gdańsk: słowo/ obraz terytoria, 2004).
- Reichardt Jasia, *Piętnaście podróży z Warszawy do Londynu*, (Warszawa-Łódź: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, 2018).
- Śniecikowska Beata, "Interaktywne jaskółki intermedialności? O Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów książkach dla dzieci, *Pl.it/ rassegna italiana di argomenti polacchi*, No 9 (2018).
- Śniecikowska Beata, "Obraz – dźwięk – słowo – ruch. Intermedialność sztuki Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów", in *Słowo – obraz – dźwięk. Literatura i sztuki wizualne w koncepcjach polskiej awangardy 1918-1939*, (Cracow: TaiWPN Universitas, 2005).
- Themerson Franciszka, Themerson Stefan, *Niewysłane listy. Dzienniki, rysunki, dokumenty 1940-1942*, (Gdańsk: słowo/ obraz terytoria, 2019).
- Themerson Stefan, *Wiersze wybrane 1939-1945*, edited by Jasia Reichardt, (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2003).
- Trzynadłowski Jan, *Małe formy literackie*, (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1977).

# KEYWORDS

war

*Franciszka Themerson*

*archive*

INTERPOETICS

LETTERS

**ABSTRACT:**

The paper discusses the wartime autobiographical practices by Franciszka and Stefan Themerson characterized by interpoetics, i.e. simultaneous preference for numerous formal and discourse organizations within one textual-visual entity. The paper analyzes the personal documents and literary works of those avant-garde writers. It is proposed to read the written and visual autobiographics according to three forms of representation: document, secondary aesthetization, and stylization. Based on this paradigm, the paper stresses the peculiarity of the Themersons' activity from the years 1940-1942, stressing the discreteness of this moment as opposed to the former and later literary work by the couple.



autobiography

## journals

*Stefan Themerson*

## AVANT-GARDE

*personal documents*

**NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

Honorata Sroka, born in 1993, PhD candidate at University of Warsaw, member of the team “Archiwum Kobiet” (Women’s Archive) under Instytut Badań Literackich Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Institute for Literature Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences). Her research interests include written and visual autobiographical practices of Franciszka and Stefan Themerson. E-mail: hksroka@gmail.com. ORCID: 0000-0002-3505-1604 |

# The Pleasure of the Intertext (in Translation): The case of Barthes and Lewańska\*

\* This article was written as part of the project  
*Tłumaczenie dyskursów teoretycznych w humanistyce  
polskiej przełomu XX i XXI wieku* [Translation of  
theoretical discourses in Polish humanities at the turn of  
the 20th and 21st centuries] (2017/25/N/HS2/01585)  
financed by the National Science Center (NCN).

Weronika Szwebs

ORCID: 0000-0001-9806-515X

The relation between intertextuality and translation is most often considered from two perspectives.<sup>1</sup> In the first perspective, intertextuality is treated as a model for the relationship between the original and the translation. In the second perspective, we study how intertextual references present in the original text are translated. In the present article, I will not discuss either of them. I will deal with a different and much more unusual phenomenon that demands critical attention; namely, intertextuality in translation, which is not motivated by the intertextuality of the original. How do you justify the presence of such unusual references? What do they say about the attitude of the translator to her task? What reactions do they cause in the reader?

<sup>1</sup> "Intertekstualność" [Intertextuality] in: *Mała encyklopedia przekładoznawstwa*, ed. Urszula Dąbska-Prokop (Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Języków Obcych i Ekonomii Edukator, 2000); Ewa Kraskowska, "Intertekstualność a przekład", in: *Między tekstami: Intertekstualność jako problem poetyki historycznej*, ed. Jerzy Ziomek, Janusz Sławiński, Włodzimierz Bolecki (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1992), 129-145; Marta Kaźmierczak, *Przekład w kręgu intertekstualności: Na materiale tłumaczeń poezji Bolesława Leśmiana* (Warszawa: Instytut Lingwistyki Stosowanej Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012), 23-31.

The unusual intertextual references whose origin, status and potential impact I wish to discuss are just two small fragments of the Polish translation of Roland Barthes's *The pleasure of the text* (1973). The text was translated into Polish by Ariadna Lewańska.<sup>2</sup> The theme and the poetics of the text exemplify Barthes's poststructuralist era. Skeptical of coherence and uniformity, Barthes explores the issue of textual pleasure and bliss.<sup>3</sup> By exploiting the poetics of the fragment, which does not preclude compositional sophistication,<sup>4</sup> he analyzes the variables that affect the experience of pleasure and bliss by writers and readers. Barthes's book is crucial to my argument, because I believe it sheds light on Lewańska's unusual translation choices and the reactions these choices cause in readers. Barthes's reflections should inspire us to analyze the texts we read, thus making us more sensitive to novel ways of thinking about translation.

I cannot discuss the quality and poetics of Lewańska's entire translation in detail, but I would like to point out that stylistic expressiveness is important for the translator: she often uses colorful, sophisticated, and "non-neutral" words in places, where, from the point of view of correctness or grammar, a stylistically "flat" and "transparent" alternative would be better. It seems that the unusual use of intertexts may be part of such a broader tendency on behalf of the translator. The first fragment that interests me comes from the *Bords / Brzegi* chapter. Barthes describes here the mechanisms of readerly pleasure, referring to old and modern texts:

Czytajcie powoli, detalicznie, powieść Zoli, a książka wypadnie wam z ręki; czytajcie szybko, po trosze, tekst współczesny, a tekst pozostanie niejasny, nie przysporzy wam żadnej przyjemności; chcecie, by się coś działo, a tu nic się nie dzieje, gdyż to, co się dzieje z językiem, nie dzieje się w dyskursie; to, co „się dzieje”, to, co „się zdarza” – zerwanie między brzegami, szpara rozkoszy – powstaje w obrębie języków, w akcie wypowiedzania, a nie w następstwie wypowiedzi. Pora przestać połykać i pożerać, a zacząć skubać i drobiazgowo przeżuwać, powrócić przy czytaniu dzisiejszych autorów do **niepróżnującego próżnowania**<sup>5</sup> dawniejszych lektur – wstąpić do klanu arystokratycznych czytelników. [pp. 20-21]

Lisez lentement, lisez tout, d'un roman de Zola, le livre vous tombera des mains ; lisez vite, par bribes, un texte moderne, ce texte devient opaque, forclos à votre plaisir : vous voulez qu'il arrive quelque chose, et il n'arrive rien ; car ce qui arrive au langage n'arrive pas au discours : ce qui «arrive», ce qui «s'en va», la faille des deux bords, l'interstice de la jouissance, se produit dans le

<sup>2</sup> Roland Barthes, *Przyjemność tekstu*, translated by Ariadna Lewańska (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo KR, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> Rafaella Di Ambra, *Plaisirs d'écriture. Une lecture thématique de l'oeuvre de Roland Barthes* (Paris: Arts Éditions de Paris, 1997), 206-216; Annette Lavers, *Roland Barthes. Structuralism and After* (London: Methuen & Co, 1982), 204-205; Patrizia Lombardo, "Against Language" in: *The Three Paradoxes of Roland Barthes* (Athens-London: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 45-86; Anna Turczyn, "Na styku przyjemności i rozkoszy. Psychoanalityczna wykładnia *Przyjemności tekstu* Rolanda Barthes'a", in: *Imperium Rolanda Barthes'a*, ed. Anna Grzegorzczak, Agnieszka Kaczmarek, Katarzyna Machtyl, 63-70 (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM 2016); George R. Wasserman, "An Erotics of Literature", in: *Roland Barthes* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981), 100-105; Andrew Brown, *Roland Barthes: The Figures of Writing* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 86-87.

<sup>4</sup> The respective fragments of the text are not numbered or titled. The table of contents shows, however, that each fragment has a title and that the chapters are arranged in a chronological and an alphabetical order. This turned out to be troublesome in translation, because not every French title could be translated into Polish without changing the first letter of the word. There had to be some give and take. To maintain the chronological and alphabetical order of the table of contents, the translator or the publisher decided to change the order of the chapters in the main text. The Polish text and the French text are therefore ordered differently.

<sup>5</sup> All emphases are mine, W.Sz.

volume des langages, dans l'énonciation, non dans la suite des énoncés : ne pas dévorer, ne pas avaler, mais brouter, tondre avec minutie, retrouver, pour lire ces auteurs d'aujourd'hui, **le loisir** des anciennes lectures : être des lecteurs aristocratiques. [pp. 23-24]<sup>6</sup>

I will not analyze the translation of this fragment in detail, but will focus instead on the procedure that interests me. The last sentence of the Polish translation, in which the postulated way of reading is discussed, alludes to the collection of works by Wespazjan Kochowski published in 1674 entitled *Niepróżnujące próżnowanie* [Non-idle idleness]. This allusion appears in the place of the French word *le loisir*, which means entertainment, leisure, and free time. Kochowski's oxymoronic and conceptual title refers to the concept of *otium negotiosum* and its ancient tradition. *Otium* means free time or leisure, which also includes intellectual and literary activities, while *negotium* means work. As Maria Eustachiewicz notes, the title indicates that the author is a poet and a landowner, who celebrates country life and creates and reads literature favored by his class.<sup>7</sup> How does such a reference relate to Barthes's argument? At the level of the most general associations, it actually conveys the main message of the original text. It evokes the feeling of pleasure that is inspired by reading, which requires active participation, but cannot be rushed. It even points to the associations between such "enjoyable" reading and the lifestyle of the higher classes. Upon a closer look, however, we notice some differences. The title of Kochowski's collection refers primarily to the tasks of the writer (the inscription under the engraving found in the collection reads: "Wespazjana Kochowskiego Liryka polskie w niepróżnującym próżnowaniu napisane" [Wespazjan Kochowski's Polish poems written during *otium negotiosum*]),<sup>8</sup> while Barthes's comments relate to the activity of the reader. In addition, the reading habits of the aristocratic French reader,<sup>9</sup> regardless of the metaphorical nature of this term, differ from those which are characteristic for the Polish nobility from the Baroque era. Historical, geographical, cultural, and class issues all play a role here. Before we consider why the translator made such a choice and whether it was a good strategy, let us look at the second example of an unusual use of intertext.

The second fragment that interests me comes from the chapter *Droite / Prawica*, in which Barthes considers stereotypes which surround the political classification of pleasure. In short, he claims that the political right monopolizes pleasure by contrasting it with boring intellectual abstraction, while the political left disregards it. Barthes thus writes about the symptoms of this tendency:

Na prawicy rewindkuje się przyjemność przeciwko intelektualizmowi i znowie klerków: to stary reakcyjny mit serca przeciwstawianego głowie, **czucia i wiary – szkiełka i oku**, życia (na gorąco) – (zimnej) abstrakcji; czyż artysta nie powinien, wedle nieszczęsnej recepty Debussy'ego, „z całą pokorą przysparzać przyjemności”? [pp. 83-84]

<sup>6</sup> The same fragment in English reads: "Read slowly, read all of a novel by Zola, and the book will drop from your hands; read fast, in snatches, some modern text, and it becomes opaque, inaccessible to your pleasure: you want something to happen and nothing does, for what happens to the language does not happen to the discourse: what "happens," what "goes away," the seam of the two edges, the interstice of bliss, occurs in the volume of the languages, in the uttering, not in the sequence of utterances: not to devour, to gobble, but to graze, to browse scrupulously, to rediscover in order to read today's writers-the leisure of bygone readings: to be aristocratic readers", R. Barthes, *The pleasure of the text*, translated by Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), pp. 12-13 (translator's note).

<sup>7</sup> Wespazjan Kochowski, *Utwory poetyckie. Wybór*, edited by Maria Eustachiewicz, 2nd revised edition (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1991), XIII-XVIII.

<sup>8</sup> Kochowski, XVII.

<sup>9</sup> More on how Barthes uses the word *aristocratic*; see: Brown, 68.

A droite, le plaisir est revendiqué contre l'intellectualité, la cléricature : c'est le vieux mythe réactionnaire du coeur contre la tête, **de la sensation contre le raisonnement**, de la «vie» (chaude) contre «l'abstraction» (froide) : l'artiste de doit-il pas, selon le précepte sinistre de Debussy, «chercher humblement à faire plaisir» ? [pp. 38-39]<sup>10</sup>

We are dealing here with a similar translation procedure as in the previous passage. Barthes writes about feeling and reasoning, emotions and logic. Ariadna Lewańska, however, was not satisfied with such ordinary counterparts, and made an allusion to Adam Mickiewicz's *Romantyczność* [Romanticism]. How does this quote influence the interpretation of Barthes's text? How does it influence Barthes's argument? At the level of the most important associations, this quote, similarly to the previous one, works well, because it refers to the opposition introduced by Barthes and its most important features. However, a closer look at the French and Polish versions demonstrates significant differences. The French word *sensation* means both "feeling" and "experience." It refers to pleasure in a more coherent and obvious way than the Polish word *wiara* [faith] used by Lewańska. Moreover, even the very etymology of the French word *raisonnement* refers to reason and French Rationalism, while the Polish phrase *szkiełko i oko* [glass and eye] refers to Empiricism. The allusion to *Romantyczność* may also seem anachronistic, disrupting Barthes's logic and argumentation. The final fragment of Mickiewicz's ballad, from which this quote comes, may indeed be read as the "manifesto" of Romanticism directed against the Enlightenment.<sup>11</sup> While the Polish phrase also refers to two opposite stances and the tensions between them, it does not mean that they are identical to those introduced by Barthes.

Do the described differences mean that Lewańska's propositions should be considered inadequate? Not necessarily. Given the assumptions about the likely reactions of readers and the nature of the translated text, let us consider what motivations, either explicit or implicit, could be hidden behind such translation choices. Although canons change, we can assume that the reader of Barthes's text is familiar with Polish literature and culture; she is able to identify intertexts or at least notice their unique status and acknowledge their importance in Polish culture. Such assumptions were particularly reasonable in the mid-1990s, when the Polish translation of *The pleasure of the text* was published. Nevertheless, we should not take it for granted that the reader will be able to identify all the contexts I have named above; such intertexts allow us to see (not necessarily) desirable ideological shifts. Respectively, we should not assume that the adopted reading mode will be conducive to such observations. Interpretative decisions may be inhibited or overshadowed by two reading responses that are likely to be evoked in such a context: surprise and pleasure.

Surprise may result from a sense of, paradoxically, both strangeness and familiarity. The conscious reader who wants to reflect on her own reading habits and knows the genesis of the book she is reading knows that it was written by the French theoretician. As long as nothing disturbs the reading process, she may even forget that she is dealing with a translation, disregarding its role, possibilities and conditions. However, when she notices intertextual references to Polish

<sup>10</sup>This fragment in English reads: "On the right, pleasure is championed against intellectuality, the clerisy: the old reactionary myth of heart against head, sensation against reasoning, (warm) "life" against (cold) "abstraction": must not the artist, according to Debussy's sinister precept, "humbly seek to give pleasure"?" [p. 22] (translator's note).

