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POETICS AND PERFORMANCE OF SONGS

Songs studies today point to three critical fields: self-referentiality, phonic and phonetic aspects of singing, and transmediality.

Songs:
Meaning, Sound, and Architecture of Transmedial Narratives

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What lies at the heart of this issue of Forum of Poetics *and at the same time, what we believe may inspire further research into the question at hand is a reflection on the known and the unknown in the poetics of songs. Despite simple semantics, these two words, which refer to the non-new and the unexplored, create an intriguing, as it seems to us, network of relations, transversals, and connections that is worth discussing in further detail.*

The adopted research perspective is announced in the headline, the title: **poetics and performances of songs**. *It is both rooted in existing scholarly discourse and opens new horizons; it refers to tradition, but it also sounds modern and brings with it its own connotations. Thus, it shows, as we believe, the axiological vector of an expressive metaphor, which we hope, may conceptually organize in the near and perhaps also in the distant future, the philological and cultural background of the concept in question and, understandably, its further inevitable modifications. This topical issue is therefore characterized by an open drive to initiate a dialogue, to review recent concepts and proposals; it is also saturated with experiental energy, which helps place earlier impulses in a vast, diverse, and complex configuration.*

Respectively, we must acknowledge the indisputable evolution of the methodology used in literary, linguistic, musicological, media, ethnological, philosophical and cultural studies. Interdisciplinary dialogue ensures that the horizon of shared interests is inspiring and vide, allowing one to investigate the issue at hand in greater detail and revisit well-known verbal and musical texts. It also allows one to analyze in greater depth seemingly familiar, intuitive, repetitive, and closed research fields.

The final plane for reflection are innovations, the sources of which may be found in the new technologies, which are after all part and parcel of the field in question, with the development of the Internet at the forefront. These new technologies mean that music is more easily available than ever, facilitating the interpretation and study of such inherently multimodal and multifaceted cultural texts as songs.

The articles in this issue of Forum of Poetics *point to three critical fields:* self-referentiality, phonic and phonetic aspects of singing, and transmediality. *Patryk Mamczur focuses on Polish bigbeat music from the 1960s and early 1970s. He analyzes the lyrics of selected songs from that period and emphasizes their self-referentiality, discussing how big-beat performers described themselves, their fans, and the phenomenon of teenage music in their songs. Mamczur refers to songs by popular bands as well as by less known local groups. His analysis is placed in a broader social and political context, as he reads the respective lyrics in and through the contemporary press, politics, and cultural policies. He shows that the self-referentiality present in the lyrics of big-beat songs proves the considerable self-awareness of Polish artists in the period in question.*

Krzysztof Gajda writes about Pablopavo, an artist for whom mise en abyme *is one of the most important means of expression. A vital perspective in literary studies,* mise en abyme *has rarely (or hardly ever) been considered an important element of song lyrics. Gajda discusses numerous examples of* mise en abyme *in the works of the Warsaw songwriter, creating fascinating paraliterary constructions. Pablopavo goes beyond the limits of the song as a genre, pointing to its literary*

nature. Mise en abyme *helps build rapport with the addressee, who is no longer purely focused on entertainment. Distance to form, irony and humor ensure the authenticity of the message, focusing on the very process of communication, based primarily on language.*

Paweł Tański attempts to interpret the performative aspects of Nick Cave's singing and song lyrics written in collaboration with the guitarist Rowland Stuart Howard (1959–2009), Mick Harvey, Vincent Eugene Craddock (also known as Gene Vincent), and William Douchette (also known as Bill Davis). Tański focuses specifically on the album The Birthday Party *(1980), which Nick Cave recorded together with his band The Birthday Party. Tański's analysis, representative of rock song lyrics studies, is a receptive trace and a reflection on the beginnings of this outstanding songwriter, rock musician, and singer's career. The author argues that the Australian singer, beginning with the first recordings with the band The Boys Next Door (*Door, Door *from 1979), writes about love, pain, and loneliness, and above all, each new album by the author of* Into My Arms *records the experience of longing.* The Birthday Party, *therefore, is no different; it expresses regret and sadness – the feelings of the author/singer, the narrating/singing "I," the lyrical and the musical persona or, in other words, the singing and performing subject. Cave's singing is a metaphor for the* habitus *of punk song miniatures, which are lyrical and vocal expressions of rebellion, filled with irony, while the main principle of the poetics of these works is the grotesque.*

Monika Konert-Panek analyzes the functioning of selected English phonetic features and inspirations related to them in Polish punk rock and interprets the results in a broader stylistic and sociolinguistic context. She argues that pronunciation in singing can be connected to expressing specific, potentially evolving, social or stylistic meanings, and in the case of Anglophone Polish punk rock these meanings depend on trends within the genre. In most analyzed cases, English pronunciation displays a lot of interference from Polish and little to no stylization, with few examples of features of Cockney, which is associated with classic punk rock.

Jakub Kosek discusses Till Lindemann's multimedia and transmedia solo works. Functioning within and across ideological and subjective discourses, the songs of the German singer and songwriter are narratives that are often developed creatively across various media platforms, including cover art, music videos, or even short films. The releases of new albums and songs are often accompanied by creative promotional campaigns. Songs are therefore analyzed in the article as transmedial narratives (M.-L. Ryan) subject to the cultural logic of media convergence (H. Jenkins) and circulating across various musical scenes (K. Kahn-Harris).

Aleksandra Reimann-Czajkowska focuses on intermediality, especially on relations between music and literature, connected by "music in lyrical circumstances" (Iwona Puchalska) in poetry. Her

*article is an attempt at listening to an intertextual dialogue between two poems, where listening to music is the most important experience (*Goldberg Variations *by J.S. Bach in Barańczak's* Kontrapunkt *[Counterpoint], and a Gregorian chant in Zagajewski's poem). In the two poems, logos and melos are inseparable, permeating each other, organizing the fictional space of their respective texts, and serving as a starting point for existential considerations. Listening thus brings a new sort of a sensual reception (and organization) of reality, in which experiencing opposites can lead to a desired harmony.*

Marek Hendrykowski attempts to functionally reconstruct the views expressed by Marshall McLuhan in his works, both from a epistemological and a methodological perspective. The author argues that at the core of McLuhan's theory, often regarded as a manifestation of "conservative" views, lies an individual form of cognitive and methodological skepticism. The skeptical attitude of the author of The Gutenberg Galaxy *and* Understanding media *means that his considerations, despite that fact that they date back to the 1960s, are not outdated and still attract great interest from contemporary media scholars.*

*All these discourses give rise to a humanistic **laboratory** that this issue of* Forum of Poetics *devoted to "The poetics and performance of songs" is. The articles in this issue illuminate **three cultural spheres** of verbal and musical texts. Against this critical background, human choices connected with the functioning in contemporary audial culture become visible. They concern individual efforts to construct one's private audiosphere in a world in which technology actively promotes indirect listening practices.*

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

"There Are Already Three Hundred Thousand of Us:"

A Self-Referential Look at Fans and Performers in Polish Big-Beat Songs from the 1960s and Early 1970s

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Big beat, which first appeared in the People's Republic of Poland in the late 1950s and developed in the 1960s and early 1970s, was recognized by the contemporary Polish society as an important phenomenon. This is evidenced by press articles from that period (not only from the music press but also socio-political newspapers and journals), interviews given years later by musicians, fans, politicians — as well as, interestingly, big-beat songs themselves, and especially their lyrics.

Although big-beat songs, like most pop culture products, talk about the everyday problems of teenagers, especially relationship problems and love, many lyrics are, quite surprisingly, self-referential. They talk directly about music targeted at teenagers and young adults, including Western stars, the Polish big-beat scene, performers, and fans. In the present article, I will try to trace the nature of this big-beat self-reflection, i.e., analyze what exactly Polish performers sang about big beat in the 1960s, and how it was related to the ongoing contemporary discussion about teenage music in communist Poland. In order to better outline the context of the era, I will first discuss images of youth in big-beat songs and then move on to actual big-beat self-referential songs, i.e., songs in which Polish performers sang about themselves and the role played by their music.[1]

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[1] This article contains paraphrased and extended excerpts from the doctoral dissertation currently written by the author at the Faculty of History of the Jagiellonian University.

Self-referentiality will be defined in keeping with Artur Sandauer's original concept, dating back to the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s (although, of course, examples of self-referentiality may be found in much older works). Sandauer and other scholars after him argued that self-referential works reflect on their origin, creative process, author(s), and legacy.[2]

"A song with a hoop," or an attempt to infantilize big beat

Rhythm & Blues, founded in the Tri-City[3], is generally considered to be the first Polish big-beat band (although when the band was founded, the term "big beat" did not exist). The band played their first concert in March 1959 in Rudy Kot [Red Cat], a club in Gdańsk, and quickly achieved great popularity, with thousands of young people starved for modern Western music attending their concerts. At the same time, however, the press and communist party leaders complained about and criticized the music performed by Rhythm & Blues and the behavior of the band's teenage audience. After the band's concert in Katowice, in September 1959, the group's manager, Franciszek Walicki, was summoned to the local Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party where a "Very Important Official"[4] reportedly informed him that the Silesian youth would "prefer to spend their time on more cultured pursuits" as they were not interested in "degenerate" rock and roll; respectively, Walicki was told that the concert in Katowice "was the band's last performance [...]."[5] Indeed, the Ministry of Culture and Art sent out a letter to all local chapters of culture and art national councils prohibiting Rhythm & Blues from performing in concert halls with more than 400 seats, which effectively led to the band's dissolution in the mid-1960s.[6]

At the same time, however, another band managed by Walicki, i.e., Czerwono-Czarni [The Red-and-Blacks], was formed. As Walicki recalled, "it was supposed to be basically the same band, only under a different name."[7] However, in order to avoid further difficulties posed by the communist authorities, and to please the older generations of Poles, Walicki and the members of the band made a number of decisions which altered the nature of Czerwono-Czarni's music. This is how the term "big beat" was coined; the phrase "rock and roll," clearly associated with Western pop culture, was no longer used to define new music for teenagers. Another of Walicki's "colorful" bands, Niebiesko-Czarni [The Blue-and-Blacks], popularized the slogan "Polish youth sings Polish songs," which was meant to convince the public and the authorities that big beat was an original Polish creation and had little in common with American or British trends. Czerwono-Czarni's and Niebiesko-Czarni's music also began to change in the first half of the 1960s. Although both bands' first EPs were dominated by covers of Western rock-and-roll hits (sometimes

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[2] Joanna Grądziel-Wójcik, "Literature's Perpetuum Mobile, or A Few Words on Self-Referentiality", *Forum of Poetics* 2 (Feb. 2015): 86–95; Ewa Szary-Matywiecka, "Autotematyzm" [Self-referentiality], in: *Słownik literatury polskiej XX wieku* [Dictionary of Polish 20th-century Literature], ed. Alina Brodzka-Wald et al. (Wrocław–Warsaw–Kraków: Ossolineum, 1995), 54–62.

[3] Metropolitan area consisting of three Polish cities: Gdańsk, Gdynia, and Sopot.

[4] Band members later admitted that it was Edward Gierek, the then First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party Committee in Katowice. See: Paweł Chmielewski, *Partia, pieniądze, rock & roll* [Communist party, money, rock & roll], part 1 *Ciuciubabka* [Blind man's buff] (Gdańsk: TVP, 1997), documentary.

[5] Franciszek Walicki, *Szukaj, burz, buduj* [Search, destroy, build] (Warsaw: TRZ, 1995), 97–98.

[6] Marek Gaszyński, *Cudowne lata. Moja historia rock and rolla w Polsce* [Beautiful years. My history of rock and roll in Poland] (Ożarów Mazowiecki: Wydawnictwo Olesiejuk, 2012), 50.

[7] Walicki, 107.

with original lyrics,[8] sometimes translated into Polish[9]), more and more adaptations of Polish folk songs,[10] Latin American,[11] and Soviet[12] melodies began to appear on subsequent albums. These songs did not refer to modern trends in teenage music, and instead, as Mariusz Gradowski rightly notices, "drew on the old canon of entertainment for more mature listeners."[13]

The sound softened and the lyrics became more infantile. Although the term "nastolatki" first appeared in Poland at the turn of the 1950s and the 1960s, popularized by Władysław Kopaliński as the equivalent of the English term "teenagers",[14] some older people stubbornly did not want to recognize the ongoing generational changes and tried to treat adolescents as children. It is demonstrated by *Piosenka z kółkiem* [A song with a hoop][15] from Czerwono-Czarni's first LP released in 1966, with lyrics by Kazimierz Winkler. Katarzyna Sobczyk sang:

Baśka z Irką wciąż bawią się w sklepik	Baśka and Irka play shop all the time
Jolka szyje dla lalek sukienki	Jolka sews dresses for dolls
A ja z kółkiem się bawię najlepiej	And I have the best time rolling my hoop‹?›
I śpiewam sobie piosenki	And I sing songs to myself
Piosenka z kółkiem, piosenka z kółkiem	A song with a hoop, a song with a hoop
Dogoni szybko jak wiatr jaskółkę	It'll catch up with the swallow as fast as the wind
To wesolutka, to znowu rzewna	It's jolly and it's tender
Lecz nie z powodu łez i pożegnań	But not because of tears and goodbyes
Gdy kółko się toczy wciąż dalej przed siebie	As the hoop rolls on and on
Piosenka z radości jest w siódmym niebie	This joyous song is on cloud nine
Lecz kiedy kółeczko przewróci się znów	But when the little hoop turns over
Piosenka zmartwiona zapomni wnet słów	This worried song soon forgets the words
La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la	La-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la
Czasem idę do parku miejskiego	I sometimes go to the city park
By z ptaszkami podzielić się bułką	To feed some bread to the birds
Spotkać kogoś: „Dzień dobry, kolego"	To run into someone: "Good morning, buddy"
I śpiewać sobie tak w kółko	And sing to myself over and over again

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[8] Cf.: Czerwono-Czarni, *Sweet Little Sixteen*, the 3rd song on the album *Elevator Rock* (Pronit, 1961).

[9] Cf.: Czerwono-Czarni, *Lucille*, the 3rd song on the album *Twist* (Muza, 1962).

[10]Cf.: Niebiesko-Czarni, *Na swojską nutę* [Familiar note] (Muza, 1963).

[11]Cf.: Niebiesko-Czarni, *El soldado de levita*, the 2nd song on the album *Adieu tristesse* (Pronit, 1962).

[12]Cf.: Czerwono-Czarni, *Wieczór na redzie* [Evening at the roadstead], the 2nd song on the album *Cztery mile za piec* [Four miles behind the heater] (Pronit, 1963).

[13]Mariusz Gradowski, *Big beat. Style i gatunki polskiej muzyki młodzieżowej, 1957–1973* [Big beat. Styles and genres of Polish teenage music, 1957–1973] (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, 2018), 121–122.

[14]Władysław Kopaliński, "Autentyczny widz" [Authentic spectator], *Życie Warszawy*, 2 May 1959; after: Witold Doroszewski, *O kulturę słowa* [For the culture of the word], vol. II (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1968), 331–332.

[15]Czerwono-Czarni, *Piosenka z kółkiem* [A song with a hoop], the 10th song on the album *Czerwono-Czarni* [The Red-and-Blacks](Muza, 1966).

Although Katarzyna Sobczyk was over 20 when she performed *Piosenka z kółkiem*, Winkler's lyrics seem to describe what children ten years her junior would do: hoop rolling, playing with dolls, or playing shop. In Polish, the infantile is additionally enhanced by the accumulation of diminutives ("sklepik" [little shop], "wesolutka" [jolly], "kółeczko" [little hoop], "ptaszki" [birdies]) and the fact that Sobczyk's voice is clearly stylized as that of a child. Other songs on the LP are similar; for example, *Czy krasnoludki są na świecie* [Do dwarfs exist?][16] or *Tato, kup mi dżinsy* ["Dad, buy me a pair of jeans],[17] a song which, on the one hand, refers to a contemporary youth fad ("tato, wszyscy mają dżinsy" [Dad, everyone has a pair of jeans]) and, on the other hand, shows a girl who depends on her parents, whom she has to ask to buy her dream jeans ("tato, nie mów, że są za drogie / jak to wytłumaczyć Tobie" [Dad, don't say they are too expensive / how can I explain it to you]).

"Your school shield is no longer on your sleeve," or two looks at teenagerhood

In the mid-1960s, the question of teenagers began to be discussed more widely and adolescence began to be directly associated with big-beat music. As Witold Pograniczny explained years later, "it was the music of the young; it was truly their own. [...] Before, a young man, after graduating from high school, put on his father's old suit and became an adult. Rock seemed to prolong our youth."[18] The language of the youth also began to change significantly, and the changes were thought to have been brought about by big beat. On the one hand, young people began quoting big-beat songs in their everyday conversations. The musicologist Wacław Panek described it, in a characteristic way, as "using musical proverbs from contemporary teenage hits."[19] On the other hand, teenage slang, teenagers, and their problems began to find their way to the lyrics of big-beat songs more often, and some of these songs became, as Krzysztof Kosiński later explained, "musical manifestos" of the young generation.[20]

However, the perception of teenagers' needs and problems was still very distorted. A good example of this is Czerwone Gitary's [The Red Guitars] hit *Dozwolone do lat 18-tu* [Only for under 18s].[21] It should be mentioned (and I will come back to this question) that one of the authors of the lyrics was Kazimierz Winkler – the same who had written *Piosenka z kółkiem* a few years earlier. Teenagerhood in Czerwone Gitary's his is described thus:

[16]Czerwono-Czarni, *Czy krasnoludki są na świecie* [Do dwarfs exist?], the 8th song on the album *Czerwono-Czarni* (Muza, 1966).

[17]Czerwono-Czarni, *Tato, kup mi dżinsy* [Dad, buy me a pair of jeans], the 13th song on the album *Czerwono-Czarni* (Muza, 1966).

[18]Maria Szabłowska, *Cały ten big beat* [All that big beat] (Łódź: Opus, 1993), 15.

[19]Wacław Panek, *Jazz, beat i rozrywka* [Jazz, Beat and Entertainment] (Warsaw: Centralny Ośrodek Metodyki Upowszechniania Kultury, 1973), 45.

[20]Krzysztof Kosiński, *Oficjalne i prywatne życie młodzieży w czasach PRL* [Official and private life of young people in the times of the Polish People's Republic] (Warsaw: Rosner & Wspólnicy, 2006), 337–343.

[21]Czerwone Gitary, *Dozwolone do lat 18-tu* [Only for under 18s], the 7th song on the album *Czerwone Gitary 3* (Muza, 1968).

Nie możemy iść dzisiaj do kina	We can't go to the movies today
Dozwolone od lat 18	It's only for over 18s
Mówić: „chłopiec mój", „moja dziewczyna"	We can't say "my boyfriend," "my girlfriend"
Dozwolone od lat 18	It's only for over 18s
Czy mi wolno zakochać się w tobie	Am I allowed to fall in love with you
W twym uśmiechu i w twych oczu blasku?	In your smile and in your glowing eyes?
Czy ktoś głosem surowym nie powie	Or will someone say in a stern voice
„Dozwolone od lat 18"?	"It's only for over 18s"?
Taki refren powtarza starszy brat	This chorus is repeated by the older brother
„Dozwolone od 18 lat"	"It's only for over 18s"
Więc po nocach się śni, już każdy zgadł	So, you dream at night about, you guessed it
„Dozwolone od 18 lat"	"It's only for over 18s"
Lecz możemy umówić się z wiosną	But we can go on a date with the spring
Dozwolone do lat 18	It's only for under 18s
Śmiać się, śpiewać piosenki zbyt głośno	Laugh, sing songs way too loud
Dozwolone do lat 18	It's only for under 18s
W śnieżną bitwę zabawić się zimą	Have fun in the snow in the winter
Dozwolone do lat 18	It's only for under 18s
Mówić „serwus" do swojej dziewczyny	Say "howdy" to your girlfriend
Dozwolone do lat 18	It's only for under 18s
Nowy refren powtarza wszystkim wiatr	A new chorus is repeated by the wind
„Dozwolone do 18 lat"	"It's only for under 18s"
Znów po nocach się śni, już każdy zgadł	So, you dream at night about you know what
„Dozwolone do 18 lat"	"It's only for under 18s"

The lyrics may be divided into two parts: a list of activities for "over 18s" and things suitable for "under 18s." According to this peculiar guide for teenagers, under 18s are not allowed to go to the cinema, publicly express their feelings by calling their partner "boyfriend" or "girlfriend," and perhaps they are not even allowed to fall in love with another person. They are allowed to, however, say "serwus" (which was a fairly cool but neutral greeting in the late 1960s)[22] to their crush, laugh together, sing songs and throw snowballs at each other. The lyrics to the song by Czerwone Gitary, the leading big-beat band of their time, mark a clear line between childhood and adulthood, and it is simply the moment one turns 18. There is no question of any transitional period, i.e., teenagerhood, nor are the actual actions or desires of teenage Poles described. Back in the 1980s, B. Lee Cooper pointed out that it is important not to look at pop song lyrics only as a reflection of the author's feelings and thoughts, but also, and perhaps most of all, as a testament to social changes.[23] These changes were not re-

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[22]"Serwus", now outdated, can be somehow compared to "howdy", "ahoy", or "ciao".

[23]B. Lee Cooper, "A Popular Music Perspective. Challenging Sexism in the Social Studies Classroom", *The Social Studies* 2 (1980): 71–76.

flected in Winkler's lyrics. Another song by Czerwone Gitary, *Nikt nam nie weźmie młodości* [Nobody will take our youth away from us],[24] was also clearly pedagogical. It criticized young people's antics and showed how they should behave: "nie chcemy pić wina" [we don't want to drink wine], "nie warto w karty grać" [we don't want to gamble], "latarni wcale nie chcemy tłuc" [we don't want to break streetlamps], "spędzamy w domu każdą noc" [we spend every night at home].

One can find out just how unrealistic and didactic in nature the image of adolescence presented in the two above-mentioned songs by Czerwone Gitary was by comparing it with the lyrics to a less popular big-beat song from the same period, namely *Osiemnaście lat* [Eighteen][25] by Czarne Golfy [The Black Turtlenecks], a band that ultimately did not manage to win Poland over, even though many thought they could. Roman Stinzing and Andrzej Icha explain that "the band was considered the best in the Tri-City."[26] Czarne Golfy were indeed a unique band, as seen in the lyrics to *Osiemnaście lat*:

Znikła tarcza już z rękawa	Your school shield is no longer on your sleeve
Biała bluzka poszła w kąt	You don't wear the white blouse no more
Już co wieczór czarna kawa	Black coffee every evening
Kawa – no i on	Coffee – and he
Przesiadujesz u fryzjera	You hang out at the hairdresser
Szminka zdobi twoją twarz	You wear lipstick
Do torebki co dzień rano	Every morning you shove
Dowód osobisty pchasz	Your ID into your purse
Osiemnaście w torcie świeczek	You've blown
Już zdmuchnęłaś	Eighteen candles on your birthday cake
Mama wino, to z porzeczek	Your mother has put
Wyciągnęła	Blackcurrant wine on the table
Maturalny, rozbawiony	High school graduation tune
Przebrzmiał walczyk	Is in the past now
A na płaszczu śladu nie ma	And the school shield
Już po tarczy	Is no longer on your sleeve
Już na filmy dla dorosłych	You can go to the movies
Możesz chodzić również ty	And watch everything you want
I uparcie, choć nie lubisz	And, even though you do not like it
Papierosy możesz ćmić	You can and will smoke cigarettes

[24]Czerwone Gitary, *Nikt nam nie weźmie młodości* [Nobody will take our youth away from us], the 10th song on the album *Czerwone Gitary 2* (Muza, 1967).

[25]Czarne Golfy, *Osiemnaście lat* [Eighteen], a song from the CD attached to the book: Roman Stinzing, Andrzej Icha, *Motława-Beat. Trójmiejska scena big-beatowa lat 60-tych* [Motława-Beat. The Tri-City big-beat scene in the 1960s] (Gdańsk: Gdański Kantor Wydawniczy, 2009).

[26]Stinzing, Icha, 31.

Czasem tylko „Filipinkę”	Sometimes, when nobody can see
Czytasz, gdy nie widzi nikt	You read "Filipinka"
We wspomnieniach często wracasz	And dream about
Do tych szkolnych dobrych chwil	Those good old times at school

This vision of turning 18 is much more ambiguous, and therefore more credible. A young girl has just turned 18, as evidenced not only by certain symbols, a school shield that is no longer on her sleeve and her new ID, but also by her actions: drinking coffee, dating (seen as nothing unusual), drinking alcohol, going to the hairdresser, wearing makeup, and smoking. Interestingly, this is not a black and white naive vision: the girl smokes cigarettes but does not like it and does it for show; she also still secretly reads "Filipinka" [Philipine], although she knows that at her age it may be seen as childish.[27] It is clear that she is somewhere in-between childhood and adulthood. The lyrics show a significant transformation that took place in the 1960s in the lives of teenage girls. As Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz observes: "Attending high school was becoming the new norm. [...] For girls, growing up began to be associated with going to school or acquiring professional training and not just with entering the matrimonial market. [...] A seventeen- or eighteen-year-old young woman, previously expected to marry right away, became a teenage girl: she studied and worked, wanted to date but not to marry, not just yet."[28]

Interesting depictions of teenagerhood may also be found in the works of other less known big-beat bands. For example, in their song *Na wagary* [Playing truant][29] Minstrele [The Minstrels] from Lublin sing about teenagers ("każdy ma 16 lat" [everyone is 16]) who want to enjoy a nice day ("w dzień upalny szkoda słońca" [let's not waste a warm sunny day]) and decide to play truant ("na wagary chodzisz ty i chodzę ja" [I play truant and you do too]), so that they can forget about everyday problems ("lekarstwo na zmartwienia to wagary" [playing truant is a cure for worries]) and learn new things ("na wagarach możesz poznać cały świat" [you can learn about so many things when you're not at school]).

In the latter half of the 1960s, teenage big-beat fans could listen to songs that not only met their expectations in terms of music (following current Western trends), but also seemed to address real life problems in the lyrics. In reality, however, the image of adolescence in most big-beat lyrics was distorted. The songs of the most popular bands were educational and didactic in nature: they did not describe how young people truly behaved but rather how they should behave. A more realistic image of teenage life could be be found in the songs by less known local bands, which did not get the chance to release many LPs or appear on TV.

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[27] „Filipinka" was a magazine for teenage girls, and adult women rather tended to read magazines like "Kobieta i Życie" [Woman and Life].

[28] Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz et al., *Kobiety w Polsce 1945–1989. Nowoczesność, równouprawnienie, komunizm* [Women in Poland 1945–1989. Modernity, equality, communism] (Kraków: Universitas, 2020), 217–218.

[29] Minstrele, *Na wagary* [Playing truant], the 1st song on the album *Kudłaci przyjaciele. Nagrania archiwalne z lat 1966–1969* [Shaggy friends. Archival recordings from 1966–1969] (Kameleon Records, 2020).

"Don't be such a Beatle," or a generational conflict

Big-beat songs about and for teenagers could not ignore a very important part of the teenage life, namely the teenage music itself. This is how real self-referentiality gradually began to be more and more noticeable in big-beat works. However, these songs about foreign and Polish idols and their fans also contained some didactic themes. In 1964, during the international wave of Beatlemania, Niebiesko-Czarni recorded the song *Nie bądź taki Bitels* [Don't be such a Beatle].[30] The lyrics were written by the band's manager, Walicki (under the pseudonym Jacek Grań), and read:

„Nie bądź taki Bitels", mówi do mnie tata	"Don't be such a Beatle," my dad tells me
A mama, jak to mama: „Do fryzjera idź"	And my mom adds: "Cut your hair"
„Bo za tobą fryzjer z nożyczkami lata"	"Because the barber is chasing after you"
„Zetnij wreszcie kudły, wstydź się synu, wstydź"	"Cut your long hair, shame on you, my son"
A ja na to tacie: „Tato zacofany"	And I say to my dad: "Dad, you're old"
„Tato nawet nie wie, taka moda dziś"	"You don't even know what is fashionable"
A już co do mamy, taką mamy mamę	And as for my mom, it's just who she is
Że o Liverpoolach nie słyszała nic	She's never heard about the band form Liverpool
Zetnij, bracie, kudły i nie rób na złość mamie	Cut your long hair, listen to your mother
Wiemy, że to trudno – sami mamy mamę	We know it's hard – we have moms too
Więc gdy mama gdera, jedna rada na to	So, when your mom complaints, all you can do is
Do fryzjera, bracie, do fryzjera idź	Cut your long hair, brother
Zrób to choć dla mamy, zrób to choć dla taty	Do it for your mom, do it for your dad
Przecież z rodzicami trzeba dobrze żyć	After all, you have to get on with your parents

The very title suggests that it is a self-referential song about teenage music. Soon, however, it turns out that it was not about the Beatles, but the Polish fans of the fab four from Liverpool. Moreover, the lyrics of the song describe these young fans in a critical way, suggesting that they blindly follow Western trends ("You don't even know what is fashionable"). A symbolic expression of this obsession with the West is the long hair that the parents do not like. It was a reflection of a real generational conflict which developed in Poland in the 1960s. As Anna Pelka observes, "in the 1960s, the generation of parents watched in horror as their sons grew long hair."[31] In one of the episodes of the Polish TV series *Wojna domowa* [War at home], the parents of the young protagonist Paweł, Mr. and Mrs. Jankowski, saw their son's long hair as their parental failure.[32] And what solution to this generational conflict is offered

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[30]Niebiesko-Czarni, *Nie bądź taki Bitels* [Don't be such a Beatle], the 3rd song on the album *Czas jak rzeka* [Time like a river] (Pronit, 1964).

