

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

LITERARY STUDIES – CULTURAL STUDIES



Humanities in the Modern World

ANDRZEJ HEJMEJ

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

LITERARY STUDIES – CULTURAL STUDIES

TRANSLATED BY LINDSAY DAVIDSON

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1. CULTURAL COMPARATIVE LITERATURE: INTERPRETATION AND EXISTENCE

I. *Pro et contra*

In the situation of diagnosing the current state of comparative literature there are rather too many reasons that make it impossible to follow a route other than the critical path. The case is thoroughly obvious, well-known to humanists around the world, who after all, have “discourse” with comparative literature – from the position of a sceptic or even an opponent of any comparative literature projects – and turns out today to be commonplace, and in some circles even fashionable. In fact, attempts to negate comparative literature research have existed since the beginning of the previous century, as strongly demonstrated by Benedetto Croce’s critical sketch “La »letteratura comparata«”¹ (the philosopher refers to comparative literature projects sceptically, one of his comments reads: “The comparative method, precisely because it is a simple method of investigative research, can afford no help in fixing the boundaries of a field of studies. It is common to all fields of study”²). Undoubtedly, as we get closer to the end of the twentieth century, reasonable voices appeared more frequently proclaiming some tendency of comparative literature studies or the lack of a separate methodology³

¹ B. Croce, “La »letteratura comparata«,” in: *La Critica. Rivista di letteratura, storia e filosofia*, Vol. 1 (1903): pp. 77–80 (see B. Croce, “Comparative Literature,” in: *Comparative Literature: The Early Years. An Anthology of Essays*, ed. H.-J. Schulz, Ph.H. Rhein, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973, pp. 219–223).

² B. Croce, “Comparative Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 219 (see B. Croce, “La »letteratura comparata«,” *op. cit.*, p. 77).

³ This line of criticism derives from René Wellek: “The Crisis of Comparative Literature,” in: *Comparative Literature: Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association* [University of North Carolina, September 8–12, 1958], vol. 1, ed. W.P. Friederich, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959, pp. 149–159.

and the fortuitous nature of the activities of comparative studies⁴ (with the passing of time we have even ceased to talk about comparative literature as a “method of methods” and meta-literary criticism) and then – ultimately – the twilight of “traditional” comparative literature⁵ ...

It should immediately be clearly stated that the removal of comparative literature from the field of view of modern literary criticism (and as an anachronistic “discipline” based on universalist thinking and strongly scientific paradigms, and as a project of postmodern thinking, centred on transgressiveness and “weak” interpretation) does not solve any issue and at the same time further deepens misunderstandings and mutual suspicion amongst researchers. In other words, **total criticism** of comparative literature, undermining the legitimacy of all comparative studies – for reasons both ideological (positivist genetism; the modern illusion of democracy turning into “demoncracy”⁶) and methodological (the former temptation of metanarrative; today’s postulates of non-paradigmism) – turns out to be not only pointless, but reckless, resting mostly on heavily ideologised judgements⁷. It is also impossible to satisfy **moderate criticism**, aimed at the genetic model of comparative literary research of the nineteenth century or the structural-semiotic model developed in the twentieth century, because it resembles the most current criticism of Russian formalism (more broadly: ideas contained in the formalist-structuralist paradigm), made from the post-structuralist perspective. The similarity, of course, is not decided by the character and merits of the arguments, as post-war American comparative literature came into being, amongst other reasons, as opposition to the attitude of

⁴ See P. Brunel, “Le comparatiste est-il un Don Juan de la connaissance?,” in: *Fin d’un millénaire: Rayonnement de la littérature comparée*, ed. P. Dethurens, O.-H. Bonne-rot, Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2000, pp. 35–49.

⁵ Talk of “the death” of comparative literature appeared at the beginning of the nineteen nineties. See S. Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford–Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993, p. 47; G.Ch. Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, *passim*. See also: E. Apter, “Afterlife of a Discipline,” in: *Comparative Literature*, 3, Vol. 57 (2005): pp. 201–206; S. Bassnett, “Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century,” in: *Comparative Critical Studies*, 1–2, Vol. 3 (2006): pp. 3–11.

⁶ See. Z. Stawrowski, *Niemoralna demokracja*, Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, Wyższa Szkoła Europejska im. ks. Józefa Tischnera, 2008, p. 205.

⁷ An example of this is Alain Badiou’s position, which he stated in a most laconic manner: “I do not believe much in comparative literature” (A. Badiou, *Petit manuel d’inesthétique*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1998, p. 85). See commentary by Emily Apter “»Je ne crois pas beaucoup à la littérature comparée«: Universal Poetics and Postcolonial Comparativism,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. H. Saussy, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, pp. 54–62.

researchers under the banner of *New Criticism*, but more by the manner in which the criticism is conducted – modeling and abstraction of the subject matter, generalizations and extreme simplification, resulting, so to speak, with an exaggerated “short-sightedness”. In this I do not want to say that, for example, Jean-Marie Carré’s concept of the nineteen fifties, namely the postulate of searching for certain “stereotypes” in a variety of national literatures (“*l’étude des relations spirituelles internationales*”⁸) is a proposal weighed down with the errors of “traditional” comparative literature (the so-called research of “relations of fact”, *rapports de fait*) – it can be regarded as a harbinger of one of today’s orientations defining the directions of comparative research. I merely draw attention to the fluidity and penetration of the trends of comparative literature because this will not be about the briefly outlined moderate criticism, or – even more so – about total criticism. If there is still a need for criticism of comparative literary research (and for that there is probably no doubt), it especially applies to self-criticism, carried out “**from inside**”, from the position of the researcher occupied with a linear array of various cross-sections from comparative literary researchers who perceives the risks associated with the current comparative literary research projects.

Comparative literature, as is well known, has long been the scene of polemical debates and disputes, often spectacular, as in the case of the voices of René Wellek (“The Crisis of Comparative Literature,” 1958), the enfant terrible of French comparative literature René Etiemble (*Comparaison n’est pas raison: La Crise de la littérature comparée*, Paris 1963)⁹, Henry H.H. Remak (“Comparative Literature, Its Definition and Function,” 1961)¹⁰ or Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (*Death of a Discipline*, New York 2003). Wellek’s contribution primarily struck in van Tieghem’s cultivation of influenceology, a methodological impasse (comparative literature is called a “stagnant backwater”) and rampant cultural na-

⁸ Jean-Marie Carré, in the well-known and frequently referred to foreword to the book by Marius-François Guyard *La littérature comparée*, wrote: “Comparative Literature is a branch of the history of literature: it is the study of international spiritual relations, *rapports de fait* between Byron and Pushkin, Goethe and Carlyle, Walter Scott and Alfred de Vigny, between works, inspirations, and even the lives of writers belonging to different literatures” (J.-M. Carré, “Avant-propos,” in: M.-F. Guyard, *La littérature comparée*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951, p. 5).

⁹ René Etiemble’s criticism was originally in the form of a pamphlet with the title – “Littérature comparée ou comparaison n’est pas raison” (in: *idem*, *Hygiène des Lettres*, vol. 3: *Savoir et goût*, Paris: Gallimard, 1958, pp. 154–173).

¹⁰ H.H.H. Remak, “Comparative Literature, Its Definition and Function,” in: *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, ed. N.P. Stallknecht, H. Frenz, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961, pp. 3–37.

tionalism; Etiemble's polemics – in exclusive research concerning “relations of fact”, which restricts comparative literature activities; Remak's redefinitions – in a purely philological pattern of comparative literature (the “French School”) and positivistic genetism as unwanted ballast; and Spivak's argument in turn – in the Eurocentric model of comparative literary trends in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Undoubtedly, in recent years the best example of a critical look at comparative literature is Spivak's little book which proclaims the slogan “death of a discipline”¹¹ and turns out, paradoxically, to be an attempt at a critical revision and one of the projects of the “new” comparative literature. That project, aimed at “neocolonialism and globalization”¹² (globalization as synonymous with uniformity), exposing the idea of “planetarity”¹³, linked to the fact of perceiving differences in today's world and cultivating the values of different cultures, with understanding of the “Other” and accord with the “Others”, focusing attention on the conditions of the functioning of various communities and language, social, ethnic and religious groups. Spivak's proposal, pretending to be total criticism, which is in fact moderate criticism, shows clearly that the new comparative literature involves ethical responsibility and discovers, to use the researcher's formula, the “performativity of cultures”¹⁴. It can be easily seen (although an extreme example) that comparative literature cannot be regarded as a scientific discipline, that it is based on the individual actions of a researcher, on postcolonial sensitivity and awareness, that is, so to say, on a never-ending process of translation¹⁵ or **interpretative practice** deeply embedded in everyday existence.

¹¹ G.Ch. Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, *op. cit.*

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 44.

¹³ G.Ch. Spivak, “Planetarity,” in: *ibidem*, pp. 71–102.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

¹⁵ See G. Steiner, “What is Comparative Literature?: An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 11 October, 1994,” Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995 (see also G. Steiner, “What is Comparative Literature?,” in: *idem*, *No Passion Spent: Essays 1978–1995*, New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 1996, pp. 142–159); G. Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, New York–London: Oxford University Press, 1975 (chapter 1: *Understanding as Translation*, pp. 1–50). See chapter 8: *Interculturalism – literature – comparative literature*, pp. 161–182.

II. Three comparative literatures

Comparative literature as a form of literary studies is subject to various transformations, especially in the humanities second half of the twentieth century. These transformations have led to the emergence of new research trends – interdisciplinary comparative studies¹⁶ (at the turn of the sixties and seventies), and cultural comparative studies (in the late eighties and early nineties). Simply put, we can say today that in the field of comparative literature three major trends coexist which here I name conventionally: **“traditional” comparative literature**, **interdisciplinary comparative literature** and **cultural comparative literature**¹⁷. The last is the most diverse – including among other things, current studies of translation, ethnic and postcolonial studies, feminist, queer and gender studies, the study of cultural identity, so-called performative studies and intermedial studies. Cultural comparative literature, unlike the other two currents, undoubtedly has the most problems concerning terminology: it is referred to at times – especially in English-speaking circles – as “new”¹⁸ comparative literature (including by Susan Bassnett, Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Emily Apter), is sometimes called “cultural studies”¹⁹ (Piotr

¹⁶ Interdisciplinarity in the case of contemporary comparative literature is understood in a very broad sense: as a condition – it should be said – of cultural comparative literature (see T. Sławek, “Literatura porównawcza: między lekturą, polityką i społeczeństwem,” in: *Polonistyka w przebudowie: Literaturoznawstwo – wiedza o języku – wiedza o kulturze – edukacja. Zjazd Polonistów, Kraków 22–25 września 2004*, ed. M. Czermińska et al., Vol. 1, Kraków: Universitas, 2005, p. 395).

¹⁷ See chapter 2: *Interdisciplinarity and comparative literature studies* (pp. 25–49), and chapter 3: *Dialogism and new comparative literature* (pp. 51–64).

¹⁸ See S. Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*, op. cit.; S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “A New Comparative Literature as Theory and Method,” in: *idem, Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application*, Amsterdam–Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, 1998, pp. 13–41; G.Ch. Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, op. cit., *passim*; E. Apter, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*, Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006 (see amongst others “A New Comparative Literature,” pp. 243–251).

¹⁹ See *Badania porównawcze: Dyskusja o metodzie. Radziejowice, 6–8 lutego 1997 r.*, ed. A. Nowicka-Jeżowa, Izabelin: Świat Literacki, 1998, p. 131; A.F. Kola, “Nie-klasyczna komparatystyka: W stronę nowego paradygmatu,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1–2 (2008): pp. 56–74 (see also: A.F. Kola, “Nie-klasyczna komparatystyka,” in: *idem, Europa w dyskursie polskim, czeskim i chorwackim: rekonfiguracje krytyczne*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2011, pp. 21–34); E.M. Grossman, “Blaski i cienie globalizacji, czyli problemy polonistyki w badaniach komparatystycznych: Przyczynek do dalszych badań,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 6 (2009): p. 68; also in: *Polonistyka bez granic*, vol. 1: *Wiedza o literaturze i kulturze*, IV Kongres Polonistyki Zagranicznej “Polonistyka bez granic” (Kraków, 9–11 October 2008), ed. R. Nycz, W. Miodunka, T. Kunz,

Roguski, Adam F. Kola, Elwira M. Grossman) or “non-classical”²⁰ (Adam F. Kola), sometimes also – with necessary qualifications, that “traditional” comparative literature has no reason to be in postmodern literary theory – simply called “comparative literature”²¹ comparative *tout court* or “literary comparative literature”²² (Tomasz Bilczewski).

The separation of these three trends in the field of comparative literature – namely traditional comparative literature, interdisciplinary comparative literature and cultural comparative literature – the simplest of all possible divisions is controversial, though, in my opinion, unavoidable. It is controversial for two reasons:

Firstly, when talking about the different types or modes of comparative studies, only their general problematic specificity is emphasized; interdisciplinary comparative literature, for example (which includes – in addition to literary phenomena – non-literary, interartistic, intermedial and multimedial phenomena) remains in opposition to traditional comparative literature as a purely philological discipline. However, substantial controversy is created by the demarcation line drawn today between the sharply criticized “traditional” comparative literature and cultural comparative literature. It is easy to formulate a fundamental objection here that traditional comparative literature practised in any form is, in fact, always cultural in character ... The argument is, of course, correct. Therefore, it should be answered that, in the case of cultural comparative literature, in **new comparative literature**, emphasis is placed upon the importance of the changes taking place due to the cultural turn²³. It is, in a nutshell, abandonment of literaturo-centrism (literature is

Kraków: Universitas, 2010, pp. 489–502; A.F. Kola, “Komparatystyka kulturoznawcza wobec wielokulturowego świata: W stronę metateorii krytycznej,” in: *Granice kultury*, ed. A. Gwóźdź, Katowice: “Śląsk”, 2010, pp. 213–224.

²⁰ A.F. Kola, “Nie-klasyczna komparatystyka: W stronę nowego paradygmatu,” *op. cit.*, pp. 56–74.

²¹ *Nota bene* the formula “literatura porównawcza” [comparative literature] was subjected to criticism by Henryk Markiewicz, proposing an alternative description: “komparatystyka literacka” [comparative literature] or “comparative literary studies” (H. Markiewicz, “Zakres i podział literaturoznawstwa porównawczego,” in: *idem, Przekroje i zbliżenia dawne i nowe: Rozprawy i szkice z wiedzy o literaturze*, Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1976, p. 415).

²² T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka literacka jako sztuka interpretacji w kontekście badań nad przekładem* [doctoral thesis, Kraków 2008] (see T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja: Nowoczesne badania porównawcze wobec translatoologii*, Kraków: Universitas, 2010).

²³ See, amongst others, A. Burzyńska, “Kulturowy zwrot teorii,” in: *Kulturowa teoria literatury: Główne pojęcia i problemy*, ed. M.P. Markowski, R. Nycz, Kraków: Universitas, 2006, pp. 41–91.

treated as one of the possible cultural practices²⁴) and acceptance of the situation of significant “deterioration” of the conditions of interpretation (some have an eloquent formula for this occasion: “antipositivist turn complemented”²⁵).

Secondly, the three-way division does not bring about radical insights (or – as desired by many literary scholars – “exclusions”), which would accent breakthroughs in the history of comparative literature, the dynamics and directions of transformations (interdisciplinary comparative literature foretells cultural comparative literature and to some extent co-exists with it today, even if we take into account the mainstream so-called intermedial studies). Naturally, this dynamic transformation is not difficult to sketch as “one-way”, to capture its historical development, as is well shown by Tomasz Bilczewski, speaking of the four strategies of comparative literature work: “**incorporeal**”, “**intercorporeal**”/“**intra-corporeal**”, “**transcorporeal**” and “**pluricorporeal communities**”²⁶. The first – the incorporeal strategy – combines with the theories of influence (with the proposals of the “French school” consolidated since the nineteenth century frankocentrism); the second – the intercorporeal/intracorporeal strategy – among other things, with interdisciplinary reflection (with the spread of Henry H.H. Remak’s concept, formulated in the nineteen sixties within the “American school” undermines the positivist mindset of the French comparatists); the third – the transcorporeal strategy – with an increase in interest in the phenomena of translation from the seventies and the translational return, which is clinched by the Bernheimer report²⁷ of 1993); fourth – the strategy of pluricorporeal communities – with cultural pluralism, which in the nineties brought to prominence “»new« (inter)disciplines”: ethnic, postcolonial, feminist, etc. studies, which gain a privileged place in the volumes by the American comparatists²⁸, including Haun Saussy’s report in 2004.

The rather exemplary “strategies” mentioned and described by Tomasz Bilczewski do not raise the slightest objection – but the problem is that

²⁴ “The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Ch. Bernheimer, Baltimore–London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 42.

²⁵ A. Szahaj, “Zwrot antypozytywistyczny dopełniony (zamiast wstępu),” in: *Filozofia i etyka interpretacji*, ed. A.F. Kola, A. Szahaj, Kraków: Universitas, 2007, pp. 7–14.

²⁶ T. Bilczewski, “Cztery strategie: od inkorporacji do plurikorporalnych wspólnot,” in: *idem, Komparatystyka i interpretacja*, *op. cit.*, pp. 58–74.

²⁷ “The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century,” *op. cit.*, p. 44.

²⁸ *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

they do not form (like the three comparative literature trends proposed here) closed chapters in the history of comparative studies, that not only still compete with each other, but also they merge and coexist in today's comparative literature. It is true that they still maintain the opinions of the conservative "French school" and, breaking with any and all manifestations of the conservatism of the "American school" (as otherwise it will break into a variety of accents: postcolonial studies, for example, situated in the centre of interest of the second school, are undervalued or deliberately marginalized by supporters of the first²⁹), but the polyphony of comparative literature is something quite natural in both spaces of reflection. It is enough to remember the system of constructivist concepts from Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, located within the "American school", although clearly aimed at maintaining comparative literature in the form of traditionally understood scientific study (an expression of which is the programmatic approach of ten "general principles of Comparative Literature"³⁰). Or take a look at the French proposals included in collective publications, at least in *Le comparatisme aujourd'hui*³¹ (1999) and *La recherche en Littérature générale et comparée en France en 2007: Bilan et perspectives*³², or in books such as *La littérature comparée* by Yves Chevrel (1989). The penetration of various comparative literature concepts can be seen perfectly in Polish comparative studies. They are distinguished by particularly lively "traditional" comparative literature (there is another question here as well, that interdisciplinary comparative literature is often completely ignored or pushed to unspecified areas of humanistic reflection³³, and cultural comparative literature is still treated

²⁹ See J.-M. Moura, "Postcolonialisme et comparatisme" (text can be found on the webpage <http://www.vox-poetica.org/sflgc/biblio/moura.html>).

³⁰ S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application*, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–18.

³¹ Five issues of contemporary comparative literature are accented there, amongst which are to be found: 1. myths in literature, 2. reception aesthetics, 3. imagology, 4. the relationship of literature to other art forms, 5. didactics (*Le comparatisme aujourd'hui*, ed. S. Ballestra-Puech, J.-M. Moura, Villeneuve d'Ascq: Université Charles de Gaulle-Lille 3, 1999).

³² The centre of attention for the comparatists include the issues: reception (including the Bible, myths, translation), literature and other arts (amongst others music, architecture, film, dance), literature and ideas (including philosophy, aesthetics, psychoanalysis), theory of literature, cultural studies, anthropology, "world literature", post-colonial studies, geocriticism (*La recherche en Littérature générale et comparée en France en 2007: Bilan et perspectives*, ed. A. Tomiche, K. Zieger, Valenciennes: Presses Universitaires de Valenciennes, 2007).

³³ See H. Janaszek-Ivaničková, *O współczesnej komparatystyce literackiej*, Warsaw: PWN, 1980, p. 165. See also: O. Płaszczewska, *Przestrzenie komparatystyki – italianizm*,

with great suspicion). As an example of the clashes of divergent views we have not only the volume from twenty years ago, which registered the opening of the debate – *Badania porównawcze: Dyskusja o metodzie* (Izabelin 1998), a collection of works which situated itself unfortunately on the sidelines of the Radziejowice discussion – *Regionalne, narodowe, uniwersalne: Literatura i media w perspektywie komparatystycznej* (Olsztyn 2005), recently published volumes: *Komparatystyka: Między Mickiewiczem a dniem dzisiejszym* (Bydgoszcz 2010), *Komparatystyka dzisiaj* (vol. 1: Kraków 2010; vol. 2: Warsaw 2011), *Komparatystyka dla humanistów* (Warsaw 2011), *Komparatystyka i konteksty: Komparatystyka między Mickiewiczem a dniem dzisiejszym II* (Bydgoszcz 2012), *Drogi i rozdroża współczesnej komparatystyki europejskiej* (Warsaw 2012), and also the discussions among literary critics concerning the most recent comparative literature initiated by *Wielogłos*³⁴.

III. “Nomadic discipline”

Comparative literature as a form of meta-literary criticism activity – despite the efforts of several generations of comparatists undertaken over the course of the last two centuries – has never gained either the stable set of instruments or the essential methodological foundation, to be able to speak of an independent discipline (sometimes it is even called an “auxiliary discipline” be that literary criticism, or today’s translation studies³⁵, as a “indiscipline”³⁶ or as a “counterdiscipline”³⁷). Little

Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2010 (part 1, chapter 4: *Komparatystyka w Polsce*, pp. 85–148).

³⁴ See “Rozmowa »Wielogłosu«” [Maria Korytowska, Marta Skwara, Olga Płaszczewska, Bogusław Bakula, Tomasz Bilczewski, Andrzej Borowski, Andrzej Hejmej and Tadeusz Sławek talk about the problems of contemporary comparative literature], in: *Wielogłos*, 1–2 (2010) (special number: “Komparatystyka dziś”): pp. 7–38. See also *Tekstualia*, 4 (2012) (special number: “Komparatystyka – upadek czy wzlot?”).

³⁵ Comparative literature is treated as an auxiliary discipline to literary criticism, amongst others, by Henry H.H. Remak (“*Comparative Literature*, Its Definition and Function,” *op. cit.*, p. 9); further as a supplementary science to translation studies amongst others by Susan Bassnett (S. Bassnett, “From Comparative Literature to Translation Studies,” in: *eadem*, *Comparative Literature*, *op. cit.*, p. 161).

³⁶ D. Ferris, “Indiscipline,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. H. Saussy, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, pp. 78–99.

³⁷ H. Saussy, “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares: Of Memes, Hives, and Selfish Genes,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

help came from numerous proposals and programmes aimed at creating comparative literature based on strong scientific foundations – proficiency in many languages and in-depth knowledge of various cultural realities. This was otherwise underlined even by reports by American comparatists from a few decades ago such as the Levin report of 1965 and the so-called Greene report of 1975³⁸. There have always been different types of comparative literature: starting with the first comparative literature studies situated clearly in the nineteenth century relating to natural science³⁹, and going on to later projects – accenting the alliances with sociology, psychology, philosophy, anthropology and cultural studies.

This state of affairs does not currently require significant changes, hence it is possible to maintain the accurate thesis from Walter Moser, that comparative literature – especially postmodern – is a “**nomadic discipline**”⁴⁰ [*une discipline nomade*]. The consequences are all too visible in the field of cultural comparative literature today. Firstly, they grow out of all forms of cultural marginalisation, as discussed by George Steiner in the lecture “What is Comparative Literature?: An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 11 October, 1994”⁴¹, or more broadly, to “experience atopy in contemporary cultural, political and social fields”⁴², with the estrangement and alienation of postmodern man. Secondly – it refers to various problem areas, such as, among others: “translation”/translatability, identity and subjectivity, body and gender, multiculturalism, interculturalism, globalisation, intermediality, etc.,

³⁸ See “The Levin Report, 1965,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21–27; “The Greene Report, 1975” (in: *ibidem*, pp. 28–38).

³⁹ The description in French *littérature comparée*, appearing in the first half of the nineteenth century (e.g. F.J.M. Noël, F. de La Place, *Leçons françaises de littérature et de morale: Cours de littérature comparée*, Paris: Le Normant, 1816), referring amongst others to Georges Cuvier’s formula *Leçons d’anatomie comparée* (five volumes published in the years 1800–1805).

⁴⁰ W. Moser, “La Littérature Comparée et la crise des études littéraires,” in: *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 1, Vol. 23 (1996): p. 43. Emphasis A.H.

⁴¹ As defined by Steiner: “Thus much of what became comparative literature programmes or departments in American academe arose from marginalization, from partial social and ethnic exclusion” (G. Steiner, “What is Comparative Literature?,” *op. cit.*, p. 7).

⁴² See A. Dziadek, “Atopia – stadność i jednostkowość,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1–2 (2008): pp. 237–243; also in: *Wizerunki wspólnoty: Studia i szkice z literatury i antropologii porównawczej*, ed. Z. Kadłubek, T. Sławek, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2008, pp. 167–175. All quotations have been translated from the Polish by Lindsay Davidson, unless otherwise stated.

which gives birth to a variety of conceptualised, individually profiled, disproportionate and – inevitably – conflicting discourses. Thirdly – it becomes, as noted by Daniel-Henri Pageaux, “**open ethnography**”⁴³, which evidently troubles any institution (any form of institutionalisation).

In the case of cultural comparative literature – the “nomadic discipline” – any attempt to determine the scope of research or even the most general research formula is difficult, as this by rule goes with the individual, to some extent uniquely defined perspective – depending on the interpreted text (interpreted texts) and experience of the interpreting entity. This means that the point of view is imposed on the one hand, by the literature itself, which still forms the *episteme* for all formulae of comparative literature (failure to take account of this fact will, despite everything, turn cultural comparative literature into culture studies), and on the other hand – by the individual experience of the comparatist, existing in a certain cultural reality. In other words, anything that can be set in connection with the comparative literature operations closes in the chain: **existence – text – interpretation**. Some are willing to place this in the perspective of modern hermeneutics (e.g. George Steiner and his followers), and others in turn – in the neo-pragmatism perspective (e.g. Stanley Fish and followers of his “communities of interpretation”). The close connection between comparative literature reflection and individual experience today reminds us of virtually all the comparatists remaining in orbit around the activities of the “American school”, and Polish literary scholars were recently reminded of this by Tadeusz Sławek. The author of the sketch “Literatura porównawcza: między lekturą, polityką i społeczeństwem” [“Comparative Literature: Between Reading, Politics and Society”] defines comparative literature as a “**viewpoint beyond the system**”. The individual actions of the comparatist and the postmodern understanding of interdisciplinarity mean in this case: “(1) a critical relationship with the existing boundaries of disciplines and their respective hermetic discourses; (2) inhibiting the tendency to totalization, to respect difference and separateness (...); (3) getting to know limitations and not experiencing illusory omniscience”⁴⁴.

Without a doubt, one of the characteristic symptoms of the cultural comparative literature “viewpoint beyond the system” is a postmodern understanding – interdisciplinarity, the idea of “Other”/“otherness”,

⁴³ D.-H. Pageaux, “Littérature comparée et comparaisons,” in: *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 3 (1998): p. 292.

⁴⁴ T. Sławek, “Literatura porównawcza: między lekturą, polityką i społeczeństwem,” *op. cit.*, p. 395. Emphasis A.H.

the issue of recognition. This is usually accompanied, as in Sławek's case, by a radical gesture of breaking with traditional comparative literature making it possible to expose the distinct cultural-anthropological perspective. Looking, however, for arguments in favour of cultural comparative literature and baring the cardinal sins of traditional comparative literature by the way, it is not enough – I think – to speak in a biased manner about “totalization”, the discourse of the colonizer and cultural nationalism, of supremacy and various centrism, of exclusion, of incorporation and erroneous cultural appropriation, which funded (and still funds) all investigations under the previous banner of influencology. For modern trends in comparative literature, produced under the banner of democracy – “demoncracy” turns out to be a real danger. In other words, no stranger to them, as euphemistically put by Teresa Walas, “»weak« totalization”⁴⁵. It is therefore possible that both cultural comparative literature officially undertaking the struggle for the abolition of totalitarian projects, culturally alienating, repressive to people, becomes today in some aspects ... a new form of “traditional” comparative literature adapted to current realities – a form of neocolonialism (from here some comparatists see a threat, among others, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Emily Apter⁴⁶). The indicated complications are associated – generally speaking – with the exposure of special interests and the existence, to use the language of Jean Baudrillard, of fictitious altruism, revealing a weak, and as yet not quite visible side of cultural comparative literature. Noticing this kind of danger here does not lead to the resignation from the opportunities offered by modern comparative studies, and only provokes formulation of the necessary, initial conclusions. The main disadvantage of cultural comparative literature (“traditional”, “interdisciplinary” and any other) is primarily **tendency interpretation** (the effect of the “use” of literature, exaggerated absolutization of *intentio lectoris*, overunderstanding, overinterpretation⁴⁷), interpretation derived from pre-existent assumptions and ideological arguments – in any culturally oppressive dimension.

To sum up: cultural comparative literature – irrespective of the orientation of individual proposals (translation studies, minority, feminist, postcolonial studies, area studies, performative, intermedial studies, etc.)

⁴⁵ T. Walas, “Historia literatury w perspektywie kulturowej – dawniej i dziś,” in: *Kulturowa teoria literatury*, op. cit., p. 134.

⁴⁶ See G.Ch. Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, op. cit., p. 44; E. Apter, *The Translation Zone*, op. cit., pp. 102–103.

⁴⁷ See U. Eco, R. Rorty, J. Culler, Ch. Brooke-Rose, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. S. Collini, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, *passim*.

– is an **interpretative practice associated with literature**. I would link this interpretative practice, firstly with the situation of contingent contextualization of literary phenomena (and related non-literary phenomena), with consolidating relationships rather “produced” through the present interpreter – *hic (et nunc)* – than “are”; secondly – as a consequence – with the bricolage procedure, with the necessity of working out a slightly different language interpretation every time, which imposes an idiographical approach and leads to case studies; thirdly – with the comparative literature action (“weak” interpretation) as an existential need: the need to situate things becomes, after all, a basic need to situate itself in a defined (inter)cultural, social, political perspective. An ideal solution for the comparatist – which should be added on the sidelines – turns out to be not so much the existence of comparative literature institutions as finding oneself in a situation “between”, remodelling in various question circumstances, as happened with the title of one of Paul Gauguin’s paintings: *D’où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?*⁴⁸ The reason to paint the famous canvas was Gauguin’s departure from Tahiti, the reason for the comparatist’s action – any kind of (em)-migration, inevitably linked with the experience of atopy.

⁴⁸ These questions are well known to today’s comparatists as a matter from, amongst others, Ulrich Weisstein and his widely commented upon article: “»D’où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?«. The Permanent Crisis of Comparative Literature” (in: *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, 2, Vol. 11 (1984): pp. 167–192).

Part One

PERSPECTIVES OF CONTEMPORARY
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

2. INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE STUDIES

I. Introductory remarks

The dispute about interdisciplinarity – we are interested in the direct connection with the problems of the most recent comparative literature (cultural comparative literature), and more broadly the problems of modern literary and cultural studies – includes today, practically speaking, each area of reflection and every field of scientific study¹. You could say simply, that interdisciplinarity as a contemporary phenomenon boils down to, firstly, the issue of knowing and perceiving the world, and secondly, as a consequence, the issue of the “economy” of knowledge and, ultimately, a certain form of power². In the situation of looking at the widest circle of issues in two indicated aspects, that is, in terms of the epistemological and sociological aspects, we should

¹ See amongst others G. Palmade, *Interdisciplinarité et idéologies*, Paris: Édition Anthropos, 1977; J.-P. Resweber, *La méthode interdisciplinaire*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1981; J.T. Klein, *Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory, and Practice*, Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1990; *Entre savoirs: L'interdisciplinarité en acte: enjeux, obstacles, perspectives*, ed. E. Portella, Toulouse: Éditions Erès, 1992; J.T. Klein, *Crossing Boundaries: Knowledge, Disciplinarity, and Interdisciplinarity*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996; P. Weingart, “Interdisciplinarity: The Paradoxical Discourse,” in: *Practising Interdisciplinarity*, ed. P. Weingart, N. Stehr, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000; V.B. Leitch, “Postmodern Interdisciplinarity,” in: *idem, Theory Matters*, New York–London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 165–171 (first edition: *Profession 2000* (New York, 2000): pp. 124–131); F. Darbellay, *Interdisciplinarité et transdisciplinarité en analyse des discours*, Genève: Editions Slatkine, 2005; *Repenser l'interdisciplinarité*, ed. G. Origgi, F. Darbellay, Genève: Editions Slatkine, 2010; *Valences of Interdisciplinarity: Theory, Practice, Pedagogy*, ed. R. Foshay, Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2012; *La circulation des savoirs: Interdisciplinarité, concepts nomades, analogies, métaphores*, ed. F. Darbellay, Bern–Berlin–Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2012.

² See J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington, B. Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, p. 52. See also F. Guattari, “Fondements éthico-politiques de l'interdisciplinarité,” in: *Entre savoirs: L'interdisciplinarité en acte: enjeux, obstacles, perspectives, op. cit.*, pp. 101–107.

think about getting to know different phenomena (e.g. literature as one of the discourses and one of the elements of cultural reality) and be aware of – as Vincent B. Leitch suggests in one of his interviews – “the era of interdisciplinarity”³.

Undoubtedly, in the current dispute about interdisciplinarity, in the dispute, which inevitably places the spotlight on the issue of the status and borders of academic individual disciplines⁴, there is no lack of either supporters or opponents. All the criticism formulated in connection with the idea of interdisciplinarity can be reduced to the moderate thesis that there is no such discipline, which would be entirely autonomous or completely isolated from the others (for example an argument from a professor of classical literature, Giovanni Gozzer⁵, drawing attention to the imprecision of the term), or to the clearly negative theses that interdisciplinarity is a manifestation of the usurpation of identity, and in general impossible to achieve (which is in turn Stanley Fish’s⁶ argument, following the line of rhetoric typical for him: “an open mind is an empty mind ...”). Under these conditions, the scope of reflection is determined by two poles: the matter of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies turns out to be, on the one hand, an obvious fact, a solution with huge potential⁷ (including filtering through empirical science, as a kind of remedy, which gives rise to a variety of hopes in the

³ “Theory, Interdisciplinarity, and the Humanities Today: An Interview with Vincent B. Leitch” (interview with Nicholas Ruiz III), in: *InterCulture*, Vol. 2 (2005) (text available on the webpage <http://iph.fsu.edu/interculture/pdfs/ruiz%20vbl%20interview.pdf> [date accessed: June 12, 2010; no longer available]).

⁴ In reality every dispute about interdisciplinarity is at the same time a dispute about the rules of existence and the condition of particular disciplines. See for example J.T. Klein, *Interdisciplinarity*, *op. cit.* (particularly part 2: *Disciplinarity/Interdisciplinarity*, pp. 75–117); S. Pietraszko, “Problem interdyscyplinarności w refleksji nad kulturą,” in: *Perspektywy refleksji kulturoznawczej*, ed. J. Sójka, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Fundacji Humaniora, 1995, pp. 27–33.

⁵ G. Gozzer, “Interdisciplinarity: A Concept Still Unclear,” in: *Prospects*, 3, Vol. 12 (1982): pp. 281–292. Vincent B. Leitch (“Postmodern Interdisciplinarity,” *op. cit.*) even leads the problem to the general conclusion that every discipline is “infiltrated” by other disciplines.

⁶ See S. Fish, “Being Interdisciplinary Is So Very Hard to Do,” in: *Profession 1989* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1989), pp. 15–22 (also in: *idem*, *There’s No Such Thing as Free Speech, and It’s a Good Thing, Too*, Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 231–242).

⁷ From the pragmatic point of view interdisciplinary studies bring the types of answers and solutions to problems which are somewhat too complicated to be able to propose them under the framework of one discipline. See J.T. Klein, W.H. Newell, “Advancing Interdisciplinary Studies,” in: *Interdisciplinarity: Essays from the Literature*, ed. W.H. Newell, New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1998, p. 3.

face of civilizational-cultural threats), and on the other hand – this idea particularly in terms of ethics, becomes one of the most controversial issues in the field, starting from the second half of the twentieth century⁸. As a result, there is a tendency to generally believe that research on the border between disciplines, interdisciplinary research, is not only extremely expansive and brings many benefits in the area, so to say, of **(re)production of knowledge**, but is also, at the same time, something purely fictional, illusory from the perspective of the assumptions, or even a sophismatic argument of institutions working in this way, more or less effectively, to source funding⁹.

Despite such a heterogeneous state of reflection, the idea of interdisciplinarity, I think, allows us to capture an important dynamic in comparative literature research (and not just in the historical sense)¹⁰. The problem of interdisciplinarity, interdisciplinary studies and comparative literature research includes, indeed, in their initial forms, very complex and different areas of battle, which for themselves take on a defense, or aim to conquer certain bastions of knowledge and power (in connection with forcing their own models of knowledge, their right to authority, the fight for intellectual and institutional dominance, which – as is known – is captured by Pierre Bourdieu in his field theory in the broad cultural-sociological context). However, to formulate the main thesis: between the characters of interdisciplinary studies and the character of comparative literature studies some similarities seem to occur, while the category of interdisciplinarity by itself within the field of comparative literature fulfils the function of a kind of determinant of the discipline.

These similarities refer to the manner of even the most general treatment of research projects: in the case of comparative literature studies (in any of the methodological variants) a vital role continues to be played by ambivalent conviction and characteristic doubt. One of these concerns,

⁸ See for example *Practising Interdisciplinarity*, *op. cit.*; J.T. Klein, *Crossing Boundaries: Knowledge, Disciplinarity, and Interdisciplinarity*, *op. cit.*

⁹ Haun Saussy captures this simply: “»Interdisciplinarity« is a wonder-working keyword in grant applications and college promotional leaflets” (H. Saussy, “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares: Of Memes, Hives, and Selfish Genes,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. H. Saussy, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, p. 3).

¹⁰ In essence, today we would generalize Susan Bassnett’s conclusions, according to whom the idea of interdisciplinarity and universalism was been decided from the very beginning by the character of American comparative literature studies. See S. Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford–Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993, p. 33. See also H.H.H. Remak, “Origins and Evolution of Comparative Literature and Its Interdisciplinary Studies,” in: *Neohelicon*, 1, Vol. 29 (2002): pp. 245–250.

among others, is the extreme conviction that comparative literature does not exist¹¹, another – despite positive reference and acceptance for this kind of research – is the constantly repeating question, appearing even on the title pages of academic compendia: “what is Comparative Literature?”¹². In the situation of interdisciplinary studies, if we maintain the appropriate proportions, the matter presents itself quite similarly – in the postmodern optic it can be argued without any reservations that such a thing as interdisciplinarity does not exist, or – at best – repeat the intractable question: “what is interdisciplinarity?”

II. Around interdisciplinarity

The term “interdisciplinarity”¹³ – to briefly sort out the facts of history – began to function in a variety of circles starting in the nineteen sixties and nineteen seventies; moreover, it is not a coincidence that it is sometimes associated with the crisis of 1968 and its consequences¹⁴. The term first appeared as a key word particularly in educational

¹¹ Such wording appears on various occasions to mention just the article by Benedetto Croce in 1902: “La »letteratura comparata«” (*La Critica. Rivista di letteratura, storia e filosofia*, Vol. 1 (1903): pp. 78; see B. Croce, “Comparative Literature,” in *Comparative Literature: The Early Years. An Anthology of Essays*, ed. H.-J. Schulz, Ph.H. Rhein, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973, p. 219) and in the thesis of the Swiss comparatist Martin Sexl, announced one hundred years later, 25 March 2002, during a lecture at the Université de Provence. It is worth recalling that a negative judgment was formulated at the beginning of the twentieth century by Maurycy Mann, claiming that comparative literature is nothing more than a part of literary criticism: “the task of comparative literature as such is identical to the task of literary history. It is the same field of research, the same means and the same goals, so there is no need to use a separate name. »Vergleichende Literaturgeschichte«, comparative literary history is the true, essential literary history. Adding the adjective »comparative« is an obvious pleonasm that can not be excused” (M. Mann, *O literaturze porównawczej: Szkic informacyjny*, Kraków: G. Gebethner i Ska, 1918, p. 20).

¹² Take for example the title of the review study authored by Pierre Brunel, Claude Pichois, André-Marie Rousseau, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature comparée?*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1983 (new edition: 1996).

¹³ The interesting controversy around the term is presented in detail by Julie Thompson Klein, “An Interdisciplinary Lexicon,” in: *eadem, Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory, and Practice*, op. cit., pp. 55–73.

¹⁴ See for example J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, op. cit., p. 52; J.-P. Resweber, “Champs et méthodes de l'interdisciplinarité,” in: *La question de l'interdisciplinarité*, Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 1982, p. 107.

projects¹⁵ (in connection with the reform of academic studies in the United States and in Western Europe), and gradually with increasing frequency in research projects and institutional projects. The influence of the idea of interdisciplinarity and formulae of so-called interdisciplinary studies in the case of the US comparative literature research was so significant in the sixties, that in the opinion of the comparatists themselves – very paradoxically – that it started to pose a threat to the future of this kind of research and new educational programmes. In the so-called Greene report of 1975¹⁶ possible dangers are signalled (including their potential scale) such as imprecise reflection, lack of methodological rigor, and finally, the institutional implications of “relaxing of discipline”.

The dominant situation in the seventies can be well illustrated by Georges Gusdorf's comments in 1973, who wrote in the *Encyclopædia Universalis* not just about the fashion for interdisciplinarity (more precisely: the fashion for interdisciplinary learning), but even about the existence of a special form of snobbery among researchers¹⁷. In reality, the problem met with various attempts at realisation and explanation from the perspectives of different research disciplines, hence – according to Julie Thompson Klein's conclusions closing her book *Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory, and Practice* (1990) – interdisciplinarity is defined in the twentieth century, among other things as “**methodology, a concept, a process, a way of thinking, a philosophy**”¹⁸. If we are tempted at this point for a more general conclusion we would have to simply say that in the context of opportunities for the practise of learning, important, in fact, are two sources of interdisciplinarity, namely the learning subject and the object studied. The relationship which occurs in connection with the subject/object perspectives is described by the Austrian astrophysicist Erich Jantsch with the original formula: “interdisciplinarity – dreams

¹⁵ See collected volumes *L'interdisciplinarité: Problèmes d'enseignement et de recherche dans les universités*, Paris: OECD Publications, 1972 (for example G. Berger's opinion, “»L'Archipel interdisciplinaire»,” p. 73); *Interdisciplinarité et sciences humaines*, vol. 1, Paris: UNESCO, 1983 (for example G. Gusdorf's remarks, “Passé, présent, avenir de la recherche interdisciplinaire,” p. 38).

¹⁶ “The Greene Report, 1975,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Ch. Bernheimer, Baltimore–London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 36.

¹⁷ See G. Gusdorf, “Interdisciplinaire (connaissance)” [encyclopaedia entry], in: *Encyclopædia Universalis*, vol. 8, Paris: Encyclopædia Universalis France, 1973, p. 1086.

¹⁸ J.T. Klein, *Interdisciplinarity*, op. cit., p. 196. Emphasis A.H.

and reality”¹⁹. As a concrete interpretative action (in the *praxis* plane), interdisciplinarity should be conceived both as a result of the researcher’s pressure (his openness of thinking and creativity leads in practice to new research conclusions), and as a result of the pressure of external reality, with its entire liquidity and dynamics of cultural phenomena.

The position of the researcher plays a particularly important role here – the subjective criterion makes it possible to isolate interdisciplinarity from the issues directly related to it, such as even transdisciplinarity. Further, it is worth signalling by the way that recently all sorts of definitions of concepts of interest in the sphere of our research have been appearing such as: interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary, transdisciplinarity, and a-disciplinarity²⁰. So, in the case of interdisciplinarity, more precisely: interdisciplinary methods²¹, today would not be a simple summation of the achievements of the representatives of different fields, absolutization of the rules of integration²² and the desire to achieve some kind of synthesis of knowledge, but above all, an **individual undertaking of confrontation of one’s own discipline with another** (or others). This type of confrontation (understood, as emphasized by Ryszard Nycz in the perspective of literary criticism, “not so much as a way to transdisciplinary integration, but rather as stimulation for critical self-reflection and re-definition of one’s own discipline”²³) leads to new diagnoses, raising new questions and determines previously unknown research purposes. In other words, interdisciplinarity is not understood by quantitative criterion, but qualitative²⁴, serves in current conditions, and in the formation of the self-awareness of the researcher, and – in the final consequence

¹⁹ E. Jantsch, “L’interdisciplinarité: les rêves et la réalité,” in: *Perspectives*, 3, Vol. 10 (1980): pp. 333–343.

²⁰ See *Interdisciplinarity: Essays from the Literature*, *op. cit.*

²¹ In the belief for example of the philosopher Jean-Paul Resweber the interdisciplinary method is one of the main temptations making possible the development of a variety of knowledge (see J.-P. Resweber, *La méthode interdisciplinaire*, *op. cit.*, p. 12).

²² This is the manner of understanding interdisciplinarity and interdisciplinary studies in the nineteen seventies; for example, according to Pierre Duguet interdisciplinary study is a question of “*integration* of concepts and methods” of different (most frequently two) disciplines (see P. Duguet, “L’approche des problèmes,” in: *L’interdisciplinarité*, *op. cit.*, p. 10).

²³ R. Nycz, “O przedmiocie studiów literackich – dziś,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1–2 (2005): p. 176. Jean-Paul Resweber otherwise describes such a confrontation with the name “hermeneutic interdisciplinarity” (J.-P. Resweber, *La méthode interdisciplinaire*, *op. cit.*, p. 26).

²⁴ See N. Zurbrugg, “Quantitative or Qualitative? Toward a Definition of Interdisciplinary Problems,” in: *La littérature et les autres arts: Actes du IXe Congrès de l’Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée* [Innsbruck, 20–25 August 1979],

– in the constant evolution of any particular given discipline. The interesting thing with this is that in a variety of works devoted to this subject in recent decades, very often the starting point for a broad definition of interdisciplinarity in the perspective of aesthetics, is emphasis upon the timeless, universal nature of cultural phenomena and the manner in which they are studied²⁵. In order to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings, we should immediately make it clear that in the case of comparative literature research it is necessary to take into account both the broader given meaning of the term, combined with historical aesthetic-philosophical reminiscences – various ideas of unity of the arts and knowledge (integrality, synthesis, correspondence) – and its narrow meaning, we could say, original meaning, referring to artistic phenomena and research projects that appear in the second half of the twentieth century (including interactivity, intermediality, multimediality). Subsequently these two fundamentally different meanings of the term and related connotations lead in fact to two divergent models of knowledge: one goes to reject the primacy of hyperspecialization, awareness of “situational knowledge” and as a result embedding perspectivism²⁶ and the process of de-disciplinization, constituting, according to Roland Barthes, the only real source of the whole phenomenon²⁷; in the second – on the contrary – the integrality and – treated in the Cartesian spirit – the unity of knowledge, belief in the possibility of reaching a universal, objective truth.

In the latter case this was therefore about fundamentalism and universality of knowledge, or, using completely different language and Claude Lévi-Strauss’s metaphor, about the position of the “engineer” and his unlimited power and unlimited knowledge²⁸. The postmodern criticism

ed. Z. Konstantinović, S.P. Scher, U. Weisstein, Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1981, pp. 339–343.

²⁵ See J.T. Klein, *Interdisciplinarity*, *op. cit.* See also G. Gusdorf, “Passé, présent, avenir de la recherche interdisciplinaire,” *op. cit.*

²⁶ The essence of the matter is conveyed well by the postulate of compromised “anti-foundationalism” (see S. Fish, “Consequences,” in: *Critical Inquiry*, 3, Vol. 11 (1985): p. 439).

²⁷ It is clearly explained in the fragment of “From Work to Text” (first edition: R. Barthes, “De l’œuvre au texte,” in: *Revue d’Esthétique*, 3 (1971): pp. 225–232): “It is indeed as though the *interdisciplinarity* which is today held up as a prime value in research cannot be accomplished by the simple confrontation of specialist branches of knowledge. Interdisciplinarity is not the calm of an easy security; it begins *effectively* (as opposed to the mere expression of a pious wish) when the solidarity of the old disciplines breaks down (...)” (R. Barthes, “From Work to Text,” in: *idem*, *Image, Music, Text*, trans. S. Heath, London: Fontana Press, 1977, p. 155).

²⁸ See C. Lévi-Strauss, “The Science of the Concrete,” in: *idem*, *The Savage Mind*, trans. G. Weidenfeld, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966, pp. 17–19

of the “engineer” ultimately leads to the simple diagnosis that interdisciplinarity has two forms distinctly separate in the historical sense. In the modernist version, called the “modern version” of interdisciplinarity by Vincent B. Leitch, it is a dream about the end of artificial divisions in knowledge and of the collapse of the disciplines (in fact: the attempt to merge them anew). In the “postmodern version” it is an accentuation – in the situation of criticism of the universality of knowledge – of the existing differences, conflicts, respect for all sorts of otherness²⁹. The results are “»new« (inter)disciplines”³⁰ and diverging research trends: culture studies, ethnic and postcolonial studies, area studies, feminist studies, so-called gender studies, new translation studies, intermedial studies, etc.

III. Comparative literature – interdisciplinarity

In the case of comparative studies interdisciplinarity turns out to be – *volens volens* – the distinguishing feature (and often one of the main problems of the discipline), in a rather singular manner, which should be emphasised, characterises postmodern comparative literature of the last decades. This state of affairs is decided by three essentially different reasons, or more properly by three strands of reflection, leading to crystallization of separate research positions, namely the camps of “pragmatists”, “theorists” and “relativists” (this definition is, of course, just nominal). Some comparatists, guided by practical considerations (tracing the analogy of literary and cultural parallelisms, homology, convergence, divergence, etc. on the border of literature and the arts), are pushing the idea of the so-called **interdisciplinary comparative literature** as an important sub-discipline and an important trend in comparative literature. Others, taking a theoretical point of view, make the assumption *a priori*, that **comparative literature in its entirety has an interdisciplinary character**, given that it is always a metastudy project³¹ (“knowledge in the second degree”³²), a metatheory, and in certain situations – if we limit ourselves to the example of traditional comparative

(C. Lévi-Strauss, “La science du concret,” in: *idem, La Pensée sauvage*, Paris: Plon, 1962, pp. 27–30).

²⁹ See V.B. Leitch, *Postmodern Interdisciplinarity*, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 169.

³¹ See H. Saussy, “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares,” *op. cit.*, p. 11.

³² E. Kasperski, “O teorii komparatystyki,” in: *Literatura. Teoria. Metodologia*, ed. D. Ulicka, Warsaw: Wydział Polonistyki UW, 2001, p. 344.

literature – meta-literary criticism³³. Still other researchers under the sign of cultural relativism – with no less conviction than the proponents of interdisciplinary characterisation of all comparative literature research on the one hand, and on the other the interdisciplinary trend of studies – perversely undermine the legitimacy of the idea of interdisciplinarity in the situation of the most recent comparative literature studies maintaining (with the creative concept of science and no doubt probably the irresistible habit of relativizing), that advanced knowledge today invalidates all distinct fields of knowledge.

As can be seen, the perception of interdisciplinarity – regardless of the impact of various proposals – could become an important determinant of comparative literature thought. In the first two cases – interdisciplinary comparative literature and comparative literature treated in its entirety as an interdisciplinary project – we come across the problem of interdisciplinarity *expressis verbis* (*nota bene* it is necessary to note existing differences here, as one position, of the “pragmatists” would have to be placed in the field of literary studies, and the second – of the “theorists” – within the traditionally understood the philosophy of literature, as a priori knowledge of literature). In the third case, however – we have to deal with the criticism of interdisciplinarity or, we could say, the issue of “**a-disciplinarity**”. In fact, these three proposals relating to comparative literature research and interdisciplinarity are in defined relationships to each other – for example, the concept included under the label a-disciplinarity excludes the other two, while the concept of interdisciplinary comparative literature fits in some way within comparative

³³ Seeing comparative studies as meta-literary studies is the main argument of those who state that in such circumstances, without a separate subject of analysis (René Etiemble claims that it is concerned with an “apparently insoluble problem” – see R. Etiemble, *Comparaison n'est pas raison: La crise de la littérature comparée*, Paris: Gallimard, 1963, p. 61), comparative studies cannot be considered a separate discipline within humanities. The indeterminable matter of comparative studies as an autonomus field of research has repeatedly raised concerns signalled not only by theorists of literature, for example Ryszard Nycz: “the results of comparative research can only be assigned the value of a contribution, and comparative studies themselves – the status of (one of many) assisting methods” (R. Nycz, “Od polonistyki do komparatystyki (i z powrotem),” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1–2 (1992): p. 2). It has also been stated by comparatists themselves, like Henry H.H. Remak: “We conceive of comparative literature less as an independent subject which must at all costs set up its own inflexible laws, than as a badly needed auxiliary discipline, a link between smaller segments of parochial literature, a bridge between organically related but physically separated areas of human creativeness” (H.H.H. Remak, “Comparative Literature, Its Definition and Function,” in: *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, ed. N.P. Stallknecht, H. Frenz, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961, pp. 9–10).

literature projects identified within the interdisciplinary formula. Let us try to trace the arguments of supporters of particular positions, keeping in mind today's problems and the state of comparative literary research.

In the current, moderate comparative literature reflection the issue of interdisciplinarity occurs both on the occasion of different research situations due to the frontier character of interpreted phenomena (the area of *praxis*), and on the occasion of consciously complicating research methods, through confronting different methods and determining, as a result, new theoretical positions in order to force specific points of view (in the areas of theory and metatheory)³⁴. However, the problem is outlined in contrast when there is an irresistible temptation to refer comparative literature as a whole – to the fullest, but never the less very cursory understanding – to the rules of interdisciplinarity. Since comparative literature makes use of the experience of other disciplines, particularly literature research (in the fields literary theory and literary history and literary criticism), and uses as necessary – as reasonably argued by Claude Pichois and André-Marie Rousseau – all methods: “historical, genetic, sociological, statistical, stylistic, comparative”³⁵, etc., then it is easy to bring all comparative literature issues to interdisciplinarity, and maintain (even hypothetically) that “comparative literary ambitions are universal, interdisciplinary and integrative”³⁶.

Naturally, one can not argue with such a theoretical position; after all, humanistic studies inherently have an interdisciplinary character (it is difficult to think of another diagnosis). Taking into account the development of the knowledge of literature in the twentieth century and the fate of modern literature it is not necessary to explain more broadly the role played, and still played, by interdisciplinary alliances: references not only to philosophy (especially in connection with the so-called breakthrough of antipositivism and poststructuralist turn), aesthetics, linguistics, history, religious studies, psychology, sociology and cultural anthropology, but also, for example, such scientific fields as history of

³⁴ See Julie Thompson Klein's proposal (*Interdisciplinarity*, *op. cit.*, p. 11 ff), which considers interdisciplinarity in these two dimensions: *praxis* and *theory*.

³⁵ C. Pichois, A.-M. Rousseau, *La littérature comparée*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1967, p. 173. Similar views concerning comparative literature are quite common, among others, Halina Janaszek-Ivaničková's opinion: “[Comparative literature] does not have its own specific methodology (except for the comparative principle on which it is based), because it uses absolutely all the methods developed within contemporary literary criticism and divides their fate (some are less, others more progressive or revealing and effective)” (H. Janaszek-Ivaničková, *O współczesnej komparatystyce literackiej*, Warsaw: PWN, 1980, pp. 137–138).

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 138.

art, film studies, media studies and musicology. The case is apparently a foregone conclusion – current literary and cultural studies have become inevitably interdisciplinary; it is enough to recall the main currents of reflection appearing recently, which are combined with cultural anthropology, culture studies, “cultural comparative literature”, gender studies, ethnic and postcolonial studies ... In the shallow context presented here it should be said that today’s formulae of the kind **comparative literature as/and interdisciplinarity**³⁷ (Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek’s proposal) define not so much the global conditions of the discipline as the nature of specific comparative literature activities (e.g. studies concerning the relationship between literature and film, politics or medicine). It would therefore be safest to speak today – like the Polish participants in the discussion about comparative literature in Radziejowice in 1997 – about the interdisciplinary aspects of comparative research³⁸.

IV. Interdisciplinary comparative literature

The main theoretical impulse leading to the creation of so-called interdisciplinary comparative literature was undoubtedly Henry H.H. Remak’s loud proposal in 1961, “Comparative Literature, Its Definition and Function,” meting out harsh criticism of the French “positivist” variant of comparative literature research, based upon the foundations of nineteenth-century empiricism. In the collective volume by US comparatists Remak proposed a new, broader definition of the discipline, according to which “traditional” comparative literature (I define it further as “traditional comparative literature”) – oriented toward the study of literature in its variously entangled cultural contexts and constellations perceived individually by comparatists – should be supplemented by interdisciplinary research. The proposal to reformulate comparative literature (still remaining within the framework of the discipline) spread around the whole world, and is even today widely commented upon and eagerly invoked. As Remak established:

³⁷ Such is the title – “Comparative Literature as/and Interdisciplinarity” – of the third chapter of Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek’s book, *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application*, Amsterdam–Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, 1998, pp. 79–120. See also S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “The New Humanities: The Intercultural, the Comparative, and the Interdisciplinary,” in: *The Global South*, 2, Vol. 1 (2007) (special number: “Globalization and the Futures of Comparative Literature”): pp. 45–68.

³⁸ See *Badania porównawcze: Dyskusja o metodzie. Radziejowice, 6–8 lutego 1997 r.*, ed. A. Nowicka-Jeżowa, Izabelin: Świat Literacki, 1998, p. 45 ff.

Comparative literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, architecture, music), philosophy, history, the social sciences (e.g., politics, economics, sociology), the sciences, religion, etc., on the other. In brief, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression.³⁹

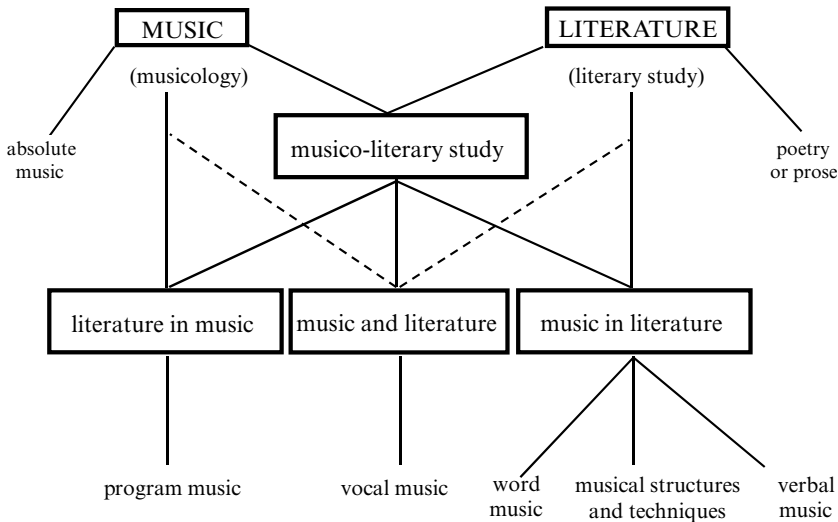
Henry H.H. Remak's new approach to comparative literature was soon annexed by American comparatist Calvin S. Brown, initiator of comparative studies of music and literature, who in 1970, in a special issue of *Comparative Literature* devoted to literature and music, writes about the manners of study of the relationship between literature and other arts (between two different means of expression), in terms, among others, of analogy and parallels⁴⁰. It should be added here that it was Brown, two decades before Remak who used the assumptions of interdisciplinary comparative literature in practice. The American comparatist in the book *Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts* (1948)⁴¹, the earliest version of which was completed in 1941, offered one of the first attempts to approach the connections between literature and music in the field of comparative literature research. Brown notably distinguished – and thoroughly analyzed in subsequent chapters – four spheres of issues: common elements (e.g. rhythm), cases of coexistence (including vocal music, opera), the influence of music on literature (e.g. repetition, variation; musical forms in literature, such as fugue; the symbolism of music) and the influence of literature on music (including programme music). Steven Paul Scher, the author of a detailed study of the schema of musico-literary studies, later referred to Brown's findings:

³⁹ H.H.H. Remak, "Comparative Literature, Its Definition and Function," *op. cit.*, p. 3). Interdisciplinary research, this "comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression" was in the sixties the highest bid for both domination at the time and the future model of comparative science: "The French seem to fear that taking on, in addition, the systematic study of the relationship between literature and any other area of human endeavor invites the accusation of charlatanism and would, at any rate, be detrimental to the acceptance of comparative literature as a respectable and respected academic domain" (*ibidem*, p. 7).

⁴⁰ C.S. Brown, "The Relations between Music and Literature as a Field of Study," in: *Comparative Literature*, 2, Vol. 22 (1970): p. 102.

⁴¹ C.S. Brown, *Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts* [1948], Athens–Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1963 (reprint with a new foreword: London–Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1987).

Organisation of musico-literary studies⁴²



Steven Paul Scher – in a universal model of musical-literary research (still referenced by many comparatists and literary critics, including Werner Wolf⁴³) – includes three basic possibilities for connections between literature and music, that is, cases of “literature *in* music” (including programme music), “music *and* literature” (vocal music) and “music *in* literature” (formation of sound layers in text – “word music”, thematisation of music – “verbal music”, using schemes and musical techniques in creating the structure of literary works – “musical structures and techniques”). Most generally speaking, all these musical-literary issues, organized by Calvin S. Brown and Steven P. Scher, open up new fields of interdisciplinary comparative research⁴⁴.

⁴² See S.P. Scher, “Literature and Music,” in: *Interrelations of Literature*, ed. J.-P. Barricelli, J. Gibaldi, New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1982, p. 237. See also S.P. Scher: “Notes Toward a Theory of Verbal Music,” in: *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 2 (1970): p. 151; “Literature and Music: Comparative or Interdisciplinary Study?,” in: *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 24 (1975): p. 38.

⁴³ See for example W. Wolf, “Intermediality Revisited: Reflections on Word and Music Relations in the Context of a General Typology of Intermediality,” in: *Word and Music Studies: Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage*, ed. S.M. Lodato, S. Aspdén, W. Bernhart, Amsterdam–New York: GA Rodopi, 2002, pp. 13–34.

⁴⁴ I have written about this several times: “Muzyka w literaturze (Perspektywy współczesnych badań),” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 4 (2000): pp. 28–36 (also in: A. Hejmej,

The extended variant of comparative literature (more precisely: comparative literature initially defined only within the so-called “American school”⁴⁵) twenty years after Remak’s comments is no longer a purely theoretical postulate, but is beginning to be regarded as a moderate, even a model programme of comparative research. At the turn of the nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties it gains a variety of interpretations: either in the form of György M. Vajda’s incidental comment on the potential importance of semiotics in the development of interdisciplinary comparative literature research⁴⁶, or the extensive article by Pierre Dufour “La Relation peinture/littérature: Notes pour un comparatisme interdisciplinaire” (1977)⁴⁷ – in which he speaks about the “interdisciplinary comparative method”⁴⁸ – or in the form of two collective publications problematising the state of reflection, namely *La littérature et les autres arts: Actes du IXe Congrès de l’Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée* (1981)⁴⁹ and *Interrelations of Literature* (1982)⁵⁰. In the first cited volume (talking about the materials from the ICLA Congress which was held in Innsbruck in 1979) the issue of interdisciplinar-

Muzyczność dzieła literackiego, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2002, pp. 5–19); “Wprowadzenie,” in: *Muzyka w literaturze: Antologia polskich studiów powojennych*, ed. A. Hejmej, Kraków: Universitas, 2002, pp. VII–XXVIII; *Muzyka w literaturze: Perspektywy komparatystyki interdyscyplinarnej*, Kraków: Universitas, 2008; “Komparatystyka interdyscyplinarna,” in: *Komparatystyka dla humanistów: Podręcznik akademicki*, ed. M. Dąbrowski, Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2011, pp. 87–140.

⁴⁵ In the so-called “French school” the problem of researching the boundaries of arts and interdisciplinarity appear much later, and the appropriate position in the hierarchy of issues is to be found only in the volume *La recherche en littérature générale et comparée en France: Aspects et problèmes*, Paris: S.F.L.G.C., 1983 (see chapter 6: *Littératures et arts*, pp. 111–171).

⁴⁶ György M. Vajda’s intuition and predictions from 1977, as to the significance of semiotics are rather far-reaching: “Firstly, considering every manifestation of culture as a sign leads to carrying out interdisciplinary research. (...) semiotics can perhaps direct us is the elaboration of the shared language of meaning-overlaps between literature and the other arts. This would be one of the most attractive and rewarding fields of comparative studies, as it would further the establishment of a solid foundation for the unified study of literature and the other arts, the objectification of such unified investigations and the exploration of deeper inner relations among the arts” (G.M. Vajda, “Present Perspectives of Comparative Literature,” in: *Neohelicon*, 1, Vol. 5 (1977): p. 279).

⁴⁷ P. Dufour, “La Relation peinture/littérature: Notes pour un comparatisme interdisciplinaire,” in: *Neohelicon*, 1, Vol. 5 (1977): pp. 141–190.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 186.

⁴⁹ *La littérature et les autres arts: Actes du IXe Congrès de l’Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée*, op. cit. (part I: *Literature and the Visual Arts*, pp. 19–214; part II: *Literature and Music*, pp. 215–296; part III: *Literature and Film*, pp. 297–322).

⁵⁰ *Interrelations of Literature*, op. cit.

ity, linked primarily to research at the border between arts, is reduced to three issues: “literature and visual arts”, “literature and music” and “literature and film”. In the second, an American selection of studies – it is understood broadly as non-literary filiations of literature and literary studies (the included articles are devoted in turn to the associations between literature and linguistics, philosophy, religion, myth, folklore, sociology, politics, law, science, psychology, music, visual arts and film).

At the IX ICLA Congress Ulrich Weisstein delivered a paper on the relationship of literature and visual arts, in which he proposed a typology of frontier phenomena. This precisely indicates potential, in his conviction, types of relationship:

1. Works of art which depict and interpret a story, rather than merely illustrating a text;
2. Literary works describing specific works of art (*ekphrases*, and *Bild-*, as distinguished from *Ding-*, *gedichte*);
3. Literary works constituting or literally re-creating works of art (*technopaignia*, including pattern poems and much of the so-called Concrete Poetry);
4. Literary works emulating pictorial styles;
5. Literary works using artistic techniques (montage, collage, the grotesque);
6. Literary works concerned with art and artists or presupposing specialized art-historical knowledge;
7. Synoptic genres (emblem);
8. Literary works sharing a theme, or themes, with works of art.⁵¹

Weisstein's proposals are still valid and are still referred to in various editions, not just comparative literature⁵². Amongst others, Seweryna Wysłouch refers to them, treating comparative literature oriented studies of words and images as one of the four possibilities: “How to study the problems of word and image? Responses to this question were sought on the basis of different disciplines: 1. history of literature; 2. comparative literature; 3. rhetoric; 4. semiotics”⁵³. The possibility of the first

⁵¹ U. Weisstein, “Comparing Literature and Art: Current Trends and Prospects in Critical Theory and Methodology,” in: *La littérature et les autres arts: Actes du IXe Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée*, op. cit., p. 23. See also U. Weisstein, “Einleitung. Literatur und bildende Kunst: Geschichte, Systematik, Methoden,” in: *Literatur und bildende Kunst: Ein Handbuch zur Theorie und Praxis eines komparatistischen Grenzgebietes*, ed. U. Weisstein, Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1992, pp. 11–31.

⁵² See for example O. Kryszowski, “Literatura i malarstwo w badaniach porównawczych,” in: *Komparatystyka dzisiaj: Problemy teoretyczne*, ed. E. Szczęsna, E. Kasperski, vol. 1, Kraków: Universitas, 2010, pp. 160–172.

⁵³ S. Wysłouch, “Literatura i obraz: Tereny strukturalnej wspólnoty sztuk,” in: *Intersemiotyczność: Literatura wobec innych sztuk (i odwrotnie)*. *Studia*, ed. S. Balbus,

– research in the historical and literary perspective – the Poznań literary scholar combines with the artistic awareness of the writer (the biographical trope), the second – research in the comparative literature perspective – with the “confrontation” of literature and art (examples of which is today’s classic monograph by Mario Praz *Mnemosyne: The Parallel between Literature and the Visual Arts*⁵⁴ and the works of Ulrich Weisstein), the third – research in the rhetorical perspective – with the problem of *ekphrasis*, the fourth – study in the semiotic perspective – with literary-painting parallels in the field of composition (examples include Adam Dziadek’s⁵⁵ work inspired by the proposals of Michael Riffaterre). It should be added that the author of the book *Literatura a sztuki wizualne* [Literature And Visual Arts] evaluates the comparative literature interpretations in a highly skeptical way, but treats the semiotic variant of reflection in a privileged manner, postulating research focused on style (“level of style”) and composition (“level of composition”)⁵⁶.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, especially in the eighties and nineties, interdisciplinary comparative literature is seen most often as a sub-discipline of comparative literature, confronting the task of penetrating the border between literature and other arts. Francis Claudon’s diagnosis well illustrates the research climate – interdisciplinary comparative literature is entering “into the era of increasing rationalisation”⁵⁷ and may in the future bring excellent results through maintaining the rules of professionalism⁵⁸. Often, however, at the same time attempts are made to make a completely separate type of studies: either out of fear of excessive expansion of the research field and the lack of competence required of the comparatists (defensive reactions include, amongst others, such suggestions as that from Halina Janaszek-Ivaničková to create a new discipline of research, derivative in relation to so-called comparative

A. Hejmej, J. Niedźwiedź, Kraków: Universitas, 2004, p. 19. See also S. Wysłouch: *Literatura a sztuki wizualne*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1994; *Literatura i semiotyka*, Warsaw: PWN, 2001.

⁵⁴ M. Praz, *Mnemosyne: The Parallel between Literature and the Visual Arts*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.

⁵⁵ See amongst others A. Dziadek, *Obrazy i wiersze: Z zagadnień interferencji sztuk w polskiej poezji współczesnej*, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2004.

⁵⁶ As Seweryna Wysłouch concludes: “[T]he structural community of arts does not depend upon the repetition of the same themes or motives, but on **deploying the same operations performed in different materials: in language, on a canvas or on a screen**. Its territory in a literary work is **style and composition**” (S. Wysłouch, “Literatura i obraz: Tereny strukturalnej wspólnoty sztuk,” *op. cit.*, p. 23).

