

Poetics, genetics, work. (On the art of rhyming)

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1. Preliminary questions, preliminary answers

In what way can genetic criticism be useful for poetics? Of course, this question may be also posed from a different point of view: why does genetic criticism “collaborate” with poetics? Because it has undoubtedly been trying to collaborate with it for several decades (and has managed to do it), as demonstrated by, among other things, one of the classic “textbooks” of *critique génétique*, Pierre-Marc de Biasi’s *Génétiq ue des textes*.¹ However, the question “why does genetics need poetics?” seems to me both less appropriate and less interesting. Firstly, because I am speaking at the “forum of poetics.” The perspective of the host seems to be more important, i.e. I should focus on the benefits that poetics can derive from cooperating with genetics (and not the other way around). Secondly, the answer to the question about the merits of poetics for genetics seems relatively trivial to me: the subject of interest of genetic critics is difficult to understand (and sometimes even difficult to notice), if one is not familiar with the methodology of the so-called descriptive poetics. The object of study in genetic criti-

¹ Cf. Pierre-Marc de Biasi, *Génétiq ue des textes* [Genetics of texts] (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2000), 192: “Questions about the relationship between the interpretation of text and genetic criticism turned out to be the most productive, both from the theoretical and practical point of view, in research conducted by narratologists and scholars of poetics.” Poetics is mentioned in de Biasi’s textbook as the first modes of literary studies with which genetic criticism collaborates (and there are nine modes in total). The book was published in Polish: *Genetyka tekstów*, trans. by Filip Kwiatek, Maria Prussak (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2015).

cism may be defined in various ways: as a text in-the-making; as a rough draft, which, as some researchers argue, is not yet a text;² or, finally, as a text-making process (or its traces, remnants, signs). Whatever definition we adopt, “what” genetic criticism deals with will always exhibit formal qualities that are the object of study of the so-called poetics. Indeed, the first draft version of a poem (even if it is still unfinished, interrupted) is divided into lines and possesses certain sonic and rhythmic features. The genetic critic who wants to name them has to use poetical terms.³ The short story in its early draft versions, with numerous deleted words and passages, is nevertheless a narrative. This draft narrative may be radically different from the final narrative: if the researcher is not familiar with narratology, they may not even notice the dynamics of the text (both as a process and as a product; after all, we cannot see what we cannot name).⁴ The genetic critic who studies the history of a play should be familiar with the poetics of drama in order to skilfully characterize the changes that the text of the play underwent before it was published in its final form.⁵ I could provide many similar examples but I will stop here. Indeed, my answer to the “less interesting” question is no longer a short aside but a long paragraph. To sum up, poetics is one of the most important languages of genetics.

² Genetic criticism often questions whether a rough draft, i.e. a manuscript, may be referred to as a “text.” One of eminent representatives of genetic criticism, Daniel Ferrer, observes (in his discussion of one of Joyce’s notebooks, but this statement seems to be an intentional extrapolation): “The draft is not a text, or a discourse; it is a protocol for making a text. It can be compared to a musical score, which is not melodious, not even sonorous, but engenders music; or to the color names jotted down by the painter on a rapid pencil sketch, which are not pictorial elements in themselves (although they may acquire a secondary pictoriality, for instance in the paintings of Jasper Johns) but instructions toward a further picture,” Daniel Ferrer, *The Open Space of the Draft Page: James Joyce and Modern Manuscripts*, in: *The Iconic Page in Manuscript, Print, and Digital Culture*, ed. George Bornstein, Theresa Tinkle (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 261. Of course, the question of “whether or not a draft may even be called a text” ultimately leads to the essential (and very broad) question: “What is a text?”

³ For example, Curtis Bradford analyzed Yeats’s poetry. Bradford showed that during the works on the third section of the poem *The Tower*, Yeats could not decide between a line with three stresses and a line with four stresses (as evidenced by the drafts). See: Curtis Bradford, *Yeats at Work* (New York: Ecco Press, 1978), 11 – 12).

⁴ A model example of combining genetic criticism and narratology is Raymonde Debray Genette’s *Métamorphoses du récit* (Paris: Seuil, 1988). In Poland, an example of a genetic study which analyzes a very interesting change in the narrative form of the novel in-the-making is Zofia Mitosek’s *Morał i historia* [Moral and history]. An unquestionable pioneer of Polish genetic criticism, Mitosek analyzes *Bramy raju* [Gates of Paradise]. The researcher demonstrates, among other things, how the classic third-person narration gave way to the experimental polyphonic “mixed” narration. She also explains the philosophical implications behind this change. Mitosek describes her method of analysis and interpretation as “genetic poetics.” See: Z. Mitosek, *Morał i historia (transformacje sensu w genezie „Bramy raju” Jerzego Andrzejewskiego* [Moral and history: Transformations of meaning in Jerzy Andrzejewski’s *Bramy raju*], in: *Écriture / Pisanie. Materiały z konferencji polsko-francuskiej, Warszawa, październik 1992* [Écriture / Writing: Proceedings from the Polish-French conference, Warsaw, October 1992], ed. Zofia Mitosek, Jakub Zdzisław Lichański (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo DiG, 1995), 41-49.

⁵ For example, the analysis of the draft of Jerzy Zawieyski’s drama *Gdy płoną lasy* [When Forests Are Burning] carried out by Olga Dawidowicz-Chymkowska. The scholar demonstrates how the artist gradually moved away from the epic model of drama (and theater), which was his starting point. See: Olga Dawidowicz-Chymkowska, *Przez kreślenie do reakcji. Analiza procesu twórczego, zapisanego w brulionach dzieł literackich* [From deletion to creation: Analysis of the creative process recorded in the drafts of literary works] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2007), 230-284. Other, more recent, examples of “genetic poetics of drama:” Anna R. Burzyńska, *Praca na rzeczywistości. Ślady dokumentalności w procesie twórczym „Lalka”* [Working on reality: Traces of documentary in the creative process of *The Doll*], *eadem* “Pomysł w kształcie trójkąta”, czyli “Trzy lekcje lustra” [“Idea in the shape of a triangle” or “Three mirror lessons”]; Mateusz Antoniuk, *Historia “Drugiego pokoju” (z autorskim komentarzem)* [The history of *Drugi Pokój* (with author’s commentary)], *idem* *Między intencją i realizacją. Powstawanie dramatu “Baśń zimowa”* [Between intention and execution: The process of writing *Baśń zimowa*], all essays in: *Pracownia Herberta. Studia nad procesem tekstotwórczym* [Herbert’s studio: Studies on the process of creating texts], ed. Mateusz Antoniuk (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2017); Mateusz Antoniuk, *“Bebeszenie (się) dramatu”, albo “jakże to Herbert pisywał...”. O powstawaniu dramatu sokratejskiego* [“Disheveling drama,” or “how Herbert wrote it ...” On the emergence of the Socratic drama] in: *Archiwa i bruliony pisarzy. Odkrywanie* [Archives and drafts of writers: Discovering], ed. Maria Prussak, Paweł Bem, Łukasz Cybulski (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2017), 217-255.

On the one hand, it conditions how it experiences reality (reality it wants to study). On the other, it also conditions its ability to communicate this experience.⁶

Let me start again: why does poetics need genetics? After all, there are enough finished and published texts in the world which can be analysed in terms of style (and stylometry), narratology, or verse structure, allowing us to test the old instruments and prove their operability. Does the study of the pre-publication history of a (draft) text only lead to a feeling of *déjà vu* (The same old thing again! It is as old as the hills!) or does it create a “new situation of poetics?”⁷

What does genetic criticism contribute to the economy of poetics? I believe that it draws attention from the text *in actu* to the text *in statu nascendi* and thus helps poetics fulfil its aspirations and desires.