[31]Anna Pelka, *Teksas-land. Moda młodzieżowa w PRL* [Texas-land. Youth trends in the People's Republic of Poland] (Warsaw: Trio, 2007), 66.

[32]Jerzy Gruza, *Wojna domowa* [War at home], episode 2 *Bilet za fryzjera* [Ticket for going to the barber] (Zespół Filmowy Syrena, 1965).

in the aforementioned song by Niebiesko-Czarni? Walicki's lyrics state it directly: "Cut your long hair, listen to your mother."

A similar look at teenage music (and fashion) may also be found in other big-beat songs from the early 1960s; for example, in Czerwono-Czarni's 1963 hit song *O mnie się nie martw* [Don't you worry about me].[33] Katarzyna Sobczyk sings the lyrics written by Kazimierz Winkler; she is addressing a man who is the embodiment of all evil ("Same zmartwienia tylko przez ciebie mam" [You only make me worry]). One of the reasons for the misunderstanding between the two is that they listen to different music: "Zawsze lubiłam stare piosenki, a ty wolałeś big beat" [I've always liked the old songs and you preferred big beat]. Why would big beat be criticized in songs that were allegedly targeted at young people? If we look at the people who wrote lyrics to big-beat songs at the time, such as Zbigniew Kaszkur, Jerzy Kleyny, Franciszek Walicki, or Kazimierz Winkler, we discover that they were born in the 1920s and, as in Winkler's case, even in the late 1910s. As Walicki observed, "There was a significant age difference between me and my protégés. We belonged to different generations, we had different mentalities, we dressed differently, acted differently, even talked differently."[34] The lyricists were a generation older than most members of big-beat bands and their fans; it was difficult for them to understand the needs and problems of young people, so they described them from their own, often didactic, perspective.

"Who can resist us?," or accepting big beat

"Diluted big beat" from the first half of the 1960s, with its softened sound and didactic lyrics, brought about at least one positive effect. In the following years, the acceptance of big beat among older generations of Poles gradually increased. This trend was also reflected in the lyrics, especially in the self-referential big-beat song *Trzysta tysięcy gitar* [Three Hundred Thousand Guitars][35] from Czerwono-Czarni's first LP:

Z początku było nas bardzo mało	At first, there were very few of us
Jak dobrych rymów w piosence	Like good rhymes in a song
Chłopcy, dziewczęta – radio podało	Boys, girls – the radio reported that
Jest nas już trzysta tysięcy	There are already three hundred thousand of us
Chłopcy, dziewczęta, któż nam się oprze	Boys, girls, who can resist us
Aż trudno temu dać wiarę	It's hard to believe
Właśnie sprzedano – radio podało	The radio announced that
Trzystutysięczną gitarę	The three hundred thousandth guitar has just been sold

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[33]Czerwono-Czarni, *O mnie się nie martw* [Don't you worry about me] (Pronit, 1963).

[34]Walicki, 128–129.

[35]Czerwono-Czarni, *Trzysta tysięcy gitar* [Three Hundred Thousand Guitars], the 11th song on the album *Czerwono-Czarni* (Muza, 1966).

Trzysta tysięcy gitar nam gra	Three hundred thousand guitars are playing for us
Żyć, nie umierać	Life's great
Trzysta tysięcy gitar co dnia	Three hundred thousand guitars every day
Żyć, nie umierać	Life's great
O tych gitarach każdy z nas śnił	We all dreamed about these guitars
I forsę zbierał	And we were all saving money
Trzysta tysięcy woła od dziś	Three hundred thousand are calling since today
Żyć, nie umierać	Life's great

The lyrical subject of this song (sung by Karin Stanek) addresses Polish boys and girls, singing on their behalf: "There are already three hundred thousand of us." We soon learn that the number in question is the number of guitars sold in the People's Republic of Poland – guitar being a true symbol of the popular music of that time. The lyrics are not as critical of big beat as the other songs, and they even refer to this musical phenomenon enthusiastically – Stanek repeats in the chorus "żyć, nie umierać" [life's great].

What caused this change? Firstly, it is worth noting that Wojciech Młynarski and Krzysztof Dzikowski who wrote *Trzysta tysięcy gitar* were born at the turn of the 1930s and 1940s; so, they were much younger than, for example, Walicki. Secondly, let us read the lyrics again and analyze how they describe Polish big beat. Młynarski and Dzikowski pay attention primarily to the fact that young people are interested in playing musical instruments. And while big beat received a lot of criticism in the 1960s, getting teenagers to play music was universally praised. The musicologist Paweł Beylin believed that this was the greatest advantage of big beat: "The most important thing in all of this is that we are dealing here with an authentic mass musical movement. It is an unprecedented opportunity to spread musical knowledge; never have we witnessed anything like this in our history."[36] Wacław Panek observes that parents were also happy: "If they saw that their offspring wanted to play music after school, they readily agreed to it, because it was better to play big beat than loaf about and have no interests at all. Besides, even for the most conservative parents playing music as a form of entertainment is and has been accepted as an important part of education."[37] Thus, it is not surprising that Karin Stanek could sing about "three hundred thousand guitars" in such an enthusiastic way.

"This is us," or Czerwone Gitary's self-creation

An equally positive attitude to big beat may be found in another song from the same period performed by Czerwone Gitary [The Red Guitars]. This time, however, big-beat self-referentiality is additionally supplemented by conscious self-creation, which, as we will see, was

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[36]Paweł Beylin, *O muzyce i wokół muzyki. Felietony* [About music and around music. Essays] (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1973), 67.

[37]Panek, 43.

this band's signature strategy. I refer to the song *To właśnie my* [This is us][38] from the band's first LP also titled *To właśnie my*:

Tak, to właśnie my	Yes, this is us
Cała piątka znów przed wami	All five are standing in front of you
Tak, to właśnie my	Yes, this is us
Już zabawę zacząć czas	It's time to start having fun
Kto chce posłuchać nas	Who wants to hear us
Kto chce się bawić tak jak my	Who wants to have fun like us
Jak właśnie my	Just like us
Niech odrzuci troski na bok	Should forget about their worries
Czas nie liczy się	As time stops
Kiedy zaczynamy grać	When we start to play
Choć na kilka chwil	Just for a few moments
Zapomnijcie o zmartwieniach	Forget about your worries
Bo możecie dziś	Because today you can
Razem z nami bawić się	Have fun with us

The lyrics, symptomatically, were not written by hired lyricists but by the members of the band themselves; they describe not only the Polish big-beat scene, but also refer directly to the musicians of Czerwone Gitary. While in classical poetics identifying the lyrical subject with the author is at times incorrect, in this case such an assumption seems to be justified. The song is sung together by the whole band – the band is introducing themselves to the audience ("to właśnie my/ cała piątka znów przed wami" [This is us/ All five are standing in front of you]) and inviting them to have fun together. It is not only big beat as such that is positively described but Czerwone Gitary's music itself ("czas nie liczy się/ kiedy zaczynamy grać" [Time stops/ When we start to play]). Similar messages may also be found in the lyrics to the band's other songs: *Baw się razem z nami* [Have fun with us][39] ("kiedy jesteś smutny lub zły, nudzisz się śmiertelnie, to my rozbawimy ciebie prędko" [when you are sad or angry, you are bored to death, we will entertain you]), *Pięciu nas jest* [There's five of us][40] ("pięciu może podbić świat, czterech na gitarach gra – czy ktoś ma chęć przyłączyć się?" [five people can conquer the world, four are playing guitars – does anyone want to play with us?], *Nie zadzieraj nosa* [Don't put on airs][41] ("już za parę minut będziesz przyjacielem całej naszej piątki" [in just a few minutes you'll be friends with all five of us]).

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[38]Czerwone Gitary, *To właśnie my* [This is us], the first song on the album *To właśnie my* [This is us] (Pronit, 1966).

[39]Czerwone Gitary, *Baw się razem z nami* [Have fun with us], the 14th song on the album *Nie daj się nabrać na byle co. Nagrania archiwalne z 1965 roku* [Don't be fooled by easy tricks. Archival recordings from 1965] (Kameleon Records, 2016).

[40]Czerwone Gitary, *Pięciu nas jest* [There's five of us], the 9th song on the album *To właśnie my*.

[41]Czerwone Gitary, *Nie zadzieraj nosa* [Don't put on airs], the 3rd song on the album *To właśnie my*.

It should also be emphasized that Czerwone Gitary's recordings and live performances (the band would open their concerts with *To właśnie my*; for example, at the "Popołudnie z młodością" [Afternoon with Youth] during the 5th National Festival of Polish Song in Opole in 1967) were closely interconnected. As a result, young people who listened to the band's albums could feel as if they had attended the concert of their favorite group. It helped Czerwone Gitary to create its image even better.

"The big fight is on," or a look at big beat concerts

Simon Frith observes that when it comes to analyzing songs, "performing rites," especially during a live performance, are as important as the lyrics.[42] Therefore, at the end of this article, let us turn to big beat concerts. I shall focus on the songs by a less known band, namely Neptuny [The Neptunes] from Szczecin. In 1966, the band played at the Gliwice big beat festival, where they performed the song *Zabawa w Gliwicach* [Party in Gliwice],[43] which was probably written specifically for this event. The song was not only performed live, but also its lyrics referred to big beat concerts in an extremely self-referential (and, as will soon become clear, a bit self-ironic) fashion. Particular attention is paid here to the lines which describe the reactions of the audience:

Ktoś wspomina dawne czasy, miły skrzypiec ton	Someone remembers the old days, the sound of the violin
Nie podoba mu się zespół: „Chałturnicy, won!"	He doesn't like the band: "Go away, you're cheap!"
Drugi znowu na ten temat inne zdanie ma	Someone else has a different opinion
W ręku pała i po plecach rhythm and blues mu gra	With a baton in his hand, he's playing rhythm and blues
Z okien pryska szkło, wielka bójka trwa	He's breaking windows, the big fight is on
Dużo zwolenników zespół bigbeatowy ma	The big beat band has a lot of fans

Neptuny never achieved national fame, and the song in question only after many years found its way onto the compilation album *Ze szpulowca bigbeatowca* [The big-beat reel]. In the booklet, Mariusz Owczarek suggests that the words "w ręku pała" [a baton in his hand] refer to policemen pacifying riots during a big beat concert. It seems, however, that Neptuny are talking about a conflict among audience members, namely those who are fans of older music ("the sound of the violin") and those who love modern sounds. It is the latter (and not the police) who use force, "playing rhythm and blues on their opponents' backs" with a baton.

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[42]Simon Frith, *Facing the Music* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 107.

[43]Neptuny, *Zabawa w Gliwicach* [Party in Gliwice], the 8th song on the album *Ze szpulowca bigbeatowca* [Big beat reel](GAD Records, 2019).

This image engages in an interesting dialogue with the images of youth music concerts described in the communist press. In his article about Rhythm & Blues' concert in Mirowska Hall in Warsaw, Daniel Passent writes about "the police who illuminated the hall with floodlights, escorting the fans who had taken their shirts off, with the rest of the audience protesting vocally;" Passent was surprised that the concert was organized "in the biggest hall in Warsaw and not in the woods."[44] Ludwik Erhardt in *Ruch Muzyczny* [Musical Movement] called the audience gathered at Czerwono-Czarni's concert "a crowd of young barbarians;" while he could not recall any reprehensible antics by audience members, he lamented the very fact that such a concert was organized at the Philharmonic.[45] Polish and foreign band members were also accused of hooliganism. *Jazz* magazine conducted an opinion poll, asking ordinary Poles who the Beatles were. One of the respondents was supposed to answer: "They used to sing in the streets and somehow made their way onto the radio. I know, because before the war we also had some street musicians, however, they weren't hooligans."[46]

The lyrics to big-beat songs usually did not address such allegations. Therefore, the evocative and, at the same time, ironic nature of *Zabawa w Gliwicach*, especially considering Neptuny's rather heavy guitar sound, confirms the thesis that local less known big-beat bands show this musical phenomenon in a different light, one that cannot be found in the songs written and performed by the most popular big-beat bands signed by the Polish national record label Polskie Nagrania [Polish Records].[47]

"We will not go down in history," or the decline of the big beat scene

The turn of the 1960s and 1970s was both a period of interesting musical explorations and, unfortunately, the beginning of the end of big beat in Poland. Katarzyna Gärtner's *Msza beatowa "Pan przyjacielem moim"* [The Beat Mass "The Lord is my friend"], performed first by Trapiści [The Trappists] and then by Czerwono-Czarni, successfully combined the form of the Mass with big-beat sound. Skaldowie experimented with the folk (Goral) music of Podhale and classical music, the best example of which is the song *Krywaniu, Krywaniu* which opens the album *Krywań, Krywań*.[48] The so-called "awangarda beatowa" [big-beat avantgarde] bands, in turn, experimented with psychedelic rock, playing long compositions inspired by the hippie movement, in which they tried to answer existential questions about man's place in the world, such as, for example, in *Pytanie czy hasło* [A question or a slogan] by Romuald i Roman [Romuald and Roman]. They also allusively referred to the use of drugs,

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[44]Daniel Passent, "A rachunki odrobione?" [Did you do your math homework?], *Polityka* 39 (1959): 2.

[45]Ludwik Erhardt, "Niesmaczny przekładaniec" [Tasteless medley], *Ruch Muzyczny* 12 (1963): 7.

[46]Tadeusz Matulewicz, "Wyniki prywatnej ankietki" [Results of a private opinion poll], *Jazz* 4 (1966): 7.

[47]More on the benefits of researching lesser-known local big-beat groups cf. Patryk Mamczur, "Big beat z domów kultury. PRL-owski garage rock lat 60." [Big beat from community centers. Garage rock in the People's Republic of Poland in the 1960s], *Piosenka. Rocznik kulturalny* 8 (2020): 186–195.

[48]Kriváň is a mountain in the High Tatras, Slovakia (translator's note).

as, for example, in Romuald i Roman's *Towarowy rusza do Indii* [Train rides to India], whose title refers to Tri, a drug popular among Polish hippies.[49]

At the same time, criticism of big beat music intensified in the press. In 1969, in *Jazz* magazine, Lech Terpiłowski wrote about the "overbearing dictates of young people, which set the tone for" the nation's musical interests.[50] In 1970, Mirosław Dąbrowski, the head of programming of Polish Radio, admitted that the music of big-beat bands was "broadcast on the radio with too much tolerance" and that "the choice of songs should be better co-ordinated," expressing the hope that "a stricter selection would allow more more space for songs from other people's democratic republics" (as "everyone knows that these songs are very nice").[51] At the 7th Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party in November 1972, Edward Gierek concluded that "a socialist state cannot be neutral as regards content targeted at our youth, as regards anything that shapes the worldview and ideological attitudes of young people."[52]

On February 28, 1973, Polish Radio broadcast the last program prepared at the Młodzieżowe Studio "Rytm" [Teenage Studio "Rhythm"], which played a huge role in the big beat scene, and the studio itself was closed. In March 1973, the last of the so-called big-beat avant-garde festivals in Kalisz took place (namely the III Festiwal Młodzieżowej Muzyki Współczesnej [3rd Contemporary Teenage Music Festival]). On the Radio and Television Committee, Włodzimierz Sokorski, who was a fan of big beat, was replaced as chairman by Maciej Szczepański, and the Department of Theater, Music and Stage was established at the Ministry of Culture and Art in order to control the popular music scene even more closely. As Andrzej Korzyński concluded years later, "a completely different model of the song became dominant then. […] You had to make sure that the miners, steel workers and farm workers were happy; you had to march in step and wave your hands. Songs for teenagers were a problem."[53] In 1973, the big-beat scene *de facto* ceased to exist.

The feeling of the impending end may be found in the last self-referential big-beat song which I will briefly analyze in this article, namely *Nie przejdziemy do historii* [We will not go down in history][54] by Krzysztof Klenczon and his band Trzy Korony[55] [Three Crowns] (founded after he left Czerwone Gitary):

[49]Tri, containing trichloroethylene, was inhaled — somehow resembling "sniffing glue".

[50]Lech Terpiłowski, "Co nam zostanie z tamtych lat?" [What's left from the good old days?], *Jazz* (3 (1969): 9.

[51]"Mniej giełd i plebiscytów w radio" [Fewer popularity contests on the radio], *Jazz* 9 (1970): 16.

[52] Edward Gierek, *Jesteście wielką szansą. Wybór przemówień 1971–1972* [You are our future. Selection of speeches 1971–1972] (Warsaw: Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1978), 55; quote after: Bogusław Tracz, "Powstrzymać dywersję moralną Zachodu. Partia komunistyczna wobec przemian kultury młodzieżowej w Polsce lat 60. i 70. XX wieku" [Stop the moral subversion of the West. The communist party and the changes in youth culture in Poland in the 1960s and 1970s], in: *To idzie młodość. Młodzież w ideologii i praktyce komunizmu* [This is youth. Youth in communist ideology and policies], ed. Dariusz Magier (Lublin – Radzyń Podlaski: Libra, 2016), 435.

[53]Maria Szabłowska, *Cały ten big beat* (Łódź: Opus, 1993), 18–19.

[54]Krzysztof Klenczon and Trzy Korony, *Nie przejdziemy do historii* [We will not go down in history] the 6th song on the album *Krzysztof Klenczon i Trzy Korony* (Pronit, 1971).

[55]Trzy Korony is a summit in the Pieniny Mountains, Poland.

Nie przejdziemy do historii	We will not go down in history
Szumni jak w piosenkach	Pompous as in songs
Nie będziemy stali w glorii	We will not be glorified
Z gitarami w rękach	With guitars in our hands
Rozedrgane nasze cienie	Yellow dust will cover
Żółty kurz otuli	Our trembling shadows
Jak toczące się kamienie	Like rolling stones
Z niebotycznej góry	From a sky-high mountain
Nie przejdziemy do historii	We will not go down in history
I literatury	And in literature
Nie będziemy stali strojni	We will not be made
W brązy i marmury	Into bronze or marble statues
Świat się nagle jak kołyska	The world will suddenly rock
Wokół zakolebie	Like a cradle
I znajdziemy naszą przystań	And we'll find our haven
Nim zgubimy siebie	Before we lose ourselves

The lyrics were written by Andrzej Kuryła (who also wrote songs for Romuald i Roman), who imbued them with interesting references to contemporary rock music. "Rolling stones" is a fairly obvious reference to the Rolling Stones, and in the original version the second verse ended with the words "i znajdziemy cichą przystań w diamentowym niebie" [and we will find a quiet haven in the diamond sky], which, in turn, was supposed to be a reference to The Beatles' *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*. Above all, however, the song in question envisions the impending end of an era in popular music and in the lives of artists. Klenczon sings that he and others like him "will not go down in history and literature" – it is an anti-manifesto of the big-beat generation, apparently convinced that their work would not withstand the test of time. Particular attention should also be paid to the lines "nie będziemy stali strojni w brązy i marmury" [we will not be carved into bronze or marble statues]. The fact that Klenczon sings that no one will erect a monument to honor him in a very interesting way corresponds to one of the oldest known manifestations of self-referentiality in literature, i.e., Horace's poem from 23BC and his conviction that he built "a monument more lasting than bronze."[56] This observation may act as a framing device for this article. And although in the end Klenczon, like other stars of the big beat scene, found a prominent place in the history of Polish popular music, the song *Nie przejdziemy do historii* remains a fascinating testimony to the decline of Polish big beat at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s.

Conclusion

The above analysis, concerning over a dozen selected big-beat songs, draws attention to an interesting finding. Songs, whether recorded live or in the studio, have long been the main subject of research for popular music studies scholars but researchers who want to trace the

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[56]Odes III: XXX, translated by Sarah Powell.

reception of music in society still refer to other sources: articles, press releases, reviews, interviews. Meanwhile, as can be seen, it is also worth examining the lyrics, as artists, in a clearly self-referential way, address in them themselves, their music and their fans.

While this is not a new observation, since the self-referential aspect of other, especially foreign, performers has already been described, the fact that such a high level of self-awareness may be found in Polish big-beat songs is somewhat surprising. This proves that although the big beat scene appeared almost out of the blue and disappeared just as quickly, the people who created it felt that big beat was a really important phenomenon in the wider musical history of the People's Republic of Poland.

Respectively, an in-depth analysis of the lyrics shows that the image of adolescence presented in them is distorted, and the opinions about big beat music are not as positive as one might expect, especially when compared to the lyrics of American or British songs from the same period. This is due to the fact that although big beat was originally music for teenagers, it was subject to strict control by adults. As Joanna Sadowska writes, "The People's Republic of Poland was a kind of gerontocracy."[57] Decision-makers who controlled national cultural policies, managers, as well as composers and songwriters were, in most cases, people one or even two generations older than big beat fans and band members. That is why songs about the lives of teenagers often turned out to be didactic. The situation changed somewhat in the latter half of the 1960s, when younger people, including band members, began to write lyrics, but, as we know, the big beat scene *de facto* ceased to exist in the early 1970s.

This notwithstanding, what Krzysztof Klenczon sang about did not come true and big beat ultimately went down in history. Although our knowledge about big beat is still far from complete, as new archival recordings are still being found and research on this genre began to be conducted only recently, we can say that the belief in the unique nature of big beat self-referentially expressed by some artists back in the 1960s and 1970s turned out to be absolutely true in retrospect.

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

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[57] Joanna Sadowska, "Młodzież polska lat 60. i 70. Próba charakterystyki postaw, dążeń, obszarów zainteresowań i aktywności" [Polish youth in the 1960s and the 1970s. A study of attitudes, aspirations, areas of interest and activities], *Społeczeństwo PRL. Historia, kultura, pamięć* [The society of the Polish People's Republic. History, culture, memory], vol. 1, ed. Stanisław Jankowiak (Poznań: Instytut Historii UAM, 2011), 155.

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– – –. *Sweet Little Sixteen*. The 3rd song on the album *Elevator Rock*. Pronit, 1961.

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KEYWORDS

big beat

R O C K

p o p u l a r   m u s i c

ABSTRACT:

The author focuses on Polish big-beat music from the 1960s and early 1970s. He analyzes the lyrics of selected songs from that period, pointing to their self-referential nature and explaining how big beat performers described their fans, themselves, and teenage music in their songs. Songs by both popular and less known local bands are analyzed. The analysis functions in a broader social and political context, and the study of lyrics is further supplemented with quotations from the contemporary press and statements by politicians, journalists, and managers. The author shows that the self-referentiality present in the lyrics of big-beat songs proves that Polish artists in the 1960s and early 1970s were aware of their lyrical and musical strategies.

history of the People's Republic of Poland

Polish music

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Mise en Abyme
in Works by Pablopavo
(Paweł Sołtys)

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Blurred lines

Over the years *mise en abyme* has attracted a lot of scholarly attention as a literary phe-
nomenon[1], which is reflected in the large body of literature devoted to it, and in many per-

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[1] Even a brief literature review gives an idea of the importance of the topic. There is a consensus that it was Artur
Sandauer who introduced this topic in Poland and elaborated on it in three texts, published in 1947, 1956,
1967, respectively: *Konstruktywny nihilism* [Constructive nihilism], *O ewolucji sztuki narracyjnej w XX wieku*
[On the evolution of narrative art in the 20th century] and *Samobójstwo Mitrydatesa* [Mithridates's suicide]
(in the present work: Artur Sandauer, *Zebrane pisma krytyczne. T. 1, T. 2* [Collected critical essays], Warszawa:
Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981). Other scholars elaborate on this topic further, such as Michał
Głowiński, „Powieść jako metodologia powieści" [Novel as a novel methodology], in: *Intertekstualność, groteska,
parabola: szkice ogólne i interpretacje* [Intertextuality, grotesque, parable: general sketches and interpretations]
(Kraków: Universitas, 2000), 122–154; Maria Podraza-Kwiatkowska, *U źródeł dwudziestowiecznego
autotematyzmu: ze studiów nad poezją okresu Młodej Polski* [At the source of twentieth-century *mise en abyme*:
studies in the poetry of Young Poland] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1974); Aleksander
Labuda, „O funkcjach narracji autotematycznej" [On the functions of autothematic narrative], *Literaria.
Teoria literatury – Metodologia – Kultura – Humanistyka* [Literaria. Literary theory – Methodology – Culture –
Humanities], 1970, 73–111; Ewa Szary-Matywiecka, „Autotematyzm" [*Mise en abyme*], in: *Słownik literatury
polskiej XX wieku* [Dictionary of twentieth-century Polish literature] (Warszawa: Zakład Narodowy im.
Ossolińskich, 1995); Dariusz Brzostek, Anna Skubaczewska-Pniewska, Andrzej Stoff, *Poezja świadoma siebie:
interpretacje wierszy autotematycznych* [Self-aware poetry: interpretatios of autothematic poems] (Toruń:
Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2009); Bogumiła Kaniewska, „Metatekstowy sposób bycia" [Matatextual way of
being], *Teksty Drugie: teoria literatury, krytyka, interpretacja* [literary theory, criticism, interpretation] 5, No 41
(1996): 20–33; Joanna Grądziel-Wójcik, „Perpetuum mobile, czyli kilka uwag o autotematyzmie" [Perpetuum
mobile, i.e. some remarks on *mise en abyme*], *Forum Poetyki* [Forum of Poetics] 2 (2015): 108–119; Andrzej
Niewiadomski, *Światy z jawnych słów i kwiatów ukrytych: o refleksji metapoetyckiej w nowoczesnej poezji polskiej*
[Worlds of lucid dreamingand hidden flowers: on metapoetic reflection in modern Polish poetry] (Lublin:
Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2010); Agnieszka Waligóra, ed., *Nowy autotematyzm? Metarefleksja we współczesnej
humanistyce* [New *mise en abyme*? Metareflection in modern humanities] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe
UAM, 2021). It should be stressed that most scholarly disputes on *mise en abyme* focus on its presence in prose
rather than in poetry.

spectives on how to conceptualize and understand this notion. The fact that it has several definitions makes it rather broad and vague, although scholars are trying to establish an appropriate framework for it. Joanna Grądziel-Wójcik outlines how scholars approach this manifestation of self-reflected literature: considered narrowly, *mise en abyme* refers to texts highlighting the creative process behind them, but in a broader meaning, it applies to any text discussing the role of literature and authors, as well as poems and novels thematizing literary programs contained within them[2]. Grądziel-Wójcik points out to the fact that the field in question is broad:

> Understood narrowly, autothematic texts focus on themselves, they are interested in their own language, reveal their own creative process. Understood broadly – these are texts discussing literature in general, their plot is set in a literary-artistic environment, with a poet or novelist presenting their literary program as the protagonist. Hence, there is *mise en abyme sensu largo* – "literature-thematism", distancing itself from literature and its forms, traditions, and conventions, openly discussing literature, authors and culture, and *mise en abyme sensu stricto* – focusing on a given literary work or a text within text. Lines between *mise en abyme* and related notions, such as metatextuality, self-reflection, and intertextuality remain blurred[3].

There is relatively little available literature on the question of *mise en abyme* in songs[4], which is due to the fact that songs (or their textual layer, to be precise) are not often analyzed and interpreted from the perspective of literary studies (however, admittedly there are not that many songs which deserve such an approach). Nonetheless, despite the fact that *mise en abyme* in lyrics is a rich, interesting phenomenon, thus far it has not attracted the scholarly attention it deserves. Unfortunately, compiling a comprehensive list of the numerous, fascinating examples of autothematic devices, both historical and modern, is beyond the scope of the present paper, which focuses on lyrics in selected songs by just one author.

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[2] Grądziel-Wójcik, 113.

[3] Grądziel-Wójcik, 113.