<sup>11</sup>Adam Mickiewicz, *Wybór poezji*. Vol. 1, edited by Cz. Zgorzelski (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1997), XLIII; Bogusław Dopart, "Romantyczność Adama Mickiewicza jako utwór programowy", *Ruch Literacki* no. 3 (1988).

literature (and even when she fails to identify a specific reference and treats it only as a “buzz-word”), she realizes that she is reading a text written in Polish. The intertexts which may be found in the Polish translation are “focal places” of the linguistic energy of the Polish language. Their outright “Polishness” destroys the illusion of reading an unproblematic and transparent text, one governed only by the conventions that are equivalent to those found in the source language. Doubt and curiosity follow. What did it sound like in the original? Why was it translated like that? What was gained and what was lost in translation?

This mechanism of disillusion demonstrates how complicated the processes of alienation and domestication are. Although Lawrence Venuti, who popularized these categories in translation studies,<sup>12</sup> takes into account the nuances, one can get the impression that alienation and domestication are often treated as an extension of Schleiermacher’s opposition, bringing the reader closer to the author and bringing the author closer to the reader.<sup>13</sup> In addition, especially in the context of the influential theories of the ethics of translation, which draw attention to power relations and postulate openness to otherness, domestication is sometimes treated as a procedure which creates a “safe” yet simplified vision of the world, solidifying the *status quo*, supporting the men in power, and perpetuating the myth. Alienation, on the other hand, is a procedure that requires cognitive effort from the reader, opening her to otherness. Such a binary approach results in a simplified classification of formal procedures. Domestication involves choosing “safe” alternatives and replacing the elements of the source text which may seem strange to the target reader with transparent equivalents in the target language. Alienation, in turn, is based on inserting “untamed” linguistic or cultural elements from the source language into the target text.

It seems that coming into contact with Lewańska’s intertexts may have a more complex effect on the reader. Factors that have a “disillusioning” or an alienating effect, which remind the reader of the existence of the source text, may in fact be regarded as, formally speaking, domesticating elements, due to their strong relationship with the target culture. However, they do not read as “transparent,” obvious, or unproblematic. Quite the opposite, although the reader is reading the Polish translation, these fragments are too Polish not to remind her that the original text was written in another language. This leads to the paradoxical situation of alienation by domestication.

Readers who are capable of such reflection may experience one more feeling, namely pleasure. The pleasure may be caused by the feeling of surprise caused by finding a typical Polish wording in a text written by a Frenchman, especially when the reader is aware of the tradition and background of the text. The language “excess” of the intertexts used by Lewańska is also pleasant – they are, after all, quotes from poetry and thus have an aesthetic impact. “Niepróżnujące próżnowanie,” “czucie i wiara” and “szkiełko i oko” attract attention; they are expressive, elegant and smart, even if we do not compare them with more standard and “flat” variants that

<sup>12</sup>Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Lawrence Venuti, *Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>13</sup>Kaisa Koskinen agrees with such an approach. See: K. Koskinen, “Domestication, Foreignization and the Modulation of Affect” in *Domestication and Foreignization in Translation Studies*, ed. Hannu Kemppanen, Marja Jäms, Alexandra Belikova, (Berlin: Frank & Timme GmbH, 2012). [[https://www.academia.edu/7872551/\\_2012\\_Domestication\\_Foreignization\\_and\\_the\\_Modulation\\_of\\_Affect\\_pre-print\\_](https://www.academia.edu/7872551/_2012_Domestication_Foreignization_and_the_Modulation_of_Affect_pre-print_)] [date of access 30 June 2019].

could be used instead. Pleasure may also result from the fact that the translator is having fun; she is playing a game inspired by the text she translates, and it gives her pleasure.

*The pleasure of the text* makes us aware of the subtle mechanisms of writerly and readerly satisfaction. It can be assumed that the informed reader of this book pays attention to both its content (theoretical reflection) and style (practical, textual manifestations of Barthes's logic). It is indeed possible that the nature of Barthes's text could have inspired the translator to adopt non-standard solutions that go beyond classic translation practices and generally accepted rules. Let us thus analyse *The pleasure of the text* as a translation theory. Although Barthes does not explicitly comment on translation, in the light of his theory we may assume that when it comes to pleasure, translations are governed by the same laws as other texts.

Before we focus exclusively on the questions of pleasure as discussed by Barthes and how they help problematize Lewańska's intertextual games, it is worth noting that according to Barthes, the relation between pleasure [*plaisir*] and bliss [*jouissance*] is complicated:

*Pleasure of the text, text of pleasure:* these expressions are ambiguous because French has no word that simultaneously covers pleasure (contentment) and bliss (rapture). Therefore, "pleasure" here (and without our being able to anticipate) sometimes extends to bliss, sometimes is opposed to it. But I must accommodate myself to this ambiguity; for on the one hand I need a general "pleasure" whenever I must refer to an excess of the text, to what in it exceeds any (social) function and any (structural) functioning; and on the other hand I need a particular "pleasure," a simple part of Pleasure as a whole, whenever I need to distinguish euphoria, fulfilment, comfort (...) from shock, disturbance, even loss, which are proper to ecstasy, to bliss. I cannot avoid this ambiguity because I cannot cleanse the word "pleasure" of meanings I occasionally do not want: I cannot avoid the fact that in French "pleasure" refers both to a generality ("pleasure principle") and to a miniaturization (...). Thus I must allow the utterance of my text to proceed in contradiction. [pp. 19-20]

The quotation shows that pleasure may have many different meanings and that the relationship between pleasure and bliss is complicated. At the same time, Barthes also demonstrates that he is able to come to terms with the contradictions in his argumentation. It is indeed an inspiring text; the reader realizes that she may accept the "indecisiveness" of the theory. Where can we locate Lewańska's translation on this scale of pleasure? If we focus only on the quoted passage, Lewańska's translation games should be considered manifestations of "general pleasure," which is associated with excess and breaking the rules, but they do not exemplify "particular pleasure" that is associated with "euphoria." I should add, however, that *The pleasure of the text* also contains passages in which the characteristics of bliss, rather than pleasure, better describe the strategy of the Polish translator.<sup>14</sup> Let us focus, however, on the questions of excess, which Barthes discusses in the context of pleasure.

<sup>14</sup>"The text you write must prove that it desires me" [p. 6]; "[...]the text of bliss always rises out of it like a scandal (an irregularity), that it is always the trace of a cut, of an assertion (and not of a flowering)" [p. 20]; "Whence the present configuration of forces: on the one hand, a mass banalization (linked to the repetition of language)-a banalization outside bliss but not necessarily outside pleasure-and on the other, a (marginal, eccentric) impulse toward the New-a desperate impulse that can reach the point of destroying discourse: an attempt to reproduce in historical terms the bliss repressed beneath the stereotype" [p. 41].

From the point of view of translation conventions, for which the basic point of reference would be equivalence, Lewańska's intertextual games are redundant; they result in a stylistic "excess" that is not justified by the text of the original. The poetic quotes that she inserts into the text draw attention to and stand out from the surrounding sentences, but they are not motivated by the poetics of the original; the fragments of the source text that Lewańska translated so colourfully are stylistically rather "neutral." The presence of the intertext in the translated text is neither justified by the presence of the intertext in the source text nor connected with the critical or ideological aspects that would emphasize the meaning of the original text in a way that cannot be achieved through more standard means. Lewańska's translation strategies may only be justified if we assume that they are motivated by the pleasure of writing (the Polish text) and the pleasure of reading.

The result of concentrating on textual pleasure is excess. Let me quote two more fragments from Barthes's text that will highlight that question:

[...] Pleasure, however, is not an element of the text, it is not a naive residue; it does not depend on a logic of understanding and on sensation; it is a drift, something both revolutionary and asocial, and it cannot be taken over by any collectivity, any mentality, any idelect. [p. 23]

Neither culture nor its destruction is erotic; it is the seam between them, the fault, the flaw, which becomes so. [p. 7]

Pleasure is an uncontrolled impulse that may not be justified by external factors, norms or conventions. Such an approach corresponds well with Lewańska's intertextual play, which goes beyond the translation model based on equivalence and disregards its rules. The insertion of an intertext for which there is no justification (also critical or ideological justification) in the original text defies all rules that are not governed by the order of pleasure. Breaking the rules, regulations and justifications that define contemporary translation theory at its core does not, however, lead Lewańska to destroying it completely. Discourse does not disintegrate; communication is not compromised; the rules governing translation are not completely questioned. We are only subtly reminded that translation theory is not universal; it may defy rational and practical justification. For a brief moment, it is the principle of textual pleasure that is the most important and it does not have to be rooted in the original text.<sup>15</sup>

Regardless of whether Barthes's comments have really influenced Lewańska's translation strategies, they allow us to capture and highlight the specificity of the procedures she used. Intertextual games that should be considered a manifestation of excess, if the notion of equivalence were the basic reference point, are justified by the pleasure of reading the text.

translated by Agnieszka Kocznur

<sup>15</sup>This punctual, unobtrusive, discontinuous presence of pleasure does not weaken its impact. Considering Barthes's other observations from the book we are interested in, it should be assumed that the opposite is true: "A text on pleasure cannot be anything but short" [p. 18]; "[...] the word can be erotic on two opposing conditions, both excessive: if it is extravagantly repeated, or on the contrary, if it is unexpected, succulent in its newness (in certain texts, words glisten, they are distracting, incongruous apparitions [...])" [p. 42].



## Bibliography

- Barthes, Roland. *Le Plaisir du texte*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973.
- Barthes, Roland. *Przyjemność tekstu*, translated by Ariadna Lewańska. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo KR, 1997.
- Barthes, Roland. *The pleasure of the text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975.
- Brown, Andrew. *Roland Barthes: The Figures of Writing*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
- Dąbska-Prokop, Urszula, ed. *Mała encyklopedia przekładoznawstwa*. Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Języków Obcych i Ekonomii Edukator, 2000.
- Di Ambra, Rafaella. *Plaisirs d'écriture. Une lecture thematique de l'oeuvre de Roland Barthes*, 45-86. Paris: Arts Éditions de Paris, 1997.
- Dopart, Bogusław. "Romantyczność Adama Mickiewicza jako utwór programowy". *Ruch Literacki* nr 3 (1988).
- Każmierczak, Marta. *Przekład w kręgu intertekstualności. Na materiale tłumaczeń poezji Bolesława Leśmiana*. Warsaw: Instytut Lingwistyki Stosowanej Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012.
- Kochowski, Wespazjan. *Utwory poetyckie. Wybór*, edited by Maria Eustachiewicz, 2nd revised edition. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1991.
- Koskinen, Kaisa. "Domestication, Foreignization and the Modulation of Affect". In *Domestication and Foreignization in Translation Studies*, edited by Hannu Kemppanen, Marja Jäms, Alexandra Belikova. Berlin: Frank & Timme GmbH, 2012. [[https://www.academia.edu/7872551/\\_2012\\_Domestication\\_Foreignization\\_and\\_the\\_Modulation\\_of\\_Affect\\_pre-print\\_](https://www.academia.edu/7872551/_2012_Domestication_Foreignization_and_the_Modulation_of_Affect_pre-print_)].
- Kraskowska, Ewa. "Intertekstualność a przekład". In *Między tekstami. Intertekstualność jako problem poetyki historycznej*, edited by Jerzy Ziomek, Janusz Sławiński, Włodzimierz Bolecki, 129-145. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1992.
- Lavers, Annette. *Roland Barthes. Structuralism and After*. London: Methuen & Co, 1982.
- Lombardo, Patrizia. "Against Language". In *The Three Paradoxes of Roland Barthes*. Athens-London: University of Georgia Press, 1989.
- Mickiewicz, Adam. *Wybór poezyj. Vol. 1*, edited by Cz. Zgorzelski. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1997.
- Turczyn, Anna. "Na styku przyjemności i rozkoszy. Psychoanalityczna wykładnia *Przyjemności tekstu* Rolanda Barthes'a". In *Imperium Rolanda Barthes'a* edited by Anna Grzegorzczuk, Agnieszka Kaczmarek, Katarzyna Machtyl, 63-70. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2016.
- Wasserman, George R. "An Erotics of Literature". In *Roland Barthes*, 100-105. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Venuti, Lawrence. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

# KEYWORDS

ROLAND BARTHES

## THE PLEASURE OF THE TRANSLATION

### intertextuality in translation

#### ABSTRACT:

In this article, I interpret two unusual intertextual references present in the Polish translation of Barthes's *The pleasure of the text* by Ariadna Lewańska. Such intertexts are unusual because they are not rooted in the intertextuality of the original: allusions to the classic works of Polish literature are inserted by the translator in the seemingly neutral and “transparent” fragments of the French text. I comment on the motivations behind them, their status, and potential impact on the reader. My analysis was inspired by observations, theses, and postulates derived from *The pleasure of the text*, which was treated as a theory of translation.

## the pleasure of the text

### TRANSLATING THEORY

*Aridana Lewańska*

#### **NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

Weronika Szwebs - PhD student at the Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology at AMU. She is writing a doctoral dissertation entitled *Tłumaczenie dyskursów teoretycznych w humanistyce polskiej przełomu XX i XXI wieku* [Translation of theoretical discourses in Polish humanities at the turn of the 20th and the 21st century]. She has been awarded the Preludium and Etiuda grants by the Polish National Science Center (NCN). She has published original and translated articles in *Przekładaniec*, *Między Oryginałem a Przekładem*, *Przestrzenie Teorii* and *Teksty Drugie*.

# Boobalk, Schubert and Codes

Przemysław Kaliszuk

ORCID: 0000-0001-8668-3911

A novel by Ryszard Schubert entitled *Trenta Tre*<sup>1</sup> caused certain controversies in the mid-80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, at the start of its literary circulation. Some critics perceived it as an unsuccessful literary experiment<sup>2</sup>, whereas others found in that book an intriguing narrative structure, broadening the scope of poetics of modern realism and an interesting way of presenting daily activities as a sphere of various languages, styles, and narrations<sup>3</sup>. *Trenta Tre* was the text that was often referred to during discussions devoted to the state of Polish prose in the 70s and 80s, both in critical literary debates and in quasi-program speeches<sup>4</sup>. Although *Trenta Tre* does not occupy the central position in historical and literary syntheses, it was, just like the other few works written by Schubert, discussed in-depth a few times. Its position on the map of the literature of the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is not clear and is located marginally, outside the literary canon, but the works by Schubert are alluded to as a crucial link to the literary changes of the Polish modernism in its mature phase<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ryszard Schubert, *Trenta tre* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1975). Further as T and page number

<sup>2</sup> Bogdan Czeszko, "Pomyślunkiem Parafianina Się Posługując...", *Nowe Książki*, no. 17 (1975). (Making Use of a Kiss by a Parishioner...); Jan Walc, "Srutu Tutu," *Polityka*, 1976. (Blah, Blah, Blah); Michał Zieliński, "Zdrowy z Urojenia," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, no. 32 (1980). (Healthy from Illusion)

<sup>3</sup> Stanisław Jan Królik, "Czyścić," *Kamena* 584, no. 20 (1975): 13 (Purgatory); Bohdan Zadura, "Trzydzieści Trzy," (Thirty-Three) *Twórczość*, no. 2 (1976) (Thirty-Three); Jerzy Niemczuk, "Ryszard Schubert, czyli słuch absolutny," *Kultura*, no. 38 (1979) (Ryszard Schubert or Absolute Hearing); Włodzimierz Bolecki, "Wolne głosy. O prozie Ryszarda Schuberta," *Twórczość*, no. 6 (1982). (Free Speaking. The Prose by Ryszard Schubert)

<sup>4</sup> Leszek Bugajski, "Rozziew," in *Licytacja: szkice o nowej literaturze*, 1st ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981). (Hiatus); Stanisław Piskor, "Nowa proza," in *Licytacja: szkice o nowej literaturze*, 1st ed. (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981). (New Prose); Donat Kirsch, "Elaborat – debiuty lat siedemdziesiątych," *Twórczość*, no. 9 (1981). (Elaborate – Debutes of the 70s)

<sup>5</sup> Olga Szmidt, "Inne możliwości, inne zapomnienia: polska krytyka literacka i 'czesanie historii pod włos,'" *Zeszyty Naukowe Towarzystwa Doktorantów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Nauki Humanistyczne*, no. 8 (2014): 9–19. (Other Possibilities, Other Oblivions: Polish Literary Criticism and Manipulating History)

In my opinion, the key problem, which appears with varying strength in the analyses of Schubert's novel, is the specifics of the intertextual relations that this work establishes. The connections are of a paradoxical nature, since they are at the same time transparent and unclear; they signal their presence, and then conceal their own origin, permanently confusing or even embarrassing the reader. The game that Schubert proposes is actually based on a permanent lack of symmetry between the reader and the text (or the messaging instance that hides behind it).