And what does poetics “want?” Probably different things. As Dorota Korwin-Piotrowska observes in her 2013 definition,

concepts and terms in the field of poetics document the cognitive effort involved in studying and describing the work of the human mind, imagination, and language found in prose and poetry as a process of bringing to the surface certain meanings at the expense of others, suggesting a flickering meaning with a finite number of units; “the appearance,” as Heidegger calls it, of a world in a word.⁸

When the definition is formulated as if “from within” the defined sphere (and this is exactly what happens here; after all, poetics is defined by a researcher and a theoretician of poetics), it is as much a description as a projection: we learn what poetics “wants.” Poetics, as defined by Korwin-Piotrowska, wants to correlate (“cognitive” but also creative) effort (because cognition is creation) of poetics with (creative and thus cognitive) effort of the analysed text. Poetics, in other words, wants to be work that responds to work. Well, I think that this “desire of poetics” may be fulfilled when poetics becomes “genetic poetics,” i.e. when poetics ventures into the archives of the text-making process. I will try to show this in this article.

I will try to present *in praxis* how the question of how “the human mind works” may become the most important question for poetics that draws on genetic criticism, especially when a certain formal quality of the text becomes the primary object of study (and this formal quality would be otherwise not considered the most complicated or intellectually stimulating problem for poetics). Indeed, I will focus on rhyme.

⁶ Cf. the concept of poetics as an “intermediary language” formulated by Stanisław Balbus in *Granice poetyki i kompetencje teorii literatury* [Limits of poetics and tasks of literary theory] in: *Poetyka bez granic* [Poetics without borders], ed. Włodzimierz Bolecki, Wojciech Tomasiak (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL, 1995).

⁷ I refer to the term coined by Tomasz Mizerkiewicz in his first article published in *Forum of Poetics*. Mizerkiewicz convincingly describes poetics as “situational knowledge,” emphasizing that it is a theory and practice that must constantly “prove its worth” in contact with the ever-changing “textual world.” Poetics should be vigilant: prepared to verify, expand and modify its definitions and dictionaries. Thus, all situations which stimulate reflection, provoke redefinition (and not only reinforce an already acquired or constructed identity) are “new situations of poetics.” See: Tomasz Mizerkiewicz, “New situations of poetics”, *Forum of Poetics*, summer 2015: 18-23. Online: <http://fp.amu.edu.pl/lato-2015-20151/>.

⁸ Dorota Korwin-Piotrowska, “Życie pośmiertne poetyki” [The afterlife of poetics], *Tematy i Konteksty*, no. 3 (2013): 28.

2. (Genetic) Poetics of rhyme

Rym [Rhyme]. It was the title of Lucylla Pszczołowska's book published in 1972.⁹ This publication, part of the series "Poetyka: Zarys encyklopedyczny" [Poetics: Encyclopedic overview] endorsed by the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, is a significant achievement of Polish structuralism in the field of descriptive and historical poetics. The book's consistency and quality of argumentation are impressive. Rhyme (a repetition of similar sounds) is discussed, successively, in the context of prosody, phonetics and morphology, lexis and semantics of language, syntax and studies on the composition of a literary text. The synchronic approach (for example, a table that classifies Polish rhymes in accordance with their phonetic structures) and the diachronic approach (for example, in the last part of the book, where rhyme is described as a historically changing literary convention) intertwine. Linguistic and literary discourses intertwine. Numerous examples from different eras are discussed, from early medieval rhyming practices to Miron Białoszewski's poetry.

Is this book a testament to the cognitive effort involved in trying to understand and describe the work of the creative mind and, in this case, the rhyming mind? *Rym* definitely aspires to it. Lucylla Pszczołowska classifies (creates criteria for classification and then applies them to specific cases) and calculates (gathers and analyzes numerical data concerning the frequency of various types of rhymes in the work of a given author, in a specific timespan, etc.). But it can also be said that Pszczołowska used the cognitive efforts of many different schools and many different researchers who, at least since the 1920s, had been developing modern poetics "in the light of linguistics." Russian Formalism, the Prague School of structuralism (led by Jakobson, Tomaszewski, Mukařovskí¹⁰), and interwar and post-war Polish scholars (including Nitsch, Siedlecki, Furmanik, Dłuska, the authors of rhyme dictionaries of Mickiewicz and Trembecki¹¹) all make cognitive contributions to Pszczołowska's book. However, is the cognitive effort focused on the work of the rhyming mind? I do not think so, or at least, it is not a direct effort. Pszczołowska studies the "finished product:" rhymes that already exist (e.g. "an assonance with an alternation of an intervocalic consonant" or "a consonance with a posttonic alternation"), and not an intellectual, psychological, and somatic effort involved in establishing correspondences between the sounds of given words. Rhyme, as the title of the book suggests, is in the center. Rhyme and not rhyming.

Naturally, I refer the concept of "rhyming" found in *Sztuka rymotwórcza* [The art of rhyming], a famous poetical treatise by Franciszek Ksawery Dmochowski published in 1788. I am interested

⁹ Lucylla Pszczołowska, *Rym* [Rhyme] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich - Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1972). The exact location of the book in the publishing series is as follows: *Poetyka. Zarys Encyklopedyczny*, Dział III *Wersyfikacja*, tom II *Wiersz. Podstawowe kategorie opisu*, część II *Eufonia*, zeszyt 1 *Rym* [Poetics: Encyclopedic overview, Section III *Versification*, Volume II *Poem. Basic categories of description*, part II *Euphonia*, book 1 *Rhyme*].

¹⁰Roman Jakobson, "O lingwistycznej analizie rymu" [Linguistic rhyme analysis], *Prace Filologiczne* [Philological Works], XVIII (1963); Boris Tomashevsky, "Przyczynek do historii rymu rosyjskiego" [A contribution to the history of the Russian rhyme], in: *Rosyjska szkoła stylistyczna* [The Russian School], ed. Maria Renata Mayenowa, Zygmunt Saloni (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1970); Jan Mukařovský, *On Poetic Language* (Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press, 1976).

¹¹Kazimierz Nitsch, "O nowych rymach" [About new rhymes], "O rymach głębokich i niezupełnych" [On perfect and imperfect rhymes], "Z historii polskich rymów" [History of Polish rhymes], in: *idem Wybór pism polonistycznych* [Selected writings on Polish language] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1954); Franciszek Siedlecki, *Studia z metryki polskiej*, cz. II *Problem transakcentacji w wierszu polskim* [Studies in Polish metrics, part II: The problem of displaced stress in the Polish poem] (Vilnius: funded by Fundusz Kultury Narodowej, 1937); Stanisław Furmanik, "Rym" [Rhyme], in: *idem Z zagadnień wersyfikacji polskiej* [Selected issues of Polish versification] (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1956); Maria Dłuska, *Studia z historii i teorii wersyfikacji polskiej*, t. 1 i 2 [Studies in the history and theory of Polish versification, vol. 1 and 2] (Kraków: PAU, 1948-1950).

in this treatise, because it places a strong emphasis on the status of rhyme as an artifact that requires hard work and effort: the poet is called the “rhyme-maker” and poetry is called “the work of rhyming.” Of course, I am aware of the fact that until the nineteenth century the word “rhyme” in Polish had referred not only to the sonic agreement between words in the poem but also to the entire poem.¹² When Dmochowski writes about “rhyming” as “work,” he generally refers to the work(s) of poets. However, there are passages in this eighteenth-century treatise which undoubtedly refer to rhyme as a repetition of similar sounds, words, and verses, clearly emphasizing the effort and hard work involved in rhyming.