[4] There are very few studies devoted to this topic. Section "2. Ironiczni romantycy w kapturach" [Ironic romantics in hoodies] of chapter III "Hip-hopowe konwencje poetyckie" [Hip hop poetic conventions] in: Tomasz Florczyk, *Rap to nie zabawa już: obrzeża genologii, czyli gatunki literackie obecne w tekstach polskich twórców hip-hopowych* [Rap is no longer fun: outskirts of genology, i.e. literary genres in Polish hip-hop] (Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Humanistyczno-Przyrodniczego im. Jana Długosza, 2020). This is a thorough attempt at applying literary studies to the analysis of (two) rap texts. However, it should be stressed that the question of *mise en abyme* in rap (in a close relationship with autobiographism understood in a specific way) is a rich topic which deserves scholarly attention. *Mise en abyme* in a song is discussed in Jerzy Wiśniewski, "Piosenka o piosence według Jerzego Wasowskiego i Jeremiego Przybory" [A song about a song according to Jerzy Wasowski and Jeremi Przybora], *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Litteraria Polonica* 16 (b.d.): 92–109. There is also a chapter "A ja piszę i piszę…, czyli o wypowiedziach autotematycznych" [And I write and write… on autothematic texts], in: Piotr Derlatka, *Poeci piosenki* [Song poets] *1956–1989: Agnieszka Osiecka, Jeremi Przybora, Wojciech Młynarski i Jonasz Kofta* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2012), 27–61, and a paper by Grzegorz Piotrowski, „Teatr piosenki" [Theater of song], *Teksty Drugie: teoria literatury, krytyka, interpretacje* 4 (2014): 357–379. There are mentions in papers devoted to some broader issues (Kamil Dźwinel, "Od sensu wiersza do sensu piosenki" [From the meaning of a poem to the meaning of a song], *Piosenka: rocznik kulturalny* [Song: a cultural yearly] [2015]: 17–23) or reviews (Paweł Tański, "Czyste ognisko nieustającego. «Piosenki kolonistów» Grzegorza Kaźmierczaka i Variete" [A clean bonfire of the incessant. «Colonists' songs» by Grzegorz Kaźmierczak and Variete], *Piosenka: rocznik kulturalny* [Song. A cultural yearly] [2016]: 62–74).

Pablopavo is a songwriter[5] born in 1978. His songs have an original style, rooted in reggae, raggamuffin, dub, dancehall (I list these genres here in order to highlight how far we are from traditionally understood sung poetry, the literary song, and other similar styles). Originally a soloist, he also performs with a band– since 2009 most often as Pablopavo i Ludziki. The songs analyzed and referred to here come from the following albums: *Telehon* (2009), *10 piosenek* [10 songs] (2011), *Głodne kawałki* [A song and dance] (2011), *Polor* [Polish] (2014), *Tylko* [Only] (2014), *Wir* [Whirl] (2015), *Ladinola* (2017), *Marginal* (2018), *Wszystkie nerwowe piosenki* [All the nervous songs] (2020)[6]. Writing under his real name (Paweł Sołtys), he is also an acclaimed author of fiction (collections of short stories *Mikrotyki*[7] and *Nieradość*[8] [Non-joy]) for which he received Nagroda Literacka Gdynia [Gdynia literary award], and was nominated to the "Nike" award, both in 2018. He lives in Warsaw, which is often manifested in his works, showing blurred lines between actors in artistic communication (author – narrator – protagonist).

This song is made of this

Piosenka ze śmieci [A song made of garbage] from *Telehon* is an excellent example of a metatextual device which uses an apparent reference to the structure of lyrics. The song reveals Pablopavo's strong anti-aesthetic inclinations. The chorus plays a significant role here; it is not only an interval between two stanzas, but also the opening and closing of the song, introducing its theme and providing a framework for specific examples which comprise the lyrics:

> And this song is made of this city of waste
> Of garbage, rubble, debris of an accident
> It is made of what is no longer needed
> Of the forbidden, the discarded, the forgotten[9].

The lyrics remind one of the so-called "poetry of garbage" – a term used by Artur Sandauer in reference to the work of Miron Białoszewski, another Warsaw poet[10]. Although in terms of poetics Pablopavo's work has little in common with the linguistic garbage of Białoszewski's poetry, when it comes to turpistic imaging, seeking inspiration outside classical aesthetics (especially in song), Pablopavo's coherence is noteworthy.

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[5] I use the foreign term "songwriter" both because it is rather common in Polish and for want of a Polish equivalent (the same goes for the names of music genres).

[6] All the lyrics cited here are based on the CD covers of the respective albums. In some cases typos and other minor editing errors had to be corrected.

[7] Paweł Sołtys, *Mikrotyki* (Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2018).

[8] Paweł Sołtys, *Nieradość* (Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2019).

[9] "A ta piosenka jest zrobiona z tego miasta odpadków / Ze śmieci, gruzów, kawałków pozostałych po wypadku / A ta piosenka jest zrobiona z tego, co już niepotrzebne / Z opuszczonego, wyrzuconego, zapomnianego bezwiednie."

[10] Artur Sandauer, „Poezja rupieci. (Rzecz o Mironie Białoszewskim)" [Poetry of garbage. (On Miron Białoszewski), in: *Zebrane pisma krytyczne. T. 1* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981), 365–398.

The description of the apparent "material" of the song leads to a characterization of a highly imperfect reality. The expression "this song is made" first of all highlights an everyday aspect of life, and secondly, it foreshadows what is about to happen in terms of literature, what is apparently being described. Ultimately it is the description of "subparts" that becomes the content of the song. The seemingly defined form (material) becomes the proper, single message. The autothematic device is a concept which makes the description of a vision of reality more attractive by making it more complex. Additionally, *mise en abyme* is also suggested here by phrases opening each line: "The first stanza is made of words which [...]"[11], "The second stanza is made of what [...]"[12], "The third one is made of words which [...]"[13]. Each part is based on a different experience; the first one uses what one could hear in the street (and in this particular case – what we do not hear in the reality beyond the text):

> [...] of words which MPs and councilmen
> Throw out of their speeches, for they would be too close to the truth
> Of meaningful grunts, when cameras are off
> Of unspoken toasts behind closed doors
> Here are all the swearwords which do not make it on screen[14].

The lyrical I thus brings to life what normally stays outside of social circulation in our everyday practice (and undeservedly so). Materializing words (and later – personifying them: "Words holy fools"[15]), sounds, and gestures reminds us of their existence; it also reproaches those who marginalize them. The message of the song consists of a record of the elements constructing it, which is essentially what the autothematic device is about here.

The second part describes what we can see (at some point – also what we can smell), but would rather not; what should not exist in public:

> The second stanza is made of what the city has consumed
> Of crumbles, foil, cigarette buds tossed on the ground
> It smells of nicotine and greenish meat
> It smells of a diver searching for aluminum in a dumpster
> Of pieces of a wall unit thrown away in the dark
> Because it did not match Ikea furniture[16]

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[11] "Pierwsza zwrotka jest ze słów, które [...]".

[12] "Druga zwrotka jest z tego, co [...]".

[13] "Trzecia jest ze słów, które [...]".

[14] "[...] ze słów, które posłowie i radni / Wyrzucają z przemówień, bo byłyby niebezpiecznie blisko prawdy / Z chrząknięć znaczących, kiedy kamery gasną / Z niewypowiedzianych, zakulisowych toastów / Tu są wszystkie przekleństwa, które nie wchodzą na wizję."

[15] "Słowa jurodiwe słowa święte głupki".

[16] "Druga zwrotka jest z tego, co to miasto nie przeżre / Z okruchów, folii i petów rzuconych na zebrę / Pachnie nikotyną i zielonkawym mięsem / Wonią nurka, który w śmietniku za aluminium węszy / Z kawałków meblościanki wyniesionej po ciemku / Bo przy meblach z Ikei była nie na miejscu."

Although this stanza is the most literal realization of the song's title, the objects described here hide real people's drama, pettiness, bad social characteristics.

The third stanza is predominantly based on emotions, using different senses and experiences. Its lines create a reality, again replacing a description of a given reality with a description of the linguistic and semiotic matter:

> The third stanza is made of words which are worn out after years
> Of "I love you" said to the girl who married your brother
> Of a quickly fading smile, of a traffic cop
> When he skillfully hides a two-hundred banknote in his pocket
> Of gunshots that killed forgotten heroes of this city[17]

The hopeless atmosphere is completed by a stylistic device which makes a clear punch line impossible. This can be observed in the last two lines of the final stanza:

> Out of meetings at the rotunda, which gave no results
> No money was made, or a date ended quickly[18]

Piosenka ze śmieci is just one example of an autothematic title; in fact all genre expressions which point out to the fact that we are dealing with a form of art (in this case – a song) should be considered as such[19]. *Dancingowa piosenka miłosna* [A dancing love song], *Wszystkie nerwowe piosenki* [All nervous songs], *To jest piosenka o różnych rzeczach* [This is a song about various things], as well as *Głodne kawałki* [A song and dance] or *Kołysanka* [Lullaby] are some more examples of such expressions. Such titles highlight the distance between the content, realization, and genre conventions. The song *Kołysanka* from *Tylko* is an example; the initial declaration "My lullaby is made of *lubuski* gin"[20] introduces us to a wobbly story, which lacks a regular rhythm, peace and harmony – features we would normally expect from a lullaby. In the course of the text the story materializes itself, subjectifying the genre; in lieu of a lullaby "about something / someone", the lullaby itself becomes the protagonist in a song dedicated to fear and sadness.

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[17]"Trzecia zwrotka jest ze słów, które zużyły się w latach / Z „kocham Cię" do dziewczyny, co wyszła za brata / Z uśmiechu, co znika szybko, policjanta z drogówki / Kiedy wyuczonym ruchem chowa do kielni dwie stówki / Ze strzałów, co zabiły zapomnianych bohaterów miasta."

[18] "Ze spotkań pod rotundą, z których nic nigdy nie wyszło / Nikt nie zarobił, albo randka skończyła się szybko."

[19]Grzegorz Piotrowski opposes such an understanding of *mise en abyme*, explaining that "Because I understand this notion narrowly, I do not consider songs which highlight singing in general (*Śpiewam pod gołym niebem* [I sing in the open air], name their genre (*Piosenka o mojej Warszawie* [A song about my Warsaw], or signal the characterization of their genre as a pretext or in a pseudo-poetic way (*Nie wierzę piosence* [I do not believe a song] as autothematic (Piotrowski, „Teatr piosenki" [Song theater], 364–365). All such titles ("A song about...") used consciously are quite clearly autothematic, introducing some distance to the genre with irony or auto-irony. Translating such a game into literature or (more broadly) culture, it is enough to imagine analogous titles from literature, film, etc., such as: "A novel about...", "A short story about...", "A film about...", "A play about...", "A picture showing...".

[20]"Moja kołysanka jest z lubuskiego ginu".

Without you I would just be bluntly silent

Introductions to albums, in which the author explains their contents, are another example of *mise en abyme* in Pablopavo's works. *Intro* to *Telehom* resembles a "song theater" in which subsequent parts of a show are explained. Songs which open other albums are also made to sound unpretentiously anachronistic: *Rozpoczęcie* [Opening] (*10 piosenek*), *Wstęp* [Introduction] (*Wir*), *Marginal Intro* (*Marginal*). Each displays a slightly different form and scale of *mise en abyme*; however, they all share a clear intention to introduce the material which follows them, creating a compositional opening.

Another interesting example of *mise en abyme* can be found in the song *10 piosenek* [10 songs], which is tenth on the list of 12 songs comprising the album under the same title. The discrepancy between the number of songs and the title can be explained with the presence of the autothematic *Rozpoczęcie* [Opening] and the final *Ballada o Okrzei* [Ballad of Okrzeja] – the latter is a traditional street ballad, which has been performed (among others) by Stanisław Grzesiuk; Pablopavo defined it as "kowerniekower"[21] [covernoncover].

In the song *10 piosenek*, *mise en abyme* concerns the whole album, but it is also a jocular self-commentary, and (more generally) an ironic description of the relationship between the artist and his audience. The lyrics list predict reasons why each song on the album may fail – with the song also being part of this album. Although *10 piosenek* is clearly pessimistic, the tone is softened by its humorous form. Here are the problems listed in the song:

> The first song will be consumed by taxes [...]
> The second one will be collected by the infallible social insurance [...]
> The third one will be taken by illegal copying [...]
> The fourth one will not be accepted by radio stations / because someone used the wrong word [...]
> The fifth song will be killed by distribution [...]
> The sixth is just mediocre [...]
> The seventh song will be carried away in a plastic bag / by a black wind which came for me [...]
> The eighth will be confiscated by the reggae police / or the city guard of real hip-hop
> The ninth will flow down Karowa to the river / with another barrel like urban sewage [...][22]

As each verse develops, various unpleasant situations are revealed in which the author finds himself. Numbers three and eight are significant, as this is where the lyrical I deals with difficult audiences. Illegal copying refers to copying CDs without observing copyrights; the song was written at a time when artists fought to educate their fans that illegal copying deprived

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[21]"Kower" is a jocular Polish version of the word *cover*.

[22]"Po pierwszą piosenkę przyjdzie skarbówka [...] Po drugą się zgłosi ZUS niezawodny [...] Po trzecią przyjdą darmowe łapki [...] Czwarta piosenka przepadnie w radio / boś użył dwa słowa, których nie warto [...] Piątą piosenkę załatwi dystrybucja [...] Szósta była marna sama po prostu [...] Siódmą porwie na plastykowej torbie / czarny wiatr, który przyleciał po mnie [...] Ósmą zawini reggae policja / albo straż miejska prawdziwego hip-hopu [...]Dziewiąta spłynie Karową do rzeki / z kolejną lufą jak miasta ścieki [...]."

them of income[23]. The lyrical I uses irony here, personifying a dishonest fan whose demands of the artist unmask him as a primitive individual who *de facto* limits the artist's freedom. In the stanza devoted to the eighth song, "the reggae police" and "the city guard of real hip hop" are two ironic expressions for uncritical fans of these two music genres restricted by limitations imposed by the two subcultures; Pablopavo has often been accused of commercialization and diverging from "proper" music genres.

The final, tenth song is the theme of the last stanza:

> The tenth one I am giving to you with no regrets,
> I am a question, you are the answer
> For there would be no song
> Without you I would just be bluntly silent[24].

The identity of the addressee of this stanza remains unknown. Is it a love confession? This underdetermination allows the opening of yet another interpretative context. Anyone able to identify with the lyrical I can think that they are the addressee – someone who understands that expectations of an artist are wrong, as opposed to the subculture "militia"[25].

Ladinola, a song from the 2017 album under the same title, is another one which directly addresses the listener. It opens the album and it thus can effectively function as an introduction. The euphonic title – a neologism – is also a melodious chorus, and together with the musical layer it co-creates an atmosphere of unpretentious entertainment, which is reflected in the lyrics. The lyrical I first points out potential situations of reception, forming a thread of understanding between them:

> and if you are listening to this on a bus
> look out of the window, look at people
> and if you are listening to it at a party, which I hope you are,
> dance with the most bored girl
> and if you are a girl, than obviously – *vice versa*
> [...]
> and if you are cycling
> [...]

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[23]The heated argument between Kazik Staszewski and his fans over this issue is probably the best known example. Grabaż (Krzysztof Grabowski, leader of two bands – Pidżama Porno and Strachy na Lachy) wrote a song entitled *I Can't Get No Gratisfaction* about this problem around the same time when Pablopavo wrote his *10 piosenek*. However, the rise of streaming services has solved it to a large extent. Additionally, CDs have lost their market significance, and musicians mostly make money performing live.

[24]"Dziesiątą bez żalu oddaję Tobie, / ja jestem pytanie Ty jesteś odpowiedź, / bo nie byłoby piosenki żadnej / bez Ciebie bym tylko milczał dosadnie."

[25]Autobiographism constitutes an important element in the works of Pablopavo, mostly as a background for considerations regarding artistic work – his own, in terms of a given genre, the world of pop culture, and other artistic phenomena. However, this topic is beyond the scope of this paper.

> and if nothing, nothing sticks together in your life
> I hope at least these sounds will
> [...][26]

The next stanza contains clear autobiographical signals which facilitate an even more direct relationship:

> and if you are roughly my age
> drink a toast to Otokar Balcy
> and if those are not your first *Ludziki*
> then you know that I inflect the word *palce* [fingers] wrong[27].

Here the author discards his mask and addresses the audience as a specific, relatable individual, who was born in the 1970s and watched animated movies made by a Bielsko-Biała studio [*Ludziki*]. Otokar Balcy was the sound operator for them – everyone who grew up in the 1970s knows his characteristic sound. The improper inflection of the word *palce* is another autothematic game – it is an intentional inflectional error which appears in almost every album by Pablopavo.

Ladinola was preceded by two albums which were considered more serious and poetic than entertaining (*Tylko* and *Wir*). Perhaps he wanted to challenge this trend by releasing an album which was much lighter, highlighting this direction in the declaration which appears in the lyrics:

> and if I am to be a bit honest
> music is fun, but everyone likes a different kind[28].

This is a clear signal which also serves as an ironic self-commentary regarding the significance of writing songs and audiences' expectations of artists.

The eighth song in *Ladinola* is yet another interesting example of *mise en abyme*. This time reflection is inspired by a concert, i.e. another important aspect of being a musician – we should bear in mind that songs involve not just lyrics and music, but also performing live, in front of an audience, which creates an opportunity for a meeting and mutual impact of the energy of the artist and of the audience. A concert hall is a meeting place for people's lives, thoughts, emotions, all focused around the artist and their work. This is the theme of the song about

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[26] "a jeśli słuchasz tego teraz w autobusie / popatrz przez okno, albo popatrz na ludzi / a jeśli słuchasz, czego życzę, na imprezie / zatańcz z dziewczyną, która się najbardziej nudzi / a jeśli jesteś dziewczyną to wiadomo, na odwrót [...] / a jeśli jedziesz sobie na rowerze [...] / a jeśli nic, nic się nie klei / niech się lepią chociaż do ciebie te dźwięki [...]."

[27] "a jeśli jesteś mój rocznik mniej więcej / wychyl kieliszek za Otokara Balcy / a jeśli to nie pierwsze twe Ludziki / to wiesz, że robię błędy w odmianie palcy."

[28] "a jeśli w ogóle mam być odrobinę szczery / muzyka to rozrywka tylko każdy inną lubi."

creating an ambiguous network of connections between the lyrical I of the text and its pro-
tagonists. The nature of this relationship is revealed at the very beginning:

> I am this guy who came for my concert
> but they called and he is gone[29].

Such a multiplication of the identity of the lyrical I leads to presenting different characters
in the text (including non-human ones). The following line continues: "I am that girl who
came here for him / and is looking around"[30]. Thanks to such snapshots we learn about hu-
man emotions, experiences that – though ambiguous due to their brevity – are clear enough
to allow us to imagine mini psychological portraits of the protagonists and their lives. Later
in the text the lyrical I impersonates different people, appearing as two characters: one
describes himself in the first person ("I am a sly guy sneering at the bar"[31]), and one is de-
scribed in the third person ("He is checking his phone to see if he has any missed calls / No,
no matter how hard he looks"[32]); he is "a guy standing on the side of the scene"[33], who "is
droning one song after another / somewhat ashamed that he knows them by heart / he is
in his forties, with cigarettes and his fist in his pocket"[34]. Interestingly, he also personifies
phenomena: "I am a flash of the barmaid's cleavage / Blinding a husband / Ordering a mojito
for his wife"[35]. The wife "is thinking about the little one / Whether she is already asleep /
Whether her grandmother's hands still feel like a mother's hands / An iron, a washing ma-
chine, a knife"[36].

Towards the end there is another example of *mise en abyme* concerning performing live, used
in order to create an atmosphere of subtle eroticism, a game of senses and omnipresent mu-
sicality:

> I am the bass which flows through the hall like a wave
> Crushing against hips and stomachs
> I wash away heartbeats and yelled whispers
> And return to the stage like blues left at the bottom of a bottle[37].

The psychological complexity of the relationships in the song is completed in the final stan-
za. It is about a kid who is scared of the crowd; importantly, the lyrical I knows that this

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[29]"Jestem tym chłopakiem który przyszedł na mój koncert / Ale zadzwonili i poszedł już gdzieś."

[30]"Jestem tą dziewczyną co przyszła tu dla niego i / Rozgląda się".

[31]"Jestem cwaniakiem szydzącym przy barze".

[32]"Sprawdza w telefonie czy są nieodebrane / Nie ma, choćby jeszcze mocniej patrzył".

[33]"facetem, stojącym z boku sceny".

[34]"cedzi przez zęby za tekstem tekst / Trochę mu wstyd, że zna wszystko na pamięć / jest po czterdziestce,
w kieszeni ma fajki i pięść".

[35]"Jestem błyskiem dekoltu barmanki / Od którego ślepnie mąż / Biorący dla żony mojito".

[36]"myśli o małej / Czy zasnęła już / Czy ręce babki są jeszcze matczyne / Żelazko, pralka, nóż".

[37]"Jestem basem, który płynie po sali jak fala / Opływam każde biodra i każdy brzuch / Lepię bicie serc
i wykrzyczane szepty / Wracam na scenę jak niedopity blues."

memory "will come back unexpectedly / in fifteen years, awakened by a shot of rum"[38]. The performing artist who is the *alter ego* of the author of the song, is also an omniscient narrator: his story about a concert and identifying himself with his audience is something more than just *mise en abyme*: it is a confession of closeness, compassion, evanescent unity which happens during a concert – a magical event for the artist, which is not necessarily always the case for all audience members.

I deal with words like a bull in a sentence shop

Pablopavo as a songwriter is an artist. As a multi-code work, a song reduces the role of the lexical layer in favor of other means of expression. Nonetheless, it is a fertile land which offers a variety of attitudes towards the meaning and form of the text in terms of constructing a song as a lexical-musical work (which are just two elementary systems of signs). In the case of Pablopavo, the linguistic layer is obviously significant. The song *Strzępia* [Toothing] from the album *Wir* can be considered a programatic statement in this regard.

The song is a reflection upon the creative act, with language as the central theme: Pablopavo is concerned with ways of thinking about language (in this case – in a song) rather than a creative moment. I have chosen to cite the entire text here, due to the fact that it is not commonly available, and in order to avoid misunderstanding regarding the need to paraphrase of interpret any fragment outside of its immediate context:

> I am wasting my breath[39]
> dashes above ń and ć
> feel as if they were written
> in blood
>
> I am wasting my breath
> given to me in good faith
> I believe in language foolishly
> like fools believe in dreams
>
> I carry, bit by bit
> what I like and what I do not like
> I disembowel in secrecy
> wo- and -rds
>
> for y- for -ou
> for lalala
> for I have nothing more
> and I will not have anything more

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[38]"wróci niespodziewanie / za piętnaście lat, przez wypity rum".
[39]The idiom used in Polish literally means "I am shredding my tongue" [PZ].

It is mocking me
matter-of-factly[40]

it is the same thing
that glows by itself

it rolls
it shreds
wears down
and

it slips on full stops
before it breaks into nothing

better is better
into a bit better nothing
I am pushing as if into myself
nothing into nothing edge-to-edge

I cut into half
drudgery and I put together a pattern
I am worried whether your ear
will put up with it

I deal with words
like a bull in a sentence shop
I track and hide away our life
in a frame of music notes

I am playing myself here
I am playing myself among one hundred
grams of anagrams
of being here with you

for y- for -ou
fo lalala
for I have nothing more
and I will not have anything more.[41]

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[40]The idiom used in Polish literally means "in a cool (i.e. cold) way"

[41]"strzępię język / kreski znad eń i znad ci / bryzgają jak krople / krwi //strzępię język w dobrej / wierze dany mi / w język wierzę głupio / jak głupcy w sny // niosę potroszę / co mi się zda lub nie zda / chyłkiem patroszę / i sło i wa // dla cie dla bie / dla lalala / bo nic więcej nie mam / i nie będę miał // drwi ze mnie / na chłodno drwi / to samo / co samo się tli // się toczy / się strzępi / się ściera / i // na kropkach się ślizga / nim pęknie na nic // lepiej to lepiej / na nieco porządniejsze nic / wciskam jak siebie / nic w nic na styk // kroję na dwoje / znoje i klecę deseń / boję się czy twoje / ucho to zniesie // robię w słowach / jak słoń w składzie zdań / tropię i kitram nasze życie / wśród nut ram // gram siebie tu / gram siebie wśród stu / gramów anagramów / bycia z tobą tu // dla cie dla bie / dla lalala / bo nic więcej nie mam / i nie będę miał."

The titular expression "strzępię" (I shred) has linguistic sources. The Polish phrase "shredding one's tongue" means "wasting one's breath", talking too much. In the song the phrase can be understood literally, which leads to biological associations, resulting in an image of diacritics as drops of blood. The tongue has a double meaning: as an organ used for talking, and as a communication system, i.e. language. Associations with New Wave conceptualizations of this theme are unavoidable (*Język, to dzikie mięso* [Tongue, this wild meat] by Ryszard Krynicki can serve as the clearest example). The initial metaphor leads to more linguistic games: breaking words into smaller units, intentionally organizing the text in such a way as to use short words, homophony (which is an example of linguistic overorganization), transformed idiomatic expressions. Language motivates playing with sounds, which inspires a similar chase of senses and meanings, alliterations, anaphors, and other stylistic devices (*lepię – lepiej*; *w słowach – słoń w składzie*; *gram – gram – gramów anagramów*). The title and opening verse are clearly based on alliteration ("ę"). Additionally, the lyrics do not really resemble what one would expect from a song; they are written in a way which highlights the *stricte* literary senses, using enjambments, the length of verses and arbitrariness of pauses. Pablopavo mixes poetic language with colloquial, everyday expressions (*na styk* [edge-to-edge], *kitram* [I hide away] – the latter is a part of a longer, alliterative passage based on "r", which consists of two strophoids and a rhyme).

Contamination of meanings in "I am wasting my breath / given to me in good faith / I believe in language foolishly / like fools believe in dreams"[42] is an important confession of faith (we should bear in mind that we are dealing with a song in which language is just one of codes, and not necessarily the primary one), but also a manifestation of evanescence, the unreality of matter. The text comes to the fore, it is a self-commentary regarding creative work, and – more broadly – the artist's attitude to the world and art. It is a confession of helplessness in the face of the language matter in communication. One could say that this song is a reflection on the philosophy of language, the impossibility of expressing oneself fully and reaching true understanding between two speakers. At the same time it is also about hoping that this attempt at describing life and incorporating it into the evanescent form of song is not in vain. The fact that the song focuses so much on the addressee stands out; the lyrical I addresses the message at the recipient, confessing faith and significance of who the addressee of those broken words and evanescent traces of senses is.

I am the hero of this story

Paweł Sołtys clearly separates his work as a songwriter (Pablopavo) from his work as an author, which he publishes under his real name. The present paper focuses on the former, and so the latter is mentioned only in order to complete the picture of the author, for whom *mise en abyme* is an important creative strategy. In *Nieradość*, a collection of short stories, there is a short story entitled *Opowiadanie*[43] (Short story) (sic!), narrated by… its protagonist, as we learn in the opening sentence:

> I am the hero of this story, and I am looking around nervously.[44]

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[42]"strzępię język w dobrej wierze / w dobrej wierze dany mi / w język wierzę głupio / jak głupcy w sny".

[43]Sołtys, *Nieradość*, 40.

[44]"Jestem bohaterem tego opowiadania i rozglądam się nerwowo."

Later in the text we learn more about the situation of this unusually self-aware literary character who does not like the life imposed on him by the author. His sense of unreadiness manifests itself, as he answers himself while in the process of creation. For example:

> I feel that this seemingly omnipotent someone is about to throw me into a whirlpool of so-called adventures, which is the last thing I want.[45]

This protagonist does not know yet whether he will have to do something heroic or grotesque, he is unwilling to play his role, excusing himself with bad weather. However, in fact the author here is only seemingly omnipotent. The protagonist has his own identity, but he is being overpowered by the author. We are witnessing his creation process in real time:

> I do not have any eye or hair color yet, but I already know too much, somewhere in this mind off-screen my unfulfilled love and random death are being invented.

His only hope to avoid such a dramatic fate is the author giving up on his work; perhaps he will "put the story away in the bottom drawer"[46]. The line between the world of the protagonist and the reality is blurred. The protagonist is aware of it through sounds (such as crackling) from outside. This inspires reflections regarding the conflict between those two worlds, how much the author's world can disrupt the fictional world, such as his focus, isolation, sacrifice. Kind surroundings ("[([Rzeczywistość] Pozornie zatroskana: a może coś wam doradzić, coś dodać, czegoś uszczknąć" [Seemingly worried reality: maybe you would like me to advise you, add something, take something away?"), "warmth and light" are enemies of creativity:

> For this world this is only death. The night, myself, the moon, even the dog – all will fade away into whiteness.[47]

The whiteness of a sheet of paper, of course. The existence of the protagonist is characterized by absurd contradictions, which perversely make it resemble real life. The only thing which manifests its literary character is the language, so characteristic for Pablopavo's works – imperfect, rebellious, but omnipotent:

> So you can only listen carefully, in spite of fear, you can wait for what is going to happen, recite fate like the Rosary, be unsurprised by anything, even get yourself killed so that the story can survive. You can only watch how infinitives construct your neighborhood, it is dawn already, and it is bringing the first voices. Still clumsy, still not used to sound, to being.[48]

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[45]"Czuję, że ten pozornie wszechwładny ktoś zaraz rzuci mnie w wir tak zwanych przygód, a to ostatnia rzecz, jakiej pragnę."

[46]"odłoży kartki z tym wszystkim do najniższej z szuflad".

[47]"Dla tego świata tu to tylko śmierć. Noc się rozwieje, ja, księżyc i pies nawet – wszyscy w biel."