The narration of *Trenta Tre* can be positioned within texts of a varied origin, not only of the literary one, but also drawn from the sphere of non-literary discourse, primarily from spoken utterances, but also from the codified written stylistic varieties. Intertextual enigmas apply to both of those planes, which demonstrates that the division between what belongs to literary aesthetics (and thus can be recognized as literature) and what goes beyond its boundaries is a matter of convention. Schubert's intertextuality, viewed from that perspective, is well grounded in the center of the problem regarding establishing literariness and ultimately must lead to an ontological deliberation concerning the status of a literary text. Of course, this very viewpoint also exposes the matters that refer to artistic practices of the avant-garde genesis, which Schubert makes use of.

The various aspects of *Trenta Tre* have been so far described by commentators. It also seems that the puzzles presented in the form of allusions, connections and references to the literary texts, vital to the correct interpretation of the novel, have been solved. The two key elements of the author's strategy of "misleading and confusing clues" have been identified immediately: the first one is related to the sources of the mysterious quotations which separate particular parts of the novel into segments; the other one concerns the title of the novel. In the mentioned debates and reviews, it was pointed out that the quotations come from letters written by Zygmunt Krasiński to his children (Stanisław Królik, Bohdan Zadura), and it was also decoded that the title of the novel is at the same time the name of a female monastery in Italy (Włodzimierz Bolecki). The clues were provided by Schubert himself, when he was finishing his polemical letter regarding Jan Walc's review:

I, Ryszard Schubert, would not be able to think of a title "Blah, Blah, Blah" for a newspaper article. However, if I did, I would not associate it with or place it next to Krasiński or **even** "Trenta Tre" by Schubert (originally in bold)<sup>6</sup>.

A dynamic dialog spontaneity integrating non-rigorous (demonstrating no accuracy that characterizes the codified norm) oral communication with literariness is the essence of the constructive concept and it serves to express: thoughts on the "non-humane aspect of language", which creates an irremovable barrier between "me" versus the world<sup>7</sup>, and the inefficiency of official communication when confronted with "anarchic" colloquial speech giving

<sup>6</sup> Ryszard Schubert, "Dialog: autor – recenzent," *Polityka*, 1976. (Dialog: Author – Reviewer)

<sup>7</sup> Olga Szmidt, "Piekło języka: 'Trenta tre' Ryszarda Schuberta," *Pamiętnik Literacki*, no. 4 (2015): 97–112. (Language Hell: 'Trenta tre' by Ryszard Schubert)

access to the authentic participation in the everyday reality<sup>8</sup>, but also lets the writer reach the boundaries of literary discourse, beyond which there awaits only the self-termination of literature as a modern institution<sup>9</sup>.

In this context, a basic question should be asked: does this catalog of relations exhaust a list of connections established by Schubert? Do the intertextual codes serve another purpose than the one described by their interpreters? What does the novel written by an author from Poznań say about the very nature of those connections?

I believe that the process of establishing intertextual connections deserves a more thorough reconstruction since it reveals the game played by Schubert, which conceals the metaliterary observations. It is this very aspect, I suppose, which shows the cautious strategy of coding the status of one's own text as a creation of something contradictory to the ideas of modernism, due to the effectively carried out production of aporetics and loss in the productivity of the opposition system in which literary discourse should examine and define itself. Schubert constructs a subtle net of erudite allusions, subtle connections, which may not be noticed (since he makes sure to cover his tracks well and leaves minimum decoding hints only) and builds a counterpoint to this fine riddle, starting a mechanism of a "recorded documentation" of colloquial speech<sup>10</sup>, which appears to be something "selfless", a text that exists on its own, which only had to be recorded, because it tells its own story and so does not require any craft virtuosity.

The novel turns out to be quite simple in its plot, but it does not allow any simple reconstructions because of the complicated narrative structure, juxtaposed events, quoting dialogs stripped of space/time context and of characteristics of messengers-interlocutors and parody stylizations (of the official language, newspeak, colloquial spoken language<sup>11</sup>) shifting the trivial everyday episodes into areas of grotesquely deformed weirdness. In the seven parts with the titles that suggest documents, letters, notes, protocols or official reports<sup>12</sup>, intertwined with passages from the correspondence of Zygmunt Krasiński (identified by the first critics), the actual story takes place: workers of the transshipment base located near the railway tracks (railway siding?) perform their duties, but most of the time they talk (the dialog parts - not interfered with by the narrator or the author - present in Rysiu's text, can

<sup>8</sup> Włodzimierz Bolecki, "Wolne glosy. O prozie Ryszarda Schuberta," *Twórczość*, no. 6 (1982). (Free Speaking. The Prose by Ryszard Schubert); Jan Galant, *Polska proza lingwistyczna: debiuty lat siedemdziesiątych*, vol. 12 (Poznań: Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne, 1998). (Polish Linguistic Prose: Debuts of the 70s)

<sup>9</sup> Krzysztof Uniłowski, *Polska proza innowacyjna w perspektywie postmodernizmu od Gombrowicza po utwory najnowsze*, Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach 1753 (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1999). (Polish Innovative Prose in the Postmodernism Perspective from Gombrowicz to the Latest Works)

<sup>10</sup> Danuta Bula, "Iluzja mówioności o "Pannie Liliance" Ryszarda Schuberta," *Język Artystyczny*, no. 3 (1985): 110–23. (Illusion of Conveying the Meaning about 'Miss Julianka' by Ryszard Schubert)

<sup>11</sup> Galant, *Polska proza lingwistyczna*. (Polish Linguistic Prose)

<sup>12</sup> Part 1 *In case: "...and the hardship with kids happened to me ..."* – is a compilation of official letters and answers, stylistically clumsy; Part 2 *On the Basis of the Impossibility to Fully Love a Small Vampire* is a kind of a report resembling an anonymous report; Part 3 *Regarding the Pregnancy of Tereska, the Clerk* provides us with the record of a dialog, with a footnote written by (possibly) the same anonymous person who prepared the report in Part 2. In Part 4 *Regarding Soiling a Baby Diaper in front of "Panderosa" Diner at an Earlier Date* contamination of the reporting protocol by the dialogs is observed, a similar thing happens in Part 6 *Regarding Buying "Kokosanki" Cookies for the Child and not because of the Desire to Buy Cheap Wine Whatsoever* The last one – Part 7 *Free Speaking* – is a short record of a dialog, implicitly between those ending the meeting. Cf. Bolecki, "Wolne glosy. O prozie Ryszarda Schuberta," 1982, 92–93. (Free Speaking. Prose by Ryszard Schubert)

be found in the fundamental Part 5 of the novel, entitled *Regarding the Motherhood of Leticia of Rachmajdow Thanks to the Ovarian Organ Specimen of the Ciba Company from Basel*). Nearby, there is a diner called "Panderosa", where they meet after work. The incomplete events which can be reconstructed refer to: looking for a fire pool warning sign, a mild explosion of a tank car, clearance of a wagon with spongy products, the coming inspection of the manager of the transshipment plant, the baptism of a son of one of the "Panderosa" employees.

*Trenta Tre* has been founded on a clearly manifested conceptual discrepancy: how to combine the two otherwise mismatched elements and how to connect an authentic element anchored in the practice of rewriting life with the refined (though superficially chaotic and slightly amorphous) tangle of literary texts. The quotation (understood in its double meaning: quoting another speech and recalling another text) is a key element of literary structure, but also an indispensable method of communication. Schubert points out that a text – both written and spoken – is not (and cannot be) autonomous, as it is permanently settled in relations<sup>13</sup>. The further exploration of the initially accepted controversy allows Schubert to formulate, of course within the frames of a constructed story, some reservations towards all the intentions to determine the adversity that he finds interesting in favor of any party: dreaming of absolute autonomy by enhancing literariness and of gaining independence of the existing artistic offers is in fact ideological fiction impossible to be maintained, whereas the other side of that dream, crossing the border between the literary order and the non-literary one, or in a slightly modified variant making literature the tool equal to other social practices, must finally lead to constituting even more distinctive literariness because it abandons currently binding model of realistic referentiality. To see the overall problem: *Trenta Tre* becomes autotelic, despite the intention of a maximum approach to recording the process of experiencing everyday life and proves that ordering operations are irremovable, and thus proves the indispensability of literary discourse (even when, or especially when, it loses its privileged position it was elevated to by modernists.)

The systematics of conditioning Schubert's intertextual treatments directly leads to formulating something similar to the individual interpoetics of the author of *Miss Lilianka*, since the quotation denotes the whole architecture and strategy of the conceptual advancements. The literary discourse in the practice of Schubert becomes a textual riddle, which is placed in the net of opposing relationships: it questions and blows it up, although, at the same time, it becomes distanced from the dichotomies that define it.

The tension between orality and literariness, but also between what is casual and formal, defines the first dimension of the textual connections; the reader has to become a participant of the procedure of constantly settling the dilemma regarding the status of the text that he/she has contact with. He/she deals – perhaps – with a record of the talks heard, transcripts, a copy of strangely looking office documents, but he/she cannot verify or state their truthfulness; their authenticity is hypothetical and therefore placed surprisingly close to fiction. The text – quotation is of an ambivalent – since there is no possibility of verification – nature as there exists no referencing plane outside the text itself. In an alternative variant, the reader recog-

<sup>13</sup>Mihail Mihajlovič Bakhtin, *Estetyka twórczości słownej*, ed. Eugeniusz Czaplewicz, trans. Danuta Ulicka, Biblioteka Krytyki Współczesnej (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1986). (Aesthetics of Verbal Creativity)

nizes in *Trenta Tre* a parody stylization, detects a literary treatment, recognizes juxtaposing and collage that make the borderline between the everyday life and literary aesthetics blurred. From the works – the second dimension of textual connections – of Schubert, there emerges a dialectical clash between the avant-garde *ready-made* and a literary processing of the raw material “cut out” from the reality. The authenticity, which arises from the clash of various intertexts, various levels of language, and indirectly from the concept of understanding textuality, suspends a possibility to determine own status and as a consequence, starts referring to the sphere of literary conceptualizations of the idea of representation, autonomy and originality.

Removing the context which would enable an unproblematic identification is an indispensable method that complicates the sense of the whole suspended between what is documentary and fictitious – within the third category of textual relations. If in dialogs and documents (protocols, official letters), references to these “quotations” get shaped thanks to the experience of the reader – the self-creating minimum contextual frame allows in a limited scope to confront one’s own everyday practices with their deformed representation in the text of the novel (which, obviously, is not equal to acknowledging the transparency of the world presented in the novel or, at the same time, to accepting the suggested *mimesis*), literary references become even more troublesome, they change into a hardly solvable puzzle.

From the reader, Schubert requires expertise which will allow one to recognize the intimistics by Krasiński, but also antiquarian perseverance that will allow one to obtain the volumes which he used while using the quotes from the letters of the author of *Irydion*<sup>14</sup>. Schubert quotes the fragments from the specific edition of the correspondence by Krasiński<sup>15</sup>. He uses the compilation of Krasinski’s epistolography from 1860 (or 1861)<sup>16</sup>.

How exact is Schubert? He uses 13 fragments, which mostly followed the original version, including the dates. These are letters written to his children exclusively: Władysław (Adziu), Zygmunt (Lili) and Maria (Marylka). They are in the fourth part, the smallest one, of the volume prepared by Konstanty Gaszyński. The characteristic diacritic symbols and punctuation have been preserved, those very few changes result from the modernization of the spelling undertaken by *Trenta Tre* publisher because the comparison of the two volumes of *Extracts from Letters of 1860 and 1861*<sup>17</sup> does not permit the researcher to state in an authoritarian way that Schubert used that particular edition. The errors and omissions in Schubert’s quotations are not consistent in following that very edition, and so the correlations of mistakes in quotations and a particular edition of *Extracts* are incidental.

<sup>14</sup>It is interesting to say that such a hint could be found in the study devoted to the correspondence of Krasiński which Schubert might have used hypothetically. Cf. Zbigniew Sudolski, *Korespondencja Zygmunta Krasińskiego: Studium Monograficzne* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1968). (Correspondence by Zygmunt Krasiński: Monographic Study)

<sup>15</sup>Incomplete bibliographic address states: Bolecki, “Wolne glosy. O prozie Ryszarda Schuberta,” 1982, 92. (Free Speaking. The Prose by Ryszard Schubert)

<sup>16</sup>Zygmunt Krasiński, *Wyjątki z listów Zygmunta Krasińskiego*, ed. Konstanty Gaszyński, vol. 1 (Paris, 1860), <https://polona.pl/item/wyjatki-z-listow-zygmunta-krasinskiego-t-1,MjU4MTMwOA>, further as W1 and page number. (Excerpts from Letters by Zygmunt Krasiński)

<sup>17</sup>Zygmunt Krasiński, *Wyjątki z Listów Zygmunta Krasińskiego*, ed. Konstanty Gaszyński, vol. 1 (Paris, 1861), <https://polona.pl/item/wyjatki-z-listow-zygmunta-krasinskiego-t-1,MjU4MTAwMA>, further as W2 and page number. (Excerpts from Letters by Zygmunt Krasiński)



Schubert makes use of the following fragments, disregarding the signals that would openly identify the author (and the addressee), which is actually parallel to the trouble the reader faces when it comes to identify the characters appearing in *Trenta Tre*:

1. Lili my dear! – Beware of **miserliness**. Adziu dear, stay away from **extravagance**!

Dresden, 1958 (T, p. 7 – orig. W1, p. 279)

2. Lili my dear. – Thank you very much for your letter– but when I was reading it I was blushing because of the errors that my eyes (arch. spelling) could see and which troubled my head with a reproach that I had not taught you your mother tongue well enough. (arch. style)

Ems, 1958 (T, p. 7, orig. W1.p. 276)

3. When you write to me, write (arch. form, spelled together) also from time to time to me my dear boy not only about that (arch. form) what is outside, but what happens inside you: - about the experienced joys or sorrows, about the tricks played or the duty performed well, about the thoughts provoked by either a book you read or an event that happened. By this (arch. form) give me a proof of your trust and love, and I will pay you back with a court trial, advice, reprimand or appraisal – but in either case, always with love!