⁵⁷ F. Claudon, “Littérature et musique,” in: *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 3 (1987): p. 261.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 265.

literature⁵⁹), or in the belief that the area of common ground is already sufficiently crystallized and in the possibility to create a new trend of reflection (and just in this way today very expansive transdisciplinary musical-literary⁶⁰ studies are appearing on the border between literary studies and musicology, and already bringing interesting effects).

The open formula of interdisciplinary comparative literature – as the findings should be summarized in a broader problematic context – is certainly one of the results of the theoretical discussion on interdisciplinarity in the postmodern academic world, not just the one that rolled loudly across American and Western European universities. At first glance it may seem here to be entirely about the criterion of examination, about identifying the specificity of research on the borders of their own discipline, about interpretation of the frontier literary phenomena and establishing the possibilities of analysis in interdisciplinary optics. That is also why interdisciplinary comparative literature, by virtue of the subject is sometimes also referred to by such formulae as “interartistic comparative literature”⁶¹, “extra-literary comparative literature”⁶², or “»external«

⁵⁹ According to Halina Janaszek-Ivaničková's prognosis: “[I]t is rather to be expected that a new derivative of comparative literature will emerge, a discipline that will deal with detailed research on the correspondence of all arts. It is less likely that comparative literature alone is capable of supporting the burden of such research” (H. Janaszek-Ivaničková, *O współczesnej komparatystyce literackiej*, op. cit., p. 165).

⁶⁰ See for example the series of publications “Word and Music Studies”, appearing from 1999 as an effect of the work of the International Association for Word and Music Studies (WMA).

⁶¹ See J.-L. Cupers, *Euterpe et Harpocrate ou le défi littéraire de la musique: Aspects méthodologiques de l'approche musico-littéraire*, Bruxelles: Publications des Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, 1988, p. 57 ff.

⁶² See S. Balbus, “Interdyscyplinarność – intersemiotyczność – komparatystyka,” in: *Intersemiotyczność: Literatura wobec innych sztuk (i odwrotnie)*. *Studia*, op. cit., p. 15. It is worth to add in this context that “external comparative literature” understood this way, despite the terminological suggestion does not present opposition in relation to “internal comparative literature” in the concept of for example Kwiryna Ziemba (“Projekt komparatystyki wewnętrznej,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1–2 (2005): pp. 72–82; also in: *Polonistyka w przebudowie: Literaturoznawstwo – wiedza o języku – wiedza o kulturze – edukacja. Zjazd Polonistów, Kraków 22–25 września 2004*, ed. M. Czermińska et al., vol. 1, Kraków: Universitas, 2005, pp. 423–433). Kwiryna Ziemba defines “internal comparative literature” like Władysław Panas (“O pograniczu etnicznym w badaniach literackich,” in: *Wiedza o literaturze i edukacja: Księga referatów Zjazdu Polonistów, Warszawa 1995*, ed. T. Michałowska, Z. Goliński, Z. Jarosiński, Warsaw: Instytut Badań Literackich PAN, Towarzystwo Literackie im. Adama Mickiewicza, 1996, pp. 605–613) as research exclusively on **actual** connections, whereas comparative literature – at least from Etiemble's known criticism – forms a field for all ideas that can be thought of and sensibly interpreted juxtapositions, analogies, parallels in isolation from the rule of causality.

comparative literature”⁶³. These same visions of comparative literature refer directly to Remak’s project. As a good example we can use here an interpretation by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek (1996, 1998):

The basic definition of Comparative Literature includes – apart from the traditional and historical approach to “compare” literary texts from different languages and cultures – the study of the literary text in/as its relationship with extra-literary areas (e.g. sociology, history, economics, the publishing industry, the history of the book, geography, biology, medicine, etc.), the other arts, etc.⁶⁴

Nevertheless complementary adjectives in the name of **interdisciplinary** comparative literature indicate in reality not only important criterion for examination, but especially **a certain way of thinking and being in culture** (an individual understanding and individual interpretation of cultural phenomena). The formula “interdisciplinary comparative literature”⁶⁵ remains today, it seems, the most adequate, dominant definition, amongst others from the moment in 1987 of the appearance of the special number of *Revue de Littérature Comparée* about the relationship of literature to music. In the opening number introduction by Francis Claudon – “Littérature et musique” – terminology questions are settled, while in the centre of reflection there are queries about the meaning of practicing interdisciplinary comparative research. Interdisciplinarity in the case of this variant of comparative literature turns out to be an expression of a certain way of thinking, which not accidentally relates directly to the rules of understanding and hermeneutics⁶⁶.

V. Cultural comparative literature

The end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the next century is a time of profound transformation within the discipline and, under cultural pressure, crystallization of its new sub-disciplines, namely interdisciplinary comparative studies and – particularly in the

⁶³ Terminology proposals of Elżbieta Zwolińska (*Badania porównawcze, op. cit.*, p. 56).

⁶⁴ S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “A New Comparative Literature as Theory and Method,” in: *idem, Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application, op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁶⁵ In Aude Locatelli’s opinion interdisciplinary comparative literature – in the case of studies concerning the relations between literature and music – preserves obvious relationships with musicology but is a separate form of humanistic reflection (see A. Locatelli, *La lyre, la plume et le temps: Figures de musiciens dans le “Bildungsroman”*, Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1998, p. 3).

⁶⁶ See F. Claudon, “Littérature et musique,” *op. cit.*, pp. 261–265.

latter period – cultural comparative studies⁶⁷, simply called by some “komparatystyka »kulturoznawcza«”⁶⁸ [“cultural critique comparative literature”]. The source of the “new comparative literature” (including amongst others the proposals from Susan Bassnett, Gayatri Ch. Spivak, Emily Apter) turns out to be not so much a methodological formula for finding and recording knowledge on the basis of the separate identity of disciplines and interdisciplinarity as a rule for contextualization of issues, the repertoire of which is continually updated by culture. Just as with previous breakthroughs⁶⁹ in comparative literary reflections, the latest breakthrough in comparative literature – the **cultural breakthrough**, to call it most simply – becomes a vital reinterpretation of existing principles of the discipline and introduces new problematic trends. These trends – brought about first and foremost through treating literature as one of the many practices, or one of the many elements of cultural reality, in other words: with the departure from literary centrism towards cultural centrism – have been articulated in the late eighties and early nineties, among others, in the attempt to define modern comparative literature research by Yves Chevrel (*La littérature comparée*, Paris 1989⁷⁰) and in the so-called Bernheimer report⁷¹ of 1993.

⁶⁷ Restating comparative literature, started by American researchers in the nineteen sixties and continued in the following decades, leads gradually towards approaching comparative reflection for this type of study, which in England contributed to the creation of a separate discipline – cultural studies (with its main centre of research in Birmingham).

⁶⁸ Piotr Roguski proposed this formula during one of the Polish debates about the condition of Polish comparative literature (*Badania porównawcze*, *op. cit.*, p. 131).

⁶⁹ In essence, comparatists are eager to see the development of the whole of comparative literature – starting with its origins in the nineteenth century through the whole twentieth century – as a history of breakthroughs and turns. Thus, Zoran Konstantinović takes into account five key moments: Paul van Tieghem’s acclaimed book about the concept of influence *La littérature comparée* (1931); Viktor Zhirmunskii’s proposals, leading from the work “Sravnitel’noe literaturovedenie i problema literaturnykh vliianii” (1936); René Wellek’s and Austin Warren’s *Theory of Literature*; Henry H.H. Remak’s concept from the sixties and the edition *La littérature comparée* by Yves Chevrel, in the series “Que sais-je?”, from 1989. See Z. Konstantinović, “Archetext – Intertext – Kontext: Paradigma einer supranationalen Literaturforschung,” in: *Germanistik und Komparatistik*, ed. H. Birus, Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995, pp. 559–562.

⁷⁰ In view of the transformations of modern humanities, Yves Chevrel (*La littérature comparée*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989) defines the current form of comparative literature as a study of literature in the context of all cultural practices.

⁷¹ See *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Ch. Bernheimer, Baltimore–London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. The trend of “cultural” comparative literature is confirmed by another report by the American comparatists from 2004 (*Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*), and also by the

Comparative literature in the current situation – which is best seen in the moment of the “opening up” of the borders of states and the emergence of new cultural-sociological constellations in Europe – ceases to be a useless metascience (a never ending dispute about the subject of research, starting from René Wellek’s historical appearance at the Second ICLA Congress in 1958: “The Crisis of Comparative Literature”) or also a form of exclusively historical discourse. In fact, it becomes an internally complicated field of research about the capacious formula – **cultural comparative literature**. Unlike traditional comparative literature (“philological comparative literature”⁷²) it takes on a much wider range of problems from the fields of sociology, psychology, history, anthropology, research on the audio-visual aspects of contemporary culture⁷³ and so on. In the Bernheimer report American researchers redefine comparative literature, setting its new range in a negative manner: “**Literary phenomena are no longer the exclusive focus of our discipline**”⁷⁴, which in turns means that literary texts are only “one discursive practice among many others in a complex, shifting, and often contradictory field of cultural production”⁷⁵.

Comparative literature studies relating to the conflictual “field of cultural production” have in effect, as compared to earlier comparative literature models, a different distribution of accents: they are primarily oriented towards different forms of literature and their various registers (the comparatist not only reaches out to high art literature, but with equal conviction to popular literature); they abolish the primacy of the two now dominant research perspectives – European and Anglo-American – in favour of previously marginalized viewpoints of cultural reality; they restore the status of literary translation of which should be

recent ICLA/AILC Congresses: *Literature as Cultural Memory* (XV, 1997), *Transitions and Transgressions in an Age of Multiculturalism* (XVI, 2000), *Beyond Binaries: Discontinuities and Displacements in Comparative Literature* (XVIII, 2007), *Expanding the Frontiers of Comparative Literature* (XIX, 2010), *Le comparatisme comme approche critique / Comparative Literature as a Critical Approach* (XX, 2013).

⁷² See A. Nowicka-Jeżowa, “Komparatystyka i filologia: Uwagi o studiach porównawczych literatury epok dawnych,” in: *Polonistyka w przebudowie*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 353 ff.

⁷³ As can easily be seen, this significant shift in research perspectives is of a more general character in contemporary humanities and is not only limited to “de-disciplinization of knowledge about literature” (R. Nycz, “O przedmiocie studiów literackich – dziś,” *op. cit.*, p. 184).

⁷⁴ “The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 42. Emphasis A.H.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*.

treated as an autonomous phenomenon and equivalent to other forms of literature; they annex of field of issues of various media (such as television or virtual reality). The comparatist's focus appears this time to be on slightly different matrices of thought. It is particularly sensitive to cultural differences, both in terms of language (this is about various cultural discourses⁷⁶), as well as the extra-linguistic dimension; in other words, to otherness, "marginality", all kinds of particularism, phenomena of a local nature.

It is worth noting that such a widely defined programme of post-modern comparative literature triggered a wave of heated discussion, primarily in connection with the scope of comparative literature studies, which in the proposed version take – according to Jonathan Culler – a form which is "excessively imperialistic"⁷⁷, or as firmly rebutted by Michael Riffaterre, cultural studies⁷⁸. However, most important from our point of view, Bernheimer's programme comes to open **criticism of the former key of interdisciplinarity** and to challenge the idea⁷⁹, which – according to the authors of the report – is the acceptance of the historical distribution of fields of learning and, willy-nilly, the result of the previous standards of professionalization. Interdisciplinarity in a purely theoretical view would be not so much an anachronism as – in the era of cultural relativism, in a situation of abolition of boundaries of different disciplines – illogical. The case of a-disciplinarity, appearing in the most radical viewpoints of the "relativists", however, raises legitimate concerns and reveals a paradox. So, questioning and abolishing the existing boundaries of all disciplines determines new *ad hoc* boundaries⁸⁰, so to say, boundaries determined on a one-off basis by extraterritoriality. "No one is free," to paraphrase the philosopher, "to know as he or

⁷⁶ See M. Dąbrowski, *Komparatystyka dyskursu / Dyskurs komparatystyki*, Warsaw: Elipsa, 2009.

⁷⁷ J. Culler, "Comparative Literature, At Last!", in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, op. cit., p. 120. See Piotr Roguski's remarks about "dark" pages of reformulated comparative literature – called, amongst other things, "intercultural" and "intracultural" comparative literature – as a new paradigm in contemporary literary criticism (*Badania porównawcze*, op. cit., p. 130).

⁷⁸ Riffaterre's intervention has a clearly defined goal – distinction of comparative literature from cultural studies and maintaining its individuality (M. Riffaterre, "On the Complementarity of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies," in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, op. cit., pp. 66–73).

⁷⁹ "The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century," op. cit., p. 42.

⁸⁰ See J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, op. cit., p. 39.

she wants”⁸¹, from here also from some point of view the new boundaries and the area of extraterritoriality are determined dependent upon the experience and disposal of the researcher from his consciously chosen research perspective, from external conditions for research in the given reality.

VI. Conclusion

It is difficult to determine the fate of today’s comparative literature, the breaking of literary centrism and traditional understanding of the “fields of knowledge”, and the directions of its future development. No doubt the identity of the discipline in its present state seems to be heavily strained, but – let us risk the proposal – that it probably was from the very beginning ... One thing is for certain, that there will not be a repeat of the situation known from musicology, where from the end of the nineteenth century “comparative musicology” (*Vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*) transformed into ethnomusicology in the twentieth century. This is because the development of comparative literature has always gone in the other direction – from traditional comparative literature (even better to say, various forms of “ethnoliterary criticism”) to cultural comparative literature, which aspires to the role of the discipline most widely open to various areas of cultural phenomena⁸² which is why under these conditions we have the question: what is the comparative literature at the centre of our interest? There is no satisfactory answer. At most it is possible to try to follow the unstable situation of the comparatist and call him like Pierre Brunel, the “Don Juan of knowledge”⁸³.

⁸¹ Jacques Derrida’s thought, formulated during an interview, concerns in reality not the rules of cognisance but of reading. Original quotation is “No one is free to read as he or she wants”. See J. Kearns, K. Newton, “An Interview with Jacques Derrida,” in: *British Post-Structuralism since 1968*, ed. A. Easthope, London: Routledge, 1988, p. 238.

⁸² In such a perspective, of course, it is easy to see certain associations of cultural comparative literature with cultural semiotics (see Anna Legeżyńska’s opinion, *Badania porównawcze*, op. cit., p. 142). Nevertheless, here the matter is primarily about taking into account the perspective of “new« (inter)disciplines”, which decisively influence the shape of current comparative studies (an example is the collective volume by Italian comparatists *Letteratura comparata*, ed. A. Gnisci, Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2002).

⁸³ P. Brunel, “Le comparatiste est-il un Don Juan de la connaissance?,” in: *Fin d’un millénaire: Rayonnement de la littérature comparée*, ed. P. Dethurens, O.-H. Bonnerot, Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, 2000, p. 35 ff.

However, in order to not lose sight of the field, what is indisputable in the context of the history of the discipline, and what has become the subject of much criticism and passionate polemics should be clearly stated. First, **comparative literature, even in today's situation as cultural comparative literature is a specific part of literary criticism**. Another matter is that comparative literature in its current, disintegrated, form, or – as recently expressed – form “under construction” is at a crossroads seeking its own identity⁸⁴. In other words: literary criticism, whose main determinant is cultural centrism. Secondly, **comparative literature cannot be contained within literary criticism** – true, they share a common subject of study, the most widely understood problems of literature, but assume slightly different research goals (ranging from aesthetic to ideological) and use different forms of analysis, for example, going beyond the historical, actual conditions of cultural phenomena. Thus, comparative literature, not only in its initial historical form – despite all expressed opposition – is a form of (meta)-literary criticism⁸⁵.

A very long and complicated path leads from the variant of comparative literature defined back in the nineteenth century as a comparison of one literature to another (Hutcheson Macaulay Posnet⁸⁶), through the variant of comparative literature formulated today as “meeting with the *Other*”⁸⁷ (Yves Chevrel), that is from traditional comparative literature to cultural comparative literature. One testimony to the evolution of the discipline is the continuing “crystallization” of its name – various terms appear in the crucible: “comparative literary criticism”, “comparative literature” (according to the English- and French-speaking tradition), “comparative study of literature” (according to the German tradition) “comparative literature study(-ies)”, “»traditional« comparative literature”, “literary

⁸⁴ See amongst others the diagnosis of the condition of modern literary criticism and the prognosis by Ryszard Nycz: “Kulturowa natura, słaby profesjonalizm: Kilka uwag o przedmiocie poznania literackiego i statusie dyskursu literaturoznawczego,” in: *Sporne i bezsporne problemy współczesnej wiedzy o literaturze*, ed. W. Bolecki, R. Nycz, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2002, pp. 351–371 (also in: *Kulturowa teoria literatury: Główne pojęcia i problemy*, ed. M.P. Markowski, R. Nycz, Kraków: Universitas, 2006, pp. 5–38); “O przedmiocie studiów literackich – dziś,” *op. cit.*, pp. 175–187.

⁸⁵ This fact once led Stefania Skwarczyńska to the conviction that comparative literature should “dominate all other disciplines of literary criticism, like a dome completing the building of the science of literary criticism” (S. Skwarczyńska, “Aspekt językowo-artystyczny w przedmiocie badań komparatystyki literackiej,” in: *eadem, Pomiędzy historią a teorią literatury*, Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1975, p. 267).

⁸⁶ H.M. Posnett, *Comparative Literature*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1886.

⁸⁷ Y. Chevrel, *La littérature comparée*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

comparative literature”, “philological comparative literature”, “interdisciplinary comparative literature”, “intermedial comparative literature”, “cultural comparative literature”, “new comparative literature” ... Various concepts of comparative literature, fundamental methodological disputes, constant reinterpretations of the scope of research (such as redefinitions by van Tieghem, Wellek, Remak, Jost, Weisstein, Bernheimer, Tötösy de Zepetnek, Bassnett, Spivak, Apter) and the nature of issues studied over time (such as influence, analogy, parallel, otherness; intertextuality, intermediality, multiculturalism, interculturalism) determine the specific status of the discipline. During one of the Polish debates about comparative literature Andrzej Mencwel presented a paradox, reducing the issue to two contrary theses: the first – “comparative literature is impossible,” the second – “comparative literature is inevitable”⁸⁸.

Without a doubt the major complication of the most recent comparative literature research is their heterogeneity (an effect of the spectacular opening to culture, which was once ironically called “a generously conciliatory mind”⁸⁹, today is defined as the fruit of “transgressiveness”⁹⁰ or a “anti-reductive comparative literature project”⁹¹), and – in consequence – internal inconsistency across the whole discipline. The heterogeneity of postmodern comparative literature, which some interpret as a sign of weakness or exhaustion of the potential field, others as its fundamental asset and a source of developmental opportunities⁹², largely turns out to be the result of, firstly, its interdisciplinary orientation and adopting an interdisciplinary course in the last decades of the twentieth century (which resulted in the creation of interdisciplinary comparative literature), and secondly – a variety of interpretations of the term interdisciplinary, including negative, in the postmodern academic discourse.

⁸⁸ In its entirety, Andrzej Mencwel’s proposal to capture the essence of comparative literature research contains four theses (presented during the discussions at Radziejowice): “comparative literature is impossible”, “comparative literature is inevitable”, “comparative literature must be typological”, and finally “comparative literature must also be typological-historical” (*Badania porównawcze*, *op. cit.*, pp. 84–87).

⁸⁹ R. Etiemble, *The Crisis in Comparative Literature*, trans. H. Weisinger, G. Joyaux, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966, p. 34 (see R. Etiemble, *Comparaison n’est pas raison*, *op. cit.*, p. 64).

⁹⁰ T. Bilczewski, “Hermeneutyczny wymiar komparatystyki literackiej,” in: *Ruch Literacki*, 6 (2003): p. 579 ff.

⁹¹ E. Kasperski, “O teorii komparatystyki,” *op. cit.*, p. 352 ff. See also *Badania porównawcze*, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

⁹² See Halina Janaszek-Ivaničková’s example conclusion, “O ambiwalencjach współczesnej komparatystyki literackiej,” in: *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, 5 (1997): pp. 40–41.

In the situation of referring the postulate of interdisciplinarity to comparative literature research we can clearly see one of the great complexities of modern humanities, which we have already become used to, namely the disparity between criteria used and – as a result – the impossibility of establishing a position. The indicated problem turns out to be key in the settlement of the interdisciplinary entanglements of recent comparative studies: as some researchers maintain the conviction that interdisciplinarity will be a “non-binding synonym”⁹³ with cultural comparative literature, and others believe – it is exactly cultural comparative literature that will be the manifestation of the break with interdisciplinarity⁹⁴ (with the old model of interdisciplinarity). But apart from these widely differing points of view and diametrically opposite viewpoints today interdisciplinarity makes it possible to define comparative literature⁹⁵, which should be understood primarily as a “perspective of literature research”⁹⁶ in a broad cultural context.

⁹³ According to Stanisław Balbus: “»Interdisciplinarity« should be treated as a rather non-binding synonym and also »intersemioticness«, and »cultural comparative literature«” (S. Balbus, “Interdyscyplinarność – intersemiotyczność – komparatystyka,” *op. cit.*, p. 15).

⁹⁴ According to Edward Możejko: “Comparative literature is emerging today from the borders of conventionalized interdisciplinary studies, is broadening and attempting to find new theoretical solutions for **going beyond** the borders of different spheres of cultural production and participating in finding new integration tasks” (E. Możejko, “Literatura porównawcza w dobie wielokulturowości,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1 (2001): p. 14). Możejko writes about the effects of the changes in North American comparative literature research in the article “Między kulturą a wielokulturowością: dylematy współczesnej komparatystyki,” in: *Sporne i bezsporne problemy współczesnej wiedzy o literaturze*, *op. cit.*, pp. 408–422.

⁹⁵ See for example F. Loriggio, “Comparative Literature and the Genres of Interdisciplinarity,” in: *World Literature Today*, 2, Vol. 69 (1995) (special number: “Comparative Literature: States of the Art”): pp. 256–262; H.H.H. Remak, “Origins and Evolution of Comparative Literature and Its Interdisciplinary Studies,” *op. cit.*; I. Fried, “Littérature comparée et interdisciplinarité,” in: *Neohelicon*, 1, Vol. 29 (2002): pp. 85–88; T. Sławek, “Literatura porównawcza: między lekturą, polityką i społeczeństwem,” in: *Polonistyka w przebudowie*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 395 ff. Considerable interest for the comparatists concerning the issues around interdisciplinarity are evidenced by the annual meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association, organised in the year 2000 at Yale University – *Interdisciplinary Studies: In the Middle, Across, or in Between?* (in the section “Theory, Methodology, and Interdisciplinary Practice in Comparative Literature” included amongst other pieces, two articles: S. Bermann, “Between Disciplines,” S. Winter, “Interdisciplinary Research: Theory and Practice”).

⁹⁶ Y. Chevrel, *La littérature comparée*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

3. DIALOGISM AND NEW COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

[I]n dialogism, the very capacity to have
consciousness is based on *otherness*.¹

I. The age of dialogue

In the modern world we constantly talk about dialogue and its consequences: in one moment about the concepts of “cultural dialogue”, interculturalism and the formulae of religious ecumenism, and at other times about the idea of interdisciplinarity and the modern form of scientific discourse (dialogism is then located in opposition to monologism as an authoritative discourse), and at still other times – about the very act of communication, “common speech” (*colloquium*), or about the rules and the importance of even passing conversation. The humanities have grappled with the problem of dialogue for a long time, to mention only the vast tradition of philosophical thinking, among other things, such “philosophers of dialogue” in the twentieth century, as Ferdinand Ebner, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Józef Tischner and Francis Jacques. The characteristic thing about this, however, is that in the last few decades interest in dialogue has clearly increased (in fact, various concepts of dialogue/dialogism) in connection with the expansion of “»new« (inter)disciplines”² – cultural studies, ethnic and postcolonial studies, gender studies, feminist studies, etc. In almost every definition of these studies, as well as in the case of the so-called

¹ M. Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 18.

² V.B. Leitch, “Postmodern Interdisciplinarity,” in: *idem*, *Theory Matters*, New York–London: Routledge, 2003, p. 169 (first edition: V.B. Leitch, “Postmodern Interdisciplinarity,” in: *Profession 2000* (New York, 2000): pp. 124–131).

new comparative literature, the word “dialogue”³ can be seen. This raises, on the one hand, the question of the actual reasons for this state of affairs, if we take into account, amongst other issues, the crystallization since the mid-nineteen eighties of dialogic criticism, on the other – the question of relationships and connections between new trends in research, especially intercultural studies compared with modern comparative literature. The last question seems inevitable, as it is not without reason that in the volume of the latest report from the US comparatists, the so-called Saussy report of 2004, the issues of postcolonialism, and feminism are taken up⁴.

By limiting the reflection of comparative literature as a field of humanities research, I would like to answer the question whether the definition of the specificity of the “indiscipline”⁵ in terms of dialogue is another fashion of science (“triumphs of artifice” considered to be the “triumphs of nature” to use the formula of Roland Barthes his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France), or a kind of necessity, conditioned by the current cultural reality. The literary criticism facts at the starting point are clear: the word “dialogue” encrusts both the titles of the most recent comparative works, as well as a variety of definitions of comparative literature (especially trying to determine the state of discipline at the time of the cultural turn). A collective volume containing materials of the XI ICLA Congress, is titled *Dialogues of Cultures* (2000)⁶, in turn a Polish selection of texts is called – *Dialog. Komparatystyka. Literatura*

³ Danuta Ulicka reasonably claims that one of the “words of authority”: “»Dialogue«, »carneval«, »polyphony«, »other«, »peripherality«, »margin«, »culture of demureness« and »humour« have become words of authority in feminist, postcolonial, minority criticism (ethical, sexual, religious)” (D. Ulicka, “Obrona teorii,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 4 (2007): p. 191).

⁴ See E. Apter, “»Je ne crois pas beaucoup à la littérature comparée«: Universal Poetics and Postcolonial Comparativism,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. H. Saussy, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, pp. 54–62; G. Finney, “What’s Happened to Feminism?,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–126.

⁵ D. Ferris, “Indiscipline,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, pp. 78–99.

⁶ *Dialogues des cultures / Dialogues of Cultures*, Actes du XIème Congrès de l’Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée (Paris, août 1985) / Proceedings of the XIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association (Paris, August, 1985), ed. E. Kushner, H. Toru, Bern–Berlin–Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2000. See also *Komparatistik als Dialog: Literatur und interkulturelle Beziehungen in der Alpen-Adria-Region und in der Schweiz*, ed. J. Strutz, P.V. Zima, Frankfurt am Main–Bern–New York: Peter Lang, 1991.

[*Dialogue. Comparative Literature. Literature*] (2002)⁷. Armando Gnisci says that comparative literature studies are “**dialogue** associated with all literatures and by all ways of researching”⁸; Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek states in turn that in comparative literature the “theoretical as well as methodological postulate to move and to **dialogue** between cultures, languages, literatures and disciplines”⁹ is essential (strictly speaking, we are talking about one of the ten principles of multi-aspect interpretation of comparative literature, an interpretation often commented upon by comparatists around the world, though otherwise giving birth to a variety of doubts). This way of thinking from the researcher of Hungarian origin perfectly illustrates the comment formulated elsewhere: so for new comparative literature – as judged by Tötösy de Zepetnek – “**dialogue is the only solution**”¹⁰. In such circumstances, further examples of definitions seem to be unnecessary. In the opinion of today’s comparatists, especially Western European, “dialogue” turns out to be a safe thinking shortcut that makes it possible to define the distinctiveness of the discipline and determine its current task (*nota bene*, not unlike the case half a century ago, when Guillermo de Torre brought comparative literature to the dialogue of literatures and cultures¹¹ during the Second ICLA Congress in 1958). The only question is – why the certainty and common belief of comparatists about the legitimacy of this kind of thinking?

⁷ *Dialog. Komparatystyka. Literatura*, ed. E. Kasperski, D. Ulicka, Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, 2002.

⁸ A. Gnisci, “La Littérature comparée comme discipline de décolonisation,” in: *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 1, Vol. 23 (1996): p. 68. Emphasis A.H.

⁹ S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “A New Comparative Literature as Theory and Method,” in: *idem*, *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application*, Amsterdam–Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, 1998, p. 16. Emphasis A.H.

¹⁰ S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “From Comparative Literature Today toward Comparative Cultural Studies,” in: *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 3, Vol. 1 (1999) (text available on the website <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol1/iss3/>). Emphasis A.H.

¹¹ G. de Torre, “Diálogo de literaturas,” in: *Comparative Literature: Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association* [University of North Carolina, September 8–12, 1958], vol. 1, ed. W.P. Friederich, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959, pp. 79–88.

II. Dialogism: the logic of relations

The problem of dialogue in literature, as is well known, appears in the reflections of literary criticism during the second half of the twentieth century, as much in relation to the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin¹² as in connection with his reception (especially following the moment of the new “discovery” of the writings of the theorist of culture in the sixties). Without doubt, dialogue is Bakhtin’s basic category of thinking (this concept exists in his dictionary since the late twenties); a category that makes it possible to formulate an original project of philosophical anthropology¹³. This is, in fact, about the cultural concept of dialogue, wrapped in a variety of works by the literary scholar, signed off among others, by names such as Voloshinov and Medvedev, proceeding consistently, so to speak, towards the idea of “**pandialogism**” (the question of a dialogue so expressed appears in the 1929 book *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, published under the name Valentin N. Voloshinov). The forms “dialogue” and “dialogic” have a specific meaning in the first version of *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (properly *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art*¹⁴, 1929). A revised, expanded version of the book from 1963 brings an even more complete interpretation of the understanding of dialogue and dialogism (another matter was that at the time of its preparation Bakhtin still considered “the dialogism of artistic thinking and of an artistic picture of the world”¹⁵ in Dostoevsky as a problem not fully recognized).

The literary-theoretical reflections in the book about Dostoevsky is situated in a wide cultural perspective. The summarising remarks

¹² It is easy to see that Polish literary criticism research devoted to the problem of dialogue in literature was conducted under the auspices of the author of *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*. See for example the collective volume *Dialog w literaturze*, ed. E. Czaplewicz, E. Kasperski, Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1978 (particularly Edward Kasperski’s text “Dialog a nauka o literaturze,” pp. 237–272).

¹³ One of the most interesting attempts at this philosophical anthropology is Tzvetan Todorov’s book *Mikhail Bakhtine: Le principe dialogique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1981). It is worth adding here that it is exactly the English translation of Todorov’s book (*Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, trans. W. Godzich, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) that contributed to the emergence of the dialogical criticism.

¹⁴ See M. Bakhtin, “Three Fragments from the 1929 Edition »Problems of Dostoevsky’s Art«,” in: *idem, Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, trans. C. Emerson, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, pp. 278–280.

¹⁵ See M. Bakhtin, “Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book,” in: *idem, Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

wonderfully reveal the working out – next to the following conclusion: “A character’s self-consciousness in Dostoevsky is thoroughly dialogized: in its every aspect it is turned outward, intensely addressing itself, another, a third person. Outside this living addressivity toward itself and toward the other it does not exist”¹⁶ – and there is a somewhat complementary conclusion: “To be means to communicate dialogically. When dialogue ends, everything ends. Thus dialogue, by its very essence, cannot and must not come to an end”¹⁷. Today it seems obvious that comments on Dostoevsky and his character would be difficult to explain in a narrow sense, only on the plane of constructing a literary character, as in Bakhtin’s concept of the plane of “**great dialogue**” (i.e. internal dialogization)¹⁸. It should rather be taken that dialogism in Bakhtin’s theory of culture (as a result of, among other things, the understanding of dialogue through the prism of the structure of the language of carnival) is not only about consciousness and worldview of a particular hero of a novel and a specific author¹⁹, but ultimately about the consciousness (and therefore the existence) of man in the contemporary world²⁰. Hence the “correction” of Tolstoy – the hypothetical solution, how Dostoevsky would have written *Three Deaths*²¹ – paradoxically there is little in common with the literary technique, which is however associated with dialogism – polyphony – as a way of seeing reality.

¹⁶ M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 252.

¹⁸ As Bakhtin argues: “Dostoevsky could hear dialogic relationships everywhere, in all manifestations of conscious and intelligent human life; where consciousness began, there dialogue began for him as well. (...) Thus all relationships among external and internal parts and elements of his novel are dialogic in character, and he structured the novel as a whole as a »great dialogue.« Within this »great dialogue« could be heard, illuminating it and thickening its texture, the compositionally expressed dialogues of the heroes; ultimately, dialogue penetrates within, into every word of the novel, making it double-voiced, into every gesture, every mimic movement on the hero’s face, making it convulsive and anguished; this is already the »microdialogue« that determines the peculiar character of Dostoevsky’s verbal style” (M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, *op. cit.*, p. 40).

¹⁹ According to David Lodge, the importance of Bakhtin’s thought for contemporary criticism is linked by the cultural theoretician to the creative and communicative power of the writer (D. Lodge, *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism*, London–New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 7).

²⁰ Bakhtin wrote about this directly, amongst other places in the notes to the second edition of the book about Dostoevsky: “The dialogic nature of consciousness, the dialogic nature of human life itself. (...) Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth” (M. Bakhtin, “Toward a Rewriting of the Dostoevsky Book,” *op. cit.*, p. 293).

²¹ M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 69–70.

The problem of Bakhtin's "dialogism", which particularly interested comparatists at the moment of the cultural turn is given prominence by Julia Kristeva in her famous text of 1966, opening the intertextual research trend – "Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman". Three important concepts are stressed in the title, namely the "word", "dialogue" and "novel", and essentially represent a concise statement of Bakhtin's theory. Kristeva is interested in a broad interpretation of dialogism: since there can be talk of an existing order – as language and the world are ruled by the **logic of relations**, "guaranteeing" instability, uncertainty, undecidability and so on. In this theoretical perspective, dialogism refers – as Kristeva argued – to writing as a subjective act and communication event, and depends upon "the »double«, language, and another logic"²². The result of the assumptions, generally speaking, is not only the rise of the theory of intertextuality, but a break with the Aristotelian order, that is, with the "monologist", authoritative, discourse. The conclusion at the end of Bakhtin's work seals the matter, also particularly important when resolving issues of interest to us the title: "dialogism," says the author of *Séméiotikè: recherches pour une sémanalyse*, "more than binarism, dialogism may well become the basis of our time's intellectual structure"²³. It should immediately be noted in the margin that this commentary, close to theses formulated by other members of the Paris *Tel Quel* group in the late sixties, is an excellent, very clear impetus for further interpretation of the writings of Bakhtin in the second half of the twentieth century²⁴.

²² J. Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," trans. A. Jardine, T. Gora, L.S. Roudiez, in: *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. T. Moi, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, p. 42. See J. Kristeva, "Le mot, le dialogue et le roman," in: *eadem, Séméiotikè: recherches pour une sémanalyse*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969, p. 152 (first edition: J. Kristeva, "Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman," in: *Critique*, 239, XXXIII (1967): pp. 438–465).

²³ J. Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," *op. cit.*, p. 59 (see J. Kristeva, "Le mot, le dialogue et le roman," *op. cit.*, p. 173).

²⁴ See amongst others D.K. Danow, *The Thought of Mikhail Bakhtin: From Word to Culture*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991; W.H. Thornton, *Cultural Prosaics: The Second Postmodern Turn*, Edmonton: Research Institute for Comparative Literature, University of Alberta, 1998; K. Hirschkop, *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999; G. Allen, *Intertextuality*, London: Routledge, 2000 ("Dialogism," pp. 21–29; "Dialogism to intertextuality," pp. 35–46); C.M. Shields, "Dialogue and Dialogism as a Way of Life," in: *eadem, Bakhtin primer*, New York–Bern–Berlin: Peter Lang, 2007, pp. 63–96. See also selection of texts included in the volume: *Ja – Inny. Wokół Bachtina. Antologia*, vol. 2, ed. D. Ulicka, Kraków: Universitas 2009 (particularly part 4: *Inni wobec tekstu Bachtina*, pp. 407–545).

III. Dialogism: understanding

The accuracy of Kristeva's intuition, connected to the importance of dialogism and the need to revise the existing patterns of thinking can be seen well after almost five turbulent decades in the humanities, during which they repeatedly reappeared around various "turns": intertextual, narrative, pragmatic, ethical (or ethical-political), cultural, inter-medial ... Undoubtedly the re-evaluation which took place on account of the matter of the thaw of post-structuralism and neo-pragmatism (leading among other things to a change in the literary criticism paradigm), decided about the career of dialogism in the current humanistic discourse²⁵. It is not necessary to argue, however, that the symptoms of this reframing of thought in the twentieth century appeared much earlier in the artistic discourse (including proposals such as Mallarmé's *Book*, the *nouveau roman* or theater of the absurd). There, dialogism reveals a kind of "crisis of commentary"²⁶, as for example in the case of Michel Butor, whom Lucien Dällenbach considers most Bakhtinian of today's writers²⁷.

Divergent concepts of **understanding** have led in recent decades to theoretical disputes around dialogism (the understanding of the category, its usefulness, etc.), and the formation of two strands of reflection: on the one hand, it is possible to situate numerous "allegatory" continuations of Bakhtin's thoughts, on the other hand – a polemical or critical reformulation emerging from the nineteen eighties. An example of a creative take on the Russian cultural theorist are also the ideas of comparatist Jola Škulj, who believes "a most appropriate methodology for the study of cultural identity be provided by the work of Bakhtin"²⁸. An example

²⁵ As a result, amongst other things, dialogical criticism came into being, which has become an alternative proposal to post-structuralism and neo-pragmatism. See D. Ulicka, "Obrona teorii," *op. cit.*, p. 193.

²⁶ See A. Krajewska, "Dialogowość," in: *eadem, Dramat współczesny: Teoria i interpretacja*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2005, pp. 213–219.

²⁷ L. Dällenbach, "Une écriture dialogique?," in: *La Création selon Michel Butor: réseaux – frontières – écart*, ed. M. Calle-Gruber, Paris: Nizet, 1991, p. 212. I wrote about the consequences of »dialogism« for the French creator in the study "Tekst-partytura Michela Butora (»Dialogue avec 33 variations de Ludwig van Beethoven sur une valse de Diabelli«)," in: *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 3 (2007): pp. 157–176 (see also A. Hejmej, *Music in Literature: Perspectives of Interdisciplinary Comparative Literature*, trans. L. Davidson, Frankfurt am Main–Berlin–Bruxelles–New York–Oxford–Warszawa–Wien: Peter Lang, 2014, pp. 197–222).

²⁸ J. Škulj, "Comparative Literature and Cultural Identity" (text available on the webpage <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol2/iss4/>). The first version of the text

of criticism – Paul de Man’s text “Dialogue and Dialogism”²⁹, in which the deconstructivist claims that dialogism absolutely does not lead to the understanding of “the status of fact, meaning and fiction in the novel”³⁰ or Wladimir Kryszinski’s text “Au delà du dialogisme”³¹, where the comparatist signals a progressive process of “relativization of dialogism”³², and as a result – the inadequacy of Bakhtin’s concept in the case of the newest European novel, dominated by subjectivity, fragmentation, irony, autoreflexion³³ (*nota bene* among the examples arguing the Polish researcher’s thesis is Jerzy Andrzejewski’s *Miazga* [Pulp]).

The cited ideas of dialogism prove the very different directions of today’s individual interpretations referring to Bakhtin’s findings. Nevertheless, in order to attempt a general conclusion in such circumstances, one would have to say that dialogism is treated more often as a **form of thinking** (sometimes even as a separate mode of research existing alongside methodological proposals, like psychoanalysis and hermeneutics), as a **way of understanding contemporary culture and the contemporary world**, frequently connected to – and this should be emphasized – the principles of democracy³⁴. (As a consequence, dialogism refers both to “modern thinking about thinking”³⁵, highlighted by comparatist Michael Holquist in his book *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*). Today’s understanding of dialogism in the perspective of the theory of knowledge is not, of course, a characteristic only of comparative literature reflection, as it is characterized, in general, by the whole of contemporary

– “Comparative Literature and Cultural Identity: A Bakhtinian Proposal” – was published in the volume *Comparative Literature Now: Theories and Practice / La Littérature comparée à l’heure actuelle: Théories et réalisations* (ed. S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, M.V. Dimić, I. Sywenky, Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999, pp. 209–217).

²⁹ P. de Man, “Dialogue and Dialogism,” in: *idem*, *The Resistance to Theory*, foreword by W. Godzich, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993 [1986], pp. 106–114 (first edition: P. de Man, “Dialogue and Dialogism,” in: *Poetics Today*, 1, Vol. 4 (1983): pp. 99–107).

³⁰ P. de Man, “Dialogue and Dialogism,” *op. cit.*, p. 112. See T. Cohen, “The Ideology of Dialogue: The Bakhtin/De Man (Dis)Connection,” in: *Cultural Critique*, 33 (1996): pp. 41–86.

³¹ W. Kryszinski, “Au delà du dialogisme,” in: *Tangence*, 51 (1996): pp. 98–123.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 99.

³³ See *ibidem*, p. 100.

³⁴ See K. Hirschkop, *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy*, *op. cit.*; J. Škulj, “Comparative Literature and Cultural Identity,” *op. cit.* (see J. Škulj, “Comparative Literature and Cultural Identity: A Bakhtinian Proposal,” *op. cit.*).

³⁵ M. Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

humanities³⁶. It should be noted, however, that it is of particular importance in the case of comparative literary criticism. Dialogism (as a form of thinking) is in fact one of the key determinants of new comparative literature, and thus – an important argument in polemics with opponents of any comparative literature projects.

IV. Cultural comparative literature *versus* ethnocentrism

Tackling the problem of dialogism in the case of comparative literature requires at the outset, I think, distinction of two research perspectives, in consequence of the existence of two different concepts of the “indiscipline”. Within the framework of so-called **comparative literature**, today often referred to as “traditional” or even – wrongly – “old”³⁷ (wrongly, after all, the tradition of this kind of research still runs deep in the consciousness of many comparatists, including Polish), dialogism refers at best to the specifics of language itself, dialogue of texts and specific literature. In other words, this trope only leads to intertextual research of the most moderate, philological variant (“The most important feature of the utterance (...)” – as Tzvetan Todorov claimed in the context of Bakhtin’s theory – “is its *dialogism*, that is, its intertextual dimension”³⁸). On the other hand, within the framework of so-called **cultural comparative literature** dialogism, referred to by some simply as “postmodern”, refers not only (not so much?) to the realm of language-text, and a variety of cultural texts (intertextual, intermedial and multimedia phenomena), but – above all – to a new way of comparative thinking associated with different concepts of understanding³⁹.

³⁶ See for example the special number *Théorie – Littérature – Enseignement*, 21 (2003): “Pour un dialogisme des disciplines: Avec Bakhtine” (Départements d’Études des Pays Anglophones et de Littérature Générale et Comparée de l’Université Paris VIII).

³⁷ See F. Malti-Douglas, “Beyond Comparison Shopping: This is Not Your Father’s Comp. Lit.,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, p. 182; M. Skwara, “Stara i nowa komparatystyka literacka,” in: *Komparatystyka dla humanistów: Podręcznik akademicki*, ed. M. Dąbrowski, Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2011, pp. 141–210.

³⁸ T. Todorov, “Introduction,” in: *idem, Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, *op. cit.*, p. X (see T. Todorov, “Introduction,” in: *idem, Mikhail Bakhtine*, *op. cit.*, p. 8).

³⁹ I write about the rationale and consequences of the division into “traditional comparative literature” and “cultural comparative literature” in chapter 2: *Interdisciplinarity and comparative literature studies*, pp. 25–49.

A paradox of the “new comparative literature” (which treats literature as one of many phenomena of culture) is not recognizing the radical changes, insufficiently visible at first glance. In fact, it is possible to think that in terms of the specific nature of research little has changed in comparative literature since the groundbreaking proposals made by Henry H.H. Remak in 1961, which are worth recalling once more:

Comparative literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, architecture, music), philosophy, history, the social sciences (e.g., politics, economics, sociology), the sciences, religion, etc., on the other. In brief, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression.⁴⁰

The explanation of the phrase three decades later by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek (1996, 1998), on account of, among other things, exposing interdisciplinary contexts, sounds undoubtedly very similar:

The basic definition of Comparative Literature includes – apart from the traditional and historical approach to “compare” literary texts from different languages and cultures – the study of the literary text in/as its relationship with extra-literary areas (e.g., sociology, history, economics, the publishing industry, the history of the book, geography, biology, medicine, etc.), the other arts, etc.⁴¹

The juxtaposition of these two definitions demonstrates that the arguments in favour of a new comparative literature should be sought beyond the object of study, beyond – to call it – the technical parameters of the studies (Tötösy de Zepetnek laconically states that “The First General Principle of Comparative Literature is the postulate that in and of the study, pedagogy, and research of literature it is not the »what« but rather the »how« that is of importance”⁴²). The new paradigm of comparative literature, as pointed out by Douwe W. Fokkema at the beginning of the nineteen eighties, among others, becomes dependent on a change in

⁴⁰ H.H.H. Remak, “Comparative Literature, Its Definition and Function,” in: *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, ed. N.P. Stallknecht, H. Frenz, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961, p. 3.

⁴¹ S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “A New Comparative Literature as Theory and Method,” *op. cit.*, p. 30. See also S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “Perspectives of Comparative Literature Today,” in: *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 1, Vol. 23 (1996): p. 7.

⁴² S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “A New Comparative Literature as Theory and Method,” *op. cit.*, p. 15.

view of literature⁴³. As is known, the distinguishing feature of this new paradigm – of new comparative literature, comparative cultural studies – turns out to be cultural centrism, taking the place of literature centrism, or perhaps better to say: ethnocentrism. In other words, we can say that one of the forms of understanding in contemporary culture, allowing us to go beyond the impasse of ethnocentrism becomes **dialogism understood as a kind of epistemology**⁴⁴, more exactly: as “pragmatically oriented theory of knowledge”⁴⁵. In just such a perspective – the fight against ethnocentrism – the research goals in the last two reports of US comparatists are profiled, namely the so-called Bernheimer report of 1993⁴⁶ and the so-called Saussy report of 2004⁴⁷.

V. Comparative literature – otherness – “decolonization”

The cursorily sketched conflict between two “models” of comparative literature, played out not only in the field of epistemology, are ultimately nothing but a clash of the Cartesian concept of substance with the dialogical concept. Traditional comparative literature – due to ethnocentric orientation⁴⁸ since the beginnings of the discipline – is based on the universalism of knowledge or also the **monologism** of thinking

⁴³ D.W. Fokkema, “Comparative Literature and the New Paradigm,” in: *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 1, Vol. 9 (1982): pp. 13–14.

⁴⁴ M. Holquist, “Dialogism as an Epistemology,” in: *idem*, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–17. See *Critical Studies*, 1–2, Vol. 2 (1990) (special number: “Mikhail Bakhtin and the Epistemology of Discourse”).

⁴⁵ M. Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴⁶ “The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Ch. Bernheimer, Baltimore–London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, pp. 39–48.

⁴⁷ H. Saussy, “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares: Of Memes, Hives, and Selfish Genes,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–42.

⁴⁸ One of the first types of this example is the lecture by Philarète Chasles “Littérature étrangère comparée” (*Revue de Paris*, 17 (1835): pp. 238–262), and later, amongst others, Max Koch’s journal, *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte* (published from 1887 as an evident counterproposal in relation to the earlier established journal from Hugo von Meltzl *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literatur ...*) or Joseph Texte’s book *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les origines du cosmopolitisme littéraire: Etude sur les relations littéraires de la France et de l’Angleterre au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1895).

(the result of this was rampant nationalism, also a result of misunderstanding the Goethe's 1827 project – *Weltliteratur*⁴⁹, “world literature” as a cosmopolitan idea). Regardless of the various schools and research trends emerging in the twentieth century, this kind of comparative literature continues the positivist tradition, is a manifestation of ethno-literary criticism, influencology, from today's point of view, has an authoritarian form (Armando Gnisci describes this simply as an “imperialist concept”⁵⁰). Cultural comparative literature in turn attempts to throw off the fundamentalist ideas of literature and culture⁵¹, to formulate research objectives from a different perspective, including amongst others in the optic of **dialogism**. Characteristically, the new comparative literature, whose reflection covers issues of cultural differences, considered in the dimensions both of language and of beyond language, associates Bakhtinian dialogism with the category of **Other/otherness**⁵², with the postcolonial perspective. To put it succinctly, the first type of comparative literature is based on “exclusion”, the second – if you take Tötösy de Zepetnek's formula – on “**inclusion of the Other**”⁵³.

Other/otherness in the horizon of comparative literature – just as in the “new« (inter)disciplines”: postcolonial, feminist, minority criticism – refer to everything that is particular, local, subjected to discrimination, recognized within the existing hierarchy as being of little value, separate, marginalized or eliminated in the official discourse, and which has a specific relationship with literature. Today's comparatist, assuming that in the multicultural world that “the very capacity to have consciousness

⁴⁹ J.W. von Goethe, J.P. Eckermann, “Conversations on World Literature,” in: *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*, ed. D. Damrosch, N. Melas, M. Buthelezi, Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009, p. 23.

⁵⁰ A. Gnisci, “La Littérature comparée comme discipline de décolonisation,” *op. cit.*, p. 67. In consequence, as noted by Włodzimierz Bolecki: “In literary studies postcolonialism in some ways competes with traditional comparative literature” (W. Bolecki, “Myśli różne o postkolonializmie: Wstęp do tekstów nie napisanych,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 4 (2007): p. 11).

⁵¹ See amongst others the collective volume *Comparare i comparatismi: La comparatistica letteraria oggi in Europa e nel mondo*, ed. A. Gnisci, F. Sinopoli, Rome: Lithos, 1995.

⁵² Tzvetan Todorov interpreted the Bakhtin proposals in this perspective (“Bakhtine et l'altérité,” in: *Poétique*, 40 (1979): pp. 502–513). See amongst others *Bakhtin and Otherness*, ed. R.F. Barsky, M. Holquist (special number *Social Discourse: Research Papers in Comparative Literature*, 1–2, Vol. 3 (1990)).

⁵³ S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “A New Comparative Literature as Theory and Method,” *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 15. Emphasis A.H.

is based on *otherness*⁵⁴, is fascinated by the “peripherality” of cultural phenomena. This raises not only the eternal need for collating, comparing and confronting (guided by the unwritten rule *comparare necesse est*). According to Yves Chevrel, author of the book *La littérature comparée*: “Reading is to identify another”⁵⁵, “meeting with the *Other*”⁵⁶, and so the comparatist’s challenge with literary illusions about what is foreign, learning about cultural differences, committing to respect for those differences, inevitably making intercultural dialogue. Understanding cultural identity, to repeat, today in a situation of a new comparative literature does not have any connection with the fundamentalist claims (at least in official declarations ...), it becomes the result of “post-colonial” thinking in the broadest sense of the term, thinking according to the **ethics of dialogism**. One attempt at definition of modern comparative literature in such an optic is Jola Škulj’s concept, presented at the XIV ICLA Congress (University of Alberta, 1994)⁵⁷. As Škulj persuades, Bakhtin’s proposals – at the moment of recognising comparative literature as a study of cultural identity – are an excellent starting point in the current comparative literature investigations.

In conclusion: modern comparative literature should be understood not only as a still expanding area of issues and unlimited expansion, but also as a result of thinking that allows the world today – if we stay with Armand Gnisci’s metaphor – to “**decolonize ourselves**”⁵⁸. The comparatist, to paraphrase Bakhtin, has a fully dialogised consciousness: continually directed to the outside, agog, explores himself, another, a third person. Outside this living addressivity toward himself and toward the other, the comparatist seems to not exist ... Dialogism in the case of cultural

⁵⁴ M. Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁵⁵ Y. Chevrel, *La littérature comparée*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989, p. 27.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 8. See also: A. Gnisci, “La Littérature comparée comme discipline de décolonisation,” *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 69, 70, 73; S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “A New Comparative Literature as Theory and Method,” *op. cit.*, p. 30; M. Delaperrière, “Komparatystyka jako odkrywanie inności,” in: *Badania porównawcze: Dyskusja o metodzie*. Radziejowice, 6–8 lutego 1997 r., ed. A. Nowicka-Jeżowa, Izabelin: Świat Literacki, 1998, p. 75 ff.

⁵⁷ See J. Škulj, “Comparative Literature and Cultural Identity: A Bakhtinian Proposal,” *op. cit.* (expanded version of the text: J. Škulj, “Comparative Literature and Cultural Identity” can be found on the website <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol2/iss4/>).

⁵⁸ A. Gnisci, “La Littérature comparée comme discipline de décolonisation,” *op. cit.*, p. 71. Gnisci in reality confronts modern comparative literature with three tasks: the first is associated with the processes of cultural decolonization, the second – with the phenomenon of translation, the third – the comparison of different cultures through literary traditions.

comparative literature is primarily a particular form of understanding, an escape from simplifying dialectic and harmful influencology, one of the ways to open to another (therefore in the perspective of epistemology this means the presence of otherness in the discourse, the inevitable polarization of various ideas, postcolonial sensitivity, etc.). At the same time it is difficult not to notice that the *modus* of dialogical thinking, provoking the “discovery of the Other, a dialogue with him and one’s self”⁵⁹, associates comparative literature research with hermeneutics to some extent⁶⁰ (regardless indeed of whether they are combined with traditionally conceived research about cultural stereotypes, with so-called imagology⁶¹, intercultural studies or also from the perspective of post-colonial studies).

⁵⁹ D.-H. Pageaux, “Littérature comparée et comparaisons,” in: *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 3 (1998): p. 307.

⁶⁰ See T. Bilczewski: “Hermeneutyczny wymiar komparatystyki literackiej,” in: *Ruch Literacki*, 6 (2003): pp. 575–587; “»Czytać po wieży Babel«: Komparatystyka – hermeneutyka – przekład,” in: *Hermeneutyka i literatura – ku nowej koiné*, ed. K. Kuczyńska-Koschany, M. Januszkiewicz, Poznań: Wydawnictwo “Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne”, 2006, pp. 95–111 (see also: *idem*, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja: Nowoczesne badania porównawcze wobec translatoologii*, Kraków: Universitas, 2010, pp. 107–134).

⁶¹ See J.-M. Moura, “L’imagologie littéraire: tendances actuelles,” in: *Perspectives comparatistes*, ed. J. Bessière, D.-H. Pageaux, Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999, p. 191.

4. THE INSTABILITY OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

I. Symptoms of “indiscipline”

David Ferris’s trick question: “why is it so *indisciplined*?”¹ may open, in principle, any of today’s disputes about the discipline, which date back to the nineteenth century and have an obvious relationship with the contemporary idea of Europe². The symptoms of “indiscipline” – despite the emergence of many new and still expanding existing institutions demanding a strong identity of the discipline (also in Polish realities during recent years) – are hard not to notice during any discussion about comparative literature. The reasons for this are multiple, extremely complex, both because of obvious geopolitical differences, and due to the formation of the discipline over the course of two centuries. But instability, in my view, is not just a result of the natural changes to the scientific paradigms and spectacular turns which have brought long histories of comparative literature studies, that is the history of comparative literature evolving from the idea of the cosmopolitan discipline of the nineteenth century, from various nationalisms³, Goethe’s vision of *Weltliteratur* and obsessions with unity, to ideas such as interdisciplinarity and multiculturalism in the twentieth century, and lately – interculturalism and intermediality. In other words: the instability

¹ D. Ferris, “Indiscipline,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. H. Saussy, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, p. 87.

² See *Re-thinking Europe: Literature and (Trans)national Identity*, ed. N. Bemong, M. Truwant, P. Vermeulen, Amsterdam–New York: Rodopi, 2008 (particularly David Damrosch’s text “Global Regionalism,” pp. 47–58).

³ As concluded by the authors of the so-called Bernheimer report: “Indeed, comparative literary studies tended to reinforce an identification of nation-states as imagined communities with national languages as their natural bases” (“The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Ch. Bernheimer, Baltimore–London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 40).

of comparative literature is not only a consequence of the transition from former ethnography, even in Joseph Texte's⁴ version – under the influence of Taine's thoughts – the author of the book *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les origines du cosmopolitisme littéraire: Etude sur les relations littéraires de la France et de l'Angleterre au XVIIIe siècle*, to "open ethnography"⁵, proposed today by Daniel-Henri Pageaux, developing the concept of interculturalism⁶.

A symptom of "indiscipline" appears to be primarily a **negative definition of comparative literature** as a field of science with specific claims, in essence, however as a specific – dependent field, deprived of its own subject of study. "Negative" definitions, something characteristic, appeared in the nineteenth century; Hugo von Meltzl for example, the founder in 1877 and editor of the multilingual comparative literature magazine *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok / Zeitschrift für vergleichende Litteratur* (from 1879 appearing with the title *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum*), stressed that comparative literature is far from a stabilized discipline⁷. In the mid-twentieth century, in the era of the expansion of the theory and "dreams of being scientific", René Wellek argued that they proved "the fact that it has not been able to establish a distinct subject-matter and a specific methodology"⁸. Current interpretations reveal further implications of the existence of the discipline *in statu nascendi* – I think not so much about the position, e.g. of Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, for whom "the discipline is difficult to define because thus it is fragmented and pluralistic"⁹ (this could be said,

⁴ See J. Texte, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et les origines du cosmopolitisme littéraire: Etude sur les relations littéraires de la France et de l'Angleterre au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: Hachette, 1895, p. XVII.

⁵ D.-H. Pageaux, "Littérature comparée et comparaisons," in: *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 3 (1998): p. 292.

⁶ See D.-H. Pageaux, "Multiculturalisme et interculturalité," in: *idem, Littératures et cultures en dialogue*, ed. S. Habchi, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007, pp. 163–174.

⁷ H. Meltzl, "Present Tasks of Comparative Literature," in: *World Literature Reader: A Reader*, ed. T. D'haen, C. Domínguez, M. Rosendahl Thomsen, London–New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 19 (see H. Meltzl, "Vorläufige Aufgaben der vergleichenden Literatur," in: *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok / Zeitschrift für vergleichende Litteratur*, 1 (1877): p. 179).

⁸ R. Wellek, "The Crisis of Comparative Literature," in: *Comparative Literature: Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association* [University of North Carolina, September 8–12, 1958], vol. 1, ed. W.P. Friederich, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959, p. 149.

⁹ S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, "A New Comparative Literature as Theory and Method," in: *idem, Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application*, Amsterdam–Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, 1998, p. 13.

in principle, about every branch of science) as the position, for example, of Haun Saussy, who in the report of US comparatists speaks directly about a **counterdiscipline**¹⁰, having “little chance of declaring scholarly independence”¹¹.

Symptoms of “indiscipline” are also **differences in understanding the same comparison, the question of comparability/incomparability**. All the consequences of “indiscipline” of comparative literature are clearly visible here – various conflicts arising from understanding the logic of comparison, among other things, of accepting or refuting the *tertium comparationis*, exposing or challenging the mode of research on the basis of so-called relations of fact [*rapports de fait*], which René Etiemble subjected to criticism, using a masterful play on words in French – “*comparaison n’est pas raison*”¹². The results of going from *tertium comparationis* (the discourse of rationalism) and the study of binary opposition from Paul van Tieghem’s influencology to “a broader regime of inter-textual studies (...) where in principle anything could be compared with anything else”¹³, and the concept of “new comparison” can also be easily seen. The effects of changes in perspective are more precisely brought to us by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: “[I]n the sixties, we took a certain pride in asserting that the word »comparative« in our discipline was a misnomer, that the point about Comparative Literature was that it did not exactly »compare«”¹⁴. In such circumstances, we begin to speak not so much about comparisons, as about “affinity”¹⁵, for which the comparatist takes responsibility, about undecidability (e.g. J. Culler¹⁶), incomparabilities (e.g. P. de Bolla¹⁷) or dissimilarity; gradually begins to mature the comparative literature project later referred to as *comparatisme quand même*¹⁸. Accenting dissimilarity becomes a fundamental basic

¹⁰ H. Saussy, “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares: Of Memes, Hives, and Selfish Genes,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

¹² Etiemble’s opinion: “[T]he history of the *relations of fact* between writers, schools, or literary genres, does not exhaust our discipline” (R. Etiemble, *The Crisis in Comparative Literature*, trans. H. Weisinger, G. Joyaux, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966, p. 38; see R. Etiemble, *Comparaison n’est pas raison: La Crise de la littérature comparée*, Paris: Gallimard, 1963, p. 70).

¹³ J. Culler, “Comparability,” in: *World Literature Today*, 2, Vol. 69 (1995): p. 268.

¹⁴ G.Ch. Spivak, “Rethinking Comparativism,” in: *New Literary History*, 3, Vol. 40 (2009): p. 611.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 611.

¹⁶ J. Culler, “Comparability,” *op. cit.*, p. 268.

¹⁷ P. de Bolla, “On the Theory of Comparison,” in: *Comparatio*, 1 (1990): pp. 14–15.

¹⁸ E. Apter, “»Je ne crois pas beaucoup à la littérature comparée«: Universal Poetics and Postcolonial Comparatism,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

amongst others of the idea of “neighborhoods”¹⁹ of Kenneth Reinhard, with a vision of “a comparative literature otherwise than comparison (...) a mode of reading logically and ethically prior to similitude, a reading in which texts are not so much grouped into »families« defined by similarity and difference, as into »neighborhoods« determined by accidental contiguity, genealogical isolation, and ethical encounter”²⁰. It is not difficult to notice that in the situation of this reading in a logical and ethical way, a key issue turns out to be moving the burden of reflection from the subject to the interpreting entity, an individual reading practice. It is not without reason that Jonathan Culler has formed the opinion that the so-called crisis of comparative literature is primarily a crisis of “comparability”, which is associated with the inability to take a neutral position, a neutral research position²¹.

The symptoms of “indiscipline” are ultimately the most general **provisional comparative literature projects**, a perfect example of which is George Steiner’s proposal from the nineteen nineties, in the belief that “the phenomenology of the untranslatable, the untranslated, the »unreceived« (*le non-recevoir*) is one of the subtlest of challenges in comparative studies”²² and also an **incommensurable conception of the problems and tasks connected to comparative literature**. Steiner himself identifies three areas of comparative studies oriented towards translation, “dissemination” (namely, reception of literature) and “thematic studies”²³. At the same time Daniel-Henri Pageaux, treating comparative literature as “discovery of the Other, dialogue with him and with one’s self”²⁴, exposes three basic comparative practices: examination of the external dimension [*l’étude de la dimension étrangère*], comparison of texts and working out more or less “theoretical” concepts. Armando Gnisci in turn defines three basic goals of comparative literature, that is,

¹⁹ K. Reinhard, “Kant with Sade, Lacan with Levinas,” in: *Modern Language Notes*, 4, Vol. 110 (1995): p. 785.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 785.

²¹ On this occasion Jonathan Culler reminds us of and exposes Auerbach’s *Ansatzpunkt*: “a specific point of departure, conceived not as an external position of mastery but as a »handle« or partial vantage point that enables the critic to bring together a variety of cultural objects” (J. Culler, “Comparability,” *op. cit.*, p. 270). See also J. Culler, “Comparative Literature, At Last,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

²² G. Steiner, “What is Comparative Literature?: An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 11 October, 1994,” Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 13.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

²⁴ D.-H. Pageaux, “Littérature comparée et comparaisons,” *op. cit.*, p. 307.

diagnosing the processes of cultural decolonization, studying the phenomenon of the ubiquitous translation and comparison of different cultures through literary traditions²⁵. A decade later the problem of profiling the discipline appears amongst others in the situation of sounding out the projects of “new comparative literature”, for example concept of “translation” from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (*Death of a Discipline*, New York 2003) and Emily Apter (*The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*, Princeton–Oxford 2006). These few mentioned proposals from the end of the last century and the beginning of the current show, firstly, the continued interest in comparative literature, and secondly – the essential issue of incommensurability of projects, of **individual efforts to create one’s own comparative literature**. The makeshift nature of the vision of comparative literature is best seen amongst others from the example of Susan Bassnett. First – in the nineteen nineties – she condemns comparative literary criticism to “migration”, to movement as an auxiliary discipline to the field of translatology²⁶, and then, in some way retreating from her earlier diagnosis, frees it from the autonomous research field of translation²⁷, as if to confirm her own words, that the discipline “has struggled and struggled to define itself”²⁸.

II. Comparative literature: a model of modernity

To repeat, the instability of comparative literature now bares questions about its very definition (and the name²⁹ and related formula: “littérature générale et comparée” and its equivalent in other languages:

²⁵ A. Gnisci, “La Littérature comparée comme discipline de décolonisation,” in: *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature / Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 1, Vol. 23 (1996): p. 69.

²⁶ See S. Bassnett, “From Comparative Literature to Translation Studies,” in: *eadem*, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford–Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993, pp. 138–161; S. Bassnett, “Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century,” in: *Comparative Critical Studies*, 1–2, Vol. 3 (2006): pp. 3–11.

²⁷ See S. Bassnett, “Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century,” *op. cit.*, p. 6 ff.

²⁸ S. Bassnett, “From Comparative Literature to Translation Studies,” *op. cit.*, p. 160.

²⁹ It is enough to mention the doubts of Henryk Markiewicz, who criticizes the term “literatura porównawcza” [comparative literature], favouring in exchange the name “komparatystyka literacka” [comparative literature] and “comparative literary studies” (H. Markiewicz, “Zakres i podział literaturoznawstwa porównawczego,” in: *idem*, *Przekroje i zbliżenia dawne i nowe: Rozprawy i szkice z wiedzy o literaturze*, Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1976, p. 415).

“Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft”, “comparative and general literature”, which Yves Chevrel considers an expression of the temptation of universality, “imperialistic discipline”³⁰, and above all the question of comparison, the issue of comparability/non-comparability and individual, inevitably, incommensurable projects. It is not difficult to see an incommensurability in comparatistic explanations in Polish academia in recent years, where it is proposed to treat comparative literature as a “kind of hermenetic school”³¹ (Tomasz Bilczewski), and the effect of interpretation placed under the aegis of Fish’s neo-pragmatism³² (Adam F. Kola), where we speak of “integral comparative literature”³³ (Bogusław Bakula) and “anti-reductionist comparative literature projects”³⁴ (Edward Kasperski), where attempts at developing individual concepts appear – “deconstructionist comparative literature”³⁵ (Wiesław Rzońca), “internal comparative literature”³⁶ (Kwiryňa Ziemba), “interdisciplinary comparative literature”³⁷ (Andrzej Hejmej), “extra-linguistic comparative literature”³⁸, “theocomparative literature”³⁹ (Zbigniew Kadłubek).

³⁰ Y. Chevrel, “La littérature comparée et la quête d’un territoire,” in: *Comparer l’étranger: Enjeux du comparatisme en littérature*, ed. É. Baneth-Nouailhetas, C. Joubert, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006, pp. 49–50.

³¹ T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja: Nowoczesne badania porównawcze wobec translatoologii*, Kraków: Universitas, 2010, p. 29.

³² A.F. Kola, “Nie-klasyczna komparatystyka: W stronę nowego paradygmatu,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1–2 (2008): pp. 56–74 (see also: A.F. Kola, “Nie-klasyczna komparatystyka,” in: *idem*, *Europa w dyskursie polskim, czeskim i chorwackim: rekonfiguracje krytyczne*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2011, pp. 21–34).

³³ B. Bakula, “Kilka uwag na temat komparatystyki integralnej,” in: *idem*, *Historia i komparatystyka: Szkice o literaturze i kulturze Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej XX wieku*, Poznań: Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Literacka, 2000, pp. 7–30. See also: B. Bakula, “W stronę komparatystyki integralnej,” in: *Porównania*, 1 (2004): pp. 7–16.

³⁴ E. Kasperski, “O teorii komparatystyki,” in: *Literatura. Teoria. Metodologia*, ed. D. Ulicka, Warsaw: Wydział Polonistyki UW, 2001, p. 352 ff. See also *Badania porównawcze: Dyskusja o metodzie. Radziejowice, 6–8 lutego 1997 r.*, ed. A. Nowicka-Jeżowa, Izabelin: Świat Literacki, 1998, p. 157.

³⁵ W. Rzońca, *Witkacy – Norwid: Projekt komparatystyki dekonstrukcjonistycznej*, Warsaw: Semper, 1998.

³⁶ K. Ziemba, “Projekt komparatystyki wewnętrznej,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1/2 (2005): pp. 72–82; also in: *Polonistyka w przebudowie: Literaturoznawstwo – wiedza o języku – wiedza o kulturze – edukacja. Zjazd Polonistów, Kraków 22–25 września 2004*, ed. M. Czermińska et al., vol. 1, Kraków: Universitas, 2005, pp. 423–433.

³⁷ A. Hejmej, *Music in Literature: Perspectives of Interdisciplinary Comparative Literature*, trans. L. Davidson, Frankfurt am Main–Berlin–Bruxelles–New York–Oxford–Warszawa–Wien: Peter Lang, 2014.

³⁸ Z. Kadłubek, *Święta Medea: W stronę komparatystyki pozasłownej*, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2010, p. 9 ff.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 13 (see also p. 31).

Individual projects show, generally speaking, the elementary mechanism of all comparative research activity – the mechanism of **transgression**. Starting from Goethe's aspirations for all-encompassing unity and concept of *Weltliteratur* and proceeding to today's idea of transgressiveness under the framework of postcolonial studies, the phenomenon appears of – expressed, among other things by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's suggestive metaphor – “crossing borders”⁴⁰. The transgressive character of the latest comparative literature is clearly emphasised by the author of *Death of a Discipline*, who signals incidental complications appearing at the same time: “**Comparative Literature must always cross borders**. And crossing borders, as Derrida never ceases reminding us via Kant, is a problematic affair”⁴¹. This transgressive nature, accented earlier – in a completely different dimension – be that Henry H.H. Remak, indicating the possibilities for the development of interdisciplinary studies in the nineteen sixties, the new paradigm of interdisciplinarity (comparative literature understood as “study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, architecture, music), philosophy, history, the social sciences (e.g., politics, economics, sociology), the sciences, religion, etc., on the other”⁴²), or the authors of the Bernheimer report in the nineties, conceptualizing it as the result of a broad contextualization of literature in the contemporary world (“The space of comparison today involves comparisons between artistic productions usually studied by different disciplines; between various cultural constructions of those disciplines; between Western cultural traditions, both high and popular, and those of non-Western cultures; between the pre- and postcontact cultural productions of colonized peoples; between gender constructions defined as feminine and those defined as masculine, or between sexual orientations defined as straight and those defined as gay; between racial and ethnic modes of signifying; between hermeneutic articulations of meaning and materialist analyses of its modes of production and circulation; and much more”⁴³). In fact, setting new areas of research and the

⁴⁰ *Crossing Borders* – is the title of the first chapter of the book by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, pp. 1–23).

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 16. Emphasis A.H.