[48] "Więc tylko nasłuchiwać, choć strach, czekać na wypadki, odmawiać fatum jak różaniec, niczemu się nie dziwić, nawet dać się zamordować, żeby opowieść przetrwała. Patrzeć, jak bezokoliczniki budują okolicę, bo to już świt, ze świtem idą pierwsze głosy. Jeszcze wypowiadane nieporadnie, jeszcze wprawiające się w brzmienie, w bycie."

These are the circumstances in which the protagonist-narrator exists. He is telling us how the story about him is being created – judging by his self-awareness, this story is popular, perhaps even sensational, but this is only the background. In the case of *Opowiadanie* the true tension stems from the creative process, bringing worlds and characters to life in which one of them became a superior being – the narrator.

In search of sense

Sandauer considered *mise en abyme* to be "a vicious circle of nothingness"[49], "a message which communicates nothing, a thought which has no content outside of itself"[50]. Such claims have been discussed by literary scholars and by literature itself many times, offering numerous interesting realizations, which led to the development of intellectually and cognitively at-tractive forms. Examples outside of literature also show that *mise en abyme* provides broad opportunities for expression when it is not a goal in itself. Paradoxically – in spite of concerns regarding exhausting culture and convention – *mise en abyme* seems to be leading to a search for the sense of creation, and more broadly, to the sense of existing in a world full of the ab-surd. In the face of a crisis of values, a loss of faith in truthfulness, Sołtys tries to find motiva-tion, consider circumstances, test the situation of his own work critically, he asks himself and others about the sense of creativity.

The song is not just entertainment, it transgresses the limitations imposed by numerous codes, striving for consciously created literariness in its textual sphere. Used skillfully, *mise en abyme* becomes an attractive device, which helps to intellectualize the message, creating in-teresting tensions based on irony, self-irony, highlighting some distance towards the creative matter. Considerations regarding the creative process and the form of a given work result from a higher level of reflection. Both the author's self-awareness and faith in the addressee – their willingness and ability to participate in such a game, demanding openness and an intel-lectual effort – become significant. In a world where art is not a subject of common interest, obscured by materialism, worldly problems, politics, considerations regarding art, creativity, the creative process itself are all examples of abstract thinking, and as such deserve special attention.

In Pablopavo's works language gains subjectivity, which is rarely seen in songs; a story be-comes the protagonist, telling it – a theme, struggling with form – an important problem. *Mise en abyme* is an attempt at distancing oneself from the artificiality of Form, with the aim of realizing this artificiality and the conventionality of communication. Metareflection is an element of irony, an attempt at defending oneself against naïve engagement in the world of described reality. It is in perfect harmony with statement distance (audible also in the phonic

[49]Artur Sandauer, „Konstruktywny nihilizm", in: *Zebrane pisma krytyczne. T. 1* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1981), 537–554.

[50]Artur Sandauer, „Samobójstwo Mitrydatesa", in: *Zebrane pisma krytyczne. T. 2*, 1981, 504.

realization), assuming emotionlessness over emotionality. As an important part of disillusion supported by subtle humor and intellectualized poetics of form, *mise en abyme* becomes an attempt at saving authenticity and constructing a higher-level understanding with the addressee who is aware of these conventions.

translated by Paulina Zagórska

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KEYWORDS

SONG

mise en abyme

LYRICS

Abstract:

The paper is devoted to the works of Pablopavo, a song artist for whom *mise en abyme* is an important means of expression. Although the term has been recognized in literature studies for decades, it has rarely been considered an important element of song lyrics. The paper discusses numerous examples which illustrate different ways in which Pablopavo uses *mise en abyme*, creating attractive paraliterary constructions, breaking the genre limitations of songs, directing the message towards literariness. *Mise en abyme* becomes a device which allows him to construct an understanding with the addressee which goes beyond entertainment. Distance from the form, irony, comicality help make the message authentic, situating the very process of communication, based mostly on language, at the center.

Pablopav

LITERARINESS

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"Hee Haw:" Singing and performing song lyrics on Nick Cave and The Birthday Party's album *The Birthday Party* (1980)

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This article attempts to interpret the performative aspects of Nick Cave's singing and song lyrics written in collaboration with the guitarist Rowland Stuart Howard (1959–2009), Mick Harvey, Vincent Eugene Craddock (also known as Gene Vincent), and William Douchette (also known as Bill Davis). I focus specifically on the album *The Birthday Party* (1980), which Nick Cave recorded together with his band The Birthday Party. This analysis, representative of rock song lyrics studies, is an interpretative trace and a reflection on the beginnings of this outstanding songwriter, rock musician, and singer's career. I argue that the Australian singer, beginning with his first songs recorded with the band The Boys Next Door (*Door, Door* from 1979), writes about love, pain and loneliness, and above all, each new album by the author of *Into My Arms* records the experience of longing. *The Birthday Party*, therefore, is no different; it expresses regret and sadness – the feelings of the author/singer, the narrating/singing "I," the lyric-musical persona or, in other words, the singing and performing subject.

The Birthday Party is The Boys Next Door's second album. It was released in 1980 by Missing Link Records. Roughly two years later, the album was re-released, with a different cover, with only the name *The Birthday Party* written on it. It is therefore considered The Birthday Party's first album.[1] The album was recorded between June 1979 and February 1980 at Richmond

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[1] Cf. Tanya Dalziell, Karen Welberry (ed.), *Cultural Seeds. Essays on the Work of Nick Cave* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009).

Recorders Studios in Melbourne and engineered by Tony Cohen. This album is distinctly different from its predecessor, the debut album *Door, Door* (released in 1979). The songs on the album are punk, dark and chaotic, a sound which later became emblematic of The Birthday Party's style. Virtually all the songs on this album were later released on the *Hee Haw* EP (1988), a compilation of The Birthday Party's early recordings.

The album, which will be discussed in this article, consists of ten tracks. Cave wrote the lyrics to four songs and co-authored the lyrics to one (in collaboration with Howard and Mick Harvey, a multi-instrumentalist who plays guitar, bass, keyboards and drums). Cave wrote the lyrics to the songs numbered: 1, 2, 3 and 6. Howard wrote the lyrics to four songs (4, 5, 7, 8), and one song is a cover of *Catman* (1957), written by Gene Vincent and Bill Davis and originally recorded by The Blue Caps. The lyrics to all the songs form a coherent structure, convey a clear message, and together form a harmonious, well-thought-out, and ordered whole. It is undoubtedly one of the most important albums in the history of rock music, and therefore it should be analyzed in more detail. The present article is preceded by my two other studies devoted to the beginnings of Nick Cave's career;[2] in these works. I present the first three artistic incarnations of the Australian musician, as these three achievements paint a fascinating portrait of this remarkable vocalist and pianist's early work.

The album was recorded by five artists: Nick Cave (vocals), Mick Harvey (guitar), Rowland S. Howard (guitar), Tracy Pew (bass guitar), and Phill Calvert (drums). The EP's running time is only 32 minutes and 3 seconds and, as have I mentioned before, it consists of ten tracks. The longest song is *The Friend Catcher* (4:22; it is the sixth song on the album and the first song on the B side), and the shortest song is *Waving My Arms* (2:15, it is the seventh song on the album and the second song on the B side). The album was structured with care: it opens with the dynamic, "fiery," crazy track *Mr. Clarinet* (3:42), and ends with the equally "wild," crazy, anxiety-driven, insane and ironic *Happy Birthday* (3:50). Such a structure brings the listener aesthetic pleasure as they listen to a "narrative" – a musical and textual whole: we begin with a song that is a disturbing cry for love, for marriage, a song that is a metaphor for loneliness, pain, and longing for a loved one, and ends with a mocking, grotesque, and ironic confession of the singing "I," who claims that the birthday party is actually quite a dark celebration, because it bitterly reminds one about the passage of time and death, evoking constant fear and terror; the song's lyrical subject reminisces about the party celebrating his eleventh birthday.[3]

The main theme of the lyrics is the different dimensions, sides, and "sounds" of love; it can be said that the lyrical subject of these songs is a man telling/singing about his emotional experiences with his beloved. Loneliness, longing, and waiting for the loved one, looking for her, wanting

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[2] Paweł Tański, "Antropologia słowa Nicka Cave'a na jego debiutanckiej płycie z zespołem The Bad Seeds *From Her to Eternity* (1984)" [Nick Cave's Anthropology of words on his debut album released with The Bad Seeds *From Her to Eternity* (1984)], *Kultura Współczesna* [Contemporary Culture] 2 (2021): 31–47; ibid., "«Sound of hername». Interpretacja tekstów piosenek z debiutanckiej płyty *Door, Door* Nicka Cave'a z zespołem The Boys Next Door" [«Sound of hername:» Study of song lyrics on Nick Cave's debut album *Door, Door* released with The Boys Next Door], *Czas Kultury* [Time of Culture] 3 (2021): 31–40.

[3] I quote the lyrics to the songs from this album after: https://genius.com/artists/The-birthday-party, date of access 22 Feb. 2022, cf. ["The Birthday Party"]. We will not find these lyrics on Nick Cave's website. The earliest lyrics posted on the website date back to Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds' album *From Her to Eternity* (1984) ["Lyrics"].

to be with her are expressed throughout. Alienation leads to madness. The lyrical and musical
"I" argues that man is a miserable, pathetic, weak, and scared creature; man may be driven mad
(*Happy Birthday*) or be filled with sadness, despair, bitterness, guilt, struggling with reality, and
trying to come to terms with the terrible fear caused by the awareness of how fragile life is, the
fleeting nature of life, and the passage of time (*Waving My Arms*, *The Red Clock*). The world which
emerges from the lyrics is ruled by darkness and nihilism; human existence is constantly threat-
ened by unnerving experiences, and traps lurk everywhere. The pessimistic dimension of the
lyrics is emphasized by the music – it is full of anxiety, madness, anger and guitar distortions,
brilliantly used to enhance the sound of the album, and finally – we have the great use of vocal ef-
fects, about which I will write more later in this article. The fundamental aesthetic category of the
discussed song lyrics is the grotesque: it emphasizes the absurdity, weirdness, strangeness and
ridiculousness of man and the world, and ultimately reveals an extremely pessimistic diagnosis,
namely that man is a sick, twisted creature – prone to violence, likely to harms others – man is
superficial, selfish, frightening and disgusting. Let us consider the following examples:

> I put on my coat of trumpets
> > > (*Mr. Clarinet*),

> Dancing like a chimney sweep
> I look ridiculous
> All hands and feet
> The hat's on wrong
> > > (*Hats On Wrong*),

> Halls echo with the sounds of his footsteps
> Water drip drops from the ceiling
> Shadow of a bird
> Race! Race! Race! Race! Race! Race!
> Race to the door and see what's scratching
> Groaning Walls did they hear you?
> Hair of the dog, hair of the dog, hair of the dog

> Turning purple is the colour of murder
> > > (*The Hair Shirt*),

> And the
> Guilt parade
> The guilt parade
> Parade, parade

> Wave and say hello
> > > (*Guilt Parade*),

> The numbers soft as soap
> And tend to bend in addition

They're much too wan for me
I'd prefer some consistency

And I say "Question:
When is a door not a door?"
And I say "That's not right!
Answer: when it's ajar!"
                    (*Riddle House*),

You and your lungs and your wrist
They throb like trains
Choo choo choo
It's a prison of sound
                    (*The Friend Catcher*),

Waving my arms
In motion
About a lot
                    (*Waving My Arms*),

The red clock goes drip toc
Drip toc as it rains cats and dogs
That break on the footpath
Put your hand out the window
Get stripped to the claw bone
                    (*The Red Clock*),

It's a very happy day
We are at lots of fun fun fun
And it's ice-cream and jelly
And a punch in the belly
How much can you throw over the walls?

And see how his face glows
It's a bike! What a surprise
It's a big bike. What a big surprise
It's a red bike. What a red surprise
Oh, what a surprise

But the best thing there
But the best thing there
Was the wonderful dog chair
Was the beautiful dog chair
That could count right up to ten

It could count right up to ten
It went woof, woof, woof, woof, woof
Woof, woof, woof, woof, woof
        (*Happy Birthday*).

The most important stylistic device here is irony; the lyricists use it to convey the vision and truth about the subject – to show man as a comic, yet terrifying, imperfect, flawed product of the evolution of the universe, a miserable creature ruled by detestable desires. From this perspective, *homo sapiens* is not a "thinking reed," but rather "thoughtless grass," "unconscious and passive club-rush," devoid of inner moral laws. Charles Baudelaire wrote in *The Flowers of Evil* that "Pascal's abyss went with him at his side;" similarly, the people depicted in Cave and Howard's songs are individuals who carry an endless abyss within – they are miserable creatures wandering among "Les Fleurs du mal," flowers of evil. Linguistically, brevity and compactness appear to play a major role in the lyrics. It should be noted that Nick Cave's first attempts at songwriting are characterized by brevity; they are, in a way, lyrical miniatures, lyrical "microns," maximally condensed intensifications of "entangled objects." They are governed by minimalism.[4] Let me then at this point turn to the critical context of "micrology:"

> Descending into the linguistic particles of a poem, tracing the movement of how the smallest threads are interwoven, chasing after the arrangements of concepts or images outlined in this micro scale represents a new encounter each time with the enigma of a text's agency. As in experiments in the natural sciences, at the nano level we observe hitherto unknown phenomena involving the self-organization of literary works, produce new knowledge about these processes, capable of freeing us from previously existing certainties regarding the orders and disorders of literature. Micropoetics thus becomes knowledge about organs that we didn't know texts possessed, but also about how these tools create their own organon, i.e. a new sequence of categories, principles for reading, and cognitive methods. What is more, discoveries of this kind simultaneously give a glimpse into the dynamic process of organization, the internal links that join texts in certain self-regulating orders, to a large measure independent of their contexts. That is not the end of the matter, because this movement of organization helps us understand the discrete phenomenon of texts' interconnections with a multiplicity of external phenomena, the text's prototyping of new kinds of connections, their production, and the awakening of their activity. Through micropoetics we can understand how it is possible for a literary work to become a centre for the crystallization of new forms of organization, new organs whose functions are not purely literary. The uncontrollable, uncodifiable, unpredictable world of new knowledge about textual organization is therefore simultaneously a world of new connections between texts and the world, and between the modes for organising the world of texts and new approaches to this.[5]

Nick Cave and Rowland Stuart Howard use repetitions in their lyrics. And while stanzas and refrains are a given in the poetics of verbal and musical works, Cave and Howard use repetitions in/as microforms, microstructures, which they saturate with bitter irony that cuts like a knife; they construct grotesque worlds/lyrical situations and create tragic heroes, standing at the edge of an abyss, melancholic, lonely and desperate for love. In the particles of musical phrases, there are confessions

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[4] Cf. "Micropoetics", *Forum of Poetics*, spring/summer (2017).
[5] "Micropoetics", 4–5.

of overwhelming experiences pulsating with sadness, grief, loss, emptiness, depression, the dark undercurrent of existence. A black sun of decay, dust, ash, smoke and nothingness shines over this bleak landscape. Howling, depression, hopelessness, and fear reign here. Nick Cave conveys these emotions using different means, from a voice full of pain, through screams, imitating a barking dog, grunts, imitating a braying donkey, mocking "polite" vocals, to angry chanting, rebelling against the stunted reality, the "wasteland." Critics have written about the work of the author of *Ghosteen* from this period that "Cave's vocals invest the album with an ominous undercurrent, but the overall ambience hardly suggests the insanity that lay ahead;"[6] "neither John Cale nor Alfred Hitchcock was ever this scary;"[7] the Australian artist does not sing – "no one else has ever suffered with a more effective sonic display than what's in these grooves."[8] Although Cave's vocalizations are not that innovative, they date back to the works of earlier "screamers" in the history of rock and roll, such as Iggy Pop or Alan Vega from Suicide, his singing with The Birthday Party still remains powerful and expressive.[9] The voice of the creator of *Push the Sky Away* endows the album with an ominous power;[10] "a raging beast filled with agonized howling, braying Cave vocals flung against a backdrop of violently attacked guitars and no-wave horn noise."[11] The following phrases were used to describe the band and the music: "16 minutes of sheer hell," "funereal dirges," "stunning gruesomeness," "harrowing lament," "visions of bloody madness."[12] The singing and the performance of the song lyrics by Nick Cave and by Rowland Stuart Howard, Mick Harvey, Vincent Eugene Craddock and William Douchette recorded on *The Birthday Party* (1980) may therefore be described as musical miniatures – textual and vocal expressions of rebellion,[13] filled with irony. The modalities and vocalizations as well as the tone of voice used by Cave express the scale of his anger at the world, while the brevity of the verbal layer of the songs shows the accidental nature of life.[14] This form of artistic expression – condensed lyrics which expresses contestation and the accidental nature of existence – lends itself to the analytical strategy of a verbal-musical miniature.[15] Cave skillfully uses his vocal range, as mentioned earlier, in order to fully functionalize the structure of the textual and the musical singing subject and use it in the communicative act, emphasizing the intensity of the metaphors of longing, sadness, helplessness, unhappiness, guilt, remorse, injustice, loneliness, pain, anger, despair, desperation, fear caused by the impending death; in a word, all the problems he sings about.

When Cave sings, his voice is, to paraphrase Roland Barthes,[16] right at the encounter between (English) language and music, or more precisely, popular music – punk rock music. It should be briefly explained what kind of punk music I have in mind – I certainly am not referring to the British music scene of the 1970s, where existential and philosophical topics did not play a major role (as it was dominated by rebellion against the system). Rather, Cave is drawing on pre-punk American bands

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[6] Ira Robbins, David Sheridan, *Birthday Party*, https://trouserpress.com/reviews/birthday-party/, date of access 23 Feb. 2022.

[7] Robbins, Sheridan.

[8] Robbins, Sheridan.

[9] Robbins, Sheridan.

[10] Robbins, Sheridan.

[11] Robbins, Sheridan.

[12] Robbins, Sheridan.

[13] Cf. Piotr Michałowski, "Miniatura poetycka" [Poetic minature], *Pamiętnik Literacki* [Literary Diary] 2 (1994): 116–135.

[14] Michałowski.

[15] Michałowski.

[16] Roland Barthes, "The grain of the voice", trans. Stephen Heath, *Image, Music, Text* (Fontana Press, 1972): 181.

from the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Cave's vocal performances are based on alliterations, word-plays, homonyms, onomatopoeic associations, such as in the following fragments:

> her white stockings and red dress that goes
> swish, swish, swish around her legs of lace
> marry me, marry me alive
>
> marry me, marry me alive
> oh maybe, oh maybe lie down
>
> I love her, love her, love her
> love her love her love her love her
> > (*Mr. Clarinet*),
>
> The skulls are just like stepping stones
> The river's littered with little bones
> > (*Hats On Wrong*),
>
> Race! Race! Race! Race! Race! Race!
> Race to the door and see what's scratching
> Groaning Walls did they hear you?
> Hair of the dog, hair of the dog, hair of the dog
>
> Turning purple is the colour of murder
> Turning purple is the colour of murder
> Turning purple is the colour of murder
> Turning purple is the colour of murder
>
> What's in your eye?
> Said what size?
> Left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right
> What's in your eye?
> Said what size?
> Left, right, left, right, left, right, left, right
> > (*The Hair Shirt*),
>
> The happy monotony
> It drags like a nail
> And it ladders your mealy mouth
> Into splintering smiles
>
> And the
> Guilt parade
> The guilt parade
> Parade, parade

Wave and say hello
Wave and say hello
Wave and say hello
Wave and say hello
        (*Guilt Parade*),

I, cigarette fingers
Puff and poke
Puff and poking the smoke
It touches the ground

You and your lungs and your wrist
They throb like trains
Choo choo choo
It's a prison of sound

Of sound

She by a chinny chin chin
Eee-oh eee-oh
Like a Zippo smokes the way
Poke around
        (*The Friend Catcher*),

It's all rough and tumble
The commotion of new
And we feel rather shiny
In our signalling suits
And explode into ho, ho, ho, ho, ho
It's our manifesto
        (*Waving My Arms*),

It could count right up to eleven
It went woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof
Woof, woof, woof
        (*Happy Birthday*).

In Cave's singing performances, language encounters a voice, to paraphrase Roland Barthes again, and the voice is produced twice: by the English language and by punk music. This is very important because this very convention of rock music, this genre, punk rock, is well integrated with the structure of the musical and the linguistic subject on the analyzed album; in its vocal aspect, it is a catalyst for songs and their composition. Cave's voice plays a crucial role – it directly supports the metaphorical *habitus* of discord, rebellion, anger, and contestation, negating the symbolic order, limiting human freedom and independence, i.e. a field of power, a socio-political system that pulsates "over the intelligible, the expressive: here, thrown in front of us like

a packet, is the Father, his phallic stature."[17] As Barthes writes, "'the grain' is that: the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue; perhaps the letter, almost certainly *significance*."[18] Cave's singing body builds the counter-cultural dimension of the songs; let's put it bluntly: the Australian artist's singing (and thus the lyrics to the songs) are the *habitus* of a man who metaphorically expresses the value system of the punk movement, a symbolic field of axiological structures of the subversive potential of the rejected, the "rotten," who in their garages play rough, dirty, wild, noisy and hard rock music. Thus, two types of texts emerge in Cave's vocal performances: the pheno-text expressing the network of punk's critical discourses, and the geno-text, as Barthes writes: "it is that apex (or that depth) of production where the melody really works at the language – not at what it says, but the voluptuousness of its sound-signifiers, or its letters – where melody explores how the language works and identifies with that work. It is, in a very simple word but which must be taken seriously, the *diction* of the language."[19] Cave's singing is therefore the habitus of the diction of his language and punk language – those romantics of late modernity, lonely outsiders of industrial civilization, precursors of grunge voices, guitars, drums, rhythms, and songs which express anger and disagreement with the world. Let me at this point explain the meaning of the phrase "Hee Haw" referenced in the title of this article. It is, of course, the title of The Birthday Party's EP; the phrase refers to a "braying donkey." I have chosen to include it in the title of this article because it perfectly characterizes what I have been trying to interpret, namely the semantics of Cave's singing and lyrics written by him and other members of the band. The singer's self-ironic metaphor perfectly conveys his active punk disposition; the efficiency of his emotional language in vocal "monodramas." In the words of Pierre Bourdieu, it is "the basis for the unintentional invention of regulated improvisations."

As far as the theme of the lyrics are concerned, the songs on the analyzed album may be divided into three groups – the subjects of these songs ask for love and friendship (*Mr. Clarinet*, *The Friend Catcher*) and desire (*Cat Man*); they are obsessed with pain (*The Hair Shirt*, *Riddle House*), the passage of time (*The Red Clock*, *Happy Birthday*) and death (*The Hair Shirt*); and they notice man's ridiculousness (*Hats On Wrong*) and shortcomings (*Guilt Parade, The Hair Shirt, Waving My Arms*). These three themes: love, the experience of time, and the absurdity of human existence are bound by the most important trauma of the lyrical "I," namely a feeling of intense loneliness in an evil and cruel world. The album in question is therefore a lamentation of a man defeated by despair, to whom only bitter irony is left. Seeing grotesque figures and situations everywhere, he finds hope in mockery and the grotesque. Cave's voice emphasizes the grotesque reality; dirty guitar sounds correspond to the "singing donkey," expressing hate for the world, and the garage sound of the whole reminds one of the birth and the explosion of punk rock in the 1970s in the UK and the United States, from where it took over the world.

The three most interesting songs on the album, representative of The Birthday Party's oeuvre, are: *The Hair Shirt* (the third song on the album, 4:04), *Hats on Wrong* (the second song on the album, 2:47) and *Guilt Parade* (the fourth song on the album, 2:46). They are filled with anxiety, entrapment, and enslavement and show the dark side of human nature. The first song

[17]Barthes, 182.
[18]Barthes, 182.
[19]Barthes, 182-183.

tells the story of a crime; the second song is a mockery of human "masks," brilliantly described by Witold Gombrowicz in his works, and the third song talks of a man who feels remorse for his offenses and the fact that our species is bound to commit immoral deeds. I stated at the beginning of this article that the album was planned and structured with great care, so now it is worth emphasizing the fact that the lyrical narratives have their own dynamics; they attract the attention of the listener, if only because the excellent opening track is followed by an equally great song – it is moving and pessimistic despite grotesque images:

> Dancing like a chimney sweep
> I look ridiculous
> All hands and feet
> The hat's on wrong
> The hat's on wrong
> The hat's on wrong
> The hat's on
> It's wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong,
> wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong
>
> The skulls are just like stepping stones
> The river's littered with little bones
> The hat's on wrong
> The hat's on wrong
> The hat's on wrong
> The hat's on
> It is on wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong
> It's on wrong, wrong, wrong,
>
> The grass is green
> The sky is blue
> My feet are bound in bamboo
> The hat's on wrong
> The hat's on wrong
> The hat's on wrong
> The hat's on
> It's on wrong, wrong, wrong
> It's on wrong, wrong
> The hat is on wrong, wrong
> My hat is on wrong, wrong
> On my skull
> Look at me, my hat is on wrong
> My hat's on wrong
> 　　　　　(*Hats On Wrong*).

Making a cover of *Catman* (2:30) the penultimate song on the album was also a successful artistic strategy. *Catman* is an ironic story about desire, sexuality, and physicality:

Catman's coming, better look out
Catman's coming, running about
Catman's coming, looking for a girl
Better hide your sister, man

C is for the crazy hair do that he wears around
A is for the arms that he'll sneak around your waist
T is for the taste on the lips belong to you, yeah man

M is for the mean things that this mean man does
A is for all the hearts that he has ever broke
N is for the names on the list you may be on

Catman

Catman's looking for a woman all day long
Better watch out
Better watch out
You better watch out because you're gonna get kissed
You better watch out because he is in your midst

Catman

You better watch out because of Mr. catman
Catman

The last song on the A side, *Riddle House* (2:47), asks questions about the limits of knowl-
edge and freedom, while the first song on the B side is *The Friend Catcher* (4:21). Inspired by
a rather prosaic situation, smoking a cigarette, the narrator tells his tale; however, the song is
actually about the human body, the boundaries of the skin. Similes and metaphors are used
here in an interesting way – they are used to reflect on the human voice, on the possibilities
of language, speech, singing; the song is thereforen also a self-referential reflection:

You and your lungs and your wrist
They throb like trains
Choo choo choo
It's a prison of sound

Earlier, I discussed the first and the last songs on both sides of the album, and I also mentioned what
is in the "middle" of side A, so I should also write about the "middle" of side B. *Waving My Arms* is the
seventh song in total and the second song on the B side; in turn, *The Red Clock* is the eighth song (the
third song on the B side). Both songs talk about time, its human experience, passing, the fleeting
nature of reality, movement, and the inevitability of death. When one truly listens to how the album
is structured, one discovers that the songs were dynamically organized, and that they connect with
one another, creating self-reinforcing and self-propelling structures. These dynamic interconnec-

tions help one understand how the songs connect with a multitude of external phenomena, how the verbal and musical works invent and create new kinds of relationships, how they activate different contexts. It all boils down to, of course, the praxis of punk counterculture, mentioned many times in this study, "exercises in engagement," rebellious acts committed by people united around this axiological sphere. Using mockery, irony, and a sharp tongue, Nick Cave sang in a unique way about man's eternal problems – miserable existence, melancholy, harsh realities of everyday life. The Birthday Party and Cave's expressive punk singing performances on *The Birthday Party* paved the way for Cave's future career, which led the artist to collaborate with the outstanding multi-instrumentalist Warren Ellis (b. 1965). Theirs is an aesthetic of musical minimalism, much different from the Australian pianist's punk roots. And with much different singing performances. The beautiful album *La Panthère Des Neiges* (released on December 17, 2021) is a tangible proof of this.

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

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KEYWORDS

rock performance

PUNK   *the grain of the voice*

the geno-text

song's language and style

HABITUS

ABSTRACT:

This article attempts to interpret the performative aspects of Nick Cave's singing and song lyrics written in collaboration with the guitarist Rowland Stuart Howard (1959–2009), Mick Harvey, Vincent Eugene Craddock (also known as Gene Vincent) and William Douchette (also known as Bill Davis). I focus specifically on the album *The Birthday Party* (1980) which Nick Cave recorded together with his band The Birthday Party. This analysis, representative of rock song lyrics studies, is a receptive trace and a reflection on the beginnings of this outstanding song-writer, rock musician, and singer's career. I argue that the Australian singer, beginning with the first recordings with the band The Boys Next Door (*Door, Door* from 1979), writes about love, pain, and loneliness, and show how each new album by the author of *Into My Arms* records the experience of longing. *The Birthday Party*, therefore, is no different; it expresses regret and sadness – the feelings of the author/singer, the narrating/singing "I," the lyrical and the musical persona or, in other words, the singing and performing subject. Cave's signing is a metaphor for the *habitus* of punk song miniatures, which are lyrical and vocal expressions of rebellion, filled with irony, while the main principle of the poetics of these works is the grotesque.

v o i c e

r o c k   l y r i c s

the pheno-text

SINGING

THE LYRICAL AND MUSICAL "

Nick Cave's work

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:

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Polish Punk Rock in English –
Sociophonetic Aspects

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Popular music – lyrics and performance

By focusing on the phonetic layer of song lyrics, the present paper addresses an aspect closely related to the differentiation between lyrics and performance, so significant in the context of song studies – see e.g. Anna Barańczak[1]: "A song has a potential structure [...], which demands to be concretized through performance". Admittedly an analysis of stylistic or expressive phonic devices[2] is also possible on the basis of lyrics, by focusing on how they can be potentially read[3]; however, my goal is to investigate pronunciation features in a specific context (performing a song), naturally positioning the performer in the center of these considerations.