Interestingly, Dmochowski is inconsistent when it comes to the recommended degree of effort involved in “the work of rhyming” (*Sztuka rymotwórcza* is an example of normative and prescriptive poetics). In the beginning of his poem, Dmochowski seems to praise, so to speak, “light” work:

Jaką rzecz przedsięwzięsz, trefną czy wysoką,	Whatever you do, whether it is low or high,
Zawsze na rymowanie chciej baczną dać oko,	Always pay attention to rhyming,
By naturalne było, bez żadnej przysady.	So that it is natural, without exaggeration.
Gdzie rym dużo kosztuje, nie będzie bez wady.	If rhyme costs a lot, it will not be without flaws.
Komu trudno przychodzi w rym związać dwa słowa,	Who finds it difficult to connect two words in rhyme,
Tego - jeżeli ma dowcip - wolna wzywa mowa;	should use speech, if he has wit;
Wiersz go nie chce, bo musu żadnego nie lubi. ¹³	The poem does not want him, because it does not like effort

Already at the end of the First Song, however, a different approach is discussed. It may be considered a warning against indolence. Hard work involved in rhyming is praised:

Pracuj na osobności, bez zgiełku, hałasu.	Work alone, without hustle and bustle.
Trzeba, żeby co zrobić, i miejsca, i czasu.	In order to succeed you need the right place and time.
Niechaj cię próżnej chwały nie zwodzą pozory,	Do not seek easy glory,
Nie szukaj z tego chluby, żeś w pisaniu skory.	Do not boast that you can write fast.
Rzadki ten, co i dobrze, i prędko napisze,	Few can write well and write fast,
Zatem, wy, co piszecie, mili towarzysze,	Indeed, my dear writing friends,
Nadto czasu w pisaniu łożyć nie możecie,	You have to devote time to writing,
Jeżeli prawdziwej chwały dostąpić pragniecie.	If you want to find true glory.
(...)	(...)
Pośpieszaj, ale zwolna. Pisz ostrożnie rymy.	Hurry up slowly. Write your rhymes carefully.
Nie leń się ich dwadzieścia razy wziąć do limy.	Do not be lazy and work on them over and over.
Nie trać serca w robocie, zniknie trudność z pracą,	Do not lose heart, you will resolve all difficulties,
A nic na opóźnieniu twe dzieła nie tracą.	And your works will not lose anything if you take your time.
Czemu dziś nie wydołasz, nazajutrz dokażesz,	What you cannot do today, you will do tomorrow,
Z czasem przydasz, co trzeba, a co nadto, zmażesz. ¹⁴	In time, you will add what is needed, and delete what is too much.

¹²Pszczołowska, *Rym*, 78.

¹³Franciszek Ksawery Dmochowski, *Sztuka rymotwórcza* [The art of rhyming] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1956), 12. This and all subsequent fragments translated by M.O.

¹⁴Dmochowski, 31-32. Ironically, one of the lines proclaiming the need for perfection was misprinted in the first edition. The verse “Jeżeli prawdziwej chwały dostąpić pragniecie” has one to many syllables. “Jeźli” instead of “jeżeli” was used in later editions. However, the contemporary edition which I use is based on the first edition and lists the mistakes and subsequent corrections in the footnotes.

Genetic poetics, i.e. poetics that studies the work of the creative mind and enters into a methodological cooperation with genetic criticism, may actually analyze all that Dmochowski describes, including the “today” and the “tomorrow” of rhyming, its pace, “cost” (the amount of effort put into “rhyming”), drafts, and experiments.

Perhaps two (not necessarily conflicting, rather, potentially complementary) models of the poetics of rhyme can be distinguished: the poetics of the product and the poetics of production. We read in academic textbooks that the poetics of the product postulates that: “rhyme in a poem consists of a partial or complete agreement between the endings of words which occupy a specific position in the line.”¹⁵ The poetics of production is interested in words whose position in the line is not yet fixed: it is dynamic. The poetics of production studies the “repetition of sounds” as a negotiable consensus. The poetics of the product studies the poem. It sees (and hears) the rhymed rhyme (I apologize for the tautology). It describes something that *is*, constituting a formal (constructive) feature of the written text. The poetics of production, inspired by genetic criticism (or, to put it more clearly, poetics that engages in voyeuristic activities inspired by genetic criticism), sees (and hears) rhyming. Its object of study is the very act of finding sonic equivalences between textual units. The poetics of production also studies the hard work and effort involved in rhyming.

I will now discuss a specific example and demonstrate how these two poetics cooperate.

3. How is Miłosz’s rhyme made? How was it made?

Let us focus on two poems by Czesław Miłosz: *Rozmowy na Wielkanoc 1620 roku* [Conversations at Easter 1620] and *Na ścięcie damy dworu* [On the beheading of a lady at court].¹⁶ These two poems have a lot in common. Miłosz added the same paratextual information to both poems: Montgeron 1959. Both poems were first printed in the 5th issue of *Kultura* in 1960. Both poems were included by Miłosz in a collection entitled *Król Popiel i inne wiersze* [King Popiel and other poems] from 1962. Thus, we are dealing with texts from the same artistic phase (and this phase is specified). Finally, both poems use rhyme.

I will quote them in their entirety.

¹⁵Michał Głowiński, Aleksandra Okopień-Sławińska, Janusz Sławiński, *Zarys teorii literatury* [Outline of the theory of literature] (Warsaw: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych, 1972), 211. The definition in the new textbook is similar: “Rhyme: repetition of similar sounds in the final stressed syllables of pairs of words, used in the final position of lines of poems (the so-called rhyme components).” D. Korwin-Piotrowska, *Poetyka: Przewodnik po świecie tekstów* [Poetics: A guide to the world of texts] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2011), 281.

¹⁶One of the things that I am particularly passionate about in genetic criticism is its connection with the interpretation of the text, which is how I usually try to “genetically” analyze poems, plays, fiction and essays. I do not perform strictly interpretative operations in this article. Therefore, I do not refer to important and interesting readings of both poems by Miłosz. However, I have to mention Stanisław Balbus’s outstanding poetological (formal) analysis of the poem *Rozmowy na Wielkanoc 1620*. Balbus discusses the stylistic devices used by Miłosz. However, he does not focus on rhyme in his interpretation. See: Stanisław Balbus, *Między stylami* [Between styles] (Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych „Universitas”, 1993), 53-64.

Rozmowy na Wielkanoc 1620 roku

– Waść teraz jesteś jako mucha w dzbanie.
 Winem opita łapkami wiosłuje.
 Z niej tyle samo co z waści zostanie,
 Darmo nadzieja frasunki cukruje.
 Złociste guzy, kiereje i stroje
 W skrzyniach jaśnieją, a śmierć mówi: moje.

Spódnice dziewczkom waść zawijać raczył,
 W gaju brzozowym biegał z twardą pytą.
 Sekreta jakie możeś tam zobaczyć?
 Albo gdy konia pod tobą ubito,
 Umazanemu bitewną posoką
 Mądrość odkryło słupiejące oko?
 Pies, koń i owad, zwierz leśny i polny
 Żyją i giną, a ty chcesz trwać wiecznie?
 Jak one mocom nie swoim powolny
 Krucyfiks chwytasz, bo tak ci bezpiecznie.
 Drewno masz w rękę, a w tym drewnie próchno.
 Pacierze mruczysz, ale strachem cuchną.

Już gęba twoja oddarta od kości
 I w czarnym mięsie robak fossy ryje.
 Nie, panie bracie, nie będzie wieczności,
 Jej nie kupiły błagania niczyje.
 Choć patrzysz w okno, czy nie dane znaki,
 Tobie i bydłu przypadek jednaki.

– Ani ja wierzę w duszę nieśmiertelną,
 Ani nagrody czekam dla zasługi.
 Imię i pamięć z szatą mi odejmą,
 Wiek mój skończony i wiek mój niedługi.
 A kiedy, pusty, legnę sam w mogile,
 Na nieskończone czasy, nie na chwilę.

Lecz jako Bóg mnie postawił na ziemi,
 Jeżeli zechce, znowu mnie postawi.
 Nie mnie dochodzić, u jakich płomieni,
 W jakich kuźnicach serce mi przetrawi,
 Ani zgadywać, w roku czy godzinie
 On się objawi, kiedy świat przemienie.

Gdybym nie ufał słowu Boga mego,
 Za cóż ufają ludzie słowom ludzi?
 Może nie świętych, ale nikczemnego
 Swoją miłością do chwały przebudzi

Conversations at Easter 1620

– Sir, now you are like a fly in a pitcher.
 Drunk, it tries to swim.
 As much will remain of it as of you,
 You cannot sugarcoat worries with hope.
 Golden buttons, pockets, and clothes
 They shine in boxes, and death says: mine.

You were lifting girls' skirts,
 In a birch grove, you were running with a hard-on.
 Did you see any secrets there?
 Or when a horse was slaughtered under you,
 Smeared with blood
 Did your dull eye discover wisdom?
 Dog, horse and insect, animals of forests and fields
 They live and die, and you want to last forever?
 You wish to deny it
 You grab the crucifix because it makes you feel safe.
 You are holding wood in your hand, and the wood is rotten.
 You say your prayers, but they reek of fear.