⁴² H.H.H. Remak, “Comparative Literature, Its Definition and Function,” in: *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, ed. N.P. Stallknecht, H. Frenz, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961, p. 3.

⁴³ “The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century,” *op. cit.*, pp. 41–42.

“mapping” of comparative literature has always been a kind of obsession for comparatists worldwide. This obsession is still current, as witnessed by the variety of concepts of “new comparative literature” (including the proposal from Gayatri Ch. Spivak, Emily Apter, Susan Bassnett, David Damrosch, Pascale Casanova, Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek), or even the issues raised at the 19th ICLA Congress: *Expanding the Frontiers of Comparative Literature* (2010).

Undoubtedly, the transgressive nature of comparative literature activities sustains and strengthens a sense of instability in comparative literature, which can be – as a consequence – interpreted in a completely surprising manner. David Ferris considers comparative literature projects – inconsistent from the very beginning, incommensurable, revealed through the order of the fragments – as an exemplary **model of postmodernism**. With these assumptions, the researcher poses the question: “Was comparative literature then always, and *avant la lettre*, postmodern?”⁴⁴ – from one side seems purely rhetorical, and from the second – at once places the entire discipline in the centre of today’s humanities. This commentary, however, requires subtle explanation, after all Ferris’s arguments in no way correspond to the arguments of many other comparatists – his exposition of the range of “impossibilities” of the discipline does not equate with an optimistic, programmatic vision of the comparative literature institution, which can be found even with Haun Saussy. It is true that both comparatists convince in their own way that comparative literature plays an important role in the modern world of science, but the conditions and consequences of their views are radically different. Saussy concentrates on the current state and perspectives of comparative literature, accenting its pragmatic dimension, maintaining that it gives rhythm to contemporary research (even giving the perverse commentary: “Comparative literature has, in a sense, won its battles”⁴⁵, although he weakens this with the inclusion of “in a sense”, in the context of the entire argument this is a clear statement). Ferris in turn includes two centuries of “indiscipline”⁴⁶, in order to note, by the by, the speculation that the overlooked or consciously unnoticed fact that comparative literature has always anticipated the modern state of humanities because of its unstable condition.

⁴⁴ D. Ferris, “Indiscipline,” *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁴⁵ H. Saussy, “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares,” *op. cit.*, p. 3. Saussy’s position is summed up by one of his remarks: “(...) now, as often as not, ours is the first violin that sets the tone for the rest of the orchestra” (*ibidem*, p. 3).

⁴⁶ D. Ferris, “Indiscipline,” *op. cit.*, p. 80 ff.

These two diagnoses are – as can be seen – highly diversified, leading to distinct regions of reflection: so as far as Saussy is absorbed in the search for answers to the question: “what is comparative literature?”, Ferris did not forget about this question, but just considered it to be unfortunate, misguided, unfounded ... Of course, criticism from the US comparatist in this case refers neither to the text of Charles M. Gayley “What is Comparative Literature?”⁴⁷ (1903), nor to the frequently reprinted compendium from Pierre Brunel, Claude Pichois and André-Michel Rousseau (*Qu'est-ce que la littérature comparée?*, Paris 1983), nor even to George Steiner's Oxford lecture “What is Comparative Literature?” (1994). Now, assuming that the question of the identity of the discipline inevitably leads to failure, Ferris achieves the intended goal, which turns out to be his own vision of comparative literature. This kind of literary criticism interests him, on the one hand, as a type of **comparative literature project of modernism**, formulated in the belief that “within the humanities, the history of comparative literature has expressed this project more purely than other »disciplines«”⁴⁸, and on the other – as suggested in the careful form of the hypothesis – as a “**more general comparative project, the comparative project of the humanities**”⁴⁹. Concluding in brief, the instability, which may not even have much in common with a move away from fundamentalism, with weak theory or weak interpretation, is according to Ferris – in spite of the efforts of successive generations of comparatists “disciplining” comparative literature – an essential attribute of the “indiscipline” from the beginning of its existence. Comparative literature, paradoxically, is in this light, forms a kind of avant-garde (post) modernity, and since inception bears the image of today's humanities.

III. (Geo)politics

Attempts to capture the instability of comparative literature – a discipline *in statu nascendi* – often involve the use of metaphorical language, of suggestive metaphors. Tomasz Bilczewski in his “Introduction” to the excellent anthology *Niewspółmierność: Perspektywy nowoczesnej komparatystyki* [*Incommensurability: Perspectives on Modern Comparative Literature*] calls up two groups of metaphors which in his view

⁴⁷ Ch.M. Gayley, “What is Comparative Literature?”, in: *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 92 (1903): pp. 56–68.

⁴⁸ D. Ferris, “Indiscipline,” *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 87. Emphasis A.H.

describe the condition of comparative literary criticism, namely the “picture of a sick body” and “constantly crossing the borders”⁵⁰. Among the many other metaphors relating to comparative literature – sometimes quite surprising due to the type of association, such as “the test bed for reconceiving the ordering of knowledge both inside and outside the humanities”⁵¹ or as “this avatar of our times”⁵², sometimes circumlocutious, ruthlessly exploited, like crisis⁵³, slump, collapse, weakness, deficiency, etc. – and we can also find a group of metaphors referring to architecture and culturally symbolic towers. Saying more precisely, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, New York’s Twin Towers in the World Trade Center complex and the biblical Tower of Babel can be treated – obviously for various reasons – as three figures of comparative literature.

The metaphor of the Eiffel Tower at first glance seems the least obvious, even controversial. Haun Saussy, not without reason, however, notes and highlights the fact that the institution of comparative literature (he recognizes the first institutional form as being Hugo Meltzl’s magazine, established in 1877, known today under the name it received somewhat later *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universalium*) formed six years before the construction of Brooklyn Bridge (1883) and twelve years before the construction of the Eiffel Tower (1889). And yet provides this statement with a careful commentary – “But a name, a birth date and a time line do not yet tell us what the discipline was designed to do”⁵⁴ – the reference points indicated by him prove to be very clear. There is no doubt that traditional comparative literature is an accomplishment in learning of the same ideas that led to such extraordinary technical success such as building La Tour Eiffel (both the idea and the actual raising of the tower – “What need did Paris have of this useless monument?” – explains Umberto Eco in his own way, among other things, calling it “the hollow spire taller than all the Gothic spires”⁵⁵ ...). I am thinking here in particular of the **idea of modernity**, carefully considered by Fer-

⁵⁰ T. Bilczewski, “Wstęp: Ekonomia i polityka komparatystyki,” in: *Niewspółmierność: Perspektywy nowoczesnej komparatystyki. Antologia*, ed. T. Bilczewski, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2010, p. X.

⁵¹ H. Saussy, “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares,” *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁵² D. Ferris, “Indiscipline,” *op. cit.*, p. 79.

⁵³ See amongst others R. Wellek, “The Crisis of Comparative Literature,” *op. cit.*, pp. 149–159; U. Weisstein, “»D’où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?«. The Permanent Crisis of Comparative Literature,” in: *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, 2, Vol. 11 (1984): pp. 167–192.

⁵⁴ H. Saussy, “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares,” *op. cit.*, pp. 6–7.

⁵⁵ U. Eco, *Foucault’s pendulum*, trans. W. Weaver, New York: Harcourt, 2007, p. 641 (see U. Eco, *Il pendolo di Foucault*, Milano: Bompiani, 1988, p. 492).

ris, and the **idea of domination**, which in today's comparative literature constitutes the main theme of reflection within all interventionist trends. The "domination effect", in the case of comparative literary criticism, is easy to perceive in the most traditional Eurocentric concepts that reinforce the national sense of community, spread nationalist tendencies, or – to be careful and use the language of economists – lead to a revaluation of the national literature (more broadly, the national culture). But it is also easy to see in it the latest concepts, to remind ourselves of the voices raised in the question of neocolonialism, and the problem, to call up Spivak's formula, of "»feudality« without »feudalism«"⁵⁶.

The second of the given metaphors, used in the context of comparative literary criticism is for sure less controversial. The events in New York of September 11, 2001 – the drama of the people in the WTC towers – revealed, in the opinion of many, a new importance of comparative literature in the modern world (not only in the academic world), as evidenced by Emily Apter in the book *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*. Apter boils down the question of modern comparative literature to broadly defined "translation" (consequently she gives it a name – *translatio*⁵⁷) and its key tasks in the multicultural world post 11th September. Translation, forced by certain geopolitical conditions, connects not so much with the establishment and negotiation of transnational relations (the existence of "phantom inter-nations"⁵⁸), as with – above all else – discovery of its place within the complex spheres of contact, **translation zone**. The destroyed WTC towers show, according to Apter, the need to renew comparative literature, renewal but in completely different conditions to those mentioned by Spivak in connection with the destruction of the Berlin Wall⁵⁹. The ruins of the New York towers give birth to the comparatist's next fear – comparative literature activities turn out to be the result not only of curiosity with the world, unprejudiced openness to otherness, becoming acquainted with

⁵⁶ G.Ch. Spivak, "Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular", in: *Postcolonial Studies*, 4, Vol. 8 (2005): p. 484.

⁵⁷ Apter forces a comparative literature that "has no national predicate, and that, in naming itself *translatio* names the action of linguistic self-cognizing, the attempt to bring-to-intelligibility that which lies beyond language" (E. Apter, "A New Comparative Literature," in: *eadem*, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*, Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 243).

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 245.

⁵⁹ As Spivak maintains: "Since 1992, three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the discipline of comparative literature has been looking to renovate itself" (G.Ch. Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, *op. cit.*, p. 1).

the Other, but especially the inevitable work of translation in traumatic “neighborhood” conditions, translation work securing daily existence.

The dramatic consequences of the attacks on the WTC and the war on terrorism, going on for years, revealed the fiasco of the political idea of multiculturalism in American reality (recently also in the European reality, even if we just mention the conflicts in French or German society). In the same way ideas grew out of various concepts of multiculturalism that totally captured the imagination of comparatists in the nineteen nineties. The research perspectives of that time were indicated by Charles Bernheimer: “[M]ulticulturalist comparatism begins at home with a comparison of oneself to oneself. This process precludes the cultural essentialism of identity politics, while it sensitizes the comparatist to the extremely difficult issues involved in evaluating cultural differences”⁶⁰, seeing anyway – despite his open enthusiasm – the obvious dangers of the idea of multiculturalism: “On the face of things, it would appear that multiculturalism, inherently pluralistic, would have a natural propensity toward comparison. But this propensity has been checked by the mimetic imperatives of an essentialist politics”⁶¹. Regardless of the position taken today in the ongoing disputes around programmes propagating the idea, it was exactly – as Spivak emphasised – the wave of multiculturalism and cultural studies (*nota bene* strongly criticized by her because of their nationalist character) caused the apogee of the crisis and the need for rebirth of the discipline⁶². The consequence of the unacceptability of the “old” comparative literature and unfulfilled hopes placed upon the concepts of multiculturalism were numerous criticisms, as well as proposals for the so-called new comparative literature, formulated in recent years.

Renewed comparative literature, as could be expected, is still far from any stability of discipline, includes individual projects, and cannot work out a common programme. Its radical, namely interventionist trend after the “death of a discipline” is pushing, among others, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, focusing exclusively on two issues: ethics (responsibility) and politics (the fight against all forms of nationalism). The project is gaining an extremely suggestive interpretation, after all, **comparativism in extremis**⁶³ is ultimately “a plea to the political other to recognize

⁶⁰ Ch. Bernheimer, “Introduction: The Anxieties of Comparison,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

⁶² G.Ch. Spivak, “Crossing Borders,” in: *eadem*, *Death of a Discipline*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁶³ G.Ch. Spivak, “Rethinking Comparativism,” *op. cit.*, pp. 609–626.

equivalence, to respond, and, finally, to end oppression”⁶⁴. The moderate trend is forced in turn by, amongst others, Susan Bassnett. In her opinion, accenting the ethical perspective, demanding commitment and postcolonial sensitivity, does not require avoidance of tradition and does not necessarily mean a complete abandonment of aesthetics⁶⁵. To collide these two different positions (Bassnett moreover from the European perspective takes a position of open polemics with Spivak’s theses), it would surely be most prudent to believe that postmodern comparative literature – as a form of literary criticism – above all else emphasizes the ethical dimension, but does not ignore the aesthetic dimension; in other words, takes into account the specificity of different literatures and cultures in both ethical-political and philological-aesthetic aspects.

Naturally, there is no question that the unstable situation in the world in recent decades, caused by various crises and forms of neo-colonialism, placed comparative literature in a new light – after a period of fascination with (meta)theory – the fundamental value of ethics (post-colonial sensitivity) and politics (political intervention). Cultural comparative literature in consequences can be, indeed, understood and defined in many ways, but most often in the context of a certain paradigm. So we could therefore reach out for a periphrase and claim, like Tadeusz Sławek, that it is “related to ethics and politics of good neighbourliness based on a rejection of ambition to seize what is on the other side of the border”⁶⁶. It is possible to maintain (like Didier Souiller and Władimir Troubetzkoy), that within it “[f]reedom and resignation from borders (linguistic and/or cultural) are undoubtedly the two fundamental rules of comparative literature activity”⁶⁷. It may also be said that cultural comparative literature derives from the radical vision of a “world without limits”⁶⁸ (Fedwa Malti-Douglas), perspectives of “meeting with the *Other*”⁶⁹ (Yves Chevrel), the idea of “planetarity” oriented on the future (Gayatri

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 615. In *Death of a Discipline* Spivak raises the issue of irreducible translation work: “not from language to language but from body to ethical semiosis, that incessant shuttle that is a »life«” (G.Ch. Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, *op. cit.*, p. 13).

⁶⁵ S. Bassnett, “Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century” *op. cit.*, pp. 5–6.

⁶⁶ T. Sławek, “Literatura porównawcza: między lekturą, polityką i społeczeństwem,” in: *Polonistyka w przebudowie*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 392.

⁶⁷ *Littérature comparée*, ed. D. Souiller, W. Troubetzkoy, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997, p. 1.

⁶⁸ F. Malti-Douglas, “Beyond Comparison Shopping: This is Not Your Father’s Comp. Lit.,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁶⁹ Y. Chevrel, *La littérature comparée*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989, p. 8.

Ch. Spivak), the idea of never ending translation of “here and now” (Emily Apter), and the idea of “plurivocality”⁷⁰, displaying the values of both the past and the future (Susan Bassnett).

IV. Comparative literature activities

Among the indicated group of metaphors allowing us to capture the instability of comparative literature we can also find a metaphor with a particular cultural dimension – the **Tower of Babel**. It is well known that whenever there is a discussion concerning language, be that understood in the way of Bakhtin⁷¹ or Derrida⁷², and issues of theory and practice of interpretation and translation appear, we invariably return to the biblical account of rebellious builders and the confusion of tongues. The Tower of Babel – is one of the most important metaphors, as is well known, in George Steiner’s dictionary – in the hermeneutic’s belief is conditioned into all comparative literature projects. The author of the lecture “What is Comparative Literature?” clearly argues that “comparative literature listens and reads after Babel”⁷³, that it draws upon the “intractable diversity of Babel”⁷⁴. The literary scholar’s assumptions, which thus put **interpretation** at the centre of attention, turn out to be definitive, unconditional. This interpretation is a specifically conceived “translation”, referring both to the various types and aspects of translation proper (all relations between languages), as well as first and foremost to the very sense of the world in language and what is brought by the “process of hermeneutic and critical »placement«”⁷⁵.

In the perspective of Steiner’s hermeneutics, where the accepted thesis that “to read is to compare”⁷⁶ – certainly anyone reading (not just literary critics) becomes a comparatist, or a comparatist *sans le savoir*.

⁷⁰ See S. Bassnett, “Reflections on Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century,” *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 7.

⁷¹ M. Bakhtin, “Discourse in Poetry and Discourse in the Novel,” in: *idem, The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. C. Emerson, M. Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, pp. 259–422.

⁷² See J. Derrida, “Des tours de Babel,” in: *Difference and Translation*, ed. J.F. Graham, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, pp. 165–248.

⁷³ G. Steiner, “What is Comparative Literature?: An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 11 October, 1994,” *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

Even Benedetto Croce, one of the first opponents of comparative literature⁷⁷, cannot – as Horst Rüdiger⁷⁸ fundamentally emphasized – go beyond the comparative perspective. Following on in this vein, it is easiest, of course, to say that comparative literature as such can be practised successfully by an historian⁷⁹, economist, political scientist, etc.; finally – that the act of comparing (the dialectical process of understanding and not understanding, as Steiner maintains) is a widespread gesture of interpreting the world, deciding about the human condition, that in the anthropological-cultural dimension it constitutes a condition for environmental adaptation, for essential understanding with others, survival. In such a broad context, the outlines of matters of interest to us in the **discipline** become blurred, but it is also easier to see that the question of postmodern comparative literature – the **indiscipline** – must remain an elementary question, as in the case of the various threads of anthropology, about man, about his existential need to “situate himself” within specific locations and communities, the need for tolerance and acceptance of his individual voice.

Comparative literature cultivated by literary scholars, regardless of whether literature is treated as a starting point, a reference point, or as a point of arrival of reflection which facilitates understanding and explaining of the social-cultural reality⁸⁰ – is in fact **reading practice**. This so-called “comparative reading”⁸¹, sometimes following the need to move away from “nationalist or national language-based reading”⁸², and sometimes (seemingly) disengaged, as for example in the case of intermedial reading, conceals a paradox. On the one hand, it proves to be something quite obvious (all literary studies, says Culler, are

⁷⁷ See B. Croce, “La »letteratura comparata«,” in: *La Critica. Rivista di letteratura, storia e filosofia*, Vol. 1 (1903): pp. 77–80 (see B. Croce, “Comparative Literature,” in: *Comparative Literature: The Early Years. An Anthology of Essays*, ed. H.-J. Schulz, Ph.H. Rhein, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973, pp. 219–223).

⁷⁸ H. Rüdiger, “Grenzen und Aufgaben der Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft: Eine Einführung,” in: *Zur Theorie der Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. H. Rüdiger, Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1971, p. 5.

⁷⁹ Characteristic in this case for example is the voice of Janusz Tazbir as an historian (*Badania porównawcze*, *op. cit.*, p. 45).

⁸⁰ Michael Riffaterre reminded us of that reality in the mid nineties, criticizing the Bernheimer report and arguing that “I would rather maintain that, if anything, literature *per se* (without even adding *comparative*, without specifying the discipline that might provide the best approach to it)” (M. Riffaterre, “On the Complementarity of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 72).

⁸¹ See D. Ferris, “Indiscipline,” *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁸² G.Ch. Spivak, “Rethinking Comparativism,” *op. cit.*, p. 613.

“fundamentally comparative”⁸³), on the other – something quite impossible, condemned on account of incomparability (Peter de Bolla suggests, “intertranslation”⁸⁴ comes into play, constructing the comparison text taking into account the differences and similarities). Of course, both diagnoses show the instability of comparative literature, additionally conditioned by previously identified (geo)political factors. Anyhow, it is well known that the comparatist – *frontalier* – had many different incarnations in the twentieth century, and still has, that need to be combined, as stated by Apter, with “the material and psychic legacy of dislocation”⁸⁵. Generalizing the conclusion, it can be said that the comparatist’s way of working designates the “topography »between«”⁸⁶, that in all realities it raises intellectual dislocation, a sense alienation, atopy.

Cultural comparative literature, to repeat, is gaining legitimacy as an **individual interpretation practice** oriented towards literature and its cultural resonance, as an interpretation practice developed in the field of new studies in translation, minority studies, feminist studies, postcolonial studies, area studies, intermedial studies, etc. Modern comparative literature so conceived turns out to be continually renewing the gesture of fortuitous placement – (re)configuration – of text or texts, through the act of reading, which allows both “the role of noncanonical readings of canonical texts, readings from various contestatory, marginal, or subaltern perspectives”⁸⁷, as well as all attempts to understand their own world through literature, communing with the text. It should rather be said, using another language that cultural comparative literature – as hermeneutics is for Hans-Georg Gadamer⁸⁸ – is not so much the method or research procedure, but

⁸³ J. Culler, “Comparability,” *op. cit.*, p. 269.

⁸⁴ P. de Bolla, “On the Theory of Comparison,” *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁸⁵ E. Apter, “Comparative Exile: Competing Margins in the History of Comparative Literature,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁸⁶ T. Sławek, “Literatura porównawcza: między lekturą, polityką i społeczeństwem,” in: *Polonistyka w przebudowie*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 397. See also T. Sławek, “Komparatystyka, czyli powszechność literatury,” in: *idem*, *Żagłowiec, czyli przeciw swojskości: Wybór esejów*, selected by Z. Kadłubek, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2006, pp. 171–192.

⁸⁷ “The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century,” *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁸⁸ H.-G. Gadamer, “Epilogue to the Revised Edition,” in: *Gadamer on Celan: “Who Am I and Who Are You?” and Other Essays*, trans. R. Heinemann, B. Krajewski, Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1997, p. 161 (see H.-G. Gadamer, “Nachwort zur revidierten Ausgabe,” in: *idem*, *Wer bin Ich und wer bist Du?: Ein Kommentar zu Paul Celans Gedichtfolge »Atemkristall«*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986, p. 151).

rather a **certain attitude**, a behaviour of a person trying to understand another person, some text or some texts.

To sum up: the undefinability of comparative literature (negative definitions), the conflict of the concept of comparison (from the Eurocentric binary model to the negated possibilities of comparison) and the incommensurableness of comparative literature projects (constantly negotiating the range of research⁸⁹) allow, indeed, better understanding of the main thesis of Ferris, but do not however bring a final answer to the question: “why is it so *indisciplined*?”. I want to clearly say through this that the change of academic paradigms and diversity of concepts of comparative literature, shaped in different historical conditions, do not prejudge the final instability of the discipline. The essential feature of comparative literature – instability – basically brings the practice of interpretation, in which we find a reflection of the unstable picture of the (not just postmodern) world and man. Only in this context, I think, does Saussy’s modest remark sound convincing, that “[w]hat needs propagating is the comparative reflex, the comparative way of thinking, not the departmental name”⁹⁰ ... Of course, it is still possible to “discipline” comparative literature and continue the vision of a strong discipline – moreover the clash of two consciousnesses can be observed today: the comparatist perceiving and attempting to overcome the “fears” of an impossible discipline (“fears” that lead to work from Emily Apter, or David Damrosch, strongly encouraging intensive reading⁹¹) and the comparatist not devoid of optimism, convinced of the strong fundamentals of comparatist work, investing – as Jonathan Culler would bluntly say after Bill Readings – the “University of Excellence”⁹². No doubt both would be eager to paraphrase the saying of Pompey the

⁸⁹ As Rodolphe Gasché concludes: “Indeed, each of the various schools that emerged in each of the countries in which comparative literature had become an academic discipline formulated its own very definite concept of what this branch of learning comprised. Comparative literature was seen variously as the study of themes, motives, myths, or legends common either to a set or to literature as a whole, of their migration across national literatures, of the factual relationships between writers, of national illusions, and so forth” (R. Gasché, “Comparatively Theoretical,” in: *idem, The Honor of Thinking: Critique, Theory, Philosophy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007, p. 169).

⁹⁰ H. Saussy, “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares,” *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁹¹ See D. Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*, Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 299.

⁹² J. Culler, “Comparability,” *op. cit.*, p. 268. See B. Readings, *The University in Ruins*, Cambridge–London: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 11 ff (also chapter 2: *The Idea of Excellence*, pp. 21–43).

Great (invoked by Plutarch⁹³): *comparare necesse est*, but only the first one draws out actual consequences of the new situation of the comparatist, sees the fortuitous character of comparatistic activities and remains with the “weak thought” of comparative literature, of the indiscipline that must be ultimately identified through the practice of interpretation.

⁹³ “Navigare necesse est, vivere non est necesse”. See *Plutarch's Lives*, vol. 4, ed. A.H. Clough, trans. J. Dryden, Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1906, p. 113.

Part Two

THE INTERMEDIAL SPACE

5. INTERMEDIALITY AND INTERMEDIAL LITERATURE

I. The paradigm of intermediality

“Intermediality” is one of the concepts which without doubt distinguishes the dictionary of contemporary humanities, referring to various artistic and cultural phenomena, to understand contemporary reality¹, which not without reason is referred to as media reality and medialized. The very concept, although often used especially in recent years, both by some authors (usually recognized as and/or considering themselves to be intermedial artists) and the supporters of the so-called intermedial studies, does not have a transparent and stable definition. There are, indeed, different “ecumenical” interpretation projects, emphasizing the inevitable penetration of media in the modern world (an example are the proposals formulated within the Canadian Centre de Recherche sur l’Intermédialité [CRI] / Centre de Recherches Intermédiales sur les arts, les lettres et les techniques [CRIalt]), but these institutional projects usually turn out to be as tempting at first glance as they are unsatisfactory in interpretive practice. Hence, it is not difficult to note the widespread current tendency which won new value at the moment of the cultural turn – representatives from intermedial studies (particularly cultural theorists and media experts) clearly emphasize the perspective of case studies, outlining theories of “mid-range” and limiting themselves to the interpretation of selected cultural phenomena. As a result, they are more willing to talk about the various

¹ See amongst others J.E. Müller, *Intermedialität: Formen moderner kultureller Kommunikation*, Münster: Nodus, 1996; I.O. Rajewsky, *Intermedialität*, Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag, 2002; S. Mariniello, “Commencements,” in: *Intermédialités*, 1 (2003) (special number: “Naître”): pp. 47–62; *Intermedialität: Analog/Digital. Theorien, Methoden, Analysen*, ed. J. Paech, J. Schröter, München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2008; *Intermedialities: Philosophy, Arts, Politics*, ed. H. Oosterling, E. Plonowska Ziarek, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011; *Travels in Intermedia[lity]: ReBlurring the Boundaries*, ed. B. Herzogenrath, Hanover: University Press of New England, 2012.

“intermedialities”² (individual theoretical and interpretation ideas) than about the intermedial phenomenon in the singular.

Existing in today’s humanities, the **paradigm of intermediality** is undoubtedly spiced up with a kind of dizziness, basically allowing anyone to find arguments appropriate for their needs. As a result of the divergent conceptualizations boundless research optimism is born (this category is deemed necessary in the description of the modern world – contemporary culture and cultural communication), or conservative thinking (acceptance of the proposal, but only in the case of interpreting the phenomena of contemporary art), or also – in the extreme cases – severe criticism (in this case, intermedial theories are treated as a transitory outcome of scientific fashions raising the reputation of the humanities environment). Either way, controversy seems inevitable – aroused even by understanding intermediality as an expression of artistic activity, artistic-ideological provocation. And it is obvious that the issue is much more complicated, that it is not just artistic manifestos or contestation, in the light of which the aesthetics of “pure” art or – as Dick Higgins would say – “the concept of the pure medium”³ should be considered as a clear illusion. Reviewing proposals from various researchers, it could be generally stated that for some intermediality defines the **character of today’s cultural communication**⁴, of being in the media society, a way of thinking about the present (in this case, intermediality is directly related to both interdiscursivity and intertextuality⁵, as well as with the ideas of interdisciplinarity and interculturalism); for other it refers to

² Such a research perspective is accented amongst others by the researchers associated with the Centre de Recherche sur l’Intermédialité (CRI) / Centre de Recherches Intermédiales sur les arts, les lettres et les techniques (CRIalt), and testament to this is even just the title of the journal published since 2003 – *Intermédialités*. See also *Intermedialities*, ed. W. Huber, E. Keitel, G. Süß, Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2007.

³ D. Higgins, “Intermedia,” in: *idem, Horizons: The Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia*, Carbondale–Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984, p. 18. See first edition: D. Higgins, “Synesthesia and Intersenses: Intermedia,” in: *Something Else Newsletter*, 1 (1966).

⁴ The problem of intermediality in such a perspective is put, amongst others, by Jürgen E. Müller in the book *Intermedialität: Formen moderner kultureller Kommunikation* (op. cit.).

⁵ See amongst others A.A. Hansen-Löve, “Intermedialität und Intertextualität. Probleme der Korrelation von Wort- und Bildkunst: Am Beispiel der russischen Moderne,” in: *Dialog der Texte: Hamburger Kolloquium zur Intertextualität*, ed. W. Schmid, W.-D. Stempel, Wien: Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, 1983, pp. 291–360; H.F. Plett, “Intertextualities,” in: *Intertextuality*, ed. H.F. Plett, Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991, p. 20; É. Méchoulan, “Intermédialités: le temps des illusions perdues,” in: *Intermédialités*, 1 (2003): pp. 10, 27; S. Mariniello, “Commencements,” op. cit., p. 49; *Intertextua-*

– as a precisely profiled concept – new aesthetics⁶, sometimes simply called the **aesthetics of intermediality**⁷, at the same time breaking with various traditions and “pure” aesthetics, and “eclectic” aesthetics; for still others – it means **all possible connections and fusions of art**, ranging from antiquity to the twenty first century.

The indicated fields of reflection well show the scale of complexity associated with understanding the paradigm of intermediality and the dangers associated with the use today of the blunt term which is unstable in meaning. The problems of ordering the issues are manifested primarily in cultural studies, media studies, film studies or theatre studies, but also – which is worth emphasizing – in the most recent literary and comparative literature studies, where “intermediality” also gains individual, one-off, idiosyncratic interpretations. This tendency, as could be predicted, will intensify in the near future, because the dissemination of intermedial issues is recognized in today’s literary criticism, especially modern cultural comparative literature, as an exceptionally promising research perspective (this is reflected, among other things, by the voices that appear in two reports from American comparatists⁸, in the so-called Bernheimer report and the so-called Saussy report. It is enough to say that the existence, from the turn of the nineteen eighties and nineteen nineties, of the literary criticism – comparative literature – fashion for intermedial research, which is reflected both in individual projects as well as in various organizational undertakings and the progressive institutionalization of such research, has already yielded noticeable results.

lité, interdiscursivité et intermédialité, ed. L. Guillemette, L. Hébert, Québec: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2009.

⁶ The new aesthetics, generally speaking, highlight the interdisciplinary perspective (see W. Welsch, “Aesthetics Beyond Aesthetics,” in: *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Aesthetics*, Lahti 1995, Vol. 3: *Practical Aesthetics in Practice and Theory*, ed. M. Honkanen, Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 1997, p. 34.

⁷ K. Chmielecki: *Estetyka intermedialności*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Rabid, 2008; “Estetyczne teorie intermedialności czy »estetyka intermedialności«? Próba określenia ram teoretycznych refleksji na temat intermedialności,” in: *Przegląd Kulturoznawczy*, 1 (2006): pp. 118–133. See also J. Bennett, “Aesthetics of Intermediality,” in: *Art History*, 3, Vol. 30 (2007): pp. 432–450 (also in: *About Mieke Bal*, ed. D. Cherry, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008, pp. 132–150).

⁸ See “The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Ch. Bernheimer, Baltimore–London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 45; H. Saussy, “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares: Of Memes, Hives, and Selfish Genes,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. H. Saussy, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, p. 19 ff.

II. Repercussions – new literary criticism

It took less than two decades on the stage of literary criticism to bring change – as a result of the expansion of the theory of intermediality – a breakthrough in thinking about some literary phenomena⁹. These changes are evidenced by the fact that few of today's literary scholars raise objections to formulae such as “literary intermediality”¹⁰, “intermediality in literature”, “intermedial literature”¹¹, “intermedial text”¹², “intermedial reading”, “intermedial interpretation”¹³, etc. But in spite of this state of affairs, that is, the rise of optimism and appearance of new literary criticism concepts under the aegis of intermedial studies¹⁴, at the same time, in my opinion, some doubts arise. I would like here to sort them into the three basic questions. Firstly, is it possible to talk meaningfully about “(inter)mediality of literature”? Secondly, how should we understand – when you take into account the complex phenomenon of contemporary intermedial culture – the series of definition-neologisms, otherwise useful in a situation dealing with contemporary literary hybrids, namely formulae such as “intermedial text” or “intermedial literature”? Thirdly – as in the case of literary criticism and modern comparative literature how do the real consequences of the expansive development of intermedial research look?

In principle I am interested in the first two questions, relating to the practice of interpretation, although in relation to them a third question

⁹ See I.O. Rajewsky, “Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality,” in: *Intermedialités*, 6 (2005): pp. 43–64.

¹⁰ See for example *Literary Intermediality: The Transit of Literature Through the Media Circuit*, ed. M. Pennacchia Punzi, Bern–Berlin–Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2007.

¹¹ *Literatur intermedial: Musik – Malerei – Photographie – Film*, ed. P.V. Zima, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995; *Literatur intermedial: Paradigmenbildung zwischen 1918 und 1968*, ed. W.G. Schmidt, T. Valk, Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009.

¹² I interpret Bernard Heidsieck's realisation of sound poetry in this light (see A. Hejmej, *Music in Literature: Perspectives of Interdisciplinary Comparative Literature*, trans. L. Davidson, Frankfurt am Main–Berlin–Bruxelles–New York–Oxford–Warszawa–Wien: Peter Lang, 2014, p. 102 ff).

¹³ See for example E. Szczęsna, *Poetyka mediów: Polisemiotyczność, digitalizacja, reklama*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Wydziału Polonistyki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2007, p. 189 ff.

¹⁴ These exist in Polish literary criticism, see for example *Intermedialność / Intermedialität*, ed. R. Lewicki, I. Ohnheiser, Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2001; M. Wasilewska-Chmura, *Przestrzeń intermedialna literatury i muzyki: Muzyka jako model i tworzywo w szwedzkiej poezji późnego modernizmu i neo-awangardy*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2011.

must also appear – with a theoretical, speculative character. It would require, in fact, consideration of the issue of whether today intermediality – as suggested by Werner Wolf, among others – is a “new paradigm in literary criticism”¹⁵. In the era of rapid spread of reports about the next turns in the humanities and continuous consideration of their validity – the matter seems surely suspect. It is worth recalling that, in the opinion of such scholars as Werner Wolf, Erik Hedling and Ulla-Britta Lagerroth, editors of the volume *Cultural Functions of Intermedial Exploration* (2002), the matter of intermediality and the **intermedial turn**¹⁶ in contemporary humanities is already exaggerated. This diagnosis applies especially to cultural studies, media studies, film studies, theatre studies, but also refers to the current situation in literary criticism and cultural comparative literature. The stakes for the last discipline are particularly high – it’s not only about expanding the idea of intermediality in areas of reflection that have been marginalized to date and revision of the existing literary criticism discourse, but also about working out new principles of reading texts which are considered to be hybrid works, “impossible”, not ready, *in statu nascendi*.

The main issue here – intermedial literature – immediately raises the question about the “(inter)mediality of literature”. This kind of question seems at first glance provocative, for, when we recognize the problem as common sense, there is no literature which is “not intermedial”. This fact exposes all the theories of intertextuality (oriented towards literature and the sphere of textuality), uncovers them too casually – not without

¹⁵ W. Wolf, “Intermedialität als neues Paradigma der Literaturwissenschaft? Plädoyer für eine literaturzentrierte Erforschung der Grenzüberschreitungen zwischen Wortkunst und anderen Medien am Beispiel von Virginia Woolfs »The String Quartet«,” in: *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 1, Vol. 21 (1996): pp. 85–116 (see also W. Wolf, “»Intermediality«: Definition, Typology, Related Terms,” in: *idem*, *The Musicalization of Fiction: A Study in the Theory and History of Intermediality*, Amsterdam: GA Rodopi, 1999, pp. 35–50). As a result of such an idea another question is raised, whether it is possible to speak of an **intermedial theory of literature** (breaking through structuralist thinking), analogical for example to “intermedial film theory” (see A. Gwóźdź, “Intermedialność jako wyzwanie dla (teorii) filmu,” in: *idem*, *Obrazy i rzeczy: Film między mediami*, Kraków: Universitas, 1997, p. 27).

¹⁶ W. Wolf, “Towards a Functional Analysis of Intermediality: The Case of Twentieth-Century Musicalized Fiction,” in: *Cultural Functions of Intermedial Exploration*, ed. E. Hedling, U.-B. Lagerroth, Amsterdam–New York: Rodopi, 2002, pp. 15, 23, 24, 30. See E. Hedling, U.-B. Lagerroth, “Introduction: In Pursuit of Functional Aspects of Intermedia Studies,” in: *ibidem*, pp. 8, 13. See also W. Wolf, “(Inter)mediality and the Study of Literature,” in: *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 3, Vol. 13 (2011) (special number: “New Perspectives on Material Culture and Intermedial Practice”; text available on the webpage <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/>).

connection to intertextuality – genetic criticism, abandoning that which is finally written (*l'écrit*), in favour of writing (*l'écriture*) and the idea of the transformativity of text (under the motto: “text does not exist”¹⁷). The most far-reaching simplification, we can say that in the optic of genetic criticism **scoring out** constitutes the condition of intertextuality (after the well-known formulation from Jean Bellemin-Noël, that “La littérature commence avec la rature” [“literature commences with scoring out”]¹⁸), and **copying** – that is, any reproduction in different media circumstances – a condition of intermediality. In this particular case, having regard to the actual effect of copying, I would eagerly talk about the phenomenon of the **intermediality of literature**, with all the consequences or maybe better said – with the awareness of the absence of any consequences ... The matter should perhaps not be questionable (*nota bene* it has a much broader dimension, and applies not only to the phenomenon of literature: Hans Belting, for example, treats intermediality as “at bottom another facet of the interaction of image with media”¹⁹). Since all known forms of oral literature (both early and contemporary, for example, sound poetry), all forms of graphic notation in the case of visual poetry, but also more traditional literary conventions, all books, audiobooks, e-books, hypertext existing in cyberspace are the result of broadly understood mediatization (copying, processing, reproduction, digitization) – may therefore be considered *en bloc* as an intermedial phenomenon. With this, I am heading to the general conclusion that the problem of (inter)mediality and literature requires a slightly different, more subtle approach than the signalled line of thinking according to the specifically understood rules of “panmediality” of literature. At the same time I am perfectly aware of the fact that such a project of the “panmediality” of literature has its devoted followers, who consequently perceive literary criticism, like Siegfried J. Schmidt, in a new light, even renaming it “special media studies” [“spezielle Medienwissenschaft”]²⁰.

¹⁷ This is Jacques Petit's formula, used by Louis Hay, amongst others, in the title of the article: “«Le Texte n'existe pas»: Réflexions sur la critique génétique” (*Poétique*, 62 (1985): pp. 147–158).

¹⁸ J. Bellemin-Noël, *Le Texte et l'avant-texte: Les brouillons d'un poème de Milosz*, Paris: Larousse, 1972, p. 5.

¹⁹ H. Belting, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body*, trans. T. Dunlap, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014, p. 32 (see H. Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft*, München: W. Fink, 2001, p. 49).

²⁰ S.J. Schmidt, “Literaturwissenschaft als interdisziplinäres Vorhaben,” in: *LUMIS-Schriften*, 30 (1991) (text available on the webpage: http://www.uni-siegen.de/infme/start_ifm/downloads/lumis_schriften/lumis_normal/nr_30-91.pdf).

The need to seek another research perspective turns out to be thoroughly obvious, because many literary phenomena are to be found, media hybrids or – if you refer to Dick Higgins – “enriched” hybrids that require interpretation in the optics of intermediality. In such cases, however, I think, it is worth to take the issue not in terms of intermediality of literature (intermediality conceived as a permanent property or individual idiom²¹), but in terms of **intermedial text** (specific project), and – as a consequence of the existence of various realisations of the concept of intermediality – **intermedial literature**. The first formula – intermedial text – makes it possible to determine the specificity of the verbal record as one of the possible cases of intermedial art. A good example of this in contemporary Polish literature is *Arw*²² by Stanisław Czycz, relatively recently published in book form, a work referring through the intermedial mode (visual and audio-visual) to the conventions of film narrative and Andrzej Wróblewski’s painting. In the case of this type of text, which contrary to the intentions of Andrzej Wajda is ultimately not a scenario, but a literary interpretation of the film medium, we can see all the features of intermedial art or even multimedial art. Namely the following approaches appear in it:

processuality (in place of objectivity), **communicativeness** (instead of presentation, representation), **interaction** (placed in opposition to contemplation), **non-linearity** (superseding or replacing linearity), **hypertextuality** (replacing textuality), **navigation** (as opposed to reading), **telematicness** (entering into an inevitable and somewhat paradoxical dialogue with tactilism), **immersion** (expanding the space for contact with the work, replacing the perceptual gap through corporeal-sensory engagement, which at the same time becomes an extreme form of tactilism)²³.

The second of the proposed formulae – intermedial literature – refers, as should be stressed once again, not to the inherent characteristics of literature as such, but to the various realisations of intermedial text. Heinrich F. Plett reduced all possible intermedial relationships to six cases, that is **paradigm changes** – firstly – **linguistic to visual** (Shakespeare’s plays and Henry Fuseli’s illustrations of them), secondly – **linguistic**

²¹ I have in mind here such questions as for example photographicness in the thinking of Bruno Schulz, musicality on the thinking of Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz or painting in the thinking of Roman Jaworski or Tytus Czyżewski.

²² S. Czycz, *Arw*, introduction A. Wajda, ed. D. Niedziałkowska, D. Pachocki, Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2007, pp. 9–53 (first edition fragments: S. Czycz, *Arw*, in: *Poezja*, 7 (1980): pp. 28–39; S. Czycz, *Arw (fragmenty)*, in: *Bez Tytułu*, 2 (1981): pp. 11–27).

²³ R.W. Kluszczyński, *Film, Wideo, Multimedia: Sztuka ruchomego obrazu w erze elektronicznej*, Warsaw: Instytut Kultury, 1999, p. 199.

to **acoustic** (Goethe's *Faust* and Liszt's *Eine Faust-Symphonie in drei Charakterbildern /nach Goethe/*), thirdly – **visual to linguistic** (77 pictures by René Magritte and the novel *La Belle Captive* by Alain Robbe-Grillet), fourthly – **visual to acoustic** (paintings by Victor Hartmann and *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Mussorgsky), fifthly – **acoustic to linguistic** (Beethoven's *Sonata in A major*, Op. 47, "Kreutzer", and *Kreutzer Sonata* by Leo Tolstoy), and the sixth – **acoustic to visual** (*Bolero* by Maurice Ravel and the ballet *Bolero* by Maurice Béjart).²⁴ If we take into account Heinrich F. Plett's proposal, who within the frame of intermediality – artistic intermediality – highlights six types of "medial substitutions" (concerning verbal-visual-acoustic transformations), it turns out that in the situation of intermedial literature there are two main possibilities: the transformation of the **visual** paradigm to **language** and the **acoustic** paradigm to **language**. So understood, the problem of literary transformations of visual and/or acoustic matters is not something new either in literature or in the sphere of literary criticism and comparative literature reflection, although the phenomenon of intermedial literature is said to be relatively recent. Such definitions appeared in the mid nineteen nineties in the title of the volume of German comparatists: *Literatur intermedial: Musik – Malerei – Photographie – Film*²⁵, and in Polish research has been taken by Maryla Hopfinger²⁶, amongst others, in the book *Doświadczenia audiowizualne: O mediach w kulturze współczesnej* [*Audiovisual Experiences: About Media in Contemporary Culture*].²⁷ Resolving here the issue of the title requires not only an indication of the arguments in favour of the seemingly tautological formula, which creates the term "intermedial literature" (tautological from the point of view of, for example, Schmidt's concept), but also situating the problem of literary transformations of visual and/or acoustic matters in the field of a variety of theories of intermediality.

²⁴ H.F. Plett, "Intertextualities," *op. cit.*, p. 20. See I.O. Rajewsky, "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality," *op. cit.*, p. 55.

²⁵ *Literatur intermedial: Musik – Malerei – Photographie – Film*, *op. cit.*

²⁶ See M. Hopfinger, "Literatura intermedialna," in: *eadem*, *Doświadczenia audiowizualne: O mediach w kulturze współczesnej*, Warsaw: "Sic!", 2003, pp. 163–171.

²⁷ Moreover, this formula around which discussions during various conferences have been rolling lately, amongst others "Literatur intermedial – Paradigmenbildung zwischen 1918 und 1968" (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Katholische Akademie, 6–9 March 2007; see *Literatur intermedial: Paradigmenbildung zwischen 1918 und 1968*, *op. cit.*), "Intermedial Literature: Concerning Image, Sound and Writing in Contemporary Literature" (Cornell University, 25–27 September 2008).

III. Attempts at theory

Currently one of the most common definitions of intermediality has been formulated by researchers associated with the so-called “Canadian school”²⁸ – more precisely – associated with the centre for intermedial research in Montréal. As part of the Centre de Recherche sur l’Intermédialité (CRI), established in January 1998 (currently: Centre de Recherches Intermédiales sur les arts, les lettres et les techniques [CRIalt]), intermediality is defined in a pragmatic way, as the interpenetration of media in contemporary culture. Overall, the almost prophetic formula turns out, quite honestly, to be relatively safe and meet institutional requirements, but in interpretative practice it requires essential clarifications. In reality, consenting to this proposal involves the adoption of certain methodological assumptions, which, moreover, are formulated by representatives of CRI/CRIalt themselves. In the belief of, for example, Éric Mechoulan, intermediality should be viewed in three perspectives. These include, firstly, study focused on all the relationships between the different media, and secondly – research oriented on the process of drawing a single medium from the crucible of various media, and finally thirdly – research oriented on the environment in which media gain specific form and meaning.²⁹ Silvestra Mariniello in the text of “L’intermédialité: un concept polymorphe”³⁰ takes a similar view. This is as she clearly argues that intermediality – firstly – refers to the relationship between media; secondly – is a crucible of media and technologies existing in today’s world, a crucible from which separate media emerge, subject to gradual institutionalization; thirdly – it is characterized by constantly changing media, community and the fluid, inextricable relationships between them; fourthly – forms a “new paradigm” for understanding material conditions and technical transmission and “archiving” experience.

²⁸ In the most far-reaching – though dangerous – simplification we speak today of the existence of several intermedial research centres, among others, the “Canadian school” (on account of the activities of CRI/CRIalt) and the “German school” (in the nineties research dedicated to intermediality developed mainly in Germany).

²⁹ É. Méchoulan, “Intermédialités: le temps des illusions perdues,” *op. cit.*, p. 22. Silvestra Mariniello takes a similar approach (S. Mariniello, “Commencements,” *op. cit.*, p. 48).

³⁰ S. Mariniello, “L’intermédialité: un concept polymorphe,” in: *Inter Media: Littérature, cinéma et intermédialité*, ed. C. Vieira, I. Rio Novo, Paris: L’Harmattan, 2011, pp. 13–15.

Emphasising the intermedial space, establishing the configuration of the problems at the time of examining concrete intermedial phenomena, seems inevitable today, a solution recognized not only within the “Canadian school” or “German school”³¹. The need for profiling, so to say, the intermedial landscape can be easily seen with Jürgen Ernst Müller, who in the perspective of culture and media studies takes into account the five research possibilities (situating intermedial issues in the light of: pragmatics, theory of knowledge, semiotics, aesthetics and the history of media)³². This can also be seen in Jens Schröter, discriminating – within their own typology – four categories of intermedial phenomena. Schröter clarifies an essential term and in turn extracts “synthetic intermediality”, “formal or transmedial intermediality”, “transformational intermediality” and “ontological intermediality”.³³ I would like to take a closer look at this proposal for two different reasons: firstly, tackling issues by the German researcher has the character of overview-recapitulation, is not therefore subject to the limitations that determine the shape of theoretical manifestations (e.g. Dick Higgins), and secondly – in my view important – separated categories seem to be easily appropriated by the latest literary criticism and cultural comparative literature and useful in the interpretation of some literary phenomena, usually included under the name media hybrid.

The first category, and at the same time the research optic, namely **synthetic intermediality**, Schröter explains laconically as an artistic revolutionary and utopian attitude³⁴. Undoubtedly this is about the political significance of intermediality postulated by Dick Higgins, and

³¹ An eloquent formula in this context is that by Jürgen Ernst Müller “»theory of practice« of intermediality” (J.E. Müller, *Intermedialität*, op. cit., p. 17).

³² J.E. Müller, *Intermedialität*, op. cit., pp. 84–92. See also J.E. Müller: “Intermediality: A Plea and Some Theses for a New Approach in Media Studies,” in: *Interart Poetics: Essays on the Interrelations of Arts and Media*, ed. U.-B. Lagerroth, H. Lund, E. Hedling, Amsterdam–Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997, pp. 295–304; “L’intermédialité, une nouvelle approche interdisciplinaire: perspectives théoriques et pratiques à l’exemple de la vision de la télévision,” in: *Cinémas*, 2–3, Vol. 10 (2000) (special number: “Cinéma et intermédialité”): pp. 113–116.

³³ J. Schröter, “Four Models of Intermediality,” in: *Travels in Intermedia[lity]*, op. cit., pp. 15–36 (see J. Schröter, “Intermedialität: Facetten und Probleme eines aktuellen medienwissenschaftlichen Begriffes,” in: *Montage a/v*, 2, Vol. 7 (1998): pp. 129–154; text can be found on the webpage: http://www.montage-av.de/pdf/07_02_1998/07_02_1998_Jens_Schroeter_Intermedialitaet.pdf).

³⁴ J. Schröter, “Four Models of Intermediality,” op. cit., p. 16 (see J. Schröter, “Intermedialität,” op. cit., p. 130). See U. Bermbach, *Der Wahn des Gesamtkunstwerkes: Richard Wagners politisch-ästhetische Utopie*, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994.

more broadly: for the location of its theoretical manifesto in the context of Wagner's programme text "Art and Revolution"³⁵ (*Die Kunst und die Revolution*, Leipzig 1849), while the art of Fluxus – of particular interest to the American creator – in the context of tradition of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The indicated field of reflection, which includes the problems of art and existence (culture and society), turn out to be important, amongst other things, in today's cultural studies. In the case of the second category – **formal intermediality (transmedial)** – the specifics of the studies define "structural homologies"³⁶, meaning random similarities between particular media, resulting from the manner of operation of artists and their expected use of convergent technologies (examples include narrativity, seriality, rhythmicism, simultaneity, montage technique, collage, thematic processing, defining motifs present in various media realizations in the space of a given culture). These homologies open up the contemporary comparatist, especially to proponents of interdisciplinary comparative studies, almost unlimited research capabilities – making it possible at the same time to move away from influencology³⁷, developing comparative research breaking with "relations of fact"³⁸, about which René Etiemble once led a fierce battle. The third type of intermediality, **transformational intermediality**, refers to "intermedial representation"³⁹, to all situations of suggesting the existence of traces of one medium within another single medium. This issue, related to monomedial cases – in literature, to remind ourselves, with visual and/or acoustic transformations – gains in Schröter an interpretation in the categories of re-representation (representation of representation), commented upon, moreover, by many other researchers, including literary critics, in terms of "suggestion"⁴⁰ (Gérard Genette) and "medial substitution"⁴¹ (Heinrich

³⁵ R. Wagner, "Art and Revolution," in: *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. W. Ashton Ellis, vol. 1, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1892, pp. 21–65.

³⁶ J. Schröter, "Four Models of Intermediality," *op. cit.*, p. 23 (see J. Schröter, "Intermedialität," *op. cit.*, p. 140).

³⁷ An example of this kind of work is the book by François Jost *Loeil-camera: Entre film et roman* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1987).

³⁸ R. Etiemble, *The Crisis in Comparative Literature*, trans. H. Weisinger, G. Joyaux, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966, p. 38 (see R. Etiemble, *Comparaison n'est pas raison: La Crise de la littérature comparée*, Paris: Gallimard, 1963, p. 70).

³⁹ J. Schröter, "Four Models of Intermediality," *op. cit.*, p. 27 (see J. Schröter, "Intermedialität," *op. cit.*, p. 144).

⁴⁰ G. Genette, "Songs without Words," in: *idem, Essays in Aesthetics*, trans. D. Cohn, Lincoln–London: University of Nebraska Press, 2005, pp. 94–101 (see G. Genette, "Romances sans paroles," in: *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, 205 (1987): pp. 113–120; see also: G. Genette, *Figures IV*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1999, pp. 109–118).

⁴¹ H.F. Plett, "Intertextualities," *op. cit.*, p. 20.

F. Plett), and “intermedial reference”⁴² (Werner Wolf, Irina O. Rajewsky). The fourth case in Schröter’s typology constitutes **ontological intermediality**, also called by him “ontomediality”⁴³ [*Ontomedialität*], which is connected to the question of materiality of various media. Due to the similarity of the material, visual poetry and photography have, for example, certain features in common with the image (due to the value of visuality), while sound poetry – with music (because of the value of phoniness). A type of “repetition” – *loci communes* in the area of material – appear to be the result of being in a particular media reality. They are usually subject to the process of neutralization within a given culture, and therefore most commonly the mass recipients do not notice them. Another matter by the way, is that the common elements of different media can be the result of conscious action, the strategy of “double coding” (during which, however, we would have to talk about cases of transformational intermediality).

A different way of treating the issue of intermediality is to be found in the concepts of Werner Wolf, which – although it had been inspired by the suggestions of Steven Paul Scher and illustrated primarily through musical-literary examples – constitutes a global idea of a “system of intermedial relations” (this concept was successfully developed and presented many times, amongst others in the article “Relations between Literature and Music in the Context of a General Typology of Intermediality” from the year 2008). The result of analysing the issues, taking into account the broader context of cultural phenomena, is a schematic diagram of intermedial relationships, illustrated with musical-literary examples⁴⁴, which is worth showing in its entirety.

⁴² W. Wolf, “Intermediality Revisited: Reflections on Word and Music Relations in the Context of a General Typology of Intermediality,” in: *Word and Music Studies: Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage*, ed. S.M. Lodato, S. Aspden, W. Bernhart, Amsterdam–New York: GA Rodopi, 2002, p. 19 ff; I.O. Rajewsky, “Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality,” *op. cit.*, p. 52 ff.

⁴³ J. Schröter, “Four Models of Intermediality,” *op. cit.*, p. 30 (see J. Schröter, “Intermedialität,” *op. cit.*, p. 149).

⁴⁴ W. Wolf, “Relations between Literature and Music in the Context of a General Typology of Intermediality,” in: *Comparative Literature: Sharing Knowledges for Preserving Cultural Diversity*, ed. L. Block de Behar, P. Mildonian, J.-M. Djian, D. Kadir, A. Knauth, D. Romero Lopez, M. Seligmann Silva, vol. 1, Oxford: EOLSS Publishers, 2009, p. 147. See also Wolf’s newest commentary, in which four issues – transmediality, intermedial transposition, intermedial reference, plurimediality – are further addressed with issues connected to narrative and narrativeness (W. Wolf, “(Inter)mediality and the Study of Literature,” *op. cit.*).

Wolf, in ideas which slightly differ in their details⁴⁵ indicates two fundamental types of intermediality, namely “**extracompositional intermediality**” and “**intracompositional intermediality**”. In the range of the first type he situates cases of **transmediality** (variation, motifs, thematic processing characteristic of various media – literature, visual art, music, opera, film, etc.) and cases of **intermedial transposition** (film adaptation, stage presentation, opera as an adaptation of a novel). In the range of the second type two opposing cases are taken into consideration: **intermedial reference** (here the discussion is about monomedial phenomena; two groups of monomedial works are identified, in which use is made of “implicit reference” or “explicit reference”) and – as he describes it – **plurimediality**⁴⁶ (multimedia phenomenon, “hybrid media”, for example opera, ballet, sound film, illustrated novel).

The author of the mentioned typology is aware that it resembles a model structuralist approach, but emphasizes the heuristic value of similar schemas⁴⁷. The aim here is to draw attention to the quantity of intermedial phenomena and their degree of recognisability. As much as the example of plurimediality is based on the coexistence of different media in a single work, the reality of intermedial transposition exposes the reality of “monomedial works” and is always a result of translation. As much as intermedial reference, which as a kind of individual mediation which does not at all feel like a “media hybrid” often remains unnoticed, retains the dominant position of literature, so the cases of transmediality show a departure from the domination of any medium. In the case of a “structurally” conceived typology it is easiest to reveal the scale of the intermedial phenomena, although in Wolf’s extensive comments he emphasizes that resolving the issue of intermediality is possible in many perspectives – including cultural studies, general aesthetics and comparative studies focused on a variety of media.

IV. Existence: *inter-esse*

Conclusions resulting from the typology of Jens Schröter and Werner Wolf are invaluable for understanding the intermedial mechanisms governing contemporary art (they appear to be helpful in the interpretation of such hybrids as Stanisław Czycz’s *Arw* or *St. Francis* &

⁴⁵ Compare amongst others W. Wolf, “Intermediality Revisited,” *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁴⁶ Wolf prefers the idea of “plurimediality” (*ibidem*, p. 22, footnote 9).

⁴⁷ See *ibidem*, pp. 29, 30.

The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops by Stefan and Franciszka Themerson), although it would be wrong to think that the key issues associated with intermediality were eventually settled here. This kind of approach leads in fact to a very obvious conclusion: there is no such thing as the isolated world of texts, the isolated world of images, the isolated world of music, or individual worlds, isolated (old and new) media or – if you use Jürgen E. Müller's formula – “media-monads”⁴⁸. Artistic reality is rather a trace, mediatisation, a mediation, “representation of representation”, which is particularly exposed by art together with the advent of the era of modernity. As is well known, there is no way today to reduce the problem of intermediality to only an intentional or accidental situation of combining different media and their collective interaction in the modern world, nor the most even complex manifestations of “synthetic intermediality” or “transformational intermediality”, appearing in a variety of historical realities that is, to the ideas of coexistence of arts, the concept of integrity, correspondence, syncretism, etc.

At this point I suggest we go beyond the realm of the present, or even outside of the twentieth century; it seems somewhat necessary. There is no question that one of the trends of contemporary art (in the widest sense – experimental-avant-garde) is a consequence of previous projects forcing the idea of totality. Not without reason, Müller, considering the potential use of the term the **poetics of intermediality**⁴⁹, reached out even as far as the work of the ancient Greeks. But at the same time it is necessary to highlight the fact that today's concepts of intermediality⁵⁰ produce slightly different results, require interpretation going beyond the aesthetic schemes of the connectivity (additivity) of art or beyond the rules – as comparatist Peter V. Zima called them – of convergence and complementarity⁵¹. Now the important thing turns out to be the ideological effects of the interaction of arts/media⁵² that are independent of each other (the effects of different modes of mediatisation: referral⁵³,

⁴⁸ J.E. Müller, *Intermedialität*, op. cit., p. 82.

⁴⁹ J.E. Müller, “Intermediality,” op. cit., p. 296.

⁵⁰ See K. Chmielecki: “Fenomen intermedialności w refleksji kulturoznawczej,” in: *idem, Estetyka intermedialności*, op. cit., pp. 17–51; “Intermedialność jako fenomen ponowoczesnej kultury,” in: *Kultura Współczesna*, 2 (2007): pp. 118–137.

⁵¹ P.V. Zima, “Vorwort,” in: *Literatur intermedial: Musik – Malerei – Photographie – Film*, op. cit., p. VII.

⁵² J.E. Müller, *Intermedialität*, op. cit., p. 89.

⁵³ Amongst others, Ryszard W. Kluszczyński holds the view that intermedial art is a peculiar kind of referral, creating relationships between media (R.W. Kluszczyński, *Film, Wideo, Multimedia*, op. cit., p. 76).

thematization, descriptiveness⁵⁴). Higgins – like Wagner before him – binds them to the sphere of politics, the idea of democracy, liberal society. Such an approach to the issue, that is, taking into account both and aesthetic-artistic and socio-ideological arguments⁵⁵, allows us to understand why one of the forms indicating thought about art and the realities of the twentieth and twenty first centuries is seen in Wagner's concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*⁵⁶. This also allows us to put forward another argument in the anthropological-cultural perspective, the argument may prejudice the effects of the ongoing discussion on the role of intermediality in today's world.

Intermediality conceived as a characteristic of the latest art becomes, according to widely shared opinions, one of the parameters in diagnosing the state of culture and the condition of modern man. It would be a truism, of course, to argue that so-called intermedial art is associated with a specific perception and understanding of reality (after all, this can be said about every manifestation of art). But it should be said that contemporary intermedial art is based predominantly on **effects of directness** and **effects of immediacy** [*effets d'immédiateté*⁵⁷], revealing the fleetingness of being in the world in a special way. Happening in the "now", imposing multisensory form of communication – it ostentatiously breaks from the "theory of the viewer", from the neutrality of the recipient. This problem is heavily accented by Éric Méchoulan, in the belief that intermediality should be connected first and foremost to that which is

⁵⁴ It is not without reason that in the new publication series "Studies in Intermediality" (SIM), appearing in the prestigious publishing house Rodopi, immediately after the first volume *Framing Borders in Literature and Other Media* (ed. W. Wolf, W. Bernhart, Amsterdam–New York: Rodopi, 2006) the next volume was – *Description in Literature and Other Media* (ed. W. Wolf, W. Bernhart, Amsterdam–New York: Rodopi, 2007).

⁵⁵ Henk Oosterling maintains that intermediality today is bringing about a reconfiguration in three institutions formed in the nineteenth century – art, politics and science (particularly philosophy). See H. Oosterling, "Sens(a)ble Intermediality and »Interesse«. Towards an Ontology of the In-Between," in: *Intermédialités*, 1 (2003): p. 30. See *Intermedialities: Philosophy, Arts, Politics*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁶ See O. Marquard, "Gesamtkunstwerk und Identitätssystem," in: *Der Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk: Europäische Utopien seit 1800*, ed. H. Szeemann, Aarau–Frankfurt am Main: Sauerländer, 1983, pp. 40–49; H. Oosterling, "Sens(a)ble Intermediality and »Interesse«," *op. cit.*, p. 32 ff; J. Paech, "Artwork – Text – Medium: Steps en route to Intermediality" (ESF "Changing Media – Changing Europe", Paris 26–28 May 2000; text available on the webpage <http://www.uni-konstanz.de/FuF/Philo/LitWiss/MedienWiss/Texte/texte.html> [date accessed: June 12, 2010; no longer available]).

⁵⁷ É. Méchoulan, "Intermédialités: le temps des illusions perdues," *op. cit.*, pp. 13, 15, 22.

direct, “immediate” [*l’immédiat*], signalled with the formula *inter-esse*⁵⁸, which is connected with the very existence, and not with the materiality of media, strategies and mechanisms of artistic mediatization (as in the case of the theory of Higgins, Müller, Schröter and Wolf). Méchoulan is naturally far from contesting the earlier viewpoints, which are supported by evident dependence on: medium – mediatization (he himself ultimately uses a chain of formulas which in French create a deliberate play on words: *l’immédiat – médias – médiations*⁵⁹), but nevertheless draws attention to the undervalued or overlooked aspect of intermediality, which connects him with radically interpreted motto (*hic et nunc*).

In such circumstances, the recapitulation of previous observations in connection with intermediality must lead to separation into – just as undertaken by Dutch researcher Henk Oosterling, amongst others – complementary research perspectives. Resolving the problem of intermediality requires finally, in my view, taking into account at least three fields of research, which define consecutively **art** (including media hybrids), **society** (politics, science, etc.) and **existence** (individual experience). In other words, this is primarily about research oriented towards **artistic intermediality**⁶⁰, secondly – about research connected to the theory of new media and understanding of the prefix “*inter-*” in societal-ideological categories, meaning research dedicated to “micro- and geopolitical aspects of intermedial interactions and transactions within a globalized, media dominated information society”⁶¹, thirdly – about research concerning specific experiences conditioned by the mediatization situation, being in reality medial and mediatized. It would be possible to assume here (following Méchoulan’s thinking) that intermediality is connected primarily with privacy, with existence, with individual experience of the modern world, the “modern experience”⁶², which is revealed amongst other things by artistic intermedial practices⁶³.

⁵⁸ See H. Oosterling, “Sens(a)ble Intermediality and »Interesse«,” *op. cit.*, pp. 29–46 (particularly pp. 43–46).

⁵⁹ É. Méchoulan, “Intermédialités: le temps des illusions perdues,” *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁶⁰ H. Oosterling, “Sens(a)ble Intermediality and »Interesse«,” *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 30–31. See M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

⁶² See R. Nycz, “O nowoczesności jako doświadczeniu – uwagi na wstępie,” in: *Nowoczesność jako doświadczenie*, ed. R. Nycz, A. Zeidler-Janiszewska, Kraków: Universitas, 2006, p. 10 ff.

⁶³ An inspiring attempt at ordering various intermedial phenomena in such a perspective is the book by Konrad Chmielecki *Estetyka intermedialności* (*op. cit.*).

V. Intermedial literature

One of these artistic practices is of course literature, which, because of its specificity with directly absorbed elements of other media, which in exchange makes it possible to construe **intermedial references**, namely various **visual and/or acoustic transformations** – painting, music, architecture, photography, film, etc. In this way they become realisations of intermedial literature, in which case it is impossible to establish any models (each intermedial text, understandably, constitutes a unique hybrid in the genological dimension). Suffice to say, such varied works are associated with intermedial literature that, in fact, works like – on one hand – Roman Jaworski's volume of tales *Historie maniaków* [*The Stories of Maniacs*] (1910) with illustrations by Witold Wojtkiewicz, Anatol Stern's poem *Europa* [*Europe*] with collages and graphic design by Mieczysław Szczuka (1929), Julian Przyboś's poetic volume *Z ponad* [*From Over*] (1930), graphically prepared by Władysław Strzemiński, Witold Wirpsza's collection *Komentarze do fotografii* [*Commentary to the Photographs*] (1962), Stefan and Franciszka Themersons' semantic opera *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops* (1972) or Jacek Dehnel's *Fotoplastikon* [*Photoplasticon*] (2009), and on the other – Stéphane Mallarmé's experimental text *A Throw of the Dice* [*Un Coup de dés*] (1897), Apollinaire's *Calligrammes* (1918)⁶⁴, Tytus Czyżewski's⁶⁵ works (for example *Hymn do maszyny mojego ciała* [*Hymn to the Machine of My Body*]), Kurt Schwitters's *Ursonate* (composed from 1922, published in 1932 in *Merz Magazine*), John Cage's visual mesostics, which came about as a graphic equivalent to photography: *Sixty-two Mesostics re: Merce Cunningham* (1971), John Paul II's *Tryptyk rzymski: Medytacje* [*Roman Triptych: Meditations*] (2003), or Stanisław Czycz's *Arw* (first edition fragments: 1980, 1981; book version: 2007), already mentioned several times.

⁶⁴ See M. Hopfinger's commentary, "Literatura intermedialna," *op. cit.*, pp. 163–165.

⁶⁵ Sławomir Sobieraj distinguishes four types of intermedial works in Czyżewski, namely "verbal-theatrical", "verbal-iconographical (visual)", "verbal-sound (onomatopoeic)" and "multicoded (multimedial)" (S. Sobieraj, "Intermedialność w twórczości literackiej Tytusa Czyżewskiego," in: *Kulturowe terytoria literatury*, ed. S. Sobieraj, Siedlce: Towarzystwo Literackie im. Adama Mickiewicza, 2006, p. 61 ff). See S. Sobieraj, *Laboratorium awangardy: O twórczości literackiej Tytusa Czyżewskiego*, Siedlce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Podlaskiej, 2009, pp. 115–142. See also B. Śniecikowska, *Słowo – obraz – dźwięk: Literatura i sztuki wizualne w koncepcjach polskiej awangardy 1918–1939*, Kraków: Universitas, 2005, pp. 23–172.

There is not the least doubt that each of these works constitutes a text hybrid or media hybrid, that they are the result, to repeat, of visual and/or acoustic intermedial transformation. The fact that these transformations exist – independently of the nuances and distinctiveness of individual records – allows them to be placed into one row and treated as examples of intermedial literature. It is in this belief, amongst others, that those researching contemporary media reaffirm various commentaries. It is enough just to reach for the explanation by Maryla Hopfinger: “intermedial projects, firstly, cross established, recognized divisions that have to date been respected. They are, secondly, the recognition of new possible links, connections, relationships. Finally, thirdly, they rely on the merging of a new integrated whole of different starting components”⁶⁶. In addition to the obvious similarities it is not difficult to discern some subtle differences between juxtaposed works, to which I would like to pay special attention: as far as the first group of projects would be well described by the category of **totality** (this is mostly about the effects of co-operation and multimodality as a characteristic feature, about the case of “plurimediality” as Wolf would claim), so far the second group – by the category of **transgressiveness** (this time it is not only just about the individual interpretation efforts and features of monomediality, and therefore – according to Wolf’s typology – about “intermedial transposition” or “intermedial reference”). Such a proposal – although controversial, as it is impossible in the situation of intermedial literature to either maintain sharp divisions: totality–transgressiveness, nor isolate intermediality from “weak” multimodality (literary cases of coexistence of media, even if provoked by the presence of intermedial quotations)⁶⁷ – makes it possible to isolate two fundamental strategies of artistic activity. Intermedial literature, stating the matter in most general terms, comes about as a result of direct “crossing”, therefore **factual co-existing** of media (most commonly found in bimedial constructs, as illustrated by Wirpsza’s *Komentarze do fotografii*, more rarely – multi-material constructs, as for example the semantic opera by the Themersons, *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio* or *Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*), or as the result of broadly understood **intermedial references** – references, thematising, descriptiveness, literary visualisations, etc. (as in the situation of Czyż’s *Arw*). The third possibility for examining literature in

⁶⁶ M. Hopfinger, “Doświadczenia audiowizualne,” *op. cit.*, p. 72.

⁶⁷ *Nota bene*, in the belief of intermediality theoreticians such as Jürgen E. Müller, it is necessary to differentiate between intermediality and multimodality (see J.E. Müller, *Intermedialität*, *op. cit.*, p. 83).

the optics of intermediality, signalled by Irina O. Rajewsky⁶⁸ – **medial transposition** (for example film, stage, radio adaptations of a literary work) – I am here consciously avoiding, as it relates to secondary adaptation operations. But also this third possibility forms – if we take into account “translation series” (Edward Balcerzan’s definition) – a huge challenge for comparatists, as well as the basic issue, which must be faced by modern intermedial comparative literature⁶⁹.