Plombières, 1858 (T, p. 13, orig. W1, p.272: here spelled "Pisz że," (identical to W2)

4. Do not write an exercise or tire yourself with your work sooner than in ten days' time.

Plombières, 1858 (T, p. 13, orig. W1, pp.269-270)

5. Please be always kind to your sister's tutoress or any other woman.

Plombières, 1858 (T, p. 17, orig. W1, p.276)

6. Get used to, I am asking you, to exemplary kindness towards women.  
Whenever in the presence of a woman you feel tempted to be unkind, remember that mother of the Savior who today reigns in the heaven (arch. form) was a woman and that your own mother (arch. word order) is a woman.

Plombières, 1858 (T, p. 17, orig. W1, p.259: the text between two passages – here the omission unmarked, no comma before the conjunction "and")

7. Instead of a German **walk** use a Polish **ride** when you have a carriage or a **stroll**, if you have only your feet.

Plombières, 1858 (T, p. 17, orig. W1,p. 261: no comma before ride, W2, p. 243: with a comma)

8. My dear and able-to-write Maryleczko! With a kiss on your forehead, the second (arch. spelling) kiss on your little nose, the third (arch. spelling) kiss on your mouth, I thank you for your letter. I have already (arch. form) read in the local papers that in Trouville there is a young girl who sea waves run away from in terror because she is so courageous; and that she can never have a bath because she cannot find (arch. word) around (arch. spelling) her the water that has fled from fear. Jokes aside, from the bottom of my heart I would love to see you bravely jumping about in the waves.

Plombières, 1858 (T, p. 25, orig. W1, pp. 279-280: no comma before “from” and a dash before “and that” )

9. Do not write: **skończyłem 8 lat** (turned {with a masculine verb ending} 8) - but write: **skończyłam**, (turned {with a feminine verb ending} because (arch. form) after all (arch. form) you are not a boy.

Plombières, 1858 (T, p. 25, orig. W1, p. 280)

10. Remember, my dear, that controlling oneself is the only (arch. form) ruling in the world – that everything else, deprived of the first and the main one, does not mean a thing and that it only puts a man in the most difficult position – in the saddest (arch. spelling) and the most disastrous (arch. spelling) – as it forces a **puppet** to rule others!

Plombières, 1858 (T, p. 63, orig. W1, p. 275)

11. You write **poszłem (went), doszłem (arrived)**. (both verbs spelled with a masculine ending). Only the feminine and neuter genders can write: **poszłam, doszłam** (both verbs spelled with a feminine ending – but masculine (arch. spelling) has to, if it is going to be correct in Polish; **poszedłem, doszedłem**. (both verbs spelled with a masculine ending) Beware of that because it is a serious error that offends the Polish taste.

Plombières, 1858 (T, p. 63, orig. W1, p. 249: colon instead of a semicolon after “in Polish”

12. Be careful with food (arch. word) not to overload your stomach, because soon indigestion can cause the come back of a fever (arch. word); - no raw fruit- no dairy products (arch. word) – and protect yourself from colds (arch. word). Do not rush, but walk slowly (arch. spelling) like a serious man – like vir togatus.

Plombières, 1858 (T, p. 143, orig. W1, p. 270: distinction of vir togatus)

13. Do not write: **I have trust in my papa**. How (arch. spelling) can you have what you are giving me? You would rather **have** someone’s trust if another person trusted you. Say then: **I put confidence in papa, towards papa** or: **I confide in papa** – or: **my soul trustfully clings to papa, reaches out to papa**.

Plombières, 1858 (T, p. 143, orig. W1, pp. 275-276)

In such records, there appears a visible main strategy of constructing connections between texts: Schubert highlights the relation-like character of the language as a tool to be used for communication and literature as a textual net of all references. Despite the fact that the fragments of the letters concern the sphere of close interpersonal relationships and they serve as advice, recommendations and instructions, thus performing the functional role, they acquire literary qualities being transformed by Schubert in peculiar mottos. The quotations, although having no author's signature, as used by Schubert have a meaning for the other parts of the novel; additionally, their anonymity intensifies the relations (they are functional and intimate and literary as well). To put it another way, the lack of the original context turns out to be a fundamental gesture showing the irremovability of the Library (a collection of texts, culture, discourses and languages, including various functional narrations, in which people's everyday practices operate.)

Schubert handles the title in an analogical way; he still explores the area of romantic connotations. *Trenta Tre* is a name of a female monastery located near Naples, which was visited by romantic idealists like Mickiewicz and Krasiński, among others. It aroused characteristic fascination because of two aspects: the strict rule of living in seclusion – the nuns generally do not contact the external world and do not leave the monastery (this isolation within a community is of the key importance when looking at that from the point of view of the other textual connections) – and the prophetic abilities of some of the nuns. Krasiński's visit to that place is mentioned in the letters to Henry Reeve and Joanna Bobrowa<sup>18</sup>. The author of *Nieboska komedia* writes the following:

And now we shall move on to another thing. There is a monastery "Sepolte vive" here; they are called *Trenta tre*" and one of them, signora Agata, foretells the future. I was there. The woman I am in love with and who I told you about so many times is sick. I said her baptism name at the gate of the enclosure. The partition separated me from the nun who is not allowed to see a human face; but her voice is changed by the sound, it becomes different; she shouts out that she is going to faint, the heart is squeezing, but she will call God for her. After ten days I come back. Then the nun tells me she is going to die of that sickness. Since that day I have come back ten times and I was always told the gloomy prophecy. The woman does not know what kind of disease it is, she only knows her baptism name, but she guessed everything rightly. "She is young, tender, full of love. Her death will be hard." These were her last words. And then she said about me, about my father some strange things that proved her mystic inspiration, because otherwise one could suppose she was familiar with the history and politics, which is incredible, which is impossible because after those prophetic moments the woman was simple and brainless like a peasant woman. The message received by me from the one who is going to die young confirms the words of the prophecy. Her sickness is getting worse and slowly is ruining (arch. form) her body. What do you say of that (arch. spelling), Henry? Do fasts and enclosure help approach heaven more than actions?<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>18</sup>List do Joanny Bobrowej z 30 marca oraz z 21 kwietnia 1835r., do Henryka Reeve'a z 4 maja 1835 r. Cf. Zygmunt Krasiński, *Listy Wybrane*, ed. Tadeusz Pini (Warsaw: Parnas Polski, 1937), <https://polona.pl/item/listy-wybrane,OTc2Nzk2NTM>. (Letter to Joanna Bobrowa of 30 March and 21 April 1835, to Henry Reeve of 4 May 1835)

<sup>19</sup>Krasiński, 148.

Włodzimierz Bolecki pinpointed another place where a reader may find the description of the Trenta Tre monastery at the times of Krasiński. Antoni Edward Odyniec in his letter to Julian Korsak of 1 June, 1830, describes his trip all over Italy in the company of Adam Mickiewicz; they visit that monastery after visiting the Christian catacombs in the Camedolite monastery<sup>20</sup>.

Still another possible source that Schubert may have used is another edition of the letters of Odyniec from 1937<sup>21</sup>. This issue is quite interesting, as this variant introduces a certain complication concerning the recipient of the letter: the selection part marked as “volume 4 (from Naples to Geneva)” starts with a letter to Ignacy Chodźko, whereas the letter in which Trenta Tre is mentioned is addressed “To the One.” The selection by Życzynski, with no introduction, results in a mistake that distorts the continuity of addressees, which in the context of Schubert’s relation treatments seems to be a significant weakness, making the relationship between a sender-recipient complicated, which is so crucial in the talks held in *Trenta Tre*. It would be an interesting symptom of some other further difficulties which the writer could put forward in front of an inquisitive reader-riddle solver; that being, obviously, only an attractive hypothesis.

Schubert’s area of romantic<sup>22</sup> connections also includes other allusions, concerning Mickiewicz mostly: one of the workers of the transshipment base starts quoting *Oda do młodości* (T, pp. 140-141), but immediately realizes he has done it in vain, and experiences his own autoparody; in another place, Rysio gets appointed to a writer by one of the workers of Boobalk 2 base like Mickiewicz by Goethe (See T, p. 184); we can observe a grotesque fulfillment of the dream to combine art and life - a moment earlier during their meeting in “Panderosa”, the characters listen to some songs, the fragments of an erotic parody of *Pan Tadeusz*, *Mrówki* by Antoni Orłowski (T, p. 182)<sup>23</sup>. High culture, vital for the national identity and the canon, if it is available at all, it is available only through such a caricaturist presence in the common collective consciousness. These connections with the romantic tradition are an element of the coding strategy of one’s own story, emphasizing the futility of the attempts to continue the romantic ideological and world-viewing imaginarium. The paradox of romantic allusions lies in the fact that they can be generally decoded by the reader only: an antiquarian or an archeologist, by a persistent seeker of references, of connections, of common elements in the Library, the Tradition and the Canon.

<sup>20</sup> Antoni Edward Odyniec, *Listy z Podróży*, ed. Marian Toporowski and Maria Dernałowicz, vol. 2, Biblioteka Pamiątek Polskich i Obcych (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1961), 382–83. Cf. Bolecki, “Wolne glosy. O prozie Ryszarda Schuberta,” 1982, 95–96. (Free Speaking. The Prose by Ryszard Schubert)

<sup>21</sup> Antoni Edward Odyniec, *Listy z Podróży: Wybór*, ed. Henryk Życzynski, Biblioteka Narodowa. Serja 1, nr 117 (Lvov: Wydawnictwo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, 1937), 367–68, <https://polona.pl/item/listy-z-podrozy,MzQ2MzY1Mg/>. (Letters from Travels)

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Niemczuk, “Ryszard Schubert, czyli słuch absolutny.”

<sup>23</sup> Schubert could be using the edition from the beginning of the 20th. century, because the variant from the magazine omits the fragments quoted in *Trenta Tre*. Cf. Antoni Orłowski, *Pan Tadeusz czyli rzecz o mrówkach* (Kijów, Lipsk, 1907), <http://kpbc.umk.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=185001>. (Mr. Tadeusz and the Thing about Ants). Antoni Orłowski, “Mrówki, czyli Spotkanie się pana Tadeusza z Telimeną i zgoda ułatwiona za pośrednictwem mrówek,” *Muchy*, no. 12 (9 grudnia) (1915): 1–2 <https://polona.pl/item/muchy-1915-nr-12-9-grudnia,NjkkMzcwMzc/>. (Ants or Meeting between Mr. Tadeusz and Telimena and the Consent Achieved with the Help of Ants). On the parody of the text by Mickiewicz, v. Dariusz Zarzycki, “Potomstwo literackie „Pana Tadeusza” (kontynuacje, parodie, pastisze, trawestacje),” *Rocznik Towarzystwa Literackiego imienia Adama Mickiewicza*, no. 30 (1995): 113–30. (The Literary Offspring of “Pan Tadeusz” (Continuations, Parodies, Pastiches, Travesties)

Perhaps the most interesting, although so far unnoticed, textual relation connects *Trenta Tre* with the works by Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński. The author of *Pokolenie* has left some unfinished stories, in which he grotesquely reshapes the biographical school experience to portray his own school - Gimnazjum im. Stefana Batorego in Warsaw, *Boobalk Junior Highschool I*<sup>24</sup>.

In a story, inspired by *Ferdydurke*<sup>25</sup> written by Gombrowicz, there is a strange arrangement: it seems that the students and teachers amicably participate in the education process, whereas in fact, education is founded in some strange rules that only imitate the acquisition of knowledge. Instead of socializing and stimulating their self-development, the students undergo further stages of wildness, whereas their teachers take part in an educational farce, presenting knowledge they do not understand themselves or view redundant. There is a game going on that neither of the parties wishes to leave. The students and teachers are defined and exist through the roles they play. Baczyński characterizes the environment of Boobalk in the following way:

Boobalk Junior Highschool I was a kind of a secret association of rivalry fighting castes. The fight has become customary with time, brought some delight to the fighters and transformed into a habit or an addiction that no one would give up for anything, as is the case with all addicts. (B, pp. 163-164).

The dynamics of the relations between the students and teachers, their identity and the theology of their actions rest upon a commonly understood, although often conventional, system of dependence – the juxtaposition of the two spheres, the students and pedagogues, is irremovable.

And so they dabbled in this hopeless, malicious infantilism, thinking that their lives completely depended on it, and putting all their energy, skills and will into it. (B, p. 167).

Baczyński builds the dramatic crisis of that grotesque order, which is going to implode, revealing its own superficiality.

There was something bad hanging in the air. It seemed that the students had never been so troublesome in an adult way, and the professors had never been so perverse in a childish way. Boobalk Junior Highschool I was turning today in some moody, infantile slurry with heavy and stuffy school air hanging over the school like a grey, threatening cloud (B, p. 167).

One of the routine school days turns out to be the moment when the stiff dependency between those "fighting castes" ceases to exist. At the same time, in mathematics, history and religion classes, the school system starts disintegrating. The math teacher prepares a math problem whose role is to reveal the game everyone at Boobalk plays. He prepares some useless formulas and orders the students to solve the problems:

<sup>24</sup>Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński, "[Opowiadanie bez tytułu] (Gimnazjum imienia Boobalka I)," in *Utwory zebrane*, ed. Aniela Kmita-Piorunowa and Kazimierz Wyka, vol. 2 (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1970), further as B and page number. [Story with No Title] (Boobalk Junior Highschool I)

<sup>25</sup>Małgorzata Wichowska, "Śladami Sublokatorów Przyszłości, Jamnika Dana i Sielanki Wergilego. O Nieznanym Utworze Krzysztofa Kamila Baczyńskiego," in *Cudowne Przygody Pana Pinzla Rudego: (Powieść Fantastyczna) Ze Zbiorów Muzeum Literatury Im. Adama Mickiewicza* (Warsaw: Muzeum Literatury im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2017). (Following in the Footsteps of Subtenants of the Future, Dan the Basset and Idyll by Vergil. The Unknown Literary Piece by Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński)

And at that point Teotyp caused the anxiety. Knowing that his hopeless drawings on the blackboard do not make any sense, he demanded something unbelievable – i.e. an explanation. He simply wanted everything to be revealed, he wanted to stop pretending to know what he is doing and he wanted them, the students, to stop pretending to understand anything. (B, p. 169).

The deceit of the mathematician leads to a rebellion – not against the very nature of the school interactions, but against the professor who tries to suppress it. Right then, the history class professor Nogotokop is dreaming: "Shit – he thought - it has to end somehow." (B, p. 170), whereas the religion teacher, priest Estypkowicz, gets fooled by his students when he carelessly starts playing their game with a wind-up toy car. Getting involved in the ludicrous behaviors of the students eliminates the refinement and thus allows for the danger of imbalance, which the mathematics and history teachers await.