Your face has already torn away from the bone
 And a worm is eating the black meat.
 No, sir, no, brother, there will be no eternity
 No one prayed for it.
 Though you look through the window to see the signs
 You and the cattle will both die.

– Neither do I believe in an immortal soul,
 Nor do I wait for a reward.
 They will take away my name and memory with my garment,
 My age is finished, and my age is doomed.
 Empty, I will lie alone in the grave,
 For eternity, not for a while.

Since God made me live on this earth,
 If he wants to, he'll do that again.
 It's not up to me to guess what flames
 What forges will torment my heart,
 I do not want to guess the year or the hour
 Of his second coming, when the world is gone.

If I did not trust the word of my God,
 How can people trust the words of others?
 Maybe not saints, but the wicked
 He will awaken for glory with his love

I proch połączy niepojętą siłą,
Aby co skryte wyjawione było.

And bind dust with inconceivable strength,
So that what is hidden is revealed.

A jeśli dla mnie dola zgotowana
Wróbla i kruka, liszki i łasicy,
I, nocny motyl, nie doczekam rana,
Ale zgoreję cały w ogniu świecy,
Jeślim nie po to, żeby mnie ocalił,
Przecie do końca Jego będę chwalił.

And if my destiny is the same as that of
A sparrow and a raven, a caterpillar and a weasel,
And, like a nocturnal butterfly, I will not live to see the dawn,
But will be burned in the flame of a candlelight,
Even if he does not save me,
I will praise him to the end.

– Waść kalwin. Proszą kłaniać się Kiejdany.
Jedźże z gospólstwem tam zawodzić DIEVIE
Albo kazania słuchać z Angliczany
W zborze bielonym, zgoła niby chlewie.
Kiedy herezja dotąd w tobie siedzi,
Co z wielkanocnej waścinej spowiedzi?

– You are a Calvinist. Give my regards to Kédainiai.
Drive with the crowd and pray DIEVIE
Or listen to sermons with Anglicans
In a white wooden church that is just like a pigsty.
If you are still a heretic,
How can you go to Easter confession?

W dolinę tedy idziesz Jozafata?
A czyś pomyślał, jacy tam królowie
I narodzonych w nieobeszłe lata
Jakich tam ludów nazbiera się mrowie?
Jakie tam śpieszą tysięcy tysiące,
Straszne maszyny, smoki latające?

Do you go down to the valley of Jehoshaphat?
And have you thought what kind of kings are there?
And those born in years gone by
What kind of peoples will gather there?
How thousands and thousands rush there,
Scary machines, flying dragons?

Jakie przestwory i jakie marmury,
Jakie rozумы, jakie palmy święte.
Ów cuda czynił i przenikał mury,
Tamten Sodomy zratował wykłete.
Mitry papieskie, berła, pastorały
Wyżej od Alpów tam będą leżały.

What spaces and what marbles,
What minds, what sacred palms.
This one performed miracles and penetrated walls,
And that one saved the cursed Sodom.
Papal miter, scepters, crosiers
Higher than the Alps, they will be there.

Gdzie sprawiedliwych, zgromadzonych w domie,
Hyzopem, myrrą witają anioły,
Gdzie lekkie duchy stąpają widomie,
Potrzeba jeszcze durnia z Wędziagoły,
Który gniótł dziewczki, znał myślistwo ptasze?
I jakże tobie nie wstyd, powiedz, wasze.

Where the righteous gathered at home,
are greeted with hyssop and myrrh by angels
Where light ghosts walk among people
We still need a fool from Wędziagoła,
Who abused maids, knew falconry?
And how are you not ashamed, say, sir.

– Iżem niegodny i pokornej cześci
Maluczkich, biednych szanować nie umiał,
Ja pod majestat chronię się niewieści,
Bom więcej pragnął, niżeli rozumiał.
Maryi Matki warga moja wzywa.
Niech mnie gwiazdami swoimi okrywa.

– I am unworthy and humble
I did not respect the little ones, the poor ones,
I want women to protect me,
For I wanted more than I understood.
I pray to Mary, the mother of God.
Let her cover me with her stars.

A jeśli w bramę ostatniej doliny
Zastuka za mnie kij mego pasterza,

And if at the gate of the last valley
My shepherd's stick will knock for me,

Nie dbam, ku czemu wezmę obłóczyny
 Pomny obietnic wiecznego przymierza.
 Po Jego woli przybranie dostanę,
 Nie ciało szpetne, dawno zapomniane.

Przez kraje wschodu i kraje zachodu,
 Ziemię południa i ziemie północy
 Dzieckiem pobiegnę w świetle do ogrodu
 Jutrzenną porą po nawalnej nocy.
 Wzrok, smak i dotyk nie takie posiędę,
 Lepszych niż tutaj muzyk słuchać będę.

Grecką, egipską odezwę się mową
 I wszelką, jaka była od początku.
 Księgę Rodzaju odczytam na nowo,
 Świadom splątanej osnowy i wątku.
 I każdą poznam tajemną przyczynę.
 A potem w Jego szczęśliwości zginę.¹⁷

Na ścięcie damy dworu

Migdałowe anioły z obłokiem woalki,
 Co nigdy nie kucają pomiędzy pokrzywą,
 Ciało bez dziurek mają, gładkie jak u lalki
 I nikt ich nie potrafi zaprosić na piwo.

Tak mi się ukazały wtedy, chłopcu z wioski.
 Rżały konie, łęk siodła spod rękawic błyskał.
 I podniosłem w ukłonie kapelusz ojcowski.
 A one przeleciały, huczał śmiech jak wystrzał.

Suczko. To jakże teraz. Jęzor swój różowy
 Zwiesiłaś, pełznąć do mnie bez farb ni przepaski.
 I na czworakach, futrem kędzierzawej głowy
 U mojego trzewika dopraszasz się łaski?

A czemu byłaś posąg, skoro jesteś cieniem
 I frufru twoich spódnic latami mnie piekło?
 Niech to, za czym gonilem, będzie zapomnieniem.
 To jabłko niech od mojej gałęzi odetną.

Dziś ja wielki, największy z całego powiatu
 Ogłosić mogę wyrok. Służba. Dać ją katu.¹⁸

I don't care what happens next
 Mindful of the promises of the everlasting covenant.
 He will decide what will become of me
 My ugly body will be gone, long forgotten.

Through the countries of the east and the west,
 The lands of the south and the lands of the north
 I will run like a child into the garden in the light of
 The dawn after a stormy night.
 My sight, taste and touch will be extraordinary,
 I will listen to better music than here.

I will speak Greek, Egyptian
 And all languages that existed since the beginning.
 I will read the book of Genesis anew,
 Aware of its complexity.
 And I will know every secret cause.
 And then I will die in His happiness.

On the beheading of a lady at court

Almond angels with a cloud veil,
 Who never crouch between nettles
 Their body is devoid of holes, as smooth as a doll's
 And no one can ask them out for a beer.

That's how they appeared to me then, a village boy.
 Horses neighed, the saddlebow flashed from under the gloves.
 And I bowed, my father's hat in hand.
 And they flew by, laughter roared like a gunshot.

Bitch. Even now. You hung your pink tongue
 out, crawling up to me, without makeup or frontlet.
 And thus, on all fours, with the fur of your fizzy head
 At my shoe, you beg for mercy?

Why were you such a cold statue, and now you are but a shadow,
 And the rustle of your skirts made me burn?
 Let that which I chased (in you) be forgotten.
 An apple that I snip from a branch.

Today I am great. The greatest in the entire region.
 And I pass sentence. Servants. Take her to the executioner.

¹⁷Czesław Miłosz, *Wiersze* [Poems], vol. 2, Kraków 2002, 283-286. Translated by M.O.

¹⁸Miłosz, 290-291. Translated by M.O.