A written text can be read out loud in different ways, and pronunciation can carry a number of meanings or associations. These associations result from the complex relationship between someone's way of speaking and their identity, which is crucial in sociolinguistics[4]. Moreover, some linguistic features, including phonetic ones, can carry a specific stylistic, expressive, or artistic potential; according to Aleksander Wilkoń[5], "Potentially any linguistic sign and form can gain a style-creative value".

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[1] Anna Barańczak, *Słowo w piosence. Poetyka współczesnej piosenki estradowej* [Word in song. Poetics of contemporary popular song] (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1983), 60.

[2] See Sykulska's classification (Karolina Sykulska, "Język emocji – foniczne środki ekspresywne" [Language of emotions – phonic means of expression], *Poradnik Językowy* 5 [2003]: 6–20).

[3] See e.g. Monika Konert-Panek, "Rozrywka i zaduma – foniczne aspekty tworzenia nastroju w tekstach Agnieszki Osieckiej" [Entertaiunment and reflection – phonic aspects of creating atmosphere in Agnieszka Osiecka's lyrics], in: *Simply Agnieszka: on the 75th anniversary of Agnieszka Osiecka's birthday. Studies and materials*, edited by Igor Borkowski (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2011), 215–231.

[4] See e.g. Andrée Tabouret-Keller, "Language and Identity", in: *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, edited by Florian Coulmas (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 315–326.

[5] Aleksander Wilkoń, *Język artystyczny: studia i szkice* [Artistic language: studies and sketches] (Katowice: Śląsk, 1999), 46.

In songs, which are a special combination of words and music, procedures regarding phonetics can become exceptionally effective drives of stylistic and sociolinguistic meaning. In case of English, so-called *style-shifting*, i.e. choosing a different variant of English when singing (as opposed to an artist's normal speech), is an interesting, well-researched phenomenon – see e.g. Peter Trudgill[6], Paul Simpson[7], Joan C. Beal[8], Andy Gibson and Allan Bell[9], Richard Watts and Franz Andres Morrissey[10], and Andy M. Gibson[11]. Typically American English is the variant of choice, which is often interpreted as a symbolic homage to idols from the American South, especially popular among British singers. However, such a stylization is inconsistent, and sometimes it is exaggerated, overshooting the imitated phonetic feature[12].

There are also other trends in popular music, which depend on (among other things) the genre. For example, Morrissey[13] points to *White Rabbit* by Jefferson Airplane, styled as British English, which may stem from the progressive rock/psychedelic music style of this American band resembling Pink Floyd. Promoting some phonetic features of Cockney (i.e. an accent and dialect of London's working class) in punk[14], which – due to the fact it co-exists with Americanization rather than replaces it – has further complicated the already complex picture of phonetic stylization in British popular music, is an especially significant trend from the perspective of this paper. Trudgill[15] interprets the use of Cockney, a stigmatized accent traditionally associated with lowest social strata, as an example of covert prestige. In terms of vowels, Cockney is characterized by (among other things): [æɪ] instead of [eɪ] (*rain, mate*), [ʌʊ] instead of [əʊ] (*go, so*), or [ɑɪ] instead of [aɪ] (*fine, mine*). There are also consonantal differences, such as dropping initial [h] in content words (*house, hot*), and intervocalic glottal stops (*better, city*).

Currently examples of singing with one's natural accent are increasingly more common in music, as well. This phenomenon was already observed by Beal[16], who analyzed the accent of the leader of Arctic Monkeys, Alex Turner, interpreting his forms from the perspective of language and ideology. The fact that Turner does not follow the model of imitating a foreign accent becomes a manifestation of authenticity and a demonstration of anti-conformism – positioning

[6] Peter Trudgill, "Acts of Conflicting Identity. The Sociolinguistics of British Pop-Song Pronunciation", in: *On Dialect: Social and Geographical Perspectives*, edited by Peter Trudgill (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 141–160.

[7] Paul Simpson, "Language, Culture and Identity: With (Another) Look at Accents in Pop and Rock Singing", *Multilingua* 18, No 4 (1999): 343–367.

[8] Joan C. Beal, "«You're Not from New York City, You're from Rotherham»: Dialect and Identity in British Indie Music", *Journal of English Linguistics* 37, No 3 (2009): 223–240.

[9] Andy Gibson, Allan Bell, "Popular Music Singing as Referee Design", in: *Style-Shifting in Public. New Perspectives on Stylistic Variation*, edited by Juan Manuel Hernández Campoy, Juan Antonio Cutillas-Espinosa (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2012), 139–164.

[10] Richard Watts and Franz Andres Morrissey, *Language, the Singer and the Song: The Sociolinguistics of Folk Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[11] Andy M. Gibson, "Sociophonetics of Popular Music: Insights from Corpus Analysis and Speech Perception Experiments" (New Zealand, University of Canterbury, 2019), http://hdl.handle.net/10092/17892.

[12] Monika Konert-Panek, "Overshooting Americanisation. Accent Stylisation in Pop Singing – Acoustic Properties of the BATH and TRAP Vowels in Focus", *Research in Language* 15, No 4 (2017): 371–384.

[13] Franz Andres Morrissey, "Liverpool to Louisiana in One Lyrical Line: Style Choice in British Rock, Pop and Folk Singing", in: *Standards and Norms in the English Language*, edited by Miriam A. Locher (Berlin – New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2008), 195–218.

[14] Trudgill.

[15] Trudgill.

[16] Beal.

him against the mainstream and globalization. The duo Sleaford Mods[17] and the Dublin trio Fontaines D.C.[18] are two more examples of artists who have gained international stardom in spite of – or perhaps partially thanks to – singing with their strong regional accents. These examples illustrate the dynamic character of stylization and potential for the evolution of socio-linguistic meanings and associations with changing circumstances.

Punk rock – global perspective

Punk rock has always been characterized by a heterogeneity resulting from its origins in *brico-lage*, the combining of various elements from both high and low culture, history, and poli-tics[19]. This complexity can be observed on various levels. From the perspective of music, it was influenced by American proto-punk (The Ramones, Iggy Pop), northern soul, reggae, glitter rock, as well as styles associated with mods. This "unlikely"[20] combination of music traditions merged with an equally eclectic fashion style, which visually reflected this cacophony. According to Hebdige, this reflection is distorted, and punk is characterized by its distorting every convention and discourse. In punk rock, dance – a means of expression which often constitutes a ritualized form of courtship – is turned into pogo, i.e. anti-dance, a caricature of conventionalized dance. In terms of music, it favors simplicity, noise and chaos (as Johnny Rotten put it: "We're into chaos not music"[21]). Song titles or band names often highlight social exclusion (The Unwanted, The Rejects, The Worst)[22]. Finally, in punk rock the language typically represents the working class, using swearwords, typos, grammatical errors (even in final versions of lyrics) which all create an impression of hastiness[23]. According to Hebdige, this relationship is symbolic – the values, lifestyle, music and visual forms are all connected: "The punks wore clothes which were the sartorial equivalent of swear words, and they swore as they dressed – with calculated effect"[24].

According to Gibson[25], in punk rock locality and social class are stressed in order to stand out from homogenous, mainstream pop music. In the case of English-speaking punk rock artists, this is

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[17]Monika Konert-Panek, „«Just fake accent nicked from someone posh»: akcent w śpiewie jako wyraz tożsamości regionalnej i klasowej: przypadek Sleaford Mods" [accent in singing as an expression or regional and class identity: the case of Sleaford Mods], in: *Muzyka/Uniwersytet/Technologia/Emocje. Studia nad muzyką popularną* [Music/University/TechnologyEmotions. Studies in popular music], edited by Andrzej Juszczyk et al. (Kraków: AT Wydawnictwo, 2017), 123–136.

[18]Monika Konert-Panek, Mariusz Gradowski, "«Dublin in the rain is mine» – tożsamość i (prze)tworzona tradycja w piosence *Big* Fontaines D.C." [identity and (re)created tradition in the song *Big* by Fontaines D.C..], *Czas Kultury* 3 (2021): 41–47.

[19]Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style* (London, New York: Routledge, 2002).

[20]Hebdige, 25.

[21]Hebdige, 109.

[22] There are similar examples in Polish punk rock: "Awareness of own individualism and incompatibility with the world, considered a positive value, is directly reflected in names: *Taniec odrzuconych* [Dance of the rejected], *Schizma* [Schism]*, Stracony* [Lost]*, Ulica* [Street]*, Zakon Żebrzących* [Monastery of beggars]*, Dzieci Gorszego Boga* [Children of a secondary god], see Mariusz Rutkowski, "(Anty)estetyka nazewnictwa punkrockowego" [(Anti-) aesthetics of punk rock names], in: *Unisono w wielogłosie II: w kręgu nazw i wartości* [Unisono in a polyphony II: names and values], edited by Radosław Marcinkiewicz (Sosnowiec: Wydawnictwo GAD Records, 2011), 136.

[23]Hebdige, 111.

[24]Hebdige, 112–13.

[25]Gibson, 17–18.

manifested via accent in singing, and associating linguistic forms with social values[26]. The local turn had to include local linguistic variants. At the same time punk rock would not be itself without subversion and *bricolage*, resulting in a genre characterized by the most peculiar and complex combination of phonetic forms: standard and non-standard British, as well as standard and non-standard American.

Since variety and change are at the heart of sociolinguistics, it is not surprising that after some time also this revolutionary turn (here, to Cockney) could become a new convention; there are examples of singers from outside of this geographic region who display features of Cockney. For example, Billie Joe Armstrong, frontman for the Californian band Green Day is sometimes "accused" of faking a London accent. In fact, he admits to some stylization, explaining that "I'm an American guy faking an English accent faking an American accent"[27].

This may result from the weight of associations, connotations, and inspirations related to the above-mentioned homage being paid to the masters of the genre. In the case of punks, this is Johnny Rotten or Joe Strummer rather than Elvis Presley. New models are thus crossing borders – not just local, dialectal, but also national, becoming global, which is how traces of Cockney (which probably no longer depends on its original geographic, or even social origins, and instead is now associated with punk rock as a music genre) can also be found in the vocal style (but not in the speech) of Justin Sullivan, singer for New Model Army – especially in early punk albums[28]. This trend can be found also outside the British Isles, for example in Babel 17, a French coldwave/post punk band founded in late 1980s – the song *Come Into Hell & Murder Hate* contains one of the most characteristic features of Cockney: [æɪ] instead of [eɪ] in the phrase "Then you *awake*, and it all seems as a lie…".

Punk rock – local perspective

Polish punk rock emerged slightly later than in the West. At first it was characterized by an intensity resulting from the multilayered character of the rebellion it brought. This rebellion was not just against a broadly understood notion of conformism, but it was also political, opposing communism[29]. At the same time, according to Tomasz Lipiński[30], certain social realities related to the origins of punk rock in England, such as unemployment, recession, a lack of prospects, which also resonated in Poland, additionally (apart from a simplicity of form) encouraged making punk rock outside popular themes, as well. There was a difference, however: in England, punk rock originated in the working class, whereas in Poland – many musicians,

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[26]See indexicality and linguistic-ideological perspective: Michael Silverstein, "Shifters, Linguistic Categories and Cultural Description", in: *Meaning in Anthropology*, edited by Keith H. Basso, Henry A. Selby (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), 11–55; Asif Agha, "The Social Life of Cultural Value", *Language and Communication* 23 (2003): 231–273; Lesley Milroy, "Language ideologies and linguistic change", in: *Sociolinguistic variation: critical reflections*, edited by Carmen Fought (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 161–177.

[27]Alec Foege, „Green Day: The Kids Are Alright", *Rolling Stone*, 22.09.1994, https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/green-day-the-kids-are-alright-247150/.

[28]Monika Konert-Panek, "Akcent a wizerunek: foniczne aspekty stylu rockowego" [Accent and image: phonic aspects of rock style], in: *Kultura rocka. Twórcy – tematy – motywy* [Rock culture. Artists – themes – motifs], edited by Jakub Osiński, Michał Pranke, Paweł Tański, vol. 1 (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2019), 55–67.

[29]Mikołaj Lizut, *Punk Rock Later* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sic!, 2003), 5–6.

[30]Lizut, 47–48.

such as Robert Brylewski, Tomasz Lipiński, or Maciej Góralski, represented artistic-intelligentsia circles[31].

In terms of *bricolage* as the main element determining punk rock, as well as the symbolic relationship between punk's lifestyle, music forms, and visual forms, we should also mention the significance of the image in the perception of this subculture by people who (today) are veterans of Polish punk. Lipiński discusses the visual layer of the first performance of The Raincoats, a Western punk rock band in Poland, and the singer's outfit, styled as if he was a secret service agent from Eastern Europe[32]. Tomasz Budzyński also points out to the importance of aesthetics, stating that he first liked the punk rock image, and only later started enjoying the music[33].

In terms of language, and specifically the significance of English in the discussed context, in Polish punk rock Polish language dominates to such an extent that it is in fact the default option. Although this does not mean that Polish punk rock bands sing exclusively in Polish, the wish to reflect local realities through local languages seems to be an important motivation both in Poland and at the very source of punk rock.

At the same time, Western inspirations and references play also an important role in the Polish case. Brylewski says that he discovered punk rock thanks to The Clash and Sex Pistols, at the same time stressing that music was the most important part of it all, with ideology – understood here broadly as mockery and provocation – coming second[34]. Dominika (Nika) Domczyk from Post Regiment lists Vice Squad, Avengers, Siouxsie and The Banshees, The Slits and DIRT[35] as her inspirations. The popularity of British punk rock as represented by bands such as Sex Pistols or The Raincoats of course went further, shaping both artists and audiences[36].

Thus English was naturally a part of the first punk models and inspirations, and a major factor in the decision to use this particular foreign language in a song, a decision which had serious consequences that were not necessarily obvious. First, as Rafał Księżyk[37] observes in reference to the unexpected popularity of *Son of the Blue Sky* by the Polish band Wilki – choosing English is sometimes considered to be "disobeying the rules guaranteeing a national hit". Of course this example concerns rock in general, however, in a way associations with punk can be even stronger due to the above-mentioned strong relationships of the genre with local conditions, as well as with local audiences. Asked about the origins of Kryzys (specifically – how The Boors became Kryzys), Brylewski explained that "When we gave our first concert, all the songs were in English, but eventually we wanted to build a rapport with the audience, so we gradually switched to Polish"[38].

[31]Robert Brylewski, Rafał Księżyk, *Kryzys w Babilonie: autobiografia* [Crisis in Babylon] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2012), 69–71.

[32]Lizut, 50–51.

[33]Lizut, 71.

[34]Brylewski, Księżyk, 59–60.

[35]Rafał Księżyk, *Dzika rzecz: Polska muzyka i transformacja 1989–1993* [A wild thing: Polish music and transformation of 1989-1993] (Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne 2020), 167.

[36]Sabrina P. Ramet, "Muzyka rockowa a polityka w Polsce: poetyka protestu i oporu w tekstach utworów rockowych" [Rock music and politics in Poland: poetics of protest and resistance in rock lyrics], *Civitas Hominibus* 13 (2018): 115.

[37]Księżyk, 348.

[38]Brylewski, Księżyk, 84.

Likewise, let us consider what the leader of Pidżama Porno, Grabaż, said about the somewhat controversial semantic dimension of the song *Fucking in the Church*, which in itself is beyond the scope of this paper, however, it does throw some light on various motivations behind the choice of a foreign language in a song:

> [Gajda]: The sacrilegiousness and indecency of these lyrics made you write them in English.
> [Grabaż]: I could not write them in Polish, I would have to be crazy to do it [...] The only saving grace is that I wrote it in pseudo-English[39].

Thus using a foreign language can help to distance oneself and conceal certain content which would be too drastic if expressed in the native tongue.

Obviously this decision can result from other motivations. For instance, the above-mentioned band Kryzys often played covers of English songs to familiarize Polish audiences with them: "With Kryzys, we have always been doing propaganda, playing several covers, apart from Marley, *Thief of Fire* Pop Group, *Disorder* Joy Division, *Like a Hurricane* Neil Young, *I will Follow* U2"[40].

Sometimes this decision can stem from the vague idea of a "better sound". For instance, asked about the use of English in his *News from Tiananmen* Grabaż explains:

> I could not write it in Polish. I started to sing this song in English, as I originally did with most of my songs. I consulted these lyrics with my friends who had studied English, and they made it work somehow[41].

The Gdańsk band Deadlock, one of the precursors of Polish punk rock, set up in 1979, had a unique attitude towards English[42,43] – especially Jacek "Luter" Lenartowicz, the band's drummer and songwriter. Lipiński claims that Lenartowicz was fluent in English, and had a gift for "peculiar, Dadaistic lyrics"[44]. Brylewski goes even further, saying that "Luter was against singing in Polish… he saw himself as a cosmopolitan", and ultimately emigrated from Poland[45].

Analysis

The aim of this paper is to determine how the sociophonetic issues outlined above, so far analyzed mostly from the perspective of Anglo-Saxon culture, function in Polish punk rock in its Anglophone version, both in covers and in original songs. The thesis is that pronunciation in singing can be related to expressing certain, potentially evolving, social or stylistic meanings, and in the case of Anglophone Polish punk rock, these meanings can depend on trends within

[39]Krzysztof Grabowski, Krzysztof Gajda, *Gościu* [Guy] (Poznań: In Rock, 2010), 150–151.

[40]Brylewski, Księżyk, 96.

[41]Grabowski, Gajda, 175.

[42]Leszek Gnoiński, Jan Skaradziński, *Encyklopedia polskiego rocka* [Encyclopedia of Polish rock] (Poznań: In Rock, 2001), 141.

[43]Ramet, 115.

[44]Lizut, 47–48.

[45]Brylewski, Księżyk, 78–79.

the genre. The analysis will focus on the extent to which the above-mentioned complexity of forms related to variants of English manifests itself, in order to determine in particular the type of stylization or its lack. The results will be interpreted from a sociolinguistic perspective, especially language-ideology in reference to meanings ascribed to certain phonetic forms.

The analysis concerns both features which may potentially indicate Cockney-stylization, and a phonetic linguistic interference, i.e. the influence of Polish on the pronunciation of English. The latter perspective includes the potential for influence as a whole, resulting from differences between two phonological systems: moreover, references to the influence of English spelling on pronunciation will also be considered[46]. The former focuses on potential characteristic features which are at the same time the most effective in stylization. Additionally, in some cases also alternative tendencies towards British or American English are indicated.

The study is based on selected songs (both covers and original work) by 10 Polish punk rock bands (Deadlock, Armia, Brygada Kryzys, Kremlowskie Kuranty, Post Regiment, Fate, Stradoom Terror, Pidżama Porno, Alians, Świat Czarownic), as well as on a later example of punk rock stylization (Tomasz "Tomson" Lach), excluding Anglophone reggae and jazz rock songs. The analyzed covers include both reinterpretations of punk rock songs, and examples of songs which originally did not belong to the genre, but were rearranged as such. Table 1 lists all the analyzed songs, divided into original songs and covers. Square brackets provide information on the original versions.

Table 1. Analyzed songs

Artist	Original songs	Covers
Alians		*I Fought the Law* [Dead Kennedys[?]], *White Man In Hammersmith Palace* [*(White Man) in Hammersmith Palais*, The Clash], *Global Landlord Herb Connection* [*Let's Lynch The Landlord*, Dead Kennedys], *War* [Leonard Cohen]

[46]It should be stressed that the analysis is not concerned with whether a given pronunciation is correct or not, but with providing a broader picture from the perspective of sociolinguistics and style, i.e. determining the stylization potential related to a given pronunciation in song.

[?]   The song was originally performed by Sonny Curtis with The Crickets, but it became a classic thanks to The Clash's cover, hence often it is the latter band's version that is recognized as the inspiration. However, in this case the lyrics indicate that it was the version modified by Dead Kennedys.

Armia		*Police and Thieves* [The Clash], *Nie dotykając ziemi* [*Not To Touch the Earth*, The Doors], *Sodoma i Gomora* [*Sodom And Gomorrah*, Misty In Roots]
Brygada Kryzys	*Too Much, Subway Train*	
Deadlock	*Ambition*	
Fate		*Biały proszek* [*Unilever*, Chumbawamba]
Kremlowskie Kuranty	*In Your Eyes*	
Pidżama Porno	*Fucking in the Church, News from Tiananmen*	*Rockin' in the Free World* [Neil Young]
Post Regiment	*Catch Another Train, Awareness, Now I Know*	
Stradoom Terror		*If the Kids Are United* [Sham 69]
Świat Czarownic		*My Youngest Son* [*My Youngest Son Came Home Today*, Eric Bogle]
Tomasz "Tomson" Lach		*Jingle Bells* [trad.[?]]

Most artists display a clear influence of Polish, and their pronunciation is affected by English spelling. These observations concern both bands performing almost exclusively in Polish, only rarely singing in English, and Deadlock, which performs only in English (which is exceptional when compared to the other analyzed bands). In fact, some bands in this group admitted that they were aware that their English was not perfect; for example, the leader and singer of Armia, Tomasz Budzyński, admits in his autobiography that he had always found singing in English problematic due to his lack of aptitude for foreign languages in general. His original plan to record an Anglophone version of the album *Legenda* was not realized: "I struggled with English, and even though *Groźniak* was almost complete, we eventually decided to give up on

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[?]   Although we know who the author of this song is (James Lord Pierpont), the song itself has become traditional, and as such it is difficult to connect it to any specific performer.

it, mostly because I was not very enthusiastic about the project"[47]. Recording a whole album, the jazz-rock 2009 *Freak*, can be thus considered a surprising experiment. As Budzyński[48] explained: "Our ancient vision suddenly had a comeback. Together with Gero[49] we wrote the lyrics, and then Gero made sure that they were comprehensible. My English had not improved, but the challenge our band undertook also concerned me". Grabaż, the singer in Pidżama Porno, also talked about his unprofessional way of learning English pronunciation: "Football helped me learn English. […] «Panorama Śląska» published photos of football teams on the last page. Most were from England, so I would ask my father to tell me how to pronounce their names. This is how I believe I have mastered English phonetics"[50].

The discussion of results can start with one of the most typical and common examples of the influence of Polish on the pronunciation of English – final devoicing of voiced obstruents, which can be observed also in the analyzed material: [t] instead of [d] in *God* (Deadlock – *Ambition*) or in *good* and *friend* (Pidżama Porno – *News from Tiananmen*); [ɛt] rather than [ɪd] in *divided* and *united* (Stradoom Terror – *If the Kids Are United*); [s] instead of [z] in *dreams*, *eyes* and *hands* (Kremlowskie Kuranty – *In Your Eyes*, Fate – *Biały proszek*). Moreover, English consonants are often replaced with Polish ones, which sound similar, but have a different place and/or manner of articulation: [š] instead of [ʃ] in *washes* (Fate – *Biały proszek*), [l] instead of [ł] and [dž] instead of [dʒ] in *kill* and *religion* (Deadlock – *Ambition*), or the Polish [r] rather than the English [ɹ], for example in *there* – "I didn't even know there was a war" or *nervous* – "the situation makes me kind of nervous" (Alians – *There is a War*). Finally, the proper name in *White Man In Hammersmith Palace* by Alians in the verse "If Adolf Hitler flew in today / They'd send a limousine anyway" – sounds very Polish altogether.

When it comes to vowels, the interference from Polish manifests itself in replacing the English [ə] with the Polish [ɔ] in words like *colors* (Pidżama Porno – *Rockin' in the Free World*), *ambition* (Deadlock – *Ambition*), *generation* or *ammunition* (Armia – *Police and Thieves*). It should be noted that in the original version by The Clash (to which Armia refers) a similar tendency is observable, yet not as clearly. Replacing [ə] with an unreduced vowel can also be heard in other cases: with [a] in *total* (Armia – *Sodoma i Gomora*). Other vocalic changes include replacing diphthongs with single vowels (e.g. [ɔ] in *total*; Armia – *Sodoma i Gomora*), or replacing English diphthongs with Polish equivalents (e.g. [ɛj] in *away* or [aj] in *whiter*; Fate – *Biały proszek*).

The influence of spelling on pronunciation is another analyzed feature. Some examples have already been provided (e.g. the pronunciation of the word *total*; Armia – *Sodoma i Gomora*). Other examples include *world* and *work* ([ɔ] instead of [ɜː], *dirty* and *dirt* ([i] instead of [ɜː]; Fate – *Biały proszek*) or the Polish [a] in such words as *happened* and *Mary* (Pidżama Porno – *News from Tiananmen*). Sometimes a wrong pronunciation can result from an improper application of rules for reading English spelling, which is especially visible in the case of words such as *by* ([i] instead of [aɪ]) and *bullet* and *butcher* ([a] instead of [ʊ]) in the phrases "Till by a bullet sanctified" and "Like

dead meat on a butcher's tray", replacing correct monophthongs with diphthongs in *brought* ([oʊ] instead of [ɔː]) and *children* ([aɪ] instead of [ɪ]) in phrases "They brought their young saint home today" and "At children's blood in gutters spilled" (Świat Czarownic – *My Youngest Son*).

When it comes to geographic variants of English, they are used inconsistently. In the analyzed covers, original versions represent American, Canadian, and British variants. British pronunciation is contaminated with Americanisms and Cockney. One could say that in some cases, when American songs were covered, a general impression of an American sound is maintained, especially in *Global Landlord Herb Connection*, or *Let's Lynch The Landlord* by Alians, in which [r] is rather consistently used in words such as *landlord* or *turn*, and the vowel [æ] in *blasting* and *can* is replaced with [ɛ], which is closer to its American realization in comparison with the British one[51] *I Fought the Law* is characterized by some inconsistency in terms of British and American phonetic features, for example: *hot* [hɑt] in the line "Drinkin' beer in the hot sun" resembles the American original, similarly to *got* [gɑt] in "You can get away with murder if you've got a badge". However, in the preceding verses: "I needed sex and I got mine" and "The law don't mean shit if you've got the right friends", or "My cop friends think that's fun" British pronunciation of words *got* [gɒt] and *cop* [kɒp] can be heard, as opposed to the original. Finally, no examples of imitating Cockney were found, even when it was audible in original versions, e.g. *(White Man) in Hammersmith Palais* by The Clash *czy If the Kids Are United* by Sham 69.

In some cases, passages in Polish are intertwined with English, for example in *Nie dotykając ziemi* by Armia or *Biały proszek* by Fate ("gdzieś w tym wszystkim ja i ty – co jesteśmy gotowi zrobić" [you and I somewhere in all that – what we would do]). It seems to highlight the performer's national identity, situating the English of the whole song in a specific context – perhaps even in brackets – constituting a kind of nod to Polish audiences. Moreover, both in the case of Armia and Fate the song titles are Polonized.

The reason why the next two bands, Brygada Kryzys and Post Regiment, are discussed separately, is that the interference from Polish is far less audible[52], which is unsurprising especially in the latter band given that the singer, Dominika Domczyk, is an English major.

In the two analyzed songs by Brygada Kryzys[53] there are correct diphthongs in such words as *roads*, *hope* and *most*, and there is no final devoicing – one of the most common examples of Polish interference – in words such as *roads*, *live*, *spend*, *need* final [z], [v] and [d], respectively. There is [ə] in *communication*, and even if in the word *isolation* the same vowel is more similar to [ɔ], it is not as clear as in the already discussed examples. A more pronounced example of Polish interference can be heard in the somewhat captious word *patrol* [pəˈtrəʊl]. Moreover, the pronunciation here sounds more British: [ɒ] in *blocked* ("they blocked all the roads"), no

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[51] In *blasting* the stressed vowel in British English would be [ɑː]. Yet, even in the cases in which phonemic transcription is the same in both the UK and the US variants, as in *can* [kæn], American English [æ] may be more raised and tensed, compared with the British variant, especially in a pre-nasal position, see Matthew J. Gordon, "The West and Midwest: Phonology", 348 in: A *Handbook of Varieties of English. Volume 1: Phonology*, edited by Bernd Kortmann and Edgar W. Schneider (Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004), 338–350; Charles Boberg, "The Phonological Status of Western New England", 17–19, *American Speech* 76 (1) [2001]: 3–29.

[52] It should be stressed that eliminating all first language interference is almost impossible, see Włodzimierz Sobkowiak, *English Phonetics for Poles: A Resource Book for Learners and Teachers* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2004), 22–23.