Finally, in the junior highschool, a fight starts between the teachers and students, with teaching aids and school accessories being used. Ultimately at Boobalk, a caricaturist intensification of school relations can be observed as that grotesque war in the school building still drives the mechanism that generates the identities within the contrarily conditioned social roles: students cannot exist without teachers and *vice versa*. The characters from the story by Baczyński do not have an alternative to create a "secret association of the fighting caste."

The name of the transshipment base in *Trenta Tre* is Boobalk II. Schubert signals in his specific way, in the form of an allusive code, that he continues the story by Baczyński; in this perspective, the place of action in *Trenta Tre* is named Boobalk 2<sup>nd</sup>, and is not a base called Boobalk Two. That connection is not only an erudite allusion referring the reader to the marginal part of the works by Baczyński, but it communicates that Schubert in a certain way continues the anthropological observations of Baczyński, or rather of Gombrowicz, transformed in the narration of Baczyński - the author of *Z głową na karabinie*.

Schubert introduces the reader – just like Baczyński does – to a hermetic environment which appears to be an amazing social space, incomprehensible from the outside. The difference is that the "amazing nature" of Boobalk II is founded on the stylization of the utterances by the characters to sound like the spoken language and removing the background of the dialogs. Both texts are similar when it comes to using nicknames or crippled surnames. Apart from the feature similarities, I view as vital the conceptual transformation and broadening of Baczyński's observations on the paradox of a school as an educational institution.

The manipulation used by the mathematician, professor Teotyp, i.e. drawing on a blackboard a problem based on non-existing mathematical symbols, thus impossible to solve and explain, changes in Schubert's strategy into the *Trenta Tre* novel itself. Imitating the reality that Schubert suggests is of a paradoxical nature; it is not possible to rewrite everyday life, and it is not possible to combine literary discourse with a non-literary sphere (art and life), since it then comes to an even more distinctive separation of the two orders. There is only self-deception left – withdrawing oneself and choosing the tested patterns of the modern *mimesis* that give an illusionary effect of the reality – or a definite abandonment of a dream of full expressiveness of the experience, says Schubert. A reference to *Boobalk Junior Highschool*

I is a metaphor of a metaliterary thought on the position of literature and the expectations towards it which are rooted in the modernist conceptualizations of the literary discourse.

The intertextuality of the novel by Schubert helps emphasize the misery of modernist literature. The intertextual connections that Schubert sets direct attention to the problem of the originality of a work and the novelty of the text. In the most extreme interpretative perspective, you can view *Trenta Tre* as a collection of quotations, references and allusions, and then it will become a repetitive instance of plagiarism which does not exist on its own. If you remain on the level of the reflection devoted to "the speaking aspect" of the language which parodies various Polish styles, or if you remain on the level of intertextual considerations, then you can observe the disappearance of the complexity and the ambivalent approach of Schubert's project towards the ontological specifics and autonomy of a literary text as an order different in its quality from what is non-literary. The conceptual problems of the borderline between the opposing spheres emerges as the result of coming back to the moment of the birth of literature, to oral narration, but under these circumstances, the rebirth is also a neo avant-garde end of experimenting aimed at the institutional dimension of literature. Originality raises a question concerning the ontological status of the text, and this in turn gives rise to some doubts regarding literariness. Novelty and originality then turn out to be an ideological construction of those who miss the sublimity of the late modernists, whom Schubert tries to separate himself from<sup>26</sup>.

The sphere of romantic references connotes a desire to find authenticity, whereas the allusion to the text by Baczyński-Gombrowicz introduces thinking about authenticity in the category of the relationship, being there for something. The common element of Schubert's references is a characteristic insignificance. The borderlines of the canon of Polish literature, curiosities, going sideways, travesties, parodies and allusions, it is the periphery that builds the net of connections, in which Schubert settles his own conglomerate of quotations. Krasiński as a letter writer, the romantic figures – travelers rather than poets, Mickiewicz parodied, Gombrowicz – the critic of romanticism made present by a short piece of prose by Baczyński. *Trenta Tre* – like the nuns in the monastery – isolates itself from the mainstream of Polish literature, but does not break the bond, and, at the same time, prophetically announces (like the monastery prioress from the letter by Krasiński) the end of modernist literary paradigms. The text makes its presence and exists in the net, remains in the permanent, irremovable relations (like the characters from *Boobalk Junior Highschool*), cannot be individual or autonomous, quoting, textual connections make up its ontological form. The only truth that *Trenta Tre* speaks about is the impossibility of being isolated.

<sup>26</sup>One of the most significant dilemmas, which Schubert signalizes within the structure of the text is the legitimacy of maintaining what McHale defined as epistemological dominant. In *Trenta Tre* the weight indeed is shifted to ontological dominant, which is visible in the intertextual games targeted at the modernist idea of originality and autonomy of a literary work. At the same time, Schubert's involvement in the formal treatment of an avant-garde origin decides upon the ambiguity of the mentioned shift of the dominant, which is rather being shifted than already shifted. Since the finiteness of that process seems to be controversial to me, I am of the opinion that – in order to remain within McHale's concept – Schubert places himself between the two dominants and thus he is located in the borderline of modernism. Cf. Brian McHale, *Powieść postmodernistyczna*, trans. Maciej Płaza, Eidos (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2012), 3–58. (Postmodernist Fiction)

The two elementary "coding terms" that Schubert uses - Boobalk and Trenta Tre lay down for the reader a requirement and a promise – the reader together with the author will build a community of insiders familiar with the hermetic connections between various spheres on which the novel is rested. At the same time, for the price of having those competencies, the reader does not receive much, which means that decoding those elements is as necessary as facultative. Solving the puzzle does not bring anything else but the satisfaction arising from that activity itself. Even if the net of connections in the novel gets blurred with a rhetoric gesture (and after all, this is what Schubert does while using slogans or quotations for coding), those connections – although hidden – still do exist, but at the same instant, their existence (just like that gesture of concealing) is in fact purely conventional, relative and thus facultative. In Trenta Tre's monastery, the future was foretold, and complete isolation from the world was not possible; it is the very same process in the metaliterary conceptualization mode and interpoetic practice that Schubert carries out. It is impossible to speak about experiencing the reality which will be deprived of its literariness that is a kind of a prophecy which will not contain any literariness – it is a kind of a prophecy made by Schubert – from the story/monastery of *Trenta Tre* the novel.

translated by Małgorzata Ryster

## Bibliography

- Baczyński, Krzysztof Kamil. "[Opowiadanie bez tytułu] (Gimnazjum imienia Boobalka I)." In *Utwory zebrane*, edited by Aniela Kmita-Piorunowa and Kazimierz Wyka, Vol. 2. Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1970. [Story with No Title] (Boobalk Junior Highschool I) *Artystyczny*, no. 3 (1985): 110–23. (Illusion of Conveying the Meaning about 'Miss Lilianka' by Ryszard Schubert)
- Bakhtin, Mihail Mihajlovič. *Estetyka twórczości słownej*. Edited by Eugeniusz Czaplewicz. Translated by Danuta Ulicka. Biblioteka Krytyki Współczesnej. Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1986. (Aesthetics of Verbal Creativity)
- Bolecki, Włodzimierz. "Wolne glosy. O prozie Ryszarda Schuberta." *Twórczość*, no. 6 (1982).
- . "Wolne glosy. O prozie Ryszarda Schuberta." *Twórczość*, no. 6 (1982). (Free Speaking. The Prose by Ryszard Schubert)
- Bugajski, Leszek. "Rozziew." In *Licytacja: szkice o nowej literaturze.*, 1st ed. Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981. (Hiatus)
- Bula, Danuta. "Iluzja mówioności o "Pannie Liliance" Ryszarda Schuberta." *Język Czeszko*, Bogdan. "Pomyślunkiem Parafianina Się Posługując...." *Nowe Książki*, no. 17 (1975). ((Making Use of a Kiss by a Parishioner...))
- Galant, Jan. *Polska proza lingwistyczna: debiuty lat siedemdziesiątych*. Vol. 12. Poznań: Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne, 1998. (Polish Linguistic Prose: Debuts of the 70s)
- Kirsch, Donat. "Elaborat – debiuty lat siedemdziesiątych." *Twórczość*, no. 9 (1981). (Elaborate - Debuts of the 70s)
- Kraśński, Zygmunt. *Listy Wybrane*. Edited by Tadeusz Pini. Warsaw: Parnas Polski, 1937. <https://polona.pl/item/listy-wybrane,OTc2Nzk2NTM>. (Selected Letters)
- . *Wyjutki z listów Zygmunta Kraśńskiego*. Edited by Konstanty Gaszyński. Vol. 1. Paris, 1860. <https://polona.pl/item/wyjutki-z-listow-zygmunta-krasinskiego-t-1,MjU4MTMwOA>. (Excerpts from Letters by Zygmunt Kraśński)



- . *Wyjtki z Listów Zygmunta Krasińskiego*. Edited by Konstanty Gaszyński. Vol. 1. Paris, 1861. <https://polona.pl/item/wyjatki-z-listow-zygmunta-krasinskiego-t-1,MjU4MTAwMA>. (Excerpts from Letters by Zygmunt Krasiński)
- Królik, Stanisław Jan. "Czyścić." *Kamena* 584, no. 20 (1975): 13. (Purgatory)
- McHale, Brian. *Powieść postmodernistyczna*. Translated by Maciej Płaza. Eidos. Cracow: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2012. (Postmodernist Fiction)
- Niemczuk, Jerzy. "Ryszard Schubert, czyli słuch absolutny." *Kultura*, no. 38 (1979). (Ryszard Schubert or Absolute Hearing)
- Odyniec, Antoni Edward. *Listy z Podróży*. Edited by Marian Toporowski and Maria Dernałowicz. Vol. 2. Biblioteka Pamiętników Polskich i Obcych. Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1961. (Letters from Travels)
- . *Listy z Podróży: Wybór*. Edited by Henryk Życzynski. Biblioteka Narodowa. Serja 1, nr 117. Lvov: Wydawnictwo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, 1937. <https://polona.pl/item/listy-z-podrozy,MzQ2MzY1Mg/>. (Letters from Travels: Selection)
- Orłowski, Antoni. "Mrówki, czyli Spotkanie się pana Tadeusza z Telimeną i zgoda ułatwiona za pośrednictwem mrówek." *Muchy*, no. 12 (9 December) (1915): 1–2. (Ants or Meeting between Mr. Tadeusz and Telimena and the Consent Achieved with the Help of Ants)
- . *Pan Tadeusz czyli rzecz o mrówkach*. Kiev, Lipsk, 1907. <http://kpbc.umk.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=185001>. (Mr. Tadeusz and the Thing about Ants)
- Piskor, Stanisław. "Nowa proza." In *Licytacja: szkice o nowej literaturze*, 1st ed. Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981. (New Prose)
- Schubert, Ryszard. "Dialog: autor – recenzent." *Polityka*, 1976. (Dialog: Author - Reviewer)
- . *Trenta tre*. Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1975.
- Sudolski, Zbigniew. *Korespondencja Zygmunta Krasińskiego: Studium Monograficzne*. Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1968. (Correspondence by Zygmunt Krasiński: Monographic Study)
- Szmidt, Olga. "Inne możliwości, inne zapomnienia: polska krytyka literacka i 'czesanie historii pod włos.'" *Zeszyty Naukowe Towarzystwa Doktorantów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Nauki Humanistyczne*, no. 8 (2014): 9–19. (Other Possibilities, Other Oblivions: Polish Literary Criticism and Manipulating History)
- . "Piekło języka: 'Trenta tre' Ryszarda Schuberta." *Pamiętnik Literacki*, no. 4 (2015): 97–112.
- Uniłowski, Krzysztof. *Polska proza innowacyjna w perspektywie postmodernizmu od Gombrowicza po utwory najnowsze*. Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach 1753. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1999. (Polish Innovative Prose in the Postmodernism Perspective from Gombrowicz to the Latest Works)
- Walc, Jan. "Srutu Tutu." *Polityka*, 1976. (Blah, Blah, Blah)
- Wichowska, Małgorzata. "Śladami Sublokatorów Przyszłości, Jamnika Dana i Sielanki Wergilego. O Nieznanym Utworze Krzysztofa Kamila Baczyńskiego." In *Cudowne Przygody Pana Pinzla Rudego: (Powieść Fantastyczna) Ze Zbiorów Muzeum Literatury Im. Adama Mickiewicza*. Warsaw: Muzeum Literatury im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2017. (Following in the Footsteps of Subtenants of the Future, Dan the Basset and Idyll by Vergil. The Unknown Literary Piece by Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński)
- Zadura, Bohdan. "Trzydzieści Trzy." *Twórczość*, no. 2 (1976). (Thirty-Three)
- Zarzycki, Dariusz. "Potomstwo literackie „Pana Tadeusza” (kontynuacje, parodie, pastisze, trawestacje)." *Rocznik Towarzystwa Literackiego imienia Adama Mickiewicza*, no. 30 (1995): 113–30. (The Literary Offspring of „Pan Tadeusz” (Continuations, Parodies, Pastiches, Travesties))
- Zieliński, Michał. "Zdrowy z Urojenia." *Tygodnik Powszechny*, no. 32 (1980). (Healthy from Illusion)

# KEYWORDS

RYSZARD SCHUBERT

MODERNISM

romanticism

**ABSTRACT:**

An article presenting intertextual relations included in *Trenta Tre* written by Ryszard Schubert, which was recognised as a late achievement of Polish neo avant-garde literature. The author demonstrates how Schubert creates references to the romantic literature and to the modernist texts engaged in a dialog with romanticism. He identifies the potential sources for quotations and allusions, and also draws readers' attention to the relationship between that work by Schubert and an unfinished story written by Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński. The main purpose of creating the intertextual connections is to present the problem of key oppositions in modern literature, and thus to illustrate the decline of the very formation itself and the downturn in the dynamics of the processes that affected its productivity.

## intertext

A V A N T - G A R D E

*modernity*

### NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:

Przemysław Kaliszuk, Dr. – born in 1985, works at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, interested in modern prose of the 2nd. half of the 20th century, experimental literature and fantasy prose; author of *Wyczerpywanie i odnowa. „Nowa” polska proza lat siedemdziesiątych i osiemdziesiątych wobec późnej nowoczesności* (“Exhausting and Renewal. ‘New’ Polish Prose of the 70s and 80s vs. Late Modernity”)

# Tilden's Tildes

Ewa Rajewska

ORCID: 0000-0002-8561-0638

First published in 1957, subsequently republished in newer editions, and recently published in Polish as *Interpretacja dziedzictwa* (2019),<sup>1</sup> *Interpreting Our Heritage* by the American mentor and philosopher Freeman Tilden (1893-1980) is a classic study in heritology. It is a relatively new discipline that is also called cultural heritage studies.<sup>2</sup>

Commissioned by the American National Park Service, a thriving institution that had been operating for 40 years and was still developing its operating principles at the time, Tilden's book was a direct result of months of traveling to American national parks and museums.<sup>3</sup> For over half a century, it has set standards in providing guiding services in the United States; the famous six principles of interpretation proposed by Tilden are also used in Europe, including Poland.