The descriptive poetics of rhyme applied to these two poems could, I believe, allow us to conclude that the works quoted *in extenso* have two different rhyme patterns. Different and yet – and at this point I will allow myself to be non-academically and unprofessionally playful – the same. The first poem has a classic structure: six-line stanzas, with eleven syllables per line, and the *ababcc* rhyme pattern. The second poem has four-line stanzas, with thirteen syllables per line, and the *abab* rhyme pattern. However, at the end of the second poem, Miłosz introduces a distich with the *cc* rhyme pattern. In a way, it can be said that both poems follow the *ababcc* rhyme pattern. In the first poem, the *cc* rhyme pattern is repeated numerous times, at the end of each stanza. In the second poem, the *cc* rhyme pattern is repeated only once, at the very end of the poem. The general rule is the same in both poems: Miłosz uses predominantly perfect double rhymes with a vowel sound at the end (with few exceptions). There are few imperfect rhymes, for example, the consonance “pytą – ubito” in *Rozmowy na Wielkanoc 1620 roku* or the assonance “piekło – odetną” in *Na ścięcie damy dworu*. The poetics of the product could provide us with even more information: we could analyze the phonetic structure in detail (and, for example, notice that the assonance mentioned above is accompanied by the alternation of an intervocalic consonant), analyze grammar (and, drawing on Pszczołowska’s classification, who in turn drew on Jakobson, divide rhymes into perfect grammatical rhymes, semi-grammatical rhymes, formal grammatical rhymes and anti-grammatical rhymes), analyze statistical data on the distribution of particular types of rhymes within the entire text and the respective stanzas. The poetics of the product could also act as an interpreter or an intermediary between various terminologies and concepts of classifying rhymes.¹⁹ This notwithstanding, “dynamic” poetics, the poetics of production, begins where the poetics of the product ends, asking questions about the process of rhyming.²⁰

¹⁹For example, Pszczołowska in her monograph does not use the category of the “extended rhyme.” It is nevertheless used in *Zarys poetyki* [Overview of poetics] by Adama Kulawik, Ewa Miodońska-Brookes and Marian Tatar.

²⁰Czesław Miłosz’s poetry has already been discussed from the perspective of genetic criticism, cf. Mateusz Antoniuk, *Słowo raz obudzone. Poezja Czesława Miłosza – próby czytania* [Word once awakened: Czesław Miłosz’s poetry: Reading attempts] (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2015), 79-117; Mateusz Antoniuk, “Przybranie formy z dawna wyglądanej (dosięganej / obiecaniej / wysnowanej...). Brulion Czesława Miłosza – próba lektury” [Taking the desired (available / promised / threadable ...) form. Czesław Miłosz’s draft: An attempt at reading], *Teksty Drugie*, no. 3 (2014): 29-48; Mateusz Antoniuk, “Miłoszologia i krytyka genetyczna (rekonesans)” [Miłoszology and genetic criticism (reconnaissance)], *Świat i Słowo* 25, no. 2 (2015). Bożena Shallcross and Karina Jarzyńska wrote about the visual aspects of Miłosz’s drafts (I refer to these texts later in my article, cf. footnotes 26 and 27). These works are devoted to the pre-publication dynamics of the text. There is, however, a separate monograph devoted to modifications (both approved by the author and not) to which Miłosz’s poems were subjected in subsequent editions and reprints. See: Paweł Bem, *Dynamika wariantu. Miłosz tekstologicznie* [Dynamics of the Variant: Miłosz textologically] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2017).

Now we can see it clearly: when Miłosz reached the third and fifth line of the fifth stanza and the fourth, fifth, and sixth line of the sixth stanza, he seemed to anticipate the linear increase of syllables and words. He wished to focus on the rhyme and the clause first, so that he may work on the “content” of the poem later. He did this when he had to find the right rhyme (for the words that were already in the poem: he eventually “moved” the word “nieśmiertelną” [immortal] from the fifth stanza to the sixth stanza) and when he had to start rhyming (i.e. find/choose the first word and then find/choose the word that rhymes with it; for example, he chose the word “mogile” [grave] in the fifth stanza and the word “godzinie” [hour] in the sixth stanza first). The poet returned to the empty spaces later (how long did it take him? we do not know) and tried to fill them in during a separate writing session. He must have had a different pen in his hand – with a different, darker, ink. Interestingly, Miłosz also used two colors of ink to make drawings on the margins of his drafts. Both “flowers” (dominant on the right margin) and geometric figures (dominant on the left margin) can be easily divided into drawings made with lighter ink (the color is identical with the words in “rhyme positions”) and darker ink (the color is identical with the rhymes that were added later). Upon closer inspection, we may even distinguish lighter doodles that were “crossed over” with a darker line. Therefore, both phases of writing have their drawing correlates.

Eventually, the handwritten version of the poem was transformed into what we see in Figure 1. In the transcription below, I demonstrate as faithfully as possible the spatial arrangement of the handwritten poem (the position of words in relation to each other and in relation to the axis of the page).²² Notes made in darker ink are written in bold. Illegible words are marked with square brackets with dots. Deletions are marked with strikethrough (I omitted the drawings for technical reasons).

- Ani ja wierzę w duszę nieśmiertelną

Ani nagrody szukam dla zasługi

Imię i pamięć

Pamięć i imię z szatą mi odejmą

Wiek mój skończony i wiek mój niedługi

pusty [?] [...]

[...] pusty — przypadnę pusty legnę sam spać

A kiedy **truchło ułożą** w mogile

Ź Na nieskończone czasy, nie na chwilę.

Lecz jako Bóg mnie postawił na ziemi

Jeżeli zechce, znowu mnie postawi

Nie mnie dochodzić u jakich płomieni

W jakich kuźnicach serce mi przetrawi

w roku czy

Ani [...] zgadywać o której godzinie

To się objawi kiedy świat przeminie

[...]

mnie przywoła, skoro

- Neither do I believe in an immortal soul

Nor am I looking for a reward

Name and memory

They will take away **my name and memory with my garment**

My age is finished and my age is doomed

empty [?] [...]

[...] empty — I will perish empty, I will lie sleep alone

And when **they will put my dead body**

in the grave

It For eternity, not for a while.

Since God made me live on this earth

If he wants to, he'll do that again

It's not up to me to guess what flames

What forges will torment my heart

the year or

I [...] do not want to guess [the] hour

It will be known when the world is gone

[...]

— will call me, since

²²In *critique génétique* this is known as “transcription diplomatique” [diplomatic transcription]. Marek Troszyński suggests that this procedure should be called “topographic transcription.” This is probably a more functional term that has a sounder etymological grounding. See: Marek Troszyński, *Alchemia rękopisu. “Samuel Zborowski” Juliusza Słowackiego* [The alchemy of the manuscript: *Samuel Zborowski* by Juliusz Słowacki (Warsaw: IBL Publishing House, 2017), 37-43].

It should be noted that the original “clause” words were not replaced. Only the “content” of the lines was subject to changes. Miłosz did not change the rhyming solutions he had developed: neither in this draft handwritten version, nor at the later stages of the text-making process, including the preparation of the text for printing. The rhymes that were used in the first brilliant draft version are in the final published version of the text. Indeed, by placing a word in a clause, Miłosz not only solved the problem of the rhyme: that is the formal problem of the *ababcc* rhyme pattern, where the first line rhymes with the third line, the second line rhymes with the fourth line, and the fifth line rhymes with the sixth line. He also solved the problem of the symbolic and ideological coherence of the stanza (after all, every six-line stanza should constitute a certain “conceptual” whole). In the first stanza

- Ani ja wierzę w duszę nieśmiertelną	- Neither do I believe in an immortal soul
Ani nagrody szukam dla zasługi	Nor am I looking for a reward
odejmą	They will take away

“odejmą” [They will take away] was by no means the most obvious sonic equivalent for the word “nieśmiertelną” [immortal]. Indeed, the two create an assonance (and in general perfect rhymes dominate in the poem). On the other hand, the semantics of “odejmą” [They will take away] is related to what is described in the second line. It can be said that it develops and strengthens the second line, which talks about refraining from wanting more (“nie szukam nagrody” = “nor am I looking for a reward;” I want nothing more). Line three, in turn, talks about loss (“odejmą” = “they will take away;” I will lose what I have). In other words, the word “odejmą” [They will take away] plays a double role: it establishes a sonic relation between the third line and the first line and “transforms” the third line into a semantic amplification of the second line. The same happens here:

Jeżeli zechce, znowu mnie postawi	If he wants to, he'll do that again
Nie mnie dochodzić u jakich płomieni	It's not up to me to guess what flames
przetrawi	torment

The word “przetrawi” [torment] is undoubtedly a good rhyme for “postawi” [do that again] but it also semantically corresponds to “płomienie” [flames] (fire that torments and purifies). In both cases, therefore, we can observe that the poet-rhyme-maker exerts “double” control over the text: Miłosz simultaneously completes the poem’s rhyme structure in-the-making and frames its semantic structure. Indeed, he accomplishes both things the minute he puts pen to paper

That’s why poetry is rightly said to be dictated by a daimonion,
though it’s an exaggeration to maintain that he must be an angel.²³

It would be an exaggeration to say that the rhymes in the fifth and sixth stanzas of *Rozmowy na Wielkanoc 1620 roku* were dictated by an angel or a daimonion. “Lighter doodles” show that even in the first phase of rhyming and jumping between clauses Miłosz not only wrote down the words, but also scribbled something on the margins. He did not write the poem in an instant. He did not simply write down what the muse had whispered to him. Nevertheless, the “rhyming” process appears to be quick and economical. Or, as I shall explain below, at least relatively economical.