[53] The analysis concerns Tomasz Lipiński's pronunciation, not Robert Brylewski's.

rhotacism in *never* ("never never knew I could") or *scared* ("I'm scared to live"), and the vowel in *ask* is [ɑː] rather than [æ] ("don't ask me for no money").

In the case of Post Regiment, the pronunciation is professional, sometimes inclined towards the American variant, e.g. [æ] in *can't* ("But something wrong happened can't you see") or [gɑt] in *got* ("You've got it in your brain"). Nonetheless, even though the interference from Polish is not as pronounced as in the cases discussed above, it can be noticed that neither group tries to imitate Cockney. Hence, the phonetic trend characteristic for the genre which originated in England is not represented here, even though it occurs in other regions of the globalized world of music.

Finally, let us discuss an exceptionally interesting case: a punk cover of *Jingle Bells* performed solo by Tomasz "Tomson" Lach, singer in Afromental (set up in 2004), as part of the soundtrack to the 2011 movie *Listy do M* [Letters to M]. The cover is characterized by dynamicity and stylistic variability, both in terms of music and language; apart from the basic text in English, there are also verses in Polish. Interestingly, sometimes there is a non-standard accent, e.g. in the line "**Przybieżeli** do Betlejem pasterze" there is the so-called dark [ł], which may sound slightly foreign (an interference from English), or regional (Polish Kresy). The most important issue for us here is the occurrence of phonetic features of Cockney in some vowels. This stylization is especially pronounced in the last word of the phrase "Jingle all the **way**" [æɪ]; it also appears in *sleigh* and *sleighing* ("In a one horse open sleigh", "A sleighing song tonight"). [ʌʊ] rather than [əʊ] in *snow* and *ago* ("Dashing through the **snow**", "A day or two **ago**") is another vocalic feature of Cockney; additionally, also [ɑɪ] resembles Cockney [ɑɪ] in "Making spirits **bright**".

Conclusions

Based on this analysis it can be concluded that the English of Polish punk rock bands set up between the late 1970s and early 1990s reflected how Poles learned the language at that time – with heavy interference from Polish, which obviously also depended on individual circumstances and skill. What is especially significant is that their English is not styled to resemble the fashionable Cockney variant, which is observable in other regions of the world of punk rock, including the discussed example of a pop-punk cover of *Jingle Bells* by "Tomson". It can thus be said that we are dealing here with a somewhat paradoxical evolution of patterns of sociolinguistic meanings. Forms of Cockney – no longer dependent on associations with a specific socio-geographic area – may have become an impressive element of style rather than a determinant of authenticity. Its 1970s rebelliousness has transformed into an attractive stylistic ornament, commercially adapted in the twenty-first century, like the T-shirts featuring punk rock bands, now commercially available in global chain stores. Hence it is English without any stylization that sounds authentic, natural and honest (at least in the context analyzed here), and as such matches the values associated with punk rock, which elevated non-standard forms (covert prestige). We should remember that even incorrect forms have their place in punk rock[54]. There are also examples from outside punk rock which show that imperfect forms with heavy interference from a given native tongue are an asset in carrying important meanings – e.g. Marlene

[54]Hebdige, 111.

Dietrich's strong German accent played a crucial role in constructing her *femme fatale* image[55].

We should obviously also consider various social conditions in different periods in Polish history. The ability to acquire linguistic awareness of English is far more easily accessible in the twenty-first century than it was in the 1970s or 1980s. English is now omnipresent, and today we have nearly unlimited access to high quality recordings, which means that hearing and imitating certain unobvious dialectal features is easier. This concerns especially those pronunciation features which are not only to some extent conventionalized, but also those becoming common or even commercially appealing. On the other hand, being able to hear features of Cockney in the communist era, using poor quality devices only testifies to someone's exceptional aptitude for languages. Thus the pop-punk cover of *Jingle Bells* may foreshadow a new trend; perhaps with the rising fluency in English and awareness of its many variants, as well as with good access to high-quality recordings, such stylizations will become more common. Hence, to some extent this may be a question of a generational change – the emergence of a generation who is familiar with English enough to copy (consciously or not) specialized, non-standard genre style patterns.

The social conditions mentioned above are to some extent also connected with a broader, and simultaneously fundamental relationship between language and identity. The significance of language in this respect manifests itself first of all in artistic decisions regarding the choice of language – Polish or English. Robert Brylewski's motivation (cited in the third section of this paper) regarding the choice of Polish in order to build better rapport with the audience on the one hand, and on the other – the choice of English in the context of Jacek Lenartowicz's cosmopolitan approach both seem to somewhat confirm certain sociolinguistic observations. A foreign language may mean – to some extant – accepting a new identity; the pronunciation is then considered to be the best, the most sensitive indicator of accepting this new identity, and at the same time of the level to which the borders of linguistic ego can be permeated[56]. This phenomenon can also be considered in the light of studies investigating relationships between a foreign language (especially pronunciation) and a sense of a cultural dissonance. It turns out that the smaller this dissonance is, the better the pronunciation, and *vice versa* – the bigger the dissonance, the worse the accent. In this case, incorrect pronunciation is connected to anxiety related to the loss of identity[57,58]. The audible interference from Polish in most of the analyzed songs can be considered in this context – the artists may not have had any motivation to take on the identity symbolized by Cockney, instead expressing their Polishness with a Polish accent in English. *Polglish*[59] can thus be seen as a symbol of locality, which in itself is valued in punk rock.

These considerations confirm the complexity and effectiveness of phonetics, both in terms of stylization and expressing identity; the stylistic potential of English in its various forms, as

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[55]Allan Bell, "Falling in love again and again: Marlene Dietrich and the iconization of non-native English", *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 5 (2011): 627–656.

[56]David Block, *Second language identities* (London – New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 51.

[57]See e.g. Karen Lybeck, "Cultural Identification and Second Language Pronunciation of Americans in Norway", *Modern Language Journal (Estados Unidos)* 86, nr 02 (2002): 174–191.

[58]Obviously the loss of identity can sometimes be a desired effect – see e.g. the case of *Fucking in the Church* mentioned in the third section of this paper.

[59]Sobkowiak, 23.

well as the dynamics of sociolinguistic meanings related to them. Finally – regardless of the applied stylistic model – the role of voice as an important means of communication between a singer and their audience is confirmed, regarding both the relationship between voice and lyrics[60], and pronunciation with socio-cultural meanings.

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translated by Paulina Zagórska

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[60]Paweł Tański, *Głosy i performanse tekstów. Literatura – piosenki – ciało* [Voices and performances of texts. Literature – song – body] (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2021).

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KEYWORDS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

punk rock

ABSTRACT:

The paper analyzes the functioning of selected English phonetic features and inspirations related to them in Polish punk rock, and interprets the results in a broader stylistic and socio-linguistic context. It is based on the thesis that pronunciation in singing is often connected to expressing specific, potentially evolving social or stylistic meanings, and in the case of Anglophone Polish punk rock these meanings depend on trends within the genre. In most analyzed cases, English pronunciation displays a lot of interference from Polish and an unstylized sound, while features associated with Cockney are quite rare.

Cockney

style

S O C I O P H O N E T I C S

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Till Lindemann's Transmedial Songs

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> Songs can no more be reduced to their performance than to their lyrics, a recording or sheet music. Song lyrics live and endure between and beyond all these interpretations, transcriptions and renditions[1].
>
> Pete Astor, Keith Negus

> Platz Eins
> Ich im Rampenlicht[2].
>
> Till Lindemann

Introduction

Rammstein's complex artistic, stage, performative, and media practices have been discussed by numerous contemporary music lovers, reviewed by journalists and music critics, as well as analyzed by Polish and international scholars, especially from the perspective of literary and

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[1] Pete Astor and Keith Negus, "More Than a Performance: Song Lyrics and the Practices of Songwriting", in: *Popular Music Matters. Essays in Honour of Simon Frith*, ed. Lee Marshall, Dave Laing (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 206.

[2] From: *Platz Eins*, *F&M* by Lindemann, Vertigo Berlin, 2019.

cultural studies, since the band was founded in 1994.[3] Respectively, minor artistic and media projects by the members of the band, such as, (auto)biographical narratives,[4] solo musical projects,[5] or the lead singer's poetry, have received less academic attention.

This article focuses on the works of the group called Lindemann, which is not as well studied and analyzed. It is, however, an ideologically engaged project that, contrary to the original intentions of its founders, highlights the *emploi* of the singer and songwriter born in Leipzig in 1963. The aim of the article will be to discuss Till Lindemann's multimedia and transmedial art as well as to reflect on the status of the song in contemporary convergence media culture. In order to discover the performative potential of the songs (co)created by the German musician, how they "work," I shall read them in relation to other multimodal means of communication, media platforms and artistic projects.

Songs in multimodal artistic communication

Lindemann's phonographic debut took place in 2015. The band has released two studio albums thus far, *Skills in Pills*[6] and *F&M*,[7] and one live album, *Live in Moscow*.[8] Despite this rather modest record output, the band attracts attention for several reasons, be they personal, image-related, promotional, or artistic. In November 2020, one of the band's co-founders, the Swedish trans-genre multi-instrumentalist Peter Tägtgren, known primarily for his versatile talent and skills displayed in the bands Hypocrisy and Pain, left the band. The band, led by the emblematic duo Tägtgren/Lindemann, was to a large extent a form of intertextual[9] game with the aesthetics of Rammstein's works and bands in which the Swedish musician was the frontman. After the artists parted ways, Till Lindemann, who named the band after himself, proposed a new stage *emploi*, which was, however, consistent with his unique image strategy. Specific transfigurations within the band, presented to the public in the town of Holon in Israel on January 1, 2022, included, among others, new

[3] See, among others, Robert G.H. Burns, "German symbolism in rock music: national signification in the imagery and songs of Rammstein", *Popular Music* 27, no. 3 (2008): 457–472; *Rammstein on Fire: New Perspectives on the Music and Performances*, ed. John T. Littlejohn, Michael T. Putnam (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2013); Tomasz P. Bocheński, "«Was verliert man / mit dem Augenschlag?». Między poezją a kontynuantami hard rocka: przypadek Tilla Lindemanna i zespołu Rammstein" [«Was verliert man / mit dem Augenschlag?». Between poetry and hard rock followers: the case of Till Lindemann and Rammstein], in: *Kultura rocka 1: Twórcy, tematy, motywy*, ed. Jakub Osiński, Michał Pranke, Paweł Tański (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2019), 301–316; Maciej Kubiak, "Koncertowe *sacrum* i *profanum* – teatralizacja przestrzeni scenicznej na przykładzie zespołu Rammstein" [The sacred and the profane in concert: Rammstein and the theatricalisation of the stage], *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia de Cultura* 11, no. 3 (2021): 57–69. In the context of Rammstein's artistic strategies, it is also worth bearing in mind the pioneering activities of the Slovenian band Laibach, founded in 1980, whose work was clearly an inspiration for the German band. On this subject, see e.g. Daniel Lukes, "Rammstein Are Laibach for Adolescents and Laibach Are Rammstein for Grown-Ups", in: *Rammstein on Fire: New Perspectives on the Music and Performances*, 53–78.

[4] For example, books by Christian Lorenz, Rammstein's keyboard player. See: Christian Lorenz, *Flake. Der Tastenficker: An was ich mich so erinnern kann* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2015); Christian Lorenz, *Flake. Heute hat die Welt Geburtstag* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2017).

[5] For example, the works of Emigrate, founded in 2005 by Richard Kruspe.

[6] Lindemann, *Skills in Pills*, Warner Music Central Europe, 2015.

[7] Lindemann, *F&M*, Vertigo Berlin, 2019.

[8] Lindemann, *Live in Moscow*, Vertigo Berlin, 2021.

[9] This category is understood broadly in the present article, see: Ryszard Nycz, "Intertekstualność i jej zakresy: teksty, gatunki, światy" [Intertextuality and its scope: texts, genres, worlds], *Pamiętnik Literacki* [Literary Diary] 2 (1990); reprinted in: Ryszard Nycz, *Tekstowy świat: poststrukturalizm a wiedza o literaturze* [The textual world: poststructuralism and literary studies] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL, 1995), 59–82.

band members, new images of the musicians, new stage engineering solutions (e.g., stage lighting design and type), new visual communication strategies, new colors used for the "décor" (as defined by Erving Goffman[10]). What is unique about Till Lindemann's solo work is also the fact that his songs are bilingual.[11] Songs in English have a potentially greater opportunity to reach a wider audience; the lyrics could be better understood by listeners from different parts of the world. Despite this original strategy, the second album from 2019 also included songs in German, which naturally provoked comparisons with Rammstein. The band, however, managed to maintain their distinct musical style and distinguish themselves from the achievements of their mother bands.

Considering the nature of Lindemann's artistic actions, using the aforementioned term "song"[12] seems justified. It is a semantically broader category than the Polish terms "piosenka" [song], "utwór słowno-muzyczny" [a short musical composition of words and music], or "pieśń" [*canto*].[13] Waldemar Kuligowski has pointed to the terminological aptness of the English noun in *Song Studies. Poetyka i polityka wytwarzania piosenki* [Song Studies. The poetics and politics of song production].[14] Since we use a term that is derived from the Old English *sang*, the research perspective should be extended in a programmatic way and the analyzes should include aspects related to the singer's voice, the art of singing, and multimodality.[15] The last category, also referred to, *inter alia*, as multiple modality,[16] has been the subject of numerous studies across different disciplines.[17]

The linguist Jolanta Maćkiewicz notes that the term "multimodality" is defined in academia in a threefold manner: firstly, in "reference to the communicative phenomenon of combining at

[10]Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), 45-46.

[11]There are songs in English on *Skills in Pills* and there are songs in German on *F&M*.

[12]The form adopted and dominant in the article is "song" due to its broader meaning. Other terms, such as "a short musical composition of words and music," may appear in the text for stylistic reasons.

[13]It should be noted, however, that the song, considered in various contexts, was the subject of insightful Polish literary analyses, see among others, Piotr Łuszczykiewicz, *Piosenka w poezji pokolenia ery transformacji 1984–2009* [Song in the Poetry of the Transformation Era 1984–2009] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2009); Joanna Maleszyńska, *Apologia piosenki: studia z historii gatunku* [The Apologia of the Song: Studies in the History of the Genre] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2013); Izolda Kiec, *W szarej sukience? Autorki i wokalistki w poszukiwaniu tożsamości* [In a gray dress? Female authors and singers in search of identity] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2013); Krzysztof Gajda, *Szarpidruty i poeci: piosenka wobec przemian społecznych i kulturowych ostatnich dekad* [Musicians and poets: The song in the face of social and cultural changes in recent decades] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2017); Marek Kurkiewicz, *Dźwięki w słowach, słowa na tle dźwięków: o korelacjach akustyczno-tekstowych w literaturze i muzyce* [Sounds in words, words against sounds: Acoustic and textual correlations in literature and music] (Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo UKW, 2019); Adam Regiewicz, *Głośne pióra. Obecność muzyki popularnej we współczesnej literaturze polskiej* [Loud pens. Popular music in contemporary Polish literature] (Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Humanistyczno-Przyrodniczego im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, 2020); Paweł Tański, *Głosy i performanse tekstów. Literatura – piosenki – ciało* [Voices and performances of texts. Literature - songs – body] (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2021). See also a thematic section devoted to *Song Studies* in: *Czas Kultury* 3 (2021).

[14]See: Waldemar Kuligowski, "Wprowadzenie: kulturowe «światy» piosenek i ich badanie" [Introduction: the cultural "worlds" of songs and song studies] in: *Song Studies. Poetyka i polityka wytwarzania piosenki* [Song Studies. The poetics and politics of song production], ed. Waldemar Kuligowski, Paweł Tański (Poznań: Instytut im. Oskara Kolberga, 2021), 7.

[15]Kuligowski, 9–10.

[16]Multimodality in popular music was studied by, among others, David Machin, see: *Analysing Popular Music: Image, Sound, Text* (London: Sage Publications, 2010). In Poland, the multimodal nature of rock songs was studied by, among others, Marcin Rychlewski, see: Marcin Rychlewski, *Rewolucja rocka. Semiotyczne wymiary elektrycznej ekstazy* [Rock revolution. The semiotic dimensions of electric ecstasy] (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Oficynka, 2011), 27–48.

[17]See, among others, important works which discuss multimodality in the optics of social semiotics: *Perspectives on Multimodality*, ed. Eija Ventola, Cassily Charles, Martin Kaltenbacher (Amsterdam–Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004); Gunther Kress, *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication* (New York: Routledge, 2010); *Multimodal Studies. Exploring Issues and Domains,* ed. Kay O'Halloran, Bradley A. Smith (New York: Routledge, 2011); *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis*, ed. Carey Jewitt (London: Routledge, 2014).

least two semiotic systems in one message. Secondly, with regard to the way in which this phenomenon is studied. A method that takes into account not only all the systems that contribute to the message, but also all possible relationships between them and additional meanings resulting from these relationships. Thirdly, with regard to the theory emerging from specific research (or, indeed a research discipline?)."[18] According to Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz, multimodality is "a property of signification, consisting in the simultaneous use of signs belonging to semiotic resources with different physical properties."[19] Lisowska-Magdziarz notes that natural language, which we often perceive as the most important means of interpersonal communication, is only one of the possible modes. When constructing and conveying meanings, "we use many sets of signs simultaneously: speech, writing, pictures, gestures, music, proxemics, touch."[20]

The textual and musical narratives (co)created and performed by Till Lindemann, as well as the work of many other rock, hip-hop, or metal artists should therefore be considered in broader contexts, related to, *inter alia*, voice, language, genre and the body. Each narrative is a part of a discourse defined as "a set of communicative behaviors expressing the power relations, knowledge and agency of the communicating individual."[21] Music itself is, as Simon McKerrell and Lyndon C.S. Way argue, multimodal discourse.[22] Functioning in ideological and social discourses, songs are narratives that are often developed creatively across various media platforms, in music videos, album covers (iconography), animations, fan art, etc. This, in turn, requires that we open up to new research perspectives.

Towards transmedial songs: The case of Till Lindemann

As works combining music with the traditional narrative medium, i.e., lyrics, songs should be considered from the perspective of transmedia narratology,[23] which postulates that narration is a transmedial category and therefore "it can be presented in many different media: as language, images, or in space."[24] Katarzyna Kaczmarczyk aptly notices the heterogenous nature

[18]Jolanta Maćkiewicz, "Badanie mediów multimodalnych – multimodalne badanie mediów" [Studying multimodal media – multimodal media research, *Studia Medioznawcze* 69, no. 2 (2017): 33–42.

[19]Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz, *Znaki na uwięzi. Od semiologii do semiotyki mediów* [Tethered signs. From semiology to media semiotics] (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka 2019), 114.

[20]Lisowska-Magdziarz, 115.

[21]Lisowska-Magdziarz, 279.

[22]See: Simon McKerrell and Lyndon C.S. Way, "Understanding Music as Multimodal Discourse", in: *Music as Multimodal Discourse. Semiotics, Power and Protest*, ed. Simon McKerrell, Lyndon C.S. Way (London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 1–20.

[23]See, for example, David Herman, "Toward a Transmedial Narratology", in: *Narrative across Media. The Languages of Storytelling*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan (Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004). One of the sections in this groundbreaking study is devoted exclusively to music, see: *Narrative across Media. The Languages of Storytelling*, 267–328. See also important publications on transmedia: *Beyond Classical Narration. Transmedial and Unnatural Challenges,* ed. Jan Alber, Per Krogh Hansen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014); Jan-Noël Thon, *Transmedial Narratology and Contemporary Media Culture* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016) or the Polish study *Narratologia transmedialna. Teorie, praktyki, wyzwania* [Transmedia narratology. Theories, practices, challenges], ed. Katarzyna Kaczmarczyk (Kraków: Universitas, 2017).

[24]On the main methodological assumptions of this research perspective, see: Katarzyna Kaczmarczyk, "O podstawowych założeniach narratologii transmedialnej i o jej miejscu wśród narratologii klasycznych i postklasycznych" [The basic assumptions of transmedia narratology and its place among classical and post-classical narratologies], in: *Narratologia transmedialna. Teorie, praktyki, wyzwania*, 21.

of the narratives which surround us, even if they are similar in terms of content. According to Kaczmarczyk, "when it comes to narration, the medium is 'the difference that makes the difference.' It allows you to emphasize some aspects of the story and allows the recipient to complete others. The medium also creates a communicative environment which determines possible patterns of engaging with the narrative and its social functioning."[25]

The projects co-founded by Till Lindemann make use of various media platforms. An example of this strategy may be the first album entitled *Skills in Pills*. The songs on the album make up a wider multimodal discourse (co)created by the German singer. The album, which is available in various formats (CD, Box Set, Deluxe Edition, vinyl, MP3, etc.), consists of various elements which may also be called paratexts;[26] they concern, among others, art (cover, booklet, accessories), components which illustrate and semantically broaden the songs, especially in regard to the lyrics.[27]

From the perspective of fan participation and the media convergence culture described by Henry Jenkins,[28] it is also worth mentioning the promotional campaign behind the album. On June 8, 2015, a search for a hidden album was organized in Berlin. The only clue was provided in photos posted on Facebook. As instructed, *Skills in Pills Hunt* participants met at the Bethanien Kunstraum in Kreuzberg, where they were given further instructions on how to destroy a so-called pig-piñata. The person who found the figure of a white pig hidden in the piñata became the happy owner of all versions of the new album. The prize for the winner of the "hunt" was hidden in a unique place, namely in a historic pharmacy room, where, apart from archival containers for medicines, vials, etc., there were editions of the premiere album *Skills in Pills*. The location, of course, referred to the title and the songs on the album. The figure of the pig is also significant in terms of the complex symbolism of the album and the intertextual play in which it engages. Emblematic in rock culture, the animal was made famous by the cover of Pink Floyd's *Animals* from 1977, which in turn refers to George Orwell's famous novel *Animal Farm: A Fairy Story*, published in 1945. A fat spotted pig may be seen in one of the photos included in the booklet accompanying *Skills in Pills*. Taking into account the animal's many symbolic meanings,[29] one may see a connection between the images and the lyrics, especially the lyrics to the song "Fat" which refers

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[25]Katarzyna Kaczmarczyk, "Wprowadzenie" [Introduction], in: *Narratologia transmedialna. Teorie, praktyki, wyzwania*, 5.

[26]See, for example, Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 377-381.

[27]The "language" of verbal-musical works should be considered from the media-linguistic perspective. At this point, it is assumed, to draw on Bogusław Skowronek, that language is "an inseparable element of cognitive structures, the functioning of which depends on external contexts, especially culture and nowadays media culture." See: Bogusław Skowronek, *Mediolingwistyka. Wprowadzenie* [Media linguistics: Introduction] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UP, 2013), 11.

[28]See: Henry Jenkins, *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006). Songs on the Internet, and especially video clips published on YouTube, can also be treated as spreadable media, see: *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*, ed. Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, Joshua Green (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

[29]The animal symbolizes, among others rebirth, sacrifice, abundance, licentiousness, lewdness, dullness, greed, gluttony, and laziness, see: Władysław Kopaliński, *Słownik symboli* [Dictionary of symbols] (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1991), 419.

to sexual practices, sexual fetishes (the so-called feederism) and (excessive) consumption.[30] Piglets also appear as metaphorical representations of children in the controversial music video for "Praise Abort,"[31] which addresses the complex problem of abortion. It is worth noting that the music video is a multimodal medium with a significant narrative potential, which, at least in Polish academia, still awaits further in-depth studies.[32] Music videos are an important form of audiovisual art and a significant element of the artistic narratives of many musicians. "Praise Abort" can be interpreted as a statement by a bitter and frustrated father of six, disappointed with parenthood, who despises his children and places hedonistic pleasures above family values. Lindemann's ironic "praise of abortion," however, is difficult to interpret and classify. Aesthetic and worldview provocations are among his most successful artistic strategies; they inspire one to analyze and reflect on the problem at hand, but these methods often shock, irritate, and repel culturally "unprepared" listeners. Music videos add another complex layer to the German artist's discourse. It is a field of games, intertextual allusions, symbols; an area that allows, especially ardent fans, to decode artistic messages. The strategies used in the music video, including hyperbolization, animalization, and transgression, intensify the grotesque effect,[33] but they may also arouse fear or disgust among audience members. The comic[34] and the tragic, the interesting, the intriguing, but also the repulsive and the abject[35] collide in "Praise Abort." It is a multimodal narrative in which conventions, styles and cultural motives intertwine in a hybrid manner. Voice, prosody of speech and sound (characteristic pitch, Lindemann's "pronounced" German accent[36]), musical genre (hybrid correlation of electronic, disco, symphonic and heavy metal music), as well as visual (contrasting colors, e.g., black, white, and red costumes worn by men and

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[30]Considering the work in the context of another illustration included on the album, showing two artists (Tägtgren, Lindemann) in an infantilized form, as boys sitting on the lap of an unnaturally large naked woman, we will discover other meanings and ironic undertones. Hyperbolic obesity self-intertextually returns in the work of the German artist; for example, in the music video for the song "Keine Lust" from Rammstein's *Reise, Reise* (2004).

[31]The video was directed by Zoran Bihać; he is known for his numerous music videos for Rammstein, which today have the status of cult productions among the fans. In the audiovisual narratives of the German artist, the poetics of shock play a very important role.

[32]As regards Polish studies devoted to music videos, Urszula Jarecka's monograph, published over two decades ago, is worth mentioning, see: Urszula Jarecka, *Świat wideoklipu* [The world of the music video] (Warsaw: Oficyna Naukowa, 1999). Important recent international publications include: Brad Osborn, *Interpreting Music Video. Popular Music in the Post-MTV Era* (New York: Routledge, 2021); *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Popular Music Video Analysis*, ed. Lori A. Burns, Stan Hawkins (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019); Mathias Bonde Korsgaard, *Music Video after MTV. Audiovisual Studies, New Media, and Popular Music* (London–New York: Routledge, 2017); Diane Railton, Paul Watson, *Music Video and the Politics of Representation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

[33]In the case of the works in question, the grotesque is also combined with the absurd. The grotesque was discussed by, among others, Lee Byron Jennings, "The Term 'Grotesque'", in: *The Ludicrous Demon: Aspects of the Grotesque in German Post-Romantic Prose* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1963), 1-27. Wolfgang Kayser, among others, wrote about the relation between the grotesque and the absurd, see: Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* (Gloucester, Mass.: P. Smith, 1968).

[34]For example, in the first part of the video, we see Till Lindemann in a white suit, coat, and high-brimmed hat, gesticulating and dancing the moonwalk. This is another clear reference, in this case to the singer Michael Jackson, the famous promoter of the moonwalk.

[35]See: Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abject* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

[36]Lindemann's voice should be analyzed in a multidimensional way, as a musical instrument, figure, person, and the body. See: Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1998), 183-225.

women[37] "starring" in the video) and spatial (e.g., apparently real places are shown in the music video) elements influence the overall paradoxical message. "Praise Abort" is a polysemic artistic message, controversial in terms of its visual representations, but essentially it comments on an important, topical, much-discussed, and in many countries (including Poland) taboo social problem. In the transmedia approach proposed here, songs performed by Till Lindemann are subject to further strengthening, expansion and development in the mediatized scenic space. Screens on which various images, animations, fragments of music videos, sometimes modified, using, for example, selected scenes, themes, and shots of people starring in them, play an important role in this process.[38]

Masks – *physica curiosa* – the scenic nature of songs

In the lyrics to the songs on *Skills in Pills,* Till Lindemann addresses topics that are complex, important and socially relevant ("Praise Abort"), controversial ("Fat," "Ladyboy"), and, for some audience members, probably also iconoclastic ("Golden Shower"). He also touches on existential, difficult issues, including disease and death ("Home Sweet Home," "Children of The Sun"). Social issues return on the second album *F&M* (2019), as well as in the complex narrative related to the artist's latest single, entitled "Ich Hasse Kinder." So far, only selected songs and tropes in Lindemann's oeuvre have been highlighted. The visuals that draw attention on the second album are, among others, the masks which cover Lindemann's and Tägtgren's faces; they can be seen on the album cover, in the booklet and in the postmodern[39] music video for the song "Platz Eins." Respectively, in the expensive limited edition of the album (the so-called Box Set), we can find two white masks which resemble the faces of the two frontmen. The mask is another element used by the musicians to create their media (self)image. As Richard Schechner notes, the mask "is more than something which conceals the identity of the masked person. A doll is more than an inanimate piece of wood, or a flat hide animated by a human actor. In fact, masks and dolls are separate entities that interact with human actors. These performative objects are saturated with a vital force capable of transforming those who perform with them and through them."[40]

[37]Young female ballet dancers in the music video contrast with the animalistic quasi-human figures of Lindemann and Tägtgren. Dance emphasizes the grotesque in the audiovisual narrative in question.

[38]In the case of the song "Praise Abort," performed by the then members of Lindemann during their concert in Moscow in March 2020, a symbolic white piglet appeared on the screen several times, also in a multiplied form.