Tilden's extraordinary work it is not a traditional textbook for guides and national heritage agencies. Written by an expert in rhetoric, it is a superb book. "I am not a museum expert, and if it were left to me to create a whole museum, I fear I should make sad work of it," Tilden writes in the book. However, since he was a professional journalist, writer, and playwright, we must take this observation with a grain of salt. "But I do feel sure that I am right about establishing the mood and the stance" (p. 88). He considered himself to be an "enthusiastic amateur scholar" of history, including natural history, that is a person who is "the personification of happiness because [he] do[es] what [he] lov[es]" (p. 95).

As the title suggests, this article is meant to be a more or less ordered collection of readerly aberrations and approximations concerning Freeman Tilden's *Interpreting Our Heritage*. Since this article also includes certain mental abbreviations and approximations, I have referred to the tilde.

## Interpretation

Tilden states that "[t]his book results from a study of Interpretation as practiced in the many and diverse cultural preserves [...] and from an inquiry as to whether there is such a philosophy, whether there are such basic principles, upon which the interpreter may proceed" (p. 4).

Tilden gives the reader a number of definitions of what he means by interpretation. He notes in the opening sentence of the book that "the word interpretation as used in this book refers to a public service that has so recently come into our cultural world that a resort to the dictionary

<sup>1</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 1977). All quotes come from this edition.

<sup>2</sup> Whose object of study changes constantly: Kowalski notes that as early as at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, the term "heritage" meant only material monuments and belonged to the field of art history. Books in the field of heritology were in fact books about conservation. See: Krzysztof Kowalski, *O istocie dziedzictwa europejskiego – rozważania* [On the essence of European heritage – reflections], *Heritologia* series, vol. 3 (Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Michał Kępski, "Wprowadzenie", in: Tilden, *Interpretacja dziedzictwa* [Polish translation: Poznań: Centrum Turystyki Kulturowej TRAKT, 2019, 19-20.

for a competent definition is fruitless" (p. 3). These words were first published more than 60 years ago. Today, of course, the appropriate definition exists. The popular dictionary of contemporary American English, *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, right after "explanation" and "adaptation, method, or style," provides the following definition of the word "interpretation:" "A teaching technique that combines factual with stimulating explanatory information."<sup>4</sup>

In probably the most universal approximation, Tilden calls interpretation "revelation based on information" (p. 9). He further explains interpretation is meant to convey to the people "something of the beauty and wonder, the inspiration and spiritual meaning that lie behind what the visitor can with his senses perceive" (p. 3-4). This clearly means that, in Tilden's view, a unique personal experience that the interpreter wants to share with others constitutes an important element of interpretation. More specifically, it is an aesthetic experience. Tilden writes that he "sometimes wonder[s] whether almost all of what we are trying to interpret does not fall, at last, into this realm of the aesthetic, in- and out-of-doors. Following this thought, the sod house of the Dakota settlers becomes not merely a bit of social history, but something beautiful, because Man used to full purpose that which he found of the materials at hand" (p. 87). Let us not forget about this mention of "purposeful" beauty; I will come back to it in a moment.

Listing various objects of interpretation, "the national parks and monuments, the state and municipal parks, battlefield areas, historic houses publicly or privately owned, museums great and small" (p. 3), "primitive parks, the unspoiled seashore, archaeological ruins, battle-fields, zoological and botanical gardens, historic preservations" (p. 13), Tilden distinguishes between works of nature and products of culture, but he also notes that "in every wildlife reserve a certain historical context can be found" (p. 60). To some extent, he tries to transform the works of nature into artifacts or perhaps he tries to see them as artifacts. In this sense, heritage, as interpreted by Tilden, may be seen as a collection of cultural constructs or, indeed, as a collection of texts. Consequently, I would like to analyze his theory of interpretation in the wider context of other theories of interpretation, for example, those found in literary studies. To some extent, such an interpretative practice is legitimized by Tilden himself, who compares visiting monuments with reading a novel: "The visitor is unlikely to respond unless what you have to tell, or to show, touches his personal experience, thoughts, hopes, way of life, social position, or whatever else. [...] When a person reads a novel or sees a play, he instinctively measures the fictional behaviour against what he imagines his own character and conduct, under such circumstances, would be" (p. 13).

Tilden is also fully aware of the power of language: "The driving force of effective interpretation is appropriate and ingenious drawing on linguistic means that will move the recipient beyond facts, towards the experience of their spiritual dimension" (p. 15). Indeed, interpretation works if it makes use of apt metaphors.

So, why should we not analyze Tilden's concepts using literary methodology?

According to Tilden, interpretation is 1. discovering and 2. conveying the meaning of artifacts and monuments, also from the domain of natural history, based on a strongly essentialist assumption that such a meaning exists. Therefore, Tilden's interpretative practice involves two stages:

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/interpretation>, date of access: 30 Oct. 2019.

1. reading (in its unique sense) and
2. creating an informative and stimulating story for the person that interacts with the object of interpretation.

When read against the background of twentieth-century literary theories, Tilden's concept of interpretation seems surprisingly novel.

## Intention

In the classic Tanner Lectures on Human Values (1990), Umberto Eco, distinguishing between the intention of the author, the intention of the text and the intention of the reader, stated that the interpreter should reconstruct the intention, the meaning-making mechanism, of the text itself.<sup>5</sup> What the interpreter is looking for is offered to him by the text itself; the text, by the virtue of its coherence, answers the question about its meaning and interpretation. Such an approach was obviously not a new one; it was rather a defensive gesture on behalf of Eco, intended to protect the text from the theory of deconstruction, which also focused on the intention of the text, although referring to it by a different name. The object of interpretation was defined by the most important theoretical schools of the twentieth century, including Russian formalists, structuralists, semioticians (such as Eco), and, in my opinion, twentieth-century hermeneuts would agree with such an approach.

Eco warned against misusing the notion of the intention (i.e. focusing on the author's intention, *intentio auctoris*, as exemplified by the age-old question "What did the author mean?") and imposing on the text the intention of the reader (*intentio lectoris*).

However, it seems that Tilden advises the interpreter to do the latter and focus on his own intention and convincingly present the object of interpretation in such a light so that it can move the audience. According to Eco, this would be a mistake, a manipulation, an overinterpretation, an (ab)use of text. But the theory of Tilden, who was also a fan of Emerson, coincides with American pragmatism, especially with how interpretation operates according to the neopragmatist Richard Rorty. Rorty argues that a given text provides stimuli by which the reader may more or less easily convince himself or others that what he wanted to say about it from the very beginning is true:

Reading texts is a matter of reading them in the light of other texts, people, obsessions, bits of information, or what have you, and then seeing what happens. [...] It may be so exciting and convincing that one has the illusion that one now sees what a certain text is really about. But what excites and convinces is a function of the needs and purposes of those who are being excited and convinced.<sup>6</sup>

For Tilden, as for Rorty, the intention of the interpreter-reader is the most important. The utilitarianism of Tilden's *intentio interpretis*, however, is unique: it is strongly directed at the recipient of the interpretation, and its "[...] real goal [...] is to stimulate the reader or hearer

<sup>5</sup> Umberto Eco, "Overinterpreting texts", in: Umberto Eco, Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler, Christine Brooks-Rose, *Interpretation and overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Richard Rorty, "The Pragmatist's progress," in: Umberto Eco, Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler, Christine Brooks-Rose, *Interpretation and overinterpretation*, 105. Translated into Polish by Janusz Grygieńć, Sergiusz Tokariew: Richard Rorty, "Ścieżka Pragmatysty: Umberto Eco o interpretacji", in: Richard Rorty, *Filozofia a nadzieja na lepsze społeczeństwo* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2013). See also: Tomasz Umerle, *Trocki – storczyki – literatura. Miejsce literatury w (auto)biografii intelektualnej Richarda Rorty'ego* (Warsaw: IBL, 2015) to learn more about the impact of Rorty's text on Polish literary studies.

toward a desire to widen his horizon of interests and knowledge, and to gain an understanding of the greater truths that lie behind any statements of fact" (p. 33).

As a pragmatist ("all anybody ever does with anything is use it. Interpreting something, knowing it, penetrating to its essence, and so on are all just various ways of describing some process of putting it into work"<sup>7</sup>), Rorty would not accept such a dualistic, Platonic, division into appearances and reality, surface and depth.

## Uses

The visitors, the addressees of the interpretative activity, are perceived by Tilden as an egalitarian community and treated as intelligent non-experts who should be inspired to seek knowledge on their own. Such an egalitarian approach is not particularly popular in literary studies. One of the few similar publications on this subject is Rita Felski's *Uses of Literature* (2006). Felski writes that "ordinary" and professional readers are not separated by an unbridgeable gap, stating that there are four forms of "textual engagement," including recognition, enchantment, knowledge and shock, which they share:

*In the following pages, I propose that reading involves a logic of **recognition**; that aesthetic experience has analogies with **enchantment** in a supposedly disenchanted age; that literature creates distinctive configurations of social **knowledge**; that we may value the experience of being **shocked** by what we read. These four categories epitomize what I call modes of textual engagement: they neither intrinsic literary properties nor independent psychological states, but denote multi-levelled interactions between texts and readers [...].<sup>8</sup>*

I would like to use Felski's four categories to further characterize Tilden's concept in relation to the first "reading" stage of how he interprets material heritage.

Tilden's category of "participation" is conceived of in terms of a direct physical experience that opens visitors to an understanding of natural and human history, "bringing the past to the present, for the stimulation of our visitors" (p. 77). It is in some respects very similar to Felski's "recognition:" "What does it mean to recognize oneself in a book? This experience seems at once utterly mundane yet singularly mysterious. While turning a page, I am arrested by a compelling description, a constellation of events, a conversation between characters, an internal monologue. Suddenly and without warning, a flash of connection leaps across the gap between text and reader" (p. 32). According to Tilden, "participation" leads one to the moment of recognition, which provides an insight into a deeper reality and endows one with a sense of belonging and understanding one's place in the world. Visitors may experience it and the interpreter *must* experience it in order to be able to transform his experience into a convincing narrative that will inspire the audience. This is also a moment, and Tilden states so openly, that brings one joy. Felski would probably refer to such a state as "enchantment," i.e. a state of "intense involvement, a sense of being so entirely caught up in an aesthetic object that that nothing else seems to matter" (p. 63). Tilden openly writes about admiration, especially one inspired by nature, while

<sup>7</sup> Rorty, "The Pragmatist's progress," 93.

<sup>8</sup> Rita Felski, *Uses of literature* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), s. 24.

warning the interpreter against using sophisticated words: “If we are showing the majesty of the Teton Range, we must not do or say anything that would make a toy of this experience. These Alpine peaks know how to speak for themselves, and they speak a language that the world of people shares” (p. 84-85). He further adds that “[a]n object, whether a mountain, a lake, a crystal, a Chippendale or an heroic act, is not made more beautiful by being called beautiful” (p. 85).

Beauty, as I have already mentioned, can result from a purposeful use of a given object, but it can also be an immanent property that will influence the viewer on its own:

If I were arranging a museum, whether of minerals or other things, I think I should have the visitor see, as he enters, one beautiful, unlabeled thing. If it is surpassingly lovely of its sort, it is of no consequence, at the moment, what its specific name may be. Anyone who wishes to know later will be informed. I would have ample space around it, so that nothing could jostle for supremacy. (p. 87-88)

Tilden advises the reader to share knowledge, which coincides with Felski’s third reading category, very carefully: excess information leads to disorientation and interpretation is not about imparting dry facts. Shock, anxiety, and horror play an even smaller role in Tilden’s book. In Tilden’s view, the principle of pleasure is more important. Still, he acknowledges the fact that recognition, insight into deeper reality, and spiritual elation, similarly to the experience of shock, also move the viewer. Tilden does not really write about “problematic” history; he only briefly mentions the American Civil War; I also found one discreet allusion to slavery. The lot of Native Americans is not addressed at all.

Because Tilden’s book is extremely affirmative: “I wish to [...] share mainly positive inspirations and constructive thoughts” (p. 88), I must admit that passion and genuine enthusiasm are shared by the reader.

It is also a humanistic book at its core. In my opinion, Michał Kępski rightly points out in the introduction to the Polish edition of the book that Tilden “interprets nature in a deeply humanistic manner.” Because, while Tilden is clearly motivated by his concern for the national heritage, its proper display, and preservation, he is probably even more motivated by his concern for his fellow human being, the visitor who is trying to understand this heritage. Tilden says that the interpreter’s task is to guide “[visitors] toward the larger aspects of things that lead toward wisdom and toward the consolations that come from a sense of living in a natural world and a historic continuity that ‘make sense’” (p. 36).

I would like to stress the importance of “making sense.” Indeed, sense, understood as “the greater truths that lie behind any statements of fact” and the concept of the “whole” are also very important for Tilden:

Of all the words in our English language, none is more beautiful and significant than the word “whole.” In the beginning it meant “healthy.” [...] A cardinal purpose of Interpretation, it seems to me, is to present a whole rather than a part, no matter how interesting the specific part may be. (p. 45)

Tilden calls the interpreter “the middleman of happiness.” The notion of happiness in Tilden’s book is truly captivating for the reader. Tilden stresses the relationship between visiting heritage sites and experiencing happiness:



[...] the finest uses of national parks, or indeed of any of the preserves that come within the range of interpretive work, lie ultimately in spiritual uplift. This end cannot be reached except through a walk with beauty of some aspect. (. 88)

One may wonder whether by referring to the interpreter as “the middleman of happiness,” who will help the visitor feel that he is a part of history, “bring to life [his] hidden capacities for happiness” and “find his place in nature and among men—not excluding remote men” (p. 34), Tilden does not refer to the intention of the author, as if moving from museology to metaphysics. We may also wonder whether Tilden’s holistic approach is not a manifestation of his Christian faith, which is present in the entire book, albeit very discreetly, indeed, almost imperceptibly. It is probably not by accident that on page 5 Tilden mentions Jesus when he writes about the fact that all great teachers were at the same time interpreters (Tilden refers to a quote from someone else’s text at this point). But at the same time, Tilden warns that one should “never give the nail that last tap” (p. 78) in the process of interpretation. He observes that

“Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection.”

I would have every interpreter, everywhere, recite this to himself frequently almost like a canticle of praise to the Great Giver of all we have, for in the realest sense it is a suggestion of the religious spirit, the spiritual urge, the satisfaction of which must always be the finest end product of our preserved natural and manmade treasures. He that understands will not wilfully deface, for when he truly understands, he knows that it is in some degree a part of himself. (p. 38)

translated by Agnieszka Kocznur

## Bibliography

- Eco, Umberto. “Overinterpreting texts.” In Umberto Eco, Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler, Christine Brooks-Rose, *Interpretation and overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.
- Felski, Rita. *Uses of literature*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2011.
- Kowalski, Krzysztof. *O istocie dziedzictwa europejskiego – rozważania*. Heritology series, vol. 3. Krakow: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury, 2013.
- Rorty, Richard. “The Pragmatist’s progress.” In Umberto Eco, Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler, Christine Brooks-Rose, *Interpretation and overinterpretation*.
- . „Ścieżka Pragmatysty: Umberto Eco o interpretacji”. Translated by Janusz Grygień and Sergiusz Tokariew. In Richard Rorty, *Filozofia a nadzieja na lepsze społeczeństwo*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2013.
- Tilden, Freeman. *Interpreting Our Heritage*. Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 1977.
- Tilden, Freeman. *Interpretacja dziedzictwa*. Translated by Agnieszka Wilga. Poznań: Centrum Turystyki Kulturowej TRAKT, 2019.
- Umerle, Tomasz. *Trocki – storczyki – literatura. Miejsce literatury w (auto)biografii intelektualnej Richarda Rorty’ego*. Warsaw: IBL, 2015.