The proposed approach to the problem of intermedial literature needs finally to take into account important cultural conditions and formulate a conclusion in yet another perspective. It seems possible that there are in fact two literary criticism outcomes in relation to the understanding of intermediality and intermedial art. On one side this is about, as for example, Wolf absorbed by manifestations of “artistic intermediality”, new sorting of all interartistic issues⁷⁰. This basically means the broadest understanding of the issues (including intermedial literature) – appearing in the field of reflection, not just the most recent artistic experiments, hybrid media of the twentieth century (happening, performance art, visual poetry, concrete poetry, sound poetry, artist’s books, contemporary graphic scores; Fluxus projects), to which Dick Higgins’s⁷¹ manifestation directly refers, not just experimental intermedial practices of the avant-garde of the beginning of the previous century (I am thinking here of the work of the futurists, the dadaists, the surrealists⁷² and creators with a profile like Kurt Schwitters or Stefan Themerson), but also many well-known artistic conceptions from earlier epochs⁷³, such

⁶⁸ See I.O. Rajewsky, “Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality,” *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁶⁹ See A. Hejmej: “Transpozycje intermedialne i literatura nowoczesna”; “Intermedialność i komparatystyka intermedialna,” in: *Sensualność w kulturze polskiej: Przedstawienia zmysłów człowieka w języku, piśmiennictwie i sztuce od średniowiecza do współczesności*, ed. W. Bolecki (texts can be found on the webpage <http://sensualnosc.ibl.waw.pl>).

⁷⁰ W. Wolf, “Towards a Functional Analysis of Intermediality: The Case of Twentieth-Century Musicalized Fiction,” *op. cit.*, p. 30. See W. Moser, “L’interartialité: pour une archéologie de l’intermedialité,” in: *Intermedialité et socialité: Histoire et géographie d’un concept*, ed. M. Froger, J.E. Müller, Münster: Nodus, 2007, pp. 69–92.

⁷¹ See D. Higgins, “Intermedia,” in: *idem, Horizons: The Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia*, *op. cit.*, p. 20 ff.

⁷² In the view of Dick Higgins: “It is possible to speak of the use of intermedia as a huge and inclusive movement of which dada, futurism and surrealism are early phases preceding the huge ground swell that is taking place now?” (*ibidem*, p. 23).

⁷³ Higgins himself indicated in 1981, that “[t]here was and could be no intermedial movement. Intermediality has always been a possibility since the most ancient times” (*ibidem*, p. 25).

as ekphrasis⁷⁴, the idea of *ut pictura poesis*, transposition of art, *correspondance des arts* and *Gesamtkunstwerk*. On the other side – when we consider this issue in the narrow cultural dimension of (post)modernity – this is only about some of the most recent art projects, including intermedial literature projects, which are gaining renown here, of **contemporary intermedial text**. The fact that intermedial text gave birth to modernity (modern literature formed, conventionally speaking, under the aegis of Mallarmé), firmly established postmodernism (postmodern bricolage literature), entails far-reaching consequences. Intermediality in this case, is linked in particular with **transgressiveness**, revealing the human condition “in an age of uncertainty”⁷⁵ and manifests itself in the weak ontology of the contemporary work of art. Intermedial realisations of the type *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio* or *Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops* by Stefan and Franciszka Themerson or Stanisław Czycz’s *Arw*, forming from the outset, works that are “unready”, unfinished, *in statu nascendi*, expose – through intermedial references, namely visual and/or acoustic transformations – aspects of the present or “immediateness”, “happening” reality. Concluding in brief, intermediality binds with the existence and audiovisual character of today’s culture in a particular way, with the reality of casually being, in fact, undeniably medial and mediatized.

⁷⁴ See P. Wagner, “Introduction: Ekphrasis, Iconotexts, and Intermediality – The State(s) of the Art(s),” in: *Icons – Texts – Iconotexts: Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, ed. P. Wagner, Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996, pp. 1–40.

⁷⁵ Z. Bauman, *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.

6. INTERMEDIAL TEXT – DIRECTING REALITY (STANISŁAW CZYCZ'S *ARW*)

[F]rom the beginning I had a quite crazy idea¹ ...
(Stanisław Czycz in a letter to Krystyna
and Andrzej Wajda on 9 January 1980)

I. "Text hybrid"

Published relatively recently in book form, Stanisław Czycz's *Arw*², a work unprecedented in Polish literature of the twentieth century, provides a great opportunity to look at the writer's atypical project. The case is pretty subtle, requiring revision of different literary critic's remarks, more so as the first edition of the text was not met with the best reception. The fragment, which was released in the first edition³, composed of vertical bands – gave birth from the very outset to various complications related to both the spatial notation (created on a broken typewriter), and its editorial work undertaken by *Poetry* editors (I have in mind the necessity of resigning from the colourful underscores of certain bands), and with the possible ways of reading – for a long time it was not so much forgotten by literary scholars as deliberately ignored or marginalized in Czycz's work. The reason for this seems all too obvious – the extreme difficulty of reception and wading through the maze of text.

¹ S. Czycz, A. Wajda, "»Arw« – listy," ed. D. Niedziałkowska, in: *Twórczość*, 10 (2006): p. 112. See also S. Czycz, *Arw*, introduction A. Wajda, ed. D. Niedziałkowska, D. Pachocki, Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2007, p. 120.

² S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–53.

³ S. Czycz, *Arw* [first edition], in: *Poezja*, 7 (1980): pp. 28–39.

It should however immediately be said that this state of affairs has changed in recent years⁴. On the wave of increased interest in the writing of the author from Krzeszowice a quite separate area of research has been developed, we could say – “Arwology”. The research perspectives that have come out to date mark out, among other things, textology, art history, musicology, film studies and literary criticism⁵. I am not resigning here from the possibility of particular close-ups and readings of *Arw*, as offered through the appropriate perspectives in isolation, but I would also define a common horizon for them, situating the work in the light of **intermediality**, and namely of particular importance for this writer, in my view, of the **aesthetics of intermediality**. Attempts to clarify Czycz’s proposal in such a context took place, true, already earlier⁶, however the problem was only brought, as Henk Oosterling would define it, to “artistic intermediality”⁷, to answer the question which Dick Higgins once asked, “what that I know does this new work lie between?”⁸ At the moment of taking into account current intermedial research and understanding intermediality in a broad, anthropological-cultural dimension as a characteristic of reality, inextricably linking art and existence⁹, undoubtedly new possibilities for interpreting Czycz’s work appear.

⁴ In fact, it is another “return” to Czycz, after all, there was a lot of interest in his work – as one of the authors belonging to the generation of “Współczesność” – at the moment of his debut in the mid-nineteen fifties. Czycz, to remind ourselves, published his first verses – *Gdybym żył w roku 1883...* and *Szczur* – in December 1955 in *Życie Literackie*, where others such as Białoszewski and Herbert had their debuts (see “Prapremiera pięciu poetów,” in: *Życie Literackie*, 51 (1955): p. 5).

⁵ It should be added that the undertaken interpretation tropes are highly varied and serve various purposes: recognition is aroused particularly by professional work of an editorial character and attempts interdisciplinary interpretation, while controversy – by efforts, so to say, of excessive mythologizing of the role of *Arw* within contemporary Polish literature, which meets with justifiable criticism (see A. Przybyszewska, “Sprzedać legendę: Jak zachwyca i rozczarowuje »Arw« Stanisława Czycza,” in: *Techsty*, 4 (2008); the article is located on the website: <http://techsty.art.pl/magazyn4/recenzje/przybyszewska01.html>).

⁶ See P. Marecki, “Intermedialny potencjał »Arwa«,” in: S. Czycz, *Arw*, op. cit., pp. 70–78.

⁷ H. Oosterling, “Sens(a)ble Intermediality and »Interesse«: Towards an Ontology of the In-Between,” in: *Intermédialités*, 1 (2003): p. 30.

⁸ D. Higgins, “Intermedia,” in: *idem*, *Horizons: The Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia*, Carbondale–Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984, p. 28.

⁹ This fact is underlined not only by Dick Higgins, but also the first German intermedial theorists, for example Udo Kultermann, perceiving “the new identity of life and art” (U. Kultermann, *Leben und Kunst: Zur Funktion der Intermedia*, Tübingen: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth, 1970, p. 78).

In the situation of analysing *Arw*, just like in the situation of many other concepts of intermediality in contemporary literature, a supporter of the traditional reading, hermetic or “monoparadigmatic” literary criticism, turns out to be helpless. It is possible at best to maintain that one has contact with the result of experimental work, a manifestation of avant-garde extravagance, breaking down the borders between individual arts, that the work is unclassifiable, breaking away from the existing literary conventions, that it is a **text hybrid** (“hybrid” in this case functions, of course, as a catch-all, as a formula closing and preventing discourse, not opening defined interpretation actions). The unique shape of Czycz’s text mean that attempts to define it are essentially of an intuitive character – looking for a specific quality in the record in relation to something already existing. This is also why *Arw* for some is an “unfinished film script”¹⁰, a misguided “script” or a “poem untranslatable to film”¹¹, for others – a “many layered literary work (on the model of a symphony)”¹² or a “many voiced poem”¹³, and for still others – a “multimedia poem”¹⁴, a “hypertext work”¹⁵, a “liberature work”¹⁶, an “intermedial project”¹⁷, a “text opera”¹⁸, etc. (in inventing names Piotr Marecki seems unbeatable!). If we were to take the optics of Franz-Josef Albersmeier¹⁹, in whose

¹⁰ J. Olczyk, “Nieukończony scenariusz filmu,” in: *Dekada Literacka*, 2–3 (2008): pp. 208–213.

¹¹ “Tworzył dla samego siebie: Andrzej Wajda wspomina Stanisława Czyczę,” in: *Lampa*, 5 (2006): p. 14.

¹² S. Marynowicz, “Moje spotkania z Czyczem,” in: *Ha!art*, 6 (2001): p. 64.

¹³ D. Niedziałkowska, “Sztuka w »Arwie«,” in: S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 79 (see also D. Niedziałkowska, “Sztuka w »Arwie«,” in: *Ha!art*, 26 (2007): pp. 54–58).

¹⁴ P. Marecki, “Tekstowa partytura: O uwerturze do »Arwa« Stanisława Czyczę,” in: *Tekst-tura: Wokół nowych form tekstu literackiego i tekstu jako dzieła sztuki*, ed. M. Dawidek Gryglicka, Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art, 2005, p. 164. See also P. Marecki, “»Arw« – dzieło niemożliwe?,” in: *Lampa*, 5 (2006): p. 14.

¹⁵ P. Marecki, “Tekstowa partytura,” *op. cit.*, p. 164. See also P. Marecki, “»Arw« – dzieło niemożliwe?,” *op. cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁶ In Piotr Marecki’s view: “Czycz’s *Arw* is most certainly a liberature work, planned out in visual terms to every inch” (P. Marecki, “Tekstowa partytura,” *op. cit.*, p. 165; compare P. Marecki, “»Arw« – dzieło niemożliwe?,” *op. cit.*, p. 14; P. Marecki, “Intermedialny potencjał »Arwa«,” *op. cit.*, p. 76). Katarzyna Bazarnik and Zenon Fajfer hold another view: “The matter is not so clear” (“»Arw« z perspektywy liberatury: (Kilka słów od redaktorów serii)” in: S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 68); “It is not true, that [the work] had some particular impact on the field of liberature” (*ibidem*, p. 69).

¹⁷ P. Marecki, “Intermedialny potencjał »Arwa«,” *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 76.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 73. See also P. Marecki, “»Arw«: o pewnym niezrealizowanym projekcie polskiego kina,” in: *Kino*, 12 (2004): p. 75.

¹⁹ F.-J. Albersmeier, *Theater, Film und Literatur in Frankreich: Medienwechsel und Intermedialität*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992, p. 81.

belief intermedial works of art that are hybrid forms should hide their genealogical overview in their names (depending on the types of media crossed), it would no doubt be necessary to escape to more neologisms and speak of “poetic-film” or “verse-film” ...

The uncertain status of text hybrid and signalled complications with the understanding of the whole can be seen perfectly when explaining *Arw* in the category of a film script. It turns out that the text – as a result of the confrontation of Czycz’s vision with suggestions from Andrzej Wajda, and more specifically: by the mutual exchange of opinions in correspondence in the years 1975–1980 – is, and at the same time is not, a script. Undoubtedly the work was written “on order” from Wajda as something, which could be used to create a film (this then would have been an analogous cooperation, which was enabled by the previously created *Bramy raju* [*The Gates of Paradise*] by Jerzy Andrzejewski and film adaptation of the novel in 1968). “For many years”, the director wrote in a letter of 22 August 1975, “I have been haunted by the idea of making a film about Andrzej Wróblewski. (...) It should also be the first film about the nineteen fifties – nostalgic and terrible. A thing about our youth. About Kraków, Nowa Huta and the Kapists – and Andrzej’s party activities, that sowed terror around”²⁰. However, the proposal to establish cooperation was qualified by a significant comment: “**I need such a text** [like *Arw*] (I consciously write **text**, and **not script**)”²¹. And although the work is recognized today – the whole, and especially its first part, published in *Poezja* – as a “script for Wajda”²², a “film script”²³, a “polyphonic script”²⁴, a “poem-script”²⁵, a “script-narrative proper”, a “narrative-script”²⁶, etc. (in order to remember, obviously, the line of inspiration), Czycz himself was much more sharp in his judgements. In the commentary to the first edition of *Arw* he used the name **like a script**, adding the explanation: “[T]his shape of the notation did not come from, for example, the fact that I’ve never seen a film script (though in truth, when I occasionally saw them, I didn’t read them, they didn’t interest

²⁰ S. Czycz, A. Wajda, “»Arw« – listy,” *op. cit.*, p. 93. See also S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

²¹ S. Czycz, A. Wajda, “»Arw« – listy,” *op. cit.*, p. 93. See also S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 100. Emphasis A.H.

²² P. Marecki, “Tekstowa partytura,” *op. cit.*, p. 152.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 159.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 152.

²⁵ S. Marynowicz, “Moje spotkania z Czyczem,” *op. cit.*, p. 64; P. Marecki, “Tekstowa partytura,” *op. cit.*, p. 160.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 161.

me), or that I wanted to write this kind of script more crazily than anyone else”²⁷. Instead of a script, which should be clearly stated, a collage construct was born, a **media hybrid**, which Higgins would without delay count in the sphere of intermedia²⁸.

II. (Texto)logical plexus

Stanisław Czycz’s *Arw* is in fact a superb example of **contemporary intermedial text**; a realisation which belongs to intermedial literature²⁹ – understood as a form of monomediality – this should not raise the slightest opposition. In the case of this kind of hybrid media (here quotation marks seem already redundant), linking experience from several media – literature, visual art, music, photography, sculpture, architecture, television, radio, film, the so-called new media – at the initial stage of analysis raises similar questions. They concern the essential characteristics of the intermedial discourse, the polisensory possibilities of reception, the interdisciplinary approach, effectiveness of interpretative actions, understanding of unconventional notation in terms of not only the purely aesthetic, avant-garde experiment for the sake of experiment (which would be otherwise contrary to Czycz’s thinking³⁰), as much as a kind of cultural necessity, an existential necessity related to the quest to find a place for itself in reality.

Analysing *Arw* as an intermedial text project, we at first come to the conclusion that it is an example, taking Ryszard Nycz’s formula,

²⁷ The assessment of the undertaking proposed on this occasion by the author himself (*Poetry*, 7 (1980): p. 28) leaves no doubt: “The here recalled »viewing« of the film is a uite poetic viewing – I know – this is not the strong side of this text, when taking it as a script” (*ibidem*, p. 28). Moreover, the prosaic part in the first edition was preceded by a characteristic ambivalent remark from Czycz: “a fragment of something like a movie script” (S. Czycz, *Arw (fragments)*, in: *Bez Tytułu*, 2 (1981): p. 11).

²⁸ See D. Higgins, “Intermedia,” *op. cit.*, pp. 18–28.

²⁹ See chapter 5: *Intermediality and intermedial literature*, pp. 85–104.

³⁰ The author of *Arw* somehow explains the concept of the notation, and somehow warns of possible groundless allegations from critics: “[T]he graphic shape of these texts is reminiscent of the tricks of the avant-garde, very primitive. But these tricks of the avant-garde were invented in order to necessarily write something that did not exist before. (...) I just came across the need for such a notation. I struggled over the attempts and over how to capture and store these simultaneities and came across this way. I don’t know whether it is the best, but so far have not found better” (J. Marx, “Rozmowa ze Stanisławem Czyczem,” in: *Poezja*, 7 (1980): p. 18).

of “contemporary silvae”³¹. However, the reasons for such an assertion, and for the non-uniform shape of the text, its open composition, fragmentation and unfinishedness are many. The work, as is known, consists of two parts of text, logically related, though mutually incompatible in character. The first part – usually described by researchers with the name “score” or “overture”³² – is an unusually notated poetic text composed of several vertical bands (the notation was initially twelve pages, later – ten pages), notation reminiscent of, among other things, Stéphane Mallarmé’s work, *A Throw of the Dice*, and such simultaneous poems, such as *Crayon bleu, poème à trois voix simultanées* by Pierre Albert-Birot. The second part – prose – is a narrative maintained in the traditional form, usually described as “narrative-script”³³. It should be added here, in order to bring closer the concept of the whole, that the text of *Arw* is complemented by two more writings as integral parts, namely the instructions (i.e. a short note from the author explaining the successive bands and the manner of their graphical notation) and a self-commentary (a kind of “explaining away” that is otherwise also reminiscent of Mallarmé’s manner, in the preface by the French poet to *A Throw of the Dice*³⁴).

The two main parts of the text are radically different from each, not only on account of the graphic convention of notation. Attention is drawn primarily to the question of factuality, the status of events: as far as the second part **happens** (*nota bene* in the Kraków Electrical School, which Czyż attended in his time), so the first part to some extent forms a natural course of events, to some extent a **projection of alternative, hypothetical actions** – so the events take place and/or will take place either in an art gallery (“gdzie oprowadzana jest / ta grupka / ..może / młodzieży”³⁵ [“where this / group / ..perhaps / of youths / is guided around”]), or in the cinema (“lub jest to / kino i film / o sztuce”³⁶ [“or is / cinema and film / about art”])). In other words, it takes place in the present time where real

³¹ R. Nycz, *Sylwy współczesne: Problem konstrukcji tekstu*, Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1984.

³² See P. Marecki, “Tekstowa partytura,” *op. cit.*, p. 161; M. Wilkońska-Karpierz, D. Niedziałkowska, “Pasma muzyczne »Arwa«,” in: S. Czyż, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 90 (first edition: *Ha!art*, 26 (2007): pp. 59–61).

³³ P. Marecki, “Tekstowa partytura,” *op. cit.*, p. 161.

³⁴ See S. Mallarmé, “Préface” to *Un Coup de dés*, in: *idem*, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. H. Mondor, G. Jean-Aubry, Paris: Gallimard, 1979, pp. 455–456 (see English translation: S. Mallarmé, “Preface / Préface,” in: *idem*, *Collected Poems*, translated and with a commentary by H. Weinfield, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, pp. 122–123).

³⁵ S. Czyż, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 10. Recalling short quotations from *Arw*, resigning from the original typographical layout of the text, namely the notation in vertical bands.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

events and imagined events (planned, future) are woven together, with a clearly exposed perspective *hic et nunc*. Without a doubt, this concept of temporality – I am thinking about the penetration of the real (present) with the imaginary (non-present) – translates into a form of notation and a form of media hybrid. Interest is at once aroused even by a nuance of the text, as crowning the work with two dots in the function of the ellipsis. The intriguing thing is that they appear in the most unexpected place, in the moment of climax, namely the dispute with the professor in the Prej's painting studio ("– Panie profesorze.. – przerywa już głośno Arw, Prej nie czeka na to, co Arw chciałby może powiedzieć, ciągnie tonem tutaj trochę.." ³⁷ ["– Professor Sir .. – Arw now interrupts out loud, Prej does not wait for what Arw would like to say, pulling here a little by tone .."]). An equally intriguing thing indeed turns out to be the fact that in the absence of an ending to the work, sometimes quite radical conclusions are drawn.

According to many of today's literary scholars, everything indicates that Czycz's composition was not finally completed ³⁸. The final form of *Arw* – a fragmentary record, *in statu nascendi*, emerging in compilation, bricolage, mode – there is no way to determine what is true, but the matter of being unfinished, I think, is not so clear. It is worth risking the hypothesis that it is connected to the desired **effects of immediacy**, intended from the outset ³⁹; in other words, with the cultural-anthropological understanding of the phenomenon of intermediality in the contemporary world. We could propose such an explanation, considering that not only the final suspension of action, and not just the characteristic prelude, but as the whole also opens with an ellipsis ("...problemów, i zmagają, niejednokrotnie dramatycznych, wyodrębnione tu tendencje, i zjawiska, te główne, wiodące, sztuki europejskie" ⁴⁰ ["...problems and challenges, often dramatic, the main, leading tendencies and phenomena of European art isolated here"]). So the meaning of Czycz's concept of intermediality can be easily seen when we have in mind both the function of narrative in suspension (and thus the occurrence of the prelude and postlude), the framing of the text (I am here consciously using such

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

³⁸ See amongst others D. Niedziałkowska, D. Pachocki, "Od redaktorów," in: S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 58; P. Marecki, "Tekstowa partytura," *op. cit.*, p. 161.

³⁹ These "effects of immediacy" – in the view of researchers such as Éric Méchoulan – best reflect the phenomenon of intermedial contemporary cultural communication (see É. Méchoulan, "Intermédialités: le temps des illusions perdues," in: *Intermédialités*, 1 (2003): p. 13 ff).

⁴⁰ S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

terms in an obvious reference to both film, and photography⁴¹), as well as also the “aleatoric” possibilities for treatment of the writing by the interpreter and a specific need for realisation *in actio*.

Resolving the problem of fragmentation and unfinishedness of *Arw*, or more broadly: the cultural sense of bricolage work would require taking into account one more issue that is symptomatic of the differences between current editions. The first edition of Czycz's text in the pages of *Poezja* (1980, No. 7) only contain the first part (no editorial actions undertaken⁴², and from here we could also consider it a “first edition-reproduction”), and also – which it is worth noting – the **instruction** added to the end of *Arw* and the **autocommentary** preceding it. In the fuller critical edition which the book version brought nearly three decades later (Kraków 2007) – apart from the fragment published in *Poezja*, the second, longer narrative part is included⁴³. The Kraków publication in the collection “Ha!art”⁴⁴ (the fourth volume in the “Liberatura” series), the result of several years of work by the young Lublin textologists, Dorota Niedziałkowska and Dariusz Pachocki, presents Czycz's notation in its fullest possible form. Various extant versions and editions of *Arw* were taken into account: typewritten manuscripts found in the archives of the writer's wife, Barbara Sommer-Czycz, text kept in the archive of Andrzej Wajda in the Manggha Centre of Japanese Art in Kraków, and

⁴¹ The reference is deliberate for the simple reason that Stanisław Czycz, under the pseudonym “Michał C. – fotoamator”, for several years had an unusual column in *Przekrój* (from 19 January 1964): “Fotografia jest sztuką trudną,” analysing ... the worst possible photography (see *Przekrój*, 980 (1964): p. 5). See M. Tobolewski, “Czyta(nie)(nie)Czyczna,” in: *Dekada Literacka*, 7/8 (1999): pp. 8–9. See also C. Zalewski, “Znaleziska, wystawy, kolekcje: Projekt antropologii estetycznej w utworach Stanisława Czyczna, Witolda Wirpszy i Jacka Dehnela,” in: *idem, Pragnienie, poznanie, przemijanie: Fotograficzne reprezentacje w literaturze polskiej*, Kraków: Universitas, 2010, pp. 242–248. Andrzej Barański created a documentary film, *Fotografia jest sztuką trudną* (1998), on the basis of these feuilletons by Czycz.

⁴² See D. Gajc, K. Nepelska, “»Arw« Stanisława Czyczna jako problem edytorski,” in: *W kręgu sztuki edytorskiej: Materiały z III Ogólnopolskich Warsztatów Młodych Edytorów*, Kazimierz Dolny, 18–20 listopada 2005, ed. D. Gajc, K. Nepelska, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2006, pp. 125–134.

⁴³ The prosaic part – titled *Arw (fragmenty)* – appeared in the underground Kraków journal *Bez Tytułu* (*op. cit.*, pp. 11–27). An abbreviated part of the work was also published in *Twórczość* (see S. Czycz, “*Arw*” – *proza* [fragments], ed. D. Niedziałkowska, in: *Twórczość*, 11 (2007): pp. 86–97).

⁴⁴ It should be emphasized that the increased interest in the work of Czycz among literary scholars in recent years include the result of previous initiatives of “Ha!art”: literary criticism session “czyczujemy” (Krzeszowice, 16–17 November 2001) and a special issue of the magazine *Ha!art* (2002, No. 9–10: “Czyczujemy”).

also the first edition-reproduction⁴⁵. The puzzling thing with this, however, is that in book form there is no comment from the author (added to the first edition of *Arw*) as an integral part of a whole, hiding in passing some reception guidance for the interpreter. This inconspicuous fact can be otherwise interpreted in two ways – first, we can talk about “unnecessary” repetition of self-commentary, since the reproduction of the first edition of the page with that commentary appears in the “Aneksy”⁴⁶ to the book, and secondly – about the (un)conscious elimination of the sphere of paratextuality that delays or defers the **happening** of the reality of the text. Regardless of the arguments and factual reasons that influenced the decision of the editors, I admit that the second explanation is particularly fear to me, after all, it emphasizes aspects of the present important to the proposed interpretation.

III. Intermedial mode

In the moment of reading *Arw*, especially the poetic part of the work, first and foremost attention is drawn mainly to the unusual notation, breaking away from the linear order. It is this notation, as can well be seen from even a cursory inspection of the first edition or the book version, thanks to the coexistence of separate columns, vertical bands of text laid out, which creates a spatial and typographical construct difficult to comprehend or to take in. The existence of separate, but simultaneously complementary and sometimes intersecting, bands or channels⁴⁷ at first sight gives an effect of **fragmentariness** (the result of departing from linear rigour) and **multi-coding** (the consequence of placing equally important texts next to each other hiding various intermedial references).

Preliminary, so to speak, “pre-reading” observations concerning the intermedial text arise in such circumstances from observing the layout and typographic detail of the writing (I have in mind Czycz’s colourful

⁴⁵ The first editions (*Poezja, Bez Tytułu*) and surviving notepads are discussed in detail by Dorota Niedziałkowska, signalling various problems with the editorial task (D. Niedziałkowska, “»Arw« Stanisława Czycza – dzieło niemożliwe w druku,” in: *Pierwszy Zjazd Edytorów Studentów i Doktorantów: Polska–Ukraina, 2–4.04.2009* Kraków, Kraków: Koło Naukowe Edytorów UJ, 2010, p. 50 ff).

⁴⁶ S. Czycz, *Arw*, op. cit., p. 123.

⁴⁷ These intersection points form both individual words, for example “*agoń*” (*ibidem*, p. 11) or “*feuer*” (*ibidem*, p. 12), and whole parts of speech.

highlighting distinguishing the different bands in the book edition⁴⁸, and technical adaptive operations in the situation of the first edition – the use of a continuous and dashed line or slash⁴⁹). Confrontation with the text itself reveals at first the aporetic character of its reading; it turns out to be as simple as it is impossible; simple – in the sense of traversing certain bands in isolation from the remaining bands⁵⁰, impossible however – in the sense of simultaneous updating of parallel segments, achieving polyphonic co-sounding of the existing voices (hearing a whole, as happens in the case of musical performance), and more precisely: coexistence and synchronization of all audiovisual channels. Multiplying reading complications, on one side, they indicate the importance of the **intermedial mode** in Czyż's project, on the other – gradually reinforces the conviction, that the graphic notation was that the graphic layout is only half-hearted, a compromise solution, a necessity joining the registration, in text mode, of the **effect of reality**.

The coexistence of differently rooted bands in *Arw* cause in consequence that traditional linear reading reveals only drawbacks, regardless moreover of whether the text is reduced for decoding in vertical arrangement and thus to the inevitable reduction (when reading a selected bands alone the concept of intermedial text is destroyed), or in a horizontal arrangement, which in turn provokes accidental merging of fragments located next to each other (finally threatening that if it does not result in tmesis, linguistic babble, it is at best devoid of logic, zero syntagma). In such a situation it is necessary to speak of a kind of **reading paradox**. It is obvious that even with such experimental writing it is not possible to completely resign from reading. This paradox, linked to the simultaneous aspects of reading *Arw* and the atypical behaviour of the interpreter, would be unusual (seemingly contradictory) actions: starting – of necessity – from traditional reading, to eventually give this up and attempt to read simultaneously, but in reality – in the case of

⁴⁸ Distinction of the bands through colours turned out to be a necessity, though Czyż himself signalled the danger associated with them: "[T]hese colours have me, make me very angry ... because they become crazy ... like a butterfly ... or a Łowicz outfit ... frivolous ... But the colours must be. There is no other way" (K. Lisowski, "Rozmowy ze Stanisławem Czyżem: Rozmowa trzecia," in: *Stanisław Czyż: Mistrz Cierpienia*, collected and edited by K. Lisowski, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1997, p. 49).

⁴⁹ These additional markings appearing in the first edition were the result of limited printing possibilities.

⁵⁰ As a result of this kind of action only analysis of selected aspects of *Arw* are undertaken, for example the iconographic band or music band. See D. Niedziałkowska, "Sztuka w »Arwie«," *op. cit.*, pp. 79–89; M. Wilkońska-Karpierz, D. Niedziałkowska, "Pasma muzyczne »Arwa«," *op. cit.*, pp. 90–94.

coexistence of several independent voices (audiovisual channels) – this is impossible for the recipient to achieve. Undoubtedly every interpreter or *Arw* falls into the trap of simultaneity, a fact of which the writer was well aware: “With the simplest of texts, where they are sort of three themes, the reader may indeed get it, but when there are already five or six kind of simultaneous voices, perhaps it’s given only in a recording, or if several authors speak this at the same time”⁵¹. The time will come to address the question of the purpose of this need to multiply the voices and achieving the text effect that Czycz on various occasions calls “simultaneity” or “concurrency”. Until then we should say that this multiplication becomes possible in literature through using the intermedial mode.

Speaking about the intermedial mode in *Arw* otherwise links to two issues, namely the characteristic “**crossing**” of media (as a result of intermedial reference⁵² or intermedial transposition⁵³) and the **simultaneous co-existence of various bands**, which make it possible to give the flowing nature of reality “in a film way”. The first issue, concerning the typical manifestations of artistic intermediality, has been discussed several times by the literary scholars dealing with Czycz, especially in connection with his idea for a literary interpretation of painting and music, as well as possible multimedia realizations. While these potential multimedia projects as adaptations need to be considered here as a separate issue, beyond the proposed sphere of reflection, we must here take interest in the way artistic intermediality is a significant feature of the notation of *Arw*. Well, all efforts serving the creation of reality in this work boil down – with one exception – to the language writing, with the clear dominance of two modes: the descriptive and dialogue. The iconographic band⁵⁴, running in three columns, is based solely on themati-

⁵¹ J. Marx, “Rozmowa ze Stanisławem Czyczem,” *op. cit.*, p. 16. Such attempts were indeed undertaken, as evidenced by the performance in Lublin (by Chór KUL) of one of Czycz’s works – “*samo już to...*”, recorded by Radio Lublin in 2005.

⁵² See I.O. Rajewsky, “Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality,” in: *Intermédialités*, 6 (2005): p. 51.

⁵³ See W. Wolf, “Intermediality Revisited: Reflections on Word and Music Relations in the Context of a General Typology of Intermediality,” in: *Word and Music Studies: Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage*, ed. S.M. Lodato, S. Aspden, W. Bernhart, Amsterdam–New York: GA Rodopi, 2002, p. 19 ff. See also W. Wolf, “(Inter)mediality and the Study of Literature,” in: *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 3, Vol. 13 (2011) (special number: “New Perspectives on Material Culture and Intermedial Practice”; text available on the webpage: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol13/iss3/>).

⁵⁴ See D. Niedziałkowska, “Sztuka w »Arwie«,” *op. cit.*, p. 80 ff; D. Niedziałkowska, “Pasma ikonograficzne »Arwa« Stanisława Czycza w aspekcie edytorskim,” in: *W kręgu sztuki edytorskiej*, *op. cit.*, pp. 135–143.

zation – **intermedial paraphrases** (therefore about, if we refer to Jens Schröter's proposal, a case of "transformational intermediality"⁵⁵, about the monomedial form of notation). This means that the text dedicated to Andrzej Wróblewski's⁵⁶ art of painting (from here we also have the enigmatic title of the whole – the anagram is formed from the painter's initials and the second letter of his surname⁵⁷) does not contain any reproduction of his work. In various places we only have the appearance of catalogue numbers of the creator's work from the cycle *Rozstrzelania* [*Executions*] (for example "24", "25"), descriptions and various allusions referring to specific realisations (related amongst others to colour connotations, for example "blue" as a symbol of death). The monomedial notation is broken by the right of the exceptional music band⁵⁸, in which exists – on account of obvious problems with the literary description of music – **intermedial quotations**, namely seven musical fragments from the *Cantata about Stalin*.

Key for interpreting *Arw*, in my view, is the second question – the matter of the intermedial mode, resulting from the "global" banding of the writing and effects of simultaneity (individual understanding of the film code). That the intermedial mode perfectly suits Czycz's thinking, to which terms are applied such as situationalness, fluency, directness, immediacy, is too well explained by the writer's interest in Heraclitus (indeed his favourite philosopher) and the sense of Heraclitean formula *panta rhei*. This also explains various nuances which determine the quality of writing: spoken language⁵⁹, reminiscent of internal monologue, or the stream of consciousness, language, otherwise "subjected to the fanciest torture"⁶⁰ (typical for *Arw*, but also for other writings by Czycz),

⁵⁵ J. Schröter, "Four Models of Intermediality," in: *Travels in Intermedia[lity]: ReBlurring the Boundaries*, ed. B. Herzogenrath, Hanover: University Press of New England, 2012, p. 26 ff (see J. Schröter, "Intermedialität: Facetten und Probleme eines aktuellen medienwissenschaftlichen Begriffes," in: *Montage a/v*, 2, Vol. 7 (1998): p. 144 ff; text can be found on the webpage: http://www.montage-av.de/pdf/07_02_1998/07_02_1998_Jens_Schroeter_Intermedialitaet.pdf).

⁵⁶ The final versions of works and numerous sketches were thoroughly commented in the work *Andrzej Wróblewski nieznan*, ed. J. Michalski, J. Modzelewski, M. Sobczyk, M. Tarabula, Kraków: Galeria Zderzak, 1993.

⁵⁷ Andrzej Wróblewski appears in Czycz's work as an historical character ("A. Wr."), and as a literary character ("Arw").

⁵⁸ See M. Wilkońska-Karpierz, D. Niedziałkowska, "Pasma muzyczne »Arwa«," *op. cit.*, pp. 90–94.

⁵⁹ See L. Bugajski, "End," in: *Twórczość*, 6 (2008): p. 106 ff.

⁶⁰ T. Burek, "Ostatni krzyk tamtej młodości," in: *Twórczość*, 6 (1995): p. 69 (see also T. Burek, "Ostatni krzyk tamtej młodości: Stanisław Czycz," in: *Sporne postaci pol-*

quotationism, musical notation with numerous mistakes⁶¹, colloquial style with incorrect constructs (“niech jest to 118”⁶² [“Let it is 118”]), chaotic syntax, sentence equivalents, ellipticity, careless punctuation, situational glossing (for example the students’ commentary in the moment of *Cantata about Stalin* sounding: “– Ta muzyka.. już taka, że / krew może zalać..”⁶³ [“– This music .. already such that / blood may spill ..”]). This finally explains Arw’s characteristic **polyversionality**, namely the possibility of many alternative readings, and as a consequence the – one-off-ness or singularity of each “performance”. Speaking about the polyversionality of Czycz’s work, I have in mind both the result of the existence of bands and alternatives proposed by the author in the first part, introduced through the use, among other ways, of the conjunctions “lub” [“or”] and “albo” [“or”] (remarks of the nature: „parosekundowe urywki / czegoś Alabjewa czy / Albéniza czy Allegriego, czy / Bacha czy Bałakiriewa czy / Belliniego czy Berlioza, / w podobnej / tej / syntezie”⁶⁴ [“few second snippets / anything by Alyabyev or / Albéniz or Allegri, or / Bach or Balakirev or / Bellini or Berlioz, / in similar / to this / synthesis”]); in reality „opis tego, co się dzieje, i co słyszane, i w jakich światłach, itp.”⁶⁵ [“a description of what is happening and what is being heard, and in which light, etc.”] is constantly replenished by hypothetical variants of what happens), and the potential reading trajectories, chosen every time by the interpreter.

Undoubtedly, it is exactly the intermedial mode which means that Arw’s message defies the traditional rules of reception, knowledge of which generally allows understanding of different realisations in particular fields of art. In the situation of assimilating a media hybrid – following the intermedial interpretative trope, the choice of intermedial reading – are subjected to an attempt at narrowly conceived standards

skiej literatury współczesnej: następne pokolenie, ed. A. Brodzka, L. Burska, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL, 1995, p. 32).

⁶¹ The musical notation for *Cantata about Stalin*, and more precisely: in the first seven bars of the vocal part there are serious mistakes (amongst others no time signature, no bar lines, no dots extending note values, no clef or key signature, or accidentals connected to tonality). Another matter is that in some versions of Arw no musical quotations appear at all (empty spaces were left). See M. Wilkońska-Karpierz, D. Niedziałkowska, “Pasma muzyczne »Arwa«”, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁶² S. Czycz, Arw, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 9. Czycz not without reason, wrote in the instructions appearing in the first edition of the poetic fragment that this voice “is a kind of stage directions” (S. Czycz, Arw [first edition], *op. cit.*, p. 39).

of professionalization and “safe” literary criticism activities. In fact, the typical character is not here, either of reading – as the alinear notation (alinearity means that reading takes the form of contingent navigation as in the case of hypertext in cyberspace), or of watching – on account of the intermedial paraphrasing, or, to use Heinrich F. Plett’s term, substitution of the visual paradigm for the linguistic⁶⁶, or hearing – on account of transposing the acoustic paradigm to the visual and linguistic paradigms. In other words, Czycz’s media hybrid, remaining in a state of unreadiness, potentiality or “unfinishedness” (in a sense, however, different to those previously proposed by some Arwologists) entails far-reaching consequences – the work does not impose any dominating, superior interpretation perspective⁶⁷. On account of the changing trajectory the reading is subjected to various, unpredictable interpretations, forming – as a result of the existence of unusual notation, a “work in movement”, and contingent interpretation activities – an extreme exemplification of an “open work” (as understood by Umberto Eco).⁶⁸

⁶⁶ H.F. Plett, “Intertextualities,” in: *Intertextuality*, ed. H.F. Plett, Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991, p. 20.

⁶⁷ Undoubtedly, Paul Ricoeur’s thesis gains a new meaning here. He formulated it in connection with the interpretation and the situation of the interpreting subject: “The idea of the finite is in itself banal, even trivial” (P. Ricoeur, “On Interpretation,” in: *idem, From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics, II*, trans. K. Blamey, J.B. Thompson, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991, p. 15; see P. Ricoeur, “De l’interprétation,” in: *idem, Du texte à l’action: Essais d’herméneutique II*, Paris: Seuil, 1986, p. 29).

⁶⁸ It is not therefore without reason that both Umberto Eco, and Stanisław Czycz refer to specific analogy with aleatorism in music and the idea of “aleatoricism”. As the author of *Arw* maintains: “It is obvious to me that it must be permissible and necessary for certain freedoms, selectivity, in production. I wanted to say here that it is a bit like aleatorism in music, but no, because randomness is excluded, there is no “playing” as it falls; it must be a conscious, logical choice, more like the directors making cuts in the text of a play or – others – make sketches from them and treat them like scripts; but – back to my texts – related aleatoricism would mean that certain voices – already after the rejection of others, some preserved but a little to the side, not main, the main voices a little drowned, hard to catch – at times could sound, they could be heard like harmonics, although not this, but that in these operations certain main voices may or could be accelerated or slowed down, etc.” (K. Lisowski, “Rozmowy ze Stanisławem Czyczem: Rozmowa druga,” in: *Stanisław Czycz: Mistrz Cierpienia, op. cit.*, pp. 37–38). Umberto Eco, writing about “works in movement”, reaches amongst others for musical examples such as *Klavierstück XI* by Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Scambi* by Henri Pousseur or *Third Sonata for Piano* of Pierre Boulez (U. Eco, “The Poetics of the Open Work,” in: *idem, The Open Work*, trans. A. Cancogni, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989, pp. 1–2; see U. Eco, “La poetica dell’opera aperta,” in: *idem, Opera aperta: Forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee*, Milano: Bompiani, 1962, pp. 31–32).

IV. Directing reality

Conscious departure from the traditional form of text, usually explained by Czyż researches in terms of nonlinearity, resulted in **polysequential notation**, which immediately suggests associations with film technique. Undoubtedly, the manner of filling or thickening the space on the page, synchronizing the individual bands, refers to film “effect of reality”. In connection with such an interpretation of *Arw* a certain commentary seems necessary – so Czyż’s understanding and directing of reality is not based only on “knitting” in time, that is, taking into account the linear dimension of time, proceeding with one thing after something else, relations of cause and effect, but simultaneity (counterpoint) of events, their accidental, contingent coexistence. Hence permanent concurrency of events and in consequence – the inevitable chaos, recorded in the mode of the text: “because if it had been about two or three simultaneities ...” Czyż divulged, “but they were more ... there were, are, always ... (...) these became my texts, because perhaps no longer poems, like a score; not for reading but for performance by several people ... these different voices ...”⁶⁹. This kind of suggestion from the author leads first and foremost to two conclusions. Firstly, simultaneity turns out to be the main attribute of reality, secondly – the idea of registration of these “simultaneities” gives rise to verbal notation, fulfilling to some extent the function of a score, demanding existence *in actio*. It is worth noting in passing that the simultaneous organization of verbal material is not a one-off for the writer – the attentive interpreter of Czyż, in connection with his obsession with simultaneity and polyphony effects in *Arw*, will see some similarities with his previous writings⁷⁰ (for example with the verse *Adieu*⁷¹, the poem cycle *Słowa do napisu na zegarze słonecznym*⁷²

⁶⁹ K. Lisowski, “Rozmowy ze Stanisławem Czyżem: Rozmowa druga,” *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁷⁰ The fact of working out a certain convention of simultaneity in literature was indeed underlined by Czyż himself, speaking about “**my technique of simultaneous writing**” (J. Marx, “Rozmowa ze Stanisławem Czyżem,” *op. cit.*, p. 20; emphasis A.H.). See M. Rygielska, “Poematy polifoniczne Stanisława Czyża: Prolog do lektury,” in: *Ha!art*, 9–10 (2002): pp. 31–33.

⁷¹ S. Czyż, *Adieu*, in: *idem*, *Tła: Wiersze*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957, pp. 73–81.

⁷² Published in the volume *Berenais* (Warsaw 1960) the cycle of poems *Słowa do napisu na zegarze słonecznym* consists of four parts: *I* (inc. “Jeszcze nie jestem...”), pp. 7–10; *II* (inc. “Ta chwila”), pp. 11–19; *III* (inc. “w niej spotykają się...”), pp. 20–23; *IV* (inc. “Przez zmrżenia zegarów...”), pp. 24–27. Part V, after meticulous collating of different variants of the writing, was prepared for print by Dorota Niedziałkowska

[*Words to Write on a Sundial*] or the work “*samo już to...*” [“*This in Itself ...*”]⁷³).

This way of thinking about Czycz’s composition – of *Arw* as a score waiting for realisation – already has its own tradition in literary criticism research, though it is worth noting, that the writer avoided calling his own texts by the name “score”⁷⁴. Instead he used related formulae (amongst others “textual scores”⁷⁵, “as if a score”⁷⁶), which means for him as much as “multivoiced”, “polyphonic” writing potentially suitable for realisation out loud (he also used other musical vocabulary with great care, using such terms as for example “as if an overture”⁷⁷). Today’s researchers of Czycz’s work – *Arw*ologists – follow a similar trope but they are undoubtedly more radical. According to Magdalena Wilkońska-Karpierz and Dorota Niedziałkowska: “Stanisław Czycz applied an analogical poetic writing technique making it possible to read the text as a musical score”⁷⁸. In turn in Piotr Marecki’s view, *Arw* is “Czycz’s score”⁷⁹, a “textual score” or a “great textual score”⁸⁰. The purpose of treating the writing this way, regardless of the interpretation intentions of individual literary scholars, seems evident – every time they opt to advocate for the need for out-loud, simultaneous (best if multimedial) realisation. This gives rise, however, to a fundamental question: whether the “score” in this case demands to actually be performed (e.g. in a multimedial version) or does it also constitute a final version of the work.

(S. Czycz, *Słowa do napisu na zegarze słonecznym V*, ed. D. Niedziałkowska, “Archiwum Edytorskie” series, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2011, pp. 35–43).

⁷³ S. Czycz, “*samo już to...*” in: *Poezja*, 7–8 (1976): pp. 77–80. Czycz drew attention to the complication associated with the simultaneity of the writing on the occasion of the first edition: “[T]his text doesn’t exist because it can’t be read (normally read), it could only exist in performance, I don’t know if I myself could really hear it” (S. Czycz, “Od autora,” in: *Poezja*, 7–8 (1976): p. 83).

⁷⁴ See for example S. Czycz, [Z *moich wierszy cenię te*], in: *idem*, *Słowa do napisu na zegarze słonecznym V*, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁷⁵ J. Marx, “Rozmowa ze Stanisławem Czyczem,” *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 18. It should be mentioned in passing that a similar caution is characterized for example by Miron Białoszewski (see M. Białoszewski, “O tym Mickiewicz jak go mówię,” in: *Odra*, 6 (1967): p. 34).

⁷⁷ Czycz’s commentary to the poem *Arw* (*Poezja*, 7 (1980): p. 28).

⁷⁸ M. Wilkońska-Karpierz, D. Niedziałkowska, “Pasma muzyczne »Arwa«,” *op. cit.*, p. 90. See M. Wilkońska-Karpierz, “»Słowa do napisu na zegarze słonecznym V« Stanisława Czycza jako partytura,” in: *W kręgu sztuki edytorskiej*, *op. cit.*, pp. 145–152. See also M. Rygielska, “Poematy polifoniczne Stanisława Czycza,” *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁷⁹ P. Marecki: “Tekstowa partytura,” *op. cit.*, p. 164; “Intermedialny potencjał »Arwa«,” *op. cit.*, p. 76. See also: K. Lisowski, “Ostatnie dzieło Mistrza Cierpienia,” in: *Nowe Książki*, 11 (2008): p. 53; L. Bugajski, “End,” *op. cit.*, p. 109.

⁸⁰ P. Marecki: “Tekstowa partytura,” *op. cit.*, p. 163; “Intermedialny potencjał »Arwa«,” *op. cit.*, p. 75.

Just this reference of the simultaneous notation to music, I think, it is not accidental, especially the self-commentary added to the first edition of *Arw* (“here, this technique of writing has a narrower and more unequivocal function”⁸¹) and can be interpreted in musical categories. Of course it should immediately be stated that Czycz perhaps did not have in mind such a radical ordering of co-existing voices as for example is of interest to Jean Tardieu in *Conversation-sinfonietta* (1952), where the simultaneity of questions falling on stage precisely defines the mirror image of the sign of musical accolades⁸², or Karol Hubert Rostworowski in *Judas z Kariothu* [*Judas of Kerioth*] (1913), where bringing ten voices and the choir onto the stage at the same time, *a cappella* turns out to be a result of using a reduced musical score in the dramatic text⁸³. In both cases, the rhythm of the poetic language was additionally supported by mensural rhythm, which allowed it to gain a defined order (rhythm effects or polyrhythm), to organize verbal polyphony in a musical manner. The concept of *Arw* is a little different – Czycz also exposes the natural rhythm of spoken language, but only in situations of everyday life, that is, **chance** multiplication of voices (incidentally approaching the well-known practice of John Cage). In other words: the simultaneity of voices in his case is governed by chance, or perhaps it is better to say – the **pulsating rhythm of reality**. So therefore if comments from Czycz appear concerning the score convention of the notation, they should rather be referred to the inconsistencies and incompleteness of the language versions, the weak ontology of *Arw* as an intermedial work, and not linked with any eventual multimedial adaptation project.

The status of Czycz’s intermedial text proves to be decidedly complicated mainly for this reason that we are dealing not with the intended actualisation of a stage text, audio text or even an audiovisual text (otherwise the whole would have to be considered to be a screenplay), but with a **total simulation of “happening” reality**, approaching – in text mode – a multimedia happening or performance art. This “simulation”, characteristic of the film medium and being somewhat the domain of

⁸¹ S. Czycz, *Arw* [first edition], *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁸² See J. Tardieu, *Conversation-sinfonietta*, in: *idem*, *Théâtre de chambre*, Paris: Gallimard, 1966, pp. 255–256.

⁸³ See K.H. Rostworowski, *Judas z Kariothu*, in: *idem*, *Pisma*, Kraków: Druk W.L. Anczyca i Spółki, 1936, pp. 177–178. I analyse the importance of score writing in Rostworowski in the book *Muzyczność dzieła literackiego*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2002 (see chapter 6: *Partytura – “Judas z Kariothu” Karola Huberta Rostworowskiego*, pp. 169–194).

film art, was based, in Czycz's view, on the basic characteristics of reality – simultaneity and “many-eventfulness”. In *Arw* there is an excellent example of the “overlap” of planes (in this case the overlap of various bands), intermedial collage, even the moment when the Alexander V. Alexandrov's *Cantata about Stalin* appears. This work, as is known, is extremely panegyric, and sounds here at the moment the taking on the thread of two totalitarianism and recalls Andrzej Wróblewski's works on the theme of war⁸⁴.

As we “listen” to the *Cantata*⁸⁵, if we “see” the pictures *Rozstrzelanie V* [*Execution V*] and *Ryby bez głów* [*Fish Without Heads*], Bolesław Bierut's words about socialist realist creation of art also reach us (“trzeba, żeby nasi twórcy pamiętali, / że ich dzieła powinny / kształtować, porywać i wychowywać / naród”⁸⁶ [“it is necessary that our creators remember / that their works should / inform, educate and capture / the nation”]) as do Rudolf Hoess's, commandant of the Auschwitz concentration camp (“rozkładowej kreciej / robocie wroga / położyć kres”⁸⁷).

⁸⁴ In the situation of *Arw* it is possible to speak of a kind of retrospection on the work of Wróblewski: this includes works created under the sign of surrealism and geometric abstraction, for example *Niebo nad górami* (1948), *Niebo nad miastem* (1948/49); figurative painting, breaking with abstraction, for example *Rozstrzelanie VI (z gestapowcem)* (1949) – given mistakenly by Czycz as *Rozstrzelanie IV*; *Rozstrzelanie V (z chłopczykiem)* (1949); socialist realism, for example *Dworzec na Ziemniach Odzyskanych* (1949), *3 x tak* (1953–1956), *Demonstracja* (1949–1950). Actually, only the painter's late works are missing, those from the mid-fifties.

⁸⁵ Czycz wrote about the original meaning of this musical work in *Arw* in a letter to Wajda (dated 30 May 1976): “[I]t is this *Cantata* but of course, I took into account that including it can't be done, this point is indeed a bit marginal, at least when I'm talking about it here, because in that whole viewing the *Cantata* sounded quite strongly to me” (S. Czycz, A. Wajda, “»Arw« – listy,” *op. cit.*, p. 108. See also S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 116).

⁸⁶ S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. From Bierut's mentioned fragment of the speech Czycz removed only one word: “współcześni” [“contemporary”]: “It is necessary that our contemporary creators remember that their works should inform, educate and capture the nation” (*O upowszechnieniu kultury: Przemówienie prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Bolesława Bieruta na otwarciu Radiostacji we Wrocławiu 16 listopada 1947*, Warsaw–Kraków: Radiowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1948, p. 20).

⁸⁷ S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. The author of *Arw* paraphrased a fragment of the Auschwitz concentration camp regulations by Rudolf Hoess (“Staatsfeinden soll ihre zersetzende Wühlarbeit an Volk und Staat durch sichere Verwahrung in einem Konzentrationslager unterbunden werden”): „Rozkładowej, kreciej robocie wrogów państwa w stosunku do narodu i państwa należy położyć kres za pomocą należycie zabezpieczającego osadzenia ich w obozie koncentracyjnym” [“The destructive, subversive activities of the enemies of the state shall be neutralized by putting them in protective custody in a concentration camp”] (*Wspomnienia Rudolfa Hoessa, komendanta obozu oświęcimskiego*, ed. J. Sehn, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Prawnicze, 1956, p. 280).

The simultaneous co-existence of contrapuntal bands gives rise to a film-like illusion of reality, an illusion reinforced among other ways through quotes from the traumatic past. This raises also in final consequence, which is worth paying attention to in the course of a singular reading, the inevitable **topophonic effect**, which rules every real space. In *Arw* we “hear” only certain sound sequences, depending on our location within the given space, the existing source, its volume, the choice of message, and the degree of concentration of interest in the recipient. Undoubtedly the often clipped sentences are not a result just of understatement, rhetorically suspended language, but also of simultaneous working in several planes, voices mutually drowning each other out, one appearing and another disappearing into the background of the others (all of these nuances for sure would be uncovered by a multi-medial realisation, being however in the case of *Arw* – an intermedial text – a pure potentiality). Czycz explains the question of hearability in one of his discussions as the main difficulty of reading: “[S]omeone setting out to read this text would, I think so, choose those more important voices, and those less important ones he would decide, because I don’t suggest there which is more important and which less important, and leave the others as if the background, leave two, and at some point only one voice would dominate”⁸⁸. The author therefore legitimizes an **aleatoric reading approach** to some extent, allowing the recipient a certain choice, to select the voices which interest him. It is however evident that an attempt to reduce the perceived audio channels (also in the situation of any kind of realisation *in actio*) turns out to be impossible. In Czycz’s text world, just like in the real world, there co-exist various sequences of sounds (amongst others in the form – if we use the writer’s simple call for musical terminology – “harmonics”⁸⁹), various noises, murmurs, etc., which form the specific phonosphere of a given reality.

In such circumstances, we need no further convincing that *Arw* as an intermedial text – a testimony of personal experience, understanding and directing of the world – from the outset presents the reader with strong resistance. The intermedial irony⁹⁰, to paraphrase Umberto Eco,

⁸⁸ J. Marx, “Rozmowa ze Stanisławem Czyczem,” *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁸⁹ K. Lisowski, “Rozmowy ze Stanisławem Czyczem: Rozmowa druga,” *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁹⁰ Umberto Eco, to indicate various levels of accessibility of the text for individual readers, uses the formula “intertextual irony” (U. Eco, “Intertextual Irony and Levels of Reading,” in: *idem, On Literature*, trans. M. McLaughlin, New York: Harcourt, 2004, pp. 212–235; see U. Eco, “Ironia intertestuale e livelli di lettura,” in: *idem, Sulla letteratura*, Milano: Bompiani, 2002, pp. 227–252).

that we experience in receiving *Arw*, is not an end in itself, but a side effect of the intermedial mode. A teleological reading, finalising, revealing a deep sense of the writing, in other words, traditional hermeneutically oriented reading turns out to be insufficient, while simultaneous reading – processual, distracting, “aleatoric” – unrealisable. This fact means that possible interpretation, to put it bluntly, takes the form of schizophrenic interpretation. (Non)understanding of *Arw* – the **effect of reading/seeing/hearing and listening, polysensory reception** – otherwise well captures the situation of contemporary man in medial and mediatized reality, imposing a multisensory form of communication. In the case of intermedial art⁹¹ “crossing” various means of expression and techniques of expression through several media launches different modes of sensory perception at the same time, demanding corporeal subjectivity, and open the field for projects of somaesthetics. As a consequence, art involving all the human senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell), gains a new status – it breaks with artificiality (i.e. a representation understood, according to the classical theory, among others, as adequacy), becomes one of the dimensions and one of the elements of the chaos of reality.

V. Existence

For Czycz’s way of working and the obtained shape of *Arw* no doubt many factors have been involved: the rarely met individualism and the eccentricity⁹² of the writer (it is not without reason that Bogdan Rudnicki coined the neologism “Czycz”⁹³), war experiences and post war reality (giving rise to the need for an internal confrontation – an

⁹¹ Ryszard W. Kluszczyński defines this well: “By intermedial art I understand the field of art, which in each of its individual manifestations inevitably initiates relations between various media. **Relationism**, so understood, a network of intermedial references, replaces a complex of attributes, by which we characterize individual types of art. Intermedial art is not a total field (...), but it is a **reference**, a view of one medium through a second, mutually activated and stimulated” (R.W. Kluszczyński, *Film, Wideo, Multimedia: Sztuka ruchomego obrazu w erze elektronicznej*, Warsaw: Instytut Kultury, 1999, p. 76; emphasis A.H.).

⁹² See P. Czapliński, “Wszelka osobność,” in: *Stanisław Czycz: Mistrz Cierpienia*, op. cit., pp. 283–309.

⁹³ This neologism is of course the result of lexical contamination, namely the combination of the writer’s name and the expression “outsider” (see B. Rudnicki, “All and Jol. Wszystko i Czycz,” in: *Stanisław Czycz: Mistrz Cierpienia*, op. cit., p. 261).

autobiographical settlement from the past⁹⁴), and surely unrealized artistic dreams of youth (a testament to which is not only his desire to take a degree in painting in 1957 and attending lectures as a free listener in the Academy of Fine Arts in the studio of Professor Adam Marczyński in the years 1957–1959, but also earlier signals of interest in the visual arts, even just like the symptomatic signature – he signed himself on his exercise book for surveying in the school year 1949/1950 as ... “Painter Stanisław”). At the same time we should forget about the prestige associated with working with Andrzej Wajda, because when information got to the writer – indeed untrue – about the film project with a script written by someone else provoked an immediate response and a letter to the film director of the film, in a quite firm tone⁹⁵.

All these indications suggest that the *Arw* is both a story about the life, creativity and individuality of Andrzej Wróblewski, a literary sketch about the artistic generation of Wajda and reality of the nineteen fifties (portrayed as the era of declared top-down socialist realism), as well as – particularly – a special witness to existence, a witness to “the modern experience”⁹⁶. One thing for *Arw* seems to be irrefutable – the intermedial mode allows Czycz not only the interpretation of the events of the past (I have in mind Wróblewski’s painting, Wróblewski’s and Wajda’s studies⁹⁷, the writer’s school period, the times of socialist realism), but – if you reach for the author’s formula, which explains a lot – “**building**”⁹⁸ **the reality**, in which he himself lives. In still other words, the aesthetics of intermediality or also intermediality understood in terms of individual experience⁹⁹ serves not so much a rational interpretation of historical events, as ineffable existence. The world created in *Arw* is a result very subjective (“I was concerned about capturing what was of the same time

⁹⁴ We should take this opportunity to remember that the book about the times of Stalin is also Czycz’s last, autobiographical novel – *Nie wierz nikomu* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1987).

⁹⁵ See Czycz’s letter to Wajda dated 11 May 1976 (S. Czycz, A. Wajda, “»Arw« – listy,” *op. cit.*, p. 107. See also S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–115).

⁹⁶ R. Nycz, “O nowoczesności jako doświadczeniu – uwagi na wstępie,” in: *Nowoczesność jako doświadczenie*, ed. R. Nycz, A. Zeidler-Janiszewska, Kraków: Universitas, 2006, p. 10 ff.

⁹⁷ Moreover, many facts about contemporary life, particularly Wróblewski’s creative work, are presents by Andrzej Wajda several years later in one of the chapters of the book *Kino i reszta świata* (Kraków: Znak, 2000, p. 50 ff).

⁹⁸ Stanisław Czycz frequently described creating literature, writing, in categories of “building” (see S. Marynowicz, “Moje spotkania z Czyczem,” *op. cit.*, p. 64).

⁹⁹ See É. Méchoulán, “Intermédialités: le temps des illusions perdues,” *op. cit.*, pp. 9–27; H. Oosterling, “Sens(a)ble Intermediality and »Interesse«,” *op. cit.*, pp. 29–46.

in my mind ...”¹⁰⁰), unverifiable, eluding the criteria of historical truth¹⁰¹. His own survival and understanding of the world finally decided on the shape of the **text-reality**, which only in the anthropological perspective reveals its originality, uniqueness and singularity¹⁰².

Stanisław Czycz – in this case Andrzej Wajda is completely correct – did not write a film script *par excellence*¹⁰³, in line with the rules of film art¹⁰⁴. Moreover the director very well describes the writing idea years later, setting a basic outline of this type, its non-autonomy, and concisely remarking upon the behaviour of the author of *Arw*: “The script is not the writer’s goal, but the way for a future film. It is not in Czycz’s spirit”¹⁰⁵. As a result an autonomous text was created, an intermedial text, which, however – not only on account of the source of inspiration – has a direct relationship with the film: thus, the **narrative of *Arw* turns out to be a literary interpretation of a film narrative, a trace or a simulacrum of reality**. All the nuances involving the notation and coexistence of the bands, with the simultaneity, essentially serve the registration and projection of events in real reality (simulacrum should be here understood both as a “replacement”, substitute, and as a desirable “complement” of existing reality). Extraction of the internal dynamics of this was obviously a key issue for Czycz – the fundamental sense of literature¹⁰⁶, indeed brought closer a couple of times, also on the occasion of *Arw*:

¹⁰⁰ J. Marx, “Rozmowa ze Stanisławem Czyczem,” *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁰¹ Hence the objection on the part of Andrzej Wajda: “[H]is writing for me did not match up with the truth of the time, it represented a later situation, when socialist realism was already mandatory” (A. Wajda, “Być głosem naszych zamordowanych,” in: S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 5).

¹⁰² It would be difficult to speak about direct inspiration of *Arw* in Polish literature, but this fact clearly does not present trouble in finding certain features of Czycz’s language in other contemporary writers. Similarities to the style of the author of *Arw* in Radosław Nowakowski (*Koniec świata według Emeryka*) is perceived amongst others by Piotr Marecki (“»Arw«: o pewnym niezrealizowanym projekcie polskiego kina,” *op. cit.*, p. 75) and Małgorzata Bogaczyk-Vormayr (“Wszystko jest Tekstem? Hipertekstualność jako nowe doświadczenie literatury,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1–2 (2008): p. 259).

¹⁰³ See “Tworzył dla samego siebie,” *op. cit.*, pp. 14–15; A. Wajda, “Być głosem naszych zamordowanych,” *op. cit.*, p. 6; “O »Arwie«, Andrzeju Wróblewskim i Stanisławie Czyczu,” Dorota Niedziałkowska and Piotr Marecki talk to Andrzej Wajda, in: *Dekada Literacka*, 1 (2008): pp. 96–101.

¹⁰⁴ See Ł. Maciejewski, “...»Nad rzeką, której nie ma«: Filmowe adaptacje prozy Stanisława Czycz,” in: *Dekada Literacka*, 2 (2005): pp. 98–100; P. Marecki, “»Arw«: o pewnym niezrealizowanym projekcie polskiego kina,” *op. cit.*, pp. 74–75.

¹⁰⁵ A. Wajda, “Być głosem naszych zamordowanych,” *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶ Talking about the goals of his own creativity, Czycz laconically stated: “[F]or sure an attempt to show chaos (...). I try to grasp this chaos but in the sense that I also want to express it” (J. Marx, “Rozmowa ze Stanisławem Czyczem,” *op. cit.*, p. 22).

Capturing here certain simultaneity is mainly in place of explanations that for example if anyone out there says something happens and this or that in speaking connects – saying or commenting or mimicking – while simultaneously someone else's speech, or speech of one – with another, or with some other speakers, voices, and in the writing it can be seen at what point something one and another thing happens, something different. And I have to say that this is **noting my imagination of film**, which in a certain way it was like I could see¹⁰⁷.

The narration in *Arw* maintained in the intermedial mode forms an extremely subjective vision of reality, and creates, to repeat, a literary equivalent of a film narration (Jens Schröter would define this type of narration within his own typology as a case of “formal intermediality” or also “transmedial”¹⁰⁸, Werner Wolf however – as a case of “transmediality”¹⁰⁹).

It should be emphasized that the mere realization of textual simultaneity – despite the opinions of many literary critics – in the case of *Arw* is not something special, that many various hybrid forms of modern literature come to mind. A few possibilities of references in connection to Czycz's shape of writing are already signalled by Katarzyna Bazarnik and Zenon Fajfer, who recalled the experimental realization is generally considered as heralding the trend of liberature¹¹⁰: Stéphane Mallarmé's text *A Throw of the Dice*, avant-garde poems are simultaneous with the heyday of Cabaret Voltaire, the second chapter of Joyce's *Book II of Finnegans Wake*, and *Double or Nothing* by Raymond Federman.¹¹¹ The named works as points of reference for *Arw* seem enough justified in so far as they reveal a convergence in the treatment of the material and the textual world (in the dimension of a weak ontology of modern art), and also in the manner of blurring the boundaries between art and life. The case of possible inspiration is certainly not a foregone conclusion, it is difficult to clearly determine the precise role of these works in the case of Czycz. It is a well-known fact that the writer of *Ajol* was interested

¹⁰⁷ Czycz's commentary to the poem *Arw* (*Poezja*, 7 (1980): p. 28). Emphasis A.H.

¹⁰⁸ J. Schröter, “Four Models of Intermediality,” *op. cit.*, p. 20 ff (see J. Schröter, “Intermedialität: Facetten und Probleme eines aktuellen medienwissenschaftlichen Begriffes,” *op. cit.*, p. 136 ff).

¹⁰⁹ W. Wolf, “Intermediality Revisited,” *op. cit.*, p. 18 ff.

¹¹⁰ See K. Bazarnik, Z. Fajfer, “»Arw« z perspektywy liberatury: (Kilka słów od redaktorów serii),” *op. cit.*, p. 69.

¹¹¹ Jacek Olczyk notes that “a still closer reference would be here the libretto of *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio* (1972) by Stefan and Franciszka Themerson” ... (J. Olczyk, “Nieukończony scenariusz filmu,” *op. cit.*, p. 209).

in the writings of Joyce¹¹², his comments are known *à propos* comparing *Arw* with avant-garde literature, moreover, we can assume that he read two other mentioned works as the translation of text passages from Federman's text appeared in one of the numbers of *Literatura na Świecie* in 1977¹¹³, and Mallarmé's text – in *Poezja* in 1975¹¹⁴. Perhaps the main trail of search – even though it is an idea remaining only in the realm of hypothesis – should lead towards Mallarmé, given the fact that the translation by Maciej Żurowski appeared in the holiday season in the July issue of *Poezja* (a magazine read on a regular basis and highly valued by Czycz) almost at the moment of receiving the letter from Wajda with the proposal to establish artistic collaboration.

Searching for other possible impulses in the comparative literature perspective, it would be worth also taking into account, I think, John Cage's *Lecture on Nothing*, an unusual piece of reading from the American composer created in 1949, before his famous piece 4'33', where art is identified with in a radical way, or also constitutes a form of existence. In favour of this hypothesis I would have three main arguments. Firstly, there is a great likelihood that Czycz at least knew the Polish version of the *Lecture on Nothing*, as the translation of excerpts of Cage's hybrid by Michał Bristiger appeared in the first issue of *Res Facta* in 1967. Secondly, *Arw* as a "testimony to writing-in-action"¹¹⁵ is very similar – despite the obvious differences related to public realisation – to the concept of the graphic notation encountered in Cage (this is about, generally speaking, the characteristic "banding" in the notation, the vertical construction¹¹⁶). Thirdly, the art in both works is no longer only in terms of the notions of

¹¹² Jan Pieszczachowicz's opinion on experiments in literature in the twentieth century otherwise pleased Czycz, as well as the placing of his work alongside Joyce's *Ulysses*, French antinovels and Teodor Parnicki's works (J. Pieszczachowicz, "Buczowski czyli granice literatury," in: *Kultura. Tygodnik Społeczno-Kulturalny*, 25 (1975): p. 6). See Czycz's first letter to Wajda from 29 August 1975 (S. Czycz, A. Wajda, "»Arw« – listy," *op. cit.*, p. 95. See also S. Czycz, *Arw*, *op. cit.*, p. 101).

¹¹³ R. Federman, *2 x tyle albo nic*, trans. J. Lemir, in: *Literatura na Świecie*, 3 (1977): pp. 86–99. See English original: R. Federman, *Double or Nothing*, Chicago: Swallow Press, 1971.

¹¹⁴ S. Mallarmé, *Rzut kości*, trans. M. Żurowski, in: *Poezja*, 7/8 (1975): pp. 66–75. See S. Mallarmé, *A Throw of the Dice / Un Coup de dés*, in: *idem*, *Collected Poems*, *op. cit.*, pp. 124–146).

¹¹⁵ K. Lisowski, "Ostatnie dzieło Mistrza Cierpienia," *op. cit.*, p. 53.

¹¹⁶ In *Arw* this is not however about either horizontal reading of individual columns or about the type of rhythmical reading as in the case of *Lecture on Nothing* and the four column notation of the voices realised "rubato which one uses in everyday speech". See J. Cage, *Lecture on Nothing*, in: *idem*, *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1961, pp. 109–126.

art creation, a story “about something” (presenting), “appropriation” of the real world – it takes the form of happening in the present.

Literature treated as a fragment and trace of reality turns out in Czycz's case to be a condition of existence, the right space for the constitution of the “I”. I would be inclined to say that being in the chaos of reality, **experiencing existence**, in *Arw* becomes a major stake the game. It is exactly this desire as said by Przemysław Czapliński, “to equate life with the record of life”¹¹⁷ interferes with the writing typical of a movie script, otherwise invalidates the fallacies relating to representation (art of the type that imitates reality or reality – art). Contemporary intermedial text – existing in real time, forming an integral part of the liquid and unpredictable reality – is first and foremost (as a record) a source of existential experience. At the same time this reveals the reason why Czycz is occupied with literary creation, and the reason why he gives it exceptionally serious treatment. Literature in the situation of the author of *Arw*, although becoming a powerful destructive force: a source of depression and schizophrenia, estrangement and alienation, experiencing atopy¹¹⁸, opens at the same time a living space that can't be overestimated, made more desirable as elsewhere it is non-existent.

¹¹⁷ P. Czapliński, “Wszelka osobność,” *op. cit.*, p. 283. See also P. Potrykus-Woźniak, “Powtórzenia, powroty: Stanisława Czycza projekt zrównania literatury z rzeczywistością,” in: *Kresy*, 4 (2009): pp. 128–134.

¹¹⁸ See A. Dziadek, “Atopia – stadność i jednostkowość,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1–2 (2008): pp. 237–243 (also in: *Wizerunki wspólnoty: Studia i szkice z literatury i antropologii porównawczej*, ed. Z. Kadłubek, T. Sławek, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2008, pp. 167–175).