[39]In keeping with Ann Kaplan's classic approach, see: chapter 4 "Ideology, adolescent desire, and the five types of video on MTV", in: Ann E. Kaplan, *Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Postmodernism, and Consumer Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1987), 49–88.

[40]Richard Schechner, *Performatyka. Wstęp*, [Performance theory: Introduction] trans. Tomasz Kubikowski (Wrocław: Ośrodek Badań Twórczości Jerzego Grotowskiego i Poszukiwań Teatralno-Kulturowych, 2006), 233. The mask was also the subject of interesting studies by Polish scholars, see e.g.: *Maska. Zakrywanie i odkrywanie pomiędzy Wschodem i Zachodem. Studia na pograniczach antropologii i estetyki porównawczej. Mask. Covering and Uncovering between East and West. Studies on the borderlines of anthropology and comparative aesthetics*, ed. Wiesna Mond-Kozłowska (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2016); *Paradoksy maski. Antologia* [The paradoxes of the mask. Anthology], ed. Wojciech Dudzik (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2018); Wojciech Dudzik, *Maska w kulturze współczesnej Europy. Teorie i praktyki* [Mask in the culture of contemporary Europe. Theories and Practices] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2020). On the process of masking and the etymology of the mask in relation to black metal artists, see: Łukasz Stec, "*La mort de l'artiste – zamaskowana nieobecność artysty*" [La mort de l'artiste - the masked absence of the artist], in: *Artyści i sceny metalowej (kontr)kultury* [Metal (counter)culture: Artists and the scene], ed. Jakub Kosek (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UP, 2020), 75–94.

According to Wojciech Dudzik, the mask "immobilizes the face to multiply the expression of the body and mobilize the body."[41] Włodzimierz Szturc, in turn, states that "like a stranger, the mask emerges as a being that may be addressed as a stranger. After all, it is a challenge, a task, often a provocation, an intruder."[42] The mask in contemporary art may be considered, as Dudzik proposes, in terms of motifs, artifacts and media.[43] From the perspective of the transmedia narrative (co-)created by the German artist, the category of the medium turns out to be particularly important. In Lindemann's provocative, eccentric, and often subversive works, one can see various, often surreal motifs, ambiguous figures, symbolic, ceremonial gestures of covering and uncovering the "face" (Goffman[44]), of masking but also media exhibitionism.

In a paratext to the concert album *Live in Moscow* (2021), added to a communist propaganda-style newspaper ("Lindemann's Pravda"), we learn that Lindemann's project is a grotesque and over-the-top performance of violence. The authors of the article also point to the title of the book, the subject of which is a clear artistic inspiration for the musicians, namely *Storia della bruttezza* (*On Ugliness*[45]) edited by Umberto Eco, which records the history of ugliness in the culture of antiquity, baroque and romanticism, and includes numerous illustrations of beasts and peculiarities. The book also comments on obscenity, charlatanism, satanism, sadism and ugliness in the context of kitsch and camp. In the illustrations of the songs in which Till Lindemann wrote the lyrics, in peculiar additions, transmedia extensions, such as covers, booklets, posters, music video trailers and actual music videos, we can find many representations of physical, bodily, distorted, mutated, or modified curiosa (*physica curiosa*[46]). Thus, the zeugma is often used in the visual poetics of Lindemann's narrative.[47] One example is a paratextual illustration included in the booklet for the album *Skills in Pills*, referring to the song "Fish On," which shows Tägtgren as half-human, half-fish – a male mermaid – and Lindemann as a fisherman. The image perversely refers to the lyrics to the song, with strong erotic undertones, in which the seducer wants to "get" women ("catch" them, regardless of their size). This narrative is further developed in a surreal music video, which also includes a "fishing" theme, insofar as naked women fleeing from an undefined space are being caught in a net. During concerts, when the song "Fish On" was performed, the artists threw dead fish at the audience gathered in front of the stage. The ceremonial gesture, apart from referring to the song, was also an ironic travesty of a rock ritual, in which musicians throw guitar picks and drumsticks to the audience, especially at the end of a show.

From the perspective of creating planned transmedia narratives, as described by Henry Jenkins, it is worth mentioning Till Lindemann's latest single "Ich Hasse Kinder" ("I hate children"). In the spring of 2021, the first photos and short teasers announcing the music video

[41]*Maska w kulturze współczesnej Europy. Teorie i praktyki,* 64.

[42]Włodzimierz Szturc, *Genetyka widowiska. Człowiek / Maska / Rytuał / Widowisko* [The genetics of the performance. Man / Mask / Ritual / Spectacle] (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2017).

[43]*Maska w kulturze współczesnej Europy. Teorie i praktyki*, 225–253.

[44]Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual* (London: Routledge, 2005), 5.

[45]See: *On Ugliness*, ed. Umberto Eco (London: Hachette, 2011).

[46]See: *On Ugliness*, 220–249.

[47]For example, in the "Praise Abort" music video.

to the song began to appear on the German singer's official social media accounts. The shots and images (including a plaster bust of Vladimir Lenin with bleeding eyes; Till Lindemann in a Russian fur hat; children at school) provoked discussions among fans concerning the planned production and preliminary interpretations. It was no coincidence that the song and the music video had their premier on June 1 – International Children's Day. After watching the entire music video (5:25 minutes), viewers received elementary information about the plot, various places shown in the video (including various Moscow streets, Red Square, a school, a courtroom), and the characters (both adults and children). However, to further understand the artistic message, one had to watch a 20-minute short film[48] under the same title, published on June 26, 2021. It is a complex crime narrative of revenge, intrigue, murder, love, school as a violent institution, and life in a totalitarian state. The song is part of an elaborate, complex whole. Not reduced only to the lyrics but treated as a multimedia narrative (which includes the album cover, the music video, the short film), the song "Ich Hasse Kinder" opens up complex interpretations. It is yet another of Lindemann's stories which deals with such socially significant topics as violence against children and the aggression shown by minors to one another, often at school. It should be emphasized that the artists tried to ensure the best possible quality of the "product." The single "Ich Hasse Kinder" was released on red (or, in fact, burgundy) vinyl, a medium whose color corresponds to the symbolic image of a boy covering his face on the dust jacket. Red has connotations of, among other things, blood, crime, victimhood, communism, and revolution.[49] In turn, the drastic events shown in the music video and the short film could have been inspired by a real character, known as the "butcher of Rostov." Andrei Chikatilo (born in 1936 in Yabluchne, died in 1994 in Novocherkassk) was an official, a teacher, and a serial killer, whose victims were mainly children. References to the biographies of criminals, rapists, and killers may also be found in Till Lindemann's earlier works.[50]

We should also discuss, if only briefly, the scenic and performative aspect of the German singer's works. The scenic nature of the songs may be considered through the relationship between the genre,[51] the singer's voice, his body "in motion" (posture, gestures, facial expressions), and the "personal façade" and "a façade of space" (Goffman), as well as in relation to the "props" used during the performance (e.g. one-of-a-kind instruments with individual decorations, unconventional stands, posters, flags, etc.) and media platforms (e.g. screens on which animations and fragments of music videos are displayed).[52] In the approach proposed in the present article, Lindemann's works should also be considered in the wider context of the transdiscursive musical and cultural space of the "stage."[53] The stage is characterized by

[48]The video and the documentary were directed by the Russian artist Serghey Grey.

[49]See: Kopaliński, 55.

[50]See, for example, the song "Mein Teil" from Rammstein's *Reise Reise*, which refers to the story of Armin Meiwes, "the Rotenburg cannibal" or the song "Weiner Blut" from the album *Liebe ist für alle da* which talks about the infamous Josef Fritzl.

[51]According to Simon Frith, it is in the genre that ideological and social discourse inevitably merge. See: Frith, 130.

[52]Till Lindemann's ceremonial stage persona is characterized by over-the-top facial expressions and gestures. The recurring elements of the performances include, among others, kicking stands, dropping the microphone, and throwing baked goods (during the performance of "Allesfresser") or fish ("Fish On").

[53]As defined by Kahn-Harris. See: Keith Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal. Music and Culture on the Edge* (Oxford: Berg, 2007).

fluidity, changeability; it comprises various cultural texts and fan, production, and creative practices. The artist's songs circulate, moving in and out of scenic, artistic, and media space. Indeed, as the leader of the band, Lindemann's *emploi*, unique voice, and commitment certainly play a role in attracting the attention of fans. Lindemann is an experienced artist, aware of the marketing processes governing the music industry and the process of creating the image of so-called stars. In his works, he often self-ironically and mockingly refers to the mechanisms of show business, such as in the lyrics to the song "Platz Eins" from the *F&M* album, in which the narcissistic I, who wants splendor and fame, addresses the audience. The surreal music video for "Platz Eins" shows the many different, not necessarily positive, aspects of fame.

Conclusion

The songs (co)created by Till Lindemann should be considered as complex narratives functioning within multimodal ideological, subjective, and institutional discourses. The perspective adopted in the present article is close to the findings of Pete Astor and Keith Negus. The songs "live" between and beyond various interpretations, transcriptions, and performances. They cannot be reduced only to the music or the lyrics.

In the culture of media convergence, songs circulate within and across different music scenes; they function as various media and in various forms. Songs are subject to (e)covering; fragments of texts circulate in the form of quotes, slogans, mottos in real and virtual space; they are turned into internet memes. Often, they are also used by fans of a given artist in creating and establishing their self-image (tattoos, personalized prints on clothing, etc.). Analyzing songs from the perspective of transmedia narratology reveals their multidimensionality and the complexity of the wider narrative context and the unique nature of the chosen artistic language.

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

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KEYWORDS

media poetics

TILL LINDEMANN

ABSTRACT:

The article discusses Till Lindemann's multimedia and transmedia art. Functioning within and across ideological and subjective discourses, the songs of the German singer and songwriter are narratives that are often developed creatively across various media platforms, including cover art, music videos, or even short films. The releases of new albums and songs are often accompanied by creative promotional campaigns. Songs are therefore analyzed in the article as transmedial narratives (M.-L. Ryan) subject to the cultural logic of media convergence (H. Jenkins) and circulating across various musical scenes (K. Kahn-Harris).

song discourses

multimodality

transmedial songs

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On Acousmatism in Poetry.
Listening to the World in *Szybki wiersz* by Adam Zagajewski and *Kontrapunkt* by Stanisław Barańczak*

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This music with a ride, this is power after all.[1]

Miron Białoszewski[2]

Introduction

Szybki wiersz [Fast poem] by Adam Zagajewski and *Kontrapunkt* [Counterpoint] by Stanisław
Barańczak share the theme of music in lyrical circumstances (Iwona Puchalska)[3]. However,

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[1] "To jednak ta muzyka z jazdą to jest potęga."

[2] Miron Białoszewski, *Chamowo. Utwory zebrane* [Rabble. Collected works], vol. 11 (Warszawa: PIW, 2010), 222.

[3] See Iwona Puchalska, *Muzyka w okolicznościach lirycznych. Zapisy słuchania muzyki w poezji polskiej XX i XXI wieku* [Music in lyrical circumstances. Records of listening to music in twentieth ad twenty-first century Polish poetry] (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2017).

the intertextual dialogue between the two poems goes further which is why – when inter-preting them – we should ask ourselves questions which will show these texts in the light of intermedial co-dependencies: does music affect the structure of a poem? Does a poem find its shape in "someone else's beauty"? Apart from analyzing the so-called musicality of literature, we also need to consider the issue of acousmatic listening, which should be rec-ognized as a part of culture in terms of these two poems[4], as well as a style of reception of a soundscape[5].

In both cases the lyrical situation is inspired by music from a loudspeaker, i.e. sounds medi-ated via technology. The acousmatic experience can be understood here as an immersion in "mixed sound" – in which the practice of "mediated" listening (hi-fi) is connected with regis-tering random sounds, provoked by a specific, real space. It is also an attempt at concocting an intimate, safe (although distributed technologically) audiosphere, which plays the role of a niche alternative to the sounds of the chaotic outside world[6].

Today interdisciplinary comparative studies define numerous music-poetic variants, which belong to the broad "field of intermediality"[7]. The vectors of these inter-artistic inspirations go in different directions, which means that they require a comprehensive approach. The intermedial classifications proposed by Irina O. Rajewsky, Werner Wolf, or Jens Schröter are helpful in defining and organizing relationships between music and literature. Modern tax-onomies are typically based on a division of music and literary influences by Steven P. Scher, which is well established in the literature on this topic. In terms of musicality, it is easy to identify "intermedial references"[8] in Zagajewski's and Barańczak's poems – taking them into consideration is a *sine qua non* condition of interpretation. Neither poem goes beyond a single (in this case – linguistic) means of expression. In sophisticated poetry narrowing the interpretation to direct musical clues seems to be an oversimplification. In this case, the character of musical-literary connotations approaches ontological intermediality phenom-ena[9], which refer to the specific character of the material of a given art. An intermedial piece is situated between ontological analogies (e.g. temporality as a feature of poetry and music) and differences (e.g. "static" narrative of painting and dynamic narrative of film).

[4] See Brian Kane, *Sound Unseen. Acousmatic Sound in The Theory and Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc, 2014), 8.

[5] It can be assumed that a soundscape is a given acoustic environment – a studied field with all its contexts. See Renata Tańczuk, "Pejzaż dźwiękowy jako kategoria badań i doświadczeń miasta" [Soundscape as a category of research and urban experiences], *Audiosfera. Koncepcje – Badania – Praktyki* 1 [Audiosphere. Ideas – Research – Practices] (2015): 10–19.

[6] See Andrzej Hejmej, "Słuchający Stanisław Barańczak" [Stanisław Barańczak listening], in: *"Odcisk palca – rozległy labirynt": prace ofiarowane profesorowi Wojciechowi Ligęzie na jubileusz siedemdziesięciolecia* [Fingerprint – a vast labirynth: papers given to professor Wojciech Ligęza on the 70th jubilee], edited by Mateusz Antoniuk, Dorota Siwor (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2021), 713–727.

[7] Bernd Herzogenrath, "Travels in Intermedia[lity]. An Introduction", in: *Travels in Intermedia[lity]. ReBlurring the Boundarries*, edited by Bernd Herzogenrath (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2012), 3.

[8] Werner Wolf, "Intermediality Revisited. Reflections on Word and Music Relations in the Context of a General Typology of Intermediality", in: *Word and Music Studies. Essays Word and Music Studies. Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage*, edited by Suzanne M. Lodato, Suzanne Aspden, Walter Bernhart (Amsterdam – New York: Rodopi, 2002), 19 onwards.; Irina O. Rajewsky, "Intermediality, Intertextuality and Remediation. A Literary Perspective on Intermediality", *Intermédialités* 6 (2005): 52 onwards.

[9] Jens Schröter, "Four Models of Intermediality", in: *Travels in Intermedia[lity]*, 15–31.

Music in poetry

Szybki wiersz[10] by Adam Zagajewski comes from the book of poetry *Ziemia ognista* [Fiery land] (1994); it was written at the time when the poet lived in France. *Kontrapunkt* comes from the poetic cycle *Widokówka z tego świata i inne rymy z lat 1986–1988* [A postcard from this world and other rhymes from 1986-1988] (1988). Barańczak's poem illustrates the experiences of an expat in the USA. A comparison of the titles shows that Zagajewski's poem is an example of a metatextual reflection, whereas Barańczak refers to music from the first attempt at a dialogue with the reader, thus signaling that counterpoint – a polyphonic technique which is based on several melodic lines in conjuction, according to strictly defined tonal, rhythmical, and harmonic rules – is going to be significant. The differences between the two poems inspire considerations regarding the style of reception of music, which in turn influences key issues – from shaping the musical prosody of a poem to thinking about the world. In both poems the main point is not collecting purely aesthetic impressions, but rather seeking an experience that would unify the whole life experience[11].

Zagajewski debuted in 1967 with his poem *Muzyka* [Music] in *Życie literackie*. He is fascinated with sound: in his poems, he writes about Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, Frederic Chopin, Witold Lutosławski, Dmitri Shostakovich, Robert Schumanna, Franz Schubert, *St. Matthew Passion* by Jan Sebastian Bach, *Requiem* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Song of the Earth* by Gustav Mahler[12]. According to Anna Czabanowska-Wróbel, for Zagajewski music was of primary importance, and poetry was only second[13].

Barańczak's passion for music resonates throughout all his poetry. In his world *logos* and *melos* are inseparable, they permeate each other, organizing both the fictional space of texts and the poetic worldview[14]. Listening brings a new type of experiencing reality sensually – an *accousmatic experience*[15], which irreversibly changes the situation of the listener and thus translates into the palpable pulse of both poems.

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[10]It should be highlighted that *Szybki wiersz* should be interpreted and read out loud. Zagajewski's "loud poetry" requires an analysis from different perspectives: linguistic communication, performance, literary analysis. See Aleksandra Kremer, "Głośna poezja. Uważne słuchanie w badaniach literackich" [Loud poetry. Attentive listening in literary studies], *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2015): 103–124.

[11]Anna Czabanowska-Wróbel, *Poszukiwanie blasku. O poezji Adama Zagajewskiego* [Searching for light. On Adam Zagajewski's poetry] (Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych "Universitas", 2005), 78.

[12]See Bartosz Małczyński, *Zestrojenia. Szkice o literaturze, muzyce i dobroci* [Tuning. Sketches on literature, music, and kindness] (Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy Nomos: 2017), 123–133.

[13]Małczyński, p. 74.

[14] See my chapter *Muzyczny światopogląd Stanisława Barańczaka* [Stanisław Barańczak's musical worldview] in Aleksandra Reimann-Czajkowska, *Muzyczne transpozycje* [Musical transpositions]. *S. I. Witkiewicz – W. Hulewicz – S. Barańczak – Z. Rybczyński – L. Majewski* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych "Universitas", 2018), 115–132.

[15]See Andrzej Hejmej, "Słuchanie literatury w społeczeństwie medialnym" [Listening to literature in a media society], *Teksty Drugie* 2 (2021): 301–319.

Time and sound

In the two poems, time – a shared characteristic of poetry and music – is of key importance: temporality is understood as the actual time required to read, and a (more complex) fictional time, which belongs to the lyrical situation. There are two temporal orders in the outlined lyrical situation – that of a car ride, and that of music: *Goldberg Variations* by Jan Sebastian Bach (in Barańczak's poem) and a Gregorian chant (in Zagajewski's poem). The former is a realistic time of fiction, whereas the latter is time which goes beyond the poems, as it belongs to a different form of art, in this case – to the duration of a piece of music. Although there is a long tradition of relationships between music and poetry, present-day poets no longer perform their poetry while playing the lute or the kithara. A present-day poet listens... In fact, sometimes listening to music can inspire a poem.

The situations presented in the poems do not encourage celebration of music typical of concerts, nor quiet, intimate contemplation at home. The poets outline a common, everyday situation: a car ride while listening to music. The art of sound can thus be only a part of a sound environment, an element of the acoustic sphere of the world, perceived as "a huge macrocosmic composition which deserves to be listened to as attentively as a Mozart symphony"[16] (Raymond Murray Schafer).

Michał Głowiński remarks (not without regret) that:

> Nothing protects a masterpiece from being used as a background for a conversation, journey, waiting room at the dentist's, or even noisy party. Seen from this perspective, the distance between Beethoven and the Beatles is surprisingly small. Music reaches you from all around you [...] any piece of autonomous music can become functional music at any moment. Even the greatest masterpieces have no protection period[17].

It is not just the distance between popular and classical music that disappears, but also the one between the art of sounds, i.e. a course of sound elements organized in time, and rustling, whirring, noise...The lyrical situation of the poems causes problems with perceiving ontologically different sounds which belong to the shared space provided in a subjective visual and audio (!) reception.

Defining the semantic field of references forces one to consider the personal experiences of the writer – an intimate act of listening. Pieces of music which exist independently of poems move its temporal limits. In Barańczak's poem, the time of listening begins when *Goldberg Variations* "splashed out from stereo speakers", surprising the driving protagonist. In Zagajewski we also enter the poem *in medias res* – when music is playing, accompanying the lyrical I while driving.

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[16]R. Murray Schafer, "Muzyka środowiska" [The Music of the Environment], translated into Polish by Danuta Gwizdalanka, *Res Facta* 9 (1982): 298–315.

[17]Michał Głowiński, "Pytania zadawane muzyce" [Questions asked to music], *Ruch Muzyczny* 3 (1993): 6.

The intermedial relations which occur between music and literature thicken the time of po-
etry not only in a literal, temporal sense, but also structurally. We should thus ask about the
textural differences between the two pieces of music – polyphonic *Variations* by Bach, and
a monotonous medieval Gregorian chant.

Music in the car

In both poems information about music appears at the very beginning, highlighting its im-
portance:

Zagajewski:

> I was listening to a Gregorian chant
> in a speeding car,
> on a highway, in France[18].
>
> > (*Szybki wiersz*)[19]

Barańczak:

> *Goldberg Variations*, in the immediately recognizable
> record by Glenn Gould, splashed out from stereo speakers,
> when he turned on the starter, and with violently sickening disgust,
> torment, in fact, he cursed what immediately blocked
> bluntly across the rushing stream of accents[20]
>
> > (*Kontrapunkt*)[21]

Zagajewski's text is a "road poem", in which the most important questions concern the des-
tination: "Where was I going? Where did the sun go?". Driving fast, passing by landscapes,
highway going up to the horizon line – these are all elements which create an impression of
a linear world, in which passing away is not a promise of a cyclical comeback.

The poem's organization is concise in terms of formulated statements, and sketchy in terms
of the presented images. The amphibrachic-trochaic rhythm creates a slowly unfolding story,
which contrasts with the lyrical situation (driving fast). The intonation dichotomy in the final
verse ("on a highway, in France") offers an opportunity to rest, and constructs a quiet percep-
tion. The reader gets an impression that the way the poem is shaped follows music and the
mood of the lyrical I, distanced to the speeding world:

[18]"Słuchałem śpiewu gregoriańskiego / w pędzącym samochodzie, / na autostradzie, we Francji".

[19]Adam Zagajewski, *Szybki wiersz*, in: *Wiersze wybrane* [Selected poems] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo a5, 2010), 155.
All quotes from the poem cited here come from this edition.

[20]"Wariacje dla Goldberga", w rozpoznawalnym od razu / nagraniu Glenna Goulda, bryznęły z głośników stereo, /
gdy włączył starter, i z tym gwałtowniej mdlącą odrazą, / męką właściwie, przeklął to, co natychmiast stanęło /
tępą przegrodą w poprzek rwącego strumienia akcentów".

[21]Stanisław Barańczak, *Kontrapunkt*, in: *Wybór wierszy i przekładów* [Selected poems and translations] (Warszawa:
PIW, 1997), 317. All quotes from the poem cited here come from this edition.

> Trees were in a hurry. The voices of monks
> praising an invisible Lord
> (at dawn, in a chapel shivering with cold).
> D**o**mine, exaudi orati**o**nem meam,
> male voices were asking so calmly,
> as if salvation was growing in the garden[22]
>
> (*Szybki wiersz*)[23]

It is worth noting that in Zagajewski's poem music creates a vision – an image of monks praying "in a chapel, shivering with cold". Shivering is sensual, and refers not only to feeling cold, but also to how sounds resonate in space. The echo accompanying chanting in medieval churches intensified the sense of spirituality and "unearthliness".

Zagajewski reaches for "archaic things"; the choice of the Gregorian chant, which flourished in the ninth-twelfth centuries, is significant. Such melodies sound raw and ascetic. The chant has no harmonious basis, no accompaniment – it is based on a rich figuration. Modality and monophony are characteristic for it; it is *cantus planus*, i.e. plainsong, a monophonic chant[24].

In such chants, the melody was subject to the text of a prayer. In its simplest version it was a recitative, modest in terms of melody, typically performed by a priest. A chorus chant was more varied in terms of melody. The most impressive, a melismatic chant was based on assigning many sounds to a syllable in order to highlight key words (e.g. Alleluia). Despite the fact that Gregorian chant is typically treated as a liturgical song, in Zagajewski's poem it also has an aesthetic value, prepossessing with its beauty and simplicity, which become a starting point for an existential reflection.

The poet refers to the Psalm of David (142), which starts with: "O Lord, hear my prayer". The Psalm is about experiencing one's own weakness, loneliness, torment and dependency on God. It is no coincidence that Zagajewski embellishes his text with the vowel "o", stressed as many as six times in the last three cited verses. In his poem, the vowel is an expression of lamenting, wailing, and also refers to singing – as if making music phonetically present (Zbigniew Herbert does something similar, but to a lesser extent, with the vowel "a" in his *Apollo and Marsjasz*).

The chant-prayer is a moment of contemplation both for monks and the lyrical I. Zagajewski's poem directs the reader's/listener's attention to transcendence. God remains invisible ("The voices of monks / praising an invisible Lord"). However, in Zagajewski's hierarchy Invisible does not mean absent – invisibility is significant, it is poignant, always perceptible

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[22]"Drzewa śpieszyły się. Głosy mnichów / chwaliły niewidzialnego Pana / (o świcie, w drżącej od chłodu kaplicy). / Domine, exaudi orationem meam, / prosiły męskie głosy tak spokojne / jakby zbawienie rosło w ogrodzie.

[23]Emphasis mine, A.R.C.

[24]Gregorian chant is based on scores – eight in the medieval times. See Bogusław Schaeffer, *Dzieje muzyki* [History of music] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1983), 47–48.

and related to the mystery. On the other hand, music is a form of art which – like no other – can make the invisible present in the audible[25].

Paradoxically, the Gregorian chant, similarly to icons, is a relic of the past, which remains highly popular. "Why do we return to old music, is not for the mystery?"[26]. In *Autoportret* [Self-portrait] (1995) he wrote: "I listen to music a lot: […] In music, I find strength, weakness and pain, three elements. / The fourth one has no name"[27]. It has no name, because it is the Mystery. In Zagajewski's poetry experiencing music means experiencing a transcendental mystery.

In Zagajewski, music leads to existential questions:

> Where was I going? Where did the sun go?
> My life was lying, torn apart
> on both sides of the road, like the paper of a map.
> Together with sweet monks
> I was going towards clouds, grey,
> heavy and impermeable,
> towards the future, an abyss,
> swallowing hard tears of hail.[28]

Music and contemplation inspired by it are a safe space for the poet, under the condition of listening – *poeta in ascolto*. Perhaps he finds a longing for mystical zealousness and spiritual indolence of the contemporary man in the Gregorian chant. For Alina Biała, music in Zagajewski's poem are two separate models of the world:

> Two models of existence: modern, secular, always in a hurry, and medieval, religious, based on focus and contemplation. The former is associated with a horizontal space, constantly changing thanks to civilization and lifestyle (car, journey), whereas the latter – with a vertical space, still equally beautiful, modeled slowly by a natural rhythm of light and serving asceticism […][29].

[25]See Bohdan Pociej, *Muzyka i mistyka – o pewnych wtajemniczeniach* [Music and mysticism – on certain initiations], accessed 13.08.2021, https://deon.pl/wiara/duchowosc/muzyka-i-mistyka-o-pewnych-wtajemniczeniach,122745.

[26]"Dlaczego wracamy do starej muzyki, czy nie dla tajemnicy właśnie?" [Why do we return to old music, is it not for the mystery?], Adam Zagajewski, *Wielkie niemilczenie* [Huge no-silence], from the program of *Festiwal Misteria Paschalia 2016*], accessed 13.08.2021, http://misteriapaschalia.com/images/upload/Zagajewski.pdf.

[27]"Dużo słucham muzyki: […] / W muzyce znajduję siłę, słabość i ból, trzy żywioły. / Czwarty nie ma imienia", Adam Zagajewski, *Późne święta* [Late holidays] (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1998), 255.

[28]„Dokąd jechałem? Gdzie schowało się słońce? / Moje życie leżało rozdarte / po obu stronach drogi, kruche jak papier mapy. / Razem ze słodkimi mnichami / zmierzałem w stronę chmur, sinych, / ciężkich i nieprzeniknionych, / w stronę przyszłości, otchłani, / połykając twarde łzy gradu."

[29]Alina Biała, *Literatura i muzyka: korespondencja sztuk* [Literature and music: correspondence of arts] (Warszawa – Bielsko-Biała: Wydawnictwa Popularnonaukowe Sfinks, 2011), 193.

Szybki wiersz is not about music *sensu stricto*, but about doubt, which also manifests itself in the language of poetry: in metaphors and alliterations referring to our reality ("twa**rd**e łzy **gr**adu" [hard tears of hail]), in synonymous adjectives ("heavy and impermeable"), in an apocalyptic juxtaposition with notions from a distant semantic field (future – abyss).

The poet's internal voice is inspired by the ascetic chant of monks; he anxiously registers the incompatibility of past and present culture, in which there is no understanding for once recognizable signs of eternity. Gregorian chant is another starting point for a conversation with the self[30], another poetic record of auto-analysis.

The aim of listening to a chant is to experience something mystical, which requires a high style mediating between spirits of the past and makeshift presence[31]. Sophistication and formal "transparency", which allow for insight into the essence of things, are characteristic of this style, as well as of a monophonic texture.