# KEYWORDS

*Richard Rorty*

national heritage

*Rita Felski*

heritology

**ABSTRACT:**

The article focuses on the concept of interpreting national heritage developed by by Freeman Tilden in his classic work *Interpreting Our Heritage* (1957), which is discussed in the wider critical context of literary interpretations developed by Richard Rorty in *The Pragmatist's Progress* and Rita Felski in *Uses of Literature*.

FREEMAN  
TILDMENTHEORY OF  
INTERPRETATION

Umberto Eco

**NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

Ewa Rajewska - literary scholar, translation scholar, editor and literary translator. Head of M.A. translation specialization at AMU's Institute of Polish Philology: [www.przekladowa.amu.edu.pl](http://www.przekladowa.amu.edu.pl). Author of *Stanisław Barańczak - poeta i tłumacz* [Stanisław Barańczak – a poet and a translator] (2007) and *Domysł portretu: O twórczości oryginalnej i przekładowej Ludmiły Marjańskiej* [An implied portrait: On the literary and translation works of Ludmiła Marjańska] (2016). Translator of, among others, Kenneth Burke's *The Philosophy of Literary Form* into Polish (*Filozofia formy literackiej*, 2014). Contact: [rajewska@amu.edu.pl](mailto:rajewska@amu.edu.pl) |

Nikodem Wołczuk | ORCID 0000-0002-4303-2016

# The Variant

Generally speaking, it is an elaboration on the same text, or a different solution to the same problem. At least, that is the definition of a variant in “Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN” [Polish Dictionary PWN – tr. JK]<sup>1</sup>. It might seem as if the explanation given above is clear enough, and would be easy to apply into an academic research method; yet, within some fields of philology, the concept appears to be quite problematic, as it presents a complex and nuanced background.

**Origin of the concept** | The concept of a variant started within the field of Classical Philology, to which we also owe the later interest in author’s manuscripts. Further research on this subject made the philologists realize that they lack certain definitions; a more precise philological take was necessary in order to enable possible relations between certain manuscripts, meaning the particular status of manuscripts popularization in ancient and medieval eras, as it was based on copying.

Let us take a closer look at the simple scheme of intertextual relations in *La Génétique des textes* by Pierre-Marc de Biasi<sup>2</sup>. Imagine we were to analyse a manuscript D, which is another copy of a text contained in manuscript A. It is not, however, a direct copy [of manuscript A]. The scribe used two other copies, which have existed besides manuscript A and D – the somewhat different manuscripts B and C. Thus, manuscripts B and C are the source text to manuscript D, and manuscript A is a source text to B and C. Within all of these copies, there are certain variances caused by problematic reading of an earlier copy, or caused by the damaged source of a manuscript paper, or a scribe’s decision to express themselves or just the simple, unintended mistakes which have happened to everyone who would transcribe any text. These various forms of message contained in the piece of writing, more or less different from the source text, were named “variants” by classical philologists.

**Modern manuscripts** | Manuscripts would gradually lose their meaning and usability after the revolution caused by Gutenberg; however, this process was a very slow one, and its development was non-aggressive. Printings were surely dominant in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Manuscripts lost the status of a primary knowledge medium, yet they still were meaningful to spreading content which was not welcomed in the primary circuit, i.e. the ones where an author would share political, social or religious opinions, especially vastly different ones from how reality was perceived by most. This way, manuscripts, in regard to the process of creating a piece of writing, became a mostly private thing. Writers’ private archives started to appear, and they became more popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

<sup>1</sup> „Variant”, Słownik Języka Polskiego [Polish Dictionary PWN – tr. JK], accessed on 30.09.2019, <https://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/wariant;2579566.html>.

<sup>2</sup> See: Pierre-Marc de Biasi, *La Génétique des textes*, 2000 (Paris: CNRS Editions).

This research field, which has just been identified, needed a conceptual apparatus that would allow unrestricted movement in research on modern or contemporary manuscripts. The easiest solution seemed to be – even though it was not the best possible one – transferring certain definitions from the Classical Philology dictionary, which was already well established, as its research subject appeared to be exactly the same. Such simple and careless transfer of the term “variant” was discredited by French Genetic Criticism; still, the concept managed to spread amongst most European researchers early on.

**The classic understanding of “variant”** | Until now, Polish researchers understood the “variant” to be every single new edit of a piece of writing, both at the level of a rough copy, as well as later prints. Such a term could be used to describe every single change made in the analysed text: every crossed out and overwritten word, every note suggesting a different intention by the author, every single interference that overturned the meaning of a literary piece of writing. The primary claim is that a modification read by a researcher cannot bear the characteristics of a mistake, so it could be recognized as a conscious decision made by the author. Pinpointing this is not easy; the attempt to guess author’s initial “intention” turns out to be quite a problematic issue<sup>3</sup>.

In Polish textological research, the term “variant” was often interchanged with many other definitions of a similar phenomenon (i.e.: a variant, an alternation, a version, an edit) and could refer to units of various scope (from a single word up to whole chapters). Such a multitude could possibly lead to terminological chaos. Roman Loth, amongst many other researchers, tried to narrow down this diverse terminology while using previous editing practices. He claims that variants belong to the family of “side texts”, which would be every single piece of writing somehow different from the text recognized as the origin of the print<sup>4</sup>. This is how Loth describes the complexity of variants terminology:

The narrowed scope of applying [certain] names can be used with two completely synonymous phrases: “an alternation” and “a variant”. It seems to be, that editing practice is relating them solely on the level of alternations placed within a piece of writing – and a level lower than that. Hence we would not talk about two alternations (variants) of a novel or an epic poem (which we would name “two edits”), but we would talk about two (variants) of a stanza or an epilogue. And call two lower levels of a text accordingly to that: alternation of a verse, a sentence, a phrase or even a word (i.e. an epithet)<sup>5</sup>.

As we can see, this statement places the “variant” within the zone of changes made at the time of creating the text; not on a general level, but rather on the level of a [textual] detail. However, the key problem is that amongst editing practices, variants have always referred to the state of a rough copy. It is not far from the approach of academics related to one of the main fields in researching manuscript origins: specifically, the one started by Gianfranco Contini, a “variantistica”. The name itself already suggests an exquisite status of such a concept.

<sup>3</sup> For a broader take on this issue, see: Kamila Budrowska, „«Tekst kanoniczny», «intencja twórcza» i inne kłopoty. Z zagadnień terminologicznych tekstologii i edytorstwa naukowego”, *Pamiętnik Literacki* 97, nr 3 (2006): p. 109–121.

<sup>4</sup> Roman Loth, *Podstawowe pojęcia i problemy tekstologii i edytorstwa naukowego* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2006), p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> Loth, op. cit., p. 123.

Alfredo Stussi, when explaining the “Italian School of Genetic Reading”, describes variants as modifications of segments in different stages of a writer’s work. These modifications can get overbuilt by any further change made within the phrase, while at the same time, they could be creating a layered variant<sup>6</sup>. Stussi understands variant as a change made in the manuscript on its lower level (that is, a paragraph, a sentence, a word).

**“Variant” in French Genetic Criticism** | French Genetic Criticism remains in opposition to the term “variant” as we have understood it until now. In the 70s, Jean Bellemin-Noël defined this concept differently. He classified it as a modification, which transforms a piece of writing into “another” piece of writing. What we can see here is a wider understanding than just a change made by the author, which would also modify the intention of a text; instead, it would be about constituting a new textual quality. However, one should not equate these modifications with revision of a text, as it does not constitute a “new” piece of writing - it is only another stage of a writer’s work<sup>7</sup>.

Pierre-Marc de Biasi, one of the main representatives of Genetic Criticism and an heir to Noël’s way of thinking, claimed that the concept taken from classical philologists does not have a rational purpose in describing a matter so fluid as an author’s rough copy. He suggests that textologists should stop naming changes within the manuscript “variants”, because the word is inadequate and loses its usefulness when compared with the distinctive research material. This is how Biasi supports his claims in *Génétique des textes*:

[In] the field of research on rough drafts, schemes, sketches and so on, the genetic criticism would talk about “another repeated writing”, “stages of writing” or “the history of writing process”, but never of variants. Why? Because its main focus is modification, within which everything is still possible, and yet nothing can be predicted: what have been modified is still not a text, but it is what preludes the text itself. For a long period of time, at the stage of making [a piece of writing] nothing is certain or stable, nor is it definitive – every single created element could disappear at any time, or transform into its opposite form, or evolve at the expense of another element, or destroy the whole writing process. If so, how could we possibly talk about “variants”. Variants of what? For the lack of any constant element (*an invariant*) – and it is a rule in the world of rough drafts – the idea of variants itself loses any kind of coherency<sup>8</sup>.

Thus, the specific character of Genetic Criticism’s approach means they would focus on the evolution of a piece of writing, transferring the researcher’s attention from the end product of the work onto the “path”, which has led to said end product. This approach excludes the concept of “variants”, because during the research on the stages of the “paths”, they do not end up constituted within the final piece of writing. Too much unpredictability and the lack of stability characterises phases of the hand-writing process to allow us to think about variantivity. Zofia Mitosek, in one of the first Polish research papers on French Genetic Criticism, has already noticed that “variant” is not very popular amongst genetic critics, because it is inherently tied to the theology of a final text<sup>9</sup>. Biasi claimed

<sup>6</sup> See: Alfredo Stussi, *Edycja genetyczna „włoska”*, w *Wprowadzenie do edytorstwa i tekstologii*, tr. Mateusz Salwa, Piotr Salwa (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2011), p. 139–165, translated from Polish by Jolanta Kikiewicz.

<sup>7</sup> Jean Bellemin-Noël, *Le texte et l’avant-texte* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1972), p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Biasi, loc. cit., p. 35.

<sup>9</sup> Zofia Mitosek, „Od dzieła do rękopisu. O francuskiej krytyce genetycznej”, *Pamiętnik Literacki* 81, no. 4 (1990): p. 397.

that we could allow the use of such problematic name only in the case of relating modifications to the final form of a piece of writing; however, it would be fake and a too far reach within the field of chronology, because it suggests “(...) establishing the existence of something not recognised by manuscripts, something they are still trying to invent”<sup>10</sup>. Such an approach is opposite to Biasi’s method.

The French critic does not completely negate the concept of a “variant” and does not exclude it from the field of genetic criticism research. However, he suggests that the use of it should be more like how it was first used<sup>11</sup>. Thus, we could talk about variantivity in the case of different versions of a text, appearing in-between another editions of a piece of writing. After we cross the border of the first edition, the piece would gain the status of “point of reference”, but it would not become permanently stable. It still could be modified by the author, or modified under different circumstances, but other than the rough drafts, such pieces of writing can be compared in a similar way; it is also how classical philologists would elaborate on said matter. The author of *Génétique des textes* calls that kind of research “printing genetics”. He claims that this approach would allow for the maintaining of a certain meaning the concept has, and clear up some of its terminological inaccuracies.

translated by Jolanta Kikiewicz

<sup>10</sup>Biasi, loc. cit., p. 35.

<sup>11</sup>Biasi, loc. cit., p. 36.

## Bibliography

Bellemin-Noël, Jean. *Le texte et l'avant-texte*. Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1972.

Biasi, Pierre-Marc de., *La Génétique des textes*. Paris: CNRS Editions, 2000. Polish translation: *Genetyka tekstów*. tr. Filip Kwiatek, Maria Prussak. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2015.

Budrowska, Kamila. „«Tekst kanoniczny», «intencja twórcza» i inne kłopoty. Z zagadnień terminologicznych tekstologii i edytorstwa naukowego”. *Pamiętnik Literacki* 97, no 3 (2006): p. 109–121.

Loth, Roman. *Podstawowe pojęcia i problemy tekstologii i edytorstwa naukowego*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2006.

Mitosek, Zofia. „Od dzieła do rękopisu. O francuskiej krytyce genetycznej”. *Pamiętnik Literacki* 81, no 4 (1990): p. 393–403.

Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN. „Wariant”. Accessed: 30.10.2019. <https://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/wariant;2579566.html>.

Stussi, Alfredo. *Wprowadzenie do edytorstwa i tekstologii*. Tr. Mateusz Salwa, Piotr Salwa. Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2011.

# KEYWORDS

PIERRE-MARC DE BIASI

VARIANT

manuscripts

**ABSTRACT:**

The paper focuses on the concept of a “variant”, which is deeply rooted in the fields of editing practices and literary criticism. The main goal is to show the concept the way it is understood by the classical textology and French Genetic Criticism, as well as to confront different ways of using it.



## variations

### G E N E T I C   C R I T I C I S M

*text genetics*

**NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

Nikodem Wołczuk – MA Polish philology student at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Wołczuk specializes in academic editing. Currently researching French Genetic Criticism and its usage in Włodzimierz Odojewski's work. A documentalist in Pracownia Bibliografii Bieżącej Instytutu Badań Literackich PAN [Department of Current Bibliography at the Institute of Literary Research PAS].

Ewa Kraskowska | ORCID: 0000-0003-4316-1675

# Between Theories

c r i t i c s :

Anna Łebkowska, *Somatopoetyka – afekty – wyobrażenia.*

*Literatura XX i XXI wieku,*

Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu

Jagiellońskiego, Cracow 2019.

As a scholar, Anna Łebkowska has been constructing bridges between theories, notions and research perspectives in the field of literature studies for many years in the constantly changing landscape of the Polish humanities. A daughter of two outstanding literature historians, Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska and Jerzy Kwiatkowski, methodologically shaped in the times of the prevalence of the Polish structuralist-semiotic school, a Polish philologist raised by Henryk Markiewicz, she has had all the qualities predisposing her to contribute greatly to the Polish literature studies since the very beginning of her career. It should be stressed that she did not waste this potential, as confirmed by her latest book, *Somatopoetyka – afekty – wyobrażenia. Literatura XX i XXI wieku* (Auto-poetics – affects – conceptualizations. Literature of the 20th and 21st centuries). But before we take a closer look at the contents of this volume, we should perhaps review the subsequent stages of theoretical interests of the author.

In the final decades of the 20th century, Łebkowska was mostly interested in the issues of literary ontologies and epistemologies, as evidenced by two monographs: *Fikcja jako możliwość. Z przemian prozy XX wieku* (Fiction as an opportunity: On the transformations in the twentieth-century prose (1991) and *Między teoriami a fikcją literacką* (Between theories and literary fiction) (2001), in which she developed the theory of literary fiction in the context of contemporary theoretical discourse. She was a pioneer of the subject in Poland. In fact, the term “fiction” became almost her trademark, and in dealing with this difficult matter, she developed a specific rhetoric in her own comments. Not only did they require “courage” and “fearlessness”, but also the “potential for danger” and “atmosphere of challenge”. “However, a sense of challenge overcomes the sense of danger”<sup>1</sup>, as ascertained by Łebkowska in the preface to the latter book and luckily for us, she did not refrain from undertaking tasks requiring vast reading, intense intellectual work, and extraordinary skill in academic discourse.