7. STEFAN THEMERSON'S INTERMEDIAL AESTHETICS (*ST. FRANCIS & THE WOLF OF GUBBIO* *OR BROTHER FRANCIS' LAMB CHOPS*)

I. *Opera (aperta)*

Do you know the anecdote about the lady who when she was asked if she can speak Chinese said, "I don't know. I haven't tried."

About a quarter of a century ago something similar happened to me.

I was riding in a double-decker bus in London, somewhere along Oxford Street, when suddenly, out of nowhere, I asked myself the question, "Can I write an opera?" And the answer was the same: "I don't know. I haven't tried." And before the bus could turn into Regent Street, I took a scrap of paper and a pencil from my pocket and immediately this wrote itself:



That is how it started, but to go further I didn't need a bus anymore, rather a piano (...)¹.

This story of the birth of the idea of writing an opera, was told in the "List do Zespołu Św. Franciszka – Teatr »Wybrzeże«" ["Letter to the Performers of St. Francis – »Wybrzeże» Theatre"] in connection with the first theatrical staging in 1981, and well illustrates both the peculiar

¹ S. Themerson, "List do Zespołu Św. Franciszka – Teatr »Wybrzeże«," in: *Stefan Themerson, "Święty Franciszek i Wilk z Gubbio albo Kotlety Świętego Franciszka"* [theatre performance programme for the "Wybrzeże" Chamber Theatre, May 1981], no page numbers (also in: *Świat według Themersonów: Szkice do portretu*, ed. Z. Majchrowski, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Trinum, 1994, pp. 93–95).

mode of argument, and first and foremost, the avant-garde artist's way of thinking. The anecdote given *à la* Themerson reveals, which is most important here, the musical source of the project (I am thinking of the conventions of opera, and about the rhythmical schema of the phrase: "I do not know whether to cry or to laugh", forming the first and after a somewhat modified variant, last question sung by St. Francis), but also – in consequence – the musical mode of realisation, the effort of composing. Thus, given the realities of the creation of *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops* in the years 1954–1960 and having to hand the work published in an English language version in 1972 by Gaberbocchus Press and De Harmonie², it is easiest to claim, that Stefan Themerson is the **author of the text and music to the opera in two acts** (in agreement with the information to be found on the title page). Another issue is that the author of the quite unusual libretto and very unusual musical composition (in the case of the former creator of avant-garde films this is actually the only experiment with text and music on this scale). The final form of writing is undoubtedly difficult to compare with anything existing either in musical theatre (opera) or dramatic theatre and – even more so – in avant-garde literature projects from the second half of the twentieth century. The book edition, as can be seen at first sight, is an **intermedial collage**, characteristic for the Themersons, a result of working according to the rules of "paste"³, to use Agnieszka Karpowicz's very accurate formula; in other words – a collage melding thanks to the modern printing techniques of various arts and media. In addition to normal fonts and facsimile, in this case original musical notation is also used, also a kind of recycling of Franciszka Themerson's drawings and Stefan's text – *St. Francis* and *Paterfamilias*⁴ – published ten years earlier in the collection *Semantic Divertissements* (London:

² *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops*, an Opera in 2 Acts, text and music by Stefan Themerson, drawings by Franciszka Themerson, Amsterdam–London: De Harmonie – Gaberbocchus Press, 1972 (in the framework of the *Luxury edition* a further 50 examples were published with the original drawings by Franciszka Themerson).

³ Agnieszka Karpowicz differentiates three collage strategies: "paste" (Stefan Themerson), "copy" (Leopold Buczkowski) and "glue" (Miron Białoszewski). See particularly A. Karpowicz, "Rękodzieło: Technika Stefana Themersona – »wklej«,", in: *eadem, Kolaż: Awangardowy gest kreacji. Themerson, Buczkowski, Białoszewski*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2007, pp. 80–135.

⁴ F. Themerson, S. Themerson, *Semantic Divertissements*, London: Gaberbocchus Press, 1962 (*St. Francis*, p. 9; *Paterfamilias*, p. 8).

Gaberbochus Press, 1962)⁵. Composed in this way as a multimaterial hybrid the whole loses its linear consistency, and the multimedial message with this is intensified⁶, allowing in consequence various forms of perception, and turns out to be extremely difficult to receive.

In such circumstances genological findings and speculation about where the Themerson's experiment could possibly be situated fail in the first attempts at interpretation (of course, for completely different reasons to those which once led Benedetto Croce, assuming "pure" expression and abandoning any typology of phenomena identified with art⁷). *St. Francis ...* for some is a "philosophical tale"⁸, for others – "philosophical adage"⁹; in one conviction Themerson wrote "Drama – but it's hard to say if it is theatrical and for which theatre it is intended"¹⁰, in another conviction – "but he didn't write drama"¹¹; others judge that "Themerson quite simply wrote a libretto to a comic opera, or more like a musical show"¹², others – that this is just about parody¹³ or "opera pastiche"¹⁴, still others add that "the work can be treated as a kind of »visual opera«"¹⁵,

⁵ See A. Dziadek, "Tekst wielowymiarowy – przypadek »Semantic Divertissements« Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów," in: *Przegląd Kulturoznawczy*, 1 (2009): pp. 57–64.

⁶ Ryszard Nycz draws the attention to the issue of "intensifying certain building rules" in the case of literary collage (resulting in inconsistency, ambiguity, metalinguisticism, intertextuality) in the study "O kolażu tekstowym: Zarys dziejów pojęcia" (R. Nycz, *Tekstowy świat: Poststrukturalizm a wiedza o literaturze*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 1993, p. 195). See also E. Kraskowska, *Twórczość Stefana Themersona: Dwujęzyczność a literatura*, Wrocław-Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1989, p. 117.

⁷ For this subject see B. Croce, "Prejudices about Art," in: *idem, Breviary of Aesthetics: Four Lectures*, trans. H. Fudemoto, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007, p. 41.

⁸ L. Erhardt, "Opera semantyczna Stefana Themersona," in: *Stefan Themerson, "Święty Franciszek i Wilk z Gubbio albo Kotlety Świętego Franciszka"*, *op. cit.*, no page numbers. See also J. Cieślak, "Kotlety świętego Franciszka," in: *Rzeczpospolita*, 153 (1991): p. 4.

⁹ P. Chynowski, "Musical surrealistyczny," in: *Życie Warszawy*, 142 (1991): p. 7.

¹⁰ T. Kubikowski, "Semantyczna Wampuka," in: *Teatr*, 10 (1991): p. 36. See also E. Kraskowska, "O dramatycznych i »dramatopodobnych« utworach Stefana Themersona," in: *Teatr i dramat polskiej emigracji 1939–1989*, ed. I. Kiec, D. Ratajczakowa, J. Wachowski, Poznań: Wydawnictwo ACARUS, 1994, pp. 160–166.

¹¹ L. Erhardt, "Opera semantyczna Stefana Themersona," *op. cit.*, no page numbers.

¹² P. Chynowski, "Musical surrealistyczny," *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹³ W. Cegłowski, "Śmiać się czy płakać?," in: *Stefan Themerson, "Święty Franciszek i Wilk z Gubbio albo Kotlety Świętego Franciszka"*, *op. cit.*, no page numbers.

¹⁴ T. Kubikowski, "Semantyczna Wampuka," *op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹⁵ B. Śniecikowska, "Obraz – dźwięk – słowo – ruch: Intermedialność sztuki Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów," in: *eadem, Słowo – obraz – dźwięk: Literatura i sztuki wizualne w koncepcjach polskiej awangardy 1918–1939*, Kraków: Universitas, 2005, p. 405.

or – finally – that *St. Francis* ... “is neither a musical work, nor any finished theatrical-operatic form”¹⁶. Among the various interpreters there is agreement in perhaps only one matter – Themerson’s realisation is an “example of a syncretic work”¹⁷, an attempt to force the modern idea of a total art work, which would be safest kept in museum conditions with an attached label: “the most »bizarre«, or radical in terms of form”¹⁸ ...

In the author’s comments Themerson called the final result of several years’ work by the name **semantic opera**¹⁹ or also – on another occasion the rather more concise name – “**opera**”²⁰ (this formula was immediately given by him in quotation marks). In fact, we are dealing with an unusual form, if you still use the handy term from Umberto Eco, of a “work in movement”²¹, a **medial hybrid**, and therefore a realization by nature unclassifiable, indefinable, avant-garde *par excellence*. In its existence it surprises even those most devoted to Themerson and “accustomed” to his experimental activities for his readers / audience (in the margin it should be noted that today there are few researchers representing literature, musicology and theatre studies). *St. Francis* ... condemns the interpreter to a variety of perturbations with reception – primarily to an inevitably musical perception, reading a complicated score, the need for intermedial interpretation²². Without a doubt, it would be wrong to consider Themerson’s work, leading to the creation of **modern “intermedium”**²³ (according to Dick Higgins’s interpretation), as an exclusively conventional “intersemiotic game”²⁴. This leads, in this case on account to the

¹⁶ L. Erhardt, “Opera semantyczna Stefana Themersona,” *op. cit.*, no page numbers.

¹⁷ E. Kraskowska, “Wielokodowość jako metoda twórcza,” in: *eadem*, *Twórczość Stefana Themersona*, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

¹⁸ L. Erhardt, “Opera semantyczna Stefana Themersona,” *op. cit.*, no page numbers.

¹⁹ *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

²⁰ S. Themerson, “List do Zespołu Św. Franciszka – Teatr »Wybrzeże«,” *op. cit.*, no page numbers.

²¹ U. Eco, “The Poetics of the Open Work,” in: *idem*, *The Open Work*, trans. A. Cancogni, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 12 ff (see U. Eco, “La poetica dell’opera aperta,” in: *idem*, *Opera aperta: Forma e indeterminazione nelle poetiche contemporanee*, Milano: Bompiani, 1962, p. 46 ff).

²² In practice, as Henryk Markiewicz would say, it often takes the form of “creative interpretation”, meaning purely intuitive and erroneous (see H. Markiewicz, “Odpowiedź na ankietę,” in: *Teksty Drugie*: 1–2 (2010): p. 101).

²³ See D. Higgins, “Intermedia,” in: *idem*, *Horizons: The Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia*, Carbondale–Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984, p. 18–28. See first edition: D. Higgins, “Synesthesia and Intersenses: Intermedia,” in: *Something Else Newsletter*, 1 (1966).

²⁴ A. Pruszyński, “O grach intersemiotycznych Stefana Themersona,” in: *Archiwum Themersonów w Polsce*, ed. A. Dziadek, D. Rott, Katowice: Fundacja “Pallas Silesia”, Redakcja “Gazety Uniwersyteckiej UŚ”, 2003, p. 36 ff.

mutual interaction and the radical degree of different media; to phenomena that require explanation in the perspective of “transmedial” and “transformational intermediality”, as proposed by Jens Schröter²⁵. So, within the range of polymedial structures they are merged or “co-exist” as an inseparable whole: text (including the *Overture* deprived of music; the extensive stage directions), verbal text (musicalised, realised through singing or declamation), musical text (with a distinctive narrative discontinuity and a prominent visual dimension as in the case of graphic scores), finally sketches (“complete” and “relocated”, that is present in the form of fragmentary quotations cut and spliced into the musical text). The composition looks completely different to classical opera, where, according to Higgins, “the music, the libretto, and the mise-en-scène are quite separate”²⁶. Taking into account the form of *St. Francis ...*, it would be difficult not to consider the intermedial research perspective. Indeed this reinforces the thesis that writing a “semantic opera” in the nineteen fifties – during a period not only of the creation of many other similar works (it is worth recalling even just Gombrowicz’s *Operetka*²⁷ [*Operetta*]), but also the expansive development of various intermedia (happening, performance, visual poetry, sound poetry, etc.), in the period, which Higgins not without reason summarises with an eloquent commentary in his essay “Intermedia”: “Much of the best work being produced today seems to fall between media”²⁸. “Late” Higgins – in the postscript of 1981 to that famous essay – resigns, it is true, of overestimating the latest art phenomena and the exaggerated valuation of intermedia (as “best work”). However, he signalises their important feature – **intermediality**, which, although in his view is characterized by various manifestations of art from its very beginnings²⁹, determines in de-

²⁵ J. Schröter, “Four Models of Intermediality,” in: *Travels in Intermedia[lity]: Re-Blurring the Boundaries*, ed. B. Herzogenrath, Hanover: University Press of New England, 2012, p. 20 ff (see J. Schröter, “Intermedialität: Facetten und Probleme eines aktuellen medienwissenschaftlichen Begriffes,” in: *Montage a/v*, 2, Vol. 7 (1998): p. 136 ff; text can be found on the website: http://www.montage-av.de/pdf/07_02_1998/07_02_1998_Jens_Schroeter_Intermedialitaet.pdf).

²⁶ D. Higgins, “Intermedia,” *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²⁷ W. Gombrowicz, *Operetka*, Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1966. See W. Gombrowicz, *Operetta*, trans. L. Iribarne, London: Calder and Boyars, 1971.

²⁸ D. Higgins, “Intermedia,” *op. cit.*, p. 18.

²⁹ This point of view is shared today by theorists of intermediality, amongst others Jürgen Ernst Müller (J.E. Müller, “Intermediality: A Plea and Some Theses for a New Approach in Media Studies,” in: *Interart Poetics: Essays on the Interrelations of Arts and Media*, ed. U.-B. Lagerroth, H. Lund, E. Hedling, Amsterdam–Atlanta: Rodopi, 1997, p. 296) and Konrad Chmielecki (*Estetyka intermedialności*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Rabid, 2008, p. 68).

tail the form and importance of modern intermedia, closely associated with a particular vision of socio-cultural relations.

The here proposed interpretation of the semantic opera *St. Francis ...*, situated precisely in the perspective of intermediality³⁰, accents – firstly – the hybrid character of the **textual notation** within the unusual “musical-graphic” or “musical-graphic-stage” score, and by the way also the manners of realisation and the specific work in the audio-visual domain. The intermedial trope, it should be noted, is well known to today’s researchers into the creative work of the Themersons. It was heavily exposed, amongst others by Beata Śniecikowska, analyzing, above all, their avant-garde films (“Obraz – dźwięk – słowo – ruch: Intermedialność sztuki Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów”³¹), as well as by the participants of the scientific conference, “Literackie intermedia. Twórczość Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów” (Kraków, Bunkier Sztuki, 4 March 2007)³². The same intermedial trope is followed anyway today by some researchers even in areas of multimediality, provokes consideration of the Themersons’ proposals as a statement of multimedia art³³. Any attempt to interpret *St. Francis ...* accents – secondly – the evident relationship of semantic opera and the concept of Semantic Poetry (more broadly, with all of the Themersons’ **semantic** works), especially its crucial relationship with Themersonian ethics and also the original anthropology project. It is an obvious matter that the author of the essay *factor T*³⁴ (first published in 1956, but written in the years 1953–1955, when the idea for *St. Francis ...* was born) not only reiterates obsessive questions about the limits of civilizing scenes of violence in the semantic opera: killing. Reminding us, in a comical-grotesque tone, about the “forgotten” ethical problem in the contemporary world, the illustrated history

³⁰ In this case I am not talking about a “metaphorical use” of the term, as assumed by some, amongst others, Artur Pruszyński (“O grach intersemiotycznych Stefana Themersona,” *op. cit.*, p. 39).

³¹ See B. Śniecikowska, “Obraz – dźwięk – słowo – ruch,” *op. cit.*, pp. 305–410.

³² The materials were published in a special number of the journal *Ha!art* in 2007 (No. 26: “Literackie intermedia. Twórczość Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów”).

³³ In Agnieszka Karpowicz’s view: “In this technically rich creativity we are basically dealing with a subcutaneous announcement of new media, and perhaps even a hunch or prefiguring of multimediality on a printed sheet of paper” (A. Karpowicz, “Stefan Themerson i »literackie multimedia«: Słowo – obraz – dźwięk,” in: *Ha!art*, 26 (2007): p. 15). See also A. Karpowicz, “Pogranicza audiowizualności: O artystycznych marginaliach Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów,” in: *Pogranicza audiowizualności: Parateksty kina, telewizji i nowych mediów*, ed. A. Gwóźdź, Kraków: Universitas, 2010, p. 180.

³⁴ In the author’s comments Themerson himself points out the close relationship of the forced concepts in *St. Francis ...* and *factor T* (see *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*, *op. cit.*, p. 9).

of *St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio* analyses in its own way – in the anthropological dimension – the “**original Tragedy**”³⁵, the scandal of existence and namely the inevitable tearing caused by the simultaneity of aversion and desire.

II. In the labyrinths of the avant-garde

The idea of writing an opera in the second half of the twentieth century, in the times, as is well known, of the public proclamation of – *nomen omen* – the “death of the opera” or even also the “second death of the opera”³⁶, is of course difficult to attribute just to a chance occurrence “somewhere along Oxford Street”. Before Stefan Themerson sat at the piano (brought to the Themersons’ apartment on Randolph Avenue thanks, as usual, to the effective efforts of his wife Franciszka), before he wrote down the first words, dialogue and whole scenes and particular musical solutions, before he spoke about his semantic opera project with the composer Michał Spisak, whom he probably met in a shelter for Polish war refugees in Voiron³⁷, he was not only a highly recognizable experimenter, eagerly reaching for the music composed by others and creatively using various sound phenomena, but – something no less important – he was an audiovisual theorist aware of the ongoing cultural change in the twentieth century (it is enough here to mention his pre-war comments contained in the draft “*Możliwości radiowe*”³⁸ [“The Potentialities of Radio”] or – especially – in the essay “*O potrzebie tworzenia widzeń*”³⁹ [“The Urge to Create Visions”], whose first ver-

³⁵ S. Themerson, *factor T*, London: Gaberbocchus Press, 1972, p. 11. Emphasis A.H.

³⁶ See S. Žižek, M. Dolar, *Opera's Second Death*, New York–London: Routledge, 2001.

³⁷ In reality not much is known about the musical collaboration between Themerson and Michał Spisak (a composer who went to Paris in 1937 with the goal of taking up compositional studies with Nadia Boulanger, spent the time of the occupation – just like the author of avant-garde films – in Voiron). After all, the information included in *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops* (*op. cit.*, p. 4) clearly indicates musical consultation.

³⁸ S. Themerson, “*Możliwości radiowe*,” in: *Wiek XX*, 23 (1928): p. 3 (see S. Themerson, “The Potentialities of Radio,” in: *OU*, 36–37 (1970)).

³⁹ S. Themerson, “*O potrzebie tworzenia widzeń*” / “*Du besoin de créer des visions*,” in: *f.a.*, 2 (1937): pp. 36–48 (see also in: *Europejskie manifesty kina: od Matuszewskiego do Dogmy. Antologia*, selection, introduction and edited by A. Gwóźdź, Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 2002, pp. 204–216). The much expanded text, finished in 1945, appeared twice in book form: in English (*The Urge to Create Visions*, Amsterdam: Gaberbocchus Press, De Harmonie, 1983) and – recently – in Polish, on the occasion of exhibition

sion was published in the journal *f.a.*). The decisive role in the situation of *St. Francis ...* is naturally played by the creative act itself, the fact that Stefan Themerson in the fifties had among other things, a series of experimental films, which testifies to his treatment of the film as “total art”⁴⁰ and – most importantly for us – about his particular interest in audiovisual phenomena. As is known, in avant-garde laboratory together with his wife Franciszka, he undertook several **medial transpositions** (transpositions of the type – literature to animated image, an effect of his experiments with photomontage – is the lost film *Europa*⁴¹ [*Europe*] from the years 1931–1932, as a film adaptation of the poem by Anatol Stern). An exceptional type of transposition are film interpretations of music: *Drobiazg melodyjny* [*Moment Musical*] (1933), probably representing a visual equivalent to Maurice Ravel’s music, and *The Eye & the Ear* (1944/1945) as an attempt at a film visualisation of sound, namely Karol Szymanowski’s four songs, which were written to Julian Tuwim’s lyrics from the cycle *Śłopiewnie*⁴². In the pre-war period Themerson also realised two films in collaboration with famous composers: Witold Lutosławski created the music to *Zwarcie* [*Short Circuit*] (1935), Stefan Kisielewski – to *Przygoda człowieka poczciwego* [*The Adventure of a Good Citizen*] (1937).

It should be noted here that the question of Themerson’s ideas and audiovisual experimentation is associated mainly with the realities of the twenties and thirties, with the pre-war form of artistic personality, with crystallisation of original ideas about art under the influence of the broadly understood avant-garde of the first decades of the twentieth century⁴³. Themerson – we can risk the assertion without hesitation – with great insight appreciated the significance and “boundlessness” of the avant-garde (of course, from a different point of view than Lev Manovich, who argues that the erstwhile avant-garde is today a kind of software, which “was a radical aesthetic vision in the 1920s became

organised by the Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Zamek Ujazdowski in Warsaw (see S. Themerson, *O potrzebie tworzenia widzeń*, trans. M. Sady, Warsaw: Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Zamek Ujazdowski, 2008).

⁴⁰ See R.W. Kluszczyński, “Kino jako sztuka totalna: Twórczość filmowa Franciszki & Stefana Themersonów,” in: *Świat według Themersonów*, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–38.

⁴¹ A contemporary reconstruction of this film – based on a few surviving frames and photomontages – is *Europa II* directed by Piotr Zarębski (1988).

⁴² See *The Films of Franciszka and Stefan Themerson / Filmy Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów*, DVD and booklet, London – Lux, Warsaw – Centre for Contemporary Art, 2007.

⁴³ See for example S. Themerson, *The Urge to Create Visions*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

a standard computer technology by the 1990s⁴⁴). The decade of Warsaw experiments, the period from the moment of Themerson's arrival in Warsaw in 1928 to study (physics which after a year he changed to architecture) until his departure in 1938 to Paris, brings a range of audio-visual experiences related to both avant-garde film, as well as original realizations of children's literature (verse tales with illustrations by his wife Franciszka, written in the thirties, abound in a variety of innovative typographical solutions⁴⁵). In the case of the author of *St. Francis ...*, this pre-war avant-garde experience turns out to be decisive, determining not only, so to say, his avant-garde adventure and avant-garde affiliation, but the "Themerson's unstoppable experimentalism"⁴⁶, set also to continue in his later activity⁴⁷.

The modernized version of the legend of St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio, which can be seen even without going into the details of the original concept of "semantic opera" is the result of direct impact on Themerson of the broader context of European avant-gardes of the first decades of the twentieth century, also in the war and post-war periods⁴⁸. Particularly important are the projects of two prominent artists: the creator of *Merz-art* – Kurt Schwitters⁴⁹, to whom indeed Themerson

⁴⁴ L. Manovich, "Avant-garde as Software," in: *Ost-West Internet: Elektronische Medien im Transformationsprozess Ost- und Mitteleuropas / Media Revolution: Electronic Media in the Transformation Process of Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. S. Kovats, Frankfurt–New York: Campus Verlag, 1999, p. 56.

⁴⁵ Amongst the books for children can be found *Historia Felka Strąka* (1931), *Jacusi w zacczarowanym mieście* (1931), *Narodziny liter* (1932), *Nasi ojcowie pracują* (1933), *Przygody Marcelianka Majster-Klepki* (1938), *Pan Tom buduje dom* (1938).

⁴⁶ E. Kraskowska, *Twórczość Stefana Themersona*, op. cit., p. 112.

⁴⁷ The essence of Themersonian work is characteristic independence and "openness", which of course brings effects: "When the system of classification of our modern world shoved printed forms under my nose to fill out – my pencil froze in the air for a moment above the rubric 'profession.' I don't know how to fill this rubric. In my life I have made six or seven films – »avant-garde«, but I'm not a director or a cameraman. I have published about twenty books for children, but I'm not a real adult author of children's books. I have written about art, but I'm not an art historian. I composed an opera, but I'm not a musician. I wrote a number of novels, but not quite normal novels – and I don't know if I'm a novelist" (S. Themerson, "Nim ukaże się książka," in: *Współczesność*, 17 (1965): p. 3). See also S. Themerson, *Jestem czasownikiem czyli zobaczyć świat inaczej*, drawings by Franciszka Themerson, Płock: Dom Kultury w Płocku, Klub Artystyczny Płocczan, 1993, p. 91.

⁴⁸ See E. Kraskowska, "Stefana Themersona alfabet awangardy," in: *Od tematu do rematu: Przechadzki z Balcerzanem*, ed. T. Mizerkiewicz, A. Stankowska, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2007, pp. 395–409.

⁴⁹ Themerson met Schwitters in London in 1942 at the conference of the PEN-Club, during which the author of *Ursonate* creates a sculpture from wire taken from the

son dedicated his book written in the nineteen fifties (*Kurt Schwitters in England: 1940–1948*, London 1958), and Guillaume Apollinaire, remaining in the centre of attention of the founders of Gaberbocchus Press (the publishing house who released the work *Apollinaire's Lyrical Ideograms*, London 1968). Apollinaire captured the publishers of “bestlookers” with his calligrams – reading ideograms is otherwise brought by *Semantic Divertissements*; in turn, Schwitters's composition *Ursonate*, which was written in the years 1922–1932, an unmatched intermedial realisation, is as much a musical work (on account of its sound performance⁵⁰), as a literary work (on account of its visual typographical version⁵¹). The effect of the creative “reworking” of Schwitters's proposal, if freely judged, is among other things, a visual poem by Themerson in 1945, the optophonetic experiment – with the incipit “Polska kaszkę warzyła”⁵² [“Poland Measured The Porridge”]. The writing turns out to be a text hybrid not so much because of the Themersonian wordplay (the pun-like title) and intertextual tension (in Urszula Czartoryska's opinion it is an evident construction “based on rhythmical-gestural motives from childish counting games”⁵³), as much especially because of the assumed – as in Schwitters – two complementary versions of the work: the visual text (graphic notation) and the sound text (vocal realisation). Regardless in this case of the evaluation of Themerson's actions and originality, we have to accept Ewa Kraskowska's conclusion that the “optophonetic experiment finally led to **perhaps the most controversial idea in artist's whole postwar creativity**, to this semantic opera called *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops*”⁵⁴. Undoubtedly, the road to taking the decision about writing a semantic opera forcing another formal experiment, directly opened the optophonetic project,

ruins of a just bombed building (see A. Dziadek, “Themerson i Schwitters,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 4 (2006): pp. 85–93).

⁵⁰ See K. Schwitters, *Ursonate* (Wergo, 6304-2, 1993). *Nota bene* Schwitters' dadaist visualisation of the recitation was undertaken in the nineteen eighties by the American artist Jack Ox (see Jack Ox. “*Ursonate*” *Kurta Schwittersa. Obrazowanie muzyki*, ed. M. Bauer, A. Bauer, trans. J. Lubiak, P. Szymor, M. Świerkocki, Łódź: Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi, 2003).

⁵¹ See K. Schwitters, *Ursonate*, in: *idem*, *Das literarische Werk*, vol. 1: *Lyrik*, ed. F. Lach, Köln: DuMont Buchverlag, 1988, pp. 214–242.

⁵² S. Themerson, *** (inc. “Polska kaszkę warzyła”), in: *idem*, *Wiersze wybrane: 1939–1945*, foreword, selection and edited by J. Reichardt, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2003, p. 138.

⁵³ U. Czartoryska, “O słowach i obrazach” / “Words and images,” in: *Projekt*, 1 (1983): p. 53.

⁵⁴ E. Kraskowska, *Twórczość Stefana Themersona*, op. cit., p. 115. Emphasis A.H.

and no less gradually paved the way to audiovisual experience – including earlier film ventures related to music, including such writings as the poetic *Fuga*⁵⁵ [*Fugue*] written in Voiron in November 1941 or the lecture about the obvious analogies between poetry and music, included in the short stories *Bayamus*⁵⁶ (1944).

To summarize the comments so far, in Themerson's situation it is possible to take a slightly different research trope to that encountered most frequently in various analyses – it is possible to speak not only about the artist's interest in visual media from the very beginning, artistic photography, drawing, film (from the first attempts, namely, *Apteka* [*Pharmacy*], created using the technique of "photograms in motion" in 1930, through experimenting with photomontage in the case of *Europa*, to the medial transpositions and the Themersons' last completed film *The Eye & the Ear*), but also the most widely understood notion of music, with particular focus on the phenomena of the **phonosphere** and the **audio-sphere**⁵⁷. Themerson after all – when he was fourteen – was the builder of the first radio receiver in Płock, fascinated by the noise of the ether⁵⁸, and was the author – as an eighteen year old – of the sketch, "Możliwości radiowe"⁵⁹, meticulously showing the similarities between cinema and

⁵⁵ S. Themerson, *Wiersze wybrane: 1939–1945*, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–91 (first edition: S. Themerson, *Dno nieba*, London: F. Mildner & Sons, 1943, pp. 5–9).

⁵⁶ Similarly, in Themerson's view, the way of reading music and poetry form one of the analogies: "You may read a musical score horizontally, following the melodic line, and you may read it vertically, following the chord structure. The same with poetry" (S. Themerson, *Bayamus and the Theatre of Semantic Poetry*, London: Gaberbocchus Press, 1965, p. 66).

⁵⁷ See T. Misiak, *Estetyczne konteksty audiosfery*, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Nauk Humanistycznych i Dziennikarstwa, 2009, pp. 30–39.

⁵⁸ Themerson reminds us of this in the book *The Urge to Create Visions* (S. Themerson, *The Urge to Create Visions*, *op. cit.*, p. 43). The author of *St. Francis ...* repeats same arguments after many years in a letter in 1970 to Henri Chopin: "[W]hat fascinated me still more than the fact of hearing a girl's sing-ing voice coming to my earphones from such strange places as Hilversum, was the noise, to me the Noise of the Celestial Spheres, and the divine interference-whistling when tuning. My handmade wireless-set became something more than a »receiver«, without losing the magic of the receiver. It became an instrument for producing new, hitherto unheard sounds, which at the time no person would have thought had anything to do with »music« (*The Films of Franciszka and Stefan Themerson / Filmy Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów*, *op. cit.*, p. 23).

⁵⁹ S. Themerson, "Możliwości radiowe," *op. cit.* An interesting matter is that Henri Chopin – theorist and practicing artist of sound poetry – came out with a proposal to publish an English version of the text in the magazine *OU* (1970, No. 11), dedicated first and foremost to the question of sound poetry. See Themerson's answer: *The Films of Franciszka and Stefan Themerson / Filmy Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów*, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–24.

radio. Themerson's way of thinking did not change much in his later period, as illustrated by fragments of the book *The Urge to Create Visions*⁶⁰ from the forties, and in his view expressed in a letter written in 1957 to Ernest Lindgren (representative of The National Film Archive): **"It is the sight-and-sound problem that I am again interested in.** Bits of the films I made 20 or 30 years ago contained what I would call »pictures-to-music« essays"⁶¹, as also evidenced by the plan presented in the same letter for the film working out of a "Synaesthetic sight and sound co-ordinator"⁶², later described as "phonovisor". Briefly concluding, Themerson's intermedial projects turn out to be as much the result of a permanent experiment with the visual arts as experimentation (a matter usually marginalized by interpreters today) with music, or more broadly: phonosphere and audiosphere. Audiovisual experience – particularly after the extinguishing of the "»fever« of film"⁶³ during the production in 1943 of *Calling Mr Smith* (a film in colour with music by Bach and Szymanowski) and *The Eye & the Ear* – leads to new ideas, provoking, I think, among other things, the creation of the semantic opera *St. Francis* ...

Themerson's unusual musical work, despite being written "for the drawer"⁶⁴ (worthless?, experimental?, not-for-performing?), appeared on Polish stages – treated as an effect of the avant-garde actions – three times. The first time was in 1981, therefore, nine years after the release of the book, the second time in 1991, after the author's death – the third time in the hundredth anniversary of his birth – in 2010⁶⁵. The world premiere of the show *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops* took place on 9th May 1981 on the stage of the Sopot Chamber Theatre "Wybrzeże" (directed by Ryszard Major, musical arrangement

⁶⁰ See S. Themerson, "The Eye & the Ear," in: *idem, The Urge to Create Visions, op. cit.*, pp. 64–67.

⁶¹ Letter published in: *The Films of Franciszka and Stefan Themerson / Filmy Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów, op. cit.*, p. 14. Emphasis A.H.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 15.

⁶³ Stefan Themerson's commentary in a letter to Aleksander Ford from October 1945 (see *The Films of Franciszka and Stefan Themerson / Filmy Franciszki i Stefana Themersonów, op. cit.*, p. 9).

⁶⁴ S. Themerson, "List do Zespołu Św. Franciszka – Teatr »Wybrzeże«,," *op. cit.*, no page numbers.

⁶⁵ It should be added here that the fragments of *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops* were performed by Dudley Moore in the Gaberbocchus Common Room in the nineteen eighties, and also during Themerson's funeral (see "Pamięci Stefana Themersona: Mowy wygłoszone na pogrzebie Stefana Themersona 13 września 1988," in: *Twórczość*, 7 (1991): pp. 77, 80; see also K. Askanas, "Dom rodzinny Stefana Themersona," in: S. Themerson, *Jestem czasownikiem czyli zobaczyć świat inaczej, op. cit.*, p. 142).

by Andrzej Biezan). The Themersons did not attend the premiere, but they took part in the last theatrical rehearsals and it is known, that the concept of producing the work in the convention of *grand grotesque* met with their approval⁶⁶. A decade later it was realised in convention of pastiche by Warsaw's Jarosław Ostaszewicz in the Dramatic Theatre (premiered 14th June 1991). This time – in contrast to the still relatively “faithful” musical realisation in “Wybrzeże” Theatre – we should speak of situation of treating the “score as a pretext”⁶⁷. Marcin Błażewicz composed original music⁶⁸, which to a not great degree referred to the musical ideas of the creator of the semantic opera (the general concept of musical narrative subordinated to dialogue structures survived, determining the particular shape of the first act). After two presentations on dramatic stages the time came for an operatic production of *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops* presented in the Poznań Grand Theatre, directed by Piotr Bogusław Jędrzejczak, with a musical arrangement by Krzysztof Słowiński (premiered 7th April 2010). The opera version was included in the cycle “Opera Kieszonkowa” [“Pocket Opera”] – written for eight operatic voices and an eight-piece orchestra playing “live” – forming an extremely meticulous reading of *St. Francis ...*, drawing out the musical nature of the work at all costs⁶⁹. Summarising, only the first and third of these stage performances turn out to be attempts to musically implement **Themerson's notation**, instructions and guidance from the author, secondly – directed in the aesthetics of pastiche (hence the many melodic-rhythmic references and allusions to classic operas) – brings a completely new musical realisation of Themerson's text.

Remembering the first two Polish theatrical realisations of *St. Francis ...* (they had a short life, exceptionally quick – due to interventions caused by various events – they were removed from the posters) and the most recent operatic realisation, I do not intend to either unduly expose their role, nor depart from the “musical-graphic-stage” score. Of course

⁶⁶ Unfortunately no sound material has survived documenting the production in the “Wybrzeże” Theatre (and also probably no copy has survived of the score by Andrzej Biezan, the instigator – together with Zofia Walkiewicz – of the whole undertaking).

⁶⁷ M. Gmys, “Partytura operowa jako źródło cierpień,” in: *Teatr*, 9 (2008): p. 70.

⁶⁸ A radio recording of Themerson's opera with music by Błażewicz – *Kotlety św. Franciszka* (1991) – was realised by Program III of Polish Radio (currently in the possession of the composer).

⁶⁹ A recording of the Poznań production of the semantic opera can be found in the archives of the Stanisław Moniuszko Grand Theatre in Poznań (Stefan Themerson, *Święty Franciszek i wilk z Gubbio czyli Kotlety świętego Franciszka*, DVD, catalogue number 662/1 R).

there is no doubt whatsoever that the avant-garde work has the status of a **dramatic** form, together with the project for stage realisation⁷⁰, written into it, that – as a media hybrid – it opens up presentations in the audiovisual space, that require possibly dramatic stages or unusual opera stages (of the type like the Poznań “Opera Kieszonkowa”, reserved for experimental works, amongst others). I am interested here, however, in another question – the semantic opera *St. Francis* ... as an example of opera *à rebours*, **anti-opera** (in the most general sense, in which we discuss anti-novel or anti-drama), therefore the question of the paradoxical status of this “musical-graphic-stage” score, revealing an otherwise random and surprising convergence with a literary “anti-operetta” – Gombrowicz’s *Operetta*.

III. Semantic opera

Themerson’s semantic opera – despite using musical notation, despite the performance involving mostly singing, despite the appearance of conventional opera figures (three sopranos, an alto, two tenors, a baritone and two basses, four-part choir and a group of dancers)⁷¹ – in short: despite the composition being reminiscent of certain formal rigours of classical opera, from the outset it is a deliberate deconstruction. Acknowledging *St. Francis* ... as an opera realisation *à rebours*, we arrive above all else at the paradoxical statement: “Exactly the score of the opera seems to be the most unusual”⁷², namely the (audio)visual project being the result of combining various means of expression. The score turns out to be unusual among other things, because of the **lack of orchestral notation** (the only thing which exists is an arrangement “for voice and piano”, a kind of piano reduction, which is indicated by the precise information on the title page: “Score for Voice and Piano”⁷³). Additionally, on account of the **visual dimension of the musical notation**; we find many places where the notation takes on a singular appearance, exposing its iconic character. I have in mind the broken stave

⁷⁰ See E. Kraskowska, “O dramatycznych i »dramatopodobnych« utworach Stefana Themersona,” *op. cit.*, p. 162.

⁷¹ See *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

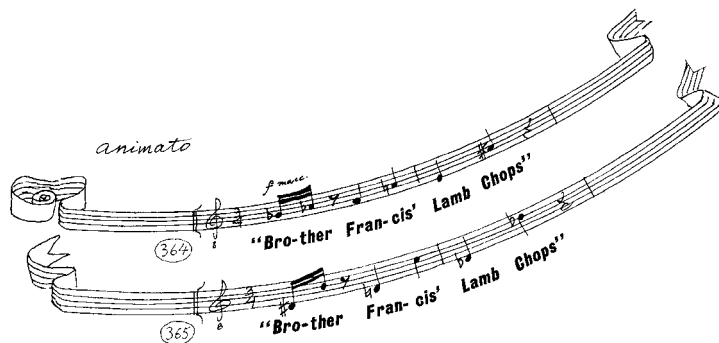
⁷² B. Śniecikowska, “Obraz – dźwięk – słowo – ruch,” *op. cit.*, p. 406. See also O. Pisarenko, “Uśmiech wilka,” in: *Ruch Muzyczny*, 13 (2010): p. 22.

⁷³ *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

“illustrating” the meaning of the parts in dialogue, for example falling from the high ladder⁷⁴:



the characteristic ribbon⁷⁵, also seen on the title page, which imitates – in “this time of Enlightenment through Advertising”⁷⁶ ... – the label of a product signed with the name of St. Francis:



the spiral⁷⁷ referring to the shape of a tin:

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 26 (see also: p. 13, questions 21–22–23 and 24; p. 79, question 363; p. 84, question 400; p. 85, question 402). In the Poznań presentation of the opera – *Święty Franciszek i wilk z Gubbio czyli Kotlety świętego Franciszka* – this falling brilliantly strengthens the percussive effects.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 79 (questions 364, 365).

⁷⁶ S. Themerson, *On Semantic Poetry*, London: Gaberbocchus Press, 1975, p. 16.

⁷⁷ *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops*, op. cit., p. 87 (question 413).



or “falling” staves, which as much provokes the situation of repeating the part: “He has no heart!”⁷⁸ a few times (of course for hyperbole), as much as – especially – a splendid idea to portray paternal dominance, patriarchalism (it is perhaps hard to be tempted to a different interpretation of this passage in light of both *Paterfamilias*⁷⁹, and the later falling words: “I am the trunk of this family tree”⁸⁰:

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 23 (questions 84–87). Compare p. 28 (questions 119, 121). It is worth noting in the margin that Marcin Błażewicz on this occasion uses the Beethovenian “fate motif” from the *Symphony No. 5*, which allows, indeed provokes, the four syllable verbal construction: “Bez sercaś jest!”

⁷⁹ *Paterfamilias* “opens” Act 2 scene 2 (see *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio* or *Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*, op. cit., p. 47).

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 48 (question 227). The matter of “great responsibility” of the Father returns in *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio* or *Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops* many times. See *ibidem*, p. 24 (question 92), pp. 29–30 (questions 125–132), p. 39 (questions 178–179).

Meno Mosso
(d = d)

FATHER He has no heart!

8.5 **UNCLE** He has no heart!

86 **AUNT** He has no heart!

FATHER 87 He has no heart!

f tutti rit. cresc. dim. tutti

Finally, the score appears to be unusual because the **stage dialogue is completed with drawings** by Franciszka Themerson – original drawings and two taken from *Semantic Divertissements* (*St. Francis* and *Paterfamilias*), and also on account of the **stage directions in a “frame”** (use of a facsimile of handwritten notes), which serve to directly comment on the course of the action. On account of the nature of these stage directions and the drawings *St. Francis* and *Paterfamilias* – appearing either in the form of complete citations⁸¹, or in the form of incomplete quotations, scattered on multiple pages of the semantic opera⁸² – in the situation of a traditional stage presentation remain unknown to the audience. Their presentation is otherwise made possible either through a multimedia realisation (in the Poznań opera version a film projection was used),

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 8, 47.

⁸² Saying precisely: in the case of *St. Francis* and *Uncle*, only verbal quotes are used from *St. Francis* ... (see *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio* or *Brother Francis' Lamb Chops*, op. cit., pp. 33–36, questions 144–165; p. 37, questions 168–171), in the case of *Aunt* – drawing (p. 38, questions 175–176), in the case however of *Father* (p. 39, question 182), *Mother* (p. 40, question 186), *Sister* (p. 41, question 193) and *Brother* (p. 43, question 204) – drawing and text at the same time. *Paterfamilias* in turn only illustrates *Father's* questions: recalling fragments of drawings and text (p. 48, question 228; p. 50, questions 236–237, 238–239; p. 52, questions 246–249) and fragment of drawings in mirror image (p. 51, question 245; p. 52, question 249).

or through a completely unconventional solution (for example the surprising reading of *Paterfamilias* at the beginning of Act 1 scene 2 – the chaotic repetition of the formula successively adding characters, summarized with a dignified and apodictic statement by Father: “*Pater familias*”⁸³).

However, there is no doubt that the unusual nature of the “musical-graphic-stage” score prejudices first and foremost the specific **manner of musicalising the text** – the jerky musical narrative depends on the dialogue, on specific sequences of words⁸⁴ (a superb example of this is the dialogue between Aunt and Uncle in Act 1⁸⁵). Themerson’s precise explanations *à propos* of the “composing” strategy taken becomes a kind of programme, anticipated in the author’s commentary:

As you will see, there is dead music-less silence for a second or two (a pause for breathing) between the end of one line of text and the beginning of the next. Here, the relation of the music to the text is what colour may be to some line drawings. **The bone structure of this work is built of words. Their meaning is essential. That is why I call it a Semantic Opera**⁸⁶.

How important are these guidelines in connection with the conception of the semantic opera – the overriding postulate *ben articolato* – is also provided by Themerson’s request addressed to the performers, the author’s last comment, contained in parentheses in the “Letter to the Performers of St. Francis – »Wybrzeże« Theatre”: “(Except that if it happens in practice that at some point the song drowns out the words, I would prefer at this point to pass the vocal part to the strings and in spoken song or sung speech, to give the meaning of the words)”⁸⁷.

The battle over the word, its meaning, is indicated in *St. Francis* ... already by its genological name: semantic opera, while the far-reaching consequences are immediately shown with the **Overture** attached to the whole, whose function is somewhat traditional in terms of formal

⁸³ In the Poznań staging of the opera the same situation (in connection with the quoted fragment *Paterfamilias*) later gets a somewhat different, to say, non-Themerson solution (as a result of the invention of the director): “*Materfamilias*”.

⁸⁴ As noted by Artur Pruszyński: “Here it wasn’t about its [music] emotional adaptation to the questions falling from the stage, as it can be in classical opera, but rather to underline just the construction of the expression in the frame of the whole work” (A. Pruszyński, “O grach intersemiotycznych Stefana Themersona,” *op. cit.*, p. 63).

⁸⁵ See *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21 (questions 71–79).

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 9. Emphasis A.H. It should be added that this characteristic non-continuity of the musical narration exposed programmatically by Themerson as a basic feature of the “semantic opera”, was obliterated in the Poznań presentation of the opera.

⁸⁷ S. Themerson, “List do Zespołu Św. Franciszka – Teatr »Wybrzeże«,” *op. cit.*, no page numbers.

requirements, that is, the practice shaped in the long history of opera ("Overture", understood as an "opening", "prologue", "introduction", etc.), but also in a sense avant-garde – because of its distinct character. As much as the formula used in the list of contents (*Overture: A street*⁸⁸) does not yet suggest any deviation from operatic conventions, so the formula immediately preceding the notation in this part of the "opera", *Overture (words without music)*⁸⁹, directly reveals the most radical decisions of the author. The concept of overture as "words without music" (at the same time with elements of dance and the use of film projection) – in a situation where in classical opera the overture is traditionally a purely orchestral introduction ("music without words") and, moreover, the only in the *Overture* does he ostentatiously dispense with musical notation – a gesture of distancing, an avant-garde gesture of passing tradition *à rebours*. The reevaluation undertaken by Themerson does not mean, however, a complete departure from the endless discussions about the two old allegations made in connection with the conventions of classical opera: "*prima la musica, dopo le parole*"⁹⁰ and "*prima le parole, dopo la musica*" (this case refers to – on the one hand – the thinking of, for example, Monteverdi, on the other – the thinking in the last decades of the sixteenth century of the representatives of the Florentine Camerata, seeking to renew the tradition of Greek theatre and preserve the primacy of words over melody). The author of *St. Francis ...* does not oscillate between these two theories like Richard Strauss in *Capriccio* (1942), he comes out strongly in favour of the second variant, of the solution restoring appropriate semantic potential to language. This is also why in Themerson the *Overture* is – through its own specific acts of provocation, best seen in the Poznań operatic presentation – a dramatic scene, as a scene which is spoken, or resorting to the legitimate oxymoron: "**textual overture**"⁹¹ (so Marcin Błażewicz's decision in these circumstances, when composing music for Themerson's libretto for the Warsaw spectacle directed by Jarosław Ostaszewicz, to propose his own "asemantic" overture, is not surprising).

It is not just the *Overture* eliminating the musical layer, and this should be emphasised, which testifies to *St. Francis ...* breaking with the conventions of classical opera. This is also evidenced by the writing, and the structure of the whole. It would be difficult not to notice that it is not bars

⁸⁸ *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops*, op. cit., p. 4.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 5. Emphasis A.H.

⁹⁰ The expression "*prima la musica*" became popular thanks to the title of the divertimento by Antonio Salieri *Prima la musica e poi le parole* (1786).

⁹¹ B. Śniecikowska, "Obraz – dźwięk – słowo – ruch," op. cit., p. 405. Emphasis A.H.

that are numbered, but groups of bars and sections of dialogue (in total: 518), that the most important dialogues are deprived generally of piano accompaniment, like for example the proposal to enter into a pact with the Wolf⁹² or the first and – in part, except for a single chord reinforcing the word “cry” – the last question from St. Francis⁹³:

pp Moderato

① **FRANCIS** I do not know— whe-ther to cry or to laugh,

short presto

② **O! I don't know whe-ther to cry or to laugh!**

Francis sings again the opening line. Now it has its full meaning.

④86 **FRANCIS** I do not know whether to laugh or to cry,

④87 **O, I don't know whe-ther to laugh or to cry.**

pp

The musical structure in *St. Francis ...* is in fact deprived of autonomous character, it is subordinated to the structure of the words, the stage dialogue (music is used to enhance through “melodic contour” – the intonation contour and semantics of each dialogue sequence). As a result, noted by Ludwik Erhardt on the occasion of the first staging: “There are no arias, recitativo, defined musical themes, or even any expressive melodic structures. The peculiar arrangement of notes, the imitative

⁹² *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops*, op. cit., pp. 71–72 (questions 320–332).

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 9 (questions 1–2), p. 103 (questions 486–487). *Nota bene* in Krzysztof Słowiński's edition the sentences repeated by St. Francis (questions 2, 487) gain a musical background.

system of dialogue, comes from the fact that the author wants certain questions sung in agreement with the notes. But between the questions there are to be pauses – as in a normal stage dialogue – not filled with any music”⁹⁴. Themerson thus resigns – as a declared supporter of verbal semanticism, meaning a supporter of **language**, rather than being seduced by the **operatic voice** – from the lifeblood of music, the flowing operatic narrative, *bel canto*, coloratura, high tessitura, etc. He consciously chooses the most primitive manner of “composing” (incidentally, writing a classical opera was beyond his technical capabilities). Subordinating music or departing from its primacy makes it possible to preserve – thinking of the elementary conventions of semantic opera – the **autonomy/audibility of verbal issues**. Thus, the entire idea of semantic opera is based on the ostentatious assumption that “from two types of material, verbal and melodic [musical], the first is more important”⁹⁵; in other words, it thrives on confrontation or even – in the case of the *Overture* – annihilation. This simple observation opens up further prospects for interpretation when the question is raised, what was the purpose in *St. Francis ...* of using the Themersonian concept (obsession?) of “semanticism”, linked initially, as is known, to the original theory of Semantic Poetry, which gained its first explication in the short story – “semantic novel”⁹⁶ – *Bayamus*. Semantic Poetry, as repeatedly stressed by Themerson, was created in the nineteen forties with the particular goal: “It was a refusal to be taken away from reality”⁹⁷. Semantic Opera – written two decades later in totally different geopolitical circumstances – seems equally programmed, constituting, despite fundamental

⁹⁴ L. Erhardt, “Opera semantyczna Stefana Themersona,” *op. cit.*, no page numbers.

⁹⁵ E. Kraskowska, *Twórczość Stefana Themersona*, *op. cit.*, p. 117. It is enough to say that even the apparently insignificant “vowel” dialogue of the family of St. Francis (Act 2, scene 3) is conditioned not so much by purely musical, but by the semantic considerations. The word *vowels* (Themerson’s formula “vowels only”) creates an evident anagram of the word which appears in its immediate context *Wolves* and thereby indirectly characterizes the dialogue of the characters (see *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*, *op. cit.*, pp. 98–100, questions 466–472; p. 101, question 476).

⁹⁶ Themerson’s formula in a letter in 1960 to Raymond Queneau, published in full by Jasia Reichardt (see J. Reichardt, “O Stefanie Themersonie i Raymondzie Queneau,” in: *Literatura na Świecie*, 8–9 (1997): p. 285).

⁹⁷ S. Themerson, *On Semantic Poetry*, London: Gaberbocchus Press, 1975, p. 16. See also, “Poezja nieprzerwana,” Gérard-Georges Lemaire speaks to Stefan Themerson, trans. A. Taborska, in: *Literatura na Świecie*, 7 (1987): p. 367.

differences, the continuation of a former lecture, also shows a supralinguistic (and supramusical) reality⁹⁸.

IV. The “original Tragedy”

In the semantic opera *St. Francis* ... Themerson certainly does not stop only at the avant-garde bricolage model, an intermedial mosaic, does not restrict himself to purely formal solutions, just as in previously realised artistic endeavors. After many years, indeed since the first “avant-garde gestures of creation”, in an interview with Gérard-Georges Lemaire given for Radio France-Culture (broadcast 3 December 1978), brings the once prevailing atmosphere and Themerson does not conceal surprise, analyzing some comments about their own works:

Zeal. Enthusiasm. The need to exploit new opportunities; in the cinema, for example, it is necessary to create a vision, trust, that you can change the world for the better, that the new order – or disorder – in art, that a new logic, new science or new economic requirements impose universal peace and justice. It is strange that works of art created in this spirit, that have grown from such thinking today have purely aesthetic value ... or commercial?⁹⁹

It turns out that of importance in this context, in the case of semantic opera, both the mode of composing, and – above all – the intended goal of the perverse treatment and deconstruction of the conventions of classical opera, both the problem of autotextuality, namely the problem of a kind of intermedial “series of translations” (leading, as Umberto Eco would say, to intertextual irony¹⁰⁰): the film *The Eye & the Ear* (part 2 is called *St. Francis*) – the short story *Bayamus* – the essay *factor T* – two sketches from *Semantic Divertissements* (*St. Francis* and *Paterfamilias*) – *St. Francis* ...¹⁰¹, and – first and foremost – the result of a philosophical-grotesque interpretation in the realities of the twentieth century, of

⁹⁸ According to Themerson: “Semantic Poetry does not arrange verses into bunches of flowers. It bares a poem and shows the extra-linguistic data hidden behind it. There is no room for hypnosis in its rhymes and rhythms” (S. Themerson, *Bayamus*, *op. cit.*, p. 99).

⁹⁹ “Poezja nieprzerwana,” *op. cit.*, p. 371.

¹⁰⁰ U. Eco, “Intertextual Irony and Levels of Reading,” in: *idem*, *On Literature*, trans. M. McLaughlin, New York: Harcourt, 2004, pp. 212–235 (see U. Eco, “Ironia intertestuale e livelli di lettura,” in: *idem*, *Sulla letteratura*, Milano: Bompiani, 2002, pp. 227–252).

¹⁰¹ These “series of translations” complement still other works by Franciszka Themerson, which were inspired by the semantic opera *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio* or *Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops* – created in the years 1985–1986 new collages and sketches.

a story surviving from a few centuries earlier (Themerson, of course, is interested in Chapter XXI of *Little Flowers of St Francis of Assisi: Of the Most Holy Miracle of St Francis in Taming the Fierce Wolf of Gubbio*¹⁰²). In other words, the actual meaning of the work is determined by two dimensions of the **aesthetics of intermediality**: on the one hand, the multi-materiality shown clearly by the creator and the primitiveness of semantic opera intended by him – anti-opera – in the purely formal plane, and on the other – the final consequences of philosophizing, “themersonadia”, struggles in the contemporary world “with St. Francis’ strange problem”¹⁰³. Only in this perspective, I think, is it possible to see the sense of Themerson’s actions and better understand why his “opera” in two acts with attached overture can in no way be reconciled with, for example, Olivier Messiaen’s opera *Saint François d’Assise* (written for the Paris Opera in 1975–1983, to a libretto by the composer himself) which also addresses the subject of St. Francis.

For Themerson classic opera as a genre becomes a perfect **pretext** to express his ethical views and to present an original theory under the sign of cultural anthropology. For exactly this reason the action of *St. Francis* ..., despite being schematic and conventional is not “operatic” in character. And so the next, sometimes inconspicuous dialogues allow you to gather the necessary arguments for the philosophical discourse: starting with the *Overture* (the discussion between the Young Man and the Old Man, changing with the Young Woman) and Act 1, warming up in its entirety in the family home of St. Francis, where we meet the main hero, Father and Mother, Uncle and Aunt, Younger Sister and Younger Brother (scene 1 with St. Francis, scene 2 – a demonstration of patriarchalism – no longer with the youth, just after breaking his relationships with his loved ones and renouncing his family possessions), through scene 1 of Act 2, namely the confrontation of the title character and making the pact, to the two final scenes – presenting the industrial reality of the factory producing “St. Francis’ Lamb Chops”, as well as the psychological portrait of the initiator of the negotiations, torn by various doubts in the presence of the Wolf and the Wolf’s Daughter (scene 2), and finally the image of meeting again after years St. Francis’ whole family and his final polemics with the Wolf (scene 3). The message about the Saint from Assisi, as can be seen at first glance, is subjected to extremely rational

¹⁰² See *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi*, trans. D.R. Huddleston, New York: Heritage Press, 1965, pp. 56–59.

¹⁰³ S. Themerson, “List do Zespołu Św. Franciszka – Teatr »Wybrzeże«,” *op. cit.*, no page numbers.

interpretation (this is about indicating all the consequences of the pact), turns out to be only a point of departure to develop an anthropological comment. The story of St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio in fact interests Themerson in connection with the paradox of civilization that hides in the embryo of the fundamental tragic contradiction, and more specifically: in connection to civilization carrying the irresolvable conflict caused by the simultaneity (necessity) of aversion and desire, aversion to killing and also consent to kill. The radical manifestation of this – very ironic – are the final conclusions, placed outside the dialogue structure:

And that's how the puzzled neurons
Of the human nervous system
evolved the codes of Ethics,
And that's how the human biped
Survived the other beasts
And makes such a fuss about it.¹⁰⁴

This biological conditioning – in Themerson's belief – contradiction, analyzed on the example of the attitude and behaviour of St. Francis (seeking alternative solutions to the issue, clearly expressed in the maxim: "to live, you need to eat, to eat, you must kill"), forms, however, only one of the possible exemplifications of a much wider problem. The tragic contradiction lies in fact in the very logic of the world, reflected in the permanent confrontation between opposing forces, raising inevitable **tragedy**: "This is not a dramatic conflict. This is a conflict, which – the thoughtlessness of the fortune – we cannot avoid. Hence, it is a Tragic [T] conflict"¹⁰⁵. In other words, the ethical dilemma debated in *St. Francis ...*, relating directly to the drama of killing lambs for the carnivorous wolf, is not limited only to the "archaeology" of killing (does not take place exclusively in the plane: nature-culture), illustrates however this fundamental contradiction: the dialectical dimension of reality. Themerson – a sceptic and rationalist, an attentive observer of the ongoing changes in the consciousness of modern man – adroitly resigns from simplification of interpretation and prevents the formulation of an unequivocal semantic interpretation of the opera. He reminds us of the story of St. Francis, mythologized in European culture, and at the same time, proposes an interpretation of its own in modern realities – a story not only degenerating the idealism of its main character

¹⁰⁴ *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops*, op. cit., p. 111.

¹⁰⁵ S. Themerson, *factor T*, op. cit., p. 9.

("I am a young human being"¹⁰⁶), falling ever deeper into a state of disillusionment ("I was a young human being"¹⁰⁷), but also the scandal of existence, expressed succinctly in *The Chair of Decency*: "Tragic necessity is in nature, evil is in culture"¹⁰⁸. Interference with the laws of nature, an attempt to irrational action, leading to the apparent settlement of the conflict through the "humanitarian" pact – become, in the view of the author of *St. Francis ...*, absurd, giving birth as a result to ridicule and specific comicalness¹⁰⁹.

The "Semantic Opera" – going beyond the proper history of the conflict of St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio as noted in the fourteenth century (an anonymous translation into Italian in the Latin collection of *Actus beati Francisci et sociorum eius*) – is ultimately a subversive lecture on ethical-philosophical views, full of grotesque comicalness. This is clearly evidenced even by the Wolf's conclusions at the end of the opera, generalizing the **dilemma of choice in the contemporary world**:

Lambs, or wolves, or peasants,
Or slaves, or nations, or races ...
Make your choice.
You can choose WHOM to devour,
But a choice you must make,
Because there is no Alternative.¹¹⁰

This is also evidenced by Themerson's explanation of – not less important – his social and ideological-political views that are most fully expressed by the final questions of the protagonist St. Francis¹¹¹ (and the almost ritual repetition by the Choir¹¹²), exposing the reasons for

¹⁰⁶ *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops*, op. cit., p. 33 (question 144 ff).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 81 (question 383 ff).

¹⁰⁸ S. Themerson, *The Chair of Decency*, Black River Falls: Obscure Publications, 2007, p. 21.

¹⁰⁹ Themerson clarifies the source of this comicalness of the semantic opera: "Its comicalness – neither literary or musical. Its comicalness – cosmic, natural. Which doesn't mean that this Truth must necessarily be – philosophical prose or pompous pathos" (S. Themerson, "List do Zespołu Św. Franciszka – Teatr »Wybrzeże«," op. cit., no page numbers).

¹¹⁰ *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops*, op. cit., p. 107 (questions 500–505). Particular attention is paid here, of course, to the note in capital letters: "WHOM" under the single word underlined by Themerson: "must".

¹¹¹ See *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis' Lamb Chops*, op. cit., p. 109 (questions 510–514).

¹¹² *Ibidem*, p. 110 (questions 515–516).

the inevitable confrontation and never-ending fight scene between “classes”, “races”, “nations”, scenes of violence otherwise well known from the Girardian concept of “scapegoating”¹¹³. In such a view *St. Francis* ... finally turns out to be an anthropological recognition of conflicting forces governing the world, a fundamentally undecidable aporia, like the essay *factor T*, in which Themerson collides, amongst others, two positions – St. Francis and the bullfighter¹¹⁴ – and universalizes the basis of all cultural mechanisms (“This is of secondary importance. Whether your [D]islike is to kill, or to risk your life in battle or in work, or to have offspring (...) – *factor T*, original Tragedy, remains and has to be acknowledged”¹¹⁵).

In the context of the arguments contained in *factor T* it has to be finally said that the ubiquitous logic of contradictions that is realized through confrontation, oppression, scandal of existence, etc. – conceals in *St. Francis* ... not just one of the tales of St. Francis (a character not without reason repeating the ambivalent question: “I do not know whether to laugh or to cry”). It can be seen even in the very structure of the title, awakening indeed at once a particular interest for the interpreter, because Themerson, as is known, was reluctant to reach for lengthy title formulas. *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops* – is essentially an exception. This type of language construct, as can be easily confirmed if we take the particular typography of the title page into account, is not of a neutral character. In this case only the first segment of the written title is neutral – *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio* (other information is given on the title page using the same typeface). The writing of the second segment however – *Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops* – turns out to be characterized and on account of the different typeface, and due to being placed on a musical stave (a change of status of the text – from autonomous text to vocal text – it clearly reveals the word and music conflict which has already been recognized in the semantic opera). Combination of these two segments with the “OR” conjunct, written in block capitals, placed in a black box, which is related to the key phrase in the question “Make your choice”:

¹¹³ See R. Girard, *Le bouc émissaire*, Paris: B. Grasset, 1982 (R. Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Y. Freccero, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989). See also R. Girard, *Des Choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde*, avec J.-M. Oughourlian et G. Lefort, Paris: Grasset, 1978 (R. Girard, J. Oughourlian, G. Lefort, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*, California: Stanford University Press, 1987).

¹¹⁴ S. Themerson, *factor T*, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–20.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 11.



– reveals in reality the deeply hidden logic of the semantic opera. Now, the real, the natural state of things (*St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio*) is “replaced by”, as a result of negotiation and socially sanctioned arrangements, seemingly humanitarian actions (*Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*). In such circumstances, the logical conjunction “or”, which expresses a normal separable alternative and opens a defined space to work in, means only – an **apparent alternative** (indeed, this is reflected in the phrase repeatedly evoked in the work: “There is no Alternative”¹¹⁶). In conclusion: the title construction – *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops* [*Święty Franciszek i Wilk z Gubbio albo Kotlety Świętego Franciszka*] – indicates the possibility of only apparent choice, becomes a concise abbreviation of the meaning of the whole semantic opera, functions as an exemplary, perverse sentence (blurred by Themerson’s translation versions of the sentence; without the conjunction “or”: for example, Ewa Kraskowska’s proposal – *Święty Franciszek i Wilk z Gubbio, czyli Kotlety Brata Franciszka*¹¹⁷, or the title of the Poznań spectacle, realised as part of the cycle

¹¹⁶ An example of one of the diagnoses of St. Francis is (*St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*, *op. cit.*, pp. 101–102, questions 479–480):

God created the World Without an Alternative

And the lamb must be kill’d To take away the Sin of Hunger.

Compare also *ibidem*, p. 104 (question 492), p. 105 (question 493), p. 107 (question 505), p. 108 (question 506).

¹¹⁷ See E. Kraskowska, *Twórczość Stefana Themersona*, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

“Opera Kieszonkowa”: *Święty Franciszek i wilk z Gubbio czyli Kotlety świętego Franciszka*).

Beyond the title construction, namely the sequence of words, to use Themerson’s language, “rich in harmonics”¹¹⁸ (formula “St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops” with the key conjunction “or” that guards only apparent alternatives), and the typography of the title page (colliding neutral writing with the writing of the vocal text), the logic of contradiction hides in the name “semantic opera” (in fact oxymoronic, indicating the dominance of words over sound) and the chosen composing convention (leading to subordination of the music, partly under the rules of “*prima le parole, dopo la musica*”), finally – in a quite radical way – a purely verbal *Overture* (as a concept “words without music”). The question in this situation: why was opera chosen? – ceases to be enigmatic. Themerson moreover gives an indirect answer to the question in his book *The Urge to Create Visions*: “The words, in an opera, do not kill the music. It is the music that kills the words by deforming them beyond recognition. Once you know the libretto, you don’t mind missing the words, you can just listen to the vowels”¹¹⁹. In semantic opera – if we need to paraphrase Themerson – music does not kill the words. These words kill music ... *St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*, as now understood, requires not so much an exaggerated interpretation of events “somewhere along Oxford Street” (i.e. explaining the semantic opera as a result of testing – out of curiosity – his own strength as an amateur in the field of music), but rather a rethink of Themerson’s aesthetics of intermediality in the light of his concept of “original Tragedy”.

¹¹⁸ S. Themerson, *On Semantic Poetry*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹¹⁹ S. Themerson, *The Urge to Create Visions*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

Part Three

INTERCULTURALISM AND
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
OF THE 21ST CENTURY

8. INTERCULTURALISM – LITERATURE – COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

I. Introductory remarks

The three issues included in the title – interculturalism, literature, comparative literature – decide, of course, about the initial findings, immediately situating literary phenomena in a certain light. Here the key register of literature from the point of view of intercultural studies proves to be translation, to operate with the old name used by Gilles Ménage – *la belle infidèle*, or also, perhaps best to say in the context of translation studies, translated literature¹; translation (literary), in turn, today turns out to be of particular interest to modern comparative studies – cultural comparative literature. It could therefore be concluded that in determining signalled dependencies a dangerous confidence exists, which takes the form of classical syllogism – obviously, if we talk about interculturalism and literature / translation and literature / translation and comparative literature, is therefore nothing more obvious than to speak ultimately, of interculturalism and comparative studies. Regardless of the logic of the argument, at the same time this exposes two current comparative literature issues, requiring subtle comment: interculturalism as one of the concepts of culture, affecting significantly, I think, the profile of modern comparative research² and widely

¹ See *Interculturality and the Historical Study of Literary Translations*, ed. H. Kittel, P.F. Armin, Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1991; T.F. Carvalhal, “Les images retenues: Sur le rôle des traductions dans les études interculturelles,” in: *Intercultural Explorations*, ed. E. Eoyang, Volume 8 of the Proceedings of the XVth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association “Literature as Cultural Memory”, Leiden 16–22 August 1997, Amsterdam–New York: Rodopi, 2005, pp. 47–54; *Translation and Interculturality: Africa and the West*, ed. S. Linn, M. Mous, M. Vogel, Frankfurt am Main–Berlin–Bern–Bruxelles–New York–Oxford–Wien: Peter Lang, 2008.

² For example Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, making the proposal “comparative cultural studies”, accenting three dimensions: intercultural, comparative and interdisciplinary (see S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “The New Humanities: The Intercultural, the Compar-

understood translation (associated not only with the translated literature, but theories of translation). In this perspective it is not difficult to formulate stronger arguments – the paradigm of interculturalism and issues of translation have recently played a decisive role in the formation of a new “alternative paradigm”³ of comparative literature.

Starting from explaining the paradigm of interculturalism, it should at once be said that the notion itself, with its origin in the English-speaking world from the nineteen sixties devoted to intercultural communication – particularly *The Silent Language* by Edward T. Hall⁴ (New York 1959) – meets with various opinions. Today this gives birth to both enthusiastic support for the search for optimal research decisions and creates sceptical opposition to the creation of still more neologisms in the most recent research, using the prefix so over-exploited in poststructuralist dictionaries, *inter*-⁵ (the series of analogical concepts, key for modernist humanities, is well known: interdiscursivity, intertextuality, interdisciplinarity, intermediality, “interculturalisation”⁶). The proponents’ theses are clearly articulated: “Contrary to appearances, interculturalism is not just a buzzword or a wave,” maintains Sylvie Thiéblemont-Dollet, “[t]his is more than a concept, an idea, a simple definition. It’s an infinite set of codes, references, knowledge, ways of being and acting”⁷. In the case of pursuing such a trope of thinking interculturalism indicates conscious, active existence “between cultures”, real intercultural dialogue conducted in respect of a precisely defined objective, namely the perception of diversity⁸ (more precisely, a dialogical, as proposed by Joanna Nowicki,

ative, and the Interdisciplinary,” in: *The Global South*, 2, Vol. 1 (2007) (special number: “Globalization and the Futures of Comparative Literature”): pp. 45–68).

³ T. Brzostowska-Tereszkiewicz, “Komparatystyka literacka wobec translatologii: Przegląd stanowisk badawczych,” in: *Przestrzenie Teorii*, 3/4 (2004): p. 303.

⁴ E.T. Hall, *The Silent Language*, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1959.

⁵ See D.-H. Pageaux, “Sur quelques préfixes en littérature comparée,” in: *idem, Trente essais de littérature générale et comparée ou la Corne d’Amalthée*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 2004, p. 310 ff.

⁶ J. Demorgon, *L’interculturalisation du monde*, Paris: Anthropos, 2000.

⁷ S. Thiéblemont-Dollet, “Introduction: Confrontations et perspectives interculturelles,” in: *Art, Médiation et Interculturalité*, ed. S. Thiéblemont-Dollet, Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 2008, p. 16.

⁸ See S. Ben-Messahel, “Médiation interculturelle et interdisciplinarité,” in: *Des frontières de l’interculturalité. Etude pluridisciplinaire de la représentation culturelle: Identité et Altérité*, ed. S. Ben-Messahel, Villeneuve d’Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2009, p. 9.

“way to analyse diversity”⁹), in effect, and – broadening their own cultural horizons, breaking “local” restrictions, sensitivities, solidarity, etc.

The paradigm of interculturalism, widely discussed in the last three decades, especially in France, is in fact a reaction to a number of different concepts explaining the hybrid nature of contemporary cultures, such as acculturation, multiculturalism, pluriculturalism and – most recently – transculturalism. This paradigm, most strongly stressed today in education, sociology, cultural studies, philosophy and anthropology, but also gaining comparative interpretations, as evidenced by Daniel-Henri Pageaux’s text “Multiculturalisme et interculturalité”¹⁰, is connected – most generally speaking – a new position in the dispute over the model of the modern world. In the case of interculturalism two trends coexist paradoxically and consequently clash: the goal of one of them is to maintain cultural diversity and heterogeneity (linguistic, ethnic, religious) and the second – the blurring of this diversity through the processes of integration, assimilation, related to the inevitable phenomena of globalization and glocalisation. (This can otherwise be well seen in the realities of the European Union, where there is a confrontation between two divergent visions, the struggle to maintain cultural identity and the struggle for the realization of the so-called “common policy”.) Interculturalism should ultimately be regarded, I think, as a kind of counterproposal, but also as – apart from especially multiculturalism and transculturalism – among the existing cultural research projects associated with politics, migration movements, a colonial past (also, evidently, from globalization and the new form of imperialism, which Marc Ferro defines as “colonialism without colonies”¹¹).