Do religious and secular music (the latter represented by *Goldberg Variations*) have their own orders? Bohdan Paciej distinguished between two spheres of sounds: physical (music "from the body"), and spiritual (music "from the spirit"). Songs representing the former sphere are characterized by variety of timbres, thick texture, blunt rhythm, concrete melodies, vitality and clarity, whereas songs representing the latter have a more sophisticated sound foregrounding structure, brightness, and a delicate rhythm, time passing slowly, subtle melody[32]. Does this translate into the style of reception? *Szybki wiersz* presents the ability to listen in a contemplative-meditative way. And what about Barańczak's poem?

Braid of counterpoint

By introducing a musical term to poetry, Barańczak recontextualizes it[33]. Using counterpoint in a poem means respecting the laws of music, which results in multiplied intermedial relations. For composers, counterpoint is a challenge and test of skill. According to Pociej:

> The art of counterpoint, made visible in the system of rules, constitutes the center and fundament of any ability to compose. Composing music is first and foremost about putting together, juxtaposing, tuning, finding agreement between consonant elements. Agreement and harmony

[30] Artur Grabowski, "Mistycyzm jako mistyfikacja, czyli o słabej poezji i jej mocnych czytelnikach" [Mysticism as mystification – on weak poetry and its strong readers], in: *Różne głosy. Prace ofiarowane Stanisławowi Balbusowi na jubileusz siedemdziesięciolecia* [Various voices. 70th anniversary of Stanisław Balbus], edited by Dorota Wojda, Magdalena Heydel, Andrzej Hejmej (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2013), 199.

[31] See Adam Zagajewski, *Obrona żarliwości* [Defense of zealousness] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo a5, 2002), 41.

[32] See Tomasz Cyz, *Muzyka i Bóg* [Music and God], accessed 10.08.2021, https://www.tygodnikpowszechny.pl/muzyka-i-bog-129000.

[33] See Aleksandra Reimann, *Kontrapunkt albo poetycka definicja techniki polifonicznej* [Counterpoint or a poetic definition of the polyphonic technique], in: *Muzyczny styl odbioru tekstów literackich* [Musical style of reception of literature]. *Iwaszkiewicz – Barańczak – Rymkiewicz – Grochowiak* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2013), 154–178.

is the ideal here, towards which all music developing over some period of time strives; sounds in individual voices of a polyphonic construction meet and tune in consonance, in accord; each dissonance strives towards a harmonious solution[34].

The expectations of a reader-music lover are confirmed in the lyrical situation: the protagonist listens to *Goldberg Variations*, which is a masterpiece of Bach's counterpoint[35]. The text focuses not only on the general rules of polyphony, but also on a specific piece of music.

Tracing the relationship between mysticism and music in Zagajewski's poem is replaced by no less ambitious task in *Kontrapunkt*: tracing parallel melodic lines and how they intersect at the counterpoint. For music lovers it is important who performs a given song. Barańczak uses a classic, i.e. *Goldberg Variations* by Glenn Cloud, who is considered not only an excellent pianist, but also an eccentric and insightful commenter of his own interpretations, who intentionally broke with established canons[36]. Barańczak listens to a song which was originally written for the cembalo, and hence it is in a (slight) piano transcription. Similarly to *Szybki wiersz*, the reader enters *Kontrapunkt* in the middle of the lyrical situation. In spite of the distance imposed by the use of third person singular, we remain in the circle of experience, thought, expression and feelings of the lyrical protagonist.

The key to understanding the poetic counterpoint is to trace the lyrical situation in which events and actions are multiplied. The moment the protagonist turns the music on, listening is accompanied by other activities:

> when he turned on the starter, and with violently sickening disgust,
> torment, in fact, he cursed what immediately blocked
> bluntly across the rushing stream of accents [37]

Barańczak creates **a situational polyphony in the poem,** which occurs between events taking place simultaneously: Bach's composition, the protagonist's awareness and routine activities performed in a hurry – these activities generate sounds: "what […] blocked / bluntly across the rushing stream of accents".

In the poem, counterpoints go beyond art, as they begins to organize the lyrical situation so that it resembles a musical form. There are too many sounds which distract the protagonist

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[34]Bohdan Pociej, *Bach – muzyka i wielkość* [Bach – music and greatness] (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1972), 8.

[35]The interest poets take in *Goldberg Variations* is noteworthy – see e.g. a series of poems inspired by individual variations by Alice B. Fogel, *Interval. Poems Based on Bach's „Goldberg Variations"* (Tucson: Schaffner Press, 2014).

[36]According to Albert Schweitzer, out of all Bach's pieces, this one is the closest in style to the piano – Albert Schweitzer, *Jan Sebastian Bach*, translated into Polish by Maria Kurecka, Witold Wirpsza, afterword by Bohdan Pociej (Kraków: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1972), 253.

[37]"gdy włączył starter; i z tym gwałtowniej mdlącą odrazą, / męką właściwie, przeklął to, co natychmiast stanęło / tępą przegrodą w poprzek rwącego strumienia akcentów".

from enjoying aesthetic experiences – in fact, they continuously disrupt the reception of *Goldberg Variations*. Adam Poprawa discusses linguistic constructions which normally describe a realistic situation, but here they also gain new, metaphorical meanings related to music:

> "The rushing stream of accents" obviously refers to *Goldberg Variations*, but there is also another meaning: "rushing stream" is also a metaphor describing traffic (a stream of cars). [...] Thanks to such a linguistic construction, which allows for double meanings, incompatible spheres are presented not only as mutual obstacles, but also parallels. [...] A rushing stream of accents is an element in Bach's composition. A rushing stream of cars is an element of the Composition about which the poem asks[38].

According to Pociej, "polyphony" strives towards "harmony", but it always precedes harmony, as it is more basic and "primary"[39]. In the world of parallel phenomena listening to music competes with the intrusive sounds of everyday life. Capturing a piece of music in its entirety is possible only via previous knowledge of Bach's composition and equipping the listener with appropriate knowledge of what counterpoint is. When the protagonist stops being distracted by everyday everyday affairs and actually starts to listen, music allows him to think clearly, it inspires the idea of a goal and order in him – art, which used to be subjected to the world, now subjects the world to its own rules:

> He sped up, and only when he hit the brakes [...]
> did a vague thought occur to him: that in such thick music there is a place for everything[40].

It should be thus assumed, that "thick music" refers not only to Bach's masterpiece, but also to the audiosphere. The composition turns out to be a polyphonic mapping of the order of the world; it contains everything, all phenomena[41] – including sounds.

The following passage is often discussed. It can be understood both as a manifesto of the acousmatic experience, and as a poetic definition of counterpoint[42]:

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[38]Adam Poprawa, *Bach w samochodzie albo próba kontrapunktu* [Bach in a car or an attempt at counterpoint], in: *Formy i afirmacje* [Forms and affirmations] (Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych „Universitas", 2003), 23.

[39]Pociej, 8–9.

[40]„Przyspieszył, i dopiero gdy ostro hamował [...] / niejasna myśl: że w tak gęstej muzyce jest miejsce na wszystko."

[41]Joanna Dembińska-Pawelec, "Stanisław Barańczak – «niepowtarzalny rytm wiersza»" [Stanisław Barańczak – unique rhythm of a poem], in: *"Poezja jest sztuką rytmu": o świadomości rytmu w poezji polskiej dwudziestego wieku* [Poetry is an art of rhythm: on the awareness of rhythm in twentieth-century Polish music] *(Miłosz – Rymkiewicz – Barańczak)* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2010), 411.

[42]See e.g. Adam Poprawa, "Bach w samochodzie albo próba harmonii. O «Kontrapunkcie» Stanisława Barańczaka" [Bach in a car or an attempt at harmony. On *Kontrapunkt* by Stanisław Barańczak], *Warsztaty Polonistyczne* 2 (1993): 44–53; Poprawa, *Bach w samochodzie albo próba kontrapunktu*; Dembińska-Pawelec, 397–398; Reimann, 154–177; Iwona Puchalska, *Zaskoczenia* [Surprises], in: *Muzyka w okolicznościach lirycznych. Zapisy słuchania muzyki w poezji polskiej XX i XXI wieku* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2017): 194–198; Iwona Puchalska, "«Deus ex machina», czyli o doświadczeniu fonografii w poezji Stanisława Barańczaka" [«Deus ex machina», i.e. on experiencing photography in Stanisław Barańczak's poetry], *Ruch Literacki* 4–5 (2013): 479–483.

> For a moment, for a moment to stroke a tight braid
> of counterpoint, contemplate the miracle of polyphony of voices,
> each making its own separate journey in time,
> and at every moment in time they are tied by a different harmony[43].

According to Andrzej Hejmej, this passage:

> provides an insightful poetic characteristic of the modern phenomenon of acousmatism, i.e. the mechanisms which determine the acousmatic experience (at the same time it is clear from the very beginning that in the new circumstances it is not about the practice of listening to music that can be conceptualized in terms of *ascoltando*)[44].

Goldberg Variations, which unexpectedly barged in, lead the protagonist towards lost harmony, showing him the original order of diversity. Music – art produced *via et ordine*, i.e. according to the rules of mathematics – reflects its own rules and order in the mirror of transcendence, and reveals a different dimension, a reflection of a universe model[45].

Conclusion

Convictions about the hegemony of visuality in the modern world seem to fundamentally disagree with everyday experience[46], as ethereal sound proves to be more expansive than image. It is impossible to stop hearing/listening. This necessity to perceive sounds means that we need to interpret literature considering its soundscape, which is an inseparable part of lyrical situation. This means that both the whir of an engine and *Goldberg Variations* function on equal terms. Extremely different sounds often co-occur: noise and music, chaos and harmony. Listening mediated via poetry allows us to comprehend reality more profoundly.

In Barańczak, the perception of soundscape which resembles a collection of sounds rather than their logical consequences is a unique experience, strongly connected to affect. Listening to music initiates an analysis which brings existential relief – order resulting from the rules of polyphony – of "thick music", which predicts and contains everything.

In Zagajewski's poem listening is connected with a mysticism which translates into both the visuality of the poem, and the sound regularity of the text. The blank verse has its rhythm, thanks to which it sounds intimate[47]. However, unlike in a soundscape, Zagajewski is more

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[43]„Przez chwilę, przez chwilę gładzić zwięźle spleciony warkocz / kontrapunktu, rozważać cud współistnienia głosów, / z których każdy odbywa w czasie osobną podróż, / a w każdym punkcie czasu związuje je inna harmonia."

[44]Andrzej Hejmej, *Słuchający Stanisław Barańczak*, p. 719.

[45]See Dembińska-Pawelec, 394.

[46]See Jakub Momro, "Fenomenologia ucha" [Phenomenology of the ear], *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2015): 7 onwards.

[47]Derek Walcott, "Elegista" [Elegist], in: "*I cień i światło…*" *O twórczości Adama Zagajewskiego* [Shadow and light… On works by Adam Zagajewski], edited by Anna Czabanowska-Wróbel (Kraków: Wydawnictwo a5, 2015), 20.

interested in a natural landscape[48] that consists of images passed by, especially the vision of a heavy sky closing in above the protagonist. A Gregorian chant leads Zagajewski towards what he calls *vita contemplativa*[49], i.e. the world of order, sense and harmony. The questions asked by the poem concern the future, and although they refer to ultimate, often mystical questions, their orientation is horizontal, forcing the reader to look at the future at the upcoming events?. To the contrary, in Barańczak's poem, the focus is on intensely experienced, "thick" presence.

Both Zagajewski and Barańczak, typically considered to belong to the "'68 generation", are trying to understand reality via the art of sounds. In doing so, they reach for music which serves different functions (religious versus *stricte* aesthetic) and is characterized by different levels of formal complexity (monody versus polyphony based on variations). Thanks to music (and psalms) Zagajewski looks inside himself experiencing invisible Transcendence, whereas Barańczak – quite paradoxically – discovers analogies between the original polyphony of the world and counterpoint encounters – *punctus contra punctum* – in Bach's autotelic masterpiece, *Goldberg Variations*, and its masterful counterpoints.

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translated by Paulina Zagórska

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[48]Barbara Toruńczyk, "Czytając Adama Zagajewskiego" [Reading Adam Zagajewski], in: „*I cień i światło…*", 33.
[49]Toruńczyk, 33.

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K<small>EYWORDS</small> | A<small>BSTRACT</small> | N<small>OTE ON THE</small> A<small>UTHOR</small>

KEYWORDS

intermediality

Barańczak

ACOUSMATIC EXPERIENCE

audio perception

Abstract:

The paper is about intermediality, focusing especially on relations between music and literature, connected by music in lyrical circumstances (Iwona Puchalska) in poetry. It is an attempt at listening to an intertextual dialogue between two poems, where listening to music is the most important experience (*Goldberg Variations* by J.S. Bach in Barańczak's *Kontrapunkt*, and a Gregorian chant in Zagajewski's *Szybki wiersz*). In the two poems logos and melos are inseparable, they permeate each other, they organize the fictional space of their respective texts, and serve as a starting point for existential considerations. Listening thus brings a new sort of a sensual reception (and organization) of reality, in which experiencing opposites can lead to desired Harmony.

Zagajewski

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
MUSIC AND LITERATURE

intertextuality

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McLuhan's Window.
In Praise of Conservatism

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* * *

Everyone, almost everyone, wants to be fashionable at all costs. As regards lifestyle, self-image, outfits, and the latest gadgets; the same applies to art and science. The new is sexy. Nobody wants to be considered a conservative.

Today, when the idolatrous cult of the new and technological progress seems to govern everything we come into contact with and everything that surrounds us, the title "In praise of conservatism" comes across as a provocation. Why should anyone concern themselves with "conservatism"? What for? In the name of what?

When one announces that they are a conservative, whenever such an ideological coming out takes place, it evokes only unpleasant associations. After all, you must be modern. The world demands it from us. In the light of the prevailing preferences and contemporary popular opinions, conservatism as an attitude represented by an individual, a group, or a community is almost synonymous with anachronism. Since Marshall McLuhan refuses to participate in an uncritical apotheosis of new technologies, he should be called a "conservative."

In the eyes of the devoted admirers of the new, its apologists, conservative views seem outdated, old, and moldy. Shame on you. Shame. Conservatism is *démodé*. The negative aura surrounding this concept has influenced the negative connotations it evokes. Unfortunately, conservatism and being a conservative are no longer considered simply attitudes, rational cognitive *modi*, or rational worldviews, but come across as almost defamatory – as a contemptuous and compromising label.

We live in a world in which languages, concepts and meanings are confounded. We are not the first to live in such a world. While it is not the time to look for the perpetrators and culprits responsible for the confusing *status quo*, it is clear that losing a sense of unity and coherence will make you lose your mind and question your sensibility: there is no doubt about it. Why do I appeal to the senses? That is a good question. I suggest that you keep the senses in mind and wait for the answer. It will be revealed below.

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Empirical reality is becoming more and more distant from us. It is losing its proper weight; it no longer is the touchstone of human experience; it falls deeper into the depths of collective oblivion. It exists but not really. It has been replaced by omnipresent and omnipotent images which function as simulacra. The simpler the better, because why should we complicate everything? In today's empire of images, what matters is skin deep. Our eyes, ears, even our fingers slide over it – the superficial, too, plays a role in this deceptive performance. The empirical has been divorced from the senses.

This artificial reality turns out to be infinitely fuller and more perfect than the one in which we exist. Maybe it is, after all, unreal, but it is unparallelly more malleable. We can shape it, change it, inhabit it in our imagination. The real is real because we experience it. Experience, therefore, lies at the heart of it, because experience, and only experience, protects against the dangers of the digital illusion.

Wasn't it what the prophet of the electronic age was afraid of a few decades ago?

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The past, as a vast reservoir of social experiences, appears too distant to become an effective warning. Unfortunately, I do not really believe in the mechanism of generational transfer of experiences, be it good or bad. Despite global cataclysms experienced throughout the twentieth century (by the way, the nineteenth century was also a century of unimaginable horrors), mankind did not manage to fully understand and learn from the cruel lessons which led to the cataclysm of total stupefaction.

Contrary to what the ancient maxim rather hastily proclaims, history is by no means a good *magistra vitae*. Unfortunately. Unfortunately, indeed. New generations which opt for change (be it for the "better" but not only) have not created historical antibodies capable of fighting the temptation to create new nationalisms, totalitarian regimes, populisms, authoritarianisms, neo-fascisms, neo-Nazisms, etc.

All sorts of healers of nations are doing very well. The recipe is always the same. We will bring order. Be ready for anything. I promise that we will succeed. Something went wrong again? Be patient. Revolution requires casualties. Oh, well. Our goals will be achieved, whatever the

cost. Let's improve the world together, together, my friends, go forward, it cannot be achieved without you. Trust me.

The old and new leaders are still able to trick their followers all too easily – they promise them a lot in exchange for their personal freedom. People are supposed to obey someone who promises to make everything right. And they will, just you wait. History *magistra vitae est*, but only to those who want to learn something. Do you remember the old mock slogan from the times of the Polish People's Republic: "Our party never promised anything to anyone and will keep its word"? This is a perfect motto for the present.

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Getting rid of fanatical tendencies is not so easy. "The sleep of reason produces monsters." Ideological insanity, which is a constant threat, always begins the same way: with the confusion of concepts in millions of minds overwhelmed by thoughtlessness. We know its effects; we experience them every day. For quite some time, left- and right-wing tendencies have not been clearly delineated, separate, forms of individual and social action; as a result of cheap political games, the left and the right have lost their meaning. They have lost their original meanings, having been processed in a conceptual centrifuge.

This is how it works, and this is how it is generally perceived. Shamans in power feed on their voters' confusion, drawing sinister power from this practice. War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength… If you do not agree with us, you are our enemy, an unrepentant conservative, and after all, we call ourselves conservatives, defend our noblest traditions, and let no one tarnish what is sacred to us or hold a different opinion.

* * *

The concept of conservatism has been, with disastrous results, appropriated by those who do not necessarily understand it well, who do not understand its value in the life of individuals and societies and what it should actually and truly involve. This concept has fallen victim to manipulation – some only pretend to be traditional, faithfully honoring the most sacred.

And what about change? It has to take place – just because – but, ideally, only if we accept it and introduce it ourselves. It is supposed to be "our way." Did you want to modernize the rolling stock and trainways in a European fashion, to replace the vehicle we have been using for years? We will not allow it; let the train of history go on as it used to, preferably without brakes. If necessary, we will make the hearth of our historic locomotive red-hot. The world won't wait? Why should we care? Let us joyfully ride on in our beloved narrow-gauge train. Who knows, maybe it will be possible to overtake it thanks to the radical reforms we are introducing. We know where we are going and where this escapade will take us all. Somewhere, without a doubt. Let's ride! No one will stop us. And whoever does not want to ride with us has to get off.

We will also tame the news. Who needs free media? New technology is to serve society. Too much freedom given to the people marks its inevitable doom. It is better to limit it, to control it. You can't do this, you can't that. Of course, we are not going to impose censorship (especially as it is impossible to do so online), but social control of the flow of information is necessary. It is better not to know too much. Why should you? Each authority has its secrets and sins. Everyone makes mistakes; politicians are people too; let's not dwell on bad decisions; everyone hides their mistakes and "distortions." Why would you worry the society that has trusted us? We love progress, but deep down in our hearts we want everything to stay as it has always been. After all, we act and rule for the common good, and the general public does not like change. Why? It's simple – because people never know if they will benefit from it.

* * *

Was Marshall McLuhan a conservative? He was, and his adversaries repeatedly accused him of it. On what grounds? Why did they detest him so much? Considering his research interests, it should be the other way round. Almost seven decades ago, he was the first scholar in the world to envision scientific models of the impending information age and he did so in the name of defending traditional cultural values. Paradoxically, for this very reason, neither the electronic nor any other revolution could claim him as its founding father.

However, I think that the opponents of the Canadian scholar, if, of course, we are to ignore the evident animosity which may be felt in many critical texts, correctly identified McLuhan's perspective. Precursor – conservative. This juxtaposition is almost incomprehensible for someone who habitually perceives and understands reality (*vide* Sapir-Whorf) – this is a type of dislocation known to orthopedists – by means of binary reasoning.

Derrick de Kerckhove deals with contemporary media development in a different manner; his approach is polyphonic and holistic:

> The development of the web and the sheer number of connections gave rise to a powerful new technological metaphor that has had a significant impact on our perception of space-time. Until now, major information technologies have influenced people's perceptions of the environment in terms of size, order, texture and, of course, boundaries. While literacy and the invention of print, by externalizing and focusing attention on the visual side of the local language, created the awareness of the "Nation" and the need to define and control its "natural" boundaries, the electronic media destroyed them, thus widening the dimensions of the mental representation of a given space.[1]

Reflecting on Marshall McLuhan's and the Toronto School of Communication Theory's legacy, Agnieszka Ogonowska contrasted Derrick de Kerckhove's and his academic master's views on *mediamorphosis,* a phenomenon that is over 100 years old. Ogonowska observes that:

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[1] Derrick De Kerckhove, *Connected Intelligence: The Arrival of Web Society* (Toronto: Somerville House Books, 1997), 150.

> The understanding of Derrick de Kerckhove's works as, in a way, extensions of McLuhan's views should be broader, not only in terms of furthering a specific paradigm but also in terms of taking into account its development based on very similar linguistic tools used to create the discourse. This (mental, epistemological, theoretical) affinity cannot be explained only in terms of the Master-Apprentice relationship and the fascination with the theories of the "media prophet" or the desire to mechanically duplicate some specific linguistic constructions. [...] Derrick de Kerckhove's McLuhanism has a clear mental motivation: the interdisciplinary and global understanding of events comes hand in hand with a language that is able to express them properly.[2]

Considering the above, the semantic connotations of the adjective "global" are particularly intriguing. As we know, the word "global" is one of the most recognizable key words in Marshall McLuhan's philosophy of contemporary media. Well, in Derrick de Kerckhove's approach, "globality" and "global surroundings" (de Kerckhove) is no longer defined in terms of topographic or geographic categories but instead is seen more holistically, which, naturally, does not exclude other definitions.

De Kerckhove understands and "explains" his Master in a peculiar way – his interpretation differs greatly from the commonly accepted exegesis. In the metaphor of the global village, the word "global" is key. This interpretation corresponds to such essential McLuhan's concepts as: openness, multi-polarity, co-occurrence, simultaneity, interdisciplinarity and heterogeneity.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

I don't know, I'm not sure, if Marshall McLuhan was really a conservative. However, having read his texts, I know that his thoughts on the evolution of the media, the development of technology, civilization, culture, social life, etc. stem from his skepticism. This observation, although it seems right, requires proof.

Was McLuhan a skeptic? Yes, but this observation alone is not enough to allow one to penetrate deeper into his philosophy and rethink the methodology of his works. In recognizing these inherent skeptical cognitive foundations, one should consider the proper definition of skepticism. The Greek word *skeptikós* means doubting, critical, disbelieving, suspicious of something.

Depending on the context in which we place McLuhan's skepticism, it may be regarded as a philosophy or as a general, and not only academic, attitude to life, involving distrust and doubt. The skeptic, both a scholar and a mere mortal, keeps in mind the uncertainty of human cognition, believes in it and proclaims it, which by no means makes them an agnostic.

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[2] Agnieszka Ogonowska, *Twórcze metafory medialne: Baudrillard – McLuhan – Goffman* [Creative media metaphors: Baudrillard - McLuhan - Goffman] (Kraków: Universitas, 2010), 133.

There is no need, I think, to refer to the philosophy of Descartes or Hume. Neither should we refer to such skeptics as Sextus Empiricus or Pyrrho of Elis. For our purposes, it will be entirely sufficient to invoke the modern version of skepticism, which places particular emphasis on the methodological aspect of the proposed hypotheses and the epistemology and accessibility of truth.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, and specifically Juan Comesaña and Peter Klein, thus define cognitive skepticism:

> Philosophically interesting forms of skepticism claim that we do not know propositions which we ordinarily think we do know.

Another passage in their definition of skepticism is also significant in the context of McLuhan's research:

> Thus, consider skepticism about the future: the claim that the only justified attitude which respect to propositions about the future is suspension of judgement. That kind of philosophical skepticism overlaps partly with ordinary skepticism about the future.[3]

The British philosopher Duncan Pritchard considers and defines skepticism from a slightly different perspective:

> We are unable to know that any one of a number of skeptical hypotheses are false, where a skeptical hypothesis is understood as a scenario that is subjectively indistinguishable from what one takes normal circumstances to be but which, if true, would undermine most of the knowledge that one ascribes to oneself.

In addition, Pritchard was also very much interested in the "skeptical paradox." Crucial in understanding the rational sources of cognitive skepticism, the skeptical paradox boils down to three brief and interconnected observations which concern the rational pursuit of knowledge:

> I. I am unable to know the denials of skeptical hypotheses.
> II. If I don't know the denials of skeptical hypotheses, then I do not know very much.
> III. A lot of what I believe, I know[4].

Bearing in mind the above and referring to the skeptical philosophy of knowledge, let us try to find a deeper principle that governs the macrosystem of views held by the Canadian media scholar. While he was seen as a "conservative," he was probably a promoter of the new media

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[3] Juan Comesaña and Peter Klein, "Skepticism", in: *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2019), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2019/entries/skepticism/.

[4] Duncan Pritchard, "Contemporary Skepticism", win *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, date of access: 14 March 2022, https://iep.utm.edu/skepcont/. See also Pritchard's newest monograph: Duncan Pritchard, *Skepticism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

in equal measure and studied this phenomenon when the era of *homo informaticus* and *homo digitalis* had just begun.

Hailed as the "prophet of the electronic age," in my opinion, he did not represent and did not behave like a typical prophet. As a scholar, he was never inclined to make effective prophecies but instead avidly sought the truth. He posed questions and examined the issues he was interested in, shying away from giving ready-made, final answers.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Marshall McLuhan's views on the media, on their evolution, and the overwhelming impact that these changes had centuries ago and continue to have in the history of mankind, in many ways correspond to the above-cited definitions of skepticism: both epistemologically and methodologically. One may find in them Socratic humility concerning "ignorance" and the "unknown;" it is a deliberate starting point in one's pursuit of knowledge.

The skeptical paradox from which he derives his method of seeking the truth makes his investigations, on the one hand, open and, on the other, restrained. Indeed, this academic discipline is methodical. The method that McLuhan chose and creatively developed determines the relation between the sign and its meaning as well as the vast intellectual horizon that it opens up.

The architecture of the poetics of McLuhan's argument is unique. It involves a consistent, contradictory dialogue with the arising assumptions and doubts, including other people's (especially widely held) beliefs. "I don't know" rather than "I know for sure." At every step, as the discourse develops, *dubito ergo sum* becomes more and more palpable. In the case of this researcher, the ethical aspect of research is closely intertwined with and corresponds to the poetics of his reflections.

In his studies, McLuhan opposes the temptation to believe that he has access to absolute, unquestionable, undisputed and fully objective knowledge. Instead, he chooses a skeptical approach, *ergo*, in the conventional sense of the word, a conservative approach. On the one hand, it is largely what makes him a "conservative" in the eyes of many of his critics and adversaries. On the other hand, it makes him address a mass audience, people who are not interested in science and his research, with ease (the famous interview for "Playboy," September 1969).

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Thus, "conservatism" often attributed to McLuhan helped reveal to us a very important aspect of his intellectual pursuits. The kind of skepticism that McLuhan represents, constantly shifting between "science" and "faith," between the development of communication technology and collective consciousness, turns out to be a very powerful cognitive strategy, closely related to the methodological aspect of his reflection on the social functions of communication media.

Let me at this point share some concluding remarks regarding Marshall McLuhan's alleged "conservatism." It can be said that he is a "conservative" in his works to the same extent as he turns out to be a cognitive and methodological skeptic.

As a scholar, and not a propagator or uncritical enthusiast, he approaches the media with due reserve. Whatever his research interest, whatever his chosen topic, he carefully avoids both risky prognoses and hasty generalizations. When he chooses examples to illustrate a given problem, he presents the reader with a description, an analysis and an interpretation of specific detailed cases of communication practices, which are consistently embedded in a specific context and situation.

Perhaps that is why, i.e., thanks to the research strategy described in this article, Marshall McLuhan was an outstanding researcher of the micro and macro cultural evolutionary processes; he is a classic scholar in media studies and a media theorist whose works, interdisciplinary ideas, and personal reflections have not lost their value over the years and continue to attract great interest from contemporary scholars.

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

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KEYWORDS

NEW MEDIA

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Abstract:

This article attempts to functionally reconstruct the views expressed by Marshall McLuhan in his works, both from an epistemological and the methodological perspective. The author argues that at the core of McLuhan's theory, often regarded as a manifestation of "conserva-tive" views, lies an individual form of cognitive and methodological skepticism. The skepti-cal attitude of the author of *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and *Understanding Media* means that his considerations, despite that fact that they date back to the 1960s, are not outdated and still attract great interest from contemporary media scholars.

a u d i o v i s u a l   p o e t i c s

cognitive theory

methodology

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