²³Czesław Miłosz, *Ars Poetica?*, in: idem, *The Collected Poems: 1931-1987* (New York: The Ecco Press, 1988).

It is an amazing picture! The margins of the third draft page of *Rozmowy na Wielkanoc 1620 roku* were partially filled with drawings. Here, the proportions are reversed: the drawings dominate on the page. In addition to “flowers” and figures, we can discern two profiles: one is (probably) male and the other, female. Drawings dominate and writing is as if confined to a narrow gap. One has to carefully “inspect” this composition of writing and drawing in order to understand what it communicates. Its genetic history begins to emerge.

I will try to tell it now. I will try to recreate it step by step, as accurately as possible, although without going into too much detail. Let us trace the sequence of actions and events that gradually transformed the white page into an artistic composition that can be seen today at the Beinecke Library reading room (Fig. 2).

It all begun thus (or at least I imagine it did) ... Miłosz writes down the first word on an empty page

Anioły

Angels

Let us look at Figure 2. Let us look at the word “Anioły” [Angels] in the context of the page. Was that indeed the first word? The word is positioned relatively low – much below the top edge of the page. It may suggest that the word “Anioły” was not the first word. Drawings that we can see above this word were executed first (why would the poet start writing so “low”?). However, when we analyze other drafts of Miłosz’s poems (especially those written in approximately the same time as *Na ścięcie damy dworu*), we observe that also in those manuscripts in which there are no doodles above the first line of the text (i.e. where the first word could have been written much “higher”) Miłosz leaves a wide gap between the opening line and the top margin. This was simply his way of managing the space of the page: his *usus scribendi*.²⁵

Back to my story. At the beginning, Miłosz wrote down – how exalted it sounds! well, the language of genetic criticism is in a way the language of the book of Genesis – the word “Anioły” [Angels]. He then crossed it out and decided to start his poem anew: not with a noun but with an adjective. The page “now” (the word “now” is obviously a purely rhetorical addition; it is meant to point to the dynamic nature of the writing process) looks as follows:

Anioły

Angels

Nietykalne anioły z obłokiem woalki,

Untouchable angels with a cloud veil,

The first line is there. Miłosz quickly changed the first word in it (the adjective) and then wrote the second line. Or *vice versa*: Miłosz wrote the second line and then returned to the first line and changed the first word. Anyway, on the page – empty a minute ago and now turned into text-in-the-making – there is also an inscription which as if documents the “ongoing” process of creation:

²⁵Apart from the spatial arrangement of a text on paper, the term “*usus scribendi*” also refers to writing tools and materials, etc. I use this term after: Daniel Ferrer, *The Open Space of the Draft Page: James Joyce and Modern Manuscripts*. In: *The Iconic Page in Manuscript, Print, and Digital Culture*, ed. George Bornstein, Theresa Tinkle (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 256; Wim Van Mierlo, *The Archaeology of the Manuscript: Towards Modern Palaeography* in: *The Boundaries of the Literary Archive: Reclamation and Representation*, ed. Carrie Smith, Lisa Stead (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 17.

Anioły

Migdałowe

Nietykalne anioły z obłokiem woalki,

Co nigdy nie kucają pomiędzy pokrzywą

Angels

Almond

Untouchable angels with a cloud veil,

Who never crouch between nettles

At this point, Miłosz should start the third line which, just like the first two lines, should have thirteen syllables. Or – why not? – perhaps now Miłosz should “jump” to the third line and come up with the first rhyme. The third line itself may be “filled in” later. We remember how effective this method was in *Rozmowy na Wielkanoc 1620 roku*. Alas, each poem has a different story. Every rhyming process has a different dynamic.



Fig. 3: A draft of a poem “On the Beheading of a Lady at Court” (the first card, close-up), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

Let us look at Figure 3 which “zooms in” on the fragment of the manuscript. Words appear between the drawings: “lalki” [doll], “gałki” [knob], “pałki” [club], “miałki” [delicate], “szalmi” [scarf], “opałki” [basket], “walki” [fight], “kobiałki” [basket], “kawałki” [piece], “koralki” [beads], “migdałki” [almond], “bajałki” [fairy tale], “skałki” [rock], “niedopałki” [cigarette butt], “kalki” [carbon paper], “piszczalki” [pipe], “wałki” [roller], “antałki” [keg], “sandałki” [sandals], and “podpałki” [fire starter]. In Polish, all these words have one thing in common: they end in “-ałki” or “-alki” and are thus more or less perfect rhymes for “woalki” [veil]. Indeed, it seems that the poet actually decided to employ the writing strategy we already know from *Rozmowy na Wielkanoc 1620 roku* and come up with the clause of the next line and thus the first rhyme. Then, however, something happened – the rhyming mind “froze” – and instead of finding solutions, the poet began to multiply alternatives.

What conclusion can be drawn from the fact that the words which rhyme with the word “woalki” [veil] are “scattered” or “sandwiched” among countless micro-drawings? The function of *doodles* in Miłosz’s creative process has already been discussed. Bożena Shallcross inter-

pretend Miłosz's "drawing-writing" with the help of a theoretically sophisticated (and at the same time "poetic") discourse of writing, drawing, visuality, and spectral presence. Karina Jarzyńska interpreted Miłosz's *doodles* as a manifestation of a "spiritual exercise," i.e. a writerly and psycho-physical practice (involving the body and the mind). Shallcross suggested that micro-drawings could have a regenerative function ("Visual notations (...) strengthen the weakening will, renew creative energy").²⁶ Jarzyńska argued that *doodles* increased "concentration" and "mindfulness."²⁷ These are interesting observations and I can use them to analyze this particular draft by Czesław Miłosz (which neither Shallcross nor Jarzyńska examined). I think that the drawing poet rests. Exhausted, he stops working to regenerate his creative energy. Or, on the contrary, I can imagine that drawing helps him concentrate. He is hard at work, focusing his attention on the sound and the meaning of an ideal word that corresponds to the word "woalki" [veil].

I could also be more cautious and not interpret the manuscript as the imprint of the creative mind. I could stop judging and prejudging and simply say that *doodles* are a visual testament to the long and difficult process of finding the right rhymes. It seems that the poet – this is probably the best word – poured over the page, stared at it, and, laboriously, with difficulty, came up with subsequent words (he relied on his memory, a dictionary, and language itself). But none of them, at least according to Miłosz, may complete the rhyme and the semantic structure. We will never know whether the drawings were created when the poet thought hard about the ideal rhyme or when he struggled, and his mind was distracted. In any case, the sheer number and placement of the drawings, which dominate on the page, are a sign, a graphic exponent, of waiting for the right word – *the* word that could complete the third line. Drawings show the inability to rhyme.

Indeed, apart from the words that I have already mentioned, the following words appear among the drawings: "stałki," "żałki," "moczałki" [?], "jajki," "kralki," and "uczałki." If I decipher them correctly and know enough about old regional forms in the Polish language,²⁸ these "words" are not words, but simply meaningless groups of syllables. The poet wrote them down hoping that one of them would make him find the right word (inspiring his creative mind). To no avail (he did not find the right word and he could not stop the creative process).

I don't know why I write poems which rhyme from time to time; I can't really answer this question. I simply feel inspired to write one. I do not like writing poems which rhyme because once you start you have to come up with rhymes. I mean, the first line is there and then you have to keep writing – you can't help it. Whether you want to or not, you cry, and you have to sit there and finish.²⁹

²⁶Bożena Shallcross, "Poeta i sygnatury" [The poet and the drawing], *Teksty Drugie*, no. 5 (2011): 60.

²⁷Karina Jarzyńska, *Literatura jako ćwiczenie duchowe. Dzieło Czesława Miłosza w perspektywie postsekularnej* [Literature as a spiritual exercise: Czesław Miłosz's work in the post-secular perspective] (Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych "Universitas", 2018), 270-272.

²⁸And Miłosz, as the author of *Elegia na kłopoty z polszczyzną...* [An elegy on the problems with the Polish language], was very knowledgeable about regional forms of the Polish language.

²⁹Czesław Miłosz, *Podróżny świata, rozmowy z Renatą Gorczyńską* [A traveler of the world, Renata Gorczyńska interviews Czesław Miłosz] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002), 266. When Miłosz talks about how difficult it is to find the right word and the perfect rhyme, he, perhaps unintentionally, refers to Juliusz Słowacki's meta-*ottava rima* (*ottava rima* about *ottava rima*). Słowacki observes that sometimes it is so difficult to find the third rhyme in *ottava rima* that it makes the poet cry.

This is how Miłosz described the experience of writing a poem which rhymes to Renata Gorczyńska. It seems that the first draft page of *Na ścięcie damy dworu* is an excellent visualization of what the poet is talking about in the last sentence. Rhyme becomes a trap.

What is the solution? The poet chose one of the words that he had scribbled on the page. Miłosz finally chose “lalki” [doll’s]. Its placement on the page is interesting. Let us look again at Figure 3. The word “lalki” is relatively close to the two first lines, at the beginning of a vertical sequence of words (I assume that Miłosz wrote “traditionally” from top to bottom). We may assume that Miłosz was “browsing through” his mental dictionary, rejecting different options until he finally returned to the word ... he had considered in the first place. However, nothing in the first draft indicates that a decision was made: the word “lalki” is not underlined, circled, or marked in any other way. The decision to choose “lalki” is only visible in the second draft:

Migdałowe anioły z obłokiem woalki	Almond angels with a cloud veil,
co nigdy nie kucają pomiędzy pokrzywą	Who never crouch between nettles
I Ciało mają bez dziurek mają, gładkie jak u lalki	Their body is without devoid of holes, as smooth as a doll’s

“Woalki”/ “lalki.” The findings of “static” poetics, the poetics of the product, would be as follows: it is an enclosing rhyme (considering the structure of the stanza); it is a perfect grammatical rhyme (in terms of its grammatical form); it is a feminine rhyme (in terms of prosody); and it is a perfect rhyme (in terms of phonetics). In turn, the findings of genetic poetics, the poetics of production, would be as follows: it was an extremely difficult rhyme to find, as evidenced by the page filled with words and drawings...

I will not reconstruct the entire “genetic history” of *Na ścięcie damy dworu*. Although there is still a lot to tell, one has to be brief and selective in an article. Perhaps, I will tell the history of this poem in more detail in a longer text.³⁰ Let me only add that the above-described situation of focusing on a single rhyme repeated itself a number of times during the writing process. In order to finish the poem, in order to end it with the distich:

Dziś ja wielki, największy z całego powiatu	Today I am great. The greatest in the entire region.
Ogłosić mogę wyrok. Służba. Dać ją katu.	And I pass sentence. Servants. Take her to the executioner.

Miłosz needed four more draft pages. He struggled with, among other things, rhymes to the words “pokrzywą” [nettles] and “wioski” [a village boy]. The first struggle and the first writer’s block turned out to be a revolving paradigm in this particular text-making process. This not-

³⁰Let me add: in my genetic history, I do not discuss the very significant fact that there is more text on the first page of the draft of *Na ścięcie damy dworu*. In the bottom left corner, there are two lines, which are almost illegible. I decipher them, not without hesitation, as follows: “Chodźcie [...] niech mnie podrapią [?] / Utyleś. Tyją wszyscy socjal-demokraci” [Come [...] let them scratch me [?] / You’ve got fat. All Social Democrats put on weight]. These two lines have nothing to do with the key “problem” of this page (i.e. the search for the first rhyme of the poem). Thus, another problem, another text, might have been “solved” on this page. Perhaps, but this is only a (most likely unverifiable) hypothesis, Miłosz played with these two lines, searching for the perfect ending to his new poem. It is also possible that it is a digression: a different new poem that comes to life on the margins. In any case, such (or similar) words do not appear in the published version of *Na ścięcie damy dworu*, nor do I recall them in any other of Miłosz’s published poems.

withstanding, it must be clearly emphasized that none of the later “blocks” were so long, intense, and dramatic. On the first page of the draft, to be more precise, after the first two lines and before the third line, Miłosz did not so much as lose his momentum, did not so much as slow down, but rather came up against a brick wall. The draft page (Figure 2) is a perfect visualization of impossibility.

The two creative sequences discussed above demonstrate how the process of rhyming may differ in each individual case. And how it may engage with other aspects of the writing process. In the case of the fifth and sixth stanzas of *Rozmowy na Wielkanoc 1620 roku*, rhyming is at the center of the writing process: the poet’s hand is guided by rhyme, rhyming drives the text. The rhyme structure can be compared to a frame, or a scaffold, which determines the shape of the text in terms of sounds, semantics, and structure. In the opening lines of *Na ścięcie damy dworu*, an opposite situation takes place: rhyming becomes a problem. Unsolved and chronic, it blocks the writing process. In *Rozmowy na Wielkanoc 1620 roku*, rhyme is a catalyst for the writing process. In *Na ścięcie damy dworu*, it slows it down.

Indeed, the summary of my findings may be simpler and more succinct. Let us consider the following:

Lecz jako Bóg mnie postawił na ziemi,
Jeżeli zechce, znowu mnie postawi.
Nie mnie dochodzić, u jakich płomieni,
W jakich kuźnicach serce mi przetrawi,

Since God made me live on this earth,
If he wants to, he’ll do that again.
It’s not up to me to guess what flames
What forges will torment my heart,

And

Migdałowe anioły z obłokiem woalki,
Co nigdy nie kucają pomiędzy pokrzywą,
Ciało bez dziurek mają, gładkie jak u lalki
I nikt ich nie potrafi zaprosić na piwo.

Almond angels with a cloud veil,
Who never crouch between nettles
Their body is devoid of holes, as smooth as a doll’s
And no one can ask them out for a beer.

In the light of genetic poetics (the poetics of production), both texts are products of two writing processes that are incomparable in terms of the workload. It is as if while working on the first of the quoted stanzas, Miłosz was guided by those fragments of *Sztuka rymotwórcza* in which the ease and joy of rhyming is praised (“If rhyme costs a lot, it will not be without flaws”). Respectively, while working on the second stanza, he followed different instructions from the same treaty (“Hurry up slowly”).³¹

³¹The genetic poetics of the rhyme becomes a fact! When I was finishing the final version of this article, I received an extremely interesting sketch by Tadeusz Budrewicz, devoted to Adam Asnyk and his rhyming process. Budrewicz analyzed new material that shed new light on this problem: he did not analyze a draft, but a notebook used by Asnyk to write down rhymes, which he later used in poems. Thus, Asnyk’s rhyming process was not related to a specific literary work. It preceded the actual writing process. Tadeusz Budrewicz’s observations are brilliant: he draws on historical poetics and, *inter alia*, the nineteenth-century theory of the rhyme. See: Tadeusz Budrewicz, “Asnyka notes z rymami” [Asnyk’s notebook with rhymes], in: *Przed-tekstowy świat. Z literackich archiwów XIX i XX wieku* [The pre-textual world: 19th-century and 20th-century literary archives], ed. Marzena Woźniak-Łabieniec (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2020), 31-50.

4. And thus: work

Dorota Korwin-Piotrowska observes that “concepts and terms in the field of poetics document the cognitive effort involved in studying and describing the work of the human mind.”³² I argue that the genetic *modus operandi* is one of the most privileged and effective modes of accessing the “work of the human mind” available to poetics or (so that I may refrain from personifying poetics, which I have done extensively in my article) the poetics scholar (or a scholar in the field of genetic criticism, versology, stylistics, composition studies, narratology ...). Of course, the access to “the work of the human mind” is neither complete nor unlimited: the thought processes of a specific person at the time of writing a specific text cannot be reconstructed on the basis of a draft in the same way as, for example, the work of the human heart in an ECG.

If I were to conceptualize the complex relation between the draft of the text (which we can find in the archive) and the writing mind (which we cannot touch), I would refer to two concepts. On the one hand, I would refer to the concept (metaphor?) of a trace, so important in contemporary philosophical reflection. On the other hand, I would refer to the concept (metaphor?) of the “extended mind,” which was introduced into the humanistic discourse at the end of the 20th century by Clark and Chalmers,³³ and then, in the 21st century, effectively operationalized for the purpose of genetic criticism by Dirk Van Hulle.³⁴

If I were to refer to a trace, I would say: the draft (as a material object, including deletions and notes) is a trace of the mental processes which take place in the author’s mind. It is a trace, i.e. it is inevitably defective, deceptive, residual, and it does not represent that which leaves the trace in its entirety. Nevertheless, it testifies to the ephemeral and fleeting reality (at least according to those philosophies of the trace that are not radically critical).³⁵ If I were to refer to the “extended mind,” I would follow in the footsteps of Van Hulle and say that the draft is not only a passive (and imperfect) reflection of the creative processes which take place outside of it, i.e. in the somewhat mythical “inside” of the mind (which has been referred to as consciousness, subconsciousness, imagination...). The draft is also an interactive element of the writer’s instrumentarium. It is the author’s mind that is at work but at the same time the author looks at how their thoughts are recorded “on paper.” What they see “on paper” stimulates (or maybe sometimes blocks) the work of “the mind,” which wants to express its thoughts on (physical, material) “paper.” In other words, the text is born both “in the mind” and “on paper.” Indeed, it is not born “in the mind” or “on the page” but in “in-the-mind-and-on-the-page” (“the mind” and “the page” interact).

We can see the drafts discussed in this article – the one shown in Figure 1, in which we can “see” that Miłosz first wrote down the final words in the line (which rhyme) and only then “filled in”

³²See: footnote 8.

³³See: Andy Clark, David Chalmers, “The Extended Mind”, *Analysis*, no. 58 (1998): 10-23.

³⁴See: Dirk Van Hulle, *Modern Manuscripts. The Extended Mind and Creative Undoing from Darwin to Beckett and Beyond* (London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014).

³⁵Cf. Andrzej Zawadzki, *Obraz i ślad* [Image and trace] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2014), 7: “(...) the basic ontological question that we may ask in connection with the trace is as follows: is it a ‘living’ sign of and a testament to the presence of the one who or which left the trace or, on the contrary, is it a ‘dead’ mechanical imprint, in which all presence disappears or turns out to be only the secondary effect of the trace? The latter question is best reflected in the works of Jacques Derrida, while the former question is discussed by, among others, Barbara Skarga, whose reflections on the trace are foundational for the Polish humanities.”

the rest; and the one in Figure 2, which demonstrates a rhyming and thus a creative crisis – as either faint traces of the writing and creative mind or as the currently inactive “external mind.” Whichever rhetoric and logic we choose, one thing is certain: these pages allow the scholar who studies “Miłosz’s rhyme” perceive this rhyme not as a product but as production. In other words, poetics returns to its source and original meaning, i.e. reflection on creation.³⁶

I will say it again: poetics which cooperates with genetic criticism and employs poetological concepts and procedures may gain a better understanding of the writing process that is hidden or encoded in the aesthetic structure of the text, thus discovering how, as cognitive scientists say, the embodied mind works. In the end, however, I would like to move away from cognitive science and comment on “work” in a more general manner. Indeed, the work that genetic poetics studies is the work of the psychophysical subject called the author,³⁷ but it can also be conceptualized as the work of language, which, tired of endless draft versions, makes an effort to finally “mean” and “convey” something, or as the work of literary conventions which are employed in the writing and semantic process.

It seems to me that redirecting poetics in such a way – towards work, understood as producing text, but also more broadly as a manifestation of an active, useful, and creative mode of being in the world – effectively “moves” poetics (which has been criticized as outdated in recent years and relegated to a secondary role) closer to the center (or one of the possible centers) of contemporary humanistic reflection. Adrienne Rich’s famous question “Does this poem work?”³⁸ is a question in which the verb “to work” does not only mean “to act” but also “to be effective.” The poem has to “work,” i.e. it has to be effective. Indeed, it has to affect the reader (and through them – the world; even if it sounds grandiloquent). If we are interested in how and if the text “works,” it is only natural that we take into account how and if the draft “works.” In other words, we should construct interdisciplinary stories which combine poetics, genetic criticism, the history of ideas, and cultural anthropology. We should talk about how the “work on” the text looked like (i.e. the work of the creative embodied mind), how text “works” (i.e. how texts affect and change our consciousness – the reader’s consciousness), and what “work” can be done through text (i.e. what work can be done by those writers and readers who process the world of social interactions through their creative and hermeneutic acts).³⁹ But this is a broader topic. It is a topic for a different text (that has to “work”)...

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

³⁶Indeed, referring to the etymology of the term “poetics” and the Greek verb “poiein” (“to produce”) is one of the *topoi* of the meta-poetological discourse. Teresa Kostkiewiczowa, among others, points out to this “productive” ancestry in “Poetyka dawniej i dziś” [Poetics in the past and today], *Tematy i Konteksty*, no. 3 (2013). Tomasz Mizerkiewicz (*New situations of poetics*) referred to it as well (indirectly, referring to Kostkiewiczowa’s article). In his discussion of “cognitive poetics,” Piotr Sobolczyk drew on this concept as well (and signaled it in the title of his text), see: “Kognitywna vs. Kognicyjna? Poetyka vs. Poietyka?” [Cognitive vs. Cognitive? Poetics vs. Poietikos], *Teksty Drugie*, no. 4 (2010).

³⁷It should be added that genetic criticism is not focused solely on the instance of the author, perceived as the sovereign of the creative process. Genetic criticism recognizes the problem of the “multi-agency” of the text, i.e. the fact that agency is divided (to a different and varying degree) among many agents, who are involved at various stages of the creative process. This approach is expressed in the article that has been translated into Polish: Nicolas Donin, Daniel Ferrer, “Autor(zy) i aktorzy genezy” [The author(s) and actors of genesis], transl. Dorota Jarząbek-Wasył, *Wielkość* 39, no. 1 (2019).

³⁸Adrienne Rich, *Poetry and Commitment: An Essay* (London-New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

³⁹I refer to the terms and considerations presented by Ryszard Nycz in the book *Kultura jako czasownik. Sondowanie nowej humanistyki* [Culture as a verb: Probing the new humanities] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL, 2017), 174-175.

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KEYWORDS

w o r k

r h y m e

P O E T I C S

ABSTRACT:

The article attempts to answer the question of what the potential benefits of a methodological cooperation between poetics and genetic criticism are. The answer is based on the definition formulated by D. Korwin-Piotrowska who observes that “concepts and terms in the field of poetics document the cognitive effort involved in studying and describing the work of the human mind.” I argue that we may understand (although, in a limited degree) how “the human mind” works when poetics, in cooperation with genetic criticism, studies not only the final version of the text, but also the text in-the-making (a record of a textual process, i.e. a draft). Combining poetics and genetic criticism, I analyze two poems by Czesław Miłosz, *Rozmowy na Wielkanoc 1620 roku* [Conversations at Easter 1620] and *Na ścięcie damy dworu* [On the beheading of a lady at court], demonstrating how the poet arrived at the final rhyme pattern. In the end, I make further theoretical comments in connection with, *inter alia*, the concept of the “extended mind” and the contemporary subjective and functional concepts of culture.

the process of creating

MIND

genetic criticism

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