I would not want here seek excessive emphasis of the importance of interculturalism, although the temptation is obvious. Especially with the assumption that the concepts of multiculturalism, currently giving rise to increasing resistance, are insufficient, that these ideas have already seen their best times, but this does not mean in any measure that they are past their best (as evidenced, for example, by the writing in the documents of the European Union – European societies are “multicultural and

⁹ J. Nowicki, “Gérer l’interculturel: Alibi? Mode ou Illusion?,” in: *Communication et Organisation*, 22 (2002): p. 64. See also J. Nowicki, *L’homme des confins: Pour une anthropologie interculturelle*, Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2008.

¹⁰ D.-H. Pageaux, “Multiculturalisme et interculturalité,” in: *idem*, *Littératures et cultures en dialogue*, ed. S. Habchi, Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007, pp. 163–174.

¹¹ *Le livre noir du colonialisme, XVIe–XXIe siècle: de l’extermination à la repentance*, ed. M. Ferro, Paris: Hachette, 2004, p. 33.

multi-ethnic”), that are considered as most adequate¹² in the description of the modern world interpretation by Wolfgang Welsch “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today”¹³ and do not depart in a radical way from interculturalism. Contrary to the suggestions of the German philosopher – the concepts of interculturalism are situated, in my opinion, much closer to the concept of transculturalism than the concept of multiculturalism. Of course, there are differences: interculturalism refers to **relative cultural identity**, while in Welsch’s proposal cultural identity (“a particularistic cultural identity”¹⁴) is a construction, which is a product of imagination of the past (replaced by him with the category “transcultural identities”¹⁵). Not resigning from the evaluation and the hierarchy of the existing research projects, not holding too tightly to both Welsch’s method of argument and his concept of transculturalism, deposing any other concept¹⁶, I am looking for moderate solutions. This does not mean, of course, to challenge Welsch’s arguments, especially such conclusions (referring among other things to Montaigne’s thoughts), that: “For most of us, multiple cultural connexions are decisive in terms of our cultural formation. We are cultural hybrids”¹⁷. The position of the German philosopher in the case of forcing his theses in connection with the “new concept of culture” is understandable, although the side effects of generalization can easily be seen; the paradigm of interculturalism which was so troublesome is reduced almost to the paradigm of multiculturalism (it is another matter that Welsch gave them two short paragraphs but in the final conclusion does not even refer to the question of interculturalism¹⁸). It would appear possible to have a slightly different

¹² See amongst others K. Wilkoszewska, “Ku estetyce transkulturowej: Wprowadzenie,” in: *Estetyka transkulturowa*, ed. K. Wilkoszewska, Kraków: Universitas, 2004, p. 15.

¹³ W. Welsch, “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” in: *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. M. Featherstone, S. Lash, London: Sage, 1999, pp. 194–213.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 197.

¹⁵ “Transcultural identities comprehend a cosmopolitan side, but also a side of local affiliation” (W. Welsch, “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” *op. cit.*, p. 205); “Transcultural identity networks, woven from partly the same and from partly different threads, aren’t all of the same color and pattern” (W. Welsch, “Rethinking Identity in the Age of Globalization – a Transcultural Perspective,” in: *Aesthetics & Art Science*, 1, (2002): p. 87.

¹⁶ In Welsch’s view, the earlier concepts were either “traditional concepts of single cultures” (Samuel von Pufendorf, Johann Gottfried Herder), or continuations, meaning concepts (multiculturalism, interculturalism) only apparently breaking from them (W. Welsch, “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” *op. cit.*, pp. 194–213).

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 198.

¹⁸ See *ibidem*, pp. 196, 205.

point of view – a moderate outcome, so to speak, a conciliatory point of view. These can be found among others in the French sociologist and philosopher Jacques Demorgon, who not without reason speaks of three complementary perspectives of research which are entangled with each other: multicultural, transcultural and intercultural¹⁹. In such a context, for example, the question of a Europe that is multicultural, transcultural or intercultural, as formulated just by the French researchers at work *Dynamiques interculturelles pour l'Europe*²⁰, does not place anyone before any radical choices, and is treated as a purely rhetorical question.

II. From multiculturalism to interculturalism

The adjective “multicultural”, used by Edward F. Haskell (*Lance: A Novel about the Multicultural Men*, New York 1941) as a synonym for cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual society – in the nineteen eighties became one of the key concepts of the dictionary not only from the social sciences. The repercussions of the debate around the issue of multiculturalism, debates especially in Canada, Australia and the United States of America in the last two decades of the previous century, can be seen today in almost every sphere of cultural reflection²¹. Multiculturalism is understood not so much as a border phenomenon (as a problem of only the periphery or limits; in this case some speak of the first “phase” of multiculturalism), but as a phenomenon of the modern metropolis, the so-called glocal nodes, population hubs in the major centres of contemporary life (the second “phase” of multiculturalism is associated with the reality of New York, Tokyo, London, Berlin, Paris), and – above all – as a phenomenon of all modern societies. In the situation of a fiasco in the idea of monoethnic societies, the fall of monocultural projects and departure from ideas of radical integration (carried

¹⁹ J. Demorgon, “L’interculturel entre réception et invention: contextes, médias, concepts,” in: *Questions de Communication*, 4 (2003): p. 58.

²⁰ *Dynamiques interculturelles pour l'Europe*, ed. J. Demorgon, E.-M. Lipiansky, B. Müller, H. Nicklas, Paris: Economica – Anthropos, 2003 (chapter 4: *Une Europe multiculturelle, transculturelle, interculturelle?*, pp. 79–104). See also: *Wielokulturowość – międzykulturowość – transkulturowość w perspektywie europejskiej i pozaeuropejskiej*, ed. A. Barska, M. Korzeniowski, Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2007.

²¹ See *Dylematy wielokulturowości*, ed. W. Kałaga, Kraków: Universitas, 2004; A. Szahaj, *Et pluribus unum? Dylematy wielokulturowości i politycznej poprawności*, Kraków: Universitas, 2004; *Czy kłęska wielokulturowości?*, ed. H. Mamzer, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Fundacji Humaniora, 2008.

out by reduction of languages and regional cultures, the best example being France, and more broadly, the French model of unification) – multiculturalism signifies not only exceeding but also abandoning the ideology of cultural *melting pot*²², but it is considered a specific remedy, another way to get out of the political impasse of growing threats. This political project (signed amongst others with the name of Charles Taylor²³) is intended for the effective conduct of the fight against discrimination, nationalism, racism, anti-Semitism. It should ensure the peaceful coexistence of autochthonous and (e)migrant cultures, coexistence of various communities and social groups, political, religious, etc. within the framework of a kind of imposed democracy.

The concept of multiculturalism was taken very quickly by the American and Canadian comparatists, in the nineteen nineties it became the main subject of discussion and one of the key postulates, as evidenced by both the report on the state of American comparative literature by Charles Bernheimer in *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, written in 1993²⁴, and the XIV ICLA Congress (Edmonton, 1994)²⁵. At the same time, however, the characteristic matter is that the multiculturalism project – even though it is treated in the Bernheimer report as “a tool to promote significant reflection on cultural relations, translations, dialogue, and debate”²⁶ and although it is in fact one of the inspirations for postcolonial studies or feminist studies – from the outset, fails to meet the expectations of many representatives of comparative studies, including those who emphasize the importance of the cultural turn and recognize the obvious connection between comparative literature and the most recent anthropology, philosophy and sociology.

²² See D.Th. Goldberg, *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994, p. 4.

²³ Ch. Taylor, *Multiculturalism and “The Politics of Recognition”*, Princeton–New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 28–44.

²⁴ “The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Ch. Bernheimer, Baltimore–London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, pp. 39–48.

²⁵ *Comparative Literature Now: Theories and Practice / La Littérature comparée à l'heure actuelle: Théories et réalisations*, ed. S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, M.V. Dimić, I. Sywenky, Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999. See also: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. R. Nethersole, Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2005; *Multiculturalisme et identité en littérature et en art*, ed. J. Bessière, S. André, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002; E. Możejko: “Literatura porównawcza w dobie wielokulturowości,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1 (2001): pp. 7–17; “Między kulturą a wielokulturowością: dylematy współczesnej komparatystyki,” in: *Sporne i bezsporne problemy współczesnej wiedzy o literaturze*, ed. W. Bolecki, R. Nycz, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2002, pp. 408–422.

²⁶ *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, op. cit., p. 45.

Another point of view in relation to the Bernheimer report presents Haun Saussy's report, which avoids the old formula of "comparative literature in the age of multiculturalism"; it replaces it with the rhetorical questions: "The Age of What?", "The Age of Comparative Literature?"²⁷ Firstly, because the comparatist as a researcher of multiculturalism is reluctantly moving away from literary issues and literary studies, and becoming an analyst of the social, political, cultural, etc. conditions²⁸ to such an extent, as happens in the case of cultural studies (hence the accusations and polemics of commentators upon the Bernheimer report, amongst others Michael Riffaterre²⁹, raised in defense of comparative literature). Secondly, because such profiled multicultural studies refer to the coexistence of different groups within "closed" communities, while today's comparatist is interested in the situation of "open" communities. In such circumstances, as can be easily predicted, the appreciation of supporters of cultural comparative literature gains, e.g. the Italian researcher, political scientist Giovanni Sartori (author of the book *La sociedad multi-étnica*³⁰), who proposes to distinguish **multiculturalism** (meaning the coexistence of closed or isolated communities) from **pluriculturalism** (meaning "open" societies, the coexistence of open communities), and who advocates strongly for the second option. In the opinion of some, this solution – in itself extremely valuable – is still half-hearted, therefore further steps are taken: in contemporary cultural comparative literature, Daniel-Henri Pageaux says bluntly, key turns out to be the "transition from *multi-* to *pluri-* and from *pluri-* to *inter-*"³¹. In other words, shifting the focus from multiculturalism to pluriculturalism, from pluriculturalism however to interculturalism (the prefix *inter-* connotes "openness", instability, the fluid nature of the analyzed phenomena) is deemed to be the basic task of modern comparative studies.

²⁷ H. Saussy, "Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares: Of Memes, Hives, and Selfish Genes," in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. H. Saussy, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, pp. 24, 34. See also C. Joubert, "Le comparatisme comme critique: littérature/s, culture/s, peuple/s," in: *Comparer l'étranger: Enjeux du comparatisme en littérature*, ed. É. Baneth-Nouailhetas, C. Joubert, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2006, pp. 25–48.

²⁸ D.-H. Pageaux, "Multiculturalisme et interculturalité," *op. cit.*, pp. 165, 166.

²⁹ M. Riffaterre, "On the Complementarity of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies," in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 66–73.

³⁰ G. Sartori, *La sociedad multiétnica: Pluralismo, multiculturalismo y extranjeros*, Madrid: Taurus, 2001 (see G. Sartori, *Pluralismo, multiculturalismo e estranei: Saggio sulla società multiétnica*, Milano: Rizzoli, 2000).

³¹ D.-H. Pageaux, "Multiculturalisme et interculturalité," *op. cit.*, p. 167.

Another point of focus and exposure of the role of the intercultural paradigm does not mean either abandoning the paradigm of multiculturalism (the first paradigm is somewhat inevitable consequence of the latter), or obliteration of the fundamental differences. Multiculturalism, in extreme simplification, refers primarily to group behaviour (this is the concept of regulating the coexistence of diverse groups in a given society), interculturalism – firstly refers to the behaviour of the individual, to the principles of the formation of a person, education (not without reason, the Greek *paideia* is one of the reference points). In the case of multiculturalism this is about apparent elimination of antagonism within the multicultural unit – eliminating cultural fundamentalism), a temporary postponement³², but not the final defusion of internal tensions (an effect of inevitable conflict is amongst others the events of 11 September 2001 and the continuing war around the world), in the case of interculturalism – about interest or even fascination with a different culture, a fascination that leads to real learning about the Other, a better understanding of one's own and other cultures³³. The aim of multiculturalism turns out to be agreement (the result of undertaken negotiations; usually an agreement is found without the intention of understanding: "This is just as laudable as endeavours towards interculturality – but equally inefficient, too," notes Welsch, "since from the basis of the traditional comprehension of cultures a mutual understanding or a transgression of separating barriers cannot be achieved"³⁴), the aim of interculturalism – understanding (recognized often in perspective of hermeneutics³⁵) as a result of intercultural dialogue. Jürgen Bolten describes these two options with the evocative formulae "Nebeneinander" ["being next to

³² See W. Welsch, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," *op. cit.*, p. 197.

³³ See B. Rafoni, "Panorama de la recherche interculturelle en France," in: *Identität und Diversität: Eine interdisziplinäre Bilanz der Interkulturalitätsforschung in Deutschland und Frankreich / Identité et diversité: Etat des lieux interdisciplinaire de la recherche sur l'interculturalité en France et en Allemagne*, ed. C. Fischer, H. Harth, Ph. and V. Viallon, Berlin: Editions Avinus, 2005, p. 31.

³⁴ W. Welsch, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," *op. cit.*, p. 197.

³⁵ In Martine Abdallah-Pretceille's view interculturalism depends upon hermeneutic thinking, is a form of hermeneutics (M. Abdallah-Pretceille, "L'interculturel comme paradigme du divers," in: *Identität und Diversität: Eine interdisziplinäre Bilanz der Interkulturalitätsforschung in Deutschland und Frankreich / Identité et diversité: Etat des lieux interdisciplinaire de la recherche sur l'interculturalité en France et en Allemagne*, *op. cit.*, p. 227).

each other”] and “Miteinander” [being “together”]³⁶. It seems necessary at this point to add an important caveat, that the paradigm of interculturalism breaks and, inevitably, “corrects” the paradigm of multiculturalism; in other words, to use Bolten’s formulae, “Nebeneinander” should be treated as a starting point to “Miteinander”.

III. In the melting pot of intercultural research

It is impossible, of course, at this time, to recall the variety of topics of reflection around interculturalism (to settle the issue of terminology, to trace more closely the history of a number of related concepts and the processes of their inflation³⁷) or to determine precisely how the current field of intercultural research looks. Individual volumes of studies would probably not bring a satisfactory solution in this respect, including one of the first French works: *L’Interculturel en éducation et en sciences humaines*³⁸, nor would the debates during the 1991 conference organised by the Association Internationale pour la Recherche Interculturelle (ARIC, 1984; from 1986 the series “Espaces interculturels” is published by L’Harmattan), nor would the next collected works, amongst others those by the representatives of the Centre pour les Equipes de Recherche et d’Etudes des Situations Interculturelles (CERESI, working around the Université Toulouse-le-Mirail). The “archaeology” of intercultural research today is difficult on account, in my view, of a few fundamental causes. Firstly, in this case, it is not so much the object of study itself that decides (after all, there is a belief that “no fact is in its entirety intercultural”³⁹, that it would be an abuse, for example, to speak – by analogy to the formula of “multicultural society” – about

³⁶ J. Bolten, “Multikulturalität und Interkulturalität: Vom Nebeneinander zum Miteinander,” in: *idem, Interkulturelle Kompetenz*, Erfurt: Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung Thüringen, 2012, pp. 95–120.

³⁷ See amongst others J. Demorgon, “L’interculturel entre réception et invention: contextes, médias, concepts,” *op. cit.*, pp. 43–70; J.-P. Durix, “Synchrétisme? Acculturation? Multiculturel? Interculturel? Une simple question de terminologie?,” in: *Synchrétisme et interculturel: De Rome à l’ère postcoloniale: culture, littérature, esthétique*, ed. J.-P. Durix, Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 1997, pp. 1–12.

³⁸ *L’Interculturel en éducation et en sciences humaines*, ed. C. Clanet, Toulouse: Université de Toulouse-Le Mirail, 1985.

³⁹ M. Abdallah-Pretceille, “L’interculturel comme paradigme du divers,” *op. cit.*, p. 227.

an “intercultural society”⁴⁰), but above all the manner of interpretation (usually in the optics of pragmatics or hermeneutics) and understanding of cultural facts. Secondly, the paradigm of interculturalism considered in historical perspective is a tangle of diverse tendencies, shaped in a variety of cultural realities. In the US, the first threads of intercultural reflection arise in connection with the possibility of practicing effective policy already in the nineteen forties (in 1947 the opening in Pittsburgh of the institute of education for American diplomats: the Foreign Service Institute), in the nineteen seventies founding there of the journals *International and Intercultural Communication Annual* (1974) and *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (1977), and the foundation of the Society of Intercultural, Education, Training and Research (SIETAR, 1974). In France, similar trends are recorded in the seventies: discussions about interculturalism are initially of a practical nature (in terms of social and educational analysis related to the problem of migration and processes of decolonization), in the eighties, in turn, they started to influence variously profiled research. Thirdly, as a consequence, current strategies for studying interculturalism do not lend themselves to any generalisation – recently, intercultural research has been carried out within such diverse fields as education, cultural studies, political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, economics, law, also media studies, literary criticism, and cultural comparative literature.

Naturally, modern researchers are trying to define interculturalism in various perspectives and identify some specific features of the intercultural research undertaken by them. Three positions can be considered typical. Béatrice Rafoni, establishing their individuality in a purely theoretical plane, emphasizes the most general, “formal” conditions, namely the consideration of the subject of research in the dynamic aspect, the existence of direct interpersonal or intergroup contact, and also the choice of an empirical approach, bringing case studies in the final analysis⁴¹. Edmond-Marc Lipiansky as a psychologist accents the *praxis* sphere, and therefore treats all mechanisms of exchange (clothes, food, TV programmes), interactions and communication, both direct communication (e.g. meetings) and indirect (e.g. the media)⁴², not for-

⁴⁰ It is true that Gilles Verbunt uses such a formula in the title of his book, but points out that so far “no nation has created a real intercultural society” (G. Verbunt, *La société interculturelle: Vivre la diversité humaine*, Paris: Seuil, 2001, p. 10).

⁴¹ B. Rafoni, “Panorama de la recherche interculturelle en France,” *op. cit.*, p. 26.

⁴² E.-M. Lipiansky, “La communication interculturelle,” in: *Introduction aux Sciences de l'Information et de la Communication*, ed. D. Benoît, Paris: Les Editions d'Organisation, 1995, pp. 190–191.

getting about the related methodology – in his belief – to the comparative literature model and the model of cross-cultural studies. However, Claude Clanet in turn, thinking about the problem of mass immigration in the French suburbs explains interculturalism as “the totality of mental processes, intellectual, group, individual, etc.”⁴³, leading to the preservation of relative cultural identity and development of certain norms of behaviour between partners of dialogue. Martine Abdallah-Pretceille, who highlights the importance of ethics and extracts the most important dimensions of intercultural studies, summarizes these positions to some extent. Firstly, the **conceptual dimension** – in relation to the understanding of culture and the Other and the understanding of cultural diversity (culture is not recognized as an independent, homogeneous whole, according to the Herderian metaphor of autonomous “islands” or “spheres”, with which Welsch otherwise covers interculturalism⁴⁴, but as a process and interaction). Secondly, the **methodological dimension**: an interdisciplinary approach is assumed, combining competencies from various disciplines, which enables the study of the dynamics and complexity of social phenomena (it is characteristic that, according to the French researcher this is a perspective far from the essentialist perspective of comparative literature, namely traditional comparative literature). Thirdly, the **ethical dimension**, decides about the fact that the aim of the research turns out to be not so much knowledge for its own sake of different cultures in isolation (not so much seeing some common traits – standards of behaviour, dress, religion), but knowledge of the interactions taking place between these cultures, making it possible to see the diversity, respect that variety and treat it as a common value⁴⁵.

The fact of omitting the mentioned proposals of perspectives of literary criticism and comparative literature, of course, does not prejudice anything; such commentaries indeed exist, for example the volume *Figures de l'interculturalité*⁴⁶. In the light of juxtaposed opinions is not difficult,

⁴³ C. Clanet, *L'interculturel, introduction aux approches interculturelles en éducation et en sciences humaines*, Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1990, p. 21.

⁴⁴ W. Welsch, “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” *op. cit.*, pp. 195–197.

⁴⁵ M. Abdallah-Pretceille, *L'éducation interculturelle*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999, p. 52.

⁴⁶ The editors of the collective volume see many search perspectives in the interpretation of literary texts, as they call it, “figures of intercultural dialectics”, revealed in a research situation: the relationship between different languages, which lead to a deeper understanding of the relationship between cultures; ethnic and social stereotypes; the role of the sender and the recipient; special dialogical cases – “foreign words” (in terms of quotations, borrowings, linguistic calques); the questions of carnality and sexuality

however, be tempted to the conclusion closing this part of the discussion – the issues of interculturalism at first glance, are situated beyond the perspective of comparative literature. This is not just on account of the accented aspect of direct relationships, contacts, exchange, or extreme empirical orientation (and therefore a departure from the erstwhile postulates of Etiemble, staunchly criticising the study of “relations of fact”). In the view of Abdallah-Pretceille the essence of interculturalism turns out to be relationality and interactivity⁴⁷, which at the same time means it is impossible to reduce the question of interculturalism to **passive – ethnocentric** – comparison of cultures, which is proposed by traditional (neo-positivist, hegemonic, etc.) comparative literature.

It is difficult, however, at the same time not to notice that today interculturalism situates itself at the centre of attention of the so-called new comparative literature, among other things, due to translation. Contemporary artistic practices: literature (literature in translation), dance, theatre, film, photography, sculpture, music⁴⁸, remaining, as is otherwise known, in a circle of particular interest of comparatists since the first attempt to create interdisciplinary comparative literature, and especially from the time of Henry H.H. Remak in 1961, is undoubtedly the perfect space for (in)direct meetings and intercultural exchange. This point of view is shared by many American and Western European comparatists, including Daniel-Henri Pageaux (author amongst others of the text “Multiculturalisme et interculturalité” and the book *L’œil en main: Pour une poétique de la médiation*⁴⁹), Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek (author of the text “The New Humanities: The Intercultural, the Comparative, and the Interdisciplinary”⁵⁰; organiser in 2002 of the panel “Interculturality, Multiculturality, and Comparative Cultural Studies”), and also Polish comparatists, as testified by Marta Skwara with “Intertekstualność a interkulturowość – perspektywa filologiczna” [“Intertextuality and

issues considered in the intercultural perspective; records of interpretations of reality (problems of space, places, migration, etc.) (J. Bres, C. Détrie, P. Siblot, “Présentation,” in: *Figures de l’interculturalité*, ed. J. Bres, C. Détrie, P. Siblot, Montpellier: Presses de l’Université Paul Valéry, 1996, pp. 7–9). See also M. Abdallah-Pretceille, L. Porcher, *Diagonales de la communication interculturelle*, Paris: Anthropos, 1999.

⁴⁷ M. Abdallah-Pretceille, “Compétence culturelle, compétence interculturelle: Pour une anthropologie de la communication,” in: *Le Français dans le Monde*, 1 (1996) (“Cultures, Culture”): p. 35.

⁴⁸ See S. Thiéblemont-Dollet, “Introduction,” *op. cit.*, pp. 11–16.

⁴⁹ D.-H. Pageaux, *L’œil en main: Pour une poétique de la médiation*, Paris: Éd. Jean Maisonneuve, 2009.

⁵⁰ S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, “The New Humanities: The Intercultural, the Comparative, and the Interdisciplinary,” *op. cit.*, pp. 45–68.

Interculturalism – Philological Perspectives”]⁵¹ at the IV Congress of Polish Studies Abroad (“Polish Studies Without Borders”, at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków, 9–11 October 2008) and the collective volume *Dialog międzykulturowy w (o) literaturze polskiej* [*Intercultural dialogue in (about) Polish literature*]⁵².

The exceptionally clear, and at the same time inspiring approach presented by Pageaux, who when thinking about issues such as “contact”, “zone”, “national literature”, “regional literature”, “hybridization”, “creolization”, identifies three potential spheres of reflection in the field, which would need to be called **intercultural comparative studies**⁵³. In the equation, firstly, long since well known to comparatists, is the describing of the mechanisms of direct literary contacts, exchanges, meetings, but at the same time taking into account the realities of the cultural turn and the ethical turn; secondly – interpreting this kind of text, which the Frenchman describes with the name “literature of mediation”⁵⁴ [*littérature de médiation*] (for its realisation he considers first and foremost letters, reportage, travel literature, interviews, critical texts, especially essays); thirdly – explaining through the prism of literature of social phenomena, provoked by the situation of broadly defined “acculturation” or, as Pageaux would prefer to say after the Cuban ethnologist Fernando Ortiz, “transculturation”. The vision of the discipline outlined by the French comparatist, constitutes in fact a form of anthropology of literature, is finally brought to the dimension of interculturalism, and the whole idea is given by the terse definition – a “dialogue of cultures: this is how I would spontaneously translate »interculturalism«”⁵⁵. Pageaux, as can easily be seen, on this occasion, does not deal with translation in the strict sense, but using the formula “dialogue of cultures”, suggests a research horizon exposing, inevitably, mechanisms and operations of **intercultural translation**.

⁵¹ M. Skwara, “Intertekstualność a interkulturowość – perspektywa filologiczna,” in: *Polonistyka bez granic*, vol. 1: *Wiedza o literaturze i kulturze*, IV Kongres Polonistyki Zagranicznej “Polonistyka bez granic” (Kraków, 9–11 October 2008), ed. R. Nycz, W. Miodunka, T. Kunz, Kraków: Universitas, 2010, pp. 357–368.

⁵² *Dialog międzykulturowy w (o) literaturze polskiej*, ed. M. Skwara, K. Krasoń, J. Kazimierski, Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 2008.

⁵³ D.-H. Pageaux, “Multiculturalisme et interculturalité,” *op. cit.*, pp. 168–169.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 168, 171.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 168.

IV. Comparative literature and translation

We may risk the hypothesis that the perspective of interculturalism and the development of intercultural studies is one of the factors (in) directly influencing the unprecedented interest in translation and its importance in the field of modern comparative studies. Expansion of translation in today's comparative studies (cultural comparative literature) started not coincidentally at the same time as the expansion of the idea of interculturalism. Suffice to say that at the peak of development in intercultural research, which in the eighties entered a phase of multi-vector reflection (after the initial analysis phase in the seventies, mainly related if we recall, to education and phenomena of migration), Western European comparatists took on the issue of translation "afresh", as evidenced by amongst others by Claudio Guillén's book *The Challenge of Comparative Literature*, the comparatist, who is of the opinion that "the study of translation (...) beyond doubt a subject of fundamental importance to comparative studies"⁵⁶, or the XI ICLA Congress, organised in Paris in 1985 (collective edition *La Traduction dans le développement des littératures / Translation in the Development of Literatures*⁵⁷ is published under the editorship of prominent theorists of translation: José Lambert, André Lefevere, and also Daniel-Henri Pageaux and Eva Kushner). In the following years, as is known, in the area of comparative studies there is a perceptible change in the manner of perceiving the **phenomenon of translation**, beginning with the gradual demolition of the hierarchy of issues set in previous decades, and at the same time with the previously applicable model of comparative literature. This reorientation of thinking translates into spectacular gestures: George Steiner in the course of his lecture "What is Comparative Literature?", given at Oxford University 11th October 1994, eloquently redefines the scope of the discipline: "In brief, comparative literature is an art of understanding centred in the eventuality and defeats of translation"⁵⁸. Jean-René Ladmiral (philosopher, translator

⁵⁶ C. Guillén, *The Challenge of Comparative Literature* [1985], trans. into English C. Franzen, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 49.

⁵⁷ *La Traduction dans le développement des littératures / Translation in the Development of Literatures, Proceedings of the XIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*, ed. J. Lambert, A. Lefevere, D.-H. Pageaux, E. Kushner, Bern-Berlin-Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993.

⁵⁸ G. Steiner, "What is Comparative Literature?: An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 11 October, 1994," Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 10.

of Adorno and Habermas, and also a promoter of intercultural studies) strongly emphasizes that “[c]omparative literature depends upon translation”⁵⁹. Yves Chevrel in turn, construes a surprising historical parallel – so using the formula *l’œuvre étrangère*⁶⁰ (which means both the text in a foreign language and its translation into another language) and recalls in passing that the first department for comparative literature in France, at the Sorbonne, established in 1830 and led by Claude Fauriel, was called *chaire de littérature étrangère*, consciously exposes the close relationship between comparative literature and literature in a foreign language and its translated versions.

Translation (literary), however, around which there are attempts to newly reconstruct an entire discipline – I am referring to the efforts of researchers such as André Lefevere, Susan Bassnett, George Steiner, Yves Chevrel, Emily Apter⁶¹ – was, within comparative literature for the next decade of the twentieth century, either ignored or deliberately underestimated and marginalized (i.e. treated as so-called auxiliary material, one of the forms of reception of literatures of many languages). It is enough to mention the classic study by Paul van Tieghem from the thirties *La littérature comparée* (in chapter 7 “mesology” is separated as a comparative discipline, including amongst others the issue of “translations and translators”⁶²) or René Wellek’s opinions from the fifties about translation as a side issue⁶³. Very little probably changed in this respect – judging from today’s point of view – the important, but lonely voice of René

⁵⁹ J.-R. Ladmiral, *Traduire: théorèmes pour la traduction*, Paris: Gallimard, 1994, p. VIII.

⁶⁰ Y. Chevrel, “L’œuvre étrangère,” in: *idem*, *La littérature comparée*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989, p. 11 ff. Yves Chevrel also proposes the definition “texte étranger” as editor of the special number *Revue de Littérature Comparée* (1989, No. 2: “Le Texte étranger: l’œuvre littéraire en traduction”).

⁶¹ See amongst others A. Lefevere, *Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature. Context*, New York: Modern Language Association, 1992; S. Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford–Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993; G. Steiner, “What is Comparative Literature?” *op. cit.*; Y. Chevrel, *La littérature comparée*, *op. cit.*; E. Apter, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*, Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.

⁶² P. van Tieghem, “Les intermédiaires,” in: *idem*, *La littérature comparée*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1931, pp. 152–167.

⁶³ R. Wellek, “The Crisis of Comparative Literature,” in: *Comparative Literature: Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association* [University of North Carolina, September 8–12, 1958], vol. 1, ed. W.P. Friederich, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959, p. 151.

Etiemble⁶⁴, changed very little of the efforts at structuralist ordering of the phenomena of translation undertaken by Dionýz Ďurišin⁶⁵. Translation, of course, has never been definitively removed from comparative literature projects, but also within the scope of traditional, neopositivist oriented comparative research has never through the years gained the appropriate rank – it was considered in an otherwise generally linguistic light while maintaining a safe distance with respect to such philosophical proposals as those from Friedrich Schleiermacher (“Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens”⁶⁶, 1813) or Walter Benjamin (“Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers”⁶⁷, 1923), to which currently people are willingly returning.

The scepticism about translation revealed or also manifested by successive generations of European comparatists resulted not only because of the lack of interest in an “art in crisis”⁶⁸, to use Efim Etkind’s formula, not only because of the suspect status of translation (*traduttore traditore*) or even the fear of accusations of unprofessional work (lack of language skills), but mainly because of the essentialist approach – proceeding on the principle that comparative literature consists of comparing literature in the original, so comparison deprived of translation as a means of mediatization. A radical change of optics can easily be seen in subsequent reports by US comparatists: while in the so-called Levin (1965)

⁶⁴ R. Etiemble, *The Crisis in Comparative Literature*, trans. H. Weisinger, G. Joyaux, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966 (see *Translators and Translations*, p. 22 ff); R. Etiemble, *Comparaison n'est pas raison: La crise de la littérature comparée*, Paris: Gallimard, 1963 (see *Traducteurs et traductions*, p. 44 ff).

⁶⁵ D. Ďurišin: *Problémy literárnej komparatistiky*, Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Slovenskej Akadémie Vied, 1967; *Teória literárnej komparatistiky*, Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ, 1975.

⁶⁶ F. Schleiermacher, “Über die verschiedenen Methoden des Übersetzens [1813],” in: *Sämtliche Werke, Dritte Abteilung: Zur Philosophie*, vol. 2, Berlin: Reimer, 1838, pp. 207–245 (see F. Schleiermacher, “On the Different Methods of Translating,” in: *Translating Literature: The German Tradition from Luther to Rosenzweig*, ed. and trans. A. Lefevere, Assen–Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1977, pp. 67–89).

⁶⁷ Walter Benjamin’s commentary, concerning the nature of language and the translator’s mission constitutes the introduction to the translation of the poem cycle – *Tableaux Parisiens* [*Parisian Scenes*] – from the Baudelairean *Flowers of Evil* (see W. Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” in: *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 1: 1913–1926, ed. M. Bullock, M.W. Jennings, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996, pp. 253–263; see first edition: W. Benjamin, “Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers,” in: Ch. Baudelaire, “*Tableaux parisiens*”: *Deutsche Übertragung mit einem Vorwort über die Aufgabe des Übersetzers*, Heidelberg: Verlag von Richard Weissbach, 1923, pp. VII–XVII).

⁶⁸ E. Etkind, *Un art en crise: Essai de poétique de la traduction poétique*, Lausanne: L’Âge d’Homme, 1982.

and Greene (1975)⁶⁹ reports literary translation – apart from a few exceptions – is something incongruous and somewhat forbidden in comparative practice (only the original should be examined hence the need to learn many, including distant, languages), as much as in the Bernheimer (1993) and Saussy (2004)⁷⁰ reports it receives a diametrically opposite interpretation (in the first of the reports it falls to him to name an important tool for the fight against ethnocentrism). Briefly concluding, the particular value of translation (literature in translation) exposed in the last three decades, is today treated as a phenomenon not only desirable in the comparative literature field of reflection, opening up new research perspectives, but – as a consequence – is to a large extent has a decisive role in the current potential development of the discipline.

V. Translations

The “translation turn” taking place in comparative studies in the nineteen nineties led to the recognition of translation as the main driving force of modern comparative literature. At the same time it again seeks common research perspectives with translation studies in the moment of the cultural turn (the same turn in translation studies, to say it in a nutshell, led to treatment of translation as an image of the Other in intercultural dialogue⁷¹). Each of the disciplines in previous decades went through distinct developmental phases: translation studies – especially in connection with various, “loosely connected”⁷² of the paradigms of translation studies⁷³, multiplying since the seventies, oriented to the language of translation⁷⁴ and the target culture (primarily

⁶⁹ See “The Levin Report, 1965” and “The Greene Report, 1975” (*Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21–27, 28–38).

⁷⁰ “The Bernheimer Report, 1993,” *op. cit.*, pp. 39–48; H. Saussy, “Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from Fresh Nightmares,” *op. cit.*, pp. 3–42.

⁷¹ See S. Bassnett, A. Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, Clevedon–Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1998.

⁷² G. Toury, “The Notion of ‘Assumed Translation’: An Invitation to a New Discussion,” in: *Letterlijkheid, Woordelijkheid / Literality, Verbality*, ed. H. Bloemen, E. Hertog, W. Segers, Antwerpen–Harmelen: Fantom, 1995, p. 135.

⁷³ The term was coined by James S. Holmes, a researcher who was one of the first to depart from linguistic translation studies (*The Name and Nature of Translation Studies*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 1972).

⁷⁴ Perspectives of translation studies – in a situation oriented translation into the target language – is clearly characterised by André Lefevere: translation may be “potentially subversive” or “potentially conservative” (A. Lefevere, “Translation: Its Genealogy

it is necessary to note the importance of polysystemic research⁷⁵ and the school of the manipulators⁷⁶, proposals from Itamar Even-Zohar, James Holmes, José Lambert, Gideon Toury, André Lefevere, Susan Bassnett). In turn comparative literature – especially in connection with interdisciplinary research paradigms (an effect of Henry H.H. Remak's initiative), refers in passing to **new “translation” questions**. After the period in which translation studies and comparative literature develop as “independent” fields of research⁷⁷, there comes a time of permissible pacts⁷⁸. The situation is, of course, neither explicit nor a foregone conclusion; the authors of some of today's projects under the banner of new translation studies treat comparative studies as sub-discipline of translation studies (e.g. Susan Bassnett⁷⁹), other authors eagerly distance themselves from all comparative literature concepts (e.g. Mary Snell-Hornby⁸⁰; this point of view undoubtedly is taken by Piotr Bukowski and Magda Heydel, editors of the recently published, valuable anthology *Współczesne teorie przekładu* [*Contemporary Theories of Translation*]⁸¹).

in the West,” in: *Translation, History & Culture*, ed. S. Bassnett, A. Lefevere, London: Pinter Publishers, 1990, p. 27).

⁷⁵ See amongst others I. Even-Zohar, “The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem,” in: *Poetics Today*, 1, Vol. 11 (1990): pp. 9–51.

⁷⁶ *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*, ed. T. Hermans, London: Croom Helm, 1985.

⁷⁷ Tamara Brzostowska-Tereszkiewicz looks at the issue of the split and dependencies in detail in the article “Komparatystyka literacka wobec translatoologii” (*op. cit.*, p. 281 ff). See also: T. Bilczewski, “»Czytać po wieży Babel«: Komparatystyka – hermeneutyka – przekład,” in: *Hermeneutyka i literatura – ku nowej koiné*, ed. K. Kuczyńska-Koschany, M. Januszkiewicz, Poznań: Wydawnictwo “Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne”, 2006, pp. 95–111 (see T. Bilczewski, *Komparatystyka i interpretacja: Nowoczesne badania porównawcze wobec translatoologii*, Kraków: Universitas, 2010, pp. 107–134); E. Możejko, “Przekład w kontekście studiów porównawczych,” in: *Komparatystyka literacka a przekład*, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–48.

⁷⁸ A testament to this is, amongst others, the volume *Kultura w stanie przekładu: Translatoologia – komparatystyka – transkulturowość*, ed. W. Bolecki, E. Kraskowska, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2012 (see particularly part 1: *Translatoologia i komparatystyka: miejsca wspólne*, pp. 13–68).

⁷⁹ See S. Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*, *op. cit.*, p. 11; *Translation, History & Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. 12; S. Bassnett, “Preface,” in: S. Bassnett, A. Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, *op. cit.*, p. VIII.

⁸⁰ See M. Snell-Hornby, *The Turns of Translation Studies: New Paradigms or Shifting Viewpoints?*, Amsterdam–Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006, pp. 35, 70, 174. See also M. Snell-Hornby, *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, Amsterdam–Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1988, p. 22.

⁸¹ See P. Bukowski, M. Heydel, “Wprowadzenie: Przekład – język – literatura,” in: *Współczesne teorie przekładu. Antologia*, ed. P. Bukowski, M. Heydel, Kraków: Znak, 2009, pp. 5–37.

In Bassnett's proposal from the beginning of the nineties we reach a specific take on comparative literature through new studies of translation (the development of translation studies – declares the author of *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* – means the decline of comparative literature⁸²). Chevrel⁸³ and Steiner⁸⁴ in turn remain “with comparative literature”, its autonomy, and it is possible to therefore conventionally say that take a more moderate stance. Both unconditionally locate the translation in the centre of all comparative literature activities. The first of these understands translation narrowly (as literary translation), speaks of a “new field of literary research, and even a new discipline”⁸⁵, whereby comparative literature is treated as a tool to get to know the Other, to enable a better understanding of their own cultural identities⁸⁶. The second however – a student of the classics of hermeneutics, Schleiermacher, Gadamer, Ricoeur – after the time of the book *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* understands translation as the broadly understood art of translation, both as an intra-linguistic translation as well as an extra-linguistic translation (“inside or between languages,” – he concludes – “human communication equals translation”⁸⁷). It is worth immediately adding in passing that modern comparative literature is interested not only in “proper” translation, translated literature, in other words: interlingual translation, as Roman Jakobson would say, not just, using the formula from the author of *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation* – intralingual translation but also intersemiotic translation (transmutation)⁸⁸ and, to use Edward Balcerzan's supplementary formula: “intrasemiotic translation” (namely internal translation, which is “subject to the same rules as intralinguistic translation, but it is not a linguistic

⁸² S. Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*, op. cit., p. 45 (see chapter 7: *From Comparative Literature to Translation Studies*, pp. 138–161).

⁸³ Y. Chevrel, “La littérature comparée et la quête d'un territoire,” in: *Comparer l'étranger*, op. cit., p. 55 ff.

⁸⁴ G. Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, New York–London: Oxford University Press, 1975 (chapter 1: *Understanding as Translation*, pp. 1–50).

⁸⁵ Y. Chevrel, “La littérature comparée et la quête d'un territoire,” op. cit., p. 55.

⁸⁶ Y. Chevrel, *La littérature comparée*, op. cit., p. 123.

⁸⁷ G. Steiner, “Understanding as Translation,” op. cit., p. 47 (italics in original). In the text “Translation as *conditio humana*” Steiner includes a “hermeneutic motion” of translation: 1. “trust” of the translator 2. step “invasive”; 3. “incorporation”; 4. “restitution” (see G. Steiner, “Translation as *conditio humana*,” in: *Übersetzung – Translation – Traduction: An International Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. H. Kittel, A.P. Frank, N. Greiner, T. Hermans, W. Koller, J. Lambert, F. Paul, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004, pp. 6–8).

⁸⁸ See R. Jakobson, “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation,” in: *On Translation*, ed. R. Brower, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959, p. 233.

phenomenon”⁸⁹). Two final translation modes; incidentally, are situated today in light of intertextuality and intermediality, they are dealt with in the plane of intertextual comparative studies and – especially – in intermedial comparative studies⁹⁰.

In the context of the mentioned proposals (Bassnett, Chevrel, Steiner) it can be easily seen that two translation issues are coming into play which are different, yet closely linked in the space of comparative reflections, namely **literary translation as such** (translated literature) and **translation as a form of interpretation**, giving birth to various **theories of translation**. Modern comparative literature clearly exposes two main trends in translation theory: hermeneutic (Steiner) and “postcolonial” (Spivak, Apter). Despite the existing fundamental differences between them, there is no doubt that ethics is crucial both for the hermeneutic paradigm, and for the interventionist post-colonial paradigm. In the opinion of researchers such as Apter the neutral treatment of translation after September 11, 2001 proves to be impossible – translation, on the one hand becomes above all a necessary condition for the functioning of the modern world, a theatre of war (in other words, in the multicultural dimension, if you agree to the comparatist’s formula that “the translation zone is a war zone”⁹¹), while on the other – more importantly for cultural comparative literature and what should be here placed in the perspective of interculturalism and transculturality – meets post-colonial aspirations, penetrating multicultural areas, creating like in Apollinaire’s *Zone*, places and languages “in-translation”⁹² (this way of thinking leads Apter in the book *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* to the conclusion that “[g]lobal translation is another name for comparative literature”⁹³). It should be said that interculturalism and transculturalism are also heading in a similar direction in *Death of a Discipline* by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak together with her idea of “planetarity”. This idea is based on the existence of free living space and a continuous effort of translation in the conditions of everyday life (translation “not from language to language but from body to ethical semiosis, that

⁸⁹ E. Balcerzan, “Słowo wstępne. (Przekład całkowity, czyli o potędze hiperboli)” in: P. Ricoeur, P. Torop, *O tłumaczeniu*, trans. T. Swoboda, S. Ułaszek, introduction E. Balcerzan, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2008, p. 22.

⁹⁰ See A. Hejmej, “Introduction,” in: *idem*, *Music in Literature: Perspectives of Interdisciplinary Comparative Literature*, trans. L. Davidson, Frankfurt am Main–Berlin–Bruxelles–New York–Oxford–Warszawa–Wien: Peter Lang, 2014, p. 27 ff.

⁹¹ E. Apter, *The Translation Zone*, *op. cit.*, p. XI.

⁹² *Ibidem*, pp. 6, 243.

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. XI.

incessant shuttle that is a »life«⁹⁴), on action analogous to such projects as those undertaken by “Doctors Without Frontiers”⁹⁵.

In the circumstances of the expansion of new theories of translation the question of literary translation gains new meaning. Impropriety would argue that the concept of multiculturalism dispensed with translation, interpretation, literature in translation. Multiculturalism understood after Jürgen Bolten as “Nebeneinander”, so to speak, only ostensibly “eliminates” translation (an effect of ghettoization and – especially – political gesture of distancing, or even nationalism). Multicultural society as a society of “closed” communities (following the interpretation of Giovanni Sartori) does not occur without literary translation, but as a rule it usually has the character, as Antoine Berman would say, of being “ethnocentric”, “hypertextual” and “Platonic”⁹⁶, it becomes – like it or not – an instrument of political play. Taking into account the three obvious facts, namely the existence of multicultural societies (multiculturalism at “ground zero”⁹⁷ of cultural research), potential intercultural dialogue as conscious act, voluntary and unforced (interculturalism as a mechanism of cultural transgression, not a “cosmetic”⁹⁸ procedure, to recall Welsch’s definition), and finally the formation of transcultural entity (transculturalism as a result of spontaneous cultural processes, often unintentional and unconscious), leads here to a final conclusion in relation to interculturalism and translation. Well, in the case of interculturalism, which – unlike transculturalism – assumes foreignness/otherness, there is a possibility of interpretation, assimilation, transgression. The whole point of this is that translation is (or more carefully: may be), as Paul Ricoeur calls the “**linguistic hospitality**”⁹⁹, or – for him not to be un-

⁹⁴ G.Ch. Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003, p. 13.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

⁹⁶ Antoine Berman, remaining in the circle of inspiration and thinking amongst others of Schleiermacher and Benjamin accuses Western translation of (under the sign of *belles infidèles*) three sins. He says that it is: **ethnocentric** (importing everything into their own culture, value norms, etc.), **hypertextual** (formal transformation on the model of another existing text, amongst others imitation, parody, pastiche, adaptation, plagiarism), **Platonic** (this formula is not explained ...) (see A. Berman, *La Traduction et la lettre ou l'auberge du lointain*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1999, p. 27).

⁹⁷ E. Rewers, “Transkulturowość czy globalność? Dwa dyskursy o kondycji postnowoczesnej,” in: *Dylematy wielokulturowości, op. cit.*, p. 119 ff.

⁹⁸ W. Welsch, “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” *op. cit.*, p. 196.

⁹⁹ P. Ricoeur: “Translation as Challenge and Source of Happiness,” in: *idem*, *On Translation*, trans. E. Brennan, London–New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 10 (see P. Ricoeur, “Défi et bonheur de la traduction,” in: *idem*, *Sur la traduction*, Paris: Bayard, 2004,

dervalued, Antoine Berman – individual “desire to translate”¹⁰⁰. Without doubt it is in this way that he thinks about translation and also Ryszard Kapuściński, when he exposes its importance in a multicultural world and recognizes the translator as a “figure of the twentieth century”¹⁰¹.

Briefly concluding: the essence of interculturalism in the perspective of cultural comparative literature turns out to be, on the one hand, widely understood **intercultural translation and understanding giving rise to engagement, empathy, solidarity** (a clear role is played here by theories of translation, and the phenomenon of literature in translation), and on the other side – no less importantly – **the idea of a society formed in the moment of the fall or end of the “old” colonialism**. Not without reason, therefore that the comparatist Jean-Marc Moura claims that postcolonial literature in the modern world constitutes an important form of “inter-cultural negotiation”¹⁰² and that postcolonial criticism, inspired by cultural studies, is interested in literature as a result of “disturbed intercultural exchange”¹⁰³.

p. 19); “The Paradigm of Translation,” in: *idem*, *On Translation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 29 (see P. Ricoeur, “Le paradigme de la traduction,” in: *idem*, *Sur la traduction*, *op. cit.*, pp. 43, 52).

¹⁰⁰ P. Ricoeur: “A »Passage«: Translating the Untranslatable,” in: *idem*, *On Translation*, *op. cit.*, p. 32 (see P. Ricoeur, “Un »passage«: traduire l'intraduisible,” in: *idem*, *Sur la traduction*, *op. cit.*, p. 57); P. Ricoeur, “The Paradigm of Translation,” *op. cit.*, p. 21 (see P. Ricoeur, “Le paradigme de la traduction,” *op. cit.*, p. 38).

¹⁰¹ Kapuściński's text “Tłumacz – postać XXI wieku” was presented during I World Congress of Translators of Polish Literature in May 2005 in Kraków (see R. Kapuściński, “Tłumacz – postać XXI wieku,” in: *Podróże z Ryszardem Kapuścińskim: opowieści trzynastu tłumaczy*, ed. B. Dudko, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2007, pp. 7–16; also in: *Pisarze polscy o sztuce przekładu: 1440–2005. Antologia*, selected and edited by E. Balcerzan, E. Rajewska, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2007, pp. 466–471).

¹⁰² J.-M. Moura, “Critique postcoloniale et échanges culturels,” in: *Frontières et passages: Les échanges culturels et littéraires*, Actes du XXVIIIe Congrès de la Société Française de Littérature Générale et Comparée, Rouen 15–17 October 1998, ed. Ch. Fouquier, D. Mortier, Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 1999, p. 243.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*, p. 237.

9. "THE UNPRESENTED WORLD". KISIEL'S FEUILLETON

I. The "alchemy" of the feuilleton

Stefan Kisielewski's feuilleton, to which I refer in the title – "Świat nie przedstawiony" ["The Unpresented World"]¹ – appeared in *Tygodnik Powszechny* in 1983. In that year, after a two-year break caused by martial law, Kisiel started his seventh series of feature articles titled *Widziane inaczej* [Seen Differently] in the pages of the Kraków newspaper. The significance of said text in the feuilletonist's output is best evidenced by the fact that it appears in the author's selection, among the "representative feuilletons of each year"², in the volume *Lata poślacane, lata szare: Wybór felietonów z lat 1945–1987* [Gilded Years, Gray Years: Selection of Feuilletons from the Years 1945–1987]³, summarising four decades of working with *Tygodnik Powszechny*. In reading "The Unpresented World", and also while reading other feuilletons, I am interested, however, not only by the question of evaluation, the author's organisation of particular texts, creating a typology or hierarchy, but above all by **the practise of feuilletonism – especially in the personal, private**, internal need (*nota bene* constantly questioning) to be a feuilletonist. In other words, they take on not so much the formal features of a feuilleton (meaning the manner of reasoning and argument, *dispositio*, all the specificities of the genre – determined by the French word *feuilleton* – formerly shaped amongst others on the pages of *Le Journal*

¹ S. Kisielewski / Kisiel, *Lata poślacane, lata szare: Wybór felietonów z lat 1945–1987*, Kraków: Znak, 1989, pp. 650–653 (first edition: S. Kisielewski, "Świat nie przedstawiony," in: *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 49 (1983): p. 8).

² S. Kisielewski, "Słowo wstępne," in: *idem, Lata poślacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 6.

³ This is the third chronological selection of feuilletons by Kisiel; the previously published volumes were: *Rzeczy małe* (Warsaw: Pax, 1956) and *100 razy głową w ściany* (Paris: Éditions du Dialogue, 1972).

des Débats), not so much important language issues⁴, as the importance of this activity for Kisielewski himself, who considered his own feuilletonistic creativity a kind of “**diary of the soul**”⁵.

The indicated issues have already been repeatedly discussed and they are broadly recognised. It is well known that Kisiel basically stuck with the “classical” feuilleton, governed by the schema: casual observation of current reality – generalisation (relating directly or indirectly to the political sphere) – and the point. However, he introduced a number of innovations (sarcasm, humour, mockery, perversity⁶, polemicism, abruptness, fluency, etc.), that came about as a result of the running battle with various forms of censorship and which ultimately determine the phenomenon termed as “Kisiel’s feuilleton”. The nonconformism, humour, antitheticism, perversity of the feuilletonist bring the desired effect:

[T]he role of the “heretic in the pulpit” around these feuilletons creates many misunderstandings. Some say that in them the author is *porte parole* so a spokesman for *Tygodnik*, others, the *l’enfant terrible* or perhaps *l’éléphant terrible*, while still others claim that, that I wield my wallet like a jester and answer to no-one. I won’t argue or try to opt for any of these three concepts: all I think are honorable, and the multitude of judgments provides only about wealth.⁷

In the context of this position and mode of writing, very characteristic for Kisiel, I would like to formulate the fundamental problem here, referring to the metaphorical interpretation – the formula “the unrepresented world”. First and foremost I am interested in **the identity of the feuilletonist and his interiorized image of the world**, or most generally

⁴ Magdalena Bondkowska for example thinks that “Kisiel’s hard-hitting attitude towards language is an expression of the same attitude, which can be seen in the New Wave poets, and that was a reaction to the newspeak, to the phrases of propaganda and official language” (M. Bondkowska, *Struktura językowa felietonu dekady 1968–1978*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper, 2005, p. 59). See also: *Dysonanse: Twórczość Stefana Kisielewskiego (1911–1991)*, ed. A. Hejmej, K. Hawryszków, K. Cudzych-Budniak, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2011 (part 3: *Felietonistyka Kisielewskiego i reperkusje*, pp. 99–182); M. Mateja, *Mowa umowna: O felietonach Kisielewskiego*, Toruń: Dom Wydawniczy Duet, 2012.

⁵ S. Kisielewski, “Słowo wstępne,” *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁶ As Kisielewski maintains: “Man is naturally perverse, he likes to be frightened, teased, excited (...). Of course, for the satisfaction of that perversity conflict is needed and is directed inward, against himself: he who does not bully themselves, is not a man and has not experienced one of the greatest human pleasures” (S. Kisielewski, “Przykrości w przyjemności przemienione [1965],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare*, *op. cit.*, p. 314).

⁷ S. Kisielewski, “Piętnastolecie [1960],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare*, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

speaking: the process of internal "decolonisation", **Kisielewski's thinking**, whose singularity is perhaps best shown by the feuilletonist's work.

In such circumstances, I think, a fundamental question should immediately be asked about the reason for staying with feuilletons for nearly 50 years. Kisiel, as is known, wrote feuilletons for *Tygodnik Powszechny* starting in 1945 (he was connected to the editorship from 29 April 1945 to 25 March 1990, when they definitively broke their cooperation). He was taken to *Tygodnik Powszechny* with a view to the music department; his first text – "Życie muzyczne Krakowa" ["The Musical Life of Kraków"] – appeared in the 6th number of the Kraków gazette, but very quickly, just like before the war in *Bunt Młodych* (1936), started to write on political themes. His first feuilleton "Sandauer w opałach" ["Sandauer in Troubles"] appeared on 5 August 1945⁸, opened a cycle of feuilletons with a title suggested to him by Jerzy Turowicz – *Pod włos* [Against the Grain] (the cycle was created in the years 1945–1949, while in 1947 there was a three-month break – unfortunate in the view of the community – due to the publication of the novel *Sprzysiężenie* [Conspiracy]). From 1949 to 1953, that is, to the publication's closure in connection with the inflexible position after Stalin's death, the next cycle was issued: *Łopatką do głowy* [Shovel in the Head]. Restoration of the gazette in its previous form in 1956 allowed Kisiel to continue to work as a feuilletonist – he worked on the cycle *Gwoździe w mózgu* [Nails in the Brain] (1956–1962) and the cycle *Głową w ściany* [Head Against the Walls] (1962–1968). After a three year hiatus – in connection with the events of 1968 and the removal of Kisiel from public life – the time for the next cycles came: *Bez dogmatu* [Without Dogma] (1971–1975) and *Wołanie na puszczy* [Calling in the Wilderness] (1976–1981). Martial law prevented the publication of feuilletons from December 1981 to November 1983. After a two-year break Kisiel began anew to write feuilletons which made up the last two cycles: *Widziane inaczej* [Seen Differently] (1983–1986) and *Sam sobie sterem...* [He is his Own Rudder ...] (1986–1989).

Through several decades, hundreds of feuilletons were written, among which are, of course, various forms – political feuilletons, musical feuilletons⁹, travel feuilletons¹⁰, etc. Already after nearly two decades of co-operation with the *Tygodnik Powszechny* it turns out to be troublesome to document his feuilleton work, as evidenced by the meticulous collection, and excessively long list of issues addressed listed in the feuilleton

⁸ S. Kisielewski, "Sandauer w opałach," in: *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 20 (1945): p. 2.

⁹ S. Kisielewski, *Z muzyką przez lata*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1957.

¹⁰ S. Kisielewski, *Opowiadania i podróże*, Kraków: Znak, 1959.

“Moje Nowe Roki” [“My New Years”] (1961) (it would be difficult to quote here in full):

Over 16 years these feuilletons repeatedly changed their image (...). There were direct and masked, sincere and deceitful, negative and positive, serious and foolish, realistic and fantastic. They made use of a variety of methods, harassing and cordial, joking and affirming, critical and apologetic. They treated subjects such as music, painting, literature, politics, society, about flies, rakes, about personalia, saints, economics, journeys.¹¹

Independently of the indicated differences in the modes of argument, methods or topic, with Kisiel, so to speak, there also exists a private theory of the genre. The specifics of the individual feuilletons (as it is difficult to speak of types) are often defined by their characteristic subtitles, to give a few, in chronological order: “personal feuilleton”¹², “demented, utopian-anarchic feuilleton”¹³, “dreamy feuilleton”¹⁴, “pessimistic feuilleton”¹⁵, “optimistic feuilleton”¹⁶, “working feuilleton”¹⁷, “private feuilleton”¹⁸, “preposterous feuilleton”¹⁹, “aleatoric feuilleton”²⁰, “feuilleton – philosophical embryo”²¹, finally as is symptomatic, “ego-centric feuilleton”²² ... It would be a dangerous thing to draw far-reaching conclusions from this statement, to emphasize the significance of

¹¹ S. Kisielewski, “Moje Nowe Roki [1961],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 247.

¹² S. Kisielewski, “Polewka – Kisiel 1:0 (felieton personalny) [1949],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 78–81.

¹³ S. Kisielewski, “Muchomachia i muchologia (felieton obłądny, utopistyczno-anarchistyczny) [1950],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 102–106.

¹⁴ S. Kisielewski, “Bufet kulturalny (felieton marzycielski) [1951],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 122–125.

¹⁵ S. Kisielewski, “Bajka o Nieznajomej (felieton pesymistyczny) [1951],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 125–128.

¹⁶ S. Kisielewski, “Historia tubki z klejem (felieton optymistyczny) [1952],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 132–135.

¹⁷ S. Kisielewski, “Młynarz, syn i osioł (felieton roboczy) [1952],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 139–142.

¹⁸ S. Kisielewski, “Urlop gorzkawy (felieton prywatny) [1961],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 250–253.

¹⁹ S. Kisielewski, “Magia prasy i samowoli (felieton niedorzeczny) [1962],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 264.

²⁰ S. Kisielewski, “Z mojego obserwatorium (felieton aleatoryczny) [1971],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 406–410.

²¹ S. Kisielewski, “Zaprogramowani wieloznacznie (felieton – embrion filozoficzny) [1974],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 458–462.

²² S. Kisielewski, “Czemu się nie martwię? (felieton egocentryczny) [1985],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 677–679.

this "egocentric feuilleton", as every feuilleton – by its very nature – has a personal character. This also explains Kisielowski's perverse remark: "I point out that I rarely write about myself, but do so with affection"²³ – I shall try to radically generalize, refer to the whole of his feuilleton work. "The Unpresented World" shows (although the argument may turn out to be extremely complicated), that Kisiel's feuilleton, his "diary of the soul", is mainly writing about himself.

II. A contradictory mind

Kisiel, as is known, divided his feuilletonistic work into three periods, laconically referred to with the formulae: "NIE" ["NO"], "TAK" ["YES"] and "LAMPA" ["LAMP"]. In the feuilleton "Piętnastolecie" ["Fifteenth Anniversary"] from 1960 he only mentioned the first two phases: "NIE" and "TAK" ("Passive until the year 1953 and conceptually active – from 1956"²⁴). In this same year he wrote the feuilleton called "O mojej trzeciej postawie (wyznania intymne)" ["About my Third Position (Intimate Confession)"], in which the third stage is already included ("the next stage of initiation, that is, a degree higher towards the much demanded and desired – wisdom"²⁵), precisely defined: "My »lamp« is a lamp of faith, hope and love. Despite everything I don't

²³ S. Kisielowski, "Piętnastolecie," *op. cit.*, p. 227.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 228–229 ("Until 1953 in the past period, or, as some would have it, the dogmatic period, I promoted liberalism, the right to complexity in assessment of phenomena, the right to »clerk's« basics, finally, a soothing atmosphere and gnawing everything – humour. After 1956 however I decided to strike the »acts of steel«. I was charmed by the vision of Polish as an intermediary, a »swing bridge«, in the great historical conflict, the vision of the nation's culture learned from the Christian civilization of the West and located today, politically and materially in the Eastern Bloc" (*ibidem*, pp. 228–229). Kisiel wrote about the fundamental change in the manner of working in the feuilleton "O Rejtanie, opozycji, polityce i publicystyce" (1957): "I currently take a sceptical view (after ten years of professing opposite view) about telling the truth out loud. Firstly – we all know it, and secondly – repeating it doesn't help anyone and in any case doesn't move anything forward" (in: *idem*, *Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 174). A slightly different argument – looking at his whole feuilletonistic output – can be found in his feuilleton "Wrocław – Londyn – Okocim" (1957): "For twelve years I didn't write what I thought. At best, I wrote completely not what I thought: I trimmed and adapted my words for political purposes, keeping Talleyrand's recommendations in mind, that speech is used to hide thoughts" (*ibidem*, p. 179).

²⁵ S. Kisielowski, "O mojej trzeciej postawie (wyznania intymne) [1960]," in: *idem*, *Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 231.

think anyone has found better”²⁶. Five years later, in the review feuilleton “Moje zygżaki czyli kronika ideologiczna” [“My Zigzags or Ideological Chronicle”], Kisiel makes – his customary – recapitulation after twenty years of collaboration with *Tygodnik Powszechny*, or, to use his formula, “a stocktaking of ideas from all three stages”. I recall a longer passage to expose not only the formal division, the specificity of each period, but the mode of the author’s argumentation (and also by the way – his splendid sense of synthesis):

I. Quasi-Christian democraticness, liberalism, clericism, deism, oppositionism, truthful cynicism, “Röpkism” (*ditto*), rationalism, open nonsense as saviour against passive, Kisielism, bohemian-like spirit (...), positive scepticism, pure jestery.

II. Neopositivism, neo-realism, patriotic pragmatism, political rationalism, historical neocriticism, dominance of patriotism, democratization, coexistence (Church-State), spiritualists – Marxists, freedom of thought, conflict of views, modern Polishness, reconstruction and transformation, model creativity, opposition of His Royal Majesty, transformation of Marxism and Marxists, discussion, dialogue, presence, synthesis, again Polish intelligence, Poland in the vanguard of reform, and so on, and so on!

And now III LAMP: **doubt or a second wind, escape or synthesis?** Red herrings (!) – Mass culture, modernity, model, investments (...) ²⁷.

The first two periods, it seems, in retrospect gain an unambiguous, radical interpretation, in turn, the third – the “current” – defined through use of the interrogative (the feuilletonist changes his manner of arguing), opens a field of doubt, and most importantly – today makes it possible to determine the actual “archaeology” of the feuilleton. In essence Kisiel’s thinking – the “worker of the word”²⁸ – is based from the outset on all kinds of dissonances (from here we get his appreciation of paradox, antithesis, *aposiopesis*, etc.). They prove to be undoubtedly the result of both passionate polemics with others, as well as “conflict with himself”²⁹. In various interpretations too often Kisiel’s blade of criticism

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 232.

²⁷ S. Kisielowski, “Moje zygżaki czyli kronika ideologiczna [1965],” in: *idem*, *Lata pozłacane, lata szare*, *op. cit.*, pp. 328–329.

²⁸ S. Kisielowski, “Słowa, nowomowa, znaczki na papierze [1967],” in: *idem*, *Lata pozłacane, lata szare*, *op. cit.*, p. 369.

²⁹ As he argues: “Who has not experienced conflict with himself, who has not challenged and not debased himself, who has not doubted and has not given external expression of this doubt – he is not great. Unfortunately, conflict with oneself is not well viewed on our globe today: the fashion for monolithism at all cost dominates, for recommended megalomania (megalomania collectives as well), for silence on uncomfortable or embarrassing matters and artificial production of all-encompassing euphoria”

and polemicism is emphasized (this is not just about the once loud polemic with Adam Polewka), drawing attention to a certain individual's ailment of the author: "[H]as a contradictory structure of mind: meaning that the best thoughts came to his mind when he was criticising others' thoughts"³⁰. This matter in the case of Kisiel turns out to be thoroughly obvious. It is therefore worth noting that this sharply critical approach integrally combines both the "conflict with himself", with his own kind of contestation. It is easily felt in the whole feuilleton "O coś dalej szary człowieku?" ["What Else Gray Man?"] (1979), written immediately after the first homecoming pilgrimage of John Paul II, where it is, moreover, explicitly articulated: "I see the value," concludes Kisiel, "of precisely the thought of challenging all schemes (even for example: to test whether they are strong) and venting every case from different angles"³¹. This kind of behaviour from Kisiel, the result of his own understanding of freedom, of course, has a direct relationship with the erstwhile attitude of Karol Irzykowski, whom the feuilletonist recalls obsessively on various occasions, even without giving his name as in a feuilleton in 1983 "Czy pesymizm jest postawą?" ["Is Pessimism an Attitude?"]³². Here only the matter of relations between Kisiel and Irzykowski is signalled (requiring a separate discussion) and is without a doubt a key clue in the case of the "archaeology" of Kisiel's feuilleton and his way of thinking about reality.

III. Visiting Poland in the Centre Pompidou

Kisiel's starting point for reflection in "The Unpresented World" are his impressions associated with the Paris exhibition of Polish art *Présences polonaises* in the Centre Pompidou (23 June – 26 September 1983), organized on the initiative of, among others, the employees of the Museum of Art in Łódź, Ryszard Stanisławski and Urszula Czartoryska. The striking verve that went into the preparation of the exhibition,

(S. Kisielowski, "Konflikt z samym sobą [1977]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 528).

³⁰ S. Kisielowski, "Narodziny przeciwnika [1964]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 293.

³¹ S. Kisielowski, "O coś dalej szary człowieku? [1979]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 572.

³² "Being depends on a play of opposites, »life is based on the fact that one cannot live«, this is its essence, as a human exam" (S. Kisielowski, "Czy pesymizm jest postawą? [1986]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 698).

the largest presentation abroad of Polish art of the twentieth century, in Western Europe (the commissioners of the exhibition were Dominique Bozo and Ryszard Stanisławski), is best demonstrated by the more than three-hundred page catalogue *Présences polonaises: l'art vivant autour du Musée de Łódź. Witkiewicz. Constructivisme. Les contemporains*³³, created by Urszula Czartoryska and Nicole Ouvrard. Kisiel the esteemed writer valued the displayed works by Witkacy³⁴, who was without doubt the main character of the exhibition (the first of three parts of the catalogue were devoted to him, the two remaining parts concerned constructivism and contemporary art), did not overshadow the achievements of the many other Polish artists of the twentieth century. The visitors had the opportunity to get to know the drawings and graphics of Bruno Schulz, Władysław Strzemiński's work, films by Stefan and Franciszka Themerson, Kantor's theatre, the creators of contemporary Polish literature: Białoszewski, Herbert, Gombrowicz, Miłosz, Lem, Różewicz, etc.

Kisielewski expressed himself positively and even enthusiastically about the monumental exhibition of Polish art of the twentieth century ("I wandered (...) around this exhibition," he wrote, "around and around again many times, because I like modern painting and other wonders"³⁵). Absorbed by the "colourful refinery"³⁶ as he described the Centre Pompidou museum space with his characteristic sense of humour, he was aware that seeing this kind of exhibition and the entire facility required both enormous intellectual engagement and time: "We need to devote many hours to the permanent exhibition Centre devoted to the paintings of our times (the new Kandinsky room – the baubles, modern Americans – wonders and fascinating oddities!). And for the section of dictionaries and encyclopaedias – the greatest publishing fashion today – it would take a good couple of days"³⁷. The readings, especially those at the beginning of the text, impose, it could be said, a kind of convention for

³³ *Présences polonaises: l'art vivant autour du Musée de Łódź. Witkiewicz. Constructivisme. Les contemporains*, ed. U. Czartoryska, N. Ouvrard, Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1983.

³⁴ Here is his short description: "Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, a legendary figure in the interwar years, a painter, philosopher, esthetician, playwright, novelist (prophetic novel *Pożegnanie jesieni* [Farewell to Autumn] and *Nienasycenie* [Insatiability])" (S. Kisielowski, "Upalny katz czyli wiek kłęski [1963]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare*, *op. cit.*, p. 276).

³⁵ S. Kisielowski, "Świat nie przedstawiony," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare*, *op. cit.*, p. 650.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

"museum" feuilleton (one of the groups of texts devoted to art: music, painting, film, literature, also theatre, and poetry, which Kisielowski apparently did not like³⁸). It is just this space in the Centre Pompidou museum that became a chance impulse to develop his own thoughts and formulate far-reaching diagnoses, opened a fundamental field of reflection, about two closely interconnected spheres – the **private sphere** and the **public sphere**.

In previous interpretations, understandably, the emphasis was mainly placed on the public sphere of Kisiel's feuilletons (more precisely: the political, ideological, educational dimensions³⁹); in other words, their "interventionalist" potential was most willingly discussed. Naturally, this manner of reception of the feuilletons was imposed firstly – by the conventions of the genre itself (the feuilleton is treated as an *ad hoc* commentary to current events, requiring the author's involvement, personal tone, etc.), secondly – by the geopolitical situation, which starting from 1945 demands that Kisiel's texts are read as political feuilletons (which are – *nolens volens* – "the author's weekly meditations about Poland"⁴⁰), thirdly – Kisiel's own attitude, referring amongst others to one of Napoleon III's critics – Rochefort ("a journalist, who fought alone with Napoleon III's ministers with the help of satire, irony, allusion, sterile or masked ridicule"⁴¹), declaring his own feuilleton writing to be "a kind of counterpoint to the events of the PRL"⁴², his political involvement (among others as a Member of Parliament as part of the ZNAK group in the years 1957–1965), his treatment of the issues of culture and art in direct relation with politics, economics, etc. ("Culture and art »instead of«, culture divorced from economic matters, matters of the system, politics bores me devilishly"⁴³). This dimension of feuilletonist

³⁸ Kisiel's relationship with the theatre was clearly explained in the feuilleton "Teatr i kangury" from 1948: "I don't like theatre" (in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 64), and his relationship to poetry – amongst others in the feuilleton of 1975 "Przeciw ekspresji, szyfrowi i reżyserii" (*ibidem*, pp. 497–502), and in the feuilleton from 1979 "W sprawie poezji" (*ibidem*, pp. 576–582). Kisiel usually shows Miłosz in a wonderful light (see "Miłosz" [1980], *ibidem*, pp. 591–599).

³⁹ In the text opening the cycle *Widziane inaczej* – "Paryż w sierpniu (Maisons-Laffitte) [1981]" – the feuilleton is described as an "act of upbringing" (in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 635).

⁴⁰ "Interesowała go gra tego świata [discussion with Paweł Hertz]," in: Kisiel, discussion with Joanna Pruszyńska about Stefan Kisielowski, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Książkowe "Twój Styl", 1997, p. 83.

⁴¹ S. Kisielowski, "Moje zygzyki czyli kronika ideologiczna," *op. cit.*, p. 321.

⁴² S. Kisielowski, "Słowo wstępne," *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁴³ S. Kisielowski, "Bezopiumowe święta [1983]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 657.

work of the author of the *Widziane inaczej* [*Seen Differently*] cycle, concerning the public sphere, is, to repeat once again, evident. Therefore it is high time to try to expose (enhance?) also another aspect of the feuilletons of the “Polish Rochefort” – the private sphere. Kisiel, I think, not without cause redefined his feuilletonist work at the end of the eighties (in the *Introduction* to the volume *Lata poślacane, lata szare* [*Gilded Years, Gray Years*]): “In the perspective of time,” he emphasised, “I see it as my own kind of **spiritual kaleidoscope**, or also like, having in mind Irzykowski’s definition, public digestion. I digested what I could and what the censor allowed: politics, everyday sociology, art and culture, modern history, travel, nay, even my type of religiosity”⁴⁴.

IV. Kisielewski’s (non)presence

In the eighties, it is worth recalling that Kisielewski did a lot of traveling around Western Europe (martial law found him in the West). His stay in Paris in 1983, enabling him to visit the exhibition in the Centre Pompidou, is otherwise his return to old Paris – the composer knew the city even before the war, as he arrived there in 1938 with the intention to study composition with Nadia Boulanger⁴⁵. He stayed in the city a couple of times later. In several travel feuilletons he brought Parisian life closer to his readers, explaining at first his own inability to adapt (“I don’t really know how to »make use of living« beyond our charmed border: I feel like a guest, a chance intruder, who in a bad way envies the French of their wealth, their marvellous array of goods on sale, their old, mature material culture, wonderful, undamaged city”⁴⁶). First, he is characterised by scepticism: “I feel like a person from the East, very experienced, who is not afraid of anything, neither shortage nor quarrels, nor sorrow, just as those who are here old children are afraid of such things. Apart from that I think that somehow it is not this »West« I have in mind”⁴⁷ (“O czym tu dumać na paryskim bruku” [“What Can We Ponder About on the Paris Pavement”], 1957),

⁴⁴ S. Kisielewski, “Słowo wstępne,” *op. cit.*, p. 5. Emphasis A.H.

⁴⁵ Kisielewski in reality only took one composition lesson with Nadia Boulanger (further lessons were not possible for the reason, amongst others, of her travel to America). See S. Kisielewski, “Życie paryskie,” in: *Ruch Muzyczny*, 5 (1977): pp. 6–7.

⁴⁶ S. Kisielewski, “O czym tu dumać na paryskim bruku [1957],” in: *idem*, *Lata poślacane, lata szare*, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 178.

and later he becomes in the worst case, to use such a formula, a sceptical francophile: "A person of the old school (and that is what I now am unfortunately) is pulled to the old romance of the Paris of our fathers and grandfathers, to the Latin Quarter, to the dark hotels with steep stairs, to tiny pubs, to the multilingual lanes"⁴⁸ ("Pierwsza przymiarka" ["First Fitting"], 1971). Interestingly, his stay abroad in the city, like Paris, paradoxically affects the display of the private sphere in his feuilletons, allows the breaking down of the earlier – "domestic" – prejudices: for example provokes him to watch a film by Wajda ("»Wesele« w Paryżu widziane" ["»Wesele« Seen in Paris"]⁴⁹, 1974), or appearing with a reading for the Pallottine Fathers about – surely a curious formula for Kisiel – "How I see the future of Poland" ("Odczytek" ["Wee Lecture"]⁵⁰, 1978). The Francophile's position, after freshly inhaling the atmosphere of Paris, is clearly reflected in the 1981 feuilleton "Paryż w sierpniu (Maisons-Laffitte)" ["Paris in August (Maisons-Laffitte)"], in which we find a summary of his earlier observations, and – never seen before – praise of the pragmatism of the locals ("over many years I have repeatedly ridiculed the French on this point, that they are egoists, egocentrics, closed in their own lives and see nothing beyond themselves, enthralled by themselves and their materialism, essentially far from the matters of the wider world. That is all true, but today, I saw the charm and wisdom of these features"⁵¹).

In "The Unpresented World" – the Paris feuilleton – the personal thread is initially mapped out hastily, casually. The point here is not only about Kisiel's emotional response to the exhibition of Polish art and its individual evaluation, but also about the way of treating his musical creativity. Well, during the presentation of Polish contemporary art at the Centre Pompidou, Kisielowski as a creator, is in a sense "present", and somehow – "non-present". During the recital accompanying the exhibition it is true that his piano composition *Danse vive*⁵² from 1939 was

⁴⁸ S. Kisielowski, "Pierwsza przymiarka [1971]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 401.

⁴⁹ S. Kisielowski, "»Wesele« w Paryżu widziane [1974]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 456–458.

⁵⁰ S. Kisielowski, "Odczytek [1978]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, pp. 551–552.

⁵¹ S. Kisielowski, "Paryż w sierpniu (Maisons-Laffitte)," *op. cit.*, pp. 636–637.

⁵² Stefan Kisielowski himself tells the history of the way this work came into being ("Wspomnienia," in: *Melos, logos, etos: Materiały sympozjum poświęconego twórczości Floriana Dąbrowskiego, Stefana Kisielowskiego, Zygmunta Mycielskiego, Warszawa 29–30 listopada 1985*, ed. K. Tarnawska-Kaczorowska, Warsaw: Musicological Section of the Polish Composers' Union, 1987, p. 302). For Mieczysław Tomaszewski it is a "type of toc-

played (the performer was the French pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard), which is barely mentioned in the *feuilleton*; I mean the comment in parentheses: “(they even played me once)”⁵³. The mentioned recital “La Pologne et la France” took place on 1 and 10 September 1983 (its detailed description is to be found in the portfolio No. 24/247 from 1982/1983 in the archive of the Museum of Art in Łódź⁵⁴). The fact of finding himself among Polish and French artists of contemporary music – and it is worth noting in passing that the recital “La Pologne et la France” was preceded by the recital “Karol Szymanowski et ses contemporains: récital de piano” on 29 and 31 August – should have given the composer satisfaction. Meanwhile Kisielewski was evidently ruled by ambivalent feelings, he remained in a state of concealed frustration. As a composer he was surely aware of his **(non)presence**: firstly – in connection with the Paris exhibition itself, secondly – in connection with the removal of his and many other names from the western encyclopaedia (the main conclusion after reviewing recent publications are to be found in the bookstore of the Centre Pompidou). The first case seems quite surprising – although *Danse vive* was performed during the monumental presentation of contemporary Polish art, it is difficult to find any mention of the composer in the French language catalogue prepared for this occasion (there is no mention of him even as a creator of music for the Themersons’ film, *The Adventures of a Good Citizen* from 1937). The list of Polish composers there is limited to names such as Tadeusz Szeligowski, Andrzej Panufnik, Witold Lutosławski, Roman Palester, Bogusław Schaeffer, Krzysztof Penderecki, Wojciech Kilar, Józef Patkowski amongst others (and this is also the order that their pictures were published in⁵⁵). Kisielewski is absent.

The second case concerns the removal of the names of Polish composers from the Western encyclopaedia, which the author of the Parisian *feuilleton* explains as a result not so much of marginalisation (not noticed, undervalued, etc.), but as a lack of communication, political exclusion, isolation due to martial law: “By the way, I found that I and

cata for piano” (“I w muzyce był swój własny” [discussion with Mieczysław Tomaszewski], in: *Kisiel*, discussion with Joanna Pruszyńska about Stefan Kisielewski, *op. cit.*, p. 260), for Małgorzata Gąsiorowska – “toccata-variation” (M. Gąsiorowska, *Kisielewski*, Kraków: PWM, 2011, p. 34).

⁵³ S. Kisielewski, “Świat nie przedstawiony,” *op. cit.*, p. 650.

⁵⁴ In the programme: Bolesław Woytowicz *Toccata*, Albert Roussel *Sonatine* Op. 16, Michał Spisak *Suite*, Arthur Honegger *7 pièces brèves*, Tadeusz Szeligowski *Sonatine*, Francis Poulenc *5 Improptus*, Stefan Kisielewski *Danse vive*.

⁵⁵ See *Présences polonaises: l'art vivant autour du Musée de Łódź*. Witkiewicz. *Constructivisme. Les contemporains*, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

a number of people known to me were thrown out of the latest editions of the western encyclopaedia. Not through anybody's ill will, simply because the post office didn't work for some time, and the data for the lexicons is renewed by mail every two years. *Sic transit ...*"⁵⁶ These remarks, of course, are crowned with the beginning of the Latin maxim *Sic transit gloria mundi* ("Thus passes the glory of the world"), a sentence which explains a great deal. Indeed he perfectly defines the situation of Polish composers from a "distant country"⁵⁷ (this is a formula by Andrzej Chłopecki, the author of the text about Polish music included in the catalogue of the Paris exhibition "La musique du pays lointain?"), but also the situation of a human in an isolated political-cultural space. And it is just this last topic that Kisiel develops obsessively in the later part of the feuilletton.

V. East–West – "swing bridge"

The main impulse for further diagnosis turned out to be a film about Polish art theatre, which provoked Kisiel to take on "special matters"⁵⁸. The puzzling thing is that there is nothing about this film, neither any mention in the French language catalogue, nor in the archival materials of the Museum of Art in Łódź⁵⁹. Only laconic information appears in the feuilletton: "perhaps one and a half hour film about Polish theatre" with fragments of various works ("There is Gombrowicz, Witkacy, Mrożek, Różewicz, Lem, Kantor, Teatr Stu, Teatr Ósmego Dnia, Tomaszewski's Pantomime, Grotowski, Piwnica, Festivals – whatever you could want"⁶⁰). The film mentioned by Kisiel is bluntly commented, and meets with radical criticism. Reflecting on the presentation of Polish art and the image of reality created by it (the recipients of this film and the reaction of the French audience turn out to be not unimportant), the feuillettonist concludes, that **this reality remains the "unpresented world"**:

⁵⁶ S. Kisielowski, "Świat nie przedstawiony," *op. cit.*, pp. 650–651.

⁵⁷ A. Chłopecki, "La musique du pays lointain?," in: *Présences polonaises: l'art vivant autour du Musée de Łódź. Witkiewicz. Constructivisme. Les contemporains*, *op. cit.*, pp. 320–326.

⁵⁸ S. Kisielowski, "Świat nie przedstawiony," *op. cit.*, p. 651.

⁵⁹ There is precise information about many other films presented at the Centre Pompidou.

⁶⁰ S. Kisielowski, "Świat nie przedstawiony," *op. cit.*, p. 651.

[P]eople (the French) sit staring, but a little – surprised. Well, since amongst this flood of oddities, metaphors, symbols, theatre of the absurd and expression, amongst the looks, contortions, yells, howls, convulsions, monstrous masks and crooked faces, throughout this whole masterful and fascinating effort and sophisticated concept of a panopticon there lacks one little thing. Which? Well, quite simply – daily life, the normal day in our country. The absence of simple, realistic, conventional but instructive, art about our life today on the banks of the Wisła, Odra, Bug, ordinary life for us, but here quite exotic, not known.⁶¹

This problem of the “unpresented world”, indicated in the feuilleton’s title, henceforth absorbs all of Kisiel’s attention. His attack in defense of realism circumstantially reveals the different experiences of the Polish artist and the French audience:

The French indeed, like oddities, eccentricities, grimaces and symbols, but – the realists – shan’t deal with theatre problems without the normal, piercing and penetrating reality around. They are good, indeed, oysters, well-marinated snails or seasoned “mussels” in shells, but where is the daily bread and cutlet? (...) I have even been asked about this “unpresented world”, why exactly this happens? Is there not anyone among us who can directly and explicitly, or does not want, or is afraid, or ashamed, or cannot, or for whom it doesn’t pay, or who doesn’t like risk, or who has unlearned or forgotten, or who is not interested, or who doesn’t feel the need, to present that, which he has every day in a manner that is direct and understandable, that it is not presenting artificial grimaces and spiritual poses to foreigners? Why do you not wish to write about this, Gentlemen? And do the filmmakers recognize this lack? That is the question.⁶²

It should be added, however, that the Kisiel’s attack is – above all – a display of the differences between the two types of mentality, between two worlds:

[W]hy is our real world not shown, why should the Pole, rather than describe, communicate our ordinary day to foreigners, as does a Frenchman, a Spaniard, an American, from this in principle starts all creative work, so why should a Pole only present contortions, dreams, masks and poses to the world? Even Gombrowicz does this, when he thinks that he hits Poles with a snobbish, posing mask, it is assumed differently, completely not without knowing it, and Poland in *Transatlantyk* [*Trans-Atlantic*] and *Pornografia* [*Pornography*] outlines a fictitious, whoa.⁶³

⁶¹ *Ibidem*.

⁶² *Ibidem*, pp. 651–652.

⁶³ S. Kisiielewski, “Świat nie przedstawiony,” *op. cit.*, p. 652.

This reluctance to describe realistically one's own reality, a practice noticed in others, so far seems to be a key target of discussion, and is the subject of fervent criticism, as can be found in dozens of other feuilletons. The criticism directed this time at the creators of symbolic, abstract, avant-garde art, in one word – "unreal", undoubtedly involves far-reaching consequences. Now, the manner of representation of Poland in the watched film makes it possible, as can easily be seen, to effectively silence the tension, the fundamental conflict between the Western world and the non-Western world (the feuilletonist uses the mechanism of synecdoche in this: the words "Polak" ["Pole"] and "Francuz" ["Frenchman"] may be considered in this case as figures of *pars pro toto*).

The title formula "the unpresented world", defining the sin of omission, refers primarily to the title of the exhibition *Présences polonaises* and to Polish contemporary artists, presented at the exhibition in the Centre Pompidou (the "slowpokes", as the feuilletonist calls them). It should be mentioned that Kisiel already sees a kind of paradox in Polish art in the sixties and that his comments in the feuilleton "Czekając na Gantenbeina..." ["Waiting for Gantenbein ..."]: "And us? (...) Social realism and national literature are preached, and all our novels and films are set on the moon, on some moon"⁶⁴. At that time, the conclusions concerning the actual nature of Polish art leave no doubt:

Anyway, I repeat, we don't have literature or films about our truths of today. We have cries, we have gimmicks, we have poses, we have grimaces, we have "isms", we have tendencies, we have didacticisms, we have buskins, we have reminiscences, we have injuries, we have pains, we have visions, but for all that we don't have everything overflowing, with perhaps characteristic Polish ORDINARINESS.⁶⁵

These same, of course, arguments in slightly different geopolitical realities return in "The Unpresented World", the allegations of a lack of realism are directed first at theatre artists, later – also at writers ("And how does today's showy writer paint Poland? Yes, he thinks, it will be worldly and not provincial. It is precisely our quaint provincialism, our paradoxical microspecifics in which we immerse ourselves and, even if we do not want to, live – that what would be the most interesting"⁶⁶). Kisiel's erstwhile intention of the late fifties, that Polish literature would reveal the truth about contemporary reality, that Poland would be a "swing

⁶⁴ S. Kisielowski, "Czekając na Gantenbeina... [1966]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 347.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 348.

⁶⁶ S. Kisielowski, "Świat nie przedstawiony," *op. cit.*, p. 652.

bridge” between the worlds of the East and the West, still remains in the sphere of Utopia.⁶⁷

On the occasion of the events at the Centre Pompidou the Polish feuilletonist noted behaviour and dangers with great insight, which are absorbed today in a special way by the imagination of, amongst others, the French essayist Pascal Bruckner. The author of the book *La Tyrannie de la pénitence: Essai sur le masochisme occidental*⁶⁸ criticises the contemporary French mentality, the mentality of a person of the West (“countries of the North”), completely uninterested in the non-Western world (“countries of the South”). Kisiel doubts in the possibility of what is now often referred to as intercultural dialogue (*nota bene* the abolition of the division of East – West does not fit into his political imagination, which was exposed moreover by the accusations from many of the contemporary groups). But the world of the West is ever present in Kisiel’s feuilletons – as a direct or indirect reference, often, however, as a key thread in the argument, to recall texts such as “Dziecinność Zachodu czyli tryumf Brandysa” [“Childishness of the West or Brandys’s Triumph”] (1959), “Moje zygzaki czyli kronika ideologiczna” [“My Zigzags or Ideological Chronicle”] (1965), “Uszła gdzieś dusza wojownika” [“A Warrior’s Soul Has Escaped Somewhere”] (1975), “Zachód, Wschód, mózg nie używany” [“West, East, Brain Not Used”] (1976), “Mój patriotyzm maniackalny” [“My Maniacal Patriotism”] (1978), etc. In “The Unpresented World” Kisiel’s main observation leads us to the following conclusion: no efforts towards understanding or even agreement – in order, as one might say, to gain a possible intercultural dialogue – are undertaken either by the East (on account of the exaggerated “europisation” of art, imitation, following of fashions), or also by the West (on account of the ubiquitous conformism). The cases of this, in Kisiel’s opinion, are clear – a result, from one side, of **mental colonialism** (should be “worldly and not provincial” ...), from the other – safe silence, no admonishing the West about the realistic representation of the Polish situation (“and anyway

⁶⁷ “But between East and West there is however Poland, which I have already called a »swing bridge« a hundred times (...). Why is it that Polish literature would not just tell the world the truth about today’s day of that world, the truth, complex and difficult, which to grasp in full requires a detailed positioning of the »crossroads«” (S. Kisielewski, “Dziecinność Zachodu czyli tryumf Brandysa [1959],” in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare*, op. cit., p. 203).

⁶⁸ P. Bruckner, *La Tyrannie de la pénitence: Essai sur le masochisme occidental*, Paris: Éditions Grasset, 2006 (see English translation: P. Bruckner, *The Tyranny of Guilt: An Essay on Western Masochism*, trans. S. Rendall, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

the world does not demand this: unlearned knowing us differently, other than through the use of their own conventions stubbornly applied by us"⁶⁹). The Western world, as Bruckner argued, prefers to remain silent and accept the blame, to live with the "tyranny of guilt", rather than trying to understand and engage in the affairs of the non-Western world. In this context, Kisiel presented his remarks exceptionally clearly – aware of the human condition in the West – he refrained from potential answers to a number of questions previously posed by foreigners: "I didn't answer to the French on all this, because the answer is psychologically and historically complicated, maybe they wouldn't understand, just as really generally they don't understand our lives, they only see shadows, reflections of our events, Platonic shadows in the cave"⁷⁰.

VI. "Diary of the soul"

In the feuilleton called "O sobie telegraficznie" ["Telegraphic About Myself"], which appeared in the same year as "The Unpresented World", we find a short, surprising remark: **"These are not the times for feuilletons"**⁷¹. Kisiel did not resign yet from the writing feuilletons (it is also interesting to recall that the first time he "bade farewell" to feuilletons was already in 1949, closing the cycle *Pod włos* [Against the Grain]⁷²). His third period of writing feuilletons, called "lamp" by him, is associated with his reorientation of thinking (more precisely: with the reorientation of his way of talking about the changing reality), brought unexpected results. The changes, I think, were best captured by Kisiel himself in the autocommentary to be found in the "Introductory word" to the volume *Lata poślaczane, lata szare* [Gilded Years, Gray Years]:

After years this form became for me something of the nature of a replacement "diary of the soul". Replacement because, as I think today, all concrete, passing subjects and occasions, even political discussions were just pretexts for a psychological trope flowing in weekly episodes with a certain steady colour – mental and stylistic.⁷³

⁶⁹ S. Kisielowski, "Świat nie przedstawiony," *op. cit.*, p. 652.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁷¹ S. Kisielowski, "O sobie telegraficznie [1983]," in: *idem*, *Lata poślaczane, lata szare*, *op. cit.*, p. 648.

⁷² S. Kisielowski, "Pożegnanie z felietonem [1949]," in: *idem*, *Lata poślaczane, lata szare*, *op. cit.*, pp. 84–89.

⁷³ S. Kisielowski, "Słowo wstępne," *op. cit.*, p. 5. Emphasis A.H.

From the beginning Kisielewski's extreme individualism, observed, to repeat, in many areas of his activities, especially in feuilletons, influences the shape of this "psychological trope". It is enough to say that his first "non-musical" text in *Tygodnik Powszechny* – "Tematy wojenne" ["War Themes"], included in number 9 of the gazette – bore the note: "The editors do not share all the author's views" that later brought much tension in "Tygodnik's" circles (amongst others the discussion around the title *Gwoździe w mózgu* [*Nails in the Brain*]⁷⁴), that controversy over editorial censorship became the norm (this is indeed a separate subject, frequently returning in various feuilleton texts), that led to a break in cooperation. Kisiel, without the slightest doubt, continually, stubbornly returned to Irzykowski's lesson, which he recalled amongst others in the feuilleton "Bęc-Walski jestem!" ["I am Cuc-koo"] from 1946, the lesson – in short – the battle with "compromising unanimity"⁷⁵. He had a need and an awareness to be provocateur, best evidenced by fragments of the feuilleton "Słowo i czyn" ["Words and Deeds"]:

the undersigned is a vestigial organ, the remnant, the exception that proves the rule, quite simply a sorrowful survivor of those often once (in another era) encountered people who wrote what they thought on their own account, without fear of errors or mistakes, without responsibility for anything, and only wanting to encourage their neighbours to intellectual ferment.⁷⁶

This kind of thinking consistently characterised Kisiel for years – as a liberal conservative he valued, above all else, independence, individual freedom⁷⁷, that "most beautiful human ideal"⁷⁸. However, it should be emphasized here that Kisiel developed his own concept of individual freedom particularly in the eighties; a masterful explanation is brought together with the feuilleton in 1981 "Paryż w sierpniu (Maisons-Laffitte)" ["Paris in August (Maisons-Laffitte)"]. The perceived ironic tone, for example in the feuilleton "Rozkosze bezsilności" ["Bliss of Helplessness"]⁷⁹

⁷⁴ See S. Kisielewski, "Kraj wielkiej przygody [1957]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 163.

⁷⁵ See S. Kisielewski, "Bęc-Walski jestem! [1946]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁷⁶ S. Kisielewski, "Słowo i czyn," in: *idem, 100 razy głową w ściany, op. cit.*, p. 329; also in: *idem, 100 razy głową w ściany: Felietony z lat 1945–1971*, Warsaw: Iskry, 1996, p. 414.

⁷⁷ See S. Kisielewski, "Paryż w sierpniu (Maisons-Laffitte)," *op. cit.*, p. 635.

⁷⁸ S. Kisielewski, "Przedmowa," in: *idem, Polityka i sztuka*, Warsaw: Iskry, 1998, p. 11.

⁷⁹ As Kisiel concludes: "[W]riting about nothing gives access to rehabilitation and higher sublimation. Long ago I believed them to be a humiliation, a rape of the mind,

is quickly replaced by a slightly different tone, exposed amongst others in the text "Czemu się nie martwię? (felieton egocentryczny)" ["Why Don't I Worry? (Egocentric Feuilleton)"] ("I am free, freedom from worry, this internal deliverance is a certain attitude which befits a serious person, the modern, Western, European, Christian person"⁸⁰). Kisiel crowned his own kind of libertarian trope with the text "Mój konserwatyzm a wolność" ["My Conservatism and Freedom"] (1987), in which the feuilletonist of *Tygodnik Powszechny* explains the imperative of freedom in the simplest way – "You have freedom in yourself, or you don't, it is an internal thing, which doesn't depend on chance"⁸¹.

The creative dilemma shown in "The Unpresented World" – concerning the duty to bear witness in art **about one's own world**, the need to speak and write about their own reality – took place in the field of individual freedom. It is not difficult to recognize here some parallels between feuilletonistic work and – for example – journalistic activities. Similar tasks stand before the feuilletonist and the "reporter", though they are realised in a slightly different way. Kisiel, not without reason, took up confrontation with the "Kapuściński's"⁸², going beyond the optics of a typical reporter: "I once felt Africa, now, sitting in Paris and observing the matter closely I gathered a lot of material and I could build up the alchemy of this continent which is quite unlike the writings of those gentlemen (compatible with each other), of messers Kapuściński, Pasierbiński or Kalabiński, Kedaj, Guz, Winiewicz or Albinowski"⁸³. That hypothetical writing about Africa in Paris, as well as writing about Poland beyond its borders, perfectly explains, I think, Kisielewski's extremely subjective vision of the world – the world (experienced) strongly internalised, the world carried within.

The closure and culmination of the feuilleton "The Unpresented World" has an undoubtedly private character:

but today they become an expression of spiritual freedom, a higher degree of freedom" (S. Kisielewski, "Rozkosze bezsilności [1984]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 673).

⁸⁰ S. Kisielewski, "Czemu się nie martwię? (felieton egocentryczny)," *op. cit.*, p. 679.

⁸¹ S. Kisielewski, "Mój konserwatyzm a wolność [1987]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 739.

⁸² *Nota bene* Ryszard Kapuściński appears amongst others in the feuilleton "Mit nauki i bylejakość": "In *Polityka* I read Kapuściński's writing about Algeria and Drewnowski's about Yugoslavia, and I know a lot, the maximum we can find out in our conditions" (S. Kisielewski, "Mit nauki i bylejakość [1964]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 302).

⁸³ S. Kisielewski, "Alchemia Afryki [1978]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 563.

I want to give testimony: I believe that our world should not remain unrepresented, that it should be examined. But how, where to find the appropriate form, time, strength, the talent, to replace other – slowpokes? I know what needs to be done, I don't know how. This is my question, my "moth covered" question, which gnaws at me all the time. And you demand I write feuilletons ...⁸⁴

In the light of the final conclusions and eloquent sense of the *apospesis* figure (the sentence closes the entirety), the formula **the unrepresented world** should therefore ultimately refer to Kisiel's feuilletons. This formula thus ultimately has, as can be seen, several different meanings: it refers – firstly – to the title of the exhibition *Présences polonaises*, to some extent undermining its legitimacy (the "presence" of Polish art in the Centre Pompidou, the "non-presence" of Poland); secondly – to the authors of the film about Polish theatre in the twentieth century and – generally – to creators of Polish contemporary art (this thesis is otherwise totally surprising when we take into account Kisielewski's views about music and the aesthetic concepts he developed!), and – of course in the situation of obvious borrowings of the formula – to Julian Kornhauser and Adam Zagajewski's diagnosis in the book *Świat nie przedstawiony* [*The Unrepresented World*]⁸⁵, which was mentioned by Kisiel in one of his feuilletons⁸⁶ from mid-seventies; and finally, thirdly – to Kisiel himself, to the feuilletons of the author *Widziane inaczej* [*Seen Differently*].

The feuilleton as a genre, it turns out, paradoxically, is insufficient, and therefore – as a simple consequence – an unsatisfactory form of communication in the case of attempting to realistically represent reality (hence perhaps Kisielewski's undying desire to practice some kind of fiction; *nota bene* the author of several political novels intended to write one more by the end of his life – about four historical Warsaws). Kisiel explained the reasons for this in passing in the sixties both in the text "Pokajanie" ["Repentance"] ("A feuilleton by its very nature must be shallow: it is an **attempt, abbreviation, a signal**"⁸⁷), just as in the text "Moje Nowe Roki" ["My New Years"], emphasizing the accidentality, transience, the temporariness of this kind of writing and – as a result – the inevitable fate of the texts: "[T]hey **must** fall. Who will read their contexts and subtexts, who will decrypt the allusions contained in them, who will link them with events current in their time and forgotten

⁸⁴ S. Kisielewski, "Świat nie przedstawiony," *op. cit.*, pp. 652–653.

⁸⁵ J. Kornhauser, A. Zagajewski, *Świat nie przedstawiony*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1974.

⁸⁶ See S. Kisielewski, "Przeciw ekspresji, szyfrom i reżyserii," *op. cit.*, p. 501.

⁸⁷ S. Kisielewski, "Pokajanie [1961]," in: *idem, Lata pozłacane, lata szare, op. cit.*, p. 236. Emphasis A.H.

today, or people, often little-known or hidden"⁸⁸. Time works against the feuilleton – its immediacy causes rapid blurring of the traces of individual history, events, polemics, etc. The feuilleton, however, has a double life: as the relative decline of its potential temporariness, the loss of its "interventionist" power, the fall of individual histories into oblivion, reveals more – about which Kisiel himself convinces us – of the author's private sphere, the story of his repeated attempts, with great difficulty, to "decolonise" himself.

⁸⁸ S. Kisielewski, "Moje Nowe Roki," *op. cit.*, pp. 246–247.

10. IN THE “MULTICULTURAL WORLD” OF RYSZARD KAPUŚCIŃSKI

I. Going beyond the schema: *Fiction – non-fiction*

It is not difficult to see in Ryszard Kapuściński's whole output – as a witness of the breakthrough events of the twentieth century – his own vision of the world evolving over time which directly influenced, among other things, the form of reportage, its gradual turn to essayism, weakening of compositional rigour, openness, fragmentation, etc. Through the reporter's eyes the reality of the previous century and the beginning of the present century, in particular the transition from vision of the “**turmoil of the world**”¹ (that is the reportage recording and interpretation of the image of particular totalitarianisms, the crises in the era of the world's decolonisation: for example to bring closer “a bit of Ethiopia” in *The Emperor*, the Iranian revolution in *Shah of Shahs*, the realities of the East in *Imperium*) to the “**world in motion**”², to use Przemysław Czapliński's accurate formula. As is well known, Kapuściński's reportage records (literary) for a long time dealt with events in Africa, Asia, Latin America, are the result of the work of an historian-ethnographer, a “global reporter”³. His writing strategy is most concisely characterised in *The Soccer War*: “to look, to walk around, to ask, to listen, to sniff, to think, to write”⁴, or in one of the conversations of the

¹ *Wrzenie świata* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1988) – this is the title of a four volume selection of works by Ryszard Kapuściński (vol. 1: *Kirgiz schodzi z konia; Chrystus z karabinem na ramieniu*, vol. 2: *Wojna futbolowa; Jeszcze dzień życia*, vol. 3: *Cesarz; Szachinszach*, vol. 4: *Busz po polsku; Notes*).

² P. Czapliński, “Kłopoty z nowoczesnością,” in: “*Życie jest z przenikania...*”: szkice o twórczości Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego, collected, edited and foreword by B. Wróblewski, afterword A. Kapuścińska, Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2008, p. 284.

³ See amongst others M. Dzięglewski, *Reportaże Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego: Źródło poznania społeczeństw i kultur*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2009, p. 51.

⁴ R. Kapuściński, *The Soccer War*, trans. W. Brand, New York: Vintage Books, 1992, p. 20 (see R. Kapuściński, *Wojna futbolowa*, Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1981, p. 16).

early nineties: "I write »from riding«. I'm not an »inventor«. I do not describe an imagined or my own world. I am describing a world that really exists"⁵. On the theme, as Kapuściński calls it, of "personal reportage" or also "literature by foot"⁶ a great deal has been written, defining that reportage with the names "anti-medial"⁷, "voluminous"⁸ or "philosophical"⁹. Here, however, I am not just interested in reportage, records of the "turmoil of the world", around which today there are – for matters including Artur Domosławski's biography *Kapuściński non-fiction* (Warsaw 2010; *Ryszard Kapuściński: A Life*, London–New York 2012) – numerous disputes about the competence, the rights and duties of the reporter, the methods of reportage describing and relating events, about the special status of reportage and understanding of truth, not a matter of political compromise or writers' confabulation, but Kapuściński's imagination of the "world in motion"; in other words, imagination of **multiculturalism** as one of the contemporary concepts of culture.

In the case of the author of *Lapidaria* there are in fact many possibilities to talk about multiculturalism, whereby, I think, there are three complementary issues. Firstly, just the experience of being a "**border person**"¹⁰, taken from childhood in the pre-war reality of Pińsk (a town in the borderlands of then Poland) of the thirties, a "pre-war African Poland"¹¹, a town of many cultures, then home to Poles, Jews, Ukrainians,

⁵ R. Kapuściński, "Korzenie w poleskiej biedzie," Barbara Hołub talks to Ryszard Kapuściński, in: *Przekrój*, 39 (1992): p. 16 (see also: R. Kapuściński, *Autoportret reportera*, selection and introduction K. Strączek, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2003, p. 15).

⁶ "You could call it, I suppose, personal reportage, because the author is always present. I sometimes call it literature by foot" ("An Interview with Ryszard Kapuściński" [Bill Buford talks to Ryszard Kapuściński], in: *Granta*, 21 (1987) ("The Story-Teller"): p. 97; see Polish translation: "Podróżnik po lesie rzeczy," in: *Most. Wolne Pismo*, 16/17 (1987): p. 147; R. Kapuściński, *Autoportret reportera*, *op. cit.*, p. 78).

⁷ Z. Bauer, *Antymedialny reportaż Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo PAP, 2001.

⁸ P. Czaplinski, "Kłopoty z nowoczesnością," *op. cit.*, p. 281.

⁹ See amongst others J. Miodek, "Człowiek pogranicza: O Ryszardzie Kapuścińskim," in: *"Życie jest z przenikania...": szkice o twórczości Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

¹⁰ "»Jestem człowiekiem pogranicza...«," Ewa Maria Slaska, Iwona Mickiewicz talk to Ryszard Kapuściński, in: *WIR*, 1 (1995) (special number: "Dwujęzyczność, podwójna tożsamość"): pp. 247–256. See J. Miodek, "Człowiek pogranicza," *op. cit.*, pp. 131–137.

¹¹ Such an analogy appears in an interview with Ryszard Kapuściński: "I really like that world, and Africa, and Latin America, and Asia. I feel good there. I myself am from Polesie, a very strange community that no longer exists, that has disappeared. It was such a pre-war African Poland" (R. Kapuściński, *Autoportret reportera*, *op. cit.*,

Belarusians and Russians, in which there were a variety of tensions and internal conflicts in the context of nationality. Secondly, also the experience of a **global reporter**, associated with various stages of cognition and understanding of other cultures (bringing an "empathic way of writing"¹²), as well as the reality of direct experience of societies and cultures (Africa, Asia, Latin America). Thirdly, finally, experience of being an **observer of the turn of the century**, immersed in the idea of the multicultural world of the twenty first century, obsessively describing the perspectives of the closer and more distant future. The third of the mentioned issues, with the obvious assumption that certain matters can neither be isolated nor interpreted in isolation from others – is otherwise exceptionally interesting for today's comparatists, especially for proponents of postcolonial studies – here forms the main subject of reflection.

II. Multicultural world

Kapuściński's later diagnoses, starting from the nineteen nineties, oscillate more and more around one fundamental question – **the multicultural world**. In short, they are the result not only of field exploration, efforts of the reporter-historian-ethnographer, but the thinking of a sociologist and – especially – a cultural anthropologist¹³. We repeatedly encounter in works by the author of *Travels with Herodotus* the formula "multicultural" which is somehow bound with the new horizons of writing, the best manifestations of which become the next volumes of *Lapidaria* and the surprisingly homogeneous in expression, even monotonous series of occasional lectures. This formula refers to some of today's "multicultural states"¹⁴ (France, Germany, United States of America),

p. 56; see first edition: "Trzeba być w środku wydarzeń," Krzysztof Łęcki talks to Ryszard Kapuściński, in: *Śląsk*, 12 (1997): p. 24).

¹² See R. Kapuściński, *Autoportret reportera*, *op. cit.*, p. 54. See also: M. Horodecka, "«Być kimś innym». Narracja empatyczna w »Buszu po polsku« Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego, in: *Życie jest z przenikania...»: szkice o twórczości Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego*, *op. cit.*, p. 99; M. Horodecka, "Narracja empatyczna. »Busz po polsku«, in: *eadem*, *Zbieranie głosów: Sztuka opowiadania Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego*, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Słowo/Obraz Teorytoria, 2010, pp. 21–80.

¹³ These diagnoses otherwise provoke today's anthropologist to pose various questions: see A. Kunce, *Antropologia punktów: rozważania przy tekstach Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego*, Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2008.

¹⁴ See R. Kapuściński, "Wojna czy dialog?," in: *Znak*, 10 (2002): p. 35 (inaugural lecture of the work of the Znak Flying University, given 17 January 2002 in the hall of the Collegium Novum of the Jagiellonian University).

and also – first and foremost – to the world situation in the era of decolonisation, giving “the beginnings of an entirely new, multicultural world”¹⁵, equally to the condition of man in postmodern reality, which he treats in particular manner in his lecture “The Other in the Global Village” (“we live in a multicultural world”¹⁶), as well as the whole history of the world (“our planet has always been multicultural”¹⁷), that is to say, for fluid cultural mechanisms, which Herodotus thoroughly understood in his time¹⁸.

The change of viewpoint, imposed not only by the official role of the speaker or lecturer, giving rise to a specific obsession with speaking about the multicultural world and multiculturalism, results in various sociological, philosophical, and anthropological constataions that emphasize instability, fluency, or the fortuitousness of being in contemporary reality. An example would be the diagnosis formulated during the lecture “My Other”, given by Ryszard Kapuściński at the International Writers’ Symposium in Graz on 12 October 1990: “For me the world has always been a great Tower of Babel. However, it is a tower in which God has mixed not just the languages but also the cultures and customs, passions and interests, and whose inhabitant He has made into an ambivalent creature combining the Self and non-Self, himself and the Other,

¹⁵ R. Kapuściński, *Our Responsibilities in a Multicultural World / Powinności obywatela świata wielokulturowego*, Kraków: The Judaica Foundation – Center for Jewish Culture, 2002, p. 10 (also pp. 12, 17). See also R. Kapuściński, *Lapidarium V*, Warsaw: Czytelnik 2002, p. 77.

¹⁶ R. Kapuściński, “The Other in the Global Village,” in: *idem, The Other*, trans. A. Lloyd-Jones, London: Verso, 2008, p. 70 (see R. Kapuściński, “Inny w globalnej wiosce,” in: *idem, Ten Inny*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2007, p. 57; lecture delivered on 30 September 2003, inaugurating the academic year in the Tischner European University). See also R. Kapuściński, “Tłumacz – postać XXI wieku,” in: *Podróże z Ryszardem Kapuścińskim: opowieści trzynastu tłumaczy*, ed. B. Dudko, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2007, pp. 14–15 (also in: *Pisarze polscy o sztuce przekładu: 1440–2005. Antologia*, selection and edited E. Balcerzan, E. Rajewska, Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2007, pp. 466–471).

¹⁷ R. Kapuściński, “The Other in the Global Village,” *op. cit.*, p. 70 (see R. Kapuściński, “Inny w globalnej wiosce,” *op. cit.*, p. 57).

¹⁸ In Kapuściński’s opinion: “[F]or Herodotus, the **world’s multiculturalism** was a living, pulsating tissue in which nothing was permanently set or defined, but which continually transformed itself, mutated, gave rise to new relationships and contexts” (R. Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, trans. K. Glowczewska, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007, p. 109. Emphasis A.H.; see R. Kapuściński, *Podróże z Herodotem*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2008, p. 107; see also first edition: R. Kapuściński, *Podróże z Herodotem*, part 11: “Widok z minaretu,” in: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 284 (2003): p. 18).

his own and the alien"¹⁹. Many remarks of a similar character appear in numerous lectures (including those collected in the volume *Ten Inny* [*The Other*], Kraków 2007), also many, of course, scattered in six volumes of *Lapidaria*, published in the years 1990–2007. In *Lapidarium II* – namely notes from the years 1989–1995 – Kapuściński wrote that "the image of the contemporary world has the nature of a collage: various rational elements make up an irrational whole. Collage – is perhaps the only method of describing and presenting the modern world in all its surprising, violent and pervading diversity"²⁰. There is no question – a reporter starting in the nineties, in times when there is no longer any illusion about the progress of civilization, the technocracy, the democratization of the world through economic development and in some way is freed from the complications of the previous system imposed after 1945, adopts a slightly different, "non-reportage" mode of arguing compared to those of previous decades, attempts to explain the phenomenon of **multiculturalism** of the contemporary world from the position of a cultural anthropologist²¹. In still other words, in the last period of his activity, he was primarily interested in cultural reflection, in anthropological analysis of relations between modern civilizations²². It is worth noting that these analyses were made in the time that Wolfgang Welsch was forcing his own concept of transculturalism²³. The German philosopher and art historian, as is known, distinguishing Herder's concept of culture (autonomous "islands"/"spheres"), concepts of multiculturalism, interculturality and transculturality, consistently leads the battle for the last of these and at the same time dethrones the others as inadequate ways of describing the reality of the modern world. Meanwhile the Polish reporter and writer – quite characteristically – remains invariably with his understanding of multiculturalism.

¹⁹ R. Kapuściński, "My Other," in: *idem*, *The Other*, *op. cit.*, p. 61 (see R. Kapuściński, "Mój Inny," in: *idem*, *Ten Inny*, *op. cit.*, pp. 49–50. Compare R. Kapuściński, *Autoportret reportera*, *op. cit.*, p. 77).

²⁰ R. Kapuściński, *Lapidarium II*, Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1995, p. 151. More such formulations can be found: "The world is already a great variety. It is a great and extremely rich collage" (R. Kapuściński, *Nie ogarniam świata*, Witold Bereś and Krzysztof Burnetko meet Ryszard Kapuściński, Warsaw: "Świat Książki", 2007, p. 194).

²¹ He admits this in an interview: "As a matter of interest I'm a cultural anthropologist" (Mariusz Dzięglewski talks to Ryszard Kapuściński [Warsaw, 15 April 2004], in: M. Dzięglewski, *Reportaże Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego*, *op. cit.*, p. 254).

²² See P. Czapliński, "Kłopoty z nowoczesnością," *op. cit.*, p. 283 ff.

²³ See W. Welsch, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," in: *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. M. Featherstone, S. Lash, London: Sage, 1999, pp. 194–213.

III. Multiculturalism or interculturalism?

In the lecture “Tłumacz – postać XXI wieku” [“Translator – a Figure of the Twentieth Century”], given in Kraków on 12 May 2005 during the 1st World Congress of Translators of Polish Literature, the former reporter stated: “The new opening of the world has made it possible to better see and feel its diversity and complexity, and especially – its **multiculturalism** (and thus multilingualism)”²⁴. He immediately adds that: “Now, at the end of the twentieth century, generic consciousness is born, **consciousness of planetary multiculturalism** and the multilingualism of the human race”²⁵. The processes of decolonization and the fight against ethnocentrism, changing the world political order in the second half of the twentieth century, leading to the overthrow of old totalitarianisms and – first and foremost – to many people regaining their sense of dignity, is undoubtedly the source of Kapuściński’s moderate optimism²⁶. It would be difficult, however, to recognize the opinions referred to (indeed to some extent wishful thinking) as definitive or representative, after all, assessment of the image of the contemporary world and man undertaken by Kapuściński the anthropologist turns out to be much more complicated. Already earlier criticism of Marshall McLuhan’s concept appeared, expressed amongst others in *Our Responsibilities in a Multicultural World* (2002):

No, we don’t live in a global village, rather in a global metropolis, a global depot or station where David Riesman’s “lonely crowd” presses ahead, a crowd of indifferent, driven, nervous people passing each other by, who do not want to know or get close to each other. The truth is rather that the more the electronics, the less the human, people-to-people contact.²⁷

Postmodernity consumed by the disease of indifference, loneliness, atopy, “lonely crowd”, lack of mutual understanding, etc. leads to a completely pessimistic diagnosis (*nota bene* from the very beginning the

²⁴ R. Kapuściński, “Tłumacz – postać XXI wieku,” *op. cit.*, p. 8. Emphasis A.H.

²⁵ *Ibidem*. Emphasis A.H.

²⁶ “The twentieth century was not only a century of totalitarian systems and wars. It was also the century of decolonization, of a great liberation. Three quarters of the residents of our planet freed themselves from colonial subjugation and – at least formally – became fully entitled citizens of the world. (...) that great movement of subject continents toward freedom was also an extraordinary civilizational phenomenon which gave the beginnings of an entirely new, multicultural world” (R. Kapuściński, *Our Responsibilities in a Multicultural World / Powinności obywatela świata wielokulturowego*, *op. cit.*, pp. 48–49).

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

reporter referred to all ideas of globalization with the greatest reserve). And it is this diagnosis that opens the path to such a way of thinking about modern man and the postmodern world, which not only accentuates the dangers, but also makes it possible to find the exit from the impasse of multiculturalism.

A concise summary and at the same time confirmation of Kapuściński's anthropological diagnosis is, I believe, the well-known conclusion in the lecture "Encountering the Other as the Challenge of the Twenty-First Century" (2004): "And so three possibilities I have mentioned have always stood before man whenever he has encountered an Other: he could **choose war**, he could **fence himself in behind a wall**, or he could **start up a dialogue**"²⁸. If we take into account Jürgen Bolten's proposal, for whom "Nebeneinander" indicates multiculturalism, and "Miteinander"²⁹ – interculturalism³⁰, it turns out, that the prospect of hostile confrontation or of any armed conflict and one's isolation/indifference should be combined with **multiculturalism**. Conversely, the prospect of postulated dialogue and the desired opening to the Other – with **interculturalism**. The only problem with this is that Kapuściński – consciously? unconsciously? – does not distinguish between these two concepts of culture (incorrectly considered by Welsch as too close to each other), that in both cases he uses the formula "multiculturalism", thereby exposing himself to inconsistent or divergent readings of his intentions.

The intricacies of the reception of Kapuściński the anthropologist are probably a subject for a separate study. It is enough to say, that the scale of the problem is revealed by the collective volume *"Życie jest z przenikania..." : szkice o twórczości Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego* [*Life is from Divination ... : Sketches About the Work of Ryszard Kapuściński*]³¹. Some authors use the formula of multiculturalism, basically to talk about the concept of interculturalism (it is perhaps impossible to read Jan Miodek's generalisation differently: "The writer thinks that multiculturalism is a chance for mankind"³², where in the opposite case it becomes not just controversial, but ridiculous, and not only because of the deep crisis of

²⁸ R. Kapuściński, "Encountering the Other as the Challenge of the Twenty-First Century," in: *idem, The Other, op. cit.*, p. 82. Emphasis A.H. (see R. Kapuściński, "Spotkanie z Innym jako wyzwanie XXI wieku," in: *idem, Ten Inny, op. cit.*, p. 67).

²⁹ J. Bolten, "Multikulturalität und Interkulturalität: Vom Nebeneinander zum Miteinander," in: *idem, Interkulturelle Kompetenz*, Erfurt: Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung Thüringen, 2012, pp. 95–120.

³⁰ See chapter 8: *Interculturalism – literature – comparative literature*, pp. 161–182.

³¹ *"Życie jest z przenikania..." : szkice o twórczości Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego, op. cit.*

³² J. Miodek, "Człowiek pogranicza," *op. cit.*, p. 135.

the concept of multiculturalism today). Some try to avoid misunderstandings, finding an unusual periphrastic formula for interculturalism: “**authentic** multiculturalism” (in Tadeusz Szkołut’s view: “Authentic multiculturalism cannot be based on »living side by side«, without making deeper attempts at understanding and agreement”³³). Some re-interpret Kapuściński’s discourse through the prism only of interculturalism, more exactly – through the prism of intercultural dialogue (in the opinion of Zygmunt Ziątek: “Fascination with the culture of otherness, difficulty in knowing, understanding and accepting, striving to discover and cross borders – those real and those between people and in themselves – mediation in **intercultural dialogue** is, in the light of *Travels with Herodotus*, the mission of the author’s life”³⁴). And some – on the contrary – do not cross the threshold of multiculturalism, which immediately calls into question the consistency, as well as the validity of many of Kapuściński’s arguments.

IV. Identity – other – dialogue

The last position is occupied by Przemysław Czapliński, who in the perspective of modernity and multiculturalism analyses the concepts of **identity**, **dialogue** and **otherness**³⁵ developed by the author of *Travels with Herodotus*. Identity, perceived essentially by the writer (“strong” identity), becomes, in the view of the literary critic, a potential source of xenophobic reactions and inclinations to colonization. Dialogue – any form of dialogue – has for him, by nature, an oppressive character (here dialogue is difficult to accept as one of the forms of coexistence with the Other). Czapliński interprets Otherness – firstly – as a meeting with “distant Other”³⁶, namely, taking into account the perspective of distant cultures, omitting the issue of the “near Other”³⁷, secondly – as a matter just of tolerance. So here it comes, in the most simplified way, the image of the reporter’s and writer’s argument in light of the concept of multiculturalism, “being side by side”, which stops in the best

³³ T. Szkołut, “Ryszard Kapuściński – tłumacz kultury współczesnej,” in: “*Życie jest z przenikania...*”: szkice o twórczości Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego, op. cit., p. 196.

³⁴ Z. Ziątek, “Powrócić do Pińska... O przemianach pisarstwa Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego po 1989 roku,” in: “*Życie jest z przenikania...*”: szkice o twórczości Ryszarda Kapuścińskiego, op. cit., pp. 116–117. Emphasis A.H.

³⁵ P. Czapliński, “Kłopoty z nowoczesnością,” op. cit., p. 285 ff.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 286.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 287.

situation on tolerance – a picture, in my view, perhaps not completely heard.

Kapuściński does not have in mind "being side by side" (for him, multiculturalism is a fact, we could say after Ewa Rewers – "point zero"³⁸ of the reflections about contemporary culture), but "being with each other", a kind of **ecumenism**³⁹ (this formula also appears in the lecture *Our Responsibilities in a Multicultural World*, written just before the tragic events of September 11, 2001). Undoubtedly strong identity – in Kapuściński's view – becomes a condition of *sine qua non* coexistence in the multicultural world ("He paid a high price for breaking away from his own culture. That is why it is so **important to have one's own, distinct identity**, a sense of its strength, value and maturity. Only then can a man boldly confront another culture"⁴⁰). However, this does not serve the realisation of particular interests, fostering xenophobia and deepening "new colonialism", but opening up to Others. Dialogue, naturally, is not devoid of violence, however, its oppression is presented differently in the perspective of multiculturalism, when it comes to the hard rules of negotiation and, so to say, the matter of self-interest (for example institutionally enforced tolerance), slightly differently – in the perspective of interculturalism, when it comes to "exchange", selfless understanding. It should therefore be added, that Kapuściński's comment here above all else clings to a kind of dialogue – in a way other than the one desired in *The Soccer War*, deciding about the reporter's craft, constitutes an essential link in the series of reportage activities. As the writer emphasizes, "The aim of this dialogue is meant to be **mutual understanding**, while the aim of this understanding is to come closer to each other"⁴¹. In such circumstances, it is difficult, of course, to reduce the question of otherness to "distant Other", or precisely to tolerance (even to the noblest of its manifestations in the field of multiculturalism, not to mention spectacular, but not very significant gestures). Kapuściński himself, cuts off all possible speculation:

³⁸ E. Rewers, "Transkulturowość czy globalność? Dwa dyskursy o kondycji postnowoczesnej," in: *Dylematy wielokulturowości*, ed. W. Kalaga, Kraków: Universitas, 2007, p. 119 ff.

³⁹ R. Kapuściński, *Our Responsibilities in a Multicultural World / Powinności obywatela świata wielokulturowego*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 74.

⁴⁰ R. Kapuściński, "Encountering the Other as the Challenge of the Twenty-First Century," *op. cit.*, p. 87 (see R. Kapuściński, "Spotkanie z Innym jako wyzwanie XXI wieku," *op. cit.*, p. 72). Emphasis A.H.

⁴¹ R. Kapuściński, "The Other in the Global Village," *op. cit.*, p. 73 (see R. Kapuściński, "Inny w globalnej wiosce," *op. cit.*, p. 59).

Tolerance does not need to assume understanding – we tolerate the presence of some other community in our city, but we are not interested in their values and what they represent. There is no communication between us, dialogue.

But a deeper and more important form of intercultural contact should include an active element – trying to meet in the middle, an attempt at dialogue. And this is more than tolerance.

Tolerance is just the first step ...⁴²

V. “Dethroned European”

Kapuściński’s late vision of culture – although shaped with full awareness of the changes taking place, that is, the emergence or even explosion of nationalism, racism, religious fundamentalism at the turn of the twentieth century⁴³ – retains, as can be seen, a characteristic individualism, and goes beyond the paradigm of multiculturalism. It is certainly different from Samuel P. Huntington’s⁴⁴ vision, proclaiming the inevitable conflict of civilizations (“There isn’t any confrontation of civilizations in the world”⁴⁵ – the former reporter unequivocally concludes), or the vision of Francis Fukuyama⁴⁶, prophesying the “end of history”, namely, the dominance of Western culture, the expansion of Eurocentrism (the author of *Shah of Shahs* acknowledges it at most for “[i]ntellectual provocation bringing about a discussion over the epoch”⁴⁷). It also undoubtedly differs from Wolfgang Welsch’s aforementioned concept, for while some of the comments would still permit some guesses in connection to the accentuation of the mechanisms of globalization (“In the contemporary world there are no longer separately existing cultures, behind seven mountains, in isolation. Every culture is present, even to a varying degree – mediated, hybrid, marked by eclecticism”⁴⁸ – we read in *Lapidarium II*), so some comments on

⁴² R. Kapuściński, *Nie ogarniam świata*, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

⁴³ In Kapuściński’s view: “The confrontation of democratic and totalitarian systems has been replaced by new currents with which we enter the twenty first century. These are: nationalism, racism and all kinds of religious fundamentalism” (*ibidem*, pp. 131–132; see also pp. 196–197, 198, 199).

⁴⁴ S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996.

⁴⁵ R. Kapuściński, *Our Responsibilities in a Multicultural World / Powinności obywatela świata wielokulturowego*, *op. cit.*, p. 62 (see also pp. 66–68).

⁴⁶ F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York: Free Press, 1992.

⁴⁷ R. Kapuściński, *Nie ogarniam świata*, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁴⁸ R. Kapuściński, *Lapidarium II*, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

the intensifying “regionalization on a global scale”⁴⁹, the weight of indigenous values, deciding on socio-cultural identities, and especially “clear identity”, do not allow us to approach the German philosopher’s way of thinking and his concept of transculturalism. Kapuściński is definitely closer to Marcel Mauss, Bronisław Malinowski and Ralph Linton, who explain the relation of different cultures in terms of exchange, mutual enrichment, respect⁵⁰, closer too – in the final analysis – to the “Philosophers of dialogue”, above all Emmanuel Lévinas and Józef Tischner (also Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel), who expose the importance of meeting, empathy, being together, understanding⁵¹.

There is no doubt that late Kapuściński is absorbed not only (not so much) by describing the foci of conflicts and antagonisms between “civilizations of development” and “civilizations of survival”⁵², the world of reportage, as much as referring to individual events, closure inside the parabola of power, freedom, independence, but with the obsessive idea of **understanding the Other**, an individual concept of “anthropological meeting”⁵³. An attempt to determine his own position and his own needs appears even in *Lapidarium II*: “I consider myself a researcher of Otherness – other cultures, other ways of thinking, other behaviours. I want to know the positively understood strangeness, that I would like to have contact with in order to understand”⁵⁴, and in *Lapidarium VI*: “I tried to become acquainted with and understand the people I met there in the places I had to go and work. Often they were people belonging to other cultures, races, religions. I tried to understand what it means to be a person of another culture. Does it mean to live differently? Feel differently? Think differently? To be someone else?”⁵⁵ The purpose of this understanding of the Other, as a manifestation of postcolonial sensitivity, turns out to be both curiosity, and – evidently – the necessity of intervention. The ultimate goal of understanding the Other, in the socio-political dimension, becomes – Kapuściński’s assessment – the struggle

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 148.

⁵⁰ See R. Kapuściński, *Our Responsibilities in a Multicultural World / Powinności obywatela świata wielokulturowego*, *op. cit.*, pp. 55–56.

⁵¹ See R. Kapuściński, “The Other in the Global Village,” *op. cit.*, p. 68 ff (see R. Kapuściński, “Inny w globalnej wiosce,” *op. cit.*, p. 55 ff).

⁵² “Świat rozpedzony, świat uśpiony,” Ryszard Kapuściński in discussion with Jacek Żakowski, in: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 300 (1999): p. 13.

⁵³ See “Od historii do antropologii spotkania,” Gabriela Łęcka talks to Ryszard Kapuściński, in: *Opcje*, 2 (1999): pp. 36–39.

⁵⁴ R. Kapuściński, *Lapidarium II*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁵⁵ R. Kapuściński, *Lapidarium VI*, Warsaw: Czytelnik, 2007, p. 49.

to be a “dethroned European”⁵⁶, the struggle to cast off Eurocentrism⁵⁷. Therefore, also the role of the reporter (assuming that the reportage as a message has a tremendous, incomparable to literature, power of influence) and the role of the writer is reduced to the mediating role of **interpreter of cultures**⁵⁸, namely, the one who explains, interprets, gives testimony about the contemporary world; in short, an interpreter “not from language to language – but from culture to culture”⁵⁹. Acceptance of multiculturalism in this case means departure from Eurocentrism, and transgression of multiculturalism – **intercultural dialogue**, utopian to some extent, although inevitable pursuit and action, because: “[T]he strategy of detaching and closing up is not a good option. What solutions remain, then?” Kapuściński asks, rhetorically, “Encounter? Getting to know each other? Dialogue? This is no longer a recommendation. It is now a duty which the reality of a multicultural world places before us”⁶⁰.

⁵⁶ R. Kapuściński, *Our Responsibilities in a Multicultural World / Powinności obywatela świata wielokulturowego*, op. cit., p. 54.

⁵⁷ As he argues: “My main ambition is to show Europeans that our mentality is very eurocentric, that Europe is surrounded by an immeasurable and ever-increasing diversity of cultures, societies, religions and civilizations. Living on a planet with more and more interconnectedness requires that awareness and adapting to the radically new global conditions” (R. Kapuściński, *Autoportret reportera*, op. cit., p. 13).

⁵⁸ R. Kapuściński, “Tłumacz – postać XXI wieku,” in: *Podróże z Ryszardem Kapuścińskim: opowieści trzynastu tłumaczy*, op. cit., pp. 14–15. See also R. Kapuściński, *Autoportret reportera*, op. cit., p. 21 (“Dlaczego piszę?” [lecture by Ryszard Kapuściński at the University of Silesia, 1997], in: *Gazeta Uniwersytecka*, 2 (1997): p. 13).

⁵⁹ R. Kapuściński, *Autoportret reportera*, op. cit., p. 21 (“Dlaczego piszę?” op. cit., p. 13). See R. Kapuściński, *Lapidarium II*, op. cit., p. 117.

⁶⁰ R. Kapuściński, *Our Responsibilities in a Multicultural World / Powinności obywatela świata wielokulturowego*, op. cit., p. 55.

CONCLUSION

11. COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND AN (OTHER) LITERARY HISTORY

I. The illusion of (non)identity

The disputes, on the one hand, around comparative literature, on the other – around literary history (I am thinking here of the “internal” disputes) entered a new phase, beginning in the nineteen nineties: weakening or even abandoning the earlier rigours of each of these literary criticism fields brings about, one might say, their accidental, next union. In 2004 the participants of the conference “Studying Transcultural Literary History”, amongst others Anders Pettersson, David Damrosch and Franco Moretti, discussed the “transcultural literary history”¹ in Stockholm. In 1994, Mario J. Valdés and Linda Hutcheon came up with the slogan: “rethinking literary history – comparatively”². In their opinion a change of the image of modern humanities in the twentieth century, under pressure, amongst others, of poststructural breakthroughs, post-Heideggerian hermeneutics, new historicism and the debate dedicated in the last century to historiography (starting from Nietzsche), finally, broadly understood postcolonial studies, bring about a shift from the traditional, national model of literary history – the “monolithic” model – to the comparative model (the researchers develop these theses in the book *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory*³).

¹ *Studying Transcultural Literary History*, ed. G. Lindberg-Wada, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006 (see amongst others A. Pettersson, “Possibilities for Transcultural Literary History,” pp. 9–11; F. Moretti, “Evolution, World-Systems, *Weltliteratur*,” pp. 113–121; D. Damrosch, “Where Is World Literature?,” pp. 211–220).

² M.J. Valdés, L. Hutcheon, *Rethinking Literary History – Comparatively*, New York: American Council of Learned Societies [occasional paper], 1994, No. 27 (also in: *ACLA Bulletin*, Vol. 25 (1995/96): pp. 11–22).

³ *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory*, ed. L. Hutcheon, M.J. Valdés, Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2002 (see L. Hutcheon, “Rethinking the National Model,” pp. 3–49; M.J. Valdés, “Rethinking the History of Literary History,” pp. 63–115; S. Greenblatt, “Racial Memory and Literary History,” pp. 50–62).

There is no doubt that this tendency, which has grown in strength in the last decade, has been around for some time now, evidenced, among other things, by the fact that it has appeared for over forty years in the series “Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages” – under the aegis of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA/AILC) – in subsequent volumes of the comparative literary history⁴ (the whole series is conceived as an international and transdisciplinary project, oriented towards a number of issues such as international artistic movements; geographical regions, for example, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America; defining moments and “turns”, in the sense of groundbreaking events and dates, for example 1989⁵; cultural institutions, such as theatre; cultural centres – cities; the phenomenon of censorship or stereotypes). “**Comparative literary history**” is a phrase that has been repeated many times in the last few decades⁶, well known, of course, for a long time as the German term: *Vergleichende Literaturgeschichte*, or even René Wellek’s scrupulous explanations, who in the nineteen fifties differentiated a few meanings of “comparative literature”⁷. Due to the historical implications of traditional comparative literature, some other formulae are preferred today: “»comparative« literary history”⁸ (the difference is determined by the small nuance – the quotation marks), “international literary history”, “transcultural literary history” (the aforementioned Stockholm conference; also the Scandinavian comparatists’ project explained by Anders Pettersson⁹) and also “comparative world

⁴ In the years 2004–2010 4 volumes on the history of literary cultures of East-Central Europe appeared in this series – *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe: Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, vol. 1, ed. M. Cornis-Pope, J. Neubauer, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2004 (vol. 2: 2006, vol. 3: 2007, vol. 4: 2010).

⁵ See W. Bolecki, “1989 in Poland: Continuity and Caesura,” in: *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe: Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, vol. 1, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–54.

⁶ See M.J. Valdés, L. Hutcheon, *Rethinking Literary History – Comparatively*, *op. cit.*

⁷ R. Wellek, “General, Comparative, and National Literature,” in: R. Wellek, A. Warren, *Theory of Literature*, New York: Harcourt, 1962, p. 46 ff.

⁸ M.J. Valdés, L. Hutcheon, *Rethinking Literary History – Comparatively*, *op. cit.*, p. 2 ff.

⁹ A. Pettersson, “Introduction: Concepts of Literature and Transcultural Literary History,” in: *Literary History: Towards a Global Perspective*, vol. 1: *Notions of Literature Across Times and Cultures*, ed. A. Pettersson, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006, pp. 1–35 (particularly p. 22 ff). See commentary: J. Kazimierski, “Jak pisać historię literatury światowej,” in: *Rocznik Komparatystyczny*, 1 (2010): pp. 281–286.

literature”¹⁰ – David Damrosch’s proposals, amongst others (*nota bene* world literature is one of the meanings of “comparative literary history” which Wellek took into account earlier).

Bearing in mind above all the current situation, namely the concepts of world literature, I would like to look at the widely understood relationships of comparative literature and literary history, considered from the point of view of the “indiscipline”¹¹. These relationships in the historical sense are undoubtedly evident, given that comparative literature came into being in the nineteenth century – in the age, to use François Jost’s term, “*l’éclosion de nationalismes politiques farouches*” [“the emergence of fierce political nationalisms”]¹² – as a critical continuation of isolated national literatures and forming a response to the obligatory model of national literary history, but also very complicated, given that they changed radically during the course of the last two centuries. As a consequence, comparative literature and literary history are at once situated in **strong opposition**, an example of which is Goethe’s idea *Weltliteratur* and Hugo von Meltzl’s idea and vision of comparative literature, fifty years younger than that, and today – the new concepts of world literature: amongst others Pascale Casanova’s “World Republic of Letters” (*La République mondiale des Lettres*), David Damrosch’s “world literature” and Franco Moretti’s “literary world-system” (“»second« *Weltliteratur*”), also a variety of collective projects called ‘comparative’, ‘international’, ‘transcultural’ literary history. Other times they are treated **inclusively** (inclusive concepts refer particularly to traditional comparative literature). On still other occasions – in fact the two literary criticism disciplines **identify themselves**, which as a result, causes the name “comparative literature” to be treated as illogical, recognizing the clarifying adjective – “comparative” – as a form of pleonasm. Of course, these three barely outlined approaches in no way exhaust the issue of the complicated relationship (in and of themselves, they turn out today to be insufficient, inadequate¹³), they do not bring satisfactory “archaeology” of the

¹⁰ D. Damrosch, “Comparative World Literature,” in: *The Canonical Debate Today: Crossing Disciplinary and Cultural Boundaries*, ed. L. Papadima, D. Damrosch, T. D’haen, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011, pp. 169–178.

¹¹ D. Ferris, “Indiscipline,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, ed. H. Saussy, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, pp. 78–99.

¹² F. Jost, “La littérature comparée, une philosophie des lettres,” in: *idem, Essais de littérature comparée*, vol. 2, Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1968, p. 317.

¹³ Henry H.H. Remak indicates this simply: “We are inclined to think that a rigid division of labors between national-literature, comparative-literature and general-literature scholars is neither feasible nor desirable” (H.H.H. Remak, “Comparative Literature,

relationships. It should be added in the margin that today not only are previous projects criticized but also the latest projects – the concepts of “world literature”, to recall the diagnosis of Gayatri Ch. Spivak, author of the text dedicated to “comparativism in extremis”¹⁴.

The last of the three solutions, all attempts to identify two areas of literary criticism, dictated by the picture of comparative literature of the nineteenth century – its closeness to the national literary histories, broadening the idea of nationality¹⁵, nationalism or crypto-nationalism¹⁶ – closes the case of comparative literature as a separate discipline. Benedetto Croce’s position is well known, who on the question of specificity of “comparative method” – the actual basis or decisive advantage of comparative literature – in 1903 formulated an unequivocal answer: “There is no doubt that this method is also applied to literary history”¹⁷. The Italian aesthetician questions the identity of the new discipline and directly challenges its legitimacy: “I do not discern what difference there is (...) between »literary history« pure and simple and »comparative literary history«; except that with the pleonasm *comparative* one does not wish to express what is requisite for a truly complete literary history that is consciously aware and takes cognizance of the full extent of the task it should fulfill”¹⁸. The possibility of this kind of understanding of the relationship between comparative literature and literary history (more precisely: abolition of this relationship) I only indicate, realising that it has come to be a varied continuation of the twentieth and twenty first centuries. It is worth here to remember that comparative literature in moderate interpretations is treated as an auxiliary science of literary

Its Definition and Function,” in: *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, ed. N.P. Stallknecht, H. Frenz, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961, p. 18).

¹⁴ G.Ch. Spivak, “Rethinking Comparativism,” in: *New Literary History*, 3, Vol. 40 (2009): p. 615 ff.

¹⁵ See M. Kuziak, “Palimpsesty komparatystyki,” in: *Komparatystyka dzisiaj*, vol. 1, ed. E. Szczęsna, E. Kasperski, Kraków: Universitas, 2010, p. 132 ff.

¹⁶ D. Damrosch, “Comparative World Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 170.

¹⁷ B. Croce, “Comparative Literature,” in: *Comparative Literature: The Early Years. An Anthology of Essays*, ed. H.-J. Schulz, Ph.H. Rhein, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973, pp. 219–220 (see B. Croce, “La »letteratura comparata«,” in: *La Critica. Rivista di letteratura, storia e filosofia*, Vol. 1 (1903): p. 77).

¹⁸ B. Croce, “Comparative Literature,” *op. cit.*, pp. 222–223 (see B. Croce, “La »letteratura comparata«,” *op. cit.*, pp. 79–80). Resounding echoes of Croce are later heard in Maurycy Mann: “It is exactly the same field of research, the same means and the same goals, so there is no need to use a separate name. »Vergleichende Literaturgeschichte«, the comparative literary history is exactly the true, essential literary history. Adding the adjective »comparative« is an obvious pleonasm that cannot be justified” (M. Mann, *O literaturze porównawczej: Szkic informacyjny*, Kraków: G. Gebethner i Ska, 1918, p. 20).

criticism, in more radical interpretations – as a superfluous substitute for the former philology (among Polish literary scholars this view is shared for example by Andrzej Borowski¹⁹) or the foreground of “world literature”, as in the case of Franco Moretti’s theory (these issues require careful analysis on another occasion).

Therefore the two first approaches remain in play, referred to here by the terms **opposition** and **inclusion** (otherwise, it could be equally useful to use two metaphors known to readers of Moretti: “wave” and “tree”). The simplest and most exemplary inclusive interpretation – the schema of “connectivity” of two fields of literary studies – is proposed by Jean-Marie Carré in the “Introduction” to the book *La littérature comparée*, which was published by Marius-François Guyard in the fifties: “Comparative literature is a branch of literary history”²⁰. In the case of inclusive versions, that is to say, continuation, and therefore establishing or negotiating dependencies, this undoubtedly leads to spectacular destabilisation. Traditional comparative literature (positivist, eurocentric, etc.) transcends the boundaries of a given national literary history and more or less favourably situates it in the context of other histories of national literature. This kind of model proposal was formulated in the nineteen thirties by Paul van Tieghem, who believed that comparative literature – **supplements** and **unites** national literary histories²¹ (such a vision, it should be said in the margin, was accepted by Stefania Skwarczyńska who argued in the wider perspective of literary criticism that comparative literature should “dominate all other literary criticism disciplines, like the dome crowning the edifice of literary scholarship”²²). Comparative literature – as a kind of continuation – therefore becomes, if we could say this, a **supplementary literary history**, literary history of the “second degree”, a metadiscipline, fulfils, to refer to Croce’s criticism, the demand “for a truly complete literary history”. Under such circumstances, where traditional comparative literature encounters traditional (national) literary history – in the spirit of inclusion, where one constitutes an

¹⁹ See “Rozmowa »Wielogłosu«” [Maria Korytowska, Marta Skwara, Olga Płaszewska, Bogusław Bakula, Tomasz Bilczewski, Andrzej Borowski, Andrzej Hejmej and Tadeusz Sławek talk about the problems of contemporary comparative literature], in: *Wielogłos*, 1–2 (2010) (special number: “Komparatystyka dziś”), pp. 11–12.

²⁰ J.-M. Carré, “Avant-propos,” in: M.-F. Guyard, *La littérature comparée*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951, p. 5.

²¹ P. van Tieghem, *La littérature comparée*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1931, pp. 16–17.

²² S. Skwarczyńska, “Aspekt językowo-artystyczny w przedmiocie badań komparatystyki literackiej,” in: *eadem*, *Pomiędzy historią a teorią literatury*, Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1975, p. 267.

“extension” of the other, construing a higher order through a gesture of appropriation – an inevitable conflict of interests arises. François Jost laconically and sententially defined it in 1968: “*Qui trop embrasse, mal étreint*” “[T]hose who grab too much hold on to little”, “*Les comparatistes, pensent les »nationalistes«, demeurent à la superficie*” “[The comparatists think the »nationalists« are superficial”]²³.

Initially concluding, it could be said that traditional comparative literature paradoxically gains from its weak identity, it is “legitimised”, in the context of literary history – it either goes beyond its horizon and is thus destabilized, or it also questions, exists in overt opposition to it (this project, according to which comparative literature is the *enfant terrible* of the then literary history, despite the efforts of Goethe and Meltzl was not realised on a larger scale during the nineteenth century). In other words, comparative literature – regardless of which variant (obvious in the case of opposition, less so for inclusion) – fulfils, so to say, a subversive function in relation to literary history, from the beginning of its existence is a destabilizing force, destroys the order imposed by individual national literary histories (and also in this sense comparative literature takes the form, as David Ferris argues on another occasion, of a counter-science – an “indiscipline”).

Naturally, the matter of the links is inextricably complex in today’s reality, in the situation of crisis on both the side of comparative literature, namely the crystallization of different trends of cultural comparative literature²⁴ (remaining in strong opposition in relation to traditional comparative literature), as well as on the side of literary history, that is the gradual departure from the tradition of Lansonism during the twentieth century (from the model of Gustav Lanson, whom René Etiemble considered as “the creator of the most orthodox literary history” for his *Histoire de la littérature française* from 1894, departing from positivist perception of factography, cataloging masterpieces, fixing rigid canons of literature based on linearity and chronological order, generally speaking: departure from hierarchizing universalism. Stephen Greenblatt captures the present state of affairs very well: “There is (...) no single literary history, and it would be difficult even to imagine what such a history would look like”²⁵, and Gayatri Ch. Spivak, using two terms:

²³ F. Jost, “La littérature comparée, une philosophie des lettres,” *op. cit.*, p. 323.

²⁴ See chapter 1: *Cultural comparative literature: interpretation and existence*, pp. 9–21.

²⁵ S. Greenblatt, “What is the History of Literature?,” in: *Critical Inquiry*, 3, Vol. 23 (1997): p. 470. Already in the nineteen sixties Roland Barthes indicated the fundamental problem with the literary history: “Amputate the individual from the literature! One sees the uprooting, the very paradox. But a history of literature is only possible at this price;

“death of a discipline”²⁶ and “comparativism in extremis”. Depending on the interests of two divergent, mutually destructive trends of comparative literature – there are two basic ways to “reconstruct” (this, I think, is the necessary word here) literary history: the horizon of traditional comparative literature determined by the dominant national model of literary history, literary histories that are isolated from each other, and the horizon of cultural comparative literature – through an “other literary history”, including the other concepts of “world literature” of David Damrosch or Franco Moretti, an array of transdisciplinary projects, such as for example the aforementioned transcultural literary history. The new understanding and comprehension of the mission of literary history in current comparative literature research, the creation – as proposed by Damrosch – of **microcanons**²⁷, I here call an “other literary history”. I am of course aware that this formula has been used many times before, including by Teresa Walas (in the title of the book *Czy jest możliwa inna historia literatury?* [*Is Another Literary History Possible?*]²⁸) and by the translator of Franco Moretti (in the subtitle to the French edition of the book *Graphes, cartes et arbres: Modèles abstraits pour une autre histoire de la littérature*²⁹). The formula “(other) literary history” – as a palimpsestic formula – in reality here has two different meanings. Firstly, it refers simultaneously to traditional literary history, and – in the situation of criticism and crossing its horizon – to an “other literary history”; in other words, it reveals the conflict between two different models of literary history (their readable emblems: universal canon and temporary microcanons). Secondly – which will be just as important for me – reveals the misgivings that an “other literary history” is even possible in the perspective of the so-called “new comparative literature”.

even if it means specifying that the history of literature, brought back necessarily into its institutional limits, will be merely history” (R. Barthes, “History or Literature?”, in: *idem*, *On Racine*, trans. R. Howard, Berkeley–Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992, p. 156; see R. Barthes, “Histoire ou littérature?”, in: *Annales*, 3 (1960): pp. 524–537; also in: *idem*, *Sur Racine*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1963, pp. 147–167).

²⁶ G.Ch. Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

²⁷ D. Damrosch, “Conclusion: World Enough and Time,” in: *idem*, *What is World Literature?*, Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 298.

²⁸ T. Walas, *Czy jest możliwa inna historia literatury?*, Kraków: Universitas, 1993.

²⁹ F. Moretti, *Graphes, cartes et arbres: Modèles abstraits pour une autre histoire de la littérature*, translated into French by É. Dobenesque, Paris: Éditions Les Prairies Ordinaires, 2008.

II. *Weltliteratur* – nationalism (repercussions)

The relations of comparative literature with national literary history (more broadly: “national philology”) are not however as clear and obvious as the above picture of inclusion suggests. For two different reasons: on account of the phenomenon of literature itself, its inevitably political and national implications (this problem is discussed in detail by Pascale Casanova in the book *La République mondiale des Lettres*³⁰), and because of the existence since the nineteenth century of cases of opposition (that is, the questioning of national literary history), to which there is a willing return in the second half of the twentieth century and in the twenty first century. In other words, it seems that sometimes we forget about the actual “beginnings” of comparative literature. There is no doubt in this respect that American comparatists are distinguished in this regard, especially the followers of postcolonial studies, who *en bloc* reduce comparative literature to the inclusive model. As the authors of the so-called Bernheimer report wrote: “Indeed, comparative literary studies tended to reinforce an identification of nation-states as imagined communities with national languages as their natural bases”³¹. However, before that happened, before the accents of nationality and nationalism prevailed (in the meanings that were deeply analysed by Benedict Anderson in the book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*³²), Goethe’s concept of humanism appears, and later – still in the nineteenth century – the concepts of comparative literary scholars from Hugo von Meltzl and Hutcheson M. Posnett³³. René Wellek was not mistaken in the nineteen fifties emphasizing the fact that at the beginning comparative literature crystallised in obvious opposition to the history of national literatures. It is precisely this opposition to hermetic national philologies that establishes the importance of the Goethean vision of *Weltliteratur*³⁴,

³⁰ P. Casanova, *La République mondiale des Lettres* [1999], Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2008. See P. Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M. DeBevoise, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

³¹ “The Bernheimer Report, 1993: Comparative Literature at the Turn of the Century,” in: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*, ed. Ch. Bernheimer, Baltimore–London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 40.

³² B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London–New York: Verso, 1983.

³³ H.M. Posnett, *Comparative Literature*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1886.

³⁴ See H. Birus, “The Goethean Concept of World Literature and Comparative Literature,” in: *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 4, Vol. 2 (2000) (text available

explained fortuitously by the poet in a conversation with Johann Peter Eckermann on January 31, 1827. During this discussion the author of the *West-Eastern Divan* maintained: "National literature is now rather an unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature [*Weltliteratur*] is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach"³⁵ (*nota bene* the enunciation of these words is spectacularly emphasised by Wellek: "It is the ideal of the unification of all literatures into one great synthesis, where each nation would play its part in a universal concert"³⁶ ...). Goethe's version of "world literature" should break the dangerous national model, becoming, in general, a proposed alternative viewpoint to the contemporary literary history. The key here is not an attempt to build a model canon, but a **humanistic attitude**, according to which both the unity of various literatures is preserved as well their diversity.³⁷ Goethe is fully aware of the existing dangers – especially dangers connected to ideology, thinking in terms of cultural hegemony. Today, regardless of the evaluation of his vision (and it met with extremely different receptions, for example Jan Mukařovský's very curious interpretation – he accused it of being a bourgeois idea ...), it should be emphasized that the proposal of the German poet in some way constitutes a prelude to current intercultural research. The project is basically utopian, uninstitutional – in this sense, probably similar, for example, to the concept of "comparativism in extremis", which Gayatri Ch. Spivak has recently been advancing.

Half a century after Goethe's discussion with Eckermann – in 1877 – a radical criticism of traditional literary history was formulated by

on the webpage: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol2/iss4/>) (also in: *Comparative Literature and Culture Studies*, ed. S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2003, pp. 11–22). See also: F. Strich, *Goethe und die Weltliteratur*, Bern: Francke Verlag, 1946; *Weltliteratur heute: Konzepte und Perspektiven*, ed. M. Schmeling, Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1995.

³⁵ J.W. von Goethe, J.P. Eckermann, "Conversations on World Literature," in: *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*, ed. D. Damrosch, N. Melas, M. Buthelezi, Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009, p. 23.

³⁶ R. Wellek, A. Warren, "General, Comparative, and National Literature," *op. cit.*, p. 48.

³⁷ In this context, I think, we should place the opinion of Marian Szyrocki, that "world literature" for Goethe is not "a sum of national literatures, but an aesthetic-humanistic quality, a collection of the best works of various nations, works that stand out with profound humanism and aesthetic values and influence national literatures" (M. Szyrocki, *Johann Wolfgang Goethe*, Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1981, p. 245).

Hugo von Meltzl³⁸. The founder of the first comparative literature journal *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok / Zeitschrift für vergleichende Litteratur* (1877), a man deeply observing the socio-cultural and political realities of the time, in the programmatic article “Vorläufige Aufgaben der vergleichenden Literatur” [“Present Tasks of Comparative Literature”] signalled a crisis and demanded immediate **reform of the historiography of literature**. He argued: “There is no area of literary study today as overworked (...) as that of literary history”³⁹; or a little further: “As every unbiased man of letters knows, modern literary history, as generally practiced today, is nothing but an *ancilla historiae politicae*, or even an *ancilla nationis*, at best an *ancilla philologiae* (in the modern sense of the latter term)”⁴⁰. Meltzl takes a stand directly against the literary history existing in the period, claiming that it is precisely comparative literature (the use of the “comparative method”) that makes it possible to abolish the historiography model which was obligatory in the nineteenth century. It is worth adding here that not only does he question the mode of operation of the literary historian (his artificial and peculiar historical-literary periodization, for whom political events or even the dates of the death of kings serve as a basis⁴¹). Now, this comparatist, among others, stressed the importance of translation, introduced interdisciplinarity into the range of comparative literary reflection – commented upon in a wide scale in the last decades – namely the need for co-operation of comparative literary studies with linguistics, philosophy, aesthetics, ethnology, anthropology (this is of course a clear precursor to interdisciplinary research which radically changed the picture of comparative literature in the second half of the twentieth century), perceives a political dimension to comparative literature (Russian is ruled out from the group of languages accepted by the magazine’s editor as a protest against the Russian prohibition of using the Ukrainian language in Ukraine). His ambitious goals include that the comparatist legitimises himself through the knowledge of many languages, that he

³⁸ See Hugo Meltzl *und die Anfänge der Komparatistik*, ed. H. Fassel, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005. See also: D. Damrosch, “Rebirth of a Discipline: The Global Origins of Comparative Studies,” in: *Comparative Critical Studies*, 1–2, Vol. 3 (2006): p. 101 ff.

³⁹ H. Meltzl, “Present Tasks of Comparative Literature,” in: *World Literature Reader: A Reader*, ed. T. D’haen, C. Domínguez, M. Rosendahl Thomsen, London–New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 20 (see H. Meltzl, “Vorläufige Aufgaben der vergleichenden Literatur,” in: *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténelmi Lapok / Zeitschrift für vergleichende Litteratur*, 1 (1877): p. 181).

⁴⁰ H. Meltzl, “Present Tasks of Comparative Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 19 (see H. Meltzl, “Vorläufige Aufgaben der vergleichenden Literatur,” *op. cit.*, p. 180).

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

has achieved a special kind of linguistic competence (*nota bene* learning different, “distant” languages is one of the so-called standards postulated by American comparatists in the nineteen sixties and nineteen seventies). The vigour of Meltzl’s concept, regardless of the one-sided criticism by Etiemble (“this stingy idea of world literature [*Weltliteratur*] definitely seems to have had its day”⁴²), is appreciated till today – in particular, the acknowledgment gives rise to an attempt to move away from nationalism, the proposal to break with the national or otherwise “nationalistic”⁴³ literary history.

Undoubtedly, the visions of comparative literature from the nineteenth century – Goethe (intellectual movement) and Meltzl (institutional venture) – were targeted against widespread nationalism. In practice, however, comparative literature quickly took over the mistakes of what was the literary history of the time and paradoxically generated new nationalisms (it is enough to mention, for example, the constataions of Philarète Chasles, author of the text “Littérature étrangère comparée”⁴⁴, which Damrosch recognizes as a manifestation of cryptonationalism, or Joseph Texte in his various writings)⁴⁵. The image of comparative literature in this regard has not changed much with the entry into the twentieth century, hence Wellek summarizes the situation of the discipline in terms of paradox (“There is a paradox in the psychological and social motivation of »comparative literature« as practised in the last fifty years. Comparative literature arose as a reaction against the narrow nationalism of much nineteenth-century scholarship, as a protest against the isolationism of many historians of French, German, Italian, English, etc., literature”⁴⁶) and it accents perhaps the most controversial aspect

⁴² R. Etiemble, “Do We Have to Revise the Notion of World Literature?,” in: *World Literature Reader*, *op. cit.*, p. 96 (see R. Etiemble, “Faut-il réviser la notion de *Weltliteratur*?,” in: *idem*, *Essais de littérature (vraiment) générale*, Paris: Gallimard, 1975, p. 19).

⁴³ D. Damrosch, “Rebirth of a Discipline: The Global Origins of Comparative Studies,” *op. cit.*, p. 102.

⁴⁴ Ph. Chasles, “Littérature étrangère comparée,” in: *Revue de Paris*, 17 (1835): pp. 238–262.

⁴⁵ Amongst other things Meltzl noticed that Goethe’s idea of *Weltliteratur* was misunderstood by the German historian of literature and politics Georg Gottfried Gervinus, author of *Handbuch der Geschichte der poetischen National-literatur der Deutschen* (Paris: Baudry, 1843). See H. Meltzl, “Present Tasks of Comparative Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 19 (see H. Meltzl, “Vorläufige Aufgaben der vergleichenden Literatur,” *op. cit.*, p. 179).

⁴⁶ R. Wellek, “The Crisis of Comparative Literature,” in: *Comparative Literature: Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association* [University of North Carolina, September 8–12, 1958], vol. 1, ed. W.P. Friederich, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959, p. 153.

of comparative literary studies, which today, in the age of global economic crisis, can be described as – *nolens volens* – creative accounting:

Still, this basically patriotic motivation of much Comparative Literature studies in France, Germany, Italy, and so on has led to a strange system of cultural book-keeping, a desire to accumulate credits for one's nation by proving as many influences as possible on other nations or, more subtly, by proving that my nation has assimilated and "understood" a foreign master more fully than any other.⁴⁷

Paul van Tieghem invites us to such comparative activity – to cultural imperialism – in the nineteen thirties in the manifesto of influenceology, the book *La littérature comparée* (it first appeared in 1931 and had several reissues later). He proposes an arbitrary division of literary research, subject to discussion from today's point of view, namely the separation of three perspectives: "national literature" [*la littérature nationale*], "comparative literature" [*la littérature comparée*] and "general literature" [*la littérature générale*]. His exceptional research optimism results primarily from the adoption of the elementary quantitative criterion, according to which national literature is limited to the literature of one country, **comparative literature – to two literatures**, general literature in turn is not subject to any limits, it takes into account all existing literature. For van Tieghem's comparative literature, it is evident that the oppressive strategy of studying binary relations between two national literatures, widely criticised since a long time for the gesture of cultural appropriation⁴⁸, turns out to be characteristic⁴⁹.

Already in the middle of the twentieth century, many comparatists speak openly of the dangers of nationalism or cryptonationalism in comparative studies: Erich Auerbach, Albert Guérard (comparative literature, in his view, is a counterbalance to the "nationalistic heresy"⁵⁰), Wellek, Etiemble, Jost, at the beginning of the twenty-first century – almost all comparatists ... David Damrosch argues that comparative literature is "the cure for the ills of nationalistic separatism, jingoism, and internecine violence"⁵¹; Emily Apter proves that comparative literature, especially

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 154–155.

⁴⁸ See for example R. Wellek, "The Name and Nature of Comparative Literature," in: *idem*, *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism*, New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 1970, p. 15.

⁴⁹ P. van Tieghem, *La littérature comparée*, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

⁵⁰ A. Guérard, "»Comparative Literature?«," in: *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, 7 (1958): p. 5.

⁵¹ D. Damrosch, "Conclusion: World Enough and Time," *op. cit.*, p. 282.

after September 11, 2001, has “no national predicate”⁵², and Gayatri Ch. Spivak postulates a specific “translation” – “linguistic equivalence”⁵³.

The struggle with the nationalism of the discipline is undertaken in the early fifties by the comparatist-in-exile – Erich Auerbach, a struggle whose essence is perfectly reflected by one of the sentences closing the text “Philology and »Weltliteratur«”: “our philological home is the earth: it can no longer be the nation”⁵⁴. The final conclusions sketch a new paradigm (*non nova, sed nove*): “We must return, in admittedly altered circumstances, to the knowledge that prenational medieval culture already possessed: the knowledge that the spirit [*Geist*] is not national”⁵⁵. Auerbach, as witnessed by the formula of the title “Philologie der Weltliteratur”, in an obvious manner makes reference to Goethe’s proposal, consciously returning after more than a hundred years to the idea of the German poet. He perceives the decay of the “inner bases of national existence”, the phenomenon of acceleration of cultural assimilation – a kind of precursor to the much later theory of transculturalism, and the “process of concentration” (his description perfectly corresponds to the interpretation of globalization in today’s world). However, most importantly, it establishes a new mode of comparative work, which should be the result of the researcher’s broad horizon, guided by the “instinctive personal interest”. It is exactly this individual approach to the interpretation of literature, the subjectivity of the interpreter, which is expressed perfectly by the Auerbachian formula *Ansatzpunkt*, and turns out to be key (Edward W. Said highlighted this in a particular manner as the author of the introduction to one of the editions of *Mimesis*⁵⁶).

René Wellek in his criticism of the nineteen fifties, frequently commented on by various literary scholars – “The Crisis of Comparative Literature” – performs a scrupulous balance of the discipline. He also perceives the value of comparative research and drags out the arguments

⁵² E. Apter, “A New Comparative Literature,” in: *eadem, The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*, Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 243.

⁵³ G.Ch. Spivak, “Rethinking Comparativism,” *op. cit.*, p. 614 ff.

⁵⁴ E. Auerbach, “Philology and »Weltliteratur«,” trans. M. and E. Said, in: *The Centennial Review*, 1, Vol. 13 (1969): p. 17 (see first edition: E. Auerbach, “Philologie der Weltliteratur,” in: *Weltliteratur: Festgabe für Fritz Strich zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. W. Muschg, E. Staiger, Bern: Francke Verlag, 1952, p. 49).

⁵⁵ E. Auerbach, “Philology and »Weltliteratur«,” *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁵⁶ See E.W. Said, “Introduction to the Fiftieth-Anniversary Edition,” in: E. Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, translated from the German by W.R. Trask, Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. XXXII.

in the spirit of Ernst R. Curtius⁵⁷ ("Comparative Literature has the immense merit of combating the false isolation of national literary histories: it is obviously right (and has brought a mass of evidence to support this) in its conception of a coherent Western tradition of literature woven together in a network of innumerable interrelations"⁵⁸), but he also reveals their serious shortcomings. Without hesitation he calls comparative literature "a stagnant backwater" ..., underlining the fact that van Tieghem's research proposals only lead to *regressus ad infinitum*⁵⁹. In such circumstances, we are reminded of humanism in reference to the tradition of Goethean thinking, pointing directly to potential possibilities of overcoming the impasse, among other things based on Croce's thesis, the perspective of Russian Formalism, New Criticism, marxism or psychoanalysis.

In the sixties, René Etiemble also suggests a return to Goethe in a manner typical for him, portraying the problem in the form of a rhetorical question – "Faut-il réviser la notion de *Weltliteratur*?" ["Do We Have to Revise the Notion of World Literature?"] (this is the title of the paper he delivered at the IV ICLA Congress in Freiburg in 1964). The French comparatist, firstly, defends the German poet before absurd, tendentious interpretations ("not one word of Goethe on world literature [*Weltliteratur*] allows us to see in him a conscious or unconscious agent of imperialism. On the contrary, his elevated idea of world literature implicitly condemns German nationalism and along with it all nationalism"⁶⁰). Secondly – he warns against identifying comparative literature with *Weltliteratur* ("If comparative literature, then, can be considered in relation to world literature [*Weltliteratur*], this is not because it is identical with the letter, but only in so far as it allows us to gain access to it"⁶¹). Thirdly – he raises important ethical questions; many years before the diagnoses, which are today commonly known in particular thanks to postcolonial studies, he formulated the following thesis: "[B]ut could we not agree that henceforth nobody has the right to meddle with world literature [*Weltliteratur*], or better with literature, if he or

⁵⁷ E.R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W.R. Trask, Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1983 (see E.R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, Bern: Francke, 1948).

⁵⁸ R. Wellek, "The Crisis of Comparative Literature," *op. cit.*, p. 150.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 152.

⁶⁰ R. Etiemble, "Do We Have to Revise the Notion of World Literature?" *op. cit.*, p. 94 (see R. Etiemble, "Faut-il réviser la notion de *Weltliteratur*?" *op. cit.*, p. 17).

⁶¹ R. Etiemble, "Do We Have to Revise the Notion of World Literature?" *op. cit.*, p. 95 (see R. Etiemble, "Faut-il réviser la notion de *Weltliteratur*?" *op. cit.*, p. 18).

she has not done his or her best to escape the determinism of his or her birth”⁶². Etiemble, exposing the importance of translation, like Goethe, dreams in essence of the new literary history (*nota bene* in his opinion, it is not the history of literature, but the history of literatures that should be worked out). He assumes the existence of transdisciplinary research, hence “**this history of literature, and of literatures**” arising as a result of professionalization, of joint work of research groups. Etiemble’s perversity is well known – so when he sees a team of capable young Parisian literary scholars in the future writing this proposed “history of literatures”, he surprises with his final conclusion: “To the point even that at precisely the moment at which world literature [*Weltliteratur*] finally becomes possible it becomes at the same time almost impossible”⁶³ ...

III. Reactivations: *Weltliteratur*, world literature

The inevitable process of homogenizing individual literatures into world literature, as emphasized by Jonathan Culler, is imposed not by the comparatists but by the literature itself⁶⁴ – the “World Republic of Letters”, to use Pascale Casanova’s adequate description. This is also why the fundamental tone of the Bernheimer report is limited – in Culler’s view – to the basic question of “how comparative literature should deal with »world literature«”⁶⁵, with the hierarchical structure of the literary world, whose characteristics are presented by Casanova in one of the chapters of *The World Republic of Letters*⁶⁶. Modern comparative literature, according to David Damrosch, opens “lines of connection across

⁶² R. Etiemble, “Do We Have to Revise the Notion of World Literature?,” *op. cit.*, p. 99 (see R. Etiemble, “Faut-il réviser la notion de *Weltliteratur*?,” *op. cit.*, p. 28).

⁶³ R. Etiemble, “Do We Have to Revise the Notion of World Literature?,” *op. cit.*, p. 102 (see R. Etiemble, “Faut-il réviser la notion de *Weltliteratur*?,” *op. cit.*, pp. 33–34). In this perspective it is not difficult to assess the final outcome of realizations coming much later in literary history, such as Denis Hollier’s project (*A New History of French Literature*, ed. D. Hollier, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989; French edition: *Nouvelle Histoire de la littérature française*, ed. D. Hollier, Paris: Bordas, 1993).

⁶⁴ J. Culler, “Comparative Literature, At Last,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, pp. 245–246 (see also J. Culler, “Comparative Literature, At Last,” in: *idem*, *The Literary in Theory*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007, pp. 248–267).

⁶⁵ J. Culler, “Comparative Literature, At Last,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

⁶⁶ P. Casanova, “Principles of a World History of Literature,” in: *eadem*, *The World Republic of Letters*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9–44 (see P. Casanova, “Principes d’une histoire mondiale de la littérature,” in: *eadem*, *La République mondiale des Lettres*, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–74).

the conflicted boundaries of nations and of cultures, and new lines of comparison across the persisting divisions between the hypercanon and the countercanon of world literature⁶⁷; in other words: broadly understood intercultural dialogue and all attempts to counter the hegemony of hypercanon. The author of the book *What is World Literature?* takes a moderate position on the question of world literature⁶⁸, examines it in three aspects, namely readership circulation, translation, and literary production. The phenomenon of world literature (a phenomenon at the same time communal and individual) is introduced, using a three-pronged definition:

1. *World literature is an elliptical refraction of national literatures.*
2. *World literature is writing that gains in translation.*
3. *World literature is not a set canon of texts but a mode of reading: a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time.*⁶⁹

The first argument – concerning the elliptical refraction of national literatures – in the case of world literature indicates coexistence (conflict) of these literatures. Coexistence, to repeat again after Culler, dictated not by reality or by academic practice, but by the very nature of literature. This arises in a defined national space and preserves its origins also in the space of world literature. Damrosch captures the essence of the whole phenomenon in terms of elliptical refraction (more precisely: keeping in mind the figure of an ellipse and “double” refraction, overlapping within the target culture and source culture), proving that its dynamics is completely different from the case, as Wellek once called it, of “the »foreign trade« of literatures”⁷⁰. The second argument serves to expose the role of translation in the context of world literature and is of key significance in the current translation studies (this is about a radical shift in the perception of literary translations – treatment of them autonomously, rather not about appropriation, giving voice to previous cosmopolitan aspirations). The third argument, in turn, concerns the mode of reading, which opens the perspective, as we can say today, of **intercultural dialogue** (Damrosch’s definition here seems exceptionally appropriate: “a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our

⁶⁷ D. Damrosch, “World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–53.

⁶⁸ See also D. Damrosch, *How to Read World Literature: How to Study Literature*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

⁶⁹ D. Damrosch, “Conclusion: World Enough and Time,” *op. cit.*, p. 281 (italics in original).

⁷⁰ R. Wellek, “The Crisis of Comparative Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 150.

own place and time”). The American comparatist – as a consequence of the assumptions – resigns from the canon, accepts both intensive reading (limited to only a few works) and also extensive (referring to many works), is willing to talk at most of “microcanons”. He ultimately favours transdisciplinary research, and for their good example recognizes the aforementioned series of comparative literary history, published since a couple of decades under the auspices of ICLA.

Damrosch quite clearly situates his own “world literature” project in the area of the latest cultural comparative literature. In my opinion, Franco Moretti⁷¹ acts in a similar manner, but – first of all – he breaks with the traditional literary history (he is interested in recalling the provocative thesis of “a more rational literary history”⁷²), and with traditional comparative literature, secondly – he strictly distinguishes between world literature and old comparative literature (the latter, according to his assessment, has a more limited scope – it is limited to Western Europe, concentrated ... “around the river Rhine”)⁷³. Moretti’s frequently formulated proposals for world literature – an **other literary history** – is undoubtedly debatable⁷⁴, which is why they are met with many objections. Most controversial is his approach to literature, presented, among others, in the text “Conjectures on World Literature” of 2000, in the book *La letteratura vista da lontano* (Torino 2005) and in the article “Evolution, World-Systems, *Weltliteratur*”⁷⁵ from 2006. The Italian researcher, analysing the international circulation of literature and creating an **other sociology of literature**⁷⁶, stays with quantitative criterion: occupied by counting, putting in sequence, graphs, maps, trees, etc. He never forgets

⁷¹ It is enough to say that, for example the French translation of the text “Conjectures on World Literature” (*New Left Review*, 1 (2000): pp. 54–68) is preceded by a remark from the author: “Here I would like to comment on the intellectual foundations of comparative literature” (F. Moretti, “Hypothèses sur la littérature mondiale,” trans. R. Micheli, in: *Etudes de Lettres*, 2 (2001): p. 9). The English version of the text was presented by Moretti at the conference “Comparative Literature: The Intellectual Foundations” (University of Columbia, February 1999).

⁷² F. Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History*, London–New York: Verso, 2005, p. 4.

⁷³ F. Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁷⁴ See for example M. Escola, “Voir de loin: Extension du domaine de l’histoire littéraire,” in: *La Revue Internationale des Livres et des Idées*, 5 (2008) (text available on the webpage: <http://www.fabula.org/revue/document4291.php>).

⁷⁵ F. Moretti, “Evolution, World-Systems, *Weltliteratur*,” *op. cit.*, pp. 113–121 (also in: *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*, *op. cit.*, pp. 399–408).

⁷⁶ F. Moretti, *Graphes, cartes et arbres: Modèles abstraits pour une autre histoire de la littérature*, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

that literature works after the model of capitalism, that literary forms reflect social relationships and political tensions, that formal analysis in its own way always means analysis of power. That is why world literature is, in his opinion, a “system of *variation*”⁷⁷, the result of inevitable literary interferences, for which, as Itamar Even-Zohar⁷⁸ previously argued, there is no symmetry.

The author of an other literary history, willingly or not, returns, of course, to Goethe’s idea, to the “old ambition of *Weltliteratur*”⁷⁹, obsessively maintaining the assumption that world literature is not the subject (fundamental in creating all canons), but the “problem” requiring the application of new critical methods. As a clear emblem of the new approach to literature, use is made of the formula “distant reading”⁸⁰, treated as a condition of knowledge⁸¹ (indicating not only abandoning the practice of close reading, but also questioning many traditional literary criticism views). In *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* it is easily seen that Moretti is in principle interested in the whole and relationships on a macro scale. Therefore, he willingly uses non-literary methods (“general methods”), using graphs taken directly from the so-called quantitative history, economic history (in this way, for example, he explains, the development of the novel in England), and – on the model of geographic sciences – maps (the method used in *Atlas of the European Novel 1800–1900*⁸²), and – inspired by the theory of evolution and neo-Darwinism – trees (he analyses the resonance of Arthur Conan Doyle’s criminal novels according to such a scheme and the phenomenon of international expansion of seemingly dependent speech).

With such assumptions about literary history – created, as Moretti perversely says “second hand”, avoiding direct connection to texts ... – becomes something completely different from the form it had to date, and turns out above all else to be the opposite of national historiography.

⁷⁷ F. Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁷⁸ See I. Even-Zohar, “Laws of Literary Interference,” in: *Poetics Today*, 1, Vol. 11 (1990): p. 62.

⁷⁹ F. Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 54.

⁸⁰ This reading practice was already explained by Moretti in the text “Conjectures on World Literature”. In the margin it is worth adding that for his opponents the assertion a “distant reading” in consequence actually leads to a paradox which Pierre Bayard included in the title of his book *How to Talk About Books You Haven’t Read*, trans. J. Mehlman, London: Bloomsbury, 2007 (see P. Bayard, *Comment parler des livres que l’on n’a pas lus?*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 2007).

⁸¹ F. Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁸² F. Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800–1900*, London–New York: Verso, 1998.

It is not without invention that the Italian literary scholar explains the conflict between world literature and national literature, as he reaches for the metaphors of “trees” (“phylogenetic tree” in the Darwinian sense) and “waves” (in meaning as much of interest to linguistics, as to genetics or archaeology). These two extremely different, mutually incompatible metaphors, make it possible to grasp, in his view, two mechanisms: the transition from unity to diversity (“tree” illustrates for example the emergence of European languages from the Indo-European trunk) and from diversity to unity (“wave” illustrates, for example, the unlimited expansion of Hollywood films or English in today’s world). World culture – and this is his essential thesis – are subordinated to two mechanisms without exception, the activities of which are best seen in the case of nation-states (functioning on the model of “trees”) and markets developing or undergoing recession (functioning on the model of “waves”). It is not difficult at the same time to use this model in a different dimension: thus, the first metaphor can successfully characterise national literature, the second – world literature. As Moretti concludes, at the same time posing the questions: “The nation or the world? The tree or the wave?”⁸³ – which have purely rhetorical expressions: “[N]ational literature, for people who see trees; world literature, for people who see waves”⁸⁴.

In the text “Evolution, World-Systems, *Weltliteratur*”, delivered at the Stockholm conference in 2004, the author of the concept of “distant reading” summarises up his previous proposals and signalises the lack of possibilities to formulate one definition of “world literature”, despite the fact that this term has been functioning in the humanities for nearly two centuries⁸⁵. Referring to the theory of evolution (the processes of “diversification”, speciation) and the theory of world-systems (the processes of “sameness”, diffusion or divergence), he ultimately distinguishes between two distinct world literatures. The “»first« *Weltliteratur*”, in his opinion, perfectly fits into the model of evolution, the “»second« *Weltliteratur*” in turn – in the model theory of world-systems.⁸⁶ The two different realisations of world literature are historically conditioned: while the first dominates until the eighteenth century, manifesting itself in a mosaic of separate, local literary cultures, divergence is created by the by, the second one comes out in a later period as a result of the unification of the international literary market. In the second case, as Moretti underlines,

⁸³ F. Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁵ F. Moretti, “Evolution, World-Systems, *Weltliteratur*,” *op. cit.*, p. 113.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 120.

this is not so much about world literature as the fluid “**world literary system**”⁸⁷. Briefly concluding, the theory of world-systems allows us to perceive and understand the process of unification – apparent “unity” – of world literature (for the Italian researcher this is always “one and unequal”), unity, which, in completely different geopolitical conditions, Goethe once demanded in his vision of *Weltliteratur*.

IV. Comparative literature constellations

Today the question is obvious that new comparative literature – cultural comparative literature – fights old, ethnocentric comparative literary studies, whereas postmodern literary history (in essence literary interpretation⁸⁸, as Paul de Man maintains) – fights traditional (national) literary history and that these formations penetrate the intellectual and institutional dimensions. If considered in the context of two comparative literatures (traditional and cultural) the situation of literary history together with its current “exaggeration”⁸⁹, it is easy to be tempted to the

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁸ In agreement with Paul de Man’s interpretation: “To become good literary historians, we must remember that what we usually call literary history has little or nothing to do with literature and that what we call literary interpretation – provided only it is good interpretation – is in fact literary history” (P. de Man, “Literary History and Literary Modernity,” in: *idem, Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983, p. 165).

⁸⁹ This problem has been for some time a subject of particular interest for Polish literary scholars, see amongst others T. Walas: *Czy jest możliwa inna historia literatury?*, *op. cit.*; “Historia literatury w przebudowie,” in: *Polonistyka w przebudowie: Literaturoznawstwo – wiedza o języku – wiedza o kulturze – edukacja. Zjazd Polonistów, Kraków 22–25 września 2004*, ed. M. Czermińska et al., vol. 2, Kraków: Universitas, 2005, pp. 429–443; “Historia literatury w perspektywie kulturowej – dawniej i dziś,” in: *Kulturowa teoria literatury: Główne pojęcia i problemy*, ed. M.P. Markowski, R. Nycz, Kraków: Universitas, 2006, pp. 93–135; “Inna historia literatury jest możliwa,” Tomasz Mackiewicz and Agnieszka Wnuk talk to Teresa Walas, in: *Tekstualia*, 3 (2010) (special number: “Czas utracony? Koniec historii literatury?”): pp. 89–100; M. Zaleski, “Jak możliwa jest dziś historia literatury?,” in: *Z perspektywy końca wieku: Studia o literaturze i jej kontekstach*, ed. J. Abramowska, A. Brodzka, Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, 1997, pp. 47–61; W. Bolecki: “Czym stała się dziś historia literatury,” in: *idem, Polowanie na postmodernistów (w Polsce) i inne szkice*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1999, pp. 350–372; “Pytania o przedmiot literaturoznawstwa,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1–2 (2005): pp. 11–21; R. Nycz: “O przedmiocie studiów literackich – dziś,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1–2 (2005): pp. 175–187; “Możliwa historia literatury,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 5 (2010): pp. 167–184.

simplest typology of relationships, to see four elementary possibilities in the melting pot of various relations.

Firstly, the relations along the lines of **traditional comparative literature – traditional (national) literary history**, therefore the case of continuation, strengthening or – as it was called it earlier – **inclusion**. It seems that this account from the perspective of our current geopolitical reality defines the historically closed division of relationships, typical of the realities and teachings of the nineteenth century. *Status quo ante (bellum)* guarantees however the “scientific” nature of the discipline, institutional autonomy (the paradox is that in this case the past of the “indiscipline” has been forgotten, which some time ago was confirmed by the interview of Polish literary scholars concerning the state of comparative literature, published in the Kraków *Wielogłos*⁹⁰). Well, traditional literary history attempts to establish the “ideal library”, a closed canon, which traditional comparative literature strengthens, heading in the direction of the University of Excellence. Of course, Etiemble’s thesis, that this is only the effects of misunderstood Lansonism: “most vain bibliographical compilations, the anecdote, the accessory”⁹¹ – is heavily exaggerated.

Secondly, it is necessary to extract the relationship along the lines **cultural comparative literature – traditional literary history**, and therefore an evident case of **opposition**. This is the horizon of thinking of many of today’s comparatists, supporters of world literature (Damrosch or to some extent Moretti). As much as one field proposes “micro-canons” and at all costs overcomes the “postcolonial hypercanon”⁹², so the second continues its interest in the classic historical-literary canon. He also criticizes cultural comparative literature, which seems to be non-literary criticism activity, even non-scholarly (such accusations have already been risked by Auerbach, strongly criticized by many philologists for the overly general approach to literature presented in *Mimesis*; today however risked by Moretti).

Thirdly, the sharp conflict should be noted between **traditional (national) comparative literature** and **postmodernist literary history** – this is also an obvious case of **opposition**. This relationship is only apparently illogical. On the one hand, the supporters of currents in present-day

⁹⁰ “Rozmowa »Wielogłosu«,” *op. cit.*, pp. 7–38. See also commentary by Henryk Markiewicz, “Glosa do dyskusji o komparatystyce,” in: *Wielogłos*, 2 (2011): pp. 157–159.

⁹¹ R. Etiemble, *The Crisis in Comparative Literature*, trans. H. Weisinger, G. Joyaux, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1966, p. 36 (see R. Etiemble, *Comparaison n’est pas raison: La Crise de la littérature comparée*, Paris: Gallimard, 1963, p. 68).

⁹² D. Damrosch, “World Literature in a Postcanonical, Hypercanonical Age,” *op. cit.*, p. 48.

comparative literature which are to a certain extent anachronistic are in favour (here a characteristic view upon cultural reality dominates, namely an escape from the present), from the other side – some literature historians, those who go back to the past of comparative literary studies, as a consequence question the sense of the existence of this kind of extremely obsolete discipline in the latest scholarship (a good example would be the criticism of Polish comparative literature, expressed on various occasions by Michał P. Markowski).

And finally – fourthly – it is necessary to notice a surprising relationship between **cultural comparative literature** and **postmodern literary history** (“other”, “weak”, “cultural”, “transcultural”, etc.), the relationship which at the beginning I called accidental union. In fact, I am not interested in all the superficial, sketchy typology, but this fourth case, for which the remaining cases constitute just an indispensable point of reference. In this case, inclusion is annulled, and even more so – opposition, both models lie in a suspended state. At first glance it may be judged, that proposals in both research strands become identical, that there is no need to distinguish between them and – as a result – retention of two (“synonymous”) formulae. Of course, the most recent comparative literature – like postmodern literary history – is characterized in the era of interpretation of a **permanent state of instability**⁹³. They contribute to this attempt at breaking with finality, with ordering, with erstwhile monographic projects, historical-literary syntheses, efforts to finally determine currents, periods, schools, types and literary genres, etc. However we should speak about the process of convergence which is happening, because the difference exists, even though it is subtle and complicated by the current situation of weakness in comparative literature, which, in Culler’s opinion, results, among other things, in different researchers taking the views of the comparatists⁹⁴ (it is worth mentioning here that bringing closer the way of working of the modern historian of literature to the way comparatists work was commented upon casually by Włodzimierz Bolecki during the Congress of Polonists in 1995⁹⁵).

⁹³ See chapter 4: *The instability of comparative literature*, pp. 65–82.

⁹⁴ See J. Culler, “Comparative Literature, At Last,” in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

⁹⁵ As Bolecki maintains: “The contemporary literary historian does not just look for the criteria of merging and synthesising but also criteria of analogies and comparisons. Not just synthesizes, which multiplies contexts. Hence the growing career of comparative literature not based on traditional criteria of national literatures, but on other factors such as: on universals associated with myths and archetypes, creations of subjects, the relationship between different forms of violence and its objects, finally, on categories

That difference is undoubtedly a broader scope of research (this point of view, for example, of Henry H.H. Remak⁹⁶): cultural comparative literature today puts, among other things, issues of translation and new translation studies, interdisciplinary issues at the centre of attention⁹⁷, all phenomena of contemporary culture (it is another thing that these research trends are trying to quickly capture the literary history). The difference between today's cultural comparative literature and postmodern literary history comes at the same time from something else, namely from the life experiences especially of comparatists such as Auerbach, Said and Spivak. There is no doubt that the need for cultural comparative literature derives currently not only from the phenomenon of world literature, international literary transfers, but also from the specific, individual experience of each comparatist. The two fundamental grounds for the further survival of comparative literature, the "indiscipline" is precisely noted by Culler, claiming that to some extent the situation of world literature and, above all, the situation of modern man determine this: the "polyglot experience" and – understood in a modern way – "an idea of cosmopolitanism"⁹⁸. The American literary scholar indicates two types of comparatists, depending on their formative life circumstances: one type imposes and conditions the reality of (e)migration (this dimension of comparative literature of the twentieth century was exposed by George Steiner in his Oxford lecture "What is Comparative Literature?"⁹⁹), the second – becomes the result of a voluntary, individual choice, to escape from "American parochialism"¹⁰⁰, and more broadly: escape from any "parochialism", the result of selfless **intercultural dialogue**.

In this context it is easy to understand the need to reactivate the idea of *Weltliteratur* in the twentieth century (and particularly at the end of the

such as sex (also cultural, known as *gender*), minority – majority, nature – culture, multiculturalism, etc." (W. Bolecki, "Czym stała się dziś historia literatury," *op. cit.*, p. 368).

⁹⁶ In Remak's opinion: "There is no fundamental difference between methods of research in national literature and comparative literature (...). There are, however, subjects encountered in comparative-literature research which go beyond national-literature scholarship: the contact or collision between different cultures, in general, and the problems connected with translation, in particular" (H.H.H. Remak, "Comparative Literature, Its Definition and Function," *op. cit.*, p. 10).

⁹⁷ See for example H.H.H. Remak, "Origins and Evolution of Comparative Literature and Its Interdisciplinary Studies," in: *Neohelicon*, 1, Vol. 29 (2002): pp. 245–250.

⁹⁸ J. Culler, "Comparative Literature, At Last," in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

⁹⁹ G. Steiner, "What is Comparative Literature?: An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on 11 October, 1994," Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

¹⁰⁰ J. Culler, "Comparative Literature, At Last," in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first); the need, which turns out in reality to be as much evident as controversial. World literature, as can be seen in the example of Damrosch and Moretti's action can be construed (sic!) in many different ways and situated in the perspective of either cultural comparative literature, or postmodern literary history. However, as a utopian project, it has long since raised the scepticism of various literary scholars: not only Etiemble (perversely declaring the idea necessary, but almost impossible to achieve), not just Culler (a researcher – *faute de mieux* – is a moderate supporter of world literature, agrees with the opinion that world literature is in some respects a hopeless project, perhaps impossible because of “McDonaldization”¹⁰¹, that is, the way America today colonizes various other cultures), not only Djelal Kadir (because of the risk of instrumentalization of individual literatures of the world, the potential objects of neo-colonial usurpation and imperial subordination), not only, understandably, Spivak, but also its main theorists, such as Damrosch, warning against the danger of “crypto-nationalism”. Spivak's diagnosis, which openly criticizes both the ethnocentric trend in comparative literature, formed in the nineteenth century, and the current trend of moderate cultural comparative literature, also world literature, turns out to be unambiguous – these proposals are considered by her as a continuation of the same paradigm of thinking about the modern world. The project of comparativism in extremis, formulated after the announcement of the “death of a discipline”, is therefore based on more radical premises stemming from a special kind of postcolonial sensitivity: “the logical consequences of our loosely defined discipline were, surely, to include the open-ended possibility of studying all literatures, with linguistic rigor and historical savvy. **A level playing field, so to speak**”¹⁰². In this situation, the most general questions about ethics and politics seem quite basic, the nature of comparatist action: how can we study without comparison? how can we not compare? given that “great networks of affiliations work by way of exclusions”¹⁰³. Comparativism in extremis, as can easily be confirmed, solves a lot in this case – a new or other literary history will not be created under this aegis.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, p. 245.

¹⁰² G.Ch. Spivak, “Crossing Borders,” in: *eadem*, *Death of a Discipline*, *op. cit.*, p. 5. Emphasis A.H.

¹⁰³ G.Ch. Spivak, “Rethinking Comparativism,” *op. cit.*, p. 611.

V. Passages and refractions: literature – “national philology” – comparative literature

The two main points of view of today’s comparatists, the two models of interpretation of literature, the modern world and the human sunken into it, are conventionally defined here by the formula well-known to representatives of the “indiscipline”: from one side Paul van Tieghem, from the other – André Lefevere and David Damrosch. I am therefore interested in **passages** not in the sense of Benjamin¹⁰⁴, but van Tieghem, or as a transmission of a specific literature beyond its proper language limits¹⁰⁵ (or better said: cultural boundaries) in the paradigm of so-called influenceology. **Refractions** in turn, within the meaning given to it by Lefevere in the nineteen eighties (“the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work”¹⁰⁶, associated with various translations, all kinds of commentaries, historiography, education, anthologies, stage realizations, film adaptations, etc.), as well as in the sense given in the late nineties by Damrosch, thus defining the phenomenon of world literature (it is worth recalling that the first of its three complementary definitions, accommodated in the book *What is World Literature?* from 2003 sounds: “*World literature is an elliptical refraction of national literatures*”¹⁰⁷)¹⁰⁸.

Passages, like refractions – and in both cases we are dealing with the international circulation of literature – run, of necessity, in two main channels. One of them is “national philology” (national literature), the second – comparative literature. In the case of **passages** this is clearly about traditional comparative literature (called “eurocentric”, “old”, “positivist”, etc., by its opponents), while in the case of **refractions** it is about cultural comparative literature, which in the second half of the twentieth century, and particularly in the last few decades, tries to break

¹⁰⁴ See W. Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, ed. R. Tiedemann, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982 (see also W. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. H. Eiland, K. McLaughlin, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

¹⁰⁵ P. van Tieghem, *La littérature comparée*, *op. cit.*, pp. 67–68.

¹⁰⁶ A. Lefevere, “Mother Courage’s Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature,” in: *Modern Language Studies*, 4, Vol. 12 (1982): p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ D. Damrosch, “Conclusion: World Enough and Time,” *op. cit.*, p. 281 (italics in original).

¹⁰⁸ This formula was also used earlier by the American comparatist Harry Levin (*Refractions: Essays in Comparative Literature*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

with influenceology (“passages”), with relations of fact [*rapports de fait*], which question the comparison, exposing instead the phenomenon of (non)comparability, which often ends with casual combinations or – as described by Spivak – in “affinity”¹⁰⁹. In such circumstances another two metaphors, which I think are appropriate: in the case of passages “*douanier vétilleux*”¹¹⁰ comes to mind (just such a determination is proposed by the French comparatist Daniel-Henri Pageaux, who strongly criticizes this idea of comparative literature), whereas in the case of refractions – *homo viator*.

If in the contemporary world – the multicultural world, or also, as Wolfgang Iser would like, the transcultural world¹¹¹ – particularly important turns out to be the circulation of literature in the international sphere (hence the widespread fashion for “world literature” projects), and it is primarily this circulation, in which case an essential role is played by **translation** – **refraction** and all commentaries, which André Lefevere includes under the name of **critical refractions**: introductions, notes, academic articles, etc. Undoubtedly, the importance of translation in the intercultural dimension was already appreciated in the nineteenth century by Goethe, and Hugo von Moltke¹¹². However, its status began to change radically only from the nineteen seventies, thanks especially to the poly-system school of Itamar Even-Zohar (the Israeli researcher’s concept makes it possible to go beyond the “histories of national literatures”) and later trends in translation studies – the new studies about translation, leading towards cultural studies and the breaking from purely linguistic interpretations, and also many other individual proposals, such as the broad understanding of the phenomenon of translation – *translatio* – by Apter influenced by the events of September 11, 2001 (I have in mind the book *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*).

At the Kraków Congress of Polonists in 2004 Alina Nowicka-Jeżowa presented a paper dedicated to comparative literature and philology¹¹³, and their evident – from the point of view of the practice of literary criticism

¹⁰⁹ G.Ch. Spivak, “Rethinking Comparativism,” *op. cit.*, p. 611.

¹¹⁰ D.-H. Pageaux, “Littérature comparée et comparaisons,” in: *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 3 (1998): p. 289.

¹¹¹ W. Iser, “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” in: *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. M. Featherstone, S. Lash, London: Sage, 1999, pp. 194–213.

¹¹² H. Moltke, “Present Tasks of Comparative Literature,” *op. cit.*, pp. 18–22 (see H. Moltke, “Vorläufige Aufgaben der vergleichenden Literatur,” *op. cit.*, pp. 179–182).

¹¹³ See A. Nowicka-Jeżowa, “Komparatystyka i filologia: Uwagi o studiach porównawczych literatury epok dawnych,” in: *Polonistyka w przebudowie*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 348–361.

– dependencies. The link between the two “disciplines” is unquestionable, and cannot be, of course, open to question or challenge. Moreover, it is now even a kind of a brake in the case of the comparatist, exposed to the temptation of venturing into areas of cultural studies, which usually leads to marginalization or even misses the phenomenon of literature. In proposing the formula “passages and refractions”, I am coming from completely different assumptions, and quite differently placing the accents in connection with the international system of literature which is explained clearly by Pascale Casanova.

In *The World Republic of Letters* the French comparatist reflects on the general functioning of literature¹¹⁴, distinguishes between two dimensions of the “world literary space” and at the same time two historically conditioned, oscillating currents, which can be defined conventionally as **national** and **“autonomous”**.¹¹⁵ This reveals fundamental questions: the international nature of literature and the hierarchical structure of the literary world, which governs competition, smooth relations between literary metropolises and their peripheries. The individual national literatures are not, in her opinion, closed, separate, isolated wholes on the pattern of Herderian cultures – “islands” or “spheres”, but formed by international confrontation. National foundations of literature, as assumed by Casanova, are something natural and inevitable, after all, literary capital (due to language) are always inherently of the nation¹¹⁶. But at the same time Casanova is also perfectly aware that favourable geopolitical conditions lead to literary emancipation, namely the depoliticization of literature, the weakening of the national paradigm. In other words, the international competition in literature, despite the fact that resources are always accompanied by a literary “seal of the nation”¹¹⁷, may take place in certain isolation from extreme national and political arguments. Briefly concluding, Casanova speaks of two poles of literature, defining the world literary space: literature in the service of the nation (in this case

¹¹⁴ P. Casanova, “Principles of a World History of Literature,” *op. cit.*, pp. 9–44 (see P. Casanova, “Principes d’une histoire mondiale de la littérature,” *op. cit.*, pp. 27–74).

¹¹⁵ See P. Casanova, “Principles of a World History of Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 39 (see P. Casanova, “Principes d’une histoire mondiale de la littérature,” *op. cit.*, p. 68). *Nota bene* the consequences of the existence of these two currents in the case of Polish literary criticism is demonstrated, among others, by Ryszard Nycz (“O przedmiocie studiów literackich – dziś,” *op. cit.*, pp. 175–188).

¹¹⁶ See P. Casanova, “Principles of a World History of Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 34 ff (see P. Casanova, “Principes d’une histoire mondiale de la littérature,” *op. cit.*, pp. 61–62 ff).

¹¹⁷ P. Casanova, “Principles of a World History of Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 39 (see P. Casanova, “Principes d’une histoire mondiale de la littérature,” *op. cit.*, p. 69).

of course the goal appears to be the gaining of independence for nations that are dominated) and literature that is to a certain degree autonomous.

There is no doubt that above all else she is interested in the moment when new participants entered the world system of literature. The French researcher stresses that every creator is at the same time the “heir” of both the national and international history that shaped him, whether it’s the case of Beckett, Michaux, Joyce or Kafka. Key for her seems to be in fact the thesis about **dual historicization**¹¹⁸, connected with the requirement of the double location of a particular writer, locating them in the hierarchy: “the place occupied by his native literary space within world literature and his own position within this space”¹¹⁹. It is worth adding here in the broader perspective, that in the centre of today’s comparative literature there should not be so much a national space for literature or “national philology” (national literature) as a world literary space – “**philology of world literature**” (philology of *Weltliteratur*), as called for as early as the nineteen fifties by Auerbach¹²⁰. To repeat, the aim is not a radical break of comparative literature with “national philology”, but a critical reevaluation, overcoming the fears of representatives of the two literary scholarship factions, an attempt to re-establish their necessary relations in the new socio-cultural and geopolitical realities. The importance of these relations in today’s humanities is eloquently highlighted amongst others by Damrosch: “Collaborative work can help bridge the divide between amateurism and specialization, mitigating both the global generalist’s besetting hubris and the national specialist’s deeply ingrained caution”¹²¹.

The dispute about comparative literature as **literary studies** (philological) or as **cultural studies** should today be considered pointless. Contemporary comparative literature, I think, is perhaps best defined by the dialectical formula: “literary studies – cultural studies”¹²² (philological

¹¹⁸ P. Casanova, “Principles of a World History of Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 42 (see P. Casanova, “Principes d’une histoire mondiale de la littérature,” *op. cit.*, p. 72).

¹¹⁹ P. Casanova, “Principles of a World History of Literature,” *op. cit.*, p. 41 (see P. Casanova, “Principes d’une histoire mondiale de la littérature,” *op. cit.*, p. 71).

¹²⁰ E. Auerbach, “Philology and »Weltliteratur«,” *op. cit.*, pp. 1–17.

¹²¹ D. Damrosch, “Conclusion: World Enough and Time,” *op. cit.*, p. 286.

¹²² See for example: *Comparative Literature and Comparative Cultural Studies*, ed. S. Tötösy de Zepetnek, West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2003; A.F. Kola, “Antropologizacja literaturoznawstwa a komparatystyka,” in: *Antropologizowanie humanistyki: Zjawisko, proces, perspektywy*, ed. J. Kowalewski, W. Piasek, Olsztyn: Instytut Filozofii Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego, 2009, pp. 83–106; A. Zawadzki, “Między komparatystyką literacką a kulturową,” in: *Wielogłos*, 1 (2010): pp. 39–53 (also in: *Kulturowa teoria literatury*, vol. 2: *Poetyki, problematyki, interpretacje*, ed. T. Walas,

issues and issues related to multiculturalism, interculturalism and trans-culturalism, with intermediality and the medial society thus situate themselves in the centre of attention). It is therefore necessary here to stress the otherwise obvious fact that comparative literature since the mid-twentieth century, has been moving away, or to say more carefully: trying to move away, not only from the positivist-oriented comparative research and national literary histories (as witnessed by amongst others Etiemble's postulate from the nineteen sixties, to write "this history of literature, and of literatures"¹²³), but also from the "classical" – meaning the philologically oriented – literary history, or more broadly: from philological literary criticism research. Weakening of the old (i.e. philological, national) paradigm of comparative literature takes various tracks: through increasing criticism of nationalism in the fifties and sixties (the positions of Auerbach, Wellek, Etiemble), a departure from the study of "relations of fact"¹²⁴, transcending purely philological directed research, namely accepting an interdisciplinary perspective starting from the sixties/seventies (Henry H.H. Remak's proposals¹²⁵; antecedents already in the nineteenth century, as witnessed by Meltzl's¹²⁶ diagnosis), finding a suitable place for a translation in comparative literary studies from the eighties (perception of translation as a wholesome literature and drawing conclusions from the development of new translation studies), finally approaching cultural studies in the nineteen nineties, as witnessed by the so-called Bernheimer report¹²⁷ and the lively discussion surrounding that today. Consequentially, two exceptionally expansive trends of reflection in comparative literature are taking shape gradually: **new translation studies**, which reveal the international circulation of literature and at the same time support the development of world literature,

R. Nycz, Kraków: Universitas, 2012, pp. 345–367); A.F. Kola, "Paradygmat kulturowy w badaniach porównawczych: Poza »cultural studies«,", in: *Slavica Litteraria*, 2 (2011): pp. 3–23.

¹²³ R. Etiemble, "Do We Have to Revise the Notion of World Literature?" *op. cit.*, p. 100 (see R. Etiemble, "Faut-il réviser la notion de *Weltliteratur*?", *op. cit.*, p. 33).

¹²⁴ In Etiemble's view: "[E]ven though two literatures have not had historical relations, it is legitimate to compare the literary genres which each developed for its own use" (R. Etiemble, *The Crisis in Comparative Literature*, *op. cit.*, p. 35; see R. Etiemble, *Comparaison n'est pas raison: La Crise de la littérature comparée*, *op. cit.*, pp. 65–66).

¹²⁵ H.H.H. Remak, "Comparative Literature, Its Definition and Function," *op. cit.*, pp. 3–37.

¹²⁶ H. Meltzl, "Present Tasks of Comparative Literature," *op. cit.*, pp. 18–22 (see H. Meltzl, "Vorläufige Aufgaben der vergleichenden Literatur," *op. cit.*, pp. 179–182).

¹²⁷ "The Bernheimer Report, 1993," *op. cit.*, pp. 39–48.

and **interdisciplinary studies**¹²⁸, including intermedial studies in this, referring to the universe of today's cultural reality, to the human situation in the contemporary audiovisual culture.

Concluding in a wider perspective: a picture of today's literary criticism – called intercultural literary criticism¹²⁹ by some – undoubtedly stems from its relationship to cultural sciences, with respect to “national philology, to comparative literature, to the teaching of foreign languages and to such social and cultural studies, which can function as a subsidiary or affiliate of the discipline, especially to those that created the area of work on interculturalism”¹³⁰. In the case of intercultural literary criticism, as can be seen, the importance of the new comparative literature actually proves to be key. This is because attempting to look at the functioning of literature in the international dimension eventually allows a better understanding of that which is its own, local, national. It is not without reason therefore that Ryszard Nycz maintains: “Only a **comparative** and **transcultural** approach to national culture can give an account of the mechanisms of the creation of specific values and unique features”¹³¹. It is just enough that Polish comparative literature so far has remained with the model of “national philology” (national literature) – it would be difficult not to agree with the general opinion anyway, for example, of Michał Kuziak, that in our literary criticism “the pattern of national philology still dominates”¹³². A new chapter in the history of Polish comparative literature seems to be necessary¹³³, but perhaps it will not be spectacular in the institutional sense. This seems especially true if you were to check out the hypothetical scenario described by Jonathan Culler as a paradox in the world of American institutions: “Welcome to comparative literature, where we do not believe that the national literature is the logical basis of literary study, but be warned that while doing

¹²⁸ This study trend – according to Remak – best shows the contrast between the two great traditions of comparative literature research: the American and European (see H.H.H. Remak, “Origins and Evolution of Comparative Literature and Its Interdisciplinary Studies,” *op. cit.*, pp. 245–250).

¹²⁹ N. Mecklenburg, “Aufgaben und Arbeitsbereiche interkultureller Literaturwissenschaft. Ein Aufriss,” in: *idem, Das Mädchen aus der Fremde: Germanistik als interkulturelle Literaturwissenschaft*, München: Iudicium, 2008, pp. 11–38.

¹³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 16.

¹³¹ R. Nycz, “Możliwa historia literatury,” *op. cit.*, p. 177. Emphasis A.H.

¹³² M. Kuziak, “Palimpsesty komparatystyki,” *op. cit.*, p. 128.

¹³³ His clear statement is found in the work of some of our comparatists, amongst others Tadeusz Sławek (see “Literatura porównawcza: między lekturą, polityką i społeczeństwem,” in: *Polonistyka w przebudowie*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 396) and Adam F. Kola (see “Nie-klasyczna komparatystyka: W stronę nowego paradygmatu,” in: *Teksty Drugie*, 1–2 (2008): p. 59).

Comp. Lit. you also need to act as if you were in a national literature department so as to make yourself competitive for a job in one"¹³⁴ ... Regardless of the geopolitical situation and the condition of the institutions in the near future, the main task for comparatists in today's cultural reality is, I think, settlement with the model of the national literature (of van Tieghem's binary oppositions and exclusive "passages") and strengthening the international currency of literature, developing all kinds of webs of refraction (amongst others the continuation of activities on the model even of Damrosch's "world literature" or Moretti's "world system of literature"). **Passages** enable comparatists a minimally tendentious confrontation, show and foment national stereotypes, perpetuate and reinforce negative mechanisms of multiculturalism, whereas **refractions** (of course, a certain kind of refractions, which is difficult to suspect of crypto-nationalism) allow – or to be more cautious: may allow – a real intercultural dialogue, essential in today's multicultural world.

¹³⁴ J. Culler, "Comparative Literature, At Last," in: *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

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SUMMARY

Comparative Literature. Literary Studies – Cultural Studies

This book attempts to diagnose the condition of (post)modern comparative literature and to determine the tasks it faces in the media-driven society, in a multicultural world. The current situation of this “indiscipline” is viewed in the widest possible context, taking into account both the earliest ideas which emerged in the nineteenth century (e.g. the contribution of the French School, Goethe’s *Weltliteratur* paradigm, or the institutional efforts of Hugo von Meltzl) and the most recent conceptions of Western European and American comparatists (e.g. G. Steiner, S. Bassnett, G.Ch. Spivak, E. Apter, D. Damrosch).

The history of the emergence of the main trends in comparative literature is usually explained by means of three metaphors: the Eiffel Tower, the World Trade Center and the Tower of Babel. Recognizing the various options put forward by comparatists and by media and intercultural scholars leads to the emergence of a new approach to comparative literature itself and especially to the act of comparative inquiry. A new paradigm of thinking which springs from cultural comparative literature involves, first and foremost, departing from the previous ethno- and Eurocentrism. As a result, modern comparative literature is understood not so much as an ever expanding field of study and an institution at the same time, but as a product of thinking which enables the “decolonization of ourselves” (Armando Gnisci’s formula); as a practice of interpretation deeply rooted in everyday existence.

The *Introduction* comments on new possibilities of comparative literature that have appeared in the last few decades, especially following various interventions proclaiming the “death” of the discipline (S. Bassnett and G.Ch. Spivak, among others). The author describes the present condition of scholarly reflection, emphasizing the fact of incommensurability of comparative projects and distinguishing three main currents of comparative literature: traditional (the legacy of the nineteenth century), interdisciplinary (interdisciplinary comparative studies pursued since the turn of the nineteen sixties and nineteen seventies), and cultural (cultural comparative studies developed since the turn of the nineteen eighties and nineteen nineties). The focus of attention is the last of these, i.e. cultural comparative literature; that is why the key parts of the book were devoted to the condition of this discipline at the beginning of the twenty first century. Issues concerning comparative literature as a field of the humanities were presented in three complementary contexts:

Part I of the book – *Perspectives of Contemporary Comparative Literature* – is an overview of the main currents of thought in comparative literature, major breakthroughs and the most important methodological disputes, with special emphasis laid on (post)modern comparative literature projects. It turns out that the groundbreaking

moment in the development of the discipline in the twentieth century was the moment when comparative literature opened up to interdisciplinary studies. The wide understanding of inderdisciplinarity (as a notion, methodology, way of thinking, etc.) makes it possible to evaluate the significance of the “American School” and – in consequence – to recognise different models of comparative research: traditional comparative literature, interdisciplinary comparative literature, and cultural comparative literature (cf. Chapter 2: “Interdisciplinarity and comparative literature studies”). The different currents of comparative literature are treated as complementary; the tripartite division is necessary, but it becomes blurred when we look upon the discipline in the light of dialogism. In the case of comparative literature studies, discussing the ideas of such scholars as Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva, Paul de Man, Jola Škulj or Michael Holquist leads to the conclusion that, within traditional comparative literature, dialogism relates to intertextuality, whereas within cultural comparative literature, it relates to a pragmatically-oriented theory of knowledge (cf. Chapter 3: “Dialogism and new comparative literature”). The inevitable vagueness of definitions, arguments concerning the notions of comparison and comparability, the incommensurability of individual projects (e.g. of G. Steiner, D.-H. Pageaux, A. Gnisci, S. Bassnett, G.Ch. Spivak, or E. Apter) – all show that instability is the distinguishing feature of the discipline since its beginnings. In consequence, comparative literature is treated – after David Ferris – as an “indiscipline” (cf. Chapter 4: “The instability of comparative literature”).

Part II of the book – *The Intermedial Space* – presents the author’s own project of comparative intermedial research. Within the modern humanities, the notion of intermediality is used variously, to characterise present-day communication, to determine the field of new aesthetics, sometimes called the aesthetics of intermediality, or even to analyse combinations and fusions of different arts that appeared at any time from antiquity up to the twenty first century. An overview of various interpretations of intermediality (by D. Higgins, J.E. Müller, H.F. Plett, J. Schröter, H. Oosterling, I.O. Rajewsky, and K. Chmielecki) enables the author to discuss Werner Wolf’s thesis concerning the “new paradigm in literary studies” and to formulate new assumptions about reading hybrids, unfinished texts, and texts *in statu nascendi* (cf. Chapter 5: “Intermediality and intermedial literature”). An example of such texts is *Arw* by Stanisław Czycz (printed edition: Kraków 2007). The Cracovian writer was to create a film script about the life and work of Andrzej Wróblewski (as was agreed with the director Andrzej Wajda) – but in effect he created a piece of experimental literature. Reading it, one reaches the conclusion that Czycz was closely related to the aesthetics of intermediality as an “aesthetics of existence” and this kind of aesthetics is undoubtedly crucial while reading this kind of artistic record (cf. Chapter 6: “Intermedial text – directing reality /Stanisław Czycz’s *Arw*”). Another work requiring intermedial interpretation is *St. Francis and The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*, a “semantic opera” in two acts, with text and music by Stefan Themerson and pictures by Franciszka Themerson (De Harmonie – Gaberbocchus Press, Amsterdam–London 1972; created 1954–1960). Interpreting this experimental opera in the context of other works by the Themersons reveals the idea of the “original Tragedy” as well as the actual reason for using the opera convention (cf. Chapter 7: “Stefan Themerson’s intermedial aesthetics /*St. Francis & The Wolf of Gubbio or Brother Francis’ Lamb Chops*”).

Part III of the book – *Interculturalism and Comparative Literature of the 21st Century* – contains analyses of cultural phenomena which have influenced the shape and understanding of new literature (e.g. the phenomenon of “translation” as intercultural dialogue) as well as attempts at formulating the tasks of cultural comparative literature

in today's world. In the light of the concepts of inter- and multiculturalism it is obvious that the issue of translation has become – thanks to such scholars as e.g. George Steiner, Daniel-Henri Pageaux, Susan Bassnett, Yves Chevrel, Emily Apter – a basic problem of comparative literature in the last few decades. The author emphasizes the significance of the widely defined “translation” in the contemporary world and analyzes the two currents of comparative studies: traditional comparative literature and cultural comparative literature from this perspective. Within traditional comparative literature, translation functions as a way to strengthen Eurocentrism, whereas within cultural comparative literature it becomes a tool of intercultural dialogue (cf. Chapter 8: “Interculturalism – literature – comparative literature”).

The feuilleton work of Stefan Kisielewski, who published in *Tygodnik Powszechny* for many years, is an example of new opportunities, but also serious threats, springing from attempts to establish intercultural dialogue. It is well-visible in the analysis of the article entitled “Świat nie przedstawiony” (“The Unpresented World”; *Tygodnik Powszechny* No. 49, 1983), written in France after visiting an exhibition of Polish art “Présences polonaises” in the Centre Pompidou in Paris. The article makes a direct reference to the geopolitical situation (East vs. West), the condition of Polish art and society in the isolated political and cultural space, and to the situation of the author himself, and to his need to be a feuilletonist – that is, a free man (cf. Chapter 9: “»The Unpresented World«. Kisiel's feuilleton”). Undoubtedly, a somewhat different understanding of the necessity of dialogue in a multicultural world can be found in Ryszard Kapuściński's writings. The interpretation of the later records of the “global reporter” shows the departure from field exploration, from political and ethnographic efforts of a reporter and from stating diagnoses from the point of view of cultural anthropology. The focus of attention are issues concerning multiculturalism, intercultural dialogue, understanding the Other, the obsession of talking about the duties of a man living in a world of multiple cultures and about being a “dethroned European” (cf. Chapter 10: “In the »multicultural world« of Ryszard Kapuściński”).

The *Conclusion* of the book addresses the question of the relationship between comparative literature and literary history, with special emphasis laid on the present condition of both fields of literary studies. Looking at various comparative conceptions that emerged in the last two centuries, and pointing out the need to go beyond the traditional national model of literary history and the ethnocentric model of traditional comparative literature, that is, the need to break up with nationalism and crypto-nationalism, the author discusses mainly the latest comparative projects of the literary history oriented toward the issue of the international literary arena (referring to such notions as “comparative literary history”, “international literary history”, “transcultural literary history”, or “world literature”). The reasons for reactivating the Goethean idea of *Weltliteratur* at the turn of the twentieth and twenty first centuries are established (world literature as explained by Pascal Casanova, David Damrosch and Franco Moretti), as well as the reasons for construing an “other literary history” under the aegis of cultural comparative literature.

Despite numerous doubts as to the possibility of creating a new literary history (e.g. the critical writings of Gayatri Ch. Spivak), one of the main problems of cultural comparative literature is the international circulation of literature, that is, analyzing the whole range of refractions of national literatures. Thus, the intercultural perspective opens up new horizons for the twenty first century comparative literature.

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