In that study of literary fiction, the category of possibility and the related issue of possible worlds come to the forefront. This difficult question, which requires good orientation in the meanders of modal logic and linguistic philosophy, was not very popular amongst the Polish literary scholars, and it is thanks to Anna Łebkowska that it became present in our theoretical discourse, together with the vast source literature in foreign languages. Łebkowska saw fiction mostly as a factor constituting the semantics of the literary expression. She was

<sup>1</sup> Anna Łebkowska, *Między teoriami a fikcją literacką* (Cracow: Universitas 2001), p. 8.

interested in such phenomena as mise-en-abyme, metafiction, counterfactual narratives, focalization, point of view techniques; in other words, the whole repertoire of means typical for fiction of “possibilistics”, probabilistic character. She illustrated her considerations on this topic with literary examples, which she derived from the rich source of the twentieth-century modernism and postmodernism, both Polish and from abroad. It is then when she wrote her excellent analyses on the prose of Kuśniewicz and Parnicki, and numerous others devoted to such authors as Italo Calvino, Jorge Luis Borges, Umberto Eco, Elias Canetti, as well as to Polish writers: Roman Jaworski, Aniela Gruszecka, Tadeusz Konwicki, Jerzy Andrzejewski.

*Empatia. O literackich narracjach przełomu XX i XXI wieku* (Empathy. On the literary narrations from the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century) (2008) was her next monograph. And although the title might suggest that her research interests had shifted, in fact dealing with the category of empathy – which she once more introduced to the major literary studies in Poland in a pioneering way – stemmed from her past fascination with fiction as a literary and cultural phenomenon in a natural way. Let us briefly trace how Łebkowska’s thought evolved from “fiction” to “empathy”.

In the mid-1990s, two new trends appeared in her works: feminist criticism and new media, modifying her way of understanding the essence of fiction and literature. In terms of semantics and ontology of literature, her research interests shifted to literary pragmatics, literacy communication, internal and external personal relations, the interpersonal. In other words, they underwent anthropologization, just like the majority of contemporary humanities.

As a feminist critic, Łebkowska is best known for her paper *Czy „płeć” może uwieść poetykę?*<sup>2</sup> (Can gender seduce poetics?) and although there are no publications in her literary output that would clearly place her on the side of this trend in literary studies – she rather discusses and popularizes it than practices it herself – ever since, feminist sensitivities have been the *signum* of her attitude to research. I use the word “sensitivity” and not “awareness” (which may inspire ideological connotations), because it is this category that will gain importance when Łebkowska becomes fascinated with empathy and its relationships with literature. The monograph devoted to this issue concludes with the chapter „Dylematy lektury genderowej” (The dilemmas of gender reading), in which she discusses (among other things) the shaping of the worlds of literary fiction. On the other hand, taking notice of the opportunities offered to the literary communication by the interactive space of the Internet has become a natural consequence and extension of studies into fiction, which is simply a more old-fashioned way of digital reality’s existence. Studies devoted to hypertext literature or *Role Playing Games* constitute an important, yet peripheral trend in Łebkowska’s work, because the traditional form of literary work (i.e. the medium – the book, the printed word), including prose, remains Anna Łebkowska’s major object of interest and passion.

There are many places in the book devoted to empathy that contain declarations of key importance to Łebkowska’s research. For instance: “Literature is [...] emphatic writing. Through

<sup>2</sup> Anna Łebkowska, “Czy płeć może uwieść poetykę?”, in *Poetyka bez granic*, edited by Włodzimierz Bolecki, Wojciech Tomasiak (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN 1995), p. 78-93.

the projection of worlds, through oscillating on the border between fiction and meta-fiction a simultaneous unity between the longing for empathy and literacy takes place”<sup>3</sup>. Or: “To tell about the other without reifying them, maintaining its subjectified dimension – this is one of the tasks which modern literature undertakes”<sup>4</sup>. This is what she wrote on the tasks of literature studies: “I am thinking here [...] of such a research attitude that offers a chance to avoid reading that would on the one hand be too ideological or instrumental, and on the other – oversimplifying and unifying variety. The category of sensitivity may be helpful in such reception”<sup>5</sup>. And finally: “I would like to stress [...] that an attitude that combines with understanding literature as a privileged discourse is close to my heart. [...] this uniqueness relies mostly on the fact that literature – in a way available only to it – offers the biggest chance of capturing what escapes cognitive constructs. Through relations between that which allows to be saved, and what escapes the process of unification, between what is repeated as a convention, and what undergoes demistification [...] allows to capture what is otherwise impossible to capture, including also what is contained in the official culture and at the same time goes beyond it”<sup>6</sup>.

Hence, the meaning of the monograph *Empatia. O literackich narracjach przełomu XX i XXI wieku* was not only that it introduced the reader to the relatively new theoretical issues and applied the titular category to the analysis of specific literary phenomena in an original way, but also – perhaps first of all – that it did not shy away from asking the fundamental question: “what is literature?” and answering it in a suggestive, well-argued way. Ever since then, the relations between cultural anthropology and literature, and more precisely, on the one hand the issue of the literary dimension of cultural anthropology, and on the other hand, of anthropolization of literary studies, have been in the center of Anna Łebkowska’s research interests. However, she focuses on the uniqueness of literary phenomena rather than identifying literature with other aspects of culture.

*Somatopoetyka – afekty – zmysły – wyobrażenia. Literatura XX i XXI wieku* is another testament to this anthropological-cultural shift in Anna Łebkowska’s work. The volume presents her most important texts from the past decade, rewritten and placed in a new context. She used them to compose three parts, organized around the titular key words. The first part is entitled “Ciało i zmysły” (The body and the senses), and it consists of three chapters: “Somatopoetyka” (Self-poetics), “Świat dotyku” (The world of touch) and “Pochwała dotyku w dyskursie współczesności” (The praise of touch in the modern discourse). The first one belongs to review-encyclopedia articles, quite common in Łebkowska’s work; in terms of the skill and need to write them, I can see traces of Henryk Markiewicz’s training, especially his method of “intersections and close-ups”, which is extremely useful for organizing and popularizing humanities discourses. The self-poetics project is mostly about analyzing and interpreting how – according to the author – “the body is combined with literature”, about “studying the body formed by

<sup>3</sup> Anna Łebkowska, *Empatia. O literackich narracjach przełomu XX i XXI wieku* (Cracow: Universitas 2008), p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Łebkowska, p. 174.

<sup>5</sup> Łebkowska, p. 186.

<sup>6</sup> Łebkowska, p. 293.

culture” and the analysis of “ways of reflecting it in literature”<sup>7</sup>. Having indicated the fields and directions in which somato-poetological reading can go, Łebkowska starts to put this tool into practice, focusing on the issues related to the sense of touch and its literary applications. First – in the second chapter – she reads novels by Zofia Romanowiczówna according to this principle, and later, in the third chapter, she shows how “touchability” plays and means in the concepts of such theoreticians as Elizabeth Grosz, Stepehn Greenblatt or Hans Ulrich Gumbert, as well as in prose by Toni Morisson and in Jolanta Brach-Czainy’s essay writing.

The texts collected in the second part of the volume belong to the so-called affective turn in modern humanities. (It should be noted here that on the Polish side, it is the Cracow literary studies community that develops research into this problem, especially dynamically, and Łebkowska’s works play an important, often inspiring role in this trend). The author continues here her interpretation work on the Polish and foreign prose of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, focusing on such issues as the relationship between the creative act and its affective aspect (the chapter “Zdarzenie – afekt – twórczość”, in which the works of Nabokov, Perec, Duras and Winterson are subject to a “close-up reading”); the category of shame in the modern studies into culture (the chapter “Wstyd i niebyt” with the analysis of the prose by Magdalena Tulla, Zyta Rudzka and Jacek Dukaj); “the theater of speech”, i.e. ways of using personal pronouns in the latest Polish prose (“Co nowego w «teatrze mowy»?” – here the prose by Zbigniew Kruszyński, Olga Tokarczuk and once more Jacek Dukaj are at the center of attention); and finally, the issue of the emphatic reception of literature discussed in the crosssectional-theoretical way (the chapter “Odbiorca empatyczny. Między symulacją a afektem”).

I would like to stop for a moment, as a digression, at the insightful comments of Łebkowska on Jacek Dukaj’s writing, since I also enjoyed it, especially *Lód*. Łebkowska sees in Dukaj “a modern master of the theater of speech”, she analyzes “a specific form of the anthropology of shame” in this novel, and she observes that “it is high time that the broadly understood fantasy novels were not analyzed separately, as a closed, isolated circle”<sup>8</sup>. Such an attitude is completely understandable in the case of a theoretician of literary fiction and possible worlds; however, it is good that it is becoming more common also among other literature scholars (such as M. Brzóstowicz-Klajn, A. Gajewska, G. Gajewska, J. Jarzębski, K. Uniłowski). Fantasy (in literature, movie, comic books, video games) is becoming a major cultural phenomenon, going decisively beyond the boundaries of pop culture, and one can only be happy that the Polish fantasy books are competitive abroad.

The final part of the monograph comprises of three texts: “Przyszłość literatury wpisana w jej historię (20<sup>th</sup> century and modern times)”, “Europa wyobrażona w literaturze doby modernizmu” and “Afirmacja świata w powieści dla dziewcząt (Wanda Borudzka)”. The two former ones are devoted to such important problems and so vast in their temporal scope that they could be developed into separate monographs. In those chapters, Anna Łebkowska first presents herself as a historian of literature, showing ways in which both the Polish and foreign

<sup>7</sup> Anna Łebkowska, *Somatopoetyka – afekty – zmysły – wyobrażenia. Literatura XX i XXI* Cracow: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego 2019), s. 16-17.

<sup>8</sup> Łebkowska, s. 119-120.

historical-literary discourse “designs the future world of literature”<sup>9</sup> at a given moment in time. This review starts at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and finishes at the latest syntheses of history of French, German and American literature. On the other hand, the chapter on the cultural figures of Europe analyzes the works of many different authors, from Young Poland to the end of the interwar period, all from the Polono-centric perspective. Sławomir Iwasiów’s comment on an earlier version of this text from his book *Reprezentacje Europy w prozie polskiej XXI wieku* may best characterize the rank of Łebkowska’s study: “I treat Anna Łebkowska’s work as a point of reference, as well as a starting point – it is an inspiration which motivates to ask questions about possible readings of Europe’s representations (and so its figures, pictures, metaphors...) present in the literary studies discourse”<sup>10</sup>. I would add that today, I read both Łebkowska’s and Iwasiów’s works with a sense of nostalgia and melancholy; after all, they were written at the time before the refugee and Brexit crises, and they are about literature that did not predict such crises (although it did not shy away from catastrophic climates).

The final text of Łebkowska’s book was a real surprise for me. Why would a scholar who analyzes the most complex mazes of fiction, theory and history of literature feel the need to read a simple book for girls, *Dorota i jej towarzysze* by Wanda Borudzka, written and published in the deeply socrealistic year of 1952? And not just to read it, but to share her views on it in the form of an academic paper placed at such an important place in the volume, i.e. at the end? As it turns out, Łebkowska referred with this text to the gesture that I made in the book *Czytelnik jako kobieta*<sup>11</sup>, which I concluded with the chapter “Kobieta mówi wielkie Tak”. In that chapter, I analyzed some topos of female writing updated in the novel scenes, illustrating in its finale the female affirmation of life, often in the ruins of patriarchal culture; I used such works as *Ulysses* by Joyce, *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf and *Buddenbrooks* by Mann. By finding the same topos in *Dorota i jej towarzysze*, Anna Łebkowska shows how in this novel “the terror of war, the terror of the nearest future in different forms reminds of itself, and still what dominates is comfort, optimism and this «Yes!» to the world”<sup>12</sup>. This reference gave me a lot of pleasure.

There are some signals in this monograph that may indicate the direction of Łebkowska’s future trips between theories. The motif from chapters 2 and 3 seems to be especially promising, related to considerations on touch and the perspectives for research into it. As Łebkowska puts it, in the modern studies into this sense the question of the boundaries of the body and “the close analysis of the relations between the internal and the external” is an exciting research opportunity. In this context, such problems as “constant contact between the whole body and the world [...], constant living among other human and non-human beings, and finally [...] being among objects”. Currently, according to Łebkowska, such an “optics for understanding tactuality”<sup>13</sup> is most supported by net theories related to the ANT concept of Brunon Latour and affordance theory, i.e. the possibilities to act provided by the environment, in which there

<sup>9</sup> Łebkowska, p. 165

<sup>10</sup>Sławomir Iwasiów, *Reprezentacje Europy w prozie polskiej XXI wieku* (Zielona Góra: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego 2013), 103.

<sup>11</sup>Ewa Kraskowska, *Czytelnik jako kobieta. Wokół literatury i teorii* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM 2007), 207-223.

<sup>12</sup>Łebkowska, 262.

<sup>13</sup>Łebkowska, 70-71.

is the perceiving subject<sup>14</sup>. Today, this term, coined in the 1970s by James J. Gibson in reference to the so-called theory of direct perception, functions mostly in IT, because the digital universe is such an environment for us especially often, whereas the “contact” point is the computer interface. Various fields of previous research interests of Anna Łebkowska are cumulated here, from fiction and possible worlds (virtual reality, augmented reality) through new media, to empathy and physicality. With her new book, Łebkowska proves that she remains among top Polish theoreticians of literature.

translated by Jolanta Kikiewicz

<sup>14</sup>W próbach stworzenia polskiego odpowiednika tego terminu pojawił się m.in. neologizm „dostarczający” (od ang. *to afford* – dostarczać).

## Bibliography

Iwasiów, Sławomir. *Reprezentacje Europy w prozie polskiej XXI wieku*. Zielona Góra: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Zielonogórskiego, 2013.

Kraskowska, Ewa. *Czytelnik jako kobieta. Wokół literatury i teorii*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2009.

-----, *Między teoriami a fikcją literacką*. Kraków: Universitas, 2001.

-----, „Czy płeć może uwieść poetykę?”, In *Poetyka bez granic*, edited by Włodzimierz Bolecki, Wojciech Tomasik. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 1995, s. 78-93.

-----, *Empatia. O literackich narracjach przełomu XX i XXI wieku*. Cracow: Universitas, 2008.

-----, *Somatopoetyka – afekty – zmysły – wyobrażenia. Literatura XX i XXI*. Cracow: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2019.

# KEYWORDS

ANNA ŁEBKOWSKA

fiction

EMPATHY

**ABSTRACT:**

The paper discusses the latest monograph by Anna Łebkowska, *Somatopoetyka - afekty - wyobrażenia. Literatura XX i XXI wieku* in the context of previous Research and publications of this author. Theoretical issues related to modern prose, cultural approach in literary studies and affective turn in humanities play the most important roles here.



affects

L I T E R A R Y   T H E O R Y

*somatopoetics*

*new media*

**NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

Ewa Kraskowska (1954) – professor of literary studies. Head of the Department of Twentieth-Century Literature, Theory of Literature and Translation Studies at the Institute of the Polish Philology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Her major research interests include female writing and translation studies. In 2018 she published a monograph, *Tylem ale naprzód. Studia i szkice o Themersonach* (Